![UMSL Education Charter Schools Office logo]

2021 UMSL Annual Review Report - Part 1: Elements 1-8
Premier Charter School

Contents:

Evaluation Standards
Ten elements of school evaluation:

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.

I. Transformative and Innovative Vision A transformational school:		
Standard	Indicators	Evidence
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.	i. Students, parents and staff can articulate the mission and vision.	**Required Documents**:
	ii. In their classrooms, teachers and students are mission driven as indicated by their enthusiasm, active and consistent participation and task completion.	**Other Evidence** • Student, parent and staff interviews and survey data • Classroom observations
COVID-19 RELATED		
c. Stakeholders address ramifications of COVID-19 on school's capacity to advance the school's mission.	i. All stakeholders have opportunities to provide input. ii. Academic and student support program adjustments are aligned to and effectively advance the school's mission.	**Documents** • **School reopening plans**
		Other Evidence • Board, leadership and staff interviews • Staff and parent survey data

Element I: Vision	
Areas of strength	Areas for Growth
• Observations, interactions with school leaders throughout the year and all stakeholder interviews indicated that the board, administration, staff, teachers and students believe in the mission and vision for the school.	

II. Responsible Governance		
The Board of Directors of a transformational school:		
Standard	**Indicator**	**Evidence**

a. Operates legitimately and in the best interest of its students and mission.	i. Considers implications of decisions on the mission of the school.
	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.
	iii. Ensures the board and school have all necessary insurance policies in place including:
	   a) Director and Officers
	   b) General Liability
	   c) Professional Liability
	   d) Property
	   e) Workmen's Compensation
	   f) Employee Dishonesty
		Documents
		• **Board Self-Evaluation**
		• **Proof of Insurance Policies**
		  o **Directors and Officer Coverage**
		  o **General Liability**
		  o **Professional Liability**
		  o **Property**
		  o **Workmen Compensation**
		  o **Employee Dishonesty/Crime (minimum $500k)**
		Other Evidence
		• Observation of board meetings
		• UMSL Sponsor communication with board president and/or directors

b. Recruits and maintains a strong governing board with diverse backgrounds and skills sets	i. Includes individuals who are experienced in managing organizations and well versed in charter law 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. 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 iv. Seeks information and professional development opportunities related to charter operation, laws, and effective non-profit board work	**Documents** • **Board Organizational Structure Chart** • **Board Director Profiles/Contact Information** • **Assurance of Board Criminal Background and FCSR (child abuse registry) Checks** • **Board Development Plans** • **Board Member Financial Disclosure Confirmation** **Other Evidence** • Director interviews
c. Conducts its business in compliance with all state statutes and regulations	i. Meetings are regularly scheduled and appropriately conducted. ii. Governance records and documentation are appropriately created and maintained. 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.	**Documents** • **Board Meeting Agenda** • **Board Meeting Calendar** • **Board Meeting Document Packets** • **Board Meeting Minutes - Approved** **Other Evidence** • Observation of board meetings • Board meeting notices and signage

			•
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 and budget amendments. ii. Reviews the school's monthly financial statements/spreadsheets that include updates on: a) Current enrollment	**Documents** • Attendance and student data reporting **internal control policy** • Monthly financial reports to board to include **Weighted Average Daily Attendance (WADA)**

		b) Average Daily Attendance (body count and percentage) c) Number of students enrolled who receive Free or Reduced Lunch (FRL) d) Number of students enrolled with an Individualized Education Program (IEP) e) Number of students enrolled and identified with a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) iii. Reviews and approves monthly check register. iv. Provides oversight of school leader's handling of cash accounts and credit card accounts. v. Provides oversight of school leader's handling of attendance reporting.	**Board meeting approved minutes** **Other Evidence** • Chair and Director interviews • Board meeting observations
i.	Fulfills its responsibilities to UMSL's sponsorship liaison.	i. Communicates in a timely manner with UMSL's sponsorship liaison about significant policy, personnel, school performance or legal issues. ii. Ensures that all required documents are submitted to UMSL in timely manner. iii. Formally reviews UMSL's Annual Review Report at its August, September or October board meeting.	**Documents** • **Board meeting approved minutes** **Other Evidence** • Board-UMSL sponsor communications • Board meeting approved minutes
		COVID-19 RELATED	

j.	Addresses ramifications of COVID-19 on school's capacity to advance the school's mission.	i. Operates virtual meetings within the requirements of Missouri Sunshine Laws; including clear communication of meeting times.
		ii. Sets meeting dates and times such that families and community members can attend.
		iii. Provides strong oversight and monitoring of academic and student support programs in light of COVID-19.
		    a. Administration provides frequent and regular updates on the nature and effectiveness of academic and student support program adjustments necessitated by COVID-19 to the board.
		    b. Administration regularly provides data from internal student achievement assessments to the board.
		iv. Carefully monitors attendance reporting, budget adjustments and financial operations to reflect changes in revenue streams resulting from COVID-19.
			Documents
			• **Board meeting approved minutes.**
			• **School leader evaluation**
			• **Budget**
			
			Other Evidence
			• Board meeting observations.
			• Board member interviews.

v. Ensures the school has the financial resources to fund adjustments to the academic and student support programs necessitated by COVID-19.	

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	Areas for Growth

• (a) Operates in best interests of students and mission
   o The board is deeply committed to Premier Charter School's (PCS) mission.
   o **COVID Related**: The board worked very closely with the administration from the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 to ensure that PCS was positioned as best as possible to meet the academic and socio-emotional needs of its students and safeguard the health of students, parents, and staff.
   o The board president is dedicated to the school and works well with the Head of School (HoS).
   o Observations and interviews indicate that board engagement has increased over the past few years. It holds the administration to high expectations.
 	
• (b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:
   o Board members bring knowledge and experience in these fields: banking and business law, accounting, business, technology, education (teaching, curriculum and instruction, reading), investment banking.
 	
• (c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations
   o To the best of UMSL's knowledge, the PCS board is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.
 	
• (d) Policies:
   o The board periodically reviews policies and updates them as needed.
	• (b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:
	   o There are no people of color serving on the board and non-educator members primarily come from business backgrounds. When the board fills openings and/or expands membership, strongly consider prioritizing increasing diversity in terms of race/ethnicity and area of experience.

- (e) Strategic approach:
   o Board interviews indicate the board works with the HoS to set up annual goals and reviews progress towards them during board meetings.
   o The board and administration are currently putting together a new three- to five-year strategic plan. The board created an ad hoc Strategic Planning Committee that meets and reviews progress.
 	
- (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
   o Relations between the board and HoS are strong; characterized by mutual respect, transparency, and collaboration to address challenges.
   o The school leader evaluation process includes solicitation of feedback from direct reports and staff and provides all board members with opportunities to provide feedback and review the final report.
	- (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
	   o PCS did not submit Head of School evaluation documents, so it is not fully clear how the process works. Board and school leader interviews indicated that the process is somewhat informal and led by the board president.
	      ▪ The board should produce a clear written description of the school leader evaluation as required by UMSL.
	      ▪ Upon completion, consider investigating best practice in this area and assessing Premier's process to ensure it not only informs the Head of School of the board's assessment of her work, but also fuels her growth.
	See comment directly below under Board Organization - Committee Structure.

- (g) Monitoring responsibility:
   o The board monitors student academic performance through regular review of PCS's internal standardized assessments before the full board and the Educational Outcomes Committee.
   o See directly below for financial oversight.
 	
- (h) Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility
   o The board regularly reviews and monitors PCS's finances and financial operations, approves the monthly check register, adjusts the annual budget as necessary and submits and publishes the annual audit.
   o PCS's financial position is strong.
   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 board fulfilled all of its responsibilities to UMSL's Charter Schools Office.	

Community Relations

- Although almost all board members do not reside within the PCS community; in non-pandemic years, the board hosts several events where parents can meet board members to share thoughts and concerns.

Board Development and Training

- Observations of board meetings indicate school leaders and staff occasionally present information on various aspects of education that go beyond PCS's specific circumstances. (However, refer to the comments in the right-hand column)
- Four board members attended board training provided by Opportunity Trust.

Board Survey – Seven members completed the survey

- Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following areas as strengths:
    - Strategic planning and goal setting for the school
    - Resolving key issues and policy concerns
    - Clarifying the School's mission and vision.
    - Developing the financial resources needed to support student performance and school success.
    - Ensuring legal and ethical integrity.

Board Organization: Committee Structure

- The board has three standing committees in place:
    - Finance
    - Facilities
    - Educational Outcomes

Community Relations

- PCS's website does not provide names of its board members nor background information about them. Consider adding this to the *Board + Financials* page.

Board Development and Training

- There is no evidence that the board created or follows a board development plan as required by UMSL. It is important that individual members of school boards broaden and deepen understanding of a wide range of education topics to increase knowledge and skills necessary to successfully govern an LEA. Consider the following:
    - As a regular part of its annual planning, the board in consultation with school leadership and UMSL's annual board survey should identify knowledge and skill areas that, if enhanced, would strengthen board governance. The plan can be flexibly implemented as circumstances arise. UMSL requires that this plan be submitted in October.

Board Survey – Seven members completed the survey

- Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following as areas for improvement:
    - Identifying, cultivating, and integrating new board members based on the needs of the school (background, diversity, expertise, etc.)

Board Organization: Committee Structure

- Consider creating a Governance Committee responsible for addressing concerns cited above:
    - Increasing diversity on the board.
    - Assessing the school leader evaluation process and revising as necessary.
    - Developing annual board training plans.

	III. Strong School Leadership and Operations		
	A transformational school leader:		
Standards		**Indicators**	**Evidence**
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.	**Required Documents**:
	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.	**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	**Required Documents**: • **School Annual Calendar** • **Strategic plan** • **School Leader Mentoring Plan** • **School Leader Professional Development Plan** • **Student Assessment Plan**
	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	**Other Evidence** • School leader interview • School leadership team interviews • Teacher interviews • Student data analysis plans
	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	
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	**Required Documents**: • **Enrollment Application** • **Marketing/Recruitment Materials**
	ii.	Utilizes a public lottery process for open enrollment	**Other Evidence**
	iii.	Ensures no practices are implemented which may limit the opportunity for students with special needs to enroll	• School leader interview • Observation of lotteries
	iv.	Ensures that student enrollment and attendance numbers are in line with the charter agreement, and	• Enrollment and attendance data • Core data

		provide evidence that the school is a viable school of choice for the community.	
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	**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)**

	iv. Establishes programs and policies that enable all students to be served effectively
	v. Ensures timely submission of required data and reporting
	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
		Title I
		• **Title I Parent Meetings (sign in sheets)**
		• **HQ Parent Notification Letters**
		Homeless and ELL Students
		• **ELL Intervention Plan**
		• **ELL Pupil Count/Percentages**
		• **Homeless Student Policy**
		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
COVID-19 RELATED		

g. Addresses ramifications of COVID-19 on school's capacity to advance the school's mission.	i. School leadership adjusts the following as necessitated by COVID-19:
	    a) Health and safety policies, procedures and practices
	    b) Recruitment and enrollment strategies
	    c) Staffing
	    d) Curriculum and instruction
	    e) Assessment of student learning
	    f) Student support: including but not limited to SPED, ELL, dyslexia, homelessness, social-emotional needs.
	    g) Communication with board, staff and families
	    h) Teacher evaluation
	    i) Professional development
		Documents
		• **School Reopening Plans**
		• **Staff PD Plan**
		• **Teacher Evaluation Process**
		Other Evidence
		• School Leader interview
		• Staff interviews

	j) Technology resources: including software, devices and internet access k) Food disbursement l) Budget and financial operations	
h. Ensures staff and students have access to technology and the knowledge base necessary to deliver the academic and student support programs	i. The school quickly and efficiently assesses the technology needs of staff, families and students. ii. The school meets the technology needs of staff, families and students; especially students without access. iii. The school provides strong guidance on use of technology and remote learning plans and protocols to families and students. iv. The school provides strong professional development and training on remote learning curriculum and instruction and the use of the remote learning platform and associated software.	**Documents** • **Staff PD Plan** • **Staff surveys** **Other Evidence** • School Leader interview • Staff interviews • Student interviews

Element III: School Leadership and Operations	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**
Head of School (HoS)/Leadership Team • (a) Investment of others: 　o The HoS works closely with her leadership team to: 　　▪ Ensure alignment to school priorities. 　　▪ Collaborate on problem solving. 　　▪ Keep her informed about what's going on at other levels of the school. 　o The HoS's leadership approach is firmly grounded in developing leadership and increasing capacity in others. 　o **COVID Related:** 　　▪ The first-week staff survey indicated the HoS and her leadership team strongly supported them as they adjusted to changes brought on by the pandemic. 　　▪ The school made an extraordinary effort to keep families abreast of any changes that occurred due to COVID and pandemic teaching and learning. 　o Teacher interviews indicated that: 　　▪ School leaders strongly support them. 　　▪ They have a voice in the decisions that directly impact their work. 　　▪ They are comfortable approaching all school leaders with any concern. 　　▪ They appreciate the opportunity to receive performance-based bonuses.	**Head of School (HoS)/Leadership Team** • (a) Investment of others: 　o Student interviews indicated that some children are missing out on team building camping trips due to their inability to raise funds to cover the expense of the trip. 　o Some teachers feel that pay is not competitive to local districts. 　o Interviews of new or relatively new teachers indicated that there is a bit of cliquishness among teachers who have been at PCS for many years. They point out that their PD is targeted especially for them, meaning they are with each other all the time. The downside is that there is less opportunity to get together and work with the more experienced teachers. 　　▪ It should be noted that interviews of other relatively new teachers indicated the opposite – they stated that there are no cliques at PCS.

- o In interviews, the HR/Operations team feel supported by the administration and have a voice in decision-making that directly impacts their work.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - o **COVID Related**: PCS prepared well for adjustments necessitated by the pandemic. This included:
    - ▪ Regularly soliciting input from all stakeholders to inform decisions directly related to PCS's response to the pandemic.
    - ▪ Providing devices and hot spots for students who needed them.
    - ▪ Providing support and professional development to help teachers adjust instructional methods for online teaching.
  - o **COVID Related**: PCS is aware they will need to strengthen academic and social-emotional support systems to meet the needs of struggling students when everyone is back in the building.
  - o Embedded in its learning culture, PCS approaches decision-making through processes that include:
    - ▪ Data gathering to understand the full context for the decision.
    - ▪ Thorough research to reveal alternatives.
    - ▪ Careful deliberation of alternatives.
    - ▪ Involvement of key stakeholders in the decision.
    - ▪ Post-decision review that assesses the outcomes or consequences of the decision.
    - ▪ Regular review of programs to ensure continuous growth.

    This approach comes with a "silver-lining" mindset where a problem or challenge often provides an opportunity to improve. The pandemic posed such a challenge, and Premier has learned from it and improved.
  - o Interviews, observations and interactions with the HoS indicated that she exhibits:
    - ▪ Deep understanding of education and school leadership.
    - ▪ A continuous growth mindset
    - ▪ Strong organizational skills.
    - ▪ A collaborative approach to problem-solving.
    - ▪ Sound judgement.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - o Stakeholder interviews indicated that the HoS is still managing front-line day-to-day operations. As PCS continues to expand structurally, consider organizational and staffing changes that ensure she has capacity to focus on high-priority responsibilities associated with her role.
  - o Teachers could use more items to support science instruction and desire actual science labs.

- o The PCS leadership team prioritizes meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of all students.
  - ▪ The Assistant Head of School has strong knowledge and skills related to student assessment, standardized tests, and data analysis.
    - • PCS assessment data drives short- and long-term planning for curriculum, instruction and assessment.
  - ▪ Building principals prioritize student progress monitoring, team building and expanding leadership capacity.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - o Premier's reputation and standing ensure that for most grade levels, there are more applications than openings.

- (d) Culture building:
  - o The HoS's dissertation researched key factors that support development of schools of character. Ensuring that PCS maintains its designation as a National School of Character is a high priority for her.
  - o The HoS is personally involved in orientation and training of new staff to ensure they fully understand the school's vision and culture; as well as the processes and practices that nurture the culture.

- (e) Employment:
  - o Staff retention is good, generally; but given its size, annual turnover does occur.
  - o The relatively high number of leadership and teaching staff who have worked at PCS for many years is a strength.
  - o The board and school leaders have prioritized attracting more diverse applicants and have started initiatives to do so (connecting with HBCs for example).
    Refer to comment directly to the right.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - o To the best of UMSL's knowledge, PCS's administration is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.

- (e) Employment:
  - o Multiple school leader and teacher interviews identified lack of diversity among teaching staff as a significant area of growth. Attracting a more diverse teaching staff remains a difficult challenge to overcome.
  - o Related to staff turnover, teacher interviews indicated it has impacted continuity within some grade-level teams.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - o The PCS website:
    - ▪ Does not include a link to its most recent Annual Report Card (SY2020) on its policies page (160.522, RSMo).
    - ▪ Does not include a link to its 2019 Annual Performance Report (APR) (160.405, RSMo).

Discipline

- **COVID Related**: Through February, suspension-expulsion occurrences were zero.

Communication

- Communication, especially with the family community, is one of PCS's strengths.

Operations/HR/Facilities

- The heads of human resources and operations have education backgrounds, and both have worked at the school in that capacity. Their experience helps this them align HR/Operations with PCS's instructional model and school vision.
- HR, Operations and Finance work closely together to best support the school.
- The school saves money by not funding bus transportation.
- All stakeholder interviews indicated satisfaction with the lunch program and quality of the food offerings.
- The school has acquired additional land and infrastructure that has opened the doors for future expansion and programming.
- The school now has plenty of outdoor space for play, outdoor classrooms, sports events and gardening.
- There are no maintenance/janitorial concerns and the janitorial staff are PCS employees that are supported by an outsourced evening crew.
- PCS has solid internal controls in place around purchasing.
- There are no concerns around attendance taking, monitoring or reporting.
- HR monitors teacher certification requirements and assures that all required background checks are current.

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development

- PCS's formal teacher evaluation plan is thorough and follows best practice. Teacher interviews indicated that they:
    - Set formal goals at the beginning of the school year.
    - School and instructional leaders formally observe them and provide immediate feedback.
    - Are satisfied with the process.
- **COVID Related**: School leadership opted to provide teachers more individual- and cohort-based PD time to prepare for alternative methods of instruction necessitated by the pandemic. Teacher interviews indicated they were very satisfied with this year's PD.

Discipline

- Review of SY20 suspension-expulsion data indicated that PCS may want to consider how it might reduce out-of-school suspension numbers.

Operations/HR/Facilities

- Teacher interviews indicate that some would like more outdoor leaning spaces that would include actual outdoor classrooms, sheltered spaces, chicken coops and green houses.

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development

- Interviews of new or less experienced teachers indicated that they would benefit from an instructional coach who regularly observes and offers feedback to support their growth.

- Teacher interviews indicated they really appreciate: - The variety of PD opportunities and formats PCS offers. - Book studies. - PCS has a strong new-teacher orientation process in place. - PCS has a new-teacher mentoring plan in place.	

IV. Transformational Curriculum
A transformational school:

Standards	Indicators	Evidence
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
COVID-19 RELATED		
c. Ensures that curriculum and instruction adjustments for remote learning provide a challenging, engaging, coherent learning experience that meets the academic needs of all students.	i. The school prioritizes core content and learning standards. ii. The school adapts as necessary the curriculum and student assessment to identify and support all students' learning needs within a distance learning environment iii. Curriculum resources and instructional strategies facilitate effective presentation and interaction in a remote setting. a) The remote learning experience is both rigorous and engaging	**Documents** • **Internal assessment data** • **Staff surveys** • **Parent surveys** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Staff interviews • Student interviews

| | iv. Adjusts the instructional delivery model to ensure that all students have equal access to rigorous education programming. | • Online observations of synchronous classrooms. |

Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**

Documented Curriculum
 	
o PCS curriculum and instruction leaders understand that a school's documented curriculum is always a work in progress. They have guided development of each subject area's scope and sequence for over five years. Currently, PCS has a very strong documented curriculum framework in place that effectively guides teacher planning and instruction. The scopes and sequences:
  ▪ Are tied to current research and best practice.
  ▪ Are aligned to Missouri's Learning standards.
  ▪ Clearly present year-long and unit student learning outcomes and content.
  ▪ Are aligned to PCS's vision for student engagement in inquiry and problem-based learning.
  ▪ Include unit plans, pacing charts, model lessons and end of unit assessments.
  ▪ Can inform:
    • Diagnosis of teacher needs in curriculum and instruction.
    • Decision-making around professional development to meet those needs.
 	
A key indicator of a strong documented curriculum is whether it effectively supports a new teacher's curriculum planning. Leadership and teacher interviews along with the documents themselves indicate the curriculum meets this indicator.
 	
o I have never included personal comments in an annual review report, but I'm making one exception now:
  ▪ I want to formally commend the work of Mike Schrimpf, the Assistant Head of School, who leads PCS's curriculum and instruction work. Mike is deeply knowledgeable in this area, yet exceedingly humble and always open to new ideas and perspectives. I have enjoyed and valued every meeting with Mike in part because of our shared interest in curriculum and assessment. I have learned from him and will miss our regular meetings where we explore C & I with enthusiasm, bordering on pleasure. Thank you, Mike.
	Documented Curriculum
	
	• As stated in the left-hand column, PCS understands that a school's curriculum constantly evolves and curriculum development never ends. With that in mind, continue:
	  o To use student assessment data and teacher input to identify areas for improvement in the curriculum.
	  o To develop more PBL based lessons; and analyze them to ensure effectiveness in building student thinking skills.
	  o To develop teacher planning and instructional skills related to delivering strong inquiry-based units and lessons.
	• Leadership and teacher interviews indicate that curriculum leaders and teachers still have more work to do concerning development of strong PBL units in science and social studies.

- (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
  - With its emphasis on developing student thinking and problem-solving skills, PCS's curriculum is tightly aligned to its vision and philosophy.
  - It should also be noted that PCS has an un-documented (in a formal sense) social-emotional curriculum with accompanying processes and practices that builds community, teaches teamwork and collaboration; and strengthens character in children and adults. This is tightly aligned to PCS's vision and philosophy of educating the whole child.

- (b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
  - The documented curriculum framework powers unit goals and instructional approaches that push thinking and problem-solving.
  - Teacher and school leader interviews indicated they believe the curriculum is more rigorous than ever before.
    - Several specifically indicated that the ELA curriculum is appropriately rigorous.
  - Roughly 70% of PCS eighth grade graduates attend high schools with selection requirements.
  - **COVID Related:** Teacher and school leader interviews indicate that:
    - Many teachers are still able to implement the PBL approach and design rigorous lessons.
    - Most students are learning.
    - A few students who struggled prior to the pandemic are more engaged and successful online.

- Student Assessment Plan
  - PCS has in place a schoolwide assessment plan that:
    - Tracks student growth throughout the year utilizing diagnostic and end of unit assessments aligned to

- (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
  - Some middle school teacher interviews indicated they'd like more opportunity to plan and implement cross-curricular units.
  - Related to the science program, teacher interviews indicated:
    - They could use more resources to support science instruction
    - They would like to conduct their classes in actual science labs.

- (b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
  - **COVID Related**: Teacher and school leader interviews indicated that:
    - Online learning is not as enriching as in person.
    - Many students who were behind prior to the pandemic are still behind and their learning gap is worse.
    - It has been a struggle to get between 8-10% of the students regularly engaged online. Teacher interviews indicated that most of these students are from blue collar families and/or students of color. PCS has made every effort to get them more involved through home visits, calls and emails. In a few cases, PCS has gotten Family Services involved, but the problem persists.
      - A major challenge PCS will face is how to support these students' academic and social-emotional needs if and when they return to school.
  - **COVID Related**: Student interviews indicated it has been harder to seek academic support online.
  - Leadership team and teacher interviews indicated PCS still has work to do to ensure students engage with content that is on grade-level. Part of the challenge is figuring out how to make this feasible with students who are three or more years behind in foundational skills such as reading.
    - Some interviewees felt that PSC should take a look at the grade-level retention policy to ensure students demonstrate strong foundational skills before they move on to the next grade level.

MLS standards; and nationally normed computer adaptive assessments (iReady) administered in Fall, Winter and Spring. ▪ Provides data to inform teacher planning to address learning gaps at the individual student level.	

V. Empowering Culture of Achievement
A transformational school:

Standard	Indicators	Evidence
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
COVID-19 RELATED		
b. Plans and implements processes and procedures to reduce COVID-19 transmission.	i. Follows current safety guidelines and government health agency mandates related to COVID-19. ii. Implements multiple COVID-19 mitigation strategies in ways that are developmentally appropriate for students, teachers and staff. iii. Educates students about COVID-19 disease prevention.	**Documents** • **AMI, AMI-X and reopening plans** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Parent surveys and interviews • Student surveys and interviews • Staff surveys interviews • Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists)

Element V: Culture of Achievement	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**

• Every teacher and school leader interview cited student-centeredness as a key strength.
   o They also indicated the culture is:
      ▪ Very friendly and supportive
      ▪ Welcoming.
      ▪ Inclusive
      ▪ Collaborative
	• **COVID Related**: Most stakeholder interviews acknowledged that isolation necessitated by pandemic-related adjustments has taken a toll on PCS's sense of community.
	• Middle school leader and teacher interviews indicated that dealing with inappropriate use of social media among students has been challenging.

- Aligned with the school's vision. - Characterized by strong relationships between teachers and students. - One where students have a voice. - Student interviews indicated: - They feel very safe at school. - They believe that everyone is treated fairly. - They value diversity among their schoolmates. - They understand that the dress code puts all students on the same level and is a factor in preventing bullying.	

VI. Transformational Teachers		
A transformational teacher:		

Standard	Indicator	Evidence
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. 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: a) Are tightly aligned to course learning objectives and desired student outcomes. b) 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. c) Engage students with thought-provoking and ambiguous texts/materials that challenge their thinking and feelings. d) Give students opportunities to conduct research to answer a question, explore and take a stand on an issue, or develop solutions to a problem. e) Use writing to communicate their reflections and understandings f) 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 adjusts 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)
COVID-19 RELATED		
f. Adjust curriculum and instruction as well as student support approaches to accommodate changes in the teaching and learning environment necessitated by COVID-19.	i. Pursue professional development to address areas for growth in teaching remotely. ii. Adjust curriculum plans, units and lessons to align with various teaching platforms to provide rigorous and engaging instruction for all students. iii. Adjust student data collection strategies to drive instructional decision-making. iv. Adjust student-monitoring strategies to support students' social-emotional needs. v. Pursues collaboration with school leaders and families to strengthen student achievement.	**Documents** • **Staff PD Plan** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Staff surveys and interviews

Element VI: Teachers	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**
• (a) Belief in the vision: 　○ Teacher and leader interviews and the teacher survey indicated teachers deeply believe in PCS's vision and mission. They enjoy working at PCS.	

- o   Teacher interviews indicated appreciation for PCS's graduate aims. One stated: "They set the vision and foundation for us. We know what our big goals are."

- (b) Student investment:
  - o   Student interviews indicated their teachers:
    - Are very helpful and supportive.
    - Caring and understanding.
    - Are open to questions.
    - Ensure that students treat each other with kindness.

- (c) Curriculum development and implementation:
  - o   Teachers are involved in developing the curriculum framework's grade level scopes and sequences, unit plans and PBL units.

- (d) Instructional practice:
  - o   Virtual classroom observations indicated that:
    - Teachers were effective in using the applications they rely on to teach virtually.
    - In general, students were engaged in the lessons.
  - o   Student interviews indicated they appreciate that their teachers:
    - Teach in different ways
    - Make learning fun.
    - In general, give students' time to think and answer.
    - Are there to help, and some even stay after school if a student needs more help.
    - Have done a great job teaching virtually.

- (e) Student progress-tracking:
  - o   Teacher interviews indicated that they utilize both formal and informal assessments – including iReady data, assignment and data trackers, and one-on-one student meetings to:
    - Track progress
    - Differentiate learning goals and instruction
    - Group students and offer targeted intervention.
    - Share student progress with parents and students.

- (c) Curriculum development and implementation:
  - o   Teacher interviews indicated that some of them need more training on developing PBL units.

- (d) Instructional practice:
  - o   Student interviews indicated that a few teachers teach "too fast" and do not give students time to think through and answer questions.

VII. Engaged Parents and Community A transformational school:		
Standard	**Indicator**	**Evidence**
a. Engages parents and community stakeholders in the vision and mission of the school	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 ii. Ensures the active engagement of administrators, board members, parents, and staff in communication and outreach planning and implementation iii. Communicates and engages all stakeholders in the mission and vision of the school iv. Involves students, parents, and community members as part of the school's support system. v. Fosters strong relationships between school staff and parents.	**Documents** **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
b. Seeks input from relevant, critical, impacted stakeholders	i. Establishes regular opportunities and methods of communication among the stakeholders, administration, and the board ii. Conducts its meetings regularly and in an open, organized, and effective manner 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	
COVID-19 RELATED		
c. Addresses ramifications of COVID-19 on school's capacity to engage and seek input from parents and community members.	i. Collaborates with families in decisions driven by COVID-19 that directly impact their children's access to learning. ii. Provides frequent opportunities for families to give feedback. iii. Ensures that all families have access to the school's distant learning platforms.	**Documents** • School leader board reports **Other Evidence** • Parent surveys and interviews • School leader interviews

Element VII: Parents and Community	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**
(a) Parent and community engagement: **COVID Related**: Teacher and school leader interviews indicate that due, in part, to the pandemic, overall communication and relationships with parents and families has increased and improved. Parents are more aware of their children's curriculum content and specific assignments. - Teachers communicate regularly via newsletters, phone calls, emails and zoom meetings. (b) Input from stakeholders: **COVID Related:** PCS continually reached out to parents for feedback to inform pandemic related schooling decisions.	(a) Parent and community engagement: **COVID Related:** School leader and teacher interviews indicated that they miss in-person contact with parents. (b) Input from stakeholders: - The only parent survey submitted to UMSL solicited input on Specials/Pathways classes. - Strongly consider sending out a parent survey that seeks feedback on all parent and child-facing elements of PCS's operations and programs.

VIII. Comprehensive Student Support System
The support staff of a transformational school:

Standard	Indicators	Evidence

a. Develops and utilizes a comprehensive, developmental student support system that proactively assists all students to develop and apply knowledge, skills and mindsets for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school years.	i. Collects and uses academic, behavior and attendance data to:
	  a) Plan appropriate programs for students both individually and collectively.
	  b) 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**
		
		Other Evidence
		• Student support team interviews
		• School leader interviews

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**: **Other Evidence** • Student support team interviews • School leader interviews • Staff, student and parent surveys
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**: • **Other Evidence** • Student support team interviews • School leader interviews • DESE CAPs • Staff, student and parent surveys
d. Develops and implements policies and procedures to ensure that all children who	i. Develops and implements a plan that's in compliance with state and federal guidelines that	**Required Documents**: • **Homeless Student Policy**

qualify as homeless receive all necessary services and support to meet their specific needs.	ensures homeless students have an equal opportunity to a public education.	**Other Evidence** • Student support team interviews • School leader interviews • DESE compliance reports • Staff, student and parent surveys
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
COVID-19 RELATED		
f. Addresses ramifications of COVID-19 on the school's capacity to proactively assist all students to develop and apply knowledge, skills and mindsets for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school years.	i. Develops and implements a plan that is in compliance with state and federal guidelines and ensures the school effectively assists all students operating in a remote learning environment.	**Documents** • **Reopening Plans**
		Other Evidence • School leader interviews • Staff interviews • Staff, student and parent surveys

Element VIII: Student Support System	
Areas of Strength	**Areas for Growth**
• Teacher interviews indicated that they are satisfied with the support their students receive from PCS's student support staff.	
Dr. Thurma DeLoach's Review	
Covid Planning and Response • A safe return to school in the fall of 2020-21 was the primary challenge for all schools following school closures in the spring of 2020 due to the Covid Pandemic. Dr. Frugo took the lead in developing the safety plan with her administrative team. PCS's experience with virtual instruction the prior spring helped inform their planning. Dr. Frugo participated in the St. Louis City Department of Health work sessions and used their direction to guide her team. A written plan was created over the summer with input from families and staff that included specific plans and roles for sanitation of the building, social distancing,	**Covid Planning and Response** • Given the possibility of future school closures due to Covid/ contagious diseases or other natural disasters, the Covid safety committee should consider taking time to review/revise the plan and evaluate the results of their efforts. The pivot to virtual instruction for any reason should be easier for students and families in the future. ○ One suggestion is to provide regular review of the procedures for accessing virtual lessons and practice content—starting at the beginning of the school year. • Virtual instruction has been challenging for most students and families. Staff reported that parents are doing what they can to support their

masks, symptom checks, isolation of students/staff with symptoms, contact tracing, and follow up.
- Although the goal was to bring students back to school for in-person learning as soon as safely possible, school started with virtual instruction. K-1 were the first grades to return to in-person—with individual families still having the option to continue virtual instruction. Grades 2-8 had the option to return in-person at the start of second semester. A hybrid model combining in person and virtual instruction was used to maintain social distancing. Organizing staff, students while trying to meet individual family needs present a great challenge; however, at the time of this review, staff reported that the plan were working and they felt safe at school with the safety measures in place.
  - Teachers received training is specific technology tools appropriate for virtual teaching.
  - IREADY was purchased as a virtual assessment and instructional tool.
- Teachers reported that students who participated regularly in virtual lessons made appropriate progress on essential curriculum. Those who did not participate regularly fell behind.
- Special education and intervention teachers expressed concern for those students with social-emotional-behavioral needs falling behind in peer relationships, emotional regulation and managing classroom routines during virtual instruction.
- PCS has two full time school nurses—both were new to PCS this school year. These nurses assumed important roles in educating parents, students and staff on Covid as an illness and safety measures. They taught classroom lessons on Covid safety and monitored student and staff symptoms.

Special Education/ Section 504 Services
- PCS currently serves 148 students with IEPs and 8 students with Section 504 plans.
- PCS provides a full continuum of special education services and placements, including several placements at a DESE-approved private special education school. The Learning Center (TLC) staffing includes 7 special education teachers, 2 speech-language pathologists, 2 occupational therapists, and a psychological examiner. Physical therapy, vision and other specialized related services are provided as needed through purchase of service contracts. A variety of service delivery models are available including pull out resource, replacement instruction and class push in/co-teaching. Early childhood special education services are also provided.

children virtually but there are many competing needs that make virtual instruction less effective than in-person. Staff identified issues with consistent participation, log-in difficulties with technology, availability of adults in the home to assist with engagement and technology access, distractions within the home (e.g., other children, noise, students still in bed or joining from the car).
  - Knowing that virtual instruction is likely to be necessary in the future, periodic refreshers/outreach to parents and students on key strategies to manage the learning environment at home could be helpful for parents and students.

Special Education/Section 504 Services
- Special education teachers worked within individual grade levels throughout this school year due to the social distancing requirements imposed by the pandemic. Prior to this, special education teachers organized services according to content disciplines—reading & writing or math & social skills. There are benefits to both of these organizational systems and teachers reported some ambivalence as to which systems enabled them to best support their students.
  - The special education director and teachers should consider working through the specific pros and cons of each approach prior to the start of new school year to reach consensus on how best to continue to organize staff within grade levels. The possibility of future school closures due to Covid should still be on the radar.

- Corrective Reading and Number Worlds are used for replacement reading and math. These are evidenced-based instructional materials often used for replacement instruction taught through special education.
- Teachers worked with parents in early August to complete Form G plans for virtual services during school closure. Teachers reported the process was helpful in figuring out *what, how, and when* for virtual special education and related services.
- Special education teachers reported that students who participated regularly in virtual services showed minimal regression on IEP goals. Students who participated inconsistently showed some loss of skills but were able to catch up adequately upon returning to in-person instruction.
- Classroom teachers indicated strong support from the special education staff. There appears to be effective communication and collaboration among general and special education staff.
- All special education eligibility evaluations this year were conducted in person—individual testing appointments at school were scheduled for students who were not attending school in person.
- PCS conducted the DESE Self-assessment in the 2019-20 SY. DESE found PCS to be in compliance with all state and federal regulations for special education.

Dyslexia Screening & Intervention Supports
- Starting in August of 2019, All Missouri public schools were required to annually screen students for potential reading challenges related to dyslexia. PCS conducted all required screening procedures for the fall and winter and met all screening timelines.
  - PCS's lead literacy specialist facilitated all screening activities with support from the administrative team.
  - IREADY was used as the initial school-wide screener. All students in Grade 1-8 completed this screening in the fall and winter; KG completed this in the winter. The third screening cycle is planned for May.
  - Students who did not meet the IREADY screening benchmark were identified for a second round of screening. Selected Dibels CBMs, Jerry Johns Reading Inventory and Haggerty Phonics Screener were used to identify the specific areas of reading difficulty.
  - All parents were notified of the school-wide dyslexia screening and those parents of students identified as at risk for reading challenges received letters describing their child's area of

Dyslexia Screening and Intervention Support
- If students with IEPs are included in the dyslexia screening process (not a DESE requirement for students with IEP reading goals), special education teachers who teach literacy should also have access to this screening data to better inform their instruction.
- PCS recognizes that selection of evidenced-based strategies and programs customized to match specific learner needs is beyond the expertise of most classroom teachers. PCS is in the process of creating such a platform but is very early in this work.
  - The National Center for Intensive Intervention (NCII) has numerous tools on its website that could be useful in identifying instructional tools and strategies that target specific skills and intensify intervention.
  - NCII recently published a guide for intensification of literacy instruction that is filled with useful strategies. It can be accessed at the following link:
    - **https://intensiveintervention.org/resource/intensifying-literacy-instruction-essential-practices**
- Understanding of the developmental sequence for acquiring phonemic awareness and phonics is essential for teachers of early literacy.

need and the plan for providing additional intervention/support.

- 53 students in grades 1-5 and 21 students in grades 6-8 were identified as at risk for reading challenges.
- Phonemic awareness and phonics skill development were the primary areas identified for targeted intervention.

o The required 2 hours of professional development related to dyslexia was provided virtually to all teachers in the fall. A power point presentation was made available to teachers with direction to view this on their own.

- The lead literacy specialist organized all dyslexia screening data by classroom into a spreadsheet made available to classroom teachers. She identified those students at risk for reading difficulty and provided recommendations for in-class intervention. She met with each teacher individually to review screening data and develop intervention plans for each identified student. Dyslexia screening data is available on-line for review as needed by classroom teachers, the Student Support Team, and administrators.
- The literacy specialist also serves as an instructional coach to classroom teachers. This provides the opportunity to periodically check in on student progress.

o The coaching cycle starts by identifying specific goals for teacher growth in literacy instruction. The literacy specialist models instructional techniques, observes and provides additional feedback.

- PCS is designing a tiered literacy intervention platform. *Wilson's Fundations* is identified as a supplemental classroom program targeting phonemic awareness and phonics development in grades K-1. Fundations will be incorporated into grades 2 & 3 in the upcoming school year. Additional resources will be identified and added to the plan for individualized tired support.
- In addition to *Fundations*, classroom teacher assign IREADY literacy intervention lessons and provide targeted small group intervention within the classroom. The most at-risk readers within each grade level also receive additional intervention in targeted skills from the literacy specialists assigned to the grade levels. Three literacy specialists are on staff at PCS.
- Classroom teachers reported that dyslexia screening provided useful information about the reading needs of their students.

Recent research has given us a well-defined sequence for teaching phonemic and phonics skills that should be followed regardless of which instructional reading resources/program is implemented. For some teachers, current research may challenge current practices and prior learning. Consider the following:

o LETRS is an advanced graduate level training that provides a strong research-based framework for teaching literacy skills to all learners. LETRS is offered through EdPlus to prepare teachers to apply the current science of reading development to literacy instruction.

- LETRS training for primary classroom teachers is available again this summer virtually through EdPlus and again in the fall of 2021.
- At the time of this review, the lead literacy specialist and primary special education teacher have applied for a DESE grant to fund their participation in LETRS training this summer.

o *Phonics for Reading* has recently been published by Curriculum Associates for Tier 2 intervention for students in grades 3-8. This program was written by Dr. Anita Archer, internationally recognized for her work in explicit direct literacy instruction. (*REWARDs and Skills for School Success* are other examples of her work). PCS should consider reviewing this as a potential resource for the upper grades.

Social Emotional Learning & Behavioral Supports/Intervention

- Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and behavior support systems are a priority at PCS. This focus was reported repeatedly in interviews with administrative and instructional staff. Staff identified behavior support intervention systems as one of many student support strengths at PCS.
- PCS is recognized as a national "School of Character". This theme is part of the 3 year mentoring and on-boarding process for new teachers. Teachers are explicitly expected to focus on relationship building with students and to know the child as a whole person.
  - PCS organized book studies around SEL and character development themes. *Whole Brain Child*, *Yardsticks, Discipline for Moral Development*, *Eyes Are Never Quiet*, and *Being the Change* are recent selections.
  - Teacher interviews frequently included concerns for the emotional needs of students and extra efforts to stay connected with individual students during school closures during the pandemic
- Development of social-emotional-behavioral support and intervention systems have been a PCS focus for the past four years. Highlights include:
  - Panorama SEL surveys of students, staff, and parents conducted 2 to 3 times a year. The Assistant Superintendent analyzes this data and shares the primary themes with the administrative team and teachers. This information helps inform PCS about student growth and graduate outcomes as students transition from 8th grade to high school.
  - PCS has invested significantly in SEL and Behavior Support staffing—including 2 licensed counselors, play therapist, social worker, 3 behavior support specialists, and occupational therapists who serve all students (not just students with IEPs).
  - The Behavior Support Team (BST) was created to facilitate focused problem solving and intervention supports for students identified by teachers or administrators with needs beyond the scope of the general education classroom. This team is facilitated by the Lead Therapist (Martha Gray) and is comprised of administrators, behavior specialists, an occupational therapist, and speech-language therapist. This team functions as a problem-solving team, using office referral and classroom observation data, to identify student needs and to match needs with available interventions or individualized plans. Individualized Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs) are

Social Emotional Behavioral Supports and Intervention

- PCS does not currently have a school-wide social-emotional learning curriculum aligned across grade levels. Teachers address this area in class meetings; however, a written curriculum to ensure alignment of themes, language, and practices is not currently available.
  - Adoption of an evidence-based published SEL curriculum, such *as 2nd Step*, could provide consistent and aligned SEL instruction across grade levels. *2nd Step* is based on the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning) standards. It is easily taught as a component of classroom circles/meetings.
- Teachers and administrators identified social-emotional support as a high priority for the upcoming school year as students return to school full time after over a year of disrupted schooling. Staff are aware that some students who functioned well prior to the pandemic may return to school with new concerns and traumas that will require intervention and support. Consideration of the following is recommended:
  - Explicitly constructing a tiered support process—starting with whole class structures (e.g., community circles), small group, and individual counseling.
  - A school-wide SEB screening process such as the *Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS) or the Social, Academic, Emotional Behavior Risk Screener (SAEBRS)* to provide individualized information about internalizing and externalizing behaviors beyond what is provided by Panorama screening.
  - Adding a trauma screener to the SEL screening process, especially coming back from over a year of school closure and Covid.
- Social-emotional-behavior supports and counseling are provided to any student identified as having this need. This includes students with IEPs; however, these services are not typically documented on students' IEPs. Counseling, therapy, and social work services are identified as related services on IEPs by federal law for students with disabilities.
  - IEP teams need to consider these related services and include them as part of the IEP for any student who requires these services in order to make progress on IEP goals. Documenting this need within the IEP ensures the student will consistently receive these services should they transfer out of PCS.

written, reviewed/revised regularly based on progress monitoring data.
- o Several behavior support centers are designed to provide a calm and supportive place for students who need to be out of the general education classroom for periodic breaks or crisis recovery. SEL, self-regulation, and social skills are explicitly taught, practiced, and generalized to the gen ed classroom. Three experienced classroom teachers known to be skilled in developing student relationships, teaching social emotional and behavioral regulation, and crisis intervention serve as behavioral specialists for the primary and intermediate grades. (PK-5). In addition to direct student support, coaching/modeling for classroom teachers is a significant part of the role.
- o Sensory-motor centers are equipped for use by primary and intermediate students. Motor walks and yoga sequences are used to help students regulate their sensory and emotional systems. Zones of Regulation are used school-wide and are the primary tool for helping all students learn self-regulation skills. Sensory tools are available in these centers and in classroom for student access as needed.
- o PCS welcomes other schools seeking to design social-emotional-behavioral intervention centers/programs. It is considered by this reviewer to be an excellent example of responsive services for students with challenging SEB needs.
- PCS was notified by DESE several years ago of disproportionality in the discipline of students with IEPs and African Americans as compared to students without IEPs and white students. This concern was identified in the strategic plan for corrective action. The administrative team is analyzing this data to more fully understand and to make necessary changes in policy and practices.
  - o A diversity-equity-inclusion group comprised of teachers, support staff and administrators has been convened to provide input/feedback on this issue.
  - o Leadership is analyzing OSS incident data and coding to better understand what behaviors result in OSS and what happens when an office referral is made.
  - o Leadership is considering alternative to OSS such as restorative and instructional practices for behaviors that are not safety violations.
    - ▪ Numerous restorative practices are currently in place including restorative circles, restorative processing,

and professional development on building relationships and the impact of trauma.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Problem Solving Procedures

- Premier Charter School has created a school culture that strives to support students without relying on special education as the primary support system. Key themes included in the on-boarding/mentoring process for teachers include expectation for teachers to:
    - differentiate instruction
    - use data to make instructional decisions
    - provide instructional accommodations
    - meet students where they are academically and emotionally
    - build strong relationships are key themes included in the 3 year on-boarding/mentoring process for new teachers.
- The Assistant Superintendent is currently collaborating with other schools and districts on tools and systems to support the MTSS (multi-tiered systems of support) process—data systems and interventions. Although there is much already in place, the desire to improve and streamline systems moving forward is commendable.
- PCS implements a strong multi-tiered system for academic and social-emotional-behavioral problem solving. This system was identified by teachers and administrators as a significant strength for PCS. Problem solving teams have not met consistently this school year because of the limitations related to Covid, school closures, and limited student attendance. However, these systems will be re-established for the 2021-22 SY.
    - Tier 2 problem solving begins at the grade level and is facilitated by an administrator. The elementary principal meets with each grade level team and the middle school assistant principal/assistant superintendent meets with individual teachers to review IREADY and Panorama data. Problem solving focuses on identifying classroom or grade level trends reflected in the data. The administrator, individual teachers/grade level teammates identify class-wide needs and instructional interventions/responses to address those needs.
    - A Data Dashboard system (Schoolzilla) provides academic and social-emotional-behavioral (SEB) data aligned with the PCS strategic plan goals. Data is color coded to quickly identify those students in need of attention in academic or SEB areas. The Assistant Superintendent organizes this data for easy use by the principal, grade level teachers/teams and the Tier 3 problem solving teams.

Tier 2 and Tier 3 Problem Solving Procedures

- Interviews indicated some concern about the two problem-solving teams becoming "siloes". Although there is efficiency in focusing just on academics or just on SEB needs, staff recognizes that Tier 3 academic and SEB needs are typically complicated and rarely separate concerns. The two team facilitators are aware of this issue and collaborate to minimize the separation of SEB and academic concerns,
    - Some type of "cross-pollination" between the two teams might be considered in practice. E.g., a member from each team also attends the meetings of the other team to provide the academic or SEB perspective.
- The school psychological examiner was able to manage special education evaluations and to work with individual teachers on student problem solving this year because new referrals were low and students with more significant needs were often not attending in person. Numerous people expressed concern about her being able to fulfill her role in the upcoming school year as the lead for special education evaluations and Tier 3 problem solving. This same concern was shared for the SEB team in anticipation of more social-emotional-behavioral needs as students return to school full time in the fall. Consider the following:
    - In a previous year, two school psychologist interns were hired to assist the problem-solving teams in data collection, observations, and intervention support. This support was described as very helpful in the overall operation of the teams. Consideration of working with UMSL or Webster Universities to re-institute this partnership could be a means for addressing the need for additional skilled staffing in this area. Although interns are likely not available at this point, school psychologist practicum students could help with some of this work.
    - Alternatively, the addition of a certified school psychologist to lead the MTSS system and coordinate intervention supports and systems could be considered as funding becomes available. Adding this expertise to the student support team would also provide more opportunity for collaborative brainstorming and support within the MTSS leadership team.

- o Numerous school-wide interventions are implemented in classrooms including Fundations and Haggerty for phonemic awareness and phonics skills, Zones of Regulation, and sensory supports
- Tier 3 Problem solving teams have been available in prior years for individual student problem solving and will be re-established for the 2021-22 SY. Two different teams are convened—one for SEB and one for academic problem solving. The Behavior Support Team (SEB) is facilitated by the lead therapist and is comprised of behavior specialists, occupational therapists, administrators, and speech language therapist. The Student Support Team focuses on academic needs—typically reading, writing, and math. The SST is facilitated by the school psychological examiner and is comprised of literacy specialists, ELL teachers, special education teachers, administrators,
- Referrals are accepted for Tier 3 problem solving after individual consultations between classroom teachers and specialists have not adequately addressed the concerns around an individual student.
  - o The teams review referral concerns and available academic and SEB data. The SST uses data from classroom, IREADY assessments, and dyslexia screenings to target areas of concern and development intervention goals.   As appropriate, the SEB team conducts Functional Behavioral Assessments and classroom observations to inform the development of a Behavior Improvement Plan (BIP). Data is collected to assess student progress.
  - o If a student with SEB needs does not respond adequately to the interventions/supports, the student may be referred to the SST for academic problem solving or consideration of a referral for special education evaluation.
- Teachers and administrators reported the opportunity to talk collectively about the individual student and to review specific student data is very beneficial. The problem-solving team process effectively brings general and specialists/special education staff together to collaborate on individual student concerns.
  - o Administrators attributed a reduction in office referral to the BIPs developed for students frequently sent to the office prior to the SEB team process.

School Health/Nursing Services
- PCS has a well-developed school nursing program. Two new nurses started this school year and are implementing critical services despite the constraints of Covid and hybrid attendance models

- PCS has very strong literacy and SEB staffing to address school-wide and individual student needs. Several staff members expressed concern that similar intervention support in math does not exist. Although READY Math provides some intervention support, teachers expressed a desire for more leadership and intervention support in math.

School Health/Nursing Services
- The lead nurse expressed an interest in connecting with other school nurses periodically for training and consultations. Several of the UMSL sponsored charter schools have embedded school nurses

- The lead nurse participates in school nurse trainings including those offered by Margaret Cole at DESE and through BJC Learning Institute
- All sub nurses have been thoroughly trained on PCS's Covid safety practices
- Vision, hearing, and dental screening were conducted by community partners—Kids Vision for Life, St. Louis Vision and Hearing Clinic, and Delta Dental. Immunization clinic is planned for the fall.
- Over 50 individualized health plans have been created including a plan for a student with epilepsy and training for all staff on this condition

through a partnership with Children's Hospital Heathy Kids Healthy Minds.
- Connecting the PCS nurses to these other like-role nurses could provide a cohort for learning and support as the role of the school nurse continues to expand.
- One appropriate function of the school nurse is to assist families without health insurance to access MO HealthNet (Medicaid). Information about student health insurance could be collected on the annual re-enrollment form. The school nurse and/or social worker could assist those families without health insurance to enroll in MO HealthNet.

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- The PCS Parent handbook and Student Support Policies are available on the PCS website.
  - The IDEA Child Find Policy is available on the website. Federal regulations require this notice also be posted in school administrative offices—this reviewer was not able to verify if this notice is currently posted.
  - Detailed Covid Safety Procedures are included in the parent handbook.
  - Suicide and Bullying policies and procedures are included in the handbook and on the website. The policy includes annual training requirement for staff
  - Seclusion, Isolation, and Restraint policy/procedures was available for review.
- PCS has 160 students identified for ELL services. A well written and through LAU plan has been board adopted to guide the identification and services for students with limited English proficiency. This an exemplary plan—in the opinion of this reviewer.
- The Title I Parent Meeting was conducted virtually and is available on the PCS Website. This meeting was well organized and included all the information required by ESEA. The Federal Programs Coordinator conducted this meeting on 9/22/2020. All required Title 1A policies and the parent compact are available for review.
- Annual Staff Training
  - Dyslexia—2 hours of virtual PD included in opening of school PD
  - De-escalation & Physical Restraint —this was not conducted this year because of the limitation of Covid and social distancing

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- No additional recommendations to consider. Overall, Premier's student support system is strong. Keep doing what you are doing!

o Seclusion, Isolation, and Restraint policy/procedures—was not reviewed but is planned for the upcoming school year • PCS monitors its own compliance with federal and state requirements. Student support policies are well written and available to staff and parents for review. This is an area of strength for PCS.	