

U.S. Department of Education
2023 National Blue Ribbon Schools Program

[X] Public or [] Non-public

For Public Schools only: (Check all that apply) [X] Title I [X] Charter [] Magnet[X] Choice

Name of Principal Mr. Krishna Rivera
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., etc.) (As it should appear in the official records)

Official School Name Alachua Learning Academy
(As it should appear in the official records)

School Mailing Address PO BOX 1389
(If address is P.O. Box, also include street address.)

City Alachua State FL Zip Code+4 (9 digits total) 32616-1389

County Alachua County

Telephone (386) 418-2080 Fax _____

Web site/URL <https://alachualearningacademy.org/> E-mail Rivera@OurALA.org

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Principal's Signature) Date _____

Name of Superintendent* Shane Andrew E-mail supt@gm.sbac.edu
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

District Name Alachua Tel. (352) 955-7300

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(Superintendent's Signature) Date _____

Name of School Board
President/Chairperson Tina Certain
(Specify: Ms., Miss, Mrs., Dr., Mr., Other)

I have reviewed the information in this application, including the eligibility requirements on page 2 (Part I-Eligibility Certification), and certify, to the best of my knowledge, that it is accurate.

(School Board President's/Chairperson's Signature) Date _____

The original signed cover sheet only should be converted to a PDF file and uploaded via the online portal.

**Non-public Schools: If the information requested is not applicable, leave blank.*

PART I – ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

The signatures on the first page of this application (cover page) certify that each of the statements below, concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education and National Blue Ribbon Schools requirements, are true and correct.

1. All nominated public schools must meet the state's performance targets in reading (or English language arts) and mathematics and other academic indicators (i.e., attendance rate and graduation rate), for the all students group, including having participation rates of at least 95 percent using the most recent accountability results available for nomination.
2. To meet final eligibility, all nominated public schools must be certified by states prior to September 2023 in order to meet all eligibility requirements. Any status appeals must be resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
3. The school configuration must include one or more of grades K-12. Schools located on the same campus (physical location and mailing address) must apply as an entire school (i.e. K-8; 6-12; K-12 school). Two (or more) schools located on separate campuses, must apply individually even if they have the same principal. A single school located on multiple campuses with one principal must apply as an entire school.
4. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2018 and each tested grade must have been part of the school for at least the three years prior to September 2022.
5. The nominated school has not received the National Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021 or 2022.
6. The nominated school has no history of testing irregularities, nor have charges of irregularities been brought against the school at the time of nomination. If irregularities are later discovered and proven by the state, the U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's application and/or rescind a school's award.
7. The nominated school has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
8. The nominated school or district is not refusing Office of Civil Rights (OCR) access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
9. The OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
10. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district, as a whole, has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
11. The nominated school has, or is subject to, a nondiscrimination policy (provide either a link to the policy or submit a text of the policy), is committed to equal opportunity for all students and all staff consistent with applicable law and does not have any outstanding findings of unlawful discrimination. The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if unlawful discrimination is later discovered.

12. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

The U.S. Department of Education reserves the right to disqualify a school's nomination and/or rescind a school's award if one of these eligibility requirements is later discovered to have not been met or otherwise been violated.

PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Data should be provided for the current school year (2022-2023) unless otherwise stated.

DISTRICT (Question 1 is not applicable to non-public schools. For charter schools: If a charter school is part of the public school system, information should be provided for the public school district. If a charter school is considered its own district or part of a charter district, the information provided should reflect that.)

1. Number of schools in the district (per district designation):
- 30 Elementary schools (includes K-8)
10 Middle/Junior high schools
9 High schools
0 K-12 schools
- 49 TOTAL

SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools. **Only include demographic data for the nominated school, not for the district.**)

2. Category that best describes the area where the school is located. If unsure, refer to NCES database for correct category: <https://nces.ed.gov/ccd/schoolsearch/> (Find your school and check “Locale”)

- ☐ Urban (city or town)
☐ Suburban
☒ Rural

3. Number of students in the school as of October 1, 2022 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent at the school. Include all students enrolled, in-person, participating in a hybrid model, or online only. If online schooling or other COVID-19 school issues make this difficult to obtain, provide the most accurate and up-to-date information available:

Grade	# of Students
PreK	0
K	18
1	19
2	13
3	18
4	20
5	20
6	22
7	19
8	18
9	0
10	0
11	0
12 or higher	0
Total Students	167

*Schools that house PreK programs should count preschool students **only** if the school administration is responsible for the program.

4. Racial/ethnic composition of the school (if unknown, estimate):
- 0 % American Indian or Alaska Native
 - 6 % Asian
 - 2.4 % Black or African American
 - 18 % Hispanic or Latino
 - 0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
 - 65.2 % White
 - 8.4 % Two or more races
 - 100 % Total**

(Only these seven standard categories should be used to report the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The Final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic Data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.)

5. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2021 - 2022 school year: 12%

If the mobility rate is above 15%, please explain:

This rate should be calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

Steps For Determining Mobility Rate	Answer
(1) Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	8
(2) Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2021 until the end of the 2021-2022 school year	10
(3) Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)]	18
(4) Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2021	155
(5) Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4)	0.12
(6) Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100	12

6. Specify each non-English language represented in the school (separate languages by commas):

Spanish, Russian, Telugu, Hindi, Japanese

English Language Learners (ELL) in the school: 1 %
1 Total number ELL

7. Students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 77 %

Total number students who qualify: 128

8. Students receiving special education services with an IEP: 3 %
Total number of students served 5

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional conditions. All students receiving special education services with an IEP should be reflected in the table below. It is possible that students may be classified in more than one condition.

<u>0</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>0</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Developmental Delay	<u>2</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>0</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>4</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>0</u> Intellectual Disability	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness

9. Students receiving special education services with a 504: 11 %
Total number of students served: 19

10. Number of years the principal has been in the position at this school: 10

11. Use Full-Time Equivalents (FTEs), rounded to the nearest whole numeral, to indicate the number of school staff in each of the categories below. If your current staffing structure has shifted due to COVID-19 impacts and you are uncertain or unable to determine FTEs, provide an estimate.

	Number of Staff
Administrators	5
Classroom teachers, including those teaching high school specialty subjects, e.g., third grade teacher, history teacher, algebra teacher.	11
Resource teachers/specialists/coaches e.g., reading specialist, science coach, special education teacher, technology specialist, art teacher etc.	4
Paraprofessionals under the supervision of a professional supporting single, group, or classroom students.	0
Student support personnel e.g., school counselors, behavior interventionists, mental/physical health service providers, psychologists, family engagement liaisons, career/college attainment coaches, etc.	1

12. Average student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the FTE of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1 15:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

Required Information	2021-2022	2020-2021	2019-2020	2018-2019	2017-2018
Daily student attendance	94%	96%	96%	94%	93%
High school graduation rate	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%

14. **For high schools only, that is, schools ending in grade 12 or higher.**

Show percentages to indicate the post-secondary status of students who graduated in Spring 2022.

Post-Secondary Status	
Graduating class size	0
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	0%
Enrolled in a community college	0%
Enrolled in career/technical training program	0%
Found employment	0%
Joined the military or other public service	0%
Other	0%

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award.

Yes ☐ No ☒

If yes, select the year in which your school received the award.

16. In a couple of sentences, provide the school's mission or vision statement.

VISION: Educating students to become exemplary citizens of the world with H.E.A.R.T. MISSION: ALA is a H.E.A.R.T.-based family that fosters our students' eagerness for lifelong learning, and their development of moral character and practical life skills, while preparing them to contribute as valuable members of our community.

17. Provide a URL link to the school's nondiscrimination policy.

<https://www.sbac.edu/equalop>

18. **For public schools only**, if the school is a magnet, charter, or choice school, explain how students are chosen to attend.

Students are selected through a random lottery.

PART III – SCHOOL OVERVIEW

The Alachua Learning Academy is a H.E.A.R.T.-based family that fosters our students' eagerness for lifelong learning, and their development of moral character and practical life skills, while preparing them to contribute as valuable members of the community.

Located in the peaceful countryside of Alachua, Florida, the Alachua Learning Academy (ALA) has a small family environment that is safe, multiculturally diverse, and adventurous. We believe that these factors create a fertile ground for both personal and academic success. We value providing students with unique opportunities to discover their passions and talents, taking leaps forward in becoming exemplary leaders in the world. We believe that our small and diverse student body, values-based approach, and caring teachers directly contribute to the success of our students.

The ALA, a Title I charter school, has received an "A" grade since the school first opened in 1999. State testing results show that ALA consistently ranks #1 in our county and among the top schools in the state of Florida.

When we ask parents what they love most about our school, one of the first things they say is the small family feel. Our school's small size has big impacts on how we teach, learn, and play. We are much smaller than the average public school, having less than 200 students from grades K-8. This combined with our large outdoor campus creates a safe and nurturing space where we focus on healthy relationships, strong bonds between students and teachers, and achieve better academic results. By offering grades K-8 in one unique educational setting, we provide continuity, age diversity, and mentorship, which can greatly benefit a child's education.

At the core of every strong family are strong values, and we focus on empowering our students in leading with their H.E.A.R.T: Honor & Happiness, Enthusiasm & Excellence, Appreciation & Acceptance, Respect & Responsibility, and Tenacity & Trust. We believe that our small school size combined with creative and inspired teachers results in higher student engagement and truly effective learning. This gives students an opportunity to meet their potential in interpersonal relationships and academic studies.

Starting from Kindergarten we create a nurturing environment that fosters an eagerness for lifelong learning. As students progress we focus on the development of moral character and joyful exploration. In middle school we raise the bar in academics and prepare students for great high school experiences and in becoming valuable contributing members of the community. In addition to our Language Arts, Math, Science, STEAM Lab (Science-Technology-Engineering-Art and Math), and Physical Education curriculum, we also offer The ACCELL Program (Academically Challenging Courses to Enhance Learning and Life Skills). These courses are designed to expose students to various subjects and provide hands-on experiences in skills like: Seven Habits for Highly Effective Teens, Spanish, Publishing, Creative Writing, Digital Media, Culinary Arts, Financial Literacy, and Speech. We also offer unique in-class and outdoor activities like permaculture gardening, archery, Values Expo Fair, Multicultural Expo Fair, Science field days, Community Service, and inspiring guest speakers. With inspired and thoughtful teachers, diverse hands-on learning experiences, and access to technology such as 1-to-1 student Chromebooks in every classroom, we ensure that our students have the best chance of success.

The ALA's goal is to educate students to become exemplary citizens of the world with H.E.A.R.T..

ALA strives to graduate students who have the knowledge, skills, and personal characteristics to be lifelong learners and independent thinkers. Graduates will excel in their chosen careers and be productive and contributing members of the global community.

PART IV – CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION

1. Core Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment.

1a. Reading/English language arts curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Alachua Learning Academy complies with Florida's B.E.S.T. (Benchmarks for Excellent Student Thinking) English Language Arts standards, using the Benchmark Advance curriculum, Wordly Wise, and novel studies for its core reading/english language arts instruction. Beginning with basic phonics instruction and phonemic awareness in Kindergarten, progressing to reading comprehension in elementary, and finally focusing on fluency and vocabulary in the higher grades, students are given a comprehensive reading and language arts experience. A variety of texts, from fables, poems, and realistic fiction to many types of nonfiction with various structures and text features, are used to achieve this goal. Spelling and grammar are integrated in the reading curriculum and patterns change weekly. A summative assessment is given weekly to show mastery of the spelling patterns, grammar skills, and passage comprehension. Additional assessments are given at the end of each Benchmark Advance reading unit to show mastery of the skills taught each week, including previously taught material, and text-based writing questions. In addition to passage selections from basal readers, novel studies round out the reading curriculum. In middle school, the reading and language arts curriculum is further enhanced with group project-based learning. The projects help students practice social and problem-solving skills as well as align their creativity with their chosen topic. Projects are always delivered orally and provide a valuable foundation for public speaking. With preparation and practice, ALA is a safe space for students to really take ownership of their words and be challenged to expand their understanding of the world around them.

Writing is introduced at the most basic level of forming letters and complete sentences with capital letters and punctuation in early elementary and progresses to writing four and five paragraph essays and responses to various texts in the upper grades. These skills are then refined in the middle grades where they use textual evidence to support their point. Writing assessments are given on a formative basis, allowing the student to improve and edit their pieces before submission at the end of that specific unit of instruction. Upper elementary and middle school teachers also use an advanced vocabulary program called Wordly Wise. A lesson may be spread out over two weeks to make sure students are grasping the full meaning of each word that is being taught.

During the 90-minute reading block, teachers use whole group instruction to model lessons for students on new skills that have never been introduced before; small group instruction to be able to personalize and differentiate instruction to those students who need it; and, also provide individualized instruction on various computer programs to reinforce or assess various Reading/ELA skills. Some examples of those programs include iStation (mainly grades K-2) and IXL (grades 3-5). An additional daily 30-50 minute uninterrupted, silent reading block is provided to students to further their absorption and cultivate a love of reading. Reading/ELA is a core subject that every other subject is based around and is key to success in a student's career in school. In addition to the progress monitoring occurring three times per year, formative assessment data, from class work, as well as summative assessment data, from unit tests and quizzes, is used to guide instruction and show where review or intervention may be necessary.

1b. Mathematics curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

ALA's mathematics curriculum complies with Florida's B.E.S.T. standards and use HMH Go Math. The key to the success of our math curriculum is engaging the student by connecting what they have learned to what they are about to learn. Formative assessments help teachers to know whether the student is understanding the concept. Whole group instruction, small group tutorials, and video and interactive online lessons are used to guide students to develop mastery. Formative assessments and summative assessments are both major factors in creating small groups in order to meet individual student needs and determine how much they are retaining. Personal sets of manipulatives concretely help solidify abstract concepts. The students are expected to be able to verbally, as well as in written form, explain the concepts being taught. This also helps them to gain a deeper understanding of the concept. Students who demonstrate proficiency in a

concept are engaged in helping their peers. This is a huge boost for the helper's self-esteem, and the ones receiving the help enjoy the interaction with their classmates. Besides pen and paper assignments, they do online assignments as well. The online work provides the extra practice required to help students grasp the concept. In addition to progress monitoring occurring three times per year, formative assessment data, from class work, as well as summative assessment data, from unit tests and quizzes, is used to guide instruction and show where review or intervention may be necessary.

1c. Science curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

Alachua Learning Academy uses HMH Core Science Curriculum and district-recommended resources, which align to the NGSS (Next Generation Science Standards) to help guide our teaching and ensure we are teaching to the Florida Science Standards. However, we also use other resources such as: Mystery Science, labs, inquiry-based learning, hands-on investigations and activities in the main classroom, as well as in our STEAM course. Concepts taught are the Nature of Science, Earth Science, Physical Science, and Life Science and are covered by lecture/discussions with videos and demonstrations to better illustrate the concepts. By grabbing students' interest and making science fun, students are more receptive to learning. Science is also integrated into other subjects and referred to at different times throughout the year to review or provide background knowledge when exploring new concepts from other disciplines. Additionally, science is incorporated into our Field Days and parent events, such as our STEM Expo and Science Fair. Students have the opportunity to demonstrate their applied understanding of scientific concepts to a variety of audiences. Summative assessments are given through chapter and unit tests. Benchmark tests are also given to track progress and readiness for the State Science Assessment. After analyzing data, we reteach either the whole class or pull individual students, as necessary to ensure all students understand each concept.

1d. Social studies/history/civic learning curriculum content, instruction, and assessment:

In the elementary grades, social studies is taught several different ways including the use of standard curriculum as well as supplemental information from various sources. Social studies standards are followed and taught using materials, such as Brain Pop Jr., Scholastic News, Studies Weekly, library resources, and books and research from the Internet. The language arts curriculum, Benchmark Advance, covers most social studies standards and is built into most lessons. The learning program includes stand-alone books that cover topics from historical knowledge to economics to government and the world. Social studies is also taught using real-world situations such as learning about holidays and festivals through the holiday season and government around Presidents Day. This type of learning can cover many standards at once including historical knowledge, chronological thinking, foundation of government, and structure and functions of government. Social studies is also included in other avenues, such as drama (Expo), music, readers theater, and art. The purpose of the Civics course is to introduce the fundamentals of the American government and how it affects the students' life. Students study the creation of our lawmaking system by examining significant founding documents, people, and events that have shaped our government. Students evaluate our laws, how they are made and enforced, and how and why our government works for the people. Students will understand their rights and responsibilities as students and young people in the United States. The class engages in meaningful conversations concerning our obligations as productive members of society, and how we can contribute to our own community. Through debate, simulation, research, reflections, and fun activities, students develop critical thinking and valuable communication skills. Ultimately, the goal of this course is to help young people make intelligent and reasoned decisions for the common good as citizens of a diverse, democratic society in an interdependent world.

In order to assess a student's understanding of the material taught, both summative and formative assessments are given. Formative assessments are made almost daily during teaching, through class participation, feedback, or having students draw or write to explain the main point of the lesson and show understanding of the topic. Students will work in groups discussing the information learned with peers and then with the teacher. Students may also be asked to write a report or create a project to show understanding. Summative assessments are given when a unit is completed.

1e. For schools that serve grades 7-12:

We support college readiness in our middle school years of grades seven and eight by teaching a career guidance module in 8th grade. Students are exposed to different career paths and gain knowledge about the expectations, skills, and training required by various careers. They also have the opportunity to develop their own career plan and outline the steps needed to achieve it. This module is incorporated into their A.C.C.E.L.L. program. We also offer an accelerated math program to help students take college-level math once they are in high school. In addition, college readiness is embedded into our middle school math program, by teaching about financial literacy and how a college degree can help students to achieve their goals. Throughout middle school, students are encouraged to develop entrepreneurship skills and leadership by participating in and running bi-annual academic-focused expos. Student-driven activities are at the heart of our curriculum program.

1f. For schools that offer preschool for three- and/or four-year old students:

2. Other Curriculum Areas:

2a. Arts (visual and/or performing)

Art is included in our STEAM course. All grades participate twice a week. Student artwork is displayed yearly at city hall. Students also compete at the Trashformations Art and Recycling Show. Trashformations is a judged student art show and competition, designed to increase waste reduction and recycling awareness. It is also an opportunity to increase public engagement and discussion about reshaping perceptions of “trash” into valuable, reusable commodities. All artwork entered in the contest must be comprised of 70% or more repurposed, salvaged, upcycled, used, recycled, or discarded materials. Art Expos are also opportunities for students to showcase their art to parents and the community.

2b. Physical education/health/nutrition

The goal of our physical education program is for our students to enjoy themselves while exercising and instill in them a positive outlook on being physically active, that will remain with them throughout their lives. We are very fortunate that our school is located in beautiful North Central Florida and our school campus is surrounded by natural beauty. These surroundings are a perfect setting for our PE program. ALA offers PE as a year-long course for all students. In this class students learn a wide variety of games which include games that develop skills like running, jumping, balancing, throwing, and catching. Many of our games are unique to our school and are played with tremendous enthusiasm. Not only are physical skills practiced, but other important life skills are taught and encouraged such as sportsmanship. For example, any time that a competitive game is played the children are taught “team sports are just for fun.” In addition to PE class, students are able to play daily at recess after eating our award-winning lunch meal. Healthy meals and plenty of outdoor physical activity help students stay healthy and ready to learn.

2c. Foreign language(s), if offered (if not offered, leave blank)

2d. Technology/library/media

Reading is an important activity at our school. Students have a daily uninterrupted silent reading period to read books of their choosing. Starting in third grade, students also take a quiz on their book with ReadNQuiz, adding points toward their quarterly reading goal, and contributing toward their ELA grade. Often, students pull out their books to read when they finish an assignment early. Every classroom is equipped with a class library of challenging and engaging reading materials. Students, parents and teachers collaborate every semester to select new reading materials that are added to classroom libraries through Scholastic materials and the Annual Book Fair.

Technology is incorporated in every classroom with a one-to-one Chromebook-to-student ratio. Students enjoy creating digital video projects, Google Slides presentations, and learning how to find reliable sources online through safe research strategies.

2e. Any other interesting or innovative curriculum programs you would like to share

3. Academic Supports

3a. Students performing below grade level:

For students who are performing below grade level in reading and other core subjects, we provide daily intensive reading classes with a reading specialist. To determine placement, students are administered a set of core reading assessments in phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, we examine students' previous year's standardized test scores and classroom performance. This assessment data provides a baseline of student reading skills and helps identify specific strengths and areas of need for each individual. To monitor student progress, the same reading tests are administered multiple times a year. Classroom performance is similarly examined throughout the year. Instruction and intervention are regularly evaluated for their effectiveness and relevance and are adjusted as needed. Student progress in reading skills is further monitored through a monthly ISIP (Istation Indicators of Progress) Reading assessment. Intervention is provided in small groups, with instruction tailored to fit individual needs and adjustments made so that each student is challenged but not overwhelmed. Instructional resources include Heggerty Phonemic and Phonological Awareness Curriculum, Benchmark Advance, and UFLI. (University of Florida Literacy Institute) visuals, manipulatives, and kinesthetic activities are used to build and solidify knowledge. Games help students learn in a fun way, while timely, supportive feedback helps students recognize errors and acknowledge their successes. To encourage students to take accountability for their learning, graphs of their progress are colored in by the students after each fluency assessment. Concepts are regularly reviewed. For example, some students in higher grades may still need phonics support, while others mostly need help with comprehension. The interventionist works with each student according to his or her needs, so while one student is doing independent work that they have first been guided in, the interventionist assists another student in practicing syllabication or finding evidence in a text. Each student gets time and support. Timely supportive feedback is important to help the students recognize errors and to acknowledge successes. For students who are performing below grade level in math, targeted math intervention is provided in the form of one-to-one or small group instruction. Computer-based programs IXL, Reflex Math, and Khan Academy are also used for instruction, practice, and assessment. Student performance is regularly examined, evaluated, and the data used to guide instruction and intervention. Students often use manipulatives or draw pictures to help them solve math problems.

3b. Students performing above grade level:

For students who are performing above grade level in reading and other core subjects, we offer advanced courses and provide individualized differentiated instruction in the classroom. To determine placement, students are administered a set of core reading assessments in phonemic and phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. In addition, we examine students' previous year's standardized test scores and classroom performance. This assessment data provides a baseline of student reading skills and helps identify specific strengths and areas of need for each individual. To monitor student progress, the same reading tests are administered multiple times a year. Classroom performance is similarly examined throughout the year. Instruction and intervention are regularly evaluated for their effectiveness and relevance and are adjusted as needed. Student progress in reading skills is further monitored through a monthly ISIP Reading assessment. Instructional resources include Heggerty Phonemic and Phonological Awareness Curriculum, Benchmark Advance, and UFLI. visuals, manipulatives, and kinesthetic activities are used to build and provide challenges. Advanced courses are offered for all subjects. Students in eighth grade can take Algebra 1 Honors or Geometry Honors. Computer-based programs IXL, Reflex Math, and Khan Academy are also used for instruction, practice, and assessment. Student performance is regularly examined, evaluated, and the data used to guide instruction.

3c. Students with disabilities:

We assist students with disabilities in getting what they need to perform in the school setting and work effectively towards their potential. This includes helping students get a 504 plan, meeting to discuss and evaluate student IEPs (Individualized Education Programs), and monitoring student progress toward their goals. General education teachers, special education teachers, and professionals, such as a school psychologist, social worker, speech therapist, and occupational therapist who work with students with disabilities at our school, use evidence-based strategies as well as intensive strategies and supports to help meet the needs of individual children. Students are provided accommodations according to their specific needs, and data from student performance, as well as teacher observation, drives decision-making about instruction and strategies to help students improve in all areas of their lives. Students are actively involved in monitoring their own progress and working to achieve their goals. Some students need text read aloud to them while others need extra time to complete assignments. Assignments may be broken into smaller chunks if the assignment in its entirety is overwhelming. Respectful, appreciative relationships between students, parents, teachers, and professionals make it easier for students with disabilities to apply themselves with determination and vigor, so this is an important part of our school culture.

3d. English Language Learners:

We determine which students require English Language support by administering the IPT (oral language proficiency test) screener to students whose parents indicate that they speak another language at home, as shown on their Home Language Survey. If the screener indicates that the student is not yet a fluent English speaker (KG-Grade 2) and/or a fluent English reader or writer (Grades 3-8), he or she is placed in our ELL program and is assessed yearly with the ACCESS for ELLs test. The test assesses their language skills in listening, reading, writing, and speaking in English. Based on their performance, students may continue in the ELL program the next year or may be eligible to exit. Teachers with English Language Learners in their classroom support them by speaking clearly and slowly, repeating directions, giving examples, using visuals and realia to illustrate points, and by arranging for group work and partner work. Teachers also give ELLs a chance to access materials before the rest of the class, including articles, videos, and books. They listen attentively to the students and avoid judging the content of what they are trying to say based on their delivery (English language skills). On classroom assessments, teachers examine whether poor performance resulted from lack of English language understanding or of the knowledge/skill being assessed.

3e. Other populations, if a special program or intervention is offered:

PART V – SCHOOL CLIMATE AND CULTURE

1. Engaging Students:

When we ask parents what they love most about our school, one of the first things they say is the small family feel. Our school's small size has a big impact on how we teach, learn, and play. We are much smaller than the average public school, having less than 200 students from grades K-8. ALA is located on five acres in the countryside. This allows us to have lots of space for recess, soccer fields, basketball courts, archery, and playgrounds. We also have a section of the campus that we call the Serenity Garden. This is a quiet and serene space where students can go to relax and read under a two hundred year old oak tree. This is separate from our Permaculture Garden area. Our small classroom sizes combined with our large outdoor campus create a safe and nurturing space where we focus on healthy relationships, strong bonds between students and teachers, and achieve better academic results. By offering grades K-8 in one unique educational setting, we provide continuity of relationships between students and teachers over a student's entire academic career, which can greatly benefit a child's education. ALA also has an award-winning Food Service Program. We believe that healthy meals help to keep students and staff happy. ALA received the National Golden Carrot award for Healthy School Lunches given by the Physician's Committee.

2. Engaging Families and Community:

Students and staff host families several times throughout the year for events such as our expos. Expo themes vary every year, for example, we may have a STEAM expo where students will share with parents the lab projects that they've been working on. At Art Expos, student docents will take parents on tours of the art projects created. Community Expos invite parents to put up a booth to highlight their businesses and talents while students show off their talents on stage or set up booths that they have worked on in their entrepreneurship club. There is a parent involvement component to every event that occurs at school. For example during Family Literacy Night, parents are taught fun literacy games to play with their children and given tips on how to support their children's education. ALA is able to have active and engaged parent participation by hosting multiple family events and having many volunteer opportunities through our PTO.

3. Creating Professional Culture:

Teachers are active in the weekly staff meetings sharing successes and resources. In addition to ACIIS for professional development, teachers decide as a group what professional development to focus on during weekly staff meetings. Free and open communication between administration and teachers allows for teachers to share ideas and receive support throughout the school year. Teachers at ALA are encouraged and supported to find creative ways to supplement the school curriculum in ways that are fun and engaging for students and teachers. This provides autonomy to teachers and utilizes their innate propensities and strengths, and gives each classroom a diverse approach while still retaining consistent structure and standards for students. The average number of years that teachers have been teaching at ALA is over ten years.

4. School Leadership:

Teachers are the true leaders of the school. Teachers are given and encouraged to have freedom in the classroom. The staff of ALA recognizes the importance of our role in our community. Therefore the staff has an important voice in the direction of the school. Teachers participate during new staff interviews and opinions are highly valued. Having only one class per grade allows teachers to share students' strengths and individualized plans as they graduate from one class to the next. Staff meetings are held weekly to discuss concerns, provide support, and facilitate professional development. These meetings allow teachers to be familiar with what is happening in every classroom of the school. Teachers are given time to highlight successes that they've had in the classroom. These weekly meetings allow teachers to support each other and to take ownership of the events that occur at the school. For example, every year the 8th grade class challenges the teachers to a teacher vs student soccer game. It is a whole school event. Students from all grades watch and cheer. They learn about sportsmanship and positive cheering. Eighth graders organize a

concession stand from start to finish to raise money for their end-of-the-year field trip and learn how expenses impact net income. No matter the situation, teachers take time to find out what is important to students and how to make it a learning opportunity. Teachers provide support for students even as they advance into higher grade levels through these collaborative meetings.

5. Culturally Responsive Teaching and Learning:

ALA is a Title I school. Teachers create individualized support plans that include sensitivity to socio-economic situations to facilitate students' need for uniforms, shoes, school supplies, food for home over the weekend, and enrichment opportunities such as field trips. One of our most engaging expos is our Multicultural Expo. Students showcase or perform songs, dances, skits, or presentations from a variety of cultures from around the world. Through a partnership with the University of Florida, we periodically host student teachers from other countries that will share customs and traditions with our students.

PART VI - STRATEGY FOR EXCELLENCE

While multiple strategies are implemented to ensure the success of every student that attends the Alachua Learning Academy, all of our strategies are born from one instrumental feature, the positive school culture for the staff. This staff culture naturally creates a positive student culture. School leadership strives to ensure that staff has the support they need in both their personal and professional lives. Teachers regularly visit the school office to share their new ideas with the administration which practices an open door policy providing teachers with support whenever needed. Teachers play an important role in a lot of the decisions for the school. For example, teachers are an active part of the interview process for new teachers. This gives teachers a feeling of ownership and are invested in the success of the school. Every teacher and staff member strives to create a working environment that stimulates creativity and supports the exploration of new ideas. Teachers are given autonomy, flexibility, and support. This creates self-directed, collaborative, and invested staff members. When you come to our school, you'll see teachers from different grade levels, sitting and eating together, having enthusiastic conversations about their students and the curriculum. Weekly staff meetings give staff the opportunity to further collaborate and share in the successes that have happened in the classroom in the last week. As a result, ALA is able to retain staff for a long period of time. The average length of teacher employment is over 10 years.