



Athlos Academy

JEFFERSON PARISH

— STRATEGIC PLAN —



BACKGROUND

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish is a Charter School located in New Orleans, Louisiana. Its Charter application was approved by the State of Louisiana and the school opened for the school year 2018-2019. The idea behind Athlos Academy is founded on the concept of parental choice in education and developing the whole child beyond academics alone. To succeed in life, students need more than just book smarts.

Students also need instruction in developing a healthy body and a strong character. Ryan Van Alfen, a co-founder of Athlos Academy, said . . . "Children are no longer defined by how they perform in the classroom. It's how they perform in life. How are they going to deal with the challenges that life will inevitably throw at them?" A concept then began to take shape, and after consulting with educational experts, fitness specialists and social-emotional thought leaders, a new school model was born—Athlos. Athlos, derived from the Greek word for "feat" or "contest," revived the classical ideal of balance—balance of mind, body and character.

The "Three Pillars" of mind, body, and character is the foundation of the educational programs provided to students attending Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish—each believed to be of equal importance in the development of the whole child. The "Mission" and "Vision" of Athlos, as hereinafter outlined, is the outgrowth of this new school model. The "Three Pillars" are defined as follows:

PREPARED MIND

The Prepared Mind Pillar is centered on academic programs that will prime students with the knowledge and critical thinking skills they need to excel. The curriculum provides opportunities for students to construct meaningful connections and deeper understanding of core content.

Teachers use instructional strategies that promote curiosity, collaboration, and a culture of positivity. Having a Prepared Mind is as much about learning how to learn and succeed as it is about academic knowledge.

HEALTHY BODY

The Healthy Body Pillar is a belief that athleticism can be taught and that every student can become an athlete. Athlos defines an athlete as an active, fit, and efficient mover. Throughout the week, students of all athletic abilities participate in a professionally developed, age-appropriate fitness curriculum. Athletic performance coaches help develop physically literate students who are equipped with the skills and knowledge to become capable and confident movers.

The Athlos Athletic Curriculum has been carefully developed by combining physical education standards with current sports performance methodology. The result is that athletic activity equips students with a foundation of physical literacy, leading to a lifetime of healthy habits.

PERFORMANCE CHARACTER

The Performance Character Pillar is the foundation of school culture at Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish. Performance Character is integrated into every learning opportunity, allowing students to experience this connection firsthand. Traits like grit, curiosity, social intelligence, and integrity become a lens through which students view their learning as more than just grades but as learning for life.





Athlos Mission

Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish empowers students to live fulfilling, responsible, and successful lives by building on the three foundational pillars of Prepared Mind, Healthy Body, and Performance Character.

Athlos Vision

The daily educational experience includes not only a rich and engaging academic curriculum, but incorporates a healthy lifestyle and development of strong character (referred to as Performance Character by the Athlos community) through participating in its unique Athlos athletic curriculum including physical exercise, good nutrition, and teaching performance character through activities.

Strategic Plan

Utilizing the Academy's Mission and Vision, the Local Governing Board of Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish felt compelled to develop a three-year Strategic Plan for the Academy as more fully outlined below.

Acknowledgements

Special appreciation and gratitude are extended to the Local Governing Board of Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish. This Strategic Plan has been realized through the Board's contributions and commitment to the students of Athlos Academy of Jefferson Parish.

Nick Berg, Board Chair
Ruben Johnson, Vice Chair
Jaquetta Wright, Secretary

Harvey Wier, Treasurer
Elydia Ketchens, Board Member
Tiffany Nelson, Board Member

We are also grateful for the dedicated efforts and collaboration with students, teachers, administrators, support staff, and parents. Without this guidance and valuable input, this document would not have come to fruition.

We Listened

The Strategic Plan incorporates a wealth of information from stakeholders who represent the diverse interests of Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish, as well as an analysis of academic performance data of students, staffing and retention of employees, and enrollment, matriculation, and attendance data. The process began in the Winter of 2021 as we gathered input for the Strategic Plan. A survey was developed and distributed to parents, teachers, and the community. Our ongoing "Listen and Learn Tour" began when we set out to expand the conversations with Athlos Academy stakeholders listed above. We discussed the Mission and Vision of the Academy, together with Core Values, Goals, and the most powerful strategies to boost academic performance. Feedback was gathered through personal interviews, group meetings, and the survey. We will continue to listen across all levels of the organization and focus on continuously improving services to students, staff, and the community.

We Learned

Common themes that surfaced during the Listen and Learn Tour included:

Strengths of the Academy

Strengths of the Academy:

The Three Pillars
Friendly and Caring Staff
The Athletic Curriculum
The Special Education Team

Staff Committed to the Community
Great and Supportive Parents
A Beautiful and Welcoming Facility
Formal Intervention Blocks

Challenges (Areas Needing Improvement)

- Academic Performance Below State Average
- Hiring and Retaining High Quality Teachers
- Retention of Key Leaders/Administrators
- Communication
- Parental Involvement
- Discipline in the Classroom
- Consistent School Wide Behavior Management Practices
- Building the Middle School Grades (both in enrollment and course selections)
- Meaningful and Targeted Professional Learning
- Aligning the Three Pillars within the Curriculum

What was learned validated the goals and objectives and helped to identify the essential elements in the Strategic Plan development.





FOCUS AREA / TEACHER RETENTION

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase the number of returning, highly qualified teachers from year to year.

GOAL

1

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will achieve 90 percent teacher retention over the next 3 years, as follows:

TEACHER RETENTION

SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
78%	80%	85%	90%	90%

IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF. PP. 4-38, 42)

- **Establish a school culture/climate in which all staff are valued, appreciated, trusted, and celebrated.**
 - Develop a lead teacher committee to plan regular staff team-building events, e.g., grade-level sponsored lunches, staff family weekends, or evening events.
 - Continue and expand the staff appreciation program.
 - Develop a system to gather information from staff and teachers to solve “problems” and make changes.
 - Celebrate your hard work often.
- **Empower new and returning teachers to become high-quality educators through meaningful and timely professional learning, mentorship, and leadership support.**
 - Survey teachers and staff annually regarding professional learning needs that will impact and increase student outcomes, both academically and behaviorally.
 - Establish a teacher onboarding and mentoring program (both information from Athlos Home Court and School-specific information) to include instructional materials, assessments, behavior management, school expectations, data-driven instruction, PLC, etc.
 - Provide teachers with personalized coaching cycles that support the growth and development of teaching practice.
 - Conduct regular classroom walk-through and observations providing feedback in alignment with the teacher evaluation process.
 - Establish teacher and parent committees to review, evaluate, and select instructional materials.
- **Support and encourage a “Grow our Own” program to increase staff, from existing staff, with dedicated and committed teachers.**
- **Consider using committees for hiring new members to the Athlos Jefferson Parish staff to promote a collaborative team culture.**
- **Review surveys from leaving teachers with all staff and make changes as appropriate.**
- **Ensure school leaders are hired, mentored, and retained for longer periods of time.**
- **Research the use of bonuses and extra-duty pay for teachers and staff.**
- **Consider implementing a longevity pay plan that pays additional wages or other compensation-based years of service.**
- **Align teachers and staff compensation, benefits, and retirement packages to be competitive with surrounding educational entities.**
- **Ensure all teachers have emergency plans centered on quarantine, weather, and any other emergency situations.**
- **Attend job fairs at universities in and around the state to recruit for the 22-23 school year.**
- **Provide instructional support aligned to NIET best practices to increase teacher retention.**
- **Partner with local universities to recruit teachers for in-service opportunities.**
- **Convert teacher employment offer letters to teacher contracts by SY 23-24.**





FOCUS AREA / STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will prioritize teaching and learning, in alignment with the Three Pillars, to ensure the highest quality of instruction and the commitment to results for student’s success in school and life.

GOAL

1

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish Student Participation rate on the Louisiana State Assessment will increase to the Pre-Covid State Participation level of 98.5 percent over the next 3 years, as follows:

PARTICIPATION RATE

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
93.6%	95%	97%	98.5%	98.5%	98.5%

GOAL

2

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish students, in tested grades, will move toward matching the ELA Post-Covid Louisiana State Achievement percentage by increasing 5-6 percent each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

STATE ASSESSMENT ELA ACHIEVEMENT DATA

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
16%	22%	28%	33%	39%	39%

GOAL

3

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish students, in tested grades, will move toward matching the Math Post-Covid Louisiana State Achievement percentage by increasing 5-6 percent each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

STATE ASSESSMENT MATH ACHIEVEMENT DATA

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
7%	13%	18%	23%	29%	29%





FOCUS AREA / STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will prioritize teaching and learning, in alignment with the Three Pillars, to ensure the highest quality of instruction and the commitment to results for student's success in school and life.

GOAL

4

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish students, in tested grades, will move toward matching the Science Post-Covid Louisiana State Achievement percentage by increasing 4-5 percent each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

STATE ASSESSMENT SCIENCE ACHIEVEMENT DATA

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
7%	12%	16%	20%	24%	24%

GOAL

5

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish students, in tested grades, will move toward matching the Social Studies Post-Covid Louisiana State Achievement percentage by increasing 3-4 percent each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

STATE ASSESSMENT SOCIAL STUDIES ACHIEVEMENT DATA

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
9%	13%	17%	20%	23%	23%

IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF. PP. 10, 23, 24)

- Use the Multi-Tiered System of Support (MTSS) to monitor students using an assessment framework that includes interim, progress monitoring, diagnostic, and summative assessments.
- Use data from assessments to drive instruction and differentiate to meet student needs.
- Use data to improve instructional practices that impact student outcomes that promote curiosity, collaboration, and a culture of positivity.
- Provide professional learning experiences that include English Language Learner strategies (SIOP), Inclusionary strategies, and the PBIS system with behavior management strategies, to promote learning.
- Screen or pretest students as they enroll.
- Establish a system of academic and/or behavioral goal setting for students in all grades, Kindergarten through eighth grade.
- Refine the use of the PLC structure ensuring the effective use of data.
- Engage students with real-world, inquiry-based tasks (Project Based Learning).
- Establish a teacher work group to evaluate the implementation of the three pillars for emphasis, consistency, and effectiveness.
- Create multi-faceted learning experiences focused on developing/honing students for lifelong success by focusing on a strong mind, healthy body, and performance character education.
- Consider the use of Canvas learning for middle students with Honors classes, accelerated, or remedial.
- Develop a reporting system for the Performance Character pillar.
- Establish and reinforce students' responsibilities, e.g., attendance and homework expectations.



IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF. PP. 10, 23, 24)

- Establish and implement a system where grade level teachers can work together to vertically and horizontally align the curriculum.
- Establish and implement a teacher work group to evaluate the use of the intervention block and the impact on student outcomes.
- Leverage all resources for improved students’ performance within and beyond the school day
- Ensure a robust virtual learning experience for all students.
- Train teachers on learning management systems.
- Continue implementing COVID protocols to prevent isolating entire classrooms.
- Include a virtual component for all curriculum that can be accessed via Cleaver to support learning.
- Continue implementing virtual learning opportunities when students are required to isolate.
- Improve Interest and Opportunity index score by fully completing the survey and increasing course offerings (K-8: PE, visual arts, performing arts, and world language courses).
- Improve Dropout/Credit Accumulation Index scores by having the school’s community liaison and school counselor engage local high schools to monitor the progress of previous AAJP 8th-grade promoters.



FOCUS AREA / STUDENT ENROLLMENT AND ATTENDANCE

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will prioritize teaching and learning, in alignment with the Three Pillars, to ensure the highest quality of instruction and the commitment to results for student’s success in school and life.

GOAL

1

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase the number of returning students over the next 3 years.

RETENTION RATE

SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
57.7%	67%	*87%	90%	90%	90%

**2023 Returning Students Intent to Re-enroll Full Registered as of 6/1/2022*

GOAL

2

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase student attendance to 95 percent or higher in all grade levels over the next 3 years, as follows:

	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
K	90.7%	88.9%	90%	95%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
1	91.5%	87.8%	90%	95%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
2	90.1%	91%	93%	95%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
3	97.1%	99.6%	99%	99%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
4	97.5%	96.5%	97%	98%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
5	97.3%	97.5%	98%	99%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%



GOAL 2 CONT.

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase student attendance to 95 percent or higher in all grade levels over the next 3 years, as follows:

	SY 20-21	SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
6	97%	93.4%	94%	95%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
7	97.5%	96.2%	97%	98%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%
8	97.5%	98.6%	98%	99%	95% - 99%	95% - 99%

IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF. PP. 10, 23, 24)

- Establish a teacher/student work group to help determine strategies for a school and classroom culture/climate in which all students are valued, appreciated, and celebrated.
- Communicate regularly with families, both celebrations and areas of weakness.
- Provide increased and frequent opportunities for parents to be at school, e.g., Literacy Night, STEM/STEAM Night, Sports, Music performances, Art Festival, Holiday events, etc.
- Attend community events to promote Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish.
- Promote the concept that successful Athlos students are successful High School students.
- Involve student council students in the promotion of Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish.
- Consider a partnership to develop before and after school programs for students.
- Add an Attendance Specialist to personnel.
- Include attendance requirements and expectations in SY 22-23 parent orientations.
- Continue to utilize the counselor to assist with home visits for students with excessive absences.
- Continue to include an incentive plan for students who have perfect attendance.



FOCUS AREA / BEHAVIOR DISCIPLINE

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will work collaboratively with Athlos Home Court to develop systems to support positive behavior outcomes, including an anti-bullying reporting system in all grade levels.

GOAL

1

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish Behavior infractions in grades 4-8 will decrease 15 percent or more each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
961	817	694	590	<590

Behavior management is an area of concern. We propose focusing on the most egregious grade level infractions in grades 4-8 and that a collaborative team sets goals for this area, keeping in mind that the yearly infractions should be reduced dramatically each year.





FOCUS AREA / BEHAVIOR DISCIPLINE

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will work collaboratively with Athlos Home Court to develop systems to support positive behavior outcomes, including an anti-bullying reporting system in all grade levels.

GOAL

2

By SY 2024-2025, Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish Bullying incidents in grades 5-8 will decrease 15 percent or more each year, over the next 3 years, as follows:

SY 21-22	SY 22-23	SY 23-24	SY 24-25	GOAL
39	33	28	24	<24

Incidents of bullying are an area of concern. We propose focusing on grade levels where the most infractions occur and that a collaborative team sets goals for this area, keeping in mind that the yearly incidents should be reduced dramatically each year.

IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF: PP. 9, 10, 27, 35)

- Ensure school-wide understanding, by both staff and students, of behavior expectations (Student Code of Conduct) and consequences.
- Schedule monthly or quarterly student assemblies to review behavior expectations within the Student Code of Conduct.
- Provide in-depth professional learning opportunities regarding PBIS including follow-up classroom observation and coaching.
- Use behavior data collected during observation within grade-level PLCs to determine the next steps.
- Develop a 24/7, online bullying reporting system to be used by parents, guardians, and the community.
- Establish protocols for communication to parents and guardians regarding bullying incidents in line with the Louisiana Anti-bullying laws.
- Use the established behavior tracking system to determine root causes of violation types and the application of consistent, fair consequences for offenses.



FOCUS AREA / COMMUNICATION

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase the effectiveness of communication and service with the school community, including students, parents, teachers, partnerships, and Athlos Home Court to meet each student's educational need.

GOAL

1

Before the beginning of school each year, develop and publish, both online and physically, a comprehensive calendar with critical and important dates, deadlines, and events, e.g., parent conference dates, PLC dates, Professional Learning schedules, payroll deadlines, school closures, school holidays, etc.





FOCUS AREA / COMMUNICATION

Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish will increase the effectiveness of communication and service with the school community, including students, parents, teachers, partnerships, and Athlos Home Court to meet each student's educational need.

GOAL

2

Before the beginning of school each year, calendar and display parent, family, and community events and meetings, e.g., Literacy Night, STEM/STEAM Night, Sports, Music performances, Art Festival, Holiday events, Book Fair, conferences, etc.

IN ALIGNMENT WITH THE ATHLOS ACCREDITATION RUBRIC: (REF: PP. 5, 12, 15, 50-58)

- Establish a Parent/Community Engagement Committee to create and implement a joint vision of parental engagement activities that will identify and utilize school /community resources to increase a family and community presence.
- Develop a master calendar with Parent/community events that is easily visible to all who enter the school.
- Consider purchasing signage (marquee) to promote student and community events.
- Communicate regularly with families, both celebrations and areas of weakness.
- Provide frequent opportunities for parents to be at school, e.g., Literacy Night, STEM/STEAM Night, Sports, Music performances, Art Festival, Holiday events, etc.
- Attend community events to promote Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish.
- Establish a teacher/student work group to help determine strategies for a school and classroom culture/climate in which all students are valued, appreciated, and celebrated.
- Promote the concept that successful Athlos students are successful High School students.
- Involve student council students in the promotion of Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish.
- Use established guidelines from Athlos Home Court communication protocols to inform the community about and promote the Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish advances in a positive light, creating a sense of pride in the community.
- Work collaboratively with Athlos Home Court to define, refine, and streamline processes to lessen the feeling of "micromanaging" from Athlos Home Court.
- Administer a fall and spring parent survey.
- Incorporate a Net Promoter Score in the surveys.

Strategic Plan Follow-Up and Execution

The Governing Board, Administration, and Teachers accept the responsibility for implementing the Strategic Plan of Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish. The plan will be implemented during the next three school years. Each year, the Governing Board will work in conjunction with the Principal to ensure that all goals, objectives, and tasks are being addressed and accomplished in a timely and professional manner. The annual progress of the plan will be reported yearly to all school constituencies via the school's annual report. The future goals, objectives, and tasks that constitute the plan will also be reviewed for usefulness and relevance on an annual basis.



Resources

As Athlos Academy Jefferson Parish begins to implement this Strategic Plan, support for professionals with expertise in each of the focus areas is essential. There are many organizations to partner with in this endeavor. JG Consulting is available to assist in your search for support. Your contact at JG Consulting will be Federico Munoz, fmunoz@jgconsulting.us.

Below is a shortlist of organizations/professionals which we believe could help address some of the identified challenges/opportunities for improvement:

1. Partner 1 focuses on teacher and staff engagement and retention. It utilizes research-based surveys to collect district- and building-level teacher engagement and retention data. The data is partnered with industry-expert coaches who work with both district and school leaders (including principals) to understand the data, identify trends, and take action steps.
<https://www.teachupbeat.com>
2. Partner 2 focuses on Teacher Coaching. It partners with and coaches teachers to help them increase student engagement & talk-time, deep thinking, and content mastery. Partner 2's instructional coaches deliver expert observation and practical, non-evaluative feedback via video.
<https://www.edconnective.com>
3. Partner 3 focuses on Student Tutoring. It helps schools improve student outcomes and eliminate learning loss through a comprehensive intervention system with assessments, analytics and high-dosage, high-impact tutoring. Partner 3's services include High impact Tutoring/EL and TELPAS Support/SEL (Social-Emotional Learning) Support.
<https://www.teachupbeat.com>
4. Partner 4 focuses on improving student attendance.
<https://www.attendanceworks.org>

