

K-12 School: William "Bill" T. Wylie VALUED Lives Award for School Excellence in Diversity

Application Date: April 24, 2013

School Information:

School Name: Lead Academy Public Charter School
School Mailing Address: 29 Ridgeway Drive,
Greenville, SC 29605
Telephone: (864) 770-1790 Fax: (866) 302-1278
School website: www.myleadacademy.com

Contact Person Name: Rodney Johnson
Contact Telephone: (864) 770-1790 or (404) 683-8503 Fax:
(866) 302-1278
Contact Email: rjohnson@myleadacademy.com

Name of person completing this form: H. Paul Thompson & Rodney Johnson
Address: 29 Ridgeway Drive, Greenville, SC 29605
Telephone: (864) 631-3912 Email: pthompson@myleadacademy.com

Diversity Leadership Contributions/Activities:

Provide a brief statement of the diversity contributions and specific activities of the school, with supporting documentation.

Lead Academy Public Charter School works for academic excellence for all students in a diverse environment where all students receive character education. Our three part motto is: "Demanding Excellence, Embracing Diversity, and Modeling Integrity." The board and administration rigorously assesses whether every action and policy we adopt advances one of these goals. Statistically, we have more racial diversity than either of the other charter middle schools in the district. Our school brochure explicitly states that we embrace ethnic, academic, and socioeconomic diversity. We are convinced that this environment will best prepare students for success in secondary and higher education, and in adulthood. At this point, our 2013-14 enrollment is roughly 50% Black, 30% White, 10% Hispanic, and 10% mixed race children, and we are proud of those numbers.

Discuss the professional development, programs, initiatives, and/or support services provided to students and employees, in order to increase diversity awareness.

K-12 education across the United States is plagued by an achievement gap that exists between impoverished students and their more affluent peers, as well as between Black and Hispanic students and their White counterparts. Our staff has attended trainings and completed book studies about research-based strategies that can assist us in making progress towards minimizing these gaps. More importantly, we regularly discuss the needs of our student body through organic dialogue during weekly staff meetings. Our goal has always been to create an environment of high expectations that pushes every child to reach their full academic potential, regardless of background or circumstance (or race, creed, culture...), while honoring the differences among our students that make them unique.

Identify the school's previous accomplishments, achievements, and/or honors related to diversity endeavors.

In only our second year of operation, 2011-2012, Lead Academy became one of only three middle schools in Greenville County to receive recognition as a Palmetto Gold and Silver award winner for making substantial progress in closing the achievement gap between disaggregated groups. Receiving this award requires that historically lower-achieving groups of students must make faster gains in achievement growth over time than historically higher-achieving groups of students in order for them to "catch up." In fact, our students posted the 11th highest growth index in the state of South Carolina. This puts our students' growth during the 2011-2012 school year in the top 2% of all elementary and middle schools in the state. Lead Academy's board of directors is also diverse, representing a variety of income-levels, occupations, and races. We anticipate that our new board, which will sit in July 2013, will contain roughly equal numbers of White, Black, and Hispanic members.

Describe how the school's diversity initiatives have impacted the school environment.

One of our school's slogans reads, "Not a building... a culture." Our staff employs a strong focus on school culture in order to minimize the effects of differences that may divide our school community, while capitalizing on the contributions of students from varying backgrounds that feed into a positive school culture. We require a signed "Commitment to Excellence" agreement during enrollment, student uniforms for all grade levels, and have a common expectation for character and community service (20 hours per school year). These practices allow us to celebrate our differences while maintaining a commitment to key initiatives that bring us together.

From a parent's perspective: "As my son neared middle school age, it became increasingly important to me that he learn in a culture of diversity where leadership, service to others and personal accountability matter. In Lead Academy, I found that... and more. At Lead, Andrew has acquired the skills necessary to study and learn. He has learned to collaborate on assignments, working elbow to elbow with children from all different ethnicities, abilities, and socioeconomic backgrounds. He takes great pride in his academic accomplishments and cheers the accomplishments of others. I am grateful for the opportunities Lead provides for my son, and for Lead's commitment to the culture of diversity in learning. "

Provide a brief description of the sustainability of your school's diversity initiatives including future long term plans.

The Board of Directors of Lead Academy has contracted with a Hispanic-owned marketing company to develop a brand and message that will reach a diverse audience and grow our school to the next level. Through this branding we intend to present Lead Academy to the Greenville community as a school where students from every demographic have the resources they need to excel. As our reputation for diversity and academic excellence becomes more clearly established, we anticipate being able to continuously enroll a student body which is completely representative of the Greenville community.

Additional comments, information or supporting documentation

Attached: Greenville Online Article (Palmetto Gold & Silver), 2012 Report Card, 2012 State Growth Index, Enrollment by Zip Code

References

Name: Jennifer Foster – Parent & Board Member

Address: 6 Criterion Drive, Simpsonville, SC 29681

Telephone: (864) 320-3230; Email: jmay6@icloud.com

Name Travis Durham – Board Member

Address: 302 South Orchard Farms Avenue, Simpsonville, SC 29681

Telephone: (828) 702-2625; Email: tra.durham@yahoo.com

<http://www.greenvilleonline.com/article/20130325/NEWS/303250040/>

Greenville, Pickens schools earn Palmetto Gold and Silver awards

Written by Ron Barnett Staff writer

greenvilleonline.com

Sixty-seven schools in Greenville County and 17 in Pickens County were named winners of Palmetto Gold and Silver Awards today by the state Education Oversight Committee.

Schools earn the honor based on their overall academic performance or by raising the achievement levels of traditionally under-performing students. Statewide, 662 schools won the awards, according to the state Department of Education. Some schools won awards in both categories.

Greenville County schools winning Gold awards for overall performance are:

Augusta Circle Elementary, Beck Academy, Bell's Crossing Elementary, Bethel Elementary, Blue Ridge High, Blythe Academy, Brashier Middle College Charter, Brushy Creek Elementary, Bryson Elementary, Bryson Middle, Buena Vista Elementary, Cherrydale Elementary, Donaldson Career Center, Eastside High, Gateway Elementary, Golden Strip Career Technology Center, Greenville Middle Academy, Greenville Technical Charter, Greer Middle College Charter, Hillcrest Middle, J. Harley Bonds Career Center, J.L. Mann High, Langston Charter Middle, **Lead Academy**, League Academy, Mauldin High, Mauldin Middle, Mitchell Road Elementary, Oakview Elementary, Paris Elementary, Pelham Road Elementary, Plain Elementary, Ralph Chandler Middle, Riverside High, Riverside Middle, Rudolph Gordon Elementary, Sara Collins Elementary, Simpsonville Elementary, Skyland Elementary, Sterling (elementary and middle), Stone Academy, Summit Drive Elementary, Wade Hampton High, Westcliffe Elementary and Woodland Elementary.

Greenville County schools winning Silver awards for overall performance are:

Berea High, Blue Ridge Middle, Chandler Creek Elementary, Duncan Chapel Elementary, Ellen Woodside Elementary, Fork Shoals Elementary, Fountain Inn Elementary, Greer Middle, Mauldin Elementary, Monaview Elementary, Mountain View Elementary, Northwest Middle, Northwood Middle, Sevier Middle, Taylors Elementary, Thomas E. Kerns Elementary, Welcome Elementary, Woodmont High and Woodmont Middle.

Greenville County schools winning awards for **closing the gap** are:

A.J. Whittenberg Elementary, Gold; Beck Academy, Gold; Blythe Academy, Gold; Brushy Creek Elementary, Silver; Bryson Elementary, Silver; Buena Vista Elementary, Gold; Cherrydale Elementary, Silver; Crestview Elementary, Silver; Langston Charter Middle, Gold; **Lead Academy, Silver**; Oakview Elementary, Gold; Robert E. Cashion Elementary, Silver; Rudolph Gordon Elementary, Silver; Sara Collins, Silver; Simpsonville Elementary, Silver; Skyland Elementary, Silver; Sterling (elementary and middle), Silver; Taylors Elementary, Silver; Westcliffe Elementary, Silver; Woodland Elementary, Gold.

Pickens County schools winning Gold awards for overall achievement were:

Ambler Elementary, Clemson Elementary, Crosswell Elementary, D.W. Daniel High, Dacusville Middle, Easley High, East End Elementary, Forest Acres Elementary, Holly Springs Elementary, Liberty Elementary, Liberty Middle, Pickens County Career and Technology Center, R.C. Edwards Middle, Six Mile Elementary and West End Elementary.

Pickens Elementary and Richard H. Gettys Middle won Silver awards for overall achievement.

Pickens County schools winning awards for closing the gap were:

Clemson Elementary, Gold; Crosswell Elementary, Silver; Holly Springs Elementary, Silver; Liberty Elementary, Silver; and Six Mile Elementary, Silver.



SC Annual School Report Card Summary

Lead Academy
 Greenville County School District
 Grades: 5-7 Enrollment: 121
 Principal: Rodney Johnson
 Superintendent: Mr. Burke Royster
 Board Chair: Mr. Roger Meek

PERFORMANCE

Comprehensive detail, including definitions of ratings, performance criteria, and explanations of status, is available on www.ed.sc.gov and www.eoc.sc.gov as well as school and school district websites. Printed versions are available from school districts upon request.

YEAR	ABSOLUTE RATING	GROWTH RATING	PALMETTO GOLD AND SILVER AWARD		ESEA/FEDERAL ACCOUNTABILITY RATING SYSTEM	
			General Performance	Closing the Gap	ESEA Grade	Accountability Indicator
2012	Average	Excellent	TBD	TBD	B	N/A
2011	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Not Met	N/A
2010	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

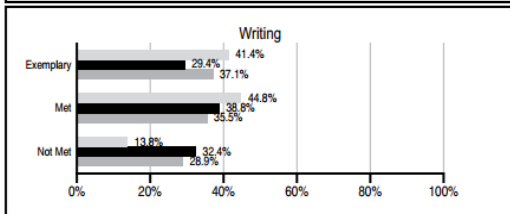
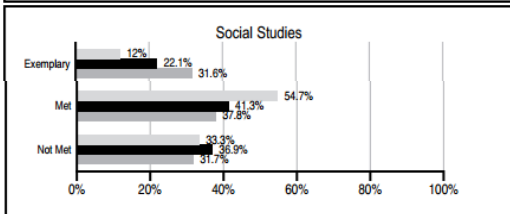
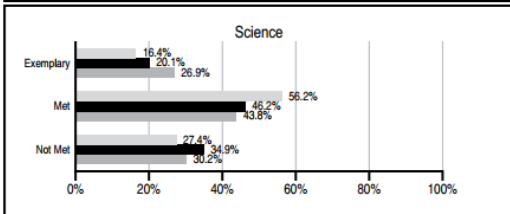
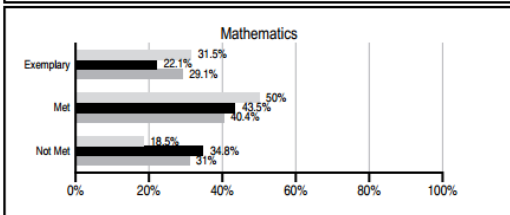
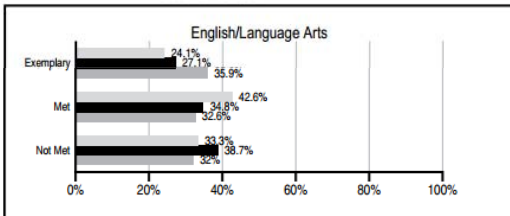
ABSOLUTE RATINGS OF MIDDLE SCHOOLS WITH STUDENTS LIKE OURS*

EXCELLENT	GOOD	AVERAGE	BELOW AVERAGE	AT-RISK
0	4	44	7	2

* Ratings are calculated with data available by 11/07/2012. Schools with Students Like Ours are Middle Schools with Poverty Indices of no more than 5% above or below the index for this school.

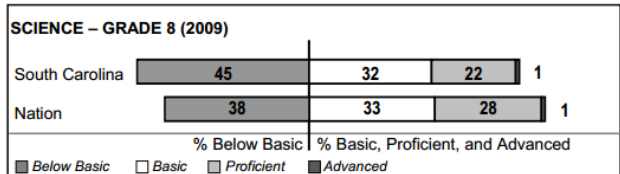
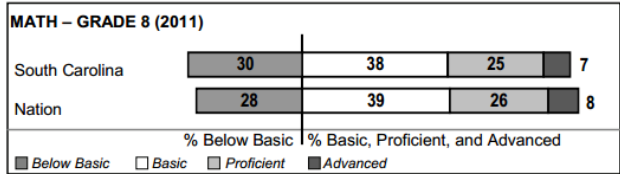
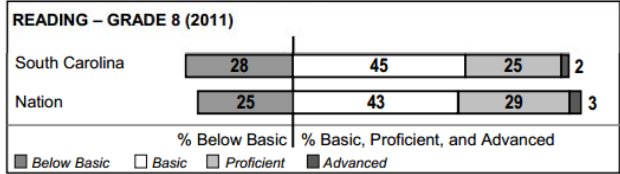
PASS PERFORMANCE

Our School Middle Schools with Students Like Ours Middle schools statewide



NAEP PERFORMANCE*

* Performance reported for SC and nation, data not available at school level. Percentages at NAEP Achievement Levels.



END OF COURSE TESTS - 2012

% of students scoring 70 or above on:	Our Middle School	Middle Schools with Students Like Ours
Algebra 1/Math for the Technologies 2	N/A	95.8
English 1	N/A	91.9
Physical Science	N/A	N/A
US History and the Constitution	N/A	N/A
All Subjects	N/A	95.8

SC PERFORMANCE VISION

By 2020 all students will graduate with the knowledge and skills necessary to compete successfully in the global economy, participate in a democratic society and contribute positively as members of families and communities.

Abbreviations Key

N/A Not Applicable N/AV Not Available N/C Not Collected N/R Not Reported I/S Insufficient Sample TBD To be determined

Lead Academy [Greenville County School District]

SCHOOL PROFILE

	Our School	Change from Last Year	Middle Schools with Students Like Ours	Median Middle School
Students (n=121)				
Students enrolled in high school credit courses (grades 7 & 8)	0.0%	N/R	19.6%	22.9%
Retention rate	1.8%	N/A	1.0%	0.8%
Attendance rate	96.7%	N/A	95.9%	96.2%
Served by gifted and talented program	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV
With disabilities other than speech	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV
Older than usual for grade	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV
Out-of-school suspensions or expulsions for violent and/or criminal offenses	0.0%	N/R	0.5%	0.5%
Annual dropout rate	0.0%	N/A	0.0%	0.0%
Teachers (n=10)				
Teachers with advanced degrees	55.6%	N/A	60.7%	61.3%
Continuing contract teachers	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV	N/AV
Teachers returning from previous year	N/A	N/A	84.9%	86.7%
Teacher attendance rate	98.3%	N/R	94.8%	95.2%
Average teacher salary*	\$39,417	I/S	\$45,551	\$46,422
Classes not taught by highly qualified teachers	19.4%	N/A	1.8%	2.0%
Professional development days/teacher	9.6 days	N/R	10.5 days	10.0 days
School				
Principal's years at school	2.0	N/R	5.0	4.0
Student-teacher ratio in core subjects	20.7 to 1	N/R	22.9 to 1	22.0 to 1
Prime instructional time	94.6%	N/R	89.3%	90.1%
Opportunities in the arts	Fair	N/R	Good	Good
SACS accreditation	Yes	N/R	Yes	Yes
Parents attending conferences	100.0%	N/R	98.3%	98.8%
Character development program	Good	N/R	Good	Good
Dollars spent per pupil**	\$9,250	N/A	\$7,377	\$7,245
Percent of expenditures for instruction**	61.0%	N/A	62.4%	63.1%
Percent of expenditures for teacher salaries**	37.1%	N/A	59.0%	60.9%
ESEA composite index score	84.5	N/A	84.9	88.1

* Length of contract = 185+ days.
 ** Prior year audited financial data available.

REPORT OF PRINCIPAL AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT COUNCIL

Lead Academy was founded on the belief that every child can achieve at an exceptionally high level, regardless of background or circumstance. Our school community made strides towards achieving this reality during our second year and we are excited to continue the pursuit. Our commitment to realize this goal is evident as students and staff all participate in a longer school day, Saturday School once each month, and a whole-school summer session. We set high expectations for our students through our focus on the three principles that guide our school culture: be nice; work hard; serve well. In this current year, our school adopted "Demanding Excellence, Embracing Diversity, and Modeling Integrity" as a framework to refine and execute our mission. During our second year of operation, our educational program expanded significantly. We added a magnificent band program, along with club sports and other club offerings including FLL Robotics. In addition to these new extracurricular offerings, our students continued to work hard in the classroom and reach outstanding levels of academic growth. We bested the national average for growth on the Measures of Academic Progress test in five out of six categories and posted noteworthy gains on the math and science sections of the PASS test. We attribute this to the work ethic of our students and staff, along with focused student development that uses data to meet the needs of each student as an individual. We plan to use these same techniques to spotlight our language arts and social studies curricula and boost student achievement in these areas. Lead Academy students spent time in their local community. We participated in the Spinx Run and Reedy River Run, visited local attractions and held events out in the community. We also remained true to our mission of serving our community with each student performing a minimum of 20 hours of community service with organizations such as the Greenville Humane Society, the Red Cross, and various neighborhood organizations. We plan to move to a new location for the 2012-2013 school year. Our school community is excited to have a more established home that will, without a doubt, positively impact our learning environment.

Rodney Johnson, Principal
 Dr. H. Paul Thompson, Jr., Board Chairperson

EVALUATION RESULTS

	Teachers	Students*	Parents*
Number of surveys returned	8	27	24
Percent satisfied with learning environment	100.0%	85.2%	95.8%
Percent satisfied with social and physical environment	100.0%	84.6%	95.8%
Percent satisfied with school-home relations	87.5%	80.8%	87.5%

*Only students at the highest middle school grade level at this school and their parents were included.

Top 15 (out of 932) Growth Index Ratings in South Carolina

DISTRICT	SCHOOL	GROWTH RATING 2012	GROWTH INDEX 2012
SPARTANBURG 2	RAINBOW LAKE MIDDLE	Excellent	101.95
RICHLAND 1	CAROLINA SCHOOL FOR INQUIRY	Excellent	101.77
SC PUBLIC CHARTER	SPARTANBURG CHARTER SCHOOL	Excellent	101.67
CHARLESTON	BUIST ACADEMY	Excellent	101.41
CHARLESTON	EAST COOPER MONTESSORI CHARTER	Excellent	101.38
RICHLAND 1	BROCKMAN ELEMENTARY	Excellent	101.22
CHARLESTON	THOMAS C. CARIO MIDDLE	Excellent	101.13
DORCHESTER 2	R H ROLLINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL OF	Excellent	101.01
ANDERSON 5	SOUTHWOOD ACADEMY FOR THE ARTS	Excellent	101.01
LEXINGTON 5	CHAPIN MIDDLE	Excellent	101
GREENVILLE	LEAD ACADEMY CHARTER	Excellent	100.98
HAMPTON 1	BRUNSON ELEMENTARY	Excellent	100.67
HORRY	ST JAMES MIDDLE	Excellent	100.61
YORK 4	SPRINGFIELD MIDDLE	Excellent	100.58
LEXINGTON 5	CROSSROADS MIDDLE	Excellent	100.43

Student Enrollment by Zip Code

Zip	# of students
29690	5
29690	5
29687	6
29681	15
29680	8
29673	4

Zip	# of students
29671	1
29669	1
29662	9
29651	3
29650	1
29644	1

Zip	# of students
29617	14
29615	7
29611	12
29609	7
29607	13
29605	26