

Lawrence Family Development Charter School □ ***Programs and Partnerships***

that make our school a special place to teach – to learn – to volunteer □ □ **school day programs**

Lawrence Family Development Charter School is open Monday through Friday beginning the last week in August through June from 7:45 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. The core academic day is 7 hours for grades 5-8, 7:45 a.m.-3:30 p.m., grades 2-4, 7:45 a.m.-3:20 p.m. and grades K-1 to Grade 1, 7:45 a.m. - 3:10 p.m. An extended day academic and enrichment program runs right after school until 6:00 p.m. for grade K-2 to grade 6 and until 5:00 p.m. for grade K-1. The following programs are integrated into the school day providing essential skills for high academic achievement and expanded opportunities and enrichment to foster the development of the whole child.

K-1 – Early Kindergarten for 4-year olds

The K-1 program, which is located at The Academy for Early Academic Preparation at 10 Railroad Street along with K-2 and Grade 1, is comprised of five classrooms with fifteen students, each staffed by one certified teacher and one paraprofessional. These students advance in their second year to K-2, where class size is twenty students per group. Extensive language development, phonemic awareness and number sense are complemented by learning and play centers, music, art, MakerSpace STEM, fitness and Spanish. A secure welcoming environment builds strong foundational skills for transition from K-1 to K-2.

K-2 – Regular Kindergarten for 5-year olds

Students who complete K-1 advance to K-2, a full-day academic program aligned with the Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum. Ready to learn at an accelerated pace, K-2 students are introduced to many technology and text-based programs in order to advance in oral fluency and reading. A full program

of English and Spanish language instruction, supporting our dual-language mission, as well as mathematics, art, music, MakerSpace STEM and physical education continue the advantages of a coordinated two-year program. Students are grouped in classes of twenty, each with a certified teacher; paraprofessionals are available to assist teachers as needed.

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ACADEMIC PROGRAMS

LFDCS, like all Massachusetts schools, taught remotely from March, 2020 to April 2021 and plans to have all students in school for FY'2021-2022 by continuing to follow DESE guidelines. An extended day program in another building, leased by LFDCS, will provide academic and social/emotional support for students along with enrichment.

READING PROGRAMS

Early Literacy in K through Grade 4 LFDCS successfully implemented its reading instruction using a scientifically-researched core program with extensive planning and consistent progress monitoring. LFDCS uses the *Jo*
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reading program in grades K-1 to 4, and grades 5-8 use novel units to teach the Massachusetts Common Core Standards. In each classroom in Kindergarten through grade 4 our teachers involve students in the five essential components of reading: phonemic awareness, systematic phonics, vocabulary development, reading fluency and reading comprehension. Grades 3-4 have a one-hour Language Arts block. Three times annually, student progress is monitored monthly using Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) and by Measures of Academic Progress (MAP). Based on this data, through our RTI (Response to Intervention) process, there is an additional 40 minutes of needs-based groups for focused instruction of Tier III students for specific attention to gaps in reading. The *Accelerated Reader (AR)*

allows students to take quizzes on the computer after they have completed reading an AR book from the library independently. Students are given AR awards during the quarterly awards assembly for earning a certain amount of points or taking a certain number of quizzes.

Read Across America - School-wide, Read-Aloud Celebration

LFDCS joins schools across the country the first week in March to celebrate the birthday of Dr. Seuss (Massachusetts-born children's author, Theodore Geisel) and to foster a love of reading to students. This tradition, organized by the Student Services Coordinator and the leadership team, invites community volunteers to visit LFDCS to read to individual or small groups of children, sharing their love of reading and its importance in life. Elected officials, police and fire officials, board members, bankers, business leaders and friends and families of LFDCS volunteer to read in assigned time blocks—energizing our school community with their presence

and enthusiasm for reading. Grade eight students travel to the Academy and read Dr. Seuss books to the K-1 students. Each child in K-1, K-2 and grade 1 receive a hard-bound copy of a Dr. Seuss book.

Mathematics

The school utilizes several resources in mathematics to meet the needs of each grade level.

LFDCS uses

Eureka Math

which is aligned with the Massachusetts Common Core Standards.

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Interventions provide support for students who are identified through Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments which is given three times annually. Based on this data, through our RTI (Response to Intervention) process, students may be grouped for specific attention to gaps in mathematics. A Title 1 Mathematics teacher for grades 2-4 provides support for these critical years when students are learning the basics upon which the understanding of mathematical processes are built.

OTHER PROGRAMS Special Education: Meeting the Needs of All Learners LFDCS is committed to providing access for all students to a quality education in the least restrictive setting. We offer an inclusion model in which students identified with specific learning needs are educated among their peers with requisite support and modifications provided by certified Special Education teachers based on individual goals written into an Individual Education Plan. External support for speech, occupational therapy and behavior management is contracted as needed to address specific needs, sometimes in a separate setting. The Special Education program is supported by a strong Parent Advisory Council where parents have indicated high levels of satisfaction with program delivery, participation and results.

Dual-Language Program: Academic Fluency in English and Spanish

LFDCS is committed to the development and implementation of effective practices to support language acquisition and academic fluency in English and Spanish for all students.

Dual-language fluency—building on the first language of Spanish while supporting proficiency in English—utilizes best practices to meet our priority funding goal. An evolving Sheltered English Immersion model, supporting vocabulary and content development in all subjects daily, and an academic Spanish language curriculum one period each day taught by native language educators supports parallel skills in two languages. All language instructors (English and Spanish) use Massachusetts Common Core Curriculum standards in English Language Arts to create lesson plans.

ESL: Supporting Needs of English Language Learners

LFDCS enrolls a student population that is 98.6% Hispanic. The overwhelming majority of students enrolling in kindergarten rank Spanish as their first or home language, necessitating a significant investment of personnel, resources and study in English Language Acquisition, particularly vocabulary development. Staff provides vocabulary-rich instructional support enhanced by visuals to increase vocabulary, comprehension and confidence. LFDCS is committed to the dual-language priority of our school (see above) and the mandates of English proficiency from the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Our program for English Language Learners (ELLs) is staffed by certified educators. Federal and state laws require that ELL students be assessed annually to measure their proficiency in reading, writing, listening and speaking English as well as the progress they are making in learning English. In fulfillment of these laws, ELL students are required to participate in ACCESS testing, which is based on the WIDA (World-Class Instructional Design and Assessment) English Language Development standards. Our goal is to provide support as long as a student needs it, and only when a student reaches a proficient level of English is support discontinued. LFDCS is in 100% compliance for all ESE ESL requirements.

Technology Program: Computers in Labs and in Classrooms

LFDCS recognizes the importance of preparing our students for their future through the integration of technology in our school and curriculum. Since our founding, computer labs and the skills they foster were foremost in our priorities. Our students and teachers were able to adapt to remote learning last year with high-level instruction because the technology needed was already familiar, and we were able to provide Chromebooks to students who needed them. As both the school and technology move forward, our technology plan has evolved to incorporate computers in every classroom as well as learning centers for research and remediation. The goals are to: encourage teacher leadership through the Innovative Learning Team which helps to inspire new ideas and approaches towards Blended Learning and its relationship within the future of learning; refine a vision for the future of learning at LFDCS; work to create aspirational and feasible prototypes for implementing curricular units for short-term pilots and build next-generation competencies. LFDCS has a Digital Instructor to work with teachers on integrating more technology into instruction. Multiple carts of Chromebooks enable 1:1 use in grades 5-8. Grades K-4 has access to technology as well, sharing multiple carts of Chromebooks or iPads to use in class. Grades 5-8 use a Learning Management System, *Schoology*, to access homework and other materials from their devices at home. LFDCS is committed to Blended Learning by integrating technology into all parts of planning, assessment and instruction. Students in grades 2-8 learn to be ethical users of technology and strengthen their computer skills with a weekly session just for that purpose.

Fine Arts Program: Full-Time Music and Art Program

LFDCS values the arts as a meaningful and essential component in the education and development of children. Participation in the arts opens children's worlds and minds, exposes them to cultures and offers them opportunities to develop skills which enrich their lives. Art and music curricula at LFDCS are offered to all students K-1 through grade 8 by full-time, certified art and music teachers. Following the arts standards established by Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, children are exposed to diverse arts media and music expressions. Art and music have also been offered in after-school and summer enrichment and through an extraordinary 14-year partnership with Phillips Academy Andover which was halted because of COVID but we hope to restart this program again. Students in grades 3-8 learn and practice instruments each week with one-on-one student tutors from the Phillip's Academy-Andover Chamber Orchestra. A music room and instrument practice center and art room at the Upper School are available for all LFDCS students to have art and music classes weekly. LFDCS looks for occasions for students to show their art and perform music throughout the year.

Physical Education: Health and Fitness, Grades K-1-Grade 8

LFDCS houses a state-of-the-art gymnasium built adjacent to its Upper School and is committed to the health and fitness of our students. Because the student population is growing, LFDCS began leasing a gym that once housed the city's Jewish Community Center. Students in all grades participate in physical education (PE) classes weekly and are introduced to fitness, stretching, strengthening of muscles and breathing. Students learn individual and team fitness routines as well as team sports and sportsmanship. We hope to begin again this year our after-school fitness activities that include: soccer, a running club, volleyball, wrestling, karate, cheerleading, gymnastics (Youth Development Organizations partnership) and league basketball for girls and boys in grades 5-8.

Grade 7 & 8: Building Leaders through Teamwork

LFDCS offers a special teambuilding activity for students in grade 8 in place of academic classes on one day within the first two weeks of school. The program introduces students to their grade-level teaching team as they participate in a day of "outward bound" leadership challenges. These activities are intended to help students learn about classmates, teachers and themselves through lessons in building trust and friendships and build grade-level team of students and teachers that work, learn and succeed together. The goal of the program is to establish, right from day one of the school year, the importance of communication, working together, respecting each other's' views and opinions and to successfully complete the tasks assigned as a team.

" Opening Doors" Program: Successful Transition to High School

LFDCS invests in the futures of our graduates through our

Opening Doors

program. The Secondary School Coordinators work with every student in grades 6, 7 and 8 and their families to understand the process of making the transition from LFDCS to high school and the many options and opportunities they may pursue. Workshops in SSAT prep and partnerships with area private secondary schools and youth organizations help connect our students to individuals and interests to broaden their experiences and vision. Connections to after school and summer enrichment, coordinated by the Secondary School Coordinators, introduces students to journalism, robotics, fine arts, theater, private schools and college campuses. Intensive attention to applications, essays and interviews are completed in early fall of eighth grade. A High School Fair for eighth grade students and their parents provides on-site information to all area schools including many of the top secondary schools in the United States. Application and acceptance rates of over 50% consistently send our graduates to bright futures. Some of the high schools that our students attend are: Academy at Notre Dame, Berkshire School, Bradford Christian Academy, Central Catholic High School, Clark School, Concord Academy, Darien High School, Deerfield Academy, The Derryfield School, Fryeburg Academy, Glastonbury High School, The Governor's Academy, Lowell Catholic High School, Maine Central Institute, Miss Hall's School, Noble and Greenough, Notre Dame Cristo Rey High School, Pentucket High School, Pingree School, Phillips Academy (Andover), Ridgefield High School, St. John's Preparatory School, St Mark's School, The Academy at Penguin Hall, White Mountain School, Greater Lawrence Technical High School, Whittier Regional Vocational Technical High School, Lawrence High School and Methuen High School. After graduation, our Secondary School Coordinators support LFDCS graduates by tracking student progress to ensure positive experiences and retention. These services help to create outreach mechanisms and gatherings to reunite alumni in age-appropriate groups. By re-connecting alumni to LFDCS, it provides participation opportunities that build allegiances and support for the school. Many of our alumni are invited to speak at special events such as at the LFDCS graduation and fundraisers and invited to become trustees on the LFDCS Board of Trustees.

Ambassadors Program: Leadership in Action, Grades 5-8

LFDCS inaugurated in 2006 the Ambassadors' Program to commence with the opening of the Upper School. The ambassadors apply and are chosen based on the following criteria: excellence of character, academic scholarship responsibility, reliability and integrity. The ambassadors represent LFDCS by leading school tours for visitors, funders and potential students. They meet with elected officials and business leaders—learning the roles of leadership in a community and showing others, by example, the qualities and expectations of students at LFDCS.

Community Service: Opportunities to Make a Difference

LFDCS was founded with a mission for high expectations for student success including the important lessons of life and leadership which are learned through service to others. Building a better community through the efforts of individuals at all ages is an important goal for our school. Keeping our school, neighborhoods and parks environmentally clean and free from graffiti, gathering food for hungry families, tutoring younger children with reading and math, maintaining the school gardens, and helping senior citizens study citizenship are some of the valuable projects our students participate in at LFDCS as part of community service and service learning. Students usually begin community service projects in Grade 7, with 30 hours needed to be documented to graduate. COVID-19 prevented students from doing community service for last year and was replaced by a civics education project. LFDCS will revisit the community service program once information on school routines related to COVID-19 are clear for the coming school year.

Libraries: Resources for Reading and Research (Upper & Lower Schools; Family Library at K-1)

LFDCS provides special places for reading and literacy throughout its facilities. A library for grades 2-4 in the Lower School contains thousands of donated and purchased books, kits for classroom and home lessons and space to work quietly on special projects. The Alekal Library at the Upper School provides fiction and nonfiction middle-grade literature, reference books and an internet-connected computer center to support student research, writing and learning. A Computer Literacy Specialist works out of the Upper School Library to support students' in the Lower and Upper School use of technology in content, reading, research and digital citizenship.

Social-Emotional Learning: The Leader in Me

Massachusetts and LFDCS recognizes that we educate the whole child and the effect that social-emotional (SEL) health has on learning.

The Leader in Me

by Sean Covey is a philosophy that is helping schools inspire greatness in all students while engaging school staff in a common approach to social-emotional supports. As a pilot project in SY'2017-2018 and completely implemented school wide in 2018-2019, Covey's book inspired LFDCS' grade five teachers to successfully implement Steven Covey's 7 Healthy Habits into their classrooms to foster leadership skills in students. This approach helps students become successful members of the LFDCS community as well as successful citizens. To apply this

philosophy at LFDCS, all new staff members receive a copy of the book and are expected to read it. The expectation was that we all read the book throughout the school year and that three

The Leader in Me

Steering Committee members and three teachers in each building support the Heads of School and teachers with the implementation of this philosophy as appropriate in each building. This approach means that all teachers and students are using the program to focus on leadership skills and building a connected community of learners that take responsibility for their own actions and learning. As we discover student experiences with the remote learning and COVID-19, LFDCS will explore other SEL programs and materials and revisit

The Leader in Me

in order to provide the best, most up-to-date SEL support in the coming year.