A.3 Program of Instruction

A. Curriculum and Alignment to Educational Philosophy

The world is full of knowledge, and to the Classical mind, all knowledge is interrelated. Trying to find the links between fields of study can be a mind-twisting task. A classical education meets this challenge by taking history as its organizing outline - beginning with the ancients and progressing forward to the moderns in history, science, literature, art and music. Therefore, subject areas of our Classical educational program are linked to history studies and taught around the time period under study in history.[1] A Classical educational program with a Charlotte Mason influence has a strong curricular focus on the academic foundation of grammar, history, and mathematics. Curriculum maps will be centered upon a limited number of essential learning outcomes for each content area, approximately 20 per area of content for the year, in order to create a guaranteed and viable curriculum.

The teacher is instrumental bringing forth the curriculum maps, which are foundational to support scholar learning, by use of scope and sequence documents that connect to the essential learning outcomes through instructional planning that guides instruction and assessment. As scholars delve into the concepts and ideas being covered, the teacher will use pacing guides for the classroom to make instructional decisions that take into consideration differentiated instruction for the essential learning outcomes that may include enrichment and/or intervention activities dependent upon scholars' ability levels, prior knowledge, previous learning experiences and learning style.

English Language Arts

- Kindergarten and 1st grade scholars build a firm foundation in phonemic awareness, and will use Journeys, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and informational texts.
- Explicit instruction of foundational skills ensures mastery of basic reading and decoding skills.
- Grades 2-8 will use living books and whole books in addition to informational texts, appropriate to the grade level that are rich selections of literature. These selections are used for reading skill development, comprehension, vocabulary development, and to instill the love of learning in scholars as they are exposed to the best of literature. We believe in order for our scholars to become the best writers and fluent readers, they need to be exposed to the best from our Western heritage and timeless classics.
- Grades 2-8, the teacher will strive to have the scholars read, or the teacher read aloud, from rich literature selections that are connected to the History unit of study.
- Exemplar texts provided throughout each level offer rich, high-quality literature and give scholars the opportunity for close reading and analysis using full-length trade books.

Sitton Spelling: *Taught at an accelerated level. Kindergarten, for example, will begin with Sitton Spelling 1.*

- Scholars' actively learn spelling skills & concepts for long-term learning and application to many more words.
- Formative assessment will guide instruction and identify words scholars have not yet mastered.

- Accountability of spelling skills through proofreading everyday writing, with a "no excuses" outlook for misspelling assigned words.
- A set core curriculum with opportunities to adapt instruction through teacher choice and optional extension activities.
- Dictated sentences teach scholars to use spelling words in sentences and not in isolation.

Shurley English: A main reason Shurley English was chosen was its use of chants and jingles in aiding scholars in memorizing. This is in line with our philosophy on the ability of young children to memorize basic facts and fundamental rules, and to absorb information and knowledge more easily at a younger age.

- Utilizes all learning styles: visual, auditory, kinesthetic.
- Never teaches isolated concepts.
- Incorporates scholar/teacher interaction.
- Uses repetition to attain mastery.
- Challenges accelerated scholars.
- Promotes higher-order thinking.
- Provides the connection between grammar skills, writing and effective speaking.

Handwriting: Handwriting is introduced in kindergarten and developed throughout grades 1-6. Cursive writing is introduced beginning in grade 2. Attentiveness to detail, correct formation and overall neatness is emphasized at each grade level.

Saxon Math: No matter how well scholars initially learn a concept, if they are not able to retain their learning, connect it to other concepts and apply it in problem solving situations, they have not reached mastery. Saxon Math is designed to support the long-term mastery and applications that will make a difference during testing, future education and careers. *Taught at an accelerated level. Kindergarten, for example, will begin with Saxon Math 1.*

- Concepts are taught in small, approachable increments.
- Increments are spread throughout the year, building in complexity, so that by the end of the year scholars have reached deep understanding and fluency.
- Practice and assessments include concepts from the most recent lessons as well as from earlier in the school year ensuring scholars retain all concepts and can make connections between them.
- Saxon math's incremental, distributed pedagogy builds upon concepts from the Common Core domain throughout the year, articulating them over time. This allows scholars to gain deep understanding and long-term mastery of the Common Core State Standards.

History/Geography: It is our contention that history should be the core of the curriculum, especially for grades 4-8. History becomes the unifying "discipline of choice" due to our belief that all aspects of life fit under its broad sweep.

Scholars read a "living" biography or two about a key person in the time period being studied. Whenever possible, primary sources such as diaries, journals, letters or speeches that the person wrote are used. Scholars research in reference books, but try to use living biographies as the main books. Scholars enter key people's names and events into a Book of Centuries (a copybook for older students), which is like a timeline in a book. History is

taught in sequence in a historical timeline so learning is not fragmented for scholars and therefore makes sense.

- Mapping skills are utilized.
- Scholars memorize geographical and historical data.
- Scholars create Copybooks/Books of Centuries to reflect their unit of study, thus becoming masters of the subject area.
- Scholars recognize how events from the past shape our future.
- The classroom is full of rich resources, biographies, maps, books and artifacts that reflect the unit of study, and are available for use by our scholars as they create their Copybooks/Books of Centuries.

Science: Effective instruction in science will be offered through hands-on experience and observation. Scholars are encouraged to ask questions about how their world works and seek answers, make observations and discuss findings, to be actively engaged in learning about science, technology, engineering and math as they learn to view the world through a scientific lens. Scholars will use the Harcourt's Science *Fusion* series for 7th and 8th grades.

- The teaching of science will be heavily focused on the Socratic method of giving the scholars foundational information and then asking questions that encourage critical thinking and assessment skills.
- The classroom also reflects the unit of study and the bookshelves are rich resources for the scholars to gather their research and collect their data to write their observations in their Copybooks.
- Younger scholars will have the opportunity to solve problems through inquiry, exploration and observation.
- Science experiments are hands-on for student discovery and observation through the active process of investigation.
- A systematic approach to the exploration of science is established through hands-on learning experiences offered by the teacher.

Spanish: Scholars in Kindergarten through grade 2 will participate through in-class instruction of Spanish. Kindergarten is the perfect time to introduce learning of Spanish, for at this age scholars are able to listen and understand, building a foundation enabling scholars to start speaking a second language. Scholars will learn common phrases, colors, numbers and greetings. The curriculum is developed in house.

Latin: Scholars will use *Latin for Children* beginning in grade 3 and continuing through grade 5. *Latin for Children* trains scholars in grammar, vocabulary and English derivatives in a lively, interactive way that is perfectly suited to scholars in the grammar stage. The study of Latin continues through grades 6-8, the logic stage, as scholars delve deeper into the structure and meaning of language. Moving from *Latin for Children* to *Latin Alive* will be a natural progression for our scholars, and research supports will greatly enhance vocabulary, reading and comprehension skills.[2]

Recitations: Each month, beginning in Kindergarten, scholars will have a piece of prose or poetry, a patriotic piece, or other piece that is connected to the curriculum to memorize and recite in front of the class. Proper poise, posture, speech, volume and overall public speaking skills are emphasized.

Technology: Classrooms will be equipped with computers and technology equivalent to having Smart Boards. Teachers are encouraged to incorporate technology into their lesson plans along with allowing their scholars to interact with them by using the technology.

Special Areas: Art, Music, Physical Education: Scholars at Leman Academy of Excellence will participate in a structured art class, music, and physical education classes. Art will have an emphasis on art appreciation. The principles and fundamentals of art will also be taught. Music will have an emphasis on music appreciation, and elements of music will be taught.

Selected Approach to the Target Population

By providing a Classical, rigorous, student-centered approach to education, our scholars are engaged in the learning process. The most pressing need of our target population is for improving student achievement in writing, followed by math and reading. Research has shown one of the essential features of Shurley English, the ongoing use of feedback through formative assessments, providing scholars with information about how well they are doing on a regular basis has shown to increase scholar achievement from 7 to 37 percent.[3] Additionally, the Saxon math program, by teaching concepts in small, approachable increments spread throughout the school year supports long-term mastery of those concepts. By teaching at an accelerated level, beginning with Saxon Math 1 in Kindergarten, I have witnessed as an administrator, teacher and parent high scholar achievement and mastery of concepts. Finally, a course of study that includes Latin can make significant scholar improvement by developing their reading skills, vocabulary skills, study skills, math problem solving abilities, as well as attain higher test scores.[4]

B. Methods of Instruction

Leman Academy of Excellence will emphasize a return to our Classical roots that adheres to an ancient view of learning and yet will use traditional teaching methods that promote critical thinking, logical analysis and a love for learning. Classical education is unique in that it seeks to faithfully restore the most proven form of education ever developed, and the classical view of education holds that human beings are thinking creatures. Humans live by their intelligence, and they want to know things.[5]

Charlotte Mason's educational approach and her influence on Leman Academy of Excellence is based on Miss Mason's firm belief that the child is a person and we must educate that whole person, not just his/her mind. Understandably, Miss Mason advocated a rich, comprehensive, connected curriculum for all scholars, not merely to "educate" them, but also to guide them in the development of character and cultivate in them a lifelong love of learning. Miss Mason planned each school day so that the more demanding academic subjects were placed in the morning while the afternoon would consist of physical education, creative work in art, music study and song, along with any other practical activities.[6]

Therefore, our foundational educational program is two-fold: it includes the Classical educational approach and curriculum that is based on academic rigor along with the belief of Charlotte Mason that children are young people who observe everything around them, picking up language at an astounding rate, learning new things because they are curious and love the joy of discovery. Both the Classical approach and Miss Mason recognize the importance of Language and Latin for producing great thinking and expression. Finally, what makes the Classical approach so effective is based on the Trivium, that no matter how

the scholar learns, he or she goes through three different phases, all of which is spoken about in greater detail in the Educational Philosophy section.[7]

Teaching Methods

1. **Direct Instruction Teaching Model:** The teacher defines and teaches a concept, models the learning process, guides scholars through its application, and arranges for extended guided practice until mastery is achieved.
2. **Structured-Discovery Learning:** A model that teachers will select when they want scholars actively participating in the learning process and to teach a particular academic content knowledge. Teachers may select this model: 1) to increase scholar motivation - challenge of "making a discovery" 2) to promote higher-level thinking 3) to promote critical thinking skills 4) to enhance retention.[8]
3. **Socratic Teaching Method:** In Socratic teaching the focus is giving scholars questions, not answers. The teacher models an inquiring, probing mind by continually probing into the subject with questions.[9]
4. **Charlotte Mason Methods:** Charlotte Mason's methods are looked upon as simple but more importantly very effective. Method implies two things – an objective based on content and a standard and the step-by-step process you take to reach that objective. With that vision in mind, the process of the method becomes natural. Educating the scholar will become effortless because our teachers will be using every circumstance in the child's life as a tool toward attaining that goal. Everything the young person does, whether it's eat, play, work, learn, etc… will be seen as a way to educating the whole child in obtaining that objective in a very natural way.[10] The following are four essential methods of Miss Mason's in our educational program:

    a) **Copybook**: Self-created, it provides greater scholar engagement and helps them retain content learned in class. Used as a tool for making cross-curricular connections (e.g., between science & history and language arts). Used sequentially with the history timeline.
    b) **Living Books**: Usually written by one person who has a passion for the subject.
    c) **Narration**: When a teacher asks the scholar to tell back in his own words what he/she just saw, heard or read.
    d) **Nature Study**: Time spent outdoors by scholars to look at various aspects of nature around them and to enter their observations in their nature notebook.

Formative Assessment Strategies

The following are formative assessment strategies that our teachers will use throughout the course of the school year that will provide information for the teacher to adjust and improve their own instructional methods as well as monitor the scholars' progress and learning while they are still happening: discussion, observations, rubric, questioning, partner work, scholar/individual white board work, small group, short quizzes, end-of-unit or chapter tests, end-of-term or semester exams, warm-up to check scholar understanding, closure for summary/reflection of what learned, homework, games, narration, projects, reading assessments, writing samples, nature study notebook, and copybooks.

Differentiated Instruction

Differentiated instruction will occur, as teachers strive to meet the needs of all scholars, through preparation as our teachers plan for and create different assignments, lessons, activities, tasks, etc… within the same unit or lesson to match individual scholar needs. The

differentiation of instruction may include the content of what they are teaching, the process that goes toward the learning of the content, and the outcome (product) or test to match the scholars' needs. Additionally, our teachers will consider differentiation of instruction based on the readiness of the scholars, which includes their ability levels and prior knowledge, their interest, which includes their experience with the content, and their learning profile, which looks at the learning style of the scholar.

Smaller class sizes will help teachers to individualize instruction based on scholars' needs and learning style. Teachers can plan for small group, whole group and individual time (one-on-one instruction) to work with a particular scholar who may need extra instruction, or to enhance and teach concepts above grade level in order to challenge the exceptional scholars. This allows our teachers and the scholars to build meaningful relationships, where scholars see the classroom as a safe place to succeed and fail, as they know they have the support of the teacher to come alongside them and bring them along academically, socially and emotionally. Scholars feel a sense of belonging to the school when teacher and scholar are co-laborers and life-long learners.

Special Education Scholars and English Language Learners

The learning community of Leman Academy of Excellence will consist of scholars with a wide range of learning abilities and special needs. Scholars with special needs will receive the services as outlined in their Individual Education Plan (IEP). Our teachers will work closely with administration, contracted service provider, parents and any IEP team member(s) to ensure that the implementation of an IEP is effective and meets the requirements as stated in the document. Specific training through experts in the field of Special Education will be made available to the faculty and staff of Leman Academy in order to both meet the needs of the special needs scholar and to meet all state and federal laws regarding Special Education.

In accordance with the Arizona Department of Education, scholars who have been identified as second language learners on the Home Language Survey (HLS) take the Arizona English Language Learner Assessment (AZELLA) placement test, which measures scholars' English language proficiency. AZELLA, a standards-based assessment, meets both state and federal requirements to measure scholars' English language proficiency. Scholars' proficiency scores determine appropriate placement for instruction. Scholars who have been placed into an English Language Learner (ELL) program will also take the AZELLA reassessment once per year until they achieve proficiency. Scholars struggling in a mainstream classroom based on a lack of English language proficiency (classroom performance and assessment results shows scholar having difficulties) along with a teacher referral may take an AZELLA Placement Test. If the scholar receives an Overall Proficiency Level below "Proficient" on the AZELLA Placement Test, the scholar shall be transferred into ELL services at the first appropriate opportunity.

C. Assessment Plan

Leman Academy of Excellence will implement a comprehensive assessment plan that includes formative, summative and benchmark assessments to assess each scholars understanding and mastery of skills, identify gaps in scholar learning, as well as measure scholars' progress towards mastery of the Arizona State and Common Core Standards.

As part of an eight-day Orientation and In-service training program for our teachers in July, the administration of Leman Academy of Excellence will include discussion and training related to: academic standards, academic excellence, classroom environment, curriculum maps, curriculum aligned to standards, planning and preparation, lesson implementation with outcomes aligned to standards, best teaching practices, scholar assessment data, various types of assessments, data collection, review and analysis of data to use in instructional decision-making, differentiated instruction, instructional material/resources for differentiated instruction, setting goals in relation to scholar learning and the standards, establishing objectives related to standards, developing action plans, and implementing the plan. Teachers will work individually and in teams according to grade level, as well as with a group of teachers in order to align the curriculum, assessments and standards across grade levels so that they teach a rich, coherent curriculum tied to state standards.

Types of Assessment to be used at Leman Academy of Excellence:

1. **Formative Assessment:** Is a two-fold assessment: at the individual scholar level because it measures how a particular scholar is progressing in the instructional program and identifies where support may be needed; at the classroom level with on-going assessments, reviews and observations used by our teachers to improve their instructional methods in the classroom throughout the school year.
   a) Daily assessment b) Linked to learning experience c) Assesses scholar understanding and mastery of skills d) Data used to modifying instruction

2. **Summative Assessment:** A form of assessment that may be teacher created or provided through purchased curriculum, summative data assessments produce valuable information that is used to make curriculum decisions, direct future instruction, and improve instructional practices.
   a) Summative assessment data are collected through end-of-unit or chapter tests
   b) Summative assessment is used by the teacher as an accountability measure and will be included in the grading process, and they will occur after instruction has taken place every 2-4 weeks, depending on the content area of study
   c) Aligned to content area state standards d) Measures scholar learning relative to state standards at a particular point in time e) Standardized Tests

3. **Benchmark Assessment:** Teachers will use to: 1) measure the achievement of school learning standards and/or Arizona and Common Core State Standards of scholars and 2) provide information that can be used to guide instruction in cyclical fashion.[11] ***Plan to administer 4 Benchmarks using Galileo K-12 Online Instructional Improvement and Instructional Effectiveness System

   a) Measure scholar mastery of standards targeted for instruction, indicating what scholars have accomplished when given appropriate learning opportunities
   b) Predictive of scholar performance on statewide test
   c) Data used at classroom level to support Data-Driven Instruction
   d) Helps teachers with future instructional planning
      *NOTE: Plan to administer 4 Benchmarks using Galileo K-12 Online Instructional Improvement and Instructional Effectiveness System

***In order to accurately determine the mastery of standards and in identifying scholars who may be at risk for not mastering standards, and to improve instructional practices and

make data-driven decisions with valid and reliable data aligned to Arizona and Common Core State Standards and to show progress and overall effectiveness on an ongoing basis, Leman Academy of Excellence is excited to incorporate and has budgeted to include the Galileo K-12 Online Instructional Improvement and Instructional Effectiveness System from Assessment Technology Incorporated (ATI). The Instructional Improvement and Instructional Effectiveness System is comprehensive, standards-based, and research supported.[12]

The curriculum at Leman Academy of Excellence has been carefully chosen to reflect our mission and philosophy. The academic staff will develop and align the curriculum maps, with their sequence of essential learning outcomes, assessments, resources, purchased instructional materials, to Arizona State Standards and Common Core Standards, as these standards serve as the foundation to the subject areas taught and provide the framework to the academic requirements and end of year outcomes for the instructors. We have deliberately chosen curricular programs, resources and materials with our philosophy and the state and common core standards in mind to ensure high scholarly achievement, be rigorous in nature, and encourage scholars to reach their full academic potential. Teachers will submit weekly lesson plans and lesson plans will be determined from the grade level curriculum maps that are aligned to Arizona State and Common Core Standards.

The summative assessments will be created prior to instruction so as to identify both the content and process of learning that represent the identified essential learning outcomes that scholars must learn through the course of the school year. Scholars must score 80% or above to demonstrate mastery on all formative and summative assessments.

For Kindergarten-Grade 6, Leman Academy of Excellence will utilize an early childhood assessment tool called the **DIBELS Next** (**Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills),** a set of procedures and measures for assessing the acquisition of early literacy skills. They are designed to be short (one minute) fluency measures used to regularly monitor the development of early literacy and early reading skills. Our teachers will collaborate not only with one another but also with the home to monitor and communicate a scholar's progress. Scholars will be evaluated quarterly and reports will be given to the home to communicate the progress of their child. However, our faculty and staff are readily available to conference with parents whenever a concern arises.

State Accountability Tests will be given to scholars in 3rd grade through 8th grade and they will be tested in reading (including Stanford 10 reading and language items) and math (including Stanford 10 items). Scholars in 5th, 6th, and 7th grade will also take a writing test, while 4th and 8th grade scholars take a science test.

A.3 Sources

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