2020 UMSL Annual Review Report: Part 1
St. Louis Language Immersion School

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Ten elements of school evaluation:
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VI. Transformational Teachers
VII. Engaged Parents and Community
VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System

NOTE:
In the Evidence columns, under Required Documents:

- Documents in bold blue must be submitted to the Charter School Office.
- Documents in bold black must be on hand, but do not need to be submitted to the Charter School Office.
Summary Page

Please note that the comments in this report reflect our analysis as of April 2020.

1. Areas of Strength
Here are the top strengths that you can leverage to continuously improve and move you towards your vision.

- **Vision**
  - SLLIS’s vision and mission is unique in the St. Louis region.

- **Student Achievement - SY2019**
  - SLLIS significantly outperformed St. Louis Public Schools (SLPS) including almost all SLPS magnet schools in all areas.
  - SLLIS outperformed the state average in ELA, Math and Science for the African-American subgroup.

- **Board Governance:**
  - The board made tremendous progress by finally resolving persistent operational, financial and facility-related challenges.
  - The board strengthened its governance skills and oversight processes.

- **School Leadership:**
  - School leaders successfully planned and executed the transition to a new building.
  - The ED successfully weathered two major challenges related to staffing and special education program compliance.
  - The ED is aware of SLLIS’s areas for growth and has a vision for addressing them.

- **Curriculum and Instruction:**
  - It is unfortunate that SLLIS will not have any state assessment outcomes for SY20, but internal assessments suggest the Gomez and Gomez model, as imperfectly implemented as it is, has had a positive impact on student achievement.

- **Teachers:**
  - Caring and hardworking staff appreciate and deeply believe in SLLIS’s vision and mission.

- **Parent and Community Engagement:**
  - School-parent collaboration is strong.

- **Student Support System**
  - The new student support services administrator addressed significant concerns in the area of special education; improving morale within SPED staff. SLLIS is poised to make significant improvements in its student support system.

2. Areas for Growth
Here are the key areas for growth that could move you towards your vision.

- **Vision:**
  - Consider how to:
    - Leverage SLLIS’s unique vision and mission to strengthen support from both internal and external stakeholders.
    - Market it to attract students and talented staff.

- **Student Achievement - SY2019**
  - SLLIS needs to strengthen its focus even more on raising student achievement in ELA and Math.

- **Board Governance:**
  - Prioritize monitoring the academic program and student achievement.
    - Develop greater understanding of state and other norm-referenced assessments
    - Review student achievement data on a regular basis.
• **School Leadership:**
  o The ED must address strengthening SLLIS’s culture. Staff morale, teacher instructional capacity, student behavior and curriculum issues interact with each other in ways that erode what could be an inspiring culture powered by the school’s unique vision and mission.
    - Building a strong, collaborative and strategically oriented leadership team is crucial.
    - Strengthening collaboration and teamwork among teachers within and across grade levels around curriculum development, instruction, and student data analysis is crucial.

• **Curriculum and Instruction:**
  o Continue to focus on creating a strong, documented curriculum that supports teacher planning and instruction.
    - Use the process to incorporate more international-global content into the curriculum.

• **Culture of Achievement**
  o The behavior of a small group of students significantly impacts culture in many classrooms. Teachers focus on the discipline system as the solution while leaders cite improved teacher management skills, along with greater parent cooperation. Staff, school leaders and parents must collaborate to address this challenge; and do not underestimate the power of an engaging curriculum to reduce student management problems.

• **Teachers:**
  o Continue to prioritize teacher fidelity to the Gomez and Gomez model.
  o Continue to develop teacher knowledge and skills:
    - In delivering the Benchmarks and ReadyMath programs and using student data to adjust and differentiate instruction.
    - In behavior management,

• **Parent and Community Engagement:**
  o Consider how to strengthen parental connection to SLLIS’s vision and mission. You want them talking about how proud they are that their child is in the only language immersion school this side of Missouri.

• **Student Support System**
  o Strengthen delivery of student support in the following areas:
    - Dyslexia screening and intervention support
    - Socio-emotional Behavioral support
    - Tier 2 intervention
    - Special Education services
    - Professional learning related to student support for classroom teachers
### I. Transformative and Innovative Vision

**A transformational school:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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| a. Develops a transformational mission and vision for its students and their families. | i. Reaching the vision clearly places students on paths of greater opportunity in life. | **Required Documents:**  
|                                                                           |                                                                           | • Charter Application: (Met as part of the charter application approval process.)  
|                                                                           |                                                                           | • Approved Charter Amendments | **Other Evidence** |
| b. Students, parents and staff understand and are invested in the mission and vision. | a) Students, parents and staff can articulate the mission and vision.  
|                                                                           | b) In their classrooms, teachers and students are mission driven as indicated by their enthusiasm, active and consistent participation and task completion. | **Required Documents:**  
|                                                                           |                                                                           | • Student, parent and staff interviews and survey data  
|                                                                           |                                                                           | • Classroom observations | **Other Evidence** |

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#### Element I: Vision

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Language immersion, global mindedness and diversity are still the focal point of SLLIS’s mission and vision; the board and school staff indicated strong belief in this.</td>
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| • In the parent survey, about 54% of parent responders on indicated they feel connected to SLLIS’s mission.  
| • In the past, the Primary Years Programme ensured that curriculum content aligned with SLLIS’s emphasis on global-mindedness, but the program is no longer a key feature of the curriculum. As SLLIS fleshes out its scope and sequence (see *Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessment* below), consider how to rebuild international/global content into the curriculum, especially in the science and social studies programs. |
II. Responsible Governance
The Board of Directors of a transformational school:

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<th>Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>Operates legitimately and in the best interest of its students and mission.</td>
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<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. Considers implications of decisions on the mission of the school.</td>
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<td>ii. The Board annually self-evaluates using a standardized tool that assesses performance based on setting goals, developing policy, communication with the school and community, and oversight of school leadership.</td>
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<td>iii. Ensures the board and school have all necessary insurance policies in place.</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Board Self-Evaluation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Insurance Policies</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Directors and Officer Coverage</td>
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<tr>
<td>o General Liability</td>
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<td>o Professional Liability</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Property</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Workmen Compensation</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Employee Dishonesty/Crime (minimum $500k)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Observation of board meetings</td>
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<td>- UMSL Sponsor communication with board president and/or directors</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
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<tr>
<td>Recruits and maintains a strong governing board with diverse backgrounds and skills sets</td>
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<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. Includes individuals who are experienced in managing organizations and well versed in charter law</td>
</tr>
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<td>ii. Maintains among its Directors a balance of skills and professional expertise (i.e. K-12 education, business, marketing, legal, accounting, fundraising, real estate etc.) necessary to fulfill all Board obligations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>iii. Provides new board members a formal orientation on the purpose and educational vision of the school, the school’s performance objectives, and their roles and legal responsibilities</td>
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<td>iv. Seeks information and professional development opportunities related to charter operation, laws, and effective non-profit board work</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Board Organizational Structure Chart</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Board Director Profiles/Contact Information</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Assurance of Board Criminal Background and FCSR (child abuse registry) Checks</td>
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<td>- Board Development Plans</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board Member Financial Disclosure Confirmation</td>
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<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<td>- Director interviews</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Conducts its business in compliance with all state statutes and regulations</td>
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<th>Indicator</th>
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<tr>
<td>i. Meetings are regularly scheduled and appropriately conducted.</td>
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<td>ii. Governance records and documentation are appropriately created and maintained.</td>
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<td>iii. School business is conducted in a transparent manner subject to the provisions and sections 610.010 to 610.030, open meetings law; free of conflict of interest, and models best practices regarding governance roles and responsibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board Meeting Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board Meeting Calendar</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board Meeting Document Packets</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board Meeting Minutes - Approved</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Observation of board meetings</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Board meeting notices and signage</td>
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| d. Ensures that policies are complete, regularly reviewed, updated as needed, and followed in a fair and consistent manner | i. Develops, adopts, and follows a comprehensive set of bylaws which at a minimum include conflicts of interest policies, meeting protocols and procedures, and formal delineations of roles and authorities within the charter school  
ii. Regularly reviews board policies, updating as necessary.  
iii. Organizes and makes available to the public the school policies utilizing multiple forms of communication | Documents  
- **Board Policy Manual and Bylaws;**  
Other Evidence  
- Observation of board meetings  
- Board meeting agendas and minutes  
- Evidence in board minutes that check registry has been reviewed and approved by the board. |
| e. Employs a clear strategic approach to meeting the school’s vision | i. With the school leaders, develops strategic plans that ensure fidelity to the school’s vision by addressing critical issues; including school performance, financial management, human resource management, facilities, and quality improvement  
ii. Monitors progress towards goals identified in the strategic plans | Documents  
- **Strategic Plan (same as for School Leader)**  
Other Evidence  
- Observation of board meetings  
- Board meeting approved minutes |
|  |   |   |
| f. Selects, supports, and annually evaluates the school leader | i. Selects a highly qualified school leader and defines the role the leader plays in the overall operation of the charter school  
ii. Supports the administrator’s decision making  
iii. Establishes clear expectations of and assesses the performance of the school leader using a consistent evaluation instrument reflecting the mission and vision of the school, the performance goals set forth in the performance contract, the day-to-day management of the school and progress made on yearly school goals. | Documents  
- **Board Evaluation of School Leader (blank template)**  
Other Evidence  
- Chair and Director interviews  
- Board meeting observations |
|  |   |   |
| g. Monitors the school’s education program, operational procedures, and fiscal health in cooperation with the sponsor. | i. Directs the school leader to provide an annual self-evaluation to the sponsor and regular reports of student performance, academic progress, and the school’s fiscal health to the sponsor and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.  
ii. Monitors student academic performance, curriculum and instruction, and operational procedures. and fiscal management. | Documents  
- **School Annual Self-Evaluation (same as for School Leader)**  
Other Evidence  
- Chair and Director interviews  
- Board meeting observations  
- Board meeting approved minutes |
|  |   |   |
| h. Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds by ensuring the school operates in a fiscally sound and appropriate manner. | i. Reviews and approves annual budgets, budget amendments, and monthly financial statements.  
ii. Reviews and approves monthly check register.  
iii. Provides oversight of school leader’s handling of cash accounts and credit card accounts. | Documents  
-   
Other Evidence  
- Chair and Director interviews  
- Board meeting observations |
Element II: Board Governance

**Recommendation: Board Policy Review**
Our office strongly recommends that each of our boards regularly review board policies to ensure that they are current with Missouri statutes.

### Areas of Strength

- **(a)** Operates in best interests of students and mission
  - Board meetings and individual member interviews strongly indicate that the board understands and believes in the school’s mission. The mission drives their decision making.
  - The acquisition of the 18th and Pine facility resolved a long-standing challenge; ensuring students learn in a safe, modern and spacious learning environment. All stakeholders cited the new building as a significant strength.
  - As of the date of this report (pre-pandemic), SLLIS’s financial condition is in significantly better shape than it has been over the previous five years.

- **(b) Recruitment and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:**
  - Members bring diverse areas of expertise to the board, especially in education; but also, school finance, medicine, investment, government, law and real estate development.

- **(c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:**
  - To the best of UMSL’s knowledge, SLLIS’s board is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.

### Areas for Growth

- **(b)** Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:
  - Consider increasing the number of board members and address needs in these areas of expertise:
    - Public relations or marketing
    - Human resources

- **(c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:**
  - According to the 2020 Assurance Checklist:
    - The board needs to adopt a written policy relating to information that the charter school will provide about former employees to other public schools (see Section 162.068 RSMo).
• (e) Strategic approach:
  o Board interviews indicate that the board is aware of the key challenges and issues school leadership faces and provides appropriate support.
  o The board monitors the ED’s implementation of SLLIS’s strategic plan.
  o The board significantly increased the staff salary schedule.
  o The board will develop a new strategic plan this coming school year.
  o The board had to focus on finances and facilities for three years prior to SY2019-20. It is now pivoting to teacher quality and student academic achievement.
  o The board is updating its bylaws to include specific committee goals and responsibilities.

• (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
  o Board interviews indicate strong trust and confidence in the ED’s leadership, citing specifically the move into the new facility and hiring decisions.
  o The board has put together an evaluation process for the ED that utilizes the DESE model for Superintendent Evaluation.
    ▪ The ED indicates that she is satisfied with the process.
    ▪ The Academic Excellence Committee manages the process.

• (g) Monitoring responsibility:
  o The board monitors ED performance, student achievement and financials, but note an area for growth in (g) Monitoring responsibility in the right-hand column.

• (h) Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility
  o The SLLIS board fulfills its fiduciary responsibility.
  o Refer also to Element X when UMSL’s Charter School Office submits Part 2 of the annual review to the board.

• (i) Responsibilities to UMSL
  o SLLIS fulfills its responsibilities to UMSL, as defined in the contract between the two institutions.

Community Relations
• The board live streams all board meetings.

• (d) Policies:
  o Though most SLLIS board policies are relatively recent; approved on Nov. 14, 2018, UMSL recommends reviewing all polices at least every other year to ensure they’re up to date. Add to or revise as necessary.

• (e) Strategic approach:
  o Until the board develops a better understanding of student achievement data, it won’t have capacity to use student data to inform their decisions. (See item (g) directly below)

• (g) Monitoring responsibility:
  o The board currently does not closely monitor NWEA student outcomes and other student assessment data. Consider putting together a monthly dashboard for board review.
### Board Development and Training
- The board has a board development plan in place that identifies areas of need and includes a board retreat and attendance at a few seminars and trainings.
- The board uses board meetings as opportunities to develop school governance knowledge and skills through expert presentations in various areas.
- The board is working to strengthen onboard training for new members.

### Board Survey
- Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following areas as strengths:
  - Resolving key strategic or policy issues
  - Developing the financial resources needed to support student performance and school success
  - Overseeing financial performance and ensuring financial solvency

### Board Development and Training
- Board interviews indicated a need to develop greater understanding of Missouri’s MSIP student assessment program.
- The board survey identified the following areas for board member training:
  - Charter School Law
  - Sunshine Law
  - Special Education Law
  - Student Discipline
  - School Administration Evaluation
- Continue efforts to strengthen onboard training for new members.

### Board Survey
- Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following as areas for improvement:
  - Clarifying the school's mission and vision.
  - Strategic planning and goal setting for the school
  - Understanding charter school law
### III. Strong School Leadership and Operations

**A transformational school leader:**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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| a) Invests students, parents and staff in the mission and vision of the school. | i. Communicates the mission and vision on a frequent basis to students, parents and staff.  
ii. Monitors students, parents and staff to gauge their understanding of the mission and vision and the extent to which they’re striving to reach it. | **Required Documents:**  
**Other Evidence**  
- School leader interview  
- Student, staff and parent surveys and interviews  
- School publications such as newsletters and announcements |
| b) Employs a clear strategic approach to meeting the goals of improving student academic achievement | i. With the Board of Directors, develops strategic plans that ensure fidelity to the school’s vision by addressing critical issues; including school performance, financial management, human resource management, facilities, and quality improvement  
ii. Articulates and monitors the goals identified in the strategic plans.  
iii. Holds him/herself accountable for specific outcomes outlined in the charter and detailed in the school’s performance contract with the sponsor  
iv. Engages in ongoing relevant professional development  
v. Utilizes an effective data communication instrument providing consistent, timely data regarding the school’s progress toward meeting agreed upon performance expectations (academic, operational, and financial)  
vi. Implements the academic program in alignment with the school’s charter and Missouri Common Core Standards  
vii. Collects, assimilates, and disseminates student achievement data to inform a continuous cycle of school improvement | **Required Documents:**  
- School Annual Calendar  
- Strategic plan  
- School Leader Mentoring Plan  
- School Leader Professional Development Plan  
- Student Assessment Plan  
**Other Evidence**  
- School leader interview  
- School leadership team interviews  
- Teacher interviews  
- Student data analysis plans |
| c) Implements recruitment and enrollment strategies and practices that respect diversity and are consistent with the school’s charter, mission, and vision, as well as federal and state regulations | i. Implements student recruitment strategies that focus on the targeted population stated in its charter and that are inclusive of a diverse range of learners  
ii. Utilizes a public lottery process for open enrollment  
iii. Ensures no practices are implemented which may limit the opportunity for students with special needs to enroll  
iv. Ensures that student enrollment and attendance numbers are in line with the charter agreement, and provide evidence that the school is a viable school of choice for the community. | **Required Documents:**  
- Enrollment Application  
- Marketing/Recruitment Materials  
**Other Evidence**  
- School leader interview  
- Observation of lotteries  
- Enrollment and attendance data  
- Core data |
| d) Develops and sustains a school culture conducive to student learning | i. Maintains a clean and safe environment that supports the educational mission of the school.  
   ii. Maintains open, consistent, clear communication among students, staff, parents, and administration  
   iii. Maintains a school culture conducive to learning and continuous improvement  
   iv. Communicates effectively to all stakeholder groups  
   | Same evidence sources as described in Element IV above.  
   | Required Documents:  
   | Other Evidence  
   • Onsite observations  
   • Parent surveys and interviews  
   • Student surveys and interviews  
   • Staff surveys and interviews  
   • Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists)  
   • Discipline, suspension and/or expulsion data  
   • Parent complaint/grievance records  
   |  |
| e) Employs qualified staff, provides professional development opportunities to improve their performance. | i. Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes instructional effectiveness and continuous school improvement.  
   ii. Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes the recruitment and retention of an effective instructional staff.  
   iii. Provides professional development opportunities for all staff members that are aligned to the school’s vision and advances their effectiveness in their roles.  
   | Required Documents:  
   • Staff Organization Chart  
   • Employee School Handbook  
   • Assurance of Faculty/Staff Background Checks (FCSR and fingerprinting)  
   • Staff Professional Development Plan and Calendar  
   • Staff Mentoring and Coaching Plan  
   • Teacher Evaluation Plan (including blank evaluation forms)  
   | Other Evidence  
   • School leader interview  
   • Staff interviews  
   • Student interviews  
   • Staff retention data  
   |  |
| f) Understands and complies with the laws, policies, and state and federal requirements that govern charter schools | i. Participates regularly in professional development opportunities, which provide insight into the trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which charter schools operate  
   ii. Allocates resources based primarily on their impact on student achievement, learning, and well-being  
   iii. Implements business policies and procedures that promote school sustainability, operational integrity, and a focus on student achievement and learning results  
   iv. Establishes programs and policies that enable all students to be served effectively  
   v. Ensures timely submission of required data and reporting  
   | Required Documents:  
   Health and Safety  
   • Health Permits (food service)  
   • Fire Safety Permit  
   • Building Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy  
   • Elevator Inspection Certificate  
   Special Education  
   • SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA & 504)  
   Title I  
   • Title I Parent Meetings (sign in sheets)  
   • HQ Parent Notification Letters  
   |  |
vi. Ensures that school is in compliance with state and federal laws, policies and requirements and provisions in its contract with UMSL in these areas:
   a. Health and safety
   b. Student records:
      i. Thorough and comprehensive
      ii. Secure and confidential
      iii. Appropriate employee access to the data system
   c. Special Education
   d. Title I
   e. Free and reduced lunch
   f. Homeless and ELL students
   g. Fiscal management
   h. State testing
   i. Other operations

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<th>Homeless and ELL Students</th>
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<tr>
<td>• ELL Intervention Plan</td>
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<td>• ELL Pupil Count/Percentages</td>
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<td>• Homeless Student Policy</td>
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Fiscal Management
(Refer to Element IX: Sound Financial Operations below)

State Testing
• Quality Assurance – Grade Level Assessment Assurance Document
• State Exam Security Policy
• State Exam Testing Calendar

Other Operations
• Student/Parent Handbook
• Media Policy

Other Evidence
• School leader interview
• Document/MOSIS submission history with UMSL and DESE
• Interviews with consultants: Shannon Spradling and Thurma DeLoach
• FERPA compliance procedures
• Student record keeping system

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<th>Element III: School Leadership and Operations</th>
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<tr>
<td>Areas of Strength</td>
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<tr>
<td>Executive Director</td>
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<tr>
<td>• (a) Investment of others:</td>
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<tr>
<td>o Teacher interviews indicate that most enjoy working at SLLIS.</td>
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<td>o The operations staff feel supported by administration and feel that they have a voice in decisions that impact their work.</td>
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| Areas for Growth                           |
| Executive Director                         |
| • (a) Investment of others:                |
|   o Interviews of stakeholders from a variety of role areas express concern about staff morale: |
|     ▪ Some staff feel underappreciated and are frustrated with lingering problems around classroom management. |
|     ▪ Staff and administrator turnover throughout the year created and increased anxiety among staff around job security; leading some of them “to lay low” in their classrooms. |
|   ▪ They resist seeking help when behavior issues bubble up in the classroom for fear of losing their position due to classroom management issues. |
• (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o The ED implements and monitors SLLIS’s strategic plan.
  o The ED prioritizes PD and teacher oversight related to:
    ▪ Teacher fidelity to dual-language program implementation
    ▪ Improving school culture related to student behavior management.
  o The ED made progress towards establishing a Pre-K program beginning next school year.

• (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies – students:
  o Enrollment was relatively stable between September and March.
  o The principal noted that the ED is an excellent “spokesperson” for the school.

• (e) Employment - staff:
  o The ED and HR strengthened SLLIS’s hiring process and the board increased the staff salary schedule.
    ▪ Increasing the salary schedule should strengthen staff retention and attract more high-quality candidates.
  o The Board and ED now issue staff contracts for 2020-21, allowing SLLIS to efficiently and effectively staff the school for the coming year.

• If they are international employees with immigrant status, this concern connects with their fear of losing employment and having to leave the U.S.
  o A few interviewees indicated they’d like the ED to have a more visible presence in the building.

• (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o The ED indicates that she wants to prioritize strengthening leadership at all levels, from her central office team to the classroom teachers.
    ▪ Related to this, a few interviewees indicated they’d like the ED to set up more meetings that include both central office and school leaders to strategize around schoolwide challenges, including student behavior.
  o The teacher survey indicates roughly fifty percent of responders were neutral or disagreed with the statement, “SLLIS staff culture is collaborative.”
  o Teachers note that the student-teacher ratio is not balanced in classrooms compared across the different focus languages.

• (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies – students:
  o Student enrollment has declined over the last several years. It is important to keep it stable and prioritize its increase.

• (d) Culture building:
  o Challenges related to staff morale, behavior management, teacher professional development and the curriculum are strongly inter-related. Strategically meeting these challenges in a holistic manner should be strongly considered. (Refer to “Discipline” and “Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development” in this element directly below and Element IV: Curriculum and Element V: Culture of Achievement further below.)

• (e) Employment - staff:
  o Staff turnover has been a significant challenge this year. (Refer to comments directly above under (a) Investment of others.)
• (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  o To the best of UMSL’s knowledge, SLLIS’s administration is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.

Head of School
• (a) Investment of others:
  o Teacher interviews indicate that in general, they feel supported by school leadership with the exception noted in the left-hand column.

• (d) Culture building:
  o Teacher interviews indicate there is a strong spirit of collaboration on their teams.

Discipline
• Classroom observations reveal that in general, students are well-behaved, on task and attentive.
• The number of Out of School Suspensions through March decreased by 27% compared to SY 2019; involving a lower number of students.

• (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  o According to the 2020 Assurance Checklist:
    ▪ SLLIS needs to include a statement in its registration documents informing parents of their right to participate in Missouri Course Access and Virtual School Program (MOCAP).

Head of School
• (a) Investment of others:
  o Some teacher interviews indicate concern that they do not get enough support for dealing with their most behaviorally challenged students.

• (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o Dealing with behavior issues has made it very challenging for the Principal to provide academic oversight and support.
  o Teacher interviews indicate that:
    ▪ Data teams could be more structured and focused.
    ▪ Teachers need more materials for center activities.

Discipline
• Interviews across all roles indicate that there are too many behavior disruptions throughout the day that significantly impact learning. One interviewee stated, “By now classroom teachers just give up; they’re so overwhelmed.”
• Teacher interviews indicate that they do not feel supported with reducing student behavior issues that interrupt instructional time.
• Although PBIS has been implemented at SLLIS for several years, teachers indicate that it is very inconsistently implemented and lacks rigor.
  o Teachers feel that consequences for behavior issues are inconsistent and often not handled in a timely manner – sending the message that there are no consequences for inappropriate behavior.
  o Some of the inconsistencies stem from different behavioral expectations across the three language programs.
  o One interviewee commented, “There aren’t enough resources to help the 12-15 kids who are repeat offenders.”
• Consider how the student support team in collaboration with classroom teachers and families can address and manage inappropriate behaviors so as to reduce the suspension rates for repeat offenders (4 students accounted for 40% of the suspensions, 10 students accounted for over 60% of the suspensions). The solution must also build classroom teachers’ capacity to manage student
**Communication**

- In general, parents are satisfied with how SLLIS communicates with them. (Refer also to Element VII: Parents and Community below)

**Operations/HR/Facilities**

- All stakeholder interviews indicate great satisfaction with:
  - The new building. They appreciate the spaces, cleanliness, and layout.
  - Front office operations.
- SLLIS conducts all state required emergency drills.
- School staff took de-escalation training.
- Consolidation to one building has simplified many operational functions.
- DESE found SLLIS to be compliant in the federal programs area.
- Human Resources offers three tiers of health benefits for staff.
- MOSIS access is limited to appropriate staff.
- All MOSIS deadlines were efficiently met.
- There are no attendance tracking concerns.
- There are no issues with the procedure used for monitoring background checks
- Teachers are given a budget for classroom supplies.
  - Orders for teaching supplies are expedited to get items to classrooms more quickly.
- Proper certification for all instructional staff must be in place prior to gaining employment.

**Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development**

- SLLIS’s teacher evaluation plan is aligned to Missouri DESE guidelines and utilizes MU’s Network for Educator Effectiveness observation scoring rubrics.
- SLLIS has a thorough new-teacher induction and mentoring program in place that meets Missouri guidelines.

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**Communication**

- Consider how to strengthen the PBIS system or implement a different behavior management approach.

**Communication**

- Teacher interviews and the staff survey indicate that communication between school administration and staff is a concern:
  - The staff survey reveals that 47 percent of respondents were either neutral or disagreed with the statement, “SLLIS communicates effectively.”

**Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development**

- Teacher interviews indicate that they were observed for evaluation but did not receive timely face to face feedback.
- Though teacher interviews indicate they are more comfortable with the Gomez model, they would like more support and PD on:
  - How to take the core curriculum and incorporate it into the model.
- SLLIS implements a PD plan that addresses dual language instruction, restorative practices, trauma-informed practices, and vertical teams.
- Teacher interviews indicate that they found the PD on behavior management to be helpful.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How to differentiate for low ability students while remaining faithful to the model.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teacher interviews strongly indicate they need more PD on Benchmarks and Ready Math.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To address discipline concerns cited above, consider providing all staff PD on behavior management from outside experts such as Melanie Fitzgerald. (Some SLLIS student support staff have participated in a series of workshops presented by Ms. Fitzgerald.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Assistant Director of Learning and Instruction indicated that teachers need more training on gathering and analyzing student data to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Learn where students are academically.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inform instructional decisions to meet them where they are.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle school teachers indicate they would like more PD geared to their grade levels.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More experienced teachers would like more customized PD opportunities to meet individual interests and growth goals.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### IV. Transformational Curriculum

#### A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the mission, vision and educational philosophy of the school. | i. Curriculum scope and sequence provide opportunities for students to reach the school's mission and vision.  
ii. Instructional practices provide opportunities for students to reach the school's mission and vision.  
iii. Curriculum and instruction are aligned to the educational philosophy of the school as described in the charter. | Required Documents:  
- Schoolwide Curriculum Scope and Sequence  
Other Evidence  
- Classroom observations – including SPED and Title 1 programs  
- Student and staff interviews  
- Sample unit and lesson plans  
- Student work  

b. Provides a challenging, engaging, coherent, transformational curriculum that meets the academic needs of all students | i. Implements curriculum that clearly identifies and builds essential and enduring knowledge.  
ii. Structures a curriculum scope and sequence aligned to Missouri's Common Core Standards.  
iii. Ensures that the curriculum invests and prepares students to extend their learning and be successful beyond the classroom and beyond their school career (life-long learning, career readiness, college readiness, active citizenship).  
iv. Uses a variety of instructional techniques to enhance content acquisition and meet the needs of a diverse student population.  
v. Develops and implements clearly defined strategies to meet the needs of a diverse student population.  
vi. Utilizes high quality instructional materials, including technology, to support the curriculum. | Required Documents:  
- Same as above  
Other Evidence  
- Same as above  
- MSIP-5 student achievement, attendance and retention data |

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### Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Documented Curriculum**  
  o SLLIS developed a K-8 scope and sequence for Language Arts that includes learning outcomes for units, connections to unit assessments and recommended pacing. | **Documented Curriculum**  
  SLLIS does not have a full-blown written curriculum in place. Teachers can refer to learning standards for their grades, but other than the ELA documents cited in the left-hand column, they have very little else provided to support their planning.  
  o SLLIS must prioritize the development of a written scope and sequence for all of the core subject areas. Most scopes and sequences feature the following: |
(a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
   o Teachers report that the Gomez and Gomez approach to language immersion is already providing dividends on internal testing compared to years past, especially when looking at reading and writing progress.
   o SLLIS is exploring curriculum options to better support its students in reading and math with extra attention and focus on students who struggle academically.

Alignment to the Missouri Learning Standards
- **Schoolwide Level (For each discipline):**
  - Standards and student outcomes mapped by and aligned across grade levels.
  - Content mapped out by grade level.
- **Grade Level (For each discipline):**
  - Clearly stated course outcomes (“By end of the year, students will…”).
  - Model course assessments.
  - Unit Map with pacing guidelines.
- **Unit Level (For each course):**
  - Clearly stated unit outcomes aligned to course outcomes.
  - Model unit assessments.
  - Sample lessons that model high student engagement; such as inquiry or problem-based learning
  - Recommendations to guide pacing of lessons through the unit.

Integration—intersection points between disciplines. These documents will not only ground the teaching staff in the curriculum, but also:
- Align the curriculum between grade levels.
- Effectively support new staff in their efforts to understand and implement the curriculum.
- Support teacher professional development and curriculum development around using data, creating assessments and differentiating instruction.

(a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
   o Regarding the need to incorporate more global content across the core disciplines, refer to **Element I: Vision** above.
   o While most teacher interviews indicate appreciation that all three language programs are in the same space, they note that there’s not much collaboration between them. One teacher noted, “Each program does its own thing.”
   - Now that everyone has had a year to settle into a new facility and get used to being together, consider how to leverage the opportunities for greater collaboration across all three programs around teaching (teachers) and learning (students) a second language and celebrating cultural diversity.
### Assessment
- SLLIS’s assessment plan utilizes a variety of internal and external (nationally normed) assessment instruments, including: dyslexia screening, NWEA and AAPPL (ACTFL Assessment of Performance toward Proficiency in Languages) and Missouri’s MAP assessments.
  - Teacher interviews indicate they use NWEA, MAP Scores and IReady to drive instructional decisions.
  - Teachers use a variety of informal assessments on a daily and weekly basis to identify learning gaps.

- Consider ways to strengthen cross-language program collaboration among teachers and students.
  - Chinese teachers expressed concern around adapting Ready Math to Chinese. It’s not clear if the issue is about language compatibility or a different approach to teaching mathematics than they prefer.
  - SLLIS does not have a clearly defined social studies or science curriculum:
    - Related to science, teachers lack the supplies needed to conduct any hands-on science activities across most strands.

- (b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
  - Teacher interviews indicate that:
    - ELA: Benchmarks is very challenging, especially for students who struggle with reading. Teachers need greater support on how to teach writing.
    - Math: ReadyMath is difficult for students because it relies on reading fluency.
  - Teachers need more resources for small group instruction in reading and math.
  - Middle school student interviews indicate that they would like:
    - More choices in elective offerings.
    - To go on field trips (especially grades 6 and 7).

- School leader interviews indicate teachers need to strengthen data analysis and application skills and leverage student assessment data more to improve student performance.
### V. Empowering Culture of Achievement

A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Supports students in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that invests them in achievement, builds character, increases responsibility, fosters inclusion and inspires joy. | i. Creates a school environment conducive to learning and growth.  
ii. Maintains a safe school environment free of violence and the threat of violence.  
iii. Implements processes to promote student health and wellness.  
iv. Ensures that students feel supported and respected by teachers and staff.  
v. Communicates and consistently implements a comprehensive student discipline policy that complies with the Missouri Safe School Act and the requirements of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. | Required Documents: |
| | | Other Evidence |
| | | • Onsite observations  
• Parent surveys and interviews  
• Student surveys and interviews  
• Staff surveys interviews  
• Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists)  
• Parent complaint/grievance records  
• Discipline, suspension and/or expulsion data |

### Element V: Culture of Achievement

#### Areas of Strength
- Students interviews indicate they appreciate the teacher/student relationships that SLLIS fosters.
- Almost all classrooms have dual word walls reflecting a school wide embrace of Gomez and Gomez implementation.
- Student interviewees report that they feel safe at school especially with the police station across the street.
- In the parent survey, 81% of parents indicated their student is safe at SLLIS.
- Student interviews indicate their belief that students are treated fairly at SLLIS.
- Middle school teacher interviews indicate satisfaction with the overall culture on the fourth floor.

#### Areas for Growth
- Refer to the “Discipline” section within Element III: School Leadership and Operations above.
  - Though the vast majority of students behave very well, teacher and leader interviews indicate concern that serious behavioral issues associated with a small number of students disrupt the teaching and learning environment in classrooms and hallways.
  - The teacher survey indicates one-third are neutral or disagree with the statement: “Staff members feel safe at SLLIS.”
- School leadership interviews indicate that expectations for students vary between the language programs, and are especially low within the French program.
- Middle school students would like more trust placed on them to travel from class to class without teachers accompanying them.
- Classroom observations reveal that students in many classrooms are working on worksheets.
- Chinese teachers expressed a desire for all classes to be on the same floor to increase cultural immersion.
VI. Transformational Teachers

A transformational teacher:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a.       | i.        | Develops an ambitious, measurable and inspiring course vision and goals aligned to the school’s vision and innovative identity.  
ii. Provides students with a clear picture of what reaching the vision and goals looks like. | Required Documents: Other Evidence  
• Teacher and student surveys and interviews  
• Classroom observations |
| b. Takes responsibility for investing students in reaching their academic and personal growth goals. | i. Believes that all students can learn.  
ii. Holds high expectations for all students  
iii. Inspires and motivates students to reach the vision and goals.  
iv. Builds a strong culture of achievement where the classroom environment is conducive to learning and growing.  
v. Builds strong, trusting relationships with students and their families.  
vi. Is passionate about the content of the curriculum and conveys that passion to students. | Required Documents: Other Evidence  
• Teacher surveys and interviews  
• Classroom observations  
• Student and parent surveys and interviews  
• Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans |
| c. Develops and/or implements curriculum that is strongly aligned to student academic achievement and personal growth goals | i. Designs a course scope and sequence that is tightly aligned to the vision and goals.  
ii. Designs a course that engages students in both critical thinking and meaningful discourse around enduring understandings and essential questions.  
iii. Designs units and lessons that:  
 o Are tightly aligned to course learning objectives and desired student outcomes.  
 o Build on what students already know and do and provide the scaffolding they need to reach the level of success commensurate with the vision and goals.  
 o Engage students with thought-provoking and ambiguous texts/materials that challenge their thinking and feelings.  
 o Give students opportunities to conduct research to answer a question, explore and take a stand on an issue, or develop solutions to a problem.  
 o Use writing to communicate their reflections and understandings  
 o Incorporate a variety of teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse student learning styles.  
i. Keeps instruction student centered and inquiry oriented | Required Documents: Other Evidence  
• School leader/Curriculum leader interview  
• Teacher surveys and interviews  
• Classroom observations  
• Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans  
• Assessment plans/performance tracking systems  
• Student performance data (including state, formative and internal benchmark assessments) |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>d. Employs best instructional practices to engage students in learning and raise academic achievement.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ii. Continually orient students to content</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Continually orient students to each other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Continually checks for student understanding and makes appropriate adjustments as necessary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Tracks student progress towards academic and personal growth goals and makes adjustments as necessary.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>i. Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth-measures assessments, to inform instructional decision-making.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ii. Evaluates students’ progress towards meeting course and school performance goals and modifies goals, as needed, to improve student achievement.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iii. Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm referenced measures and state assessments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>iv. Builds student skills in tracking their own progress and motivates them to take charge of their own academic and personal growth.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>v. Pursues professional development opportunities to address areas for growth in their own teaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Evidence
- School leader/Curriculum leader interviews
- Teacher interviews
- Classroom observations

### Required Documents
- School leader/Curriculum leader interviews
- Classroom observations
- Teacher surveys
- Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans
- Assessment plans/performance tracking systems
- Student performance data (including state, formative and internal benchmark assessments)

### Element VI: Teachers

#### Areas of Strength

- (a) Belief in the vision:
  - Teacher interviews and surveys indicate they feel a strong connection to SLLIS’s mission.
  - Relationships among teachers are generally supportive.
- (b) Student investment:
  - Students report that they like their teachers
  - Parent survey responders indicate that:
    - 84% agree with the statement, “My student has a strong relationship with his/her teachers at SLLIS.”
    - 88% agree with the statement, “My student’s teacher is responsive to his/her needs.”
  - Middle School students appreciate that their teachers tie instruction to real life situations that help make learning feel relevant.
  - Parents have easy access to regular teacher communication through email and text messaging.
  - Morning meeting/calendar work in the younger grades builds community.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(c) Curriculum development and implementation:</th>
<th>(c) Curriculum development and implementation:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>o Teacher interviews indicate that the Gomez and Gomez model is much less challenging for teachers to implement this year compared to year one.</td>
<td>o School leader interviews indicate teachers need to become more data-driven to inform curriculum planning and instructional decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) Instructional practice:</td>
<td>(d) Instructional practice:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o The diversity of SLLIS staff fosters a wide range of teaching styles and approaches unseen in most traditional schools in the US.</td>
<td>o Teacher and school leader interviews indicate that not all teachers are implementing the Gomez and Gomez model with fidelity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o At grade level, teachers collaborate on academics and student support.</td>
<td>o Student interviews indicate that some teachers overly rely on worksheets and packets.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>o Classroom observations reveal that some teachers could leverage technology more to make lessons more engaging (Example: A teacher was explaining what a submarine was and could have easily used the internet and his projector to show students pictures and videos of actual submarines.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) Student progress-tracking:</td>
<td>(e) Student progress-tracking:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>o Student interviews indicate that they are unaware of their learning goals and do not partner with their teachers to track them.</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### VII. Engaged Parents and Community

**A transformational school:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Engages parents and community stakeholders in the vision and mission of the school</td>
<td>i. Develops and implements an effective communications plan consistently engaging the community in becoming educated regarding quality education and developing support for their charter school</td>
<td>Documents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Ensures the active engagement of administrators, board members, parents, and staff in communication and outreach planning and implementation</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Communicates and engages all stakeholders in the mission and vision of the school</td>
<td>• Parent interviews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iv. Involves students, parents, and community members as part of the school’s support system.</td>
<td>• Parent and community communication/involvement plan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>v. Fosters strong relationships between school staff and parents.</td>
<td>• Data on parent and community participation in school events</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Seeks input from relevant, critical, impacted stakeholders</td>
<td>i. Establishes regular opportunities and methods of communication among the stakeholders, administration, and the board</td>
<td>• Parent-teacher contact data</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>ii. Conducts its meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner</td>
<td>• Newsletters and other communications</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>iii. Operates within the requirements of the Missouri Sunshine Law ensuring board meeting agendas and meeting minutes are posted in a timely manner for broad public review and all state non-profit requirements are met</td>
<td>• Parent survey data</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Other Evidence
- Parent interviews
- Parent and community communication/involvement plan
- Data on parent and community participation in school events
- Parent-teacher contact data
- Newsletters and other communications
- Parent survey data
- Board meeting agendas, notices, minutes and supporting documentation

### Element VII: Parents and Community

#### Areas of Strength
- (a) Parent and community engagement:
  - Teachers reach out to parents in a variety of ways and report positive behavior and progress in balance with negative reports.
  - Teacher and school leader interviews indicate that, in general, parents provide strong support to the school.
  - In the parent survey:
    - 80% of responders agreed with the statement, “SLLIS communicates effectively.”

#### Areas for Growth
- (a) Parent and community engagement:
  - Teachers need more support to build stronger relationships and involvement with less-affluent families.
    - Related to this, a few interviewees indicate that some teachers need to develop greater cultural competency to improve communication with parents.
- 96% of responders indicated that they are “kept informed about parental involvement in activities offered by the school.”
- 80% of responders indicated that they have attended “any parental involvement activities.”

- (b) Input from stakeholders:
  - In the parent survey, 75% of responders agreed with the statement, “SLLIS leadership wants my feedback.”

- (b) Input from stakeholders:
  - While 73% of responders in the parent survey are “familiar with SLLIS’s mission statement, only 54% indicated that they “feel connected to SLLIS’s mission.”
  - In the parent survey, 42% of responders were neutral or disagreed with the statement, “SLLIS leadership considers my feedback when making decisions.”
### VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System

The support staff of a transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **a.** Develops and utilizes a comprehensive, developmental student support system that proactively assists all students to develop and apply skills for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school years. | i. Collects and uses academic, behavior and attendance data to:  
   o Plan appropriate programs for students both individually and collectively.  
   o Monitor student performance and provide appropriate interventions in cooperation with all stakeholders for student success.  
ii. Assists all students with developing academic, career, and personal/social skills; helping them to utilize reasoning, understand connections and make complex choices.  
iii. Uses a variety of activities, resources and strategies; including individual and group counseling, classroom presentations, academic advising, parent education and other responsive services. | **Required Documents:**  
   - SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA & 504)  
   - ELL Intervention Policy  
   - Title I Needs Assessment and Plan |
| **b.** Advocates for students and provides professional expertise to help school personnel, parents/guardians and community members to increase the effectiveness of student success. | i. Proactively facilitates communication and collaboration within and among the school, home and community to promote and build trust, understanding and partnerships with all segments of the school community.  
ii. Seeks solutions and provide referrals to overcome barriers to effective involvement in education and success of students. | **Required Documents:** |
| **c.** Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children with disabilities are identified and evaluated; and if eligible, receive services that meet their specific needs. | i. Ensure that teachers have the expertise to identify students who may have special needs and communicates regularly with teachers to share concerns.  
ii. Follows protocol related to parent concerns in a timely manner.  
iii. Develops and implements a system (internal or external) to evaluate students.  
iv. Develops and implements appropriate services that meet each student’s individual needs.  
v. Is in compliance with all special education statutes and procedures. | **Required Documents:**  
   - DESE CAPs  
   - Staff, student and parent surveys |
| **d.** Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who qualify as homeless receive all necessary | i. Develops and implements a plan that’s in compliance with state and federal guidelines that ensures homeless students have an equal opportunity to a public education. | **Required Documents:**  
   - Homeless Student Policy |
| **Other Evidence** | |  
   - Student support team interviews  
   - School leader interviews |

Other Evidence

- Student support team interviews
- School leader interviews
services and support to meet their specific needs.

| e. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who qualify as ELL receive necessary services and support to meet their specific needs. | i. Develops and implements a plan that's in compliance with state and federal guidelines that ensures ELL students receive necessary services and support to meet their specific needs. | Required Documents:
- ELL Intervention Plan

| Other Evidence |
- Student support team interviews
- School leader interviews
- DESE compliance reports
- Staff, student and parent surveys

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**Element VIII: Student Support System**

**Dr. Thurma DeLoach's Review**

**Leadership**

- There was much optimism about student support services being together in one building when SLLIS transitioned to a unified single campus. This would provide the opportunity to create efficiencies, organize services around grade levels, build systems of support for students with special needs. However, unanticipated staffing problems occurred when two of the three special education teachers and the Educational Support Counselor resigned before the start of school. Best efforts to locate qualified special education teachers were unsuccessful until well into the fall semester. The Educational Support Counselor was not replaced until March 2020, leaving close to 50 students without the therapeutic counseling services they previously received at school. Efforts on the part of the special education administrator to utilize existing staffing to provide special education instructional minutes required by student IEPs were not successful. Many students did not receive special education services during the fall semester.
  - The SLLIS board of education was notified of the non-compliance issue.
  - An experienced special education director was secured to replace the former administrator who was terminated in early November. The new director person worked directly with DESE for advisement on how to address the non-compliance issue.
    - Lost instructional minutes due to each student were calculated.
    - Parents were notified by letter of the non-compliance issue.

- The current student support services administrator requested a part-time schedule for the 2020-21 SY. An experienced special education teacher/PBIS facilitator will assist her in this role—also on a half time basis. The director will focus on monitoring compliance and creating systems of support. Her assistant will focus on coaching and training special education teachers. She will also facilitate the Student Support Team (the collaborative problem-solving team for Tier 2 and 3 supports and interventions). With a new principal, assistant principal, instructional coach, and two part-time special education/student support services leads, clarity on who takes the lead for what will be important. Strong, intentional, and consistent collaboration among the administrative leads is vital for ongoing development of the responsive student support systems.
  - Protected scheduled time needs to be scheduled for regular administrative collaboration specific to student support services.
  - The new administrative team should be trained/re-freshed on compliance requirements for special education, homeless, ELL, Section 504, dyslexia. This team must work together to ensure that the compliance issues that have plagued SLLIS in prior years do not continue.

- Grade Level Team (GLT) meetings are the primary vehicle for including all teachers in regular data review, problem solving, and professional growth.
  - Administrative commitment to scheduling and leading GLTs starting at the beginning of the year is vital for ensuring that the significant instructional priorities identified at SLLIS are
• Compensatory services were offered for the summer of 2020.
  o SLLIS HR and administration worked with many outside resources to recruit qualified special education teachers. All open positions were filled by the end of the semester.
  o Starting in the 2020-21 SY, all teachers are hired under contract for the full school year instead of “at will”. This change should prevent this serious special education problem from repeating itself in the future.

• Under the leadership of this experienced special education administrator, numerous other compliance issues were identified in several student support areas. She is currently writing operational procedures and policies to support multiple aspects of student support services—including dyslexia screening, special education, ELL, Section 504 and annual staff training calendars. Written procedures and policies will help ensure that systems do not break down when leadership and staff changes occur.
  o The SLLIS website now has student support services policies posted and available for public access—including Special Education Child Find, Homeless (McKinney-Vento), ELL (Lau Plan).

• The current special education administrator meets regularly with student support instructional staff. All special education and ELL teachers participate in these meetings. Staff report this regular collaboration time has united them as a department and is creating efficiencies in how students are scheduled for services. Teachers report feeling more supported by each other and more aware of the issues and needs of students throughout the school.

• SLLIS’s Executive Director expressed confidence in the improvements underway for Special Education and Student Support Services under the leadership of the current administrator.

Dyslexia Screening & Intervention Support

• Starting in August of 2019, All MO. public schools were required to annually screen students for potential reading challenges related to dyslexia. (Spring screening was not required after school closure due to the Covid-19 pandemic.) A screening plan was developed for the fall of 2019 and partially implemented. Appropriate tools and procedures for screening were available; however, all screening requirements described in MO Senate Bill 638 were not met.
• Aimsweb Plus was purchased as the primary tool for dyslexia screening. Some staff were trained to use this tool for screening and progress monitoring.

Dyslexia Screening & Intervention Support

• SLLIS did not meet dyslexia screening requirements in 2019-20.
  SLLIS did meet most of the dyslexia screening requirements in the prior year (2018-19).
  o Administrative oversight of the screening process, schedule, documentation, and use of screening data is necessary. Given the new administrative team in place for 2020-21 SY, clarity as to who is responsible for ensuring that all screening requirements are met is urgent.
  o Although special education staff often participate in dyslexia screening, this requirement is a general education requirement and is not within the purview of special education personnel.
SLLIS met the requirement that all teachers annually participate in 2 hours of dyslexia training. Most classroom teachers participated in a virtual training session conducted (April 17). Documentation of this training was provided for this review.

The primary special education teacher participated in Literacy Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling (LETRS) training in June 2020. LETRS is identified/promoted by DESE as a research-based, high quality professional development resource. This teacher should be tapped as a great resource to other teachers who instruct students with reading challenges.

- LETRS training is offered periodically at a reduced cost through EdPlus.

- Classroom teachers should be included in the screening process and have time to work with and understand screening results for their own students. Consideration should be given to training classroom teachers and empowering each grade level team to conduct the screening, data review procedures and intervention planning within their own grade level.

- Screening dates should be scheduled on the school instructional calendar.

- A clear expectation and plan for using screening data and providing intervention for students identified as “at-risk” for reading difficulty needs to be articulated and resources provided for helping teachers provide intervention.

- Parental notification of the screening results after each round of screening is required. A written notification should be mailed to parents after screening and classroom teachers can discuss the results and the intervention plans with parents during fall conferences.

- Information about required dyslexia screening, screening dates, and how the results are used to help students identified with reading challenges could be included in the parent handbook.

Tier 2 literacy intervention resources are very limited at SLLIS. No literacy specialist is on staff and no push in or pull out interventions for students with reading challenges are available (outside of IEP driven instruction for students with disabilities). Classroom teachers reported feeling ill equipped to create interventions. Time for intervention has not been dedicated in the classroom schedule.

- Consideration should be given to creating an intervention block within the daily schedule for each grade level (e.g.—20 to 30 minutes).

- Benchmark Advance provides targeted intervention resources which align with Benchmark literacy lessons. This resource should be utilized for targeted small intervention groups in the classroom.

- Difficulties with phonemic awareness and phonics are the primary causes of reading difficulty in developing readers. Every primary classroom should be implementing an evidence-based phonemic awareness program (e.g. Michael Haggerty, SIPPS). Upper grades should provide targeted
Social Emotional Behavioral (SEB) Supports

A team of SLLIS administrators, teachers, and school psychologists convened in the summer of 2019 to revise the current SLLIS Discipline code. The goal was greater focus on restorative practices paired with prevention/intervention supports for students with chronic behavior challenges.

- The Student Success Plan (SSP) was developed by this group and launched in the fall of 2019. The SSP focuses on trauma-informed restorative practices, added instructional support & coaching for students with chronic, lower level behavior issues and universal classroom routines to support behavioral learning.
- Out of school suspension is recognized as a last resort to be used when student behaviors significantly impact the safety of others. OSS is described in the SSP as being most appropriate for children beyond grade one.
- The SSP identifies trauma-informed practices, Positive Behavior Intervention Supports (PBIS), Student Success Centers and Student Success Teams as primary vehicles for connecting students with SEB supports and intervention.
- A Coordinator of Instructional Support (a certified school psychologist) was hired to coordinate the Student Success Centers, Student Success Team, and to assist administration and teachers when significant student behaviors occur.
- Teachers have been introduced to Community Circles as a universal classroom strategy for building community and phonemic and phonics intervention to students identified with gaps in these skills.
- Consideration of offering LETRS training to other primary-grade teachers and the instructional coach is recommended.

- Aimsweb Plus is a powerful tool for screening and progress monitoring student growth in literacy. It also provides direct guidance on appropriate goals and interventions for students who are below expectancy in literacy development.
- This resource could be more fully utilized by intervention and grade level teams in planning interventions and monitoring student progress throughout the school year.
- Future funding considerations should include a literacy specialist to train and coach SLLIS teachers on literacy instruction (Benchmark Advance), assist with data analysis, and intervention planning/implementation.

Social-Emotional-Behavioral Support

- Student needs in the area of social-emotional-behavior have historically been a significant concern at SLLIS. Teacher interviews suggest that though efforts have been made to address these concerns each year, more needs to be done.
- Although the Student Success Plan provides a comprehensive “blueprint” for supporting social-emotional-behavioral development and intervention, the concepts and strategies proved to be a difficult shift for SLLIS. Administrative consistency and staff buy-in was difficult to achieve. Teachers appear to not understand the Student Success Centers as tools for intervention and support—not in-school suspension or discipline centers.
- Prior to the start of school, the Student Success Plan should be re-launched with SLLIS staff. Supporting teachers in understanding the rationales for this shift can be challenging and requires consistent messaging and modeling of how children’s brains develop and specifically how adults support/facilitate children’s learning of civility, kindness, and empathy.
- More focused training on how children develop social-emotional-behavioral competencies and how adults help them in that learning, as well as the impact of trauma, and relationships as the foundation of all SEB development is recommended.
  - Dr. Melanie Fitzgerald would be an excellent resource for providing this type of training with the SLLIS staff. (Dr. Fitzgerald provided the Early Childhood behavior...
including all voices. More teacher training on this and other
and other Restorative Practices is planned.

- Student Success Centers—one for primary grades and one for upper
elementary—are staffed by two strong Instructional Assistants. These
behavior support assistants are highly skilled at building relationships,
de-escalating/calming and mentoring students.
  - Students are referred for SSC supports by the Student
    Success Team and through administration.
  - Current programming includes Zones of Regulation and other
    sensory motor supports for students who are learning self-
    regulation strategies. Students also receive assistance with
    classwork and time to calm down when their behaviors are
    escalating in the classroom.
  - Although goal-driven, progress monitoring data were not
    collected on students receiving intervention through the SSC,
    the Coordinator of Instructional Support, SSC facilitators, and
    classroom teachers reported improved behavior and
    classroom functioning for students supported through the
    SSC. One student who had previously been suspended out of
    school frequently, was specifically mentioned.
  - Both SSC facilitators and the Instructional Support
    Coordinator participated in a 4 session (10 hours)
    Professional Development series on Early Childhood Behavior
    Supports and Interventions in the spring of 2020.

- SLLIS is in its 4th year of partnership with BJC Behavioral Health
  through a Missouri Foundation for Health grant. However, a qualified
  replacement for last year’s Educational Support Counselor (ESC) was
  not hired until March—2 weeks before the school shut down due to
  Covid-19. Starting just before school closure made it very challenging
  for the new ESC to establish a caseload and begin to work with
  students. With help from the SLLIS social worker, students with the
  greatest mental health needs were identified and a virtual counseling
  support program was implemented for the remainder of the spring
  semester.

- The SLLIS social worker and ESC appear to be forming a strong
  collaboration for triaged services to students with mental health needs.

- 2nd Step, an evidence-based social-emotional learning (SEL) program,
  was purchased 2 years ago. 2nd Step is identified as the schoolwide
  SEL program for all SLLIS students.

- PBIS continues to be the SEB Framework for SLLIS. PBIS
  consultants from EdPlus provides on-going assistance to SLLIS
  administration on implementation issues.

- The Student Success Centers are the primary vehicles for delivery of
  Tier 2 & 3 SEB supports and interventions. Much can be learned by
  reviewing the successes and challenges experienced in the first year
  of implementation.
  - Facilitators of these services should be recognized as student
    support staff—beyond the traditional Instructional Assistants in
    their roles & responsibilities. They should participate in
    Student Success Team meetings when students are being
    considered for support through the SSC and should provide
    input and data when participating students are being
    reviewed.
  - When a student on the SSC case load is referred to the office
    for disciplinary concerns, the SSC facilitator should be
    informed and included in determining appropriate follow-up
    through the SSC.
  - The Student Success Plan includes a detailed description of
    the SSC services, functions, and Tier 2 interventions;
    however, these descriptions were not shared with the 2
    facilitators. As the SSCs re-launch in the fall, the 2 facilitators
    and the SSC administrative supervisor should review the
    current descriptions and make necessary revisions to the plan,
    including systems for setting student goals, data collection,
    referral and exiting procedures, protocols for key Tier 2
    interventions, etc.
  - A training plan for the SSC facilitators as described in the SSP
    should be implemented as funding and training resources are
    identified.
  - A Student Success Center specifically for older students
    should be considered in the revision of the existing SSC
    model. Current centers are oriented toward younger students;
    however older students could benefit from a facilitated center
    with age appropriate sensory and calming tools. It may be
    possible to build this into the existing schedule without adding
    additional staff.
  - Continued opportunities to participate in professional
    development specific to social-emotional-behavioral supports,
    interventions, and trauma should be offered to the SSC staff.
    - Several other local charter schools have support
      centers similar to the SSC. Site visits to these similar
      programs to share ideas, resources, and systems
      should be considered.
**Student Success Team (SST)**

- SLLIS implements a Student Success Team for connecting students with academic and SEB supports and interventions prior to referral for special education eligibility. Research indicates that many students can be appropriately supported using data-driven, problem solving processes like these. The SST team is comprised of school administrators, social worker, school psychologist and when possible, the referring classroom teacher. The SST problem solving framework

- Implementation of the 2nd Step SEL Program continues to be inconsistent. The SLLIS social worker coordinated the program and modeled lessons for classroom teachers; however, not all teachers have embraced the program or see its benefit.
  - Clarification on implementation expectations is needed and as a schoolwide SEL program, implementation should not be optional.
  - Re-launch/refresh of 2nd Step should be included in the August start of school workshops. It is important for staff to understand the goals of this program and how it supports development of social-emotional-behavioral competencies, self-regulation and empathy in all children.
  - Administrative expectation and monitoring of 2nd Step implementation should be communicated regularly to staff—with check ins and report outs during grade level and schoolwide faculty meetings.

- The annual professional development calendar should include regular training on social emotional competency, resilience, impact of trauma and other environmental factors in young children. (Dr. Fitzgerald is an exceptional PD resource in these areas.)

- SLLIS has adopted a Suicide and Bullying prevention/intervention policy. The social worker provided some classroom lessons on bullying; however, staff training on suicide & bullying prevention/intervention was not offered this year. This training for staff should be included on the annual PD calendar.

- SLLIS has identified as a PBIS school for more than seven years; however, staff continue to describe its implementation as inconsistent and spotty. As a highly researched framework for school-wide positive behavior support, administration needs to commit to implementation with fidelity or drop it in favor of something that will be implemented with fidelity.
  - Consideration should be given to re-creating the school-wide Tier 1 PBIS team, should SLLIS continue to use the PBIS framework

**Student Success Team (SST)**

- The Student Success Team structure is still developing at SLLIS. The concept is solid; however, issues with implementation of support plans and collection of data continue to create frustration for teachers. An experienced special education teacher/behavior facilitator will be the SST coordinator in the upcoming school year. Key considerations in this re-launch include:
from prior years was not written and when key staff left SLLIS, SST procedures and documentation were not available for new staff. Coordinator of Instructional Support facilitated SST for most of the 2019-20 SY.

- The current SST operates like a CARE Team—referral documents from teachers or administrators are reviewed in the team meeting, problem areas are identified and team members suggest supports and interventions that could address the concerns.
- The team meets every other week. Prior cases are reviewed for progress and new referrals are discussed.
- The current problem-solving process is informal but efforts to review available data—NWEA, discipline, grades-- and targeted goals increased over the course of the school year. Documentation of plans is maintained and reviewed in future meetings.
- The SST is identified as the vehicle for school-based referrals for special education evaluations and for referrals to the Student Success Centers.

Special Education
- Despite a very tumultuous year for Special Education, staffing, services, morale, collaboration, and optimism improved significantly in

Special Education
- Identification of grade level teams as the first response for academic and social-emotional-behavioral concerns
  - One meeting per month should be dedicated to review of data to identify those students who are off track academically and/or behaviorally and to match students with classroom and/or grade level tier 2 interventions. A second meeting should be used to review student progress and change supports as needed.
  - Grade level teams should refer students who are not responding to the SST for more individualized support planning.
- The school psychologist and special education teachers that support the grade level should participate in grade level team meetings to assist with data review and small group/grade level intervention planning.
  - It is important that staff members who are assigned roles in implementing student support plans understand their own accountability. Administrative checks on implementation of the plans are needed.
  - The GLT and SST process should be documented in a written handbook with forms, flow charts and available Tier 2 interventions identified. A visual map of academic and SEB interventions and data tools should be created to assist teams match students with available interventions (e.g. Check In Check out, Meaningful Work, Short term social skill groups, mentoring, Steps to Advance (literacy), sensory-motor breaks for self-regulation).
  - Functional Behavioral Assessment (FBAs) are the foundation for planning behavioral interventions appropriate to the needs of the student. FBAs are a required part of the BIP and disciplinary process for students with disabilities under IDEA and Section 504. There is little evidence that these assessments are routinely conducted or utilized to match students with interventions that address the specific function of the behavior.
    - FBAs as part of the behavioral intervention planning process should be re-instated.
    - Re-fresh FBA training which includes clear expectations for when FBAs are to be considered is recommended for the SST and special education staff.
Early spring. Two special education staff members left SLLIS in the spring and the new staff brought renewed enthusiasm, willingness to learn, energy, and teeming spirit to the department. Numerous special education staff members commented specifically about the improved morale, teaming and appreciation for the current special education administrator’s leadership.

- Training, coaching, departmental planning is embedded into the scheduled weekly team meetings which include the ELL teachers.
- The current special education director intensified administrative monitoring of evaluation reports, compliance timelines, student files, documentation, and IEP services.
- A more efficient service delivery plan was designed in which special education teachers have assigned grade levels (Kg-, 4 and 5-8 caseloads) and a 3rd teacher provides more services to students with more time intensive instructional needs.
- The special education team created a strong Continuity of Instruction plan and pivoted to provide IEP and related services virtually during school closure in the spring.

**English Language Learners (ELL)**
- Administrative oversight for ELL has significantly improved under the leadership of the current director. A LAU plan has been written which should significantly improve fidelity of ELL services.
- SLLIS currently services 101 students identified as ELL. Two certified ELL teachers serve these students—one teacher works with grades Kg-4 and the other focuses on grades 5-8. Services are delivered through pull out and push in models. Scheduling teachers to focus on specific grade level is an example of improved efficiency of services on the unified SLLIS campus.
- The ELL teachers are developing a strong partnership; they collaborate on programming, assessments, and problem solving.
- WIDA and ACCESS assessments were completed as required.
- Benchmark Advance ELL instructional resources are used for some of the ELL programming. This program aligns with the general education literacy program adopted by SLLIS 2 years ago.
- The MS ELL teacher pushes into English and math to support students with content vocabulary, reading and writing structures of English. Middle School teachers reported ELL push in services are effective in helping students learn within their classrooms.

**English Language Learners (ELL)**
- Professional learning specific to the needs of English Language Learners has not been provided regularly to classroom teachers. Given that approximately 20% of the SLLIS student population is identified as ELL, more intentional planning for ELL professional learning should be incorporated into the annual PD calendar.
  - Plans for regular communication and grade level collaboration around ELL needs should be scheduled into grade level team meetings.
  - Opportunities for ELL teachers to participate in PD specific to their role as ELL teachers should be made available. DESE and EdPlus offer period PD opportunities in the St. Louis area.
• ELL teachers pivoted to a virtual learning platform during school closure in the spring.
• An ELL assessment and services plan (Lau Plan) has been developed for the 2020-21 SY. Community outreach and parental training/support has been added to the ELL program for the upcoming school year. The plan includes collection of student data, support plans, and progress maintained in ELL “portfolios”. These files will now be part of students’ permanent records.

Other
• General Compliance
  o SLLIS has adopted a Seclusion, Isolation, and Restraint policy including annual staff training and procedures for documenting & reporting when restraint is used.
    ▪ Most staff members were trained in de-escalation techniques and selected staff in the use of physical restraint as required by state regulation and policy (January 6, 2020).
    ▪ The plan for 2020-21 is to shift to Crisis Prevention Intervention (CPI) training model—which is available through Character Plus. CPI is used by numerous districts in the St. Louis area.
• SLLIS received funding for a full-time school nurse through the Healthy Kids Healthy Minds grant. This partnership ensures on-going supervision, collaboration, “standard of care” training, and resources provided through Children’s Hospital. This is a significant partnership given the Covid-19 concerns all schools are facing when schools re-open in the fall.
• SLLIS is in the process of partnering with 2 other charter schools to provide Pre-Kindergarten early childhood programming. The program would operate on the SLLIS campus and would create a KG feeder program for all 3 participating charter schools.
  o Consideration should be given to incorporating Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) into the program. ECSE is 100% funded through state and federal dollars.
  o On-site ECSE services would ensure early identification and intervention for young children with disabilities prior to the start of Kg. It also would provide receiving schools the opportunity to plan for KG special education services in the spring of the prior year.

Other
• SLLIS has already taken steps to address some of the concerns raised above for the 2020-21 school year, including:
  o Staff training on dyslexia screening.
  o A forty-minute block built into the master schedule for daily interventions.
  o Hiring a Curriculum and Instruction Coach with expertise in literacy.
  o A planned re-launch of Second Step as its Social Emotional Learning program.