2020 UMSL Annual Review Report: Part 1
The Soulard School

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Evaluation Standards
Ten elements of school evaluation:

I. Transformative and Innovative Vision
II. Responsible Board Governance
III. Strong School Leaders
IV. Transformational Curriculum
V. Empowering Culture of Achievement
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 the end of the 2019-20 school year.

1. Areas of Strength
   Here are the top strengths that you can leverage to continuously improve and move you towards your vision.
   • Vision:
     o Stakeholders maintain a strong commitment to the school’s mission.
   • Board Governance:
     o The board approaches the transition to a public charter school and accompanying challenges with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn.
   • Leadership:
     o The Administrative team leverages its passionate commitment to the school and strong relational skills to guide the school through the transition.
   • Curriculum and Instruction:
     o A student centered, project based approach engages students and spurs their growth in both academic and non-academic areas.
   • Culture of Achievement:
     o One feels the sense of community and friendly, accepting atmosphere immediately upon entering the building and classrooms.
   • Teachers:
     o Hard working teachers care deeply about engaging students with meaningful content and push their thinking skills.
   • Parent Relations:
     o This is a significant strength.
   • Student Support:
     o The transition to a public charter school presented more challenges to the school’s student support system than any other area. Its leader and the teaching staff are to be commended for their efforts to meet them and ensure the school meets student social-emotional needs.

2. Areas for Growth
   Here are the key areas for growth that could move you towards your vision.
   • Vision:
     o An important reason behind The Soulard School’s decision to become a public charter school was its desire to increase capacity to serve more diverse students from a racial and socio-economic perspective. Consider putting together a strategy and plans that will close the gap between aspiration and reality.
   • Board Governance:
     o Since the transition began, the board’s roles have expanded in significant ways. Board members have begun to realize that public school governance requires greater commitment in terms of time and involvement compared to independent school governance. It is important that each member fully meets their commitment; especially during these first few years as a public school.
     o Construct a new strategic plan that focuses on the next phase of The Soulard School’s transition to a public charter school.
     o Consider how to improve the board’s monitoring of student academic performance.
   • School Leadership:
     o In coordination with the board, consider how to increase diversity among staff and students.
Consider how best to support the new principal’s transition to her role.

- **Curriculum and Instruction:**
  - One of the key challenges facing The Soulard School is reconciling its previous curricular and instructional approach with the learning requirements imposed by the state. This will create tensions between teacher autonomy versus school accountability; open versus structured curriculum; and classroom versus school-wide priorities. Acknowledging and facing these tensions will be paramount.

- **Teachers:**
  - Consider how to ensure teachers find ownership in the curriculum and instruction development work that lies ahead.

- **Student Support System**
  - Continue to prioritize strengthening Soulard’s systems in this area.
I. Transformative and Innovative Vision
   A transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</table>
| 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:  
Other Evidence  
   - Student, parent and staff interviews and survey data  
   - Classroom observations |

**Element I: Vision**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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| The vast majority of the board, teachers, staff and administration clearly share the same mission and vision for the school. This vision includes:  
o. A focus on developing the whole child.  
o. Supporting children’s growth to become better versions of themselves.  
o. Becoming a model for other schools.  
All stakeholder interviews indicated the existence of a strong sense of community and collaboration fueled by belief in the school’s mission. | An important reason behind The Soulard School’s decision to become a public charter school was its desire to increase capacity to serve more diverse students from a racial and socio-economic perspective. Consider putting together a strategy and plans that will close the gap between aspiration and reality. |
II. Responsible Governance
The Board of Directors of a transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Operates legitimately and in the best interest of its students and</td>
<td>i. Considers implications of decisions on the mission of the school.</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<tr>
<td>mission.</td>
<td>The Board annually self-evaluates using a standardized tool that</td>
<td>• Board Self-Evaluation</td>
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<td></td>
<td>assesses performance based on setting goals, developing policy,</td>
<td>• Insurance Policies</td>
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<td>communication with the school and community and oversight of school</td>
<td>- Directors and Officer Coverage</td>
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<td></td>
<td>leadership.</td>
<td>- General Liability</td>
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<td>Ensures the board and school have all necessary insurance policies</td>
<td>- Professional Liability</td>
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<td>in place.</td>
<td>- Property</td>
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<td>- Workmen Compensation</td>
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<td>- Employee Dishonesty/Crime (minimum $500k)</td>
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<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- Observation of board meetings</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>- UMSL Sponsor communication with board president and/or directors</td>
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<td>b. Recruits and maintains a strong governing board with diverse</td>
<td>i. Includes individuals who are experienced in managing organizations and</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<td>backgrounds and skills sets.</td>
<td>well versed in charter law</td>
<td>• Board Organizational Structure Chart</td>
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<td>Maintains among its Directors a balance of skills and professional</td>
<td>• Board Director Profiles/Contact Information</td>
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<td>expertise (i.e. K–12 education, business, marketing, legal,</td>
<td>• Assurance of Board Criminal Background and FCSR (child abuse registry)</td>
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<td>accounting, fundraising, real estate etc.) necessary to fulfill all</td>
<td>Checks</td>
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<td>Board obligations.</td>
<td>• Board Development Plans</td>
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<td>Provides new board members a formal orientation on the purpose and</td>
<td>• Board Member Financial Disclosure Confirmation</td>
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<td>educational vision of the school, the school’s performance</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>objectives, and their roles and legal responsibilities.</td>
<td>- Director interviews</td>
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<td>Seeks information and professional development opportunities related</td>
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<td>to charter operation, laws, and effective non-profit board work.</td>
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<td>c. Conducts its business in compliance with all state statutes and</td>
<td>i. Meetings are regularly scheduled and appropriately conducted.</td>
<td>Documents</td>
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<td>regulations.</td>
<td>Governance records and documentation are appropriately created and</td>
<td>• Board Meeting Agenda</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>maintained.</td>
<td>• Board Meeting Calendar</td>
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<td>School business is conducted in a transparent manner subject to the</td>
<td>• Board Meeting Document Packets</td>
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<td>provisions and sections 610.010 to 610.030, open meetings law; free</td>
<td>• Board Meeting Minutes - Approved</td>
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<td>of conflict of interest, and models best practices regarding</td>
<td>Other Evidence</td>
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<td></td>
<td>governance roles and responsibilities.</td>
<td>- Observation of board meetings</td>
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<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 |
iv. Provides oversight of school leader’s handling of attendance reporting.
v. Ensures the board, school leader and staff are adequately covered by ins

i. Fulfills its responsibilities to UMSL’s sponsorship liaison.

The Board communicates in a timely manner with UMSL’s sponsorship liaison about significant policy, personnel, school performance or legal issues.

A written response from the Board that addresses the concerns and recommendations of the annual sponsor evaluation no later than one week following the board’s regularly-scheduled October meeting.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Operates in best interests of students and mission</td>
<td>The board’s roles have expanded in significant ways. Board members have begun to realize that public school governance requires greater commitment in terms of time and involvement compared to independent school governance. As an independent school, its number one priority was funding operations. Now, ensuring that the school meets the academic needs of all students joins that priority as a co-equal. It is important that each member fully meets their commitment; especially during these first few years as a public school.</td>
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<td>Meeting observations and member interviews strongly indicate that the board understands and believes in the school’s mission. The mission drives its decision making.</td>
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<tr>
<td>(b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:</td>
<td>(b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members bring diverse areas of expertise to the board: law, business and investment, school leadership, real estate, education funding, and educational technology.</td>
<td>Consider increasing the number of board members and address needs in these areas:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:</td>
<td>Diversity within the board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To the best of UMSL’s knowledge, The Soulard School’s board is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations, including background checks and open meetings laws, except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.</td>
<td>Expertise in public relations or marketing, and child psychology.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Refer to comments under (d) Policies directly below.</td>
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</table>
• (d) Policies:
  o The school has been working on developing all of its policies based upon the MCPSA-endorsed policy manual.

• (e) Strategic approach:
  o The school is completing the third year of its three-year strategic plan that addressed the initial transition from independent to charter school.

• (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
  o The board maintains a very positive relationship with the school's executive director, characterized by open communication and mutual respect.
  o The board drafted an evaluation process for the ED. Its features are aligned with current understanding of best practice.

• (g) Monitoring responsibility:
  o The board monitors ED performance and financials.
  o Board interviews indicate that the board is aware of the key challenges and issues school leadership faces and provides appropriate support.

• (h) Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility
  o The Soulard School 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 The Soulard School fulfills its responsibilities to UMSL, as defined in the contract between the two institutions.

Community Relations
• Parent surveys indicate families are very pleased with school-family relations.

• (d) Policies:
  o Continue work on customizing the polices and aim for completion by November, 2020.

• (e) Strategic approach:
  o Now that the transition to becoming a charter school is complete, it is time to construct a new strategic plan that focuses on the next phase of the transition to charter school, builds on experiences from the first year and addresses emerging challenges; particularly how best to:
    ▪ Meet the needs of students underserved in St. Louis.
    ▪ Buttress financial resources to ensure long-term sustainability
  o Consider how to utilize student academic achievement data to inform decisions related to improving school performance. See also (g) below.

• (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
  o As this is the first year of implementation of the ED evaluation process, consider reviewing and adjusting as necessary.
  o As the Board and ED identify her areas for growth, provide the ED training opportunities that address those areas.

• (g) Monitoring responsibility:
  o The board needs to consider processes to improve how it monitors student achievement through systematic analysis of assessment outcomes. To support this, school leaders should regularly submit internal student performance data (and eventually, state data) to the board for review and feedback.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Board Development and Training</strong></th>
<th><strong>Board Development and Training</strong></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• The board development plan is thorough and sets up topics and goals that, if met, will increase member knowledge and skills in board governance and strengthen board ties to the school community.</td>
<td>• Board surveys and interviews identified a need for increased understanding of:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| • Board members underwent several training experiences concerning charter school governance, including presentations from UMSL's charter office and MCPSA; and a special board retreat as part of the transition to becoming a public charter school. |   - Charter School Law  
   - Missouri’s Sunshine Law  
   - Special Education  
   - School Leader Evaluation  
   - Curriculum and instruction: Especially in ELA and math. |
| **Board Meetings** | **Board Meetings** |
| • Board meetings are well run and efficient. | • During the first half of the year, the ED led board meetings. Currently, the board chair leads the meetings. Continue this practice. |
| **Board Survey** | **Board Survey** |
| • Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following areas as strengths:  
  - Clarifying the School’s mission and vision.  
  - Strategic planning and goal setting for the school  
  - Ensuring legal and ethical integrity | • Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following as areas for improvement:  
  - Developing the financial resources needed to support student performance and school success.  
  - Identifying, cultivating, and integrating new board members based on the needs of the school (background, diversity, expertise, etc.) |
## III. Strong School Leadership and Operations

A transformational school leader:

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Standards</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</table>
| **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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Homeless and ELL Students</th>
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<tbody>
<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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<tr>
<th>Fiscal Management</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Refer to Element IX: Sound Financial Operations below)</td>
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<th>State Testing</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Quality Assurance – Grade Level Assessment Assurance Document</td>
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<tr>
<td>• State Exam Security Policy</td>
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<td>• State Exam Testing Calendar</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Operations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Student/Parent Handbook</td>
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<td>• Media Policy</td>
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<tr>
<th>Other Evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>• School leader interview</td>
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<td>• Document/MOSIS submission history with UMSL and DESE</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Interviews with consultants: Shannon Spradling and Thurma DeLoach</td>
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<tr>
<td>• FERPA compliance procedures</td>
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<td>• Student record keeping system</td>
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**Element III: School Leadership and Operations**

**Areas of Strength**

**Executive Director**

- (a) Investment of others:
  - Staff and Principal interviews indicate that the ED’s passion for the school permeates the entire staff.
  - Board interviews strongly indicate confidence in and respect for the ED’s leadership.
  - Teacher interviews indicate strong appreciation for the ED’s support and also cited the Director of Operation’s work as very helpful in connecting them to parents.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - TSS’s co-teaching model provides many benefits:
    - Low teacher/student ratio.
    - Extra floating student support in the classroom.
    - In-class partnership that ensures constant sharing and testing of ideas along with feedback for continuous growth.

**Areas for Growth**

**Executive Director**

- (a) Investment of others:
  - TSS did not administer a general survey of staff covering all aspects of school life and operations (Academic program, evaluation and professional development, curriculum and instruction, school climate, school leadership, discipline and behavior, the student support system, parent relations, etc.)

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - The ED noted that the transition requires her to be more connected to what’s going on “day to day” than in previous years and that she sees herself needing to continue to operate that way.
More time to focus on instruction and differentiation.
  - TSS’s approach to technology and commitment to innovation is a strength.
  - The ED and her team are to be commended for responding quickly and effectively to the closure resulting from the pandemic.

- (d) Culture building:
  - The ED works on building strong relationships that fuel the overall culture in positive ways.
  - Socioemotional learning is embedded in the school culture.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - To the best of UMSL’s knowledge, TSS’s administration is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.
  - All TSS staff have cleared Criminal Background checks and FCSR registration.
  - TSS limits access to MOSIS and Core Data to appropriate staff necessitated by their roles.
  - DESE reported no concerns to UMSL’s office regarding state reporting or any compliance issues.

**Principal**

- (a) Investment of others:
  - Teacher interviews strongly indicate:
    - The principal offers support.
    - They have a voice in decisions that impact their work.
    - They appreciate the autonomy they have to create their curriculum.
    - They value their opportunities to collaborate with each.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - Regarding diversity, the school should consider adjusting/developing its enrollment strategy to increase the diversity in terms of race, ethnicity and social class:
    - One interviewee stated: "We must take firm steps towards greater diversity in the student population now that we’re public. We need to be more representative of the St. Louis community.

- (d) Culture building:
  - A few interviews indicated they’d like to see the ED more connected to the classrooms perhaps via pop-ins or walk-throughs.

- (e) Employment:
  - Interviews across all roles identify the need to diversify the teaching staff as a significant area for growth.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - TSS’s Enrollment Application does not fully comply with the most recent virtual learning statute (RSMo: Section 161.670).
    - "Availability of the program shall be made clear in the parent handbook, registration documents, and featured on the home page of the school district or charter school's website."

  This statement appears in the parent handbook and website homepage, but registration materials.
• (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o The Principal works through committees to build collaboration around goals and initiatives.

• (d) Culture building:
  o Teacher interviews indicate appreciation for a welcoming school culture that cultivates collaboration.

Discipline
• In general, stakeholder interviews at all role levels indicate satisfaction with behavior management and discipline practices.
• The Soulard Schools adheres to a discipline approach that rejects suspensions and expulsion except in extreme circumstances. As of the date when the school closed due to COVID-19, there were zero suspensions and expulsions.

Communication
• All stakeholder interviews indicated that communication – both internal and external – is a strength of the school.

Operations/HR/Facilities
• UMSL found TSS’s operations to be in very sound shape, including the following:
  o A strong management team.
  o A good attendance tracking/reporting system.
  o HR records are kept safe.
  o The Principal tracks teacher certification and provides ample notices.
  o The school conducts all required safety/emergency drills.
• The school grounds not only provide room for children to play but also inspire learning by having gardening areas, a stream pond and chicken coop.

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development
• TSS has an evaluation process in place that is strongly aligned with current understanding of best practice. Teacher interviews indicate that:

• (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  o Teachers would like more curriculum support materials and supplies.
  o As the curriculum becomes more standards-based, consider how to support teachers’ analysis of student performance data to guide curricular and instructional decisions.

Discipline
• A few teacher interviews indicate that restorative justice practices as currently applied lack accountability and are less effective for students coming from a challenging home life.

Operations/HR/Facilities
• Observations and teacher interviews strongly indicate concerns with lack of space. For example, it can be challenging to find spaces for small groups or confidential conversations.

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development
• The principal indicated that the teacher evaluation document is very long and extensive; and needs to be updated.
• Teacher interviews indicate a strong desire for more observations with follow-up coaching.
- They see potential in the VEO evaluation system that includes video lesson-and-feedback components and wonder if it could be utilized better.
- TSS has a mentoring plan in place that is strongly aligned with state expectations and current understanding of best practice.
- TSS has a staff professional development plan in place that meets state requirements.
- Teacher interviews indicate general satisfaction with their professional development.
  - They cited staff meetings where teachers choose among several peer-delivered best-practice presentations as especially valuable for building cohorts of common interest.
  - The explicitly cited Amber Candela’s support as valuable.

- Consider strengthening PD offerings throughout the year to address schoolwide and individual staff instructional goals.
- Teacher interviews indicate they would like more professional development and support in these areas:
  - Teaching the core curriculum
  - Implementing STEAM into their curricula and instructional practice.
  - Individualized PD to meet their own growth goals.
### 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 |
| 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

- Classroom observations – including SPED and Title 1 programs
- Student and staff interviews
- Sample unit and lesson plans
- Student work

### Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

#### Areas of Strength

- (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy: 
  - Student interest driven curriculum helps make learning fun and authentic.  
  - A student driven culinary arts program drives the lunch program where the children not only help menu plan but prep, cook and serve the meals.  
  - TSS has a teacher designated to lead students with STEAM activities in cooperation and aligned with classroom teachers.

#### Areas for Growth

- (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy: 
  - A significant challenge facing The Soulard School is developing a curriculum that prepares students for success in meeting state learning standards while preserving the positive elements of:  
    - Teacher autonomy to make classroom decisions in the best interest of their students  
    - Student interest-driven and project-based learning
Students' have the opportunity to learn violin during "strings" instruction time.

(b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
- Teacher interviews strongly indicate their belief that the curriculum is challenging and pushes kids to deeper thinking.
- The project-based elements of the curriculum along with the STEAM studio program provide rich opportunities for:
  - Student inquiry
  - Developing higher order thinking skills
  - Student collaboration
  - Integration across disciplines
- Students really appreciate the culinary arts program that provides opportunities to directly participate in the creation of high-quality meals.

Student Assessment Plan
- TSS has a thorough student assessment plan in place that utilizes both internal, state, and nationally normed assessment tools and processes that incorporate diagnostic, formative, benchmark and summative categories.

Student Collaboration
- The student interest-driven curriculum creates several challenges:
  - It opens up the possibility that students don’t have opportunities to meet key learning standards.
  - It can lead to students not expanding their horizons
  - It can impede curriculum alignment across grade levels

(b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
- Students indicated they would like more time to work with Chromebooks.

Documented Curriculum
- Since instruction is student-interest driven, the school lacks a formal written curriculum.
- It is uncertain how the teachers’ units and lessons align to the Missouri Learning Standards.
- The Soulard School must prioritize the development of a written scope and sequence for all of the core subject areas. Most scopes and sequences feature the following:
  - 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, a 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.

All of the above stated, careful thought must be given to how to adapt this documentation structure to make it compatible with the school's current student-centered, project-based approach to teaching and learning. This will require commitment, collaboration and input from the entire teaching staff. Also, it will not happen overnight. Plan for several years to develop the curriculum and its documentation.
### V. Empowering Culture of Achievement

**A transformational school:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a. Supports students in a safe, healthy, and nurturing environment that invests them in achievement, builds character, increases responsibility, fosters inclusion and inspires joy.</td>
<td>i. Creates a school environment conducive to learning and growth.</td>
<td>Required Documents:</td>
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<td>ii. Maintains a safe school environment free of violence and the threat of violence.</td>
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<td>iii. Implements processes to promote student health and wellness.</td>
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<td>iv. Ensures that students feel supported and respected by teachers and staff.</td>
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<td>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.</td>
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**Element V: Culture of Achievement**

**Areas of Strength**
- The overall culture is open, friendly, accepting, and student centered.
- Observations and interviews indicate students are engaged in learning experiences, some of which develop from their curiosity.
- Teachers take pride in developing project-based lessons that challenge student thinking.
- Meeting the socio-emotional needs of children are rooted in the everyday culture of the school.
- All teachers and staff take pride in the fact that TSS makes teaching and learning decisions around what’s best for the students.
- Stakeholder interviews at all role levels cite Soulard’s strong sense of community as a significant strength.

**Areas for Growth**
- For the first time, the 5th grade glass was located across the street from the main building at Gene Slay’s Girls & Boys Club. Student interviews indicated some fifth graders have concerns about being away from the main campus.
- Students would like more space
  - Quiet area to work
  - Library

**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
### VI. Transformational Teachers

A transformational teacher:

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| a. Understands and believes in the vision and innovative identity of the school. | 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.  
vii. 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 | 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) |
| d. Employs best instructional practices to engage students in learning and raise academic achievement. | i. Keeps instruction student centered and inquiry oriented  
ii. Continually orients students to content  
iii. Continually orients students to each other  
iv. Continually checks for student understanding and makes appropriate adjustments as necessary | **Required Documents:**  
|  |  | **Other Evidence**  
|  |  | • School leader/Curriculum leader interviews  
|  |  | • Teacher interviews  
|  |  | • Classroom observations  
| e. Tracks student progress towards academic and personal growth goals and makes adjustments as necessary. | i. Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth-measures assessments, to inform instructional decision-making.  
ii. Evaluates students’ progress towards meeting course and school performance goals and modifies goals, as needed, to improve student achievement.  
iii. Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm referenced measures and state assessments.  
iv. Builds student skills in tracking their own progress and motivates them to take charge of their own academic and personal growth.  
v. Pursues professional development opportunities to address areas for growth in their own teaching. | **Required Documents:**  
|  |  | **Other Evidence**  
|  |  | • 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:  
  o Teachers strongly believe in the vision.  
• (b) Student investment:  
  o Students report that their teachers care about them  
  o Students like the hands-on learning projects.  
• (c) Curriculum development and implementation:  
  o Teachers create project-based units that are student centered, cross-disciplinary, and engaging. They provide opportunities to develop thinking skills.  
• (d) Instructional practice:  
  o Soulard teachers:  
    ▪ Create word walls, and some are mobile so students have hands-on access.  
    ▪ Set up classrooms and learning spaces that are warm and inviting.  
    ▪ Create plenty of anchor charts  
**Areas for Growth**  
• (a) Belief in the vision:  
  o Some teacher interviews indicate concern about their potential loss of autonomy in the area of curriculum development.  
• (c) Curriculum development and implementation:  
  o Teacher’s classroom autonomy poses a challenge: Teacher interviews indicate they grapple with integrating their curriculum with state standards and the MAP assessment.  
• (d) Instructional practice:  
  o Teacher’s classroom autonomy poses a challenge: It can be hard to meet schoolwide priorities tied to implementation of best instructional practice:  
    ▪ For example, ensuring that instructional practices in teaching literacy are consistently applied across classrooms.  
|
- Drive student conversation with good questioning techniques.
- Run their classrooms smoothly and set up strong routines and procedures that guide student behavior in positive ways.
- Begin class with or break for yoga or some form of self-care or meditation.
- Effectively utilize the co-teaching model.
  - The co-teaching model and small class size facilitates instructional adjustments, differentiation and individualized learning to ensure students are appropriately challenged.

- (e) Student progress-tracking:
  - Teacher interviews indicate they frequently utilize formative assessments, checks for understanding, and observations to identify individual student learning needs.

- (e) Student progress-tracking:
  - As the school implements more assessments tied to state learning standards, teachers may need support in how to analyze this kind of data to inform instructional decisions.
### 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>
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<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>
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<td>v. Fosters strong relationships between school staff and parents.</td>
<td>• Data on parent and community participation in school events</td>
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<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>
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<td></td>
<td>ii. Conducts its meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner</td>
<td>• Newsletters and other communications</td>
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<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>
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#### Element VII: Parents and Community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) Parent and community engagement:</td>
<td>(a) Parent and community engagement:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Parent surveys indicate parents are very satisfied concerning their relationship and engagement with The Soulard School.</td>
<td>- Consider how to engage with the small percentage of parents who don’t or can’t attend events due to transportation or employment factors.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Stakeholder interviews at all role levels cite Soulard’s sense of community and wide-ranging family engagement as a significant strength.</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Teacher interviews indicate they employ a variety of methods to build solid relationships with parents and families:</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- They communicate frequently via emails, newsletters, SeeSaw, phone calls, face-to-face interactions during drop off and pick up.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
- Parent involvement built into project-based assignments.
- (b) Input from stakeholders:
  - A significantly high number of parents completed the survey.
  - Surveys indicate parents strongly believe the school works to build parent-school partnerships.
## VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System

The support staff of a transformational school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Standard</th>
<th>Indicators</th>
<th>Evidence</th>
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</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. | **Required Documents:**  
  - SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA & 504)  
  - ELL Intervention Policy  
  - Title I Needs Assessment and Plan |
| | ii. Assists all students with developing academic, career, and personal/social skills; helping them to utilize reasoning, understand connections and make complex choices. | **Required Documents:** |
| | 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:** |
| **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. | **Required Documents:**  
  - Student support team interviews  
  - School leader interviews  
  - Staff, student and parent surveys |
| | 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. | **Required Documents:**  
  - Student support team interviews  
  - School leader interviews  
  - DESE CAPs  
  - Staff, student and parent surveys |
| | ii. Follows protocol related to parent concerns in a timely manner. | **Required Documents:** |
| | iii. Develops and implements a system (internal or external) to evaluate students. | **Required Documents:** |
| | iv. Develops and implements appropriate services that meet each student’s individual needs. | **Required Documents:** |
| | v. Is in compliance with all special education statutes and procedures. | **Required Documents:** |
| **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 |
| | | **Required Documents:**  
  - Student support team interviews |
| services and support to meet their specific needs. | • School leader interviews  
• DESE compliance reports  
• Staff, student and parent surveys |
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<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Required Documents:  
• ELL Intervention Plan | Other Evidence  
• Student support team interviews  
• School leader interviews  
• DESE compliance reports  
• Staff, student and parent surveys |

**Element VIII: Student Support System**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas of Strength</th>
<th>Areas for Growth</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Teacher interviews indicate strong satisfaction with the Assistant Principal’s leadership in this area, while acknowledging the switch to a public charter school has brought with it significant challenges related to meeting SPED students’ needs.</td>
<td>• Teacher and school leader interviews indicate the switch to a public charter school and its mandated SPED requirements has created new challenges for them. One interviewee stated, “It has been our biggest growing pain.” Continue to prioritize strengthening Soulard’s systems in this area.</td>
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**Dr. Thurma DeLoach’s Review**

**Leadership**

• Soulard School is in its first year as a public charter school. However, it has operated as an independent private school since 2005. Soulard School co-founder- executive director promotes a school vision that embraces all learners—including those with special needs. Project-based instructional strategies emphasize student interests, inquiry, and community building.
  - Soulard’s Executive Director identified the current school year as a baseline year for student support services and special education. Greater clarity as to how best to provide services, allocation of staff, and the role of the Student Support Services administrator should evolve as the instructional team assumes full responsibility for all learners, including those with special needs.
  - The Executive Director identified social-emotional learning as a high priority for Soulard school and evidence of this commitment was observed during classroom lessons and student resources posted in classrooms.
  - A part-time school social worker is on staff to provide counseling and other social work services to Soulard students. She provides classroom & small group buddy lessons as well as professional development for staff.

• As a new building principal comes on board for the 2020-21 school year, collaborative discussions and planning by the leadership team to ensure general and support programming are well aligned is recommended.
Although Out of School Suspension is assigned if deemed necessary, it is rarely used. No students have been suspended out of school as of March 2020. Students are supported through behavioral crises and returned to class when they are capable of returning without further disruption.

- The Assistant Principal (Haley Biehl) serves as the administrator responsible for Student Support Services and Special Education. In addition to her administrative duties, she provides special education services and intervention supports. Ms. Biehl began the planning process for special education, other student support services, policies and procedures early in the spring of 2019 in order to start the 2019-20 school year with all anticipated student support services in place. This reviewer met with her multiple times during the spring and summer to assist with initial planning and problem solving.
  - Ms. Biehl is a highly resourceful staff member skilled at locating instructional resources and professional development that is low or no cost to Soulard (e.g. Belleville Failure Free dyslexia training).
  - Classroom teachers report feeling strong support from Ms. Biehl and from the Autism Consultant. They see Ms. Biehl as responsive and effective in her roles.

- Soulard School implements a co-teaching instructional model in which 2 certified teachers work side-by-side in classrooms of typically 20 students. This model allows for most students to be fully supported within the classroom using small group and differentiated instructional methods. The school principal meets bi-weekly with each grade level team to discuss student progress and problem solve supports for children who are not performing to expectation. Teachers report that this informal problem-solving process is helpful in figuring out student support plans. In addition, Ms. Biehl is available for individual student consultation and supports for students with IEPs or other identified special needs.

Special Education Services
- Assuming responsibility for and embedding all student support services within Soulard was a significant part of the transition from independent private to public charter school. Prior to this transition, St. Louis City Public school provided special education evaluation and instructional service plans to eligible students attending Soulard School. Most of these services were provided during after school hours by non-Soulard staff. All students with IEPs became “in-state transfer” students when Soulard became a public charter school.

Special Education Services
- Several teachers expressed some uncertainly about the referral for evaluation procedures when they suspect a student may have a disability. Current procedures are fairly informal (i.e. discuss the concern with Ms. Biehl).
  - A simple flowchart with supporting documentation forms should be developed that clarifies the process for formally referring a student for evaluation. This flowchart could be put in the staff handbook and documentation forms maintained on a shared Google drive.
The transfer process requires that all evaluations be individually reviewed and accepted or rejected for compliance. Re-evaluations were initiated for all rejected evaluations and completed within the required 60-day timeline. All special education service plans had to be re-written using the required IEP development process and the full range of special education and related services available as needed to provide FAPE (free appropriate public education).

- Soulard leadership identified all anticipated and required services prior to the start of the school. Part-time staff, including a school psychologist, occupational therapist, social worker, special education teacher and behavior analyst, were hired to provide most of the required services. Speech-language services are provided by contract with a private agency. Classroom teachers perceive the Soulard special services staff as collaborative, resourceful, and responsive to student needs.
- Despite being a small school (enrollment around 100 students), Soulard serves students with a wide range of special education diagnoses—including specific learning disabilities, Other Health Impaired, Emotional Disturbance, Speech Disordered, Language Impaired, Autism. The student support services team has done a remarkable job of putting together services and supports that appropriately meet the wide range of student needs.
  - An Autism consultant provides functional behavioral assessments, behavior improvement plans, and behavioral support consultation with classroom teachers.
- Several special education files were reviewed and found to be compliant with DESE and federal requirements. All required documents, including evaluation reports, IEPs, Notices of Action, Notices of Meetings, signed consents, and transfer file reviews were in good order.
  - Classroom teachers participate in all special education process meetings including Review of Existing Data, Eligibility and IEPs.
  - Special education administrator provides IEPs at a glance folders with suggestions and strategies for supports and accommodations to classroom teachers.

**Dyslexia Screening & Intervention Supports**
- Starting in August of 2019, All MO. public schools are required to annually screen students for potential reading challenges related to dyslexia. Soulard School conducted all required screening procedures for the fall and winter and met all screening timelines.

**Dyslexia Screening and Intervention Support**
- Information about the annual dyslexia screening requirement and calendar could be added to the parent handbook under a federal and state policies/requirement tab instead of sending home parental notifications about dyslexia screening. Parental notification of the
Dibels Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) were used to conduct the screenings. Practicum students worked with school administration to complete fall screenings and classroom teachers assumed this responsibility for the winter cycle.

20 students were identified as having reading concerns through this screening. Parents were notified by letter of the concern and the plan for supporting their child’s reading development. Classroom teachers are responsible for providing supplemental reading supports for their students.

- Soulard teachers participated in multiple professional development (PD) opportunities related to dyslexia and other literacy challenges— included LETRS training for a grade 1 teacher. A team of 6 Soulard teachers participated in written expression PD sponsored by Premier Charter School in January.
- Additional training and support in using dyslexia screening data to better understand and address students’ reading development needs is planned for the upcoming school year. Soulard teachers currently use the MO learning standards to guide their curriculum and design their own learning activities/lessons. Evidence-based practices are used by teachers; however, a consistent, school-wide literacy instructional program is not currently provided for teachers.

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- These Student Support policies were available for review.
  - Child Find
  - Homeless
  - English Language Learners (ELL)
  - Physical Restraint, Isolation, Seclusion (drafted and includes guidance for documentation and reporting; still needs to be board adopted)
  - Suicide and Bullying
  - Federal Programs EESA
    - Parental complaints
    - Parent involvement
    - Parents Right to Know
    - School-parent Compact

- Annual Staff Training
  - Dyslexia—August, January and on going
  - De-escalation
  - Physical Restraint—January through Character Plus
  - Suicide and Bullying—planned for spring faculty meeting—Social worker is conducting

- On-going training for teachers in using screening data to make decisions about literacy interventions is recommended.

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- Soulard has developed/adopted all required student support policies. Several are published in the parent handbook.
  - Consideration should be given to including all required policies in the parent handbook under a state and federal policy tab.

- DESE has provided new guidance for language on school enrollment forms for ELL, homeless, and migrant status. Reminder to review this guidance and update the enrollment form for compliant language.
- Consideration could be given to collecting health insurance status for students on the enrollment form and annual updates. This would help Soulard determine eligibility for Medicaid reimbursement for IEP related services (i.e. Speech & Language, OT, PT), Mental Health services, as well as SDAC—School District Administrative Claims.
- Written process and documentation procedures for tier 2 and 3 interventions as well as procedures for referral for special education eligibility should be developed and shared with teachers as part of annual start of school orientation.
• Annual Federal Programs (Title 1) parent meeting was held on February 23, 2020.

**Student Support Resources and Processes: General Observations**

• The Assistant Principal is the designated as the lead administrator for all student support services. She has researched the requirements for ELL, Homeless, Migrant, and Section 504 identification and services and participated in DESE sponsored trainings. Currently, Soulard does not have students identified for Section 504, ELL, Migrant or Homeless services/supports. However, in anticipation of these needs at some time in the future, general policies and procedures have been developed to respond to these needs.

• The building principal meets bi-weekly with each grade level co-teacher team to review student progress, discuss curriculum and instruction, and problem solve student performance issues. These meetings appear to provide the first round of support beyond the classroom teachers to identify and plan tier 2 supports for small groups and individual students. Teachers reported this is a helpful process for initial problem-solving around individual and small group support needs in the classroom. These same meetings could be used as needed for more intense Tier 3 problem solving—i.e. inviting the student support services administrator, SLP, OT or school social worker as needed for Tier 3 problem solving.

• The Speech-Language therapist, Occupational therapist, and school social worker include supports to students without IEPs as part of their consultative or direct services. They are able to provide Tier 2/3 consultative or direct services as part of the tiered support framework under development at Soulard school.
  
  o This flexible use of student support services staff can be effective in minimizing reliance on special education to serve students with mild to moderate challenges in academic, behavior, sensory-motor, and social-emotional learning. As funding allows, scheduled times for the special education teacher to provide Tier 2/3 academic intervention could be considered.
  
  o The social worker is the identified lead for Social Emotional Learning and provides in-class lessons on SEL topics. She also facilitates Buddy Circles (counseling groups) to support students in various areas—e.g. divorce, grief, anger, self-regulation
  
  o The social worker conducts risk assessments for students experiencing suicidal thinking and assists families find the needed supports for their children.
- The social worker and occupational therapist collaborate on students and co-facilitate group intervention when appropriate.
- Continued exploration of Restorative Practices as a component of the disciplinary framework is planned.

**Continuity of Instruction During School Closure: Student Support Services**

- Student Support Services staff immediately planned for continuity of services during the unanticipated school closure in March 2020. Special education, Occupational therapy, speech, language, counseling services and parental coaching/resources are provided via FaceTime, Zoom, email and phone contact.
  - All student instruction and parent contacts are documented.
  - Student participation and progress on IEP goals is monitored.
  - IEP review and Evaluation timelines are discussed with parents and decisions made about when and how IEPs and evaluations can be conducted. In most cases, IEPs will be conducted virtually; however, evaluations will need to be delayed until face to face assessments can be conducted.
- In addition to supports for caseload students, student support staff are sharing resources with classroom teachers and other students.
  - The social worker and Student Support Services administrator meet weekly to provide "Wellness Email" with social-emotional supports for all students and families; social worker is also checking in with 3-5 families per week prioritizing those who have not been participating in virtual connections or with known vulnerability.
- The responsiveness, flexibility, and creativity of Soulard's student support staff during this unprecedented and challenging pandemic is to be commended.