



## **Executive Summary**

**Liza Jackson Preparatory School**

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### Introduction

Every school has its own story to tell. The context in which teaching and learning takes place influences the processes and procedures by which the school makes decisions around curriculum, instruction, and assessment. The context also impacts the way a school stays faithful to its vision. Many factors contribute to the overall narrative such as an identification of stakeholders, a description of stakeholder engagement, the trends and issues affecting the school, and the kinds of programs and services that a school implements to support student learning. <br><br> The purpose of the Executive Summary (ES) is to provide a school with an opportunity to describe in narrative form the strengths and challenges it encounters. By doing so, the public and members of the school community will have a more complete picture of how the school perceives itself and the process of self-reflection for continuous improvement. This summary is structured for the school to reflect on how it provides teaching and learning on a day to day basis.

### Description of the School

**Describe the school's size, community/communities, location, and changes it has experienced in the last three years. Include demographic information about the students, staff, and community at large. What unique features and challenges are associated with the community/communities the school serves?**

Liza Jackson Preparatory School (LJPS) is located in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. It is situated in the western end of Florida's Panhandle between Pensacola and Destin in Okaloosa County. We are a military community where over 50% of our county's land is owned by the federal government. This includes four military facilities: Hurlburt Field, Eglin Air Force Base, Duke Field, and a U.S. Army training facility, the 7th Special Forces Group. Our student population reflects our community's military presence with 35% of our student population affiliated with the military. We are also a tourist community, as we are home to some of the most spectacular beaches in the world. This brings tourists to our area year round.

LJPS, a school of choice, is a public charter school and opened in the 2001 - 2002 school year. Presently serving 840 students and maintaining over 1,000 student- applicants on our waiting list, LJPS primarily serves the Fort Walton Beach area but also includes students from the surrounding communities of Destin, Niceville, and Crestview. The LJPS administrative team uses data about our community, students, and families to make decisions about our school population. The LJPS charter requires that we consider ethnicity, gender, and active duty military status when implementing our enrollment policies. The school administration, the CEO, and the Board of Directors analyze demographic data each year to ensure that our school population mirrors the community at large. In addition, gender, ethnicity, performance, and English language proficiency, as well as other factors, are considered when making class placements to ensure a balance within each class.

LJPS was founded on the Success for All program in our elementary school and has been implemented over the last twelve years. Success for All is a whole-school model that weaves together five essential strategies to help ensure the success of all students. These essential strategies are leadership for continuous learning; school-wide support and intervention tools; powerful instruction; professional development and coaching; and research. School leaders and teachers collaborate to set goals, measure progress, and celebrate success. Proven strategies focus on attendance, parental and family involvement, positive school culture, family needs, health issues, and individual student support and intervention to make sure that students are in school and ready to learn. Engaged students and dynamic teaching are the keys to high achievement. Instruction in Success for All is built around cooperative learning to engage students in rich discussion and motivating challenges every day. Technology is deeply embedded in daily teaching and learning. Classes are homogeneously grouped in to provide all students the benefit of a full 90 minutes of Reading instruction. Extensive job-embedded professional development and coaching enable teachers and school leaders to succeed. The effectiveness of Success for All model has been proven in federally funded gold-standard research and in schools across the country for twenty-five years.

Our middle school program is now an accredited International Baccalaureate (IB) - Middle Years Programme (MYP) School. We chose this path for our middle school to further our adherence to our school mission and purpose for international mindedness. The IB MYP is designed for students ages 11 to 16. It provides a framework of learning which encourages students to become creative, critical and reflective thinkers. The MYP emphasizes intellectual challenge, encouraging students to make connections between their studies in traditional subjects and to the real world. It fosters the development of skills for communication, intercultural understanding and global engagement, qualities that are essential for life in the 21st century. Our school is committed to the success of this program and therefore, designated an IB coordinator to ensure fidelity to the program. In conjunction with the IB programme, we have added the Global Perspectives Program to immerse our students in both the language and culture of Spanish speaking countries. To further the international mindedness of the IB programme, our

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middle school students have the opportunity to travel to such destinations as Puerto Rico, Spain, and Costa Rica to enhance their cultural development.

LJPS is a research driven school where data is collected, analyzed, and used at all levels to inform decision making. We strive to offer an advanced, challenging curriculum to all of our students. We have been awarded an A+ on our academic performance since opening in 2001 and have held a standing in the top 50 highest performing schools in Florida for the past two years. We are dedicated to providing each of our students with a successful, well-rounded, high quality education which includes high academic expectations, fine and performing arts, physical education, as well as manners, character traits, and conflict resolution skills.

## **School's Purpose**

**Provide the school's purpose statement and ancillary content such as mission, vision, values, and/or beliefs. Describe how the school embodies its purpose through its program offerings and expectations for students.**

Our first vision, mission, purpose, and beliefs were identified in our original charter in 2001. They are:

Vision: "Excelling Locally, Thinking Globally"

Mission: It is the mission of Liza Jackson Preparatory School to provide a comprehensive approach to education that prepares students to succeed in a global community. The school is founded on the belief that disciplined human intelligence, imagination, and individual development will provide the opportunity for the best quality of life.

The mission was updated and made student friendly in 2003. Our current, student friendly, mission statement is:

"We are a caring community of learners dedicated to making the world a better place through academic preparation, good manners, common sense, and 100% effort."

Beliefs:

Every student does his or her "Personal Best" through:

Integrity: To act according to a sense of what is right and wrong

Initiative: To do something of one's own free will, because it needs to be done

Flexibility: To be willing to alter plans when necessary

Perseverance: To keep at it

Organization: To plan, arrange, and implement in an orderly way

Sense of Humor: To laugh and be playful without harming others

Effort: To do one's best

Common Sense: To use good judgment

Problem Solving: To create solutions in difficult situations and everyday problems

Responsibility: To respond when appropriate, to be accountable for your actions

Patience: To wait calmly for someone or something

Friendship: To make and keep a friend through mutual trust and caring

Curiosity: A desire to investigate and seek understanding of one's world

Cooperation: To work together toward a common goal

Caring: To feel and show concern for others

Pride: To be satisfied from doing one's personal best

Reliability: To be accountable every time for doing one's share

The mission and purpose at Liza Jackson Preparatory School (LJPS) is made clear to all stakeholders. The mission and beliefs statements are posted in the entryway of our school, in every classroom, on our letterhead, in all of our correspondences, and on our website. The mission is recited at celebrations, ceremonies, and graduations. It is also stated each day, with a volunteer student leading a school-wide recitation, during our morning announcements over the intercom. Students in all grade levels, K - 8, are able to state our mission and explain its meaning.

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At LJPS the mission statement is a living document that is directly referred to frequently when having discussions about school policies and curriculum, decisions on issues ranging from scheduling to character education efforts, and is referred to as a way of life to help better oneself. At LJPS, we refer to the mission statement as "Liza's Way". For example, when we discuss our school-wide requirements for community service, we tie it to "making the world a better place" in the mission statement. When we developed our standards for quality work we addressed the part of the mission statement about "100% effort." When we conclude our morning announcements each day, we state "use the things we say each day in our mission statement and make it a great day".

## **Notable Achievements and Areas of Improvement**

**Describe the school's notable achievements and areas of improvement in the last three years. Additionally, describe areas for improvement that the school is striving to achieve in the next three years.**

LJPS has a long list of notable achievements.

### Academics:

A+ School every year since opened in 2002 - 2013

Designated High Performing School every year

Top 20 School in Florida 2011 - 2012

Top 50 School in Florida 2012 - 2013

Ranked in top 4 in the district in both Reading and Mathematics in 2011, 2012, & 2013

Ranked 1st in district in 3rd grade Mathematics on the FCAT in 2013

Ranked 1st in district in 5th grade Mathematics on the FCAT in 2012 & 2013

Ranked 1st in district in 8th grade Reading on the FCAT in 2011, 2012, & 2013

Ranked 1st in district in 8th grade Mathematics on the FCAT in 2011 & 2012

Ranked 2nd in district in the 4th grade in Mathematics in 2012 & 2013

Ranked 2nd in district in the 6th grade in Mathematics in 2012 & 2013

Ranked 1st in district in the 5th and 8th grade Science on the FCAT in 2012

Ranked 2nd in the district in the 5th and 8th grade Science on the FCAT in 2013

Ranked 1st in district in 8th grade in Writing on the FCAT Writes in 2011, 2012, & 2013

100% of Instructional Staff were Highly Effective" on their Formal Evaluation using the Charlotte Danielson Evaluation System, 2013

Academic Team ranked 1st in district, 2013

### School Programs:

Success For All Foundation School, 2001 to present

Ambassador School for Success For All Foundation, 2012, 2013, 2014

Pilot school for Success For All "Power Math" program in Middle School, 2013

International Baccalaureate Middle Years Programme Authorized School

Global Perspectives Opportunity for middle school students to tour to Puerto Rico, Costa Rica, Spain, 2012, 2013, 2014

### Science Fair:

12 Regional Winners, 2011

15 Regional Winners, 2013

### Thespians:

10 Superior, 3 Excellent Awards, 2013

Best in Show for Set Design, 2013

### Odyssey of the Mind:

2012: Division 1 - Qualified for State Tournament; Division II - 4th place in District

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2013: Division I - 5th place; Division II - 2nd place

### Art:

Van Porter Artist of the Year, 2005 - 2010 & 2012

Van Porter Artist of the Year Honorable Mention, 2013

District Art Show, 1st Place and 3rd Place, 2013

Arts and Design Society of Fort Walton Beach: 1st Place: 2012 & 2013; 2nd Place: 2012; 3rd Place: 2012; Honorable Mention: 2012

### Dance Team:

2011 Champions at Dance Nationals; 2nd in Hip-Hop; 3rd Place in Jazz

### Sports:

2011: Girls' Varsity Cross Country District Champs; Jr. Varsity 2nd Place in district

2011: Boys' Jr Varsity District Champs & 2nd in State

2011: Girls' Golf District Champs

2011: Girls' Swim Team District Champs, also 2008, 2009, 2010, 2011, & 2012

2012: Girls' Cross County District Champs

2012: Boys' Cross Country District Champs

2012: Girls' Tennis Team 2nd Place in District

2012: Girls' Volleyball District Champs

2013: Boys' Soccer Team Lion's Cup Champs

2013: Boys' Tennis Team District Champs

### Areas of Improvement:

LJPS has been working over the last three years to improve our writing proficiency level. We have hired consultants to help us in this area. Our consultant, who was our eighth grade Language Arts teacher last year, the top-scoring writing teacher in the county, is still consulting with us even though she is no longer on our teaching staff. Last year, she worked with the entire Language Arts faculty to vertically align the school-wide Writing curriculum maps and scope and sequences for each grade level. She also created and implemented a common vocabulary and writing technique that is now used school-wide. She has and is currently working with teachers by training them in her method of writing and common vocabulary/strategies. She meets with all Language Arts teachers regularly to train, discuss writing instruction, model writing lessons, provide feedback, and discuss problems and/or issues. Due to changes in staff in state-tested grade levels, this process has been consistently offered each year to new teachers. We maintain the process of increasing our Writing proficiency level and have included it in our school's goals.

LJPS has increased the level of technology available to teachers and students over the past five years. The technology committee developed a five year technology plan in 2009 which is revised and updated each year. We must be able to meet the near future demand for increased computer-based testing and the move to electronic textbooks. We will continue to keep up with the current demand for technology as we know it is the way of the future.

### Additional Information

**Provide any additional information you would like to share with the public and community that were not prompted in the previous sections.**

Liza Jackson Preparatory School (LJPS) was built on the belief that every child is an individual and can be successful. Students are assessed regularly and the curriculum is continually tailored to meet the needs of the students in each class.

LJPS has developed curriculum maps, scope and sequences, pacing calendars, and policies and procedures to ensure that all students within each grade level receive the same opportunities and equal access to a quality education, regardless of class placement. School-wide signals, academic requirements, behavior expectations, grading policies, communication policies, common language, as well as other policies and procedures are in place to help students transition quickly and effectively from one class or place to another. This results in less loss of instructional time.

LJPS is a cooperative learning school. Students work in cooperative groups each day across the curriculum. We believe students learn best from each other. Our goal is to have teacher-talk equal or less than student-talk. We also believe in the real-world of work, people have to work together to solve problems and execute work. Cooperative learning is a great life-skill for the future.

Reading and Math support classes are provided during the school day for students who are experiencing difficulties in these areas. Both support teachers are subject-area certified. In addition, many of the core teachers offer before and/or after school tutoring, within their subject area, on a regular basis.

All teachers at LJPS have a minimum of 65 minutes of common planning time in elementary and 100 minutes in middle school with their grade level team each day. Teachers meet with their administrative curriculum coordinator, weekly, for training, communication, problem-solving, and curriculum planning. They also meet as a grade level team at least two other days per week. This common planning time allows teachers to work together to provide an equal education to all students by planning lessons together, sharing ideas, discussing students, and solving problems, concerns or issues. It is also a time to meet as a team with parents or guardians.

LJPS believes it is important to develop the body, as well as the mind. To that end, LJPS has developed comprehensive physical education (PE) and sports programs. All students in elementary and middle school, except some middle school students who are in both support classes, receive a structured PE for at least 30 minutes each day. Students in grades fifth through eighth can participate in a wide range of sports and also dance. Our sports students are held to a higher academic standard of eligibility than other county students requiring our students have a "C" average or better in each class rather than on overall "C" grade point average.

For the students who are not interested in sports, we offer a wide variety of after school activities. The elementary students can participate in Brickz for Kids (Legos), Abrakadoole (art classes), Odyssey of the Mind (OM), and thespians to name a few. Middle school students are offered a variety of clubs such as Student Council, Environmental Club, Chess Club & Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA). They can also participate in band and/or thespians.

LJPS believes that kindness, manners, and respect for others are a way of life. We call this "Liza's Way". To assist us with this undertaking, we have embraced "Rachel's Challenge". Rachel's Challenge is a national program, developed from the Columbine School Incident, which challenges students to be caring, helpful, and friendly towards one another. We also have developed a "Liza's Way" manner and etiquette

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standard for LJPS. All students are introduced or re-introduced to the standards at the beginning of each school year and are expected to uphold them. All employees are responsible for helping student follow "Liza's Way".

We also believe we are a family here at LJPS. All staff members, instructional and non-instructional, are celebrated and honored for their roles within the school. We embrace all new staff, parents, and students as new family members and welcome them into the fold. We pride ourselves on the safe, friendly, open environment we have created. Many people who enter our building for the first time notice the difference right away and usually comment on the caring, positive atmosphere.

All LJPS employees, including administration, are "at will" employees. We are here because we want to be here. We believe in our mission and purpose and are driven to carry it out. We do not have a union, but we do have a Leadership Team with a representative from each grade level, the wheel/exploratory teachers, and the non-instructional staff. This ensures that everyone has a voice in making decisions and solving problems at our school. Communication is continuously promoted and encouraged. The administrative team is dedicated to cultivating teachers and staff. Weekly walk-throughs and yearly formal evaluations are seen as opportunities for growth. Teachers are provided with support to strengthen and perfect their teaching ability through training, observation of master teachers, modeling, administrative assistance, and school-wide book studies on best practices. We believe all teachers can be nurtured and become master teachers. Our staff is proof.

LJPS is a full-service school offering parents the convenience of fee-based before and after school daycare. Doors open at 6:30 am for students whose parents must be at work before our school start time. In the afternoon, we remain open until 6:00 pm. Liza's daycare director and staff offer students the opportunity to work on their homework, read, play games - both indoor and out, enjoy arts and crafts, learn new dances, exercise, eat a healthy breakfast and snacks, and just have fun. The daycare also offers full-day services from 6:30 am to 6:00 pm on some holidays and throughout the summer. The summer is theme-based with bi-weekly field trips.

LJPS employs ten full-time CDL (commercial driver's license) certified bus drivers. After doing a morning bus run, drivers come into the building and assist in a multitude of ways such as: administrative assistance, kitchen preparation, custodial, media center assistance, and aide in our PE program. They enhance the functioning of our school and it helps us retain quality bus drivers. At the end of the day, drivers return our students home safely. They are an integral part of the LJPS family in making the school run smoothly and efficiently. All staff members take their work seriously and are a vital part of why the environment for students and teachers are conducive to teaching and learning. The administrative staff meets regularly with the non-instructional staff to discuss solutions to problems and concerns and to facilitate communication throughout the building. Each week the administrative team meets with the staff members who are in charge of the department or a group of staff members to plan and schedule events. Communication is the key to a well-run school such as Liza.

LJPS purchased and maintains its own busing system, and employs a full-time transportation director. With ten buses in our fleet, we have the ability to offer transportation to real-world, curriculum-related experiences.

LJPS has an active parent organization called PATHS (Parents and Teachers Helping Students). Their mission is to bring the relationship of home and school together so that parents and teachers can cooperate intelligently in the education of the children. They also promote the well-being of the students by sponsoring physical activities such as the Fall Fest Carnival and Ultimate Fitness Challenge. These activities are aimed at bringing the parents, teachers, staff, and students together for some quality fun time. PATHS are Liza's only fundraising entity as our charter states that students can not be involved in fundraising activities. All activities sponsored by PATHS raise money to help pay for student awards, student trips for competition purposes, club fees, and building technology to name a few. PATHS contributes, on average, \$10,000 each year to help the school acquire needed technology as designated in our five year technology plan.