UMSL|Education
Charter Schools Office

2021 UMSL Annual Review Report - Part 1: Elements 1-8
The Soulard 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. • **COVID Related**: The Soulard School's (TSS) commitment to social-emotional learning and educating the whole child, along with its heritage of building and maintaining a strong family community positioned it well to support students when the pandemic hit.	• **COVID Related**: The pandemic forced The Soulard School (TSS) to severely alter or suspend a few key programs, such as culinary arts and family style lunches, that fuel commitment to the vision and strengthen ties to families and the larger community.

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 TSS's mission.
  o **COVID Related**: The board worked very closely with the administration from the beginning of the pandemic in March 2020 to ensure that TSS 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 Executive Director (ED).	

• (b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:
  o Board members bring knowledge and experience in these fields: Business development – cyber security, law, property management, creative art, banking and finance.
	• (b) Recruits and maintains - Diverse backgrounds and skill sets:
	  o A few key board members resigned this year and will need to be replaced. With the departure of Dr. Rodney, the board is predominantly white and male. No one left on the board brings knowledge and experience of education or school leadership. In filling the openings and expanding the number of members, prioritize addressing these gaps.

• (c) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations: o To the best of UMSL's knowledge, the TSS board is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations.	

• (d) Policies:
  o The board periodically reviews policies and updates them as needed.
	• (d) Policies:
	  o Consider putting the board-approval date for each policy in the header or footer of every page in the manual. As specific policies are updated, the date for those pages will change. This makes it easier to identify the age of any given policy and whether or not it needs to be updated based on changes in statute or recommended best practice.

• (e) Strategic approach:
  o See comment in the left-hand column, *(e) Strategic approach*
	• (e) Strategic approach:
	  o TSS is working to develop a new strategic plan for the next five years. The development process began in January

- (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
    - The TSS board has an ED evaluation process in place that focuses on organizational and performance goals and outcomes. Refer to comment in the right-hand column.
    - Relations between the board and ED are strong; characterized by mutual respect, transparency, and collaboration to address challenges.

- (g) Monitoring responsibility:
    - The board monitors student academic performance through review of TSS's internal standardized assessments before the full board and the Academic Committee.
    - See directly below for financial oversight.

- (h) Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility
    - The board regularly reviews and monitors Soulard's finances and financial operations, approves the monthly check register, adjusts the annual budget as necessary and submits and publishes the annual audit.
    - *Refer also to Element X when UMSL's Charter School Office submits Part 2 of the annual review to the board sometime in early fall.*
- (i) Responsibilities to UMSL
    - The board fulfilled all of its responsibilities to UMSL's Charter Schools Office.

Community Relations
- Almost all board members live or work near or among The Soulard School's family community and stay informed by and in touch with parents and community leaders.

culminating in a board summit in late March. It is anticipated the new plan will be in place for SY22.

- (f) School leader relations and evaluation:
    - The ED undergoes evaluation primarily conducted by both the school's and foundation's board presidents.
        - Consider how to formalize and streamline the process that involves more board members and solicits feedback from parents and staff at TSS.
    - Board interviews indicated uncertainty as to whether the current evaluation process is rigorously followed.
        - It is also unclear whether the full board gets to review the report in draft or final form.
    - The Board should formally review and approve the final version during a closed session.

Community Relations
- There is no evidence either way that reveals the board's relationship with families of color who belong to TSS's community. Consider gathering data to determine if a gap exists. If so, prioritize addressing the gap.

Board Development and Training
• The SY21 board development plan was thorough and covered important topics worth exploring.
	Board Development and Training
	• Board member interviews revealed that board members could use more training in these areas:
	    ○ Specific knowledge about the teaching and learning process that takes place at TSS.
	    ○ Public school finance
	    ○ Obligations owed DESE by statute
	    ○ Interpreting MAP data

Board Survey: Five members completed the survey
• Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following areas as strengths:
    ○ Ensuring legal and ethical integrity
    ○ Developing the financial resources needed to support student performance and school success
    ○ Monitoring fiscal operations, including developing and approving a budget, monitoring expenses, and optimizing cash flow for all funding and expense streams
	Board Survey: Five members completed the survey
	• Results from the board survey reveal that board members consider the following as areas for improvement:
	    ○ Strategic planning and goal setting for the school
	    ○ Evaluating the school's Executive Director/Principal/Head of School
	    ○ 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.)
	    ○ Providing charter school orientation and training for new board members

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. 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	**Required Documents**: • **Enrollment Application** • **Marketing/Recruitment Materials** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Observation of lotteries • 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**

Executive Director (ED)
• (a) Investment of others:
   o The ED works closely with the building principal to:
     ▪ Ensure alignment to school priorities.
     ▪ Collaborate on problem solving.
     ▪ Keep her informed about what's going on at other levels of the school.
     ▪ Provide support as needed.
   The principal interview indicated she deeply appreciates the ED's support.
   o **COVID Related:**
     ▪ The teacher survey indicated the ED 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 Stakeholder interviews cited the ED's genuine passion for TSS and its students.
   o Staff completed surveys seeking input on:
     ▪ Adjustments related to COVID.
     ▪ Long term planning.
	Executive Director (ED)
	• (a) Investment of others:
	   o Teacher interviews indicated they would like salary increases.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - **COVID Related**: The Soulard School prepared well for adjustments necessitated by the pandemic. This includes providing:
    - Devices and hot spots for students who needed them.
    - Support and professional development to teachers to help them adjust instructional methods for online teaching.
    - Strengthening partnerships with parents and families.
  - The co-teaching model has been an important asset in TSS's approach to meeting all students' needs, especially during the pandemic.
  - Stakeholder interviews indicated the ED's strengths include:
    - Knowledge and experience in education.
    - Organization.
  - The ED meets regularly with the principal and shares feedback.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - In spite of COVID, enrollment at TSS remained very steady this school year.
  - The school has no concerns at this time about recruitment. At all grade levels, the number of applicants exceeded openings.

- (d) Culture building:
  - The ED prioritizes maintaining:
    - Strong relationships with the community.
    - A spirit of teamwork and collaboration among staff.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - Currently, TSS's finances are fairly tight. Stakeholder interviews indicated that this situation places strains on the school in at least two areas:
    - Offering competitive salaries for staff
    - Providing more resources to teachers to enhance teaching and learning; specially:
      - Resources that support hands-on learning and differentiated instruction.
      - More technology in their classrooms.
    Some programs unique to TSS (its co-teaching model for example) come with a significant price-tag. There are trade-offs underneath every budget decision one makes. As TSS moves forward with its strategic plan and considers its long-term budget, it will have to prioritize its program offerings through a process that factors in their:
    - Financial costs.
    - Importance to the school's culture
    - Value related to reaching the school's vision.
  - Stakeholder interviews indicated that before the new principal's arrival, TSS's culture, structures and processes lacked clarity concerning the roles and responsibilities of the principal position; making it, at times, challenging for the new principal to establish her leadership in the building. Taking over in the middle of a pandemic didn't make meeting that challenge any easier. Consider clearly defining the position's roles and responsibilities and the processes for carrying them out; and then communicating this to all staff so that everyone understands where the lines of authority lie.
  - TSS does not have a formal evaluation process of the principal position in place.

- (c) Recruitment and enrollment strategies:
  - In terms of racial and ethnic diversity (less than 25% people of color); and socio-economic diversity (less than 25% Free or Reduced-Price Lunch); TSS is one of the least diverse charter schools in Saint Louis. Consider what steps TSS needs to take to increase diversity at all levels: Board, staff and students.
    Data Source: 2020 District Report Card on DESE's website: https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Reports/SSRS_Print.aspx?Reportid=6a5392af-6f3d-46a5-92e1-f39fdfa861c2

- (e) Employment:
  - Teaching staff retention following SY20 was 100%.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - TSS's administration is compliant with state and federal statutes and regulations except where specifically noted in the right-hand column of this report.

Principal
- (a) Investment of others:
  - Teacher interviews and survey indicated:
    - The principal supported them as they adjusted to changes brought on by the pandemic.
    - They have a strong voice in decisions that directly impact them.

- (b) Strategic approach towards student achievement:
  - The principal interview indicated that she brings a continuous growth mindset to all aspects of the school program and is working with her staff to consider certain elements from new perspectives.
  - The principal:
    - Prioritized improving teacher skills around analyzing and using data to drive planning and instruction. She holds bi-weekly grade level meetings and data-team meetings to reach this goal.
    - Strongly supports teachers' PD needs.

- (d) Culture building:
  - Teacher interviews indicated the principal is knowledgeable, helpful and responsive.

Discipline
- All stakeholder interviews indicate student behavior in the building reflects the school's vision and strong sense of community. Incidents necessitating disciplinary action are practically non-existent.

- (f) Compliance with state-federal statutes and regulations:
  - TSS's independent annual audit submission did not meet DESE's deadline. This was the first one, and it took longer than expected for the auditor to complete it due to complications related to TSS's transition from a private to a public school. Though it is doubtful TSS will miss another deadline, TSS should do whatever is necessary to ensure it is on time next year.

Principal

- (d) Culture building:
  - **COVID Related**: Teacher interviews indicated that due to the pandemic, it has been hard to forge a relationship with the new principal. They would like to get to know her better.

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

Operations/HR/Facilities
- TSS's operations team runs smoothly.
- There are no concerns with attendance tracking/reporting.
- HR records are kept safe.
- All staff background checks are in place.
- The Principal tracks teacher certification and provides ample notices.
- There are no concerns around maintenance or custodial services.
- The school has ordered stickers for TITLE I inventory.
- TSS conducted all state mandated emergency drills.
- TSS limits access to MOSIS and Core data to school staff as appropriate.

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development
- TSS's formal evaluation plan is thorough and follows best practice.
    - Teacher interviews indicated they are satisfied with the process.
- TSS's SY21 PD plan ensured all mandated trainings take place.
- Due to COVID, school leadership opted to provide teachers more individual PD time to prepare their courses and set up their classrooms.
- Teacher interviews indicated they appreciated:
    - **COVID Related**: Beginning of the year PD on resources and practices that support virtual teaching. All interviewees said it was extremely helpful. One elaborated, "I still use them."
    - Individualized PD opportunities.
    - The eight-week training on LTRS.
- TSS has a Staff Mentoring Plan in place, although the school did not have any new or second year teachers.
- TSS has a coaching plan in place that involves principal observations every or every other week. They're tied to each teacher's individual professional development goals.

Operations/HR/Facilities
- Multiple stakeholder interviews indicated that one of TSS's greatest needs is more space. The school has already outgrown its current building and has to share space with the nearby Boys and Girls Club. There's not enough room for staff offices and special services. As the school's enrollment and programs continue to grow, constraints due to lack of space will increase.
- Teacher interviews indicated TSS needs a better system for substitute teachers

Teacher Evaluation, Mentoring and Professional Development
- Teacher interviews indicated it was harder to process formal classroom observations on Zoom. They'd also appreciate having more informal "drop-in" observations with feedback.
- Teacher interviews indicated they would like more PD on curriculum planning and teaching reading and writing in a virtual setting.

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

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	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	**Documented Curriculum**
• School leaders recognize there is a need to develop scopes and sequences (refer to comments in the column directly to the right) and have planned to start the development process this summer.	• **COVID Related**: In last year's review, one of the key findings was TSS's lack of formal, overarching scopes and sequences for the four core subject areas. It included the following statement: o 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. (*Refer to full statement in the SY20 Annual Review Report: Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*) The pandemic completely rearranged TSS's priorities and school leaders placed a hold on plans to develop scopes and sequences for all core subjects. If SY22 brings a return to pre-pandemic teaching and learning at TSS, it is important to take this on. As one teacher expressed, "Nothing is officially written down. A teacher new to Soulard would have to figure it out. There's nothing to inherit concerning what has been done." • Those leading the work on curriculum development should aspire to locate the balance point between a curriculum that prioritizes teacher autonomy and student-derived content and one that prioritizes mastery of national and state standards and content-coverage. These priorities are not mutually exclusive. The challenge will be to find and leverage the common ground between the two.

• (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
   o At each grade level, teachers have aligned their curricula to Missouri Learning Standards (MLS). Report cards incorporate key MLS standards as part of the TSS's assessment of individual student progress.
      ▪ Teacher interviews indicated they appreciate being able to reference the standards in their planning.
	• (a) Curriculum alignment to vision and philosophy:
	   o Teacher interviews indicated TSS needs:
	      ▪ A literacy phonics curriculum that is aligned across grade levels.
	      ▪ A scope and sequence including grade level support for math.

- (b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
  - **COVID Related**: The principal interview indicated that teachers have incorporated problem-based and inquiry activities and units into the virtual learning delivery model.
  - Teachers create units derived from student interests.
  - Teacher interviews indicated satisfaction with rigor. One stated: "Expectations are set at a high bar that is challenging but not frustrating. Our emphasis on social-emotional learning enables us to keep the bar high."

- Student Assessment Plan
  - TSS has implemented a thorough plan that includes fall, winter and spring administrations of the following:
    - Dyslexia screenings (DIBELS)
    - Star Early Literacy, Math and Reading
    - Fountas & Pinnell Reading
  - Teacher interviews indicated they are comfortable using STAR assessments and find them helpful.

- (b) Challenging, engaging and coherent:
  - **COVID Related**: Virtual teacher and school leader interviews revealed a few concerns about student progress under hybrid learning:
    - They indicated a majority of students have adjusted well to virtual learning. That stated, all of them expressed concerns about one or two students in each class that are not consistently engaging and falling behind. One interviewee cited specific home conditions ("students without a reliable adult at home") as a key factor. Teachers and school leadership have put forth their best efforts to get them more engaged, with a modicum of success.
    - Concerning in-person students, some interviewees indicated they have not been able to cover as many standards compared to previous, non-pandemic school years.

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**

• Teacher and school leader interviews indicated the culture is:
   o Very friendly and supportive
   o Welcoming.
   o Inclusive
   o Collaborative
   o Aligned with the school's vision.
	• **COVID Related**: Teacher interviews and survey during the first semester indicated that changes necessitated by the pandemic (virtual learning, social distancing and movement restrictions) has made it challenging to maintain the strong sense of community that existed prior to the pandemic's onset.
	   o They lamented the lack of opportunities to connect with each other and with both their own students and other students

- o Characterized by strong relationships between teachers and students. - Student interviews indicated: - o They feel very safe at school. - o They believe that everyone is treated fairly.	attending TSS. One stated, "More than anything, I miss the camaraderie when we're all in the building." o They also lamented the lack of opportunities for their students to connect more with each other.

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:
  o Teacher and leader interviews and the teacher survey indicated teachers deeply believe in TSS's vision and mission.
  o All stakeholder interviews indicated teacher dedication is a strength of TSS.	

- o School leader interviews indicated that teachers have been supportive of the new principal.
- o The teacher survey indicated they have been supportive of each other throughout the year. Staff collaboration is a hallmark of TSS.

- (b) Student investment:
  - o Teacher interviews indicated:
    - They develop curriculum units derived from student interests blended with the Missouri Learning Standards.
    - They are "staying true" to TSS's priority of student social-emotional development.
    - They are in constant communication with parents about their child's progress.
  - o Regarding their teachers, student interviews indicated that:
    - They appreciate the relationships they have with their teachers, believing that they know each of their students on a personal level.
    - Their teachers do a great job teaching them.
      - They explain things well.
      - They are very slow to get angry or frustrated.
      - They care about their students and want them to succeed.

- (b) Student investment:
  - o Some student interviewees indicated they feel their teachers give them too much to do and keep track of.

- (c) Curriculum development and implementation:
  - o Teacher interviews indicate they value the freedom and autonomy they have to incorporate student interests into their curriculum plans.
  - o Out of necessity, teachers are very resourceful when it comes to designing units and locating materials and supplies to implement them.
  - o Zoom observations of classrooms indicated that teachers planned lessons that:
    - Focused on foundational skills.
    - Were well organized and utilized a variety of applications to make the lessons engaging.

- (c) Curriculum development and implementation:
  - o Teacher interviews indicated they understand TSS needs to find a balance between a student-centered curriculum and ensuring students perform well on state assessments. They admit discomfort about this.
    - Related to this, some teachers would like more guidance on curriculum planning.
    (Refer to comments above in *Element IV: Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment*.)
  - o Teacher interviews indicated that given the expectations for their work, there is not enough support for providing the materials they need to teach effectively.

- (d) Instructional practice:
  - o Teacher interviews indicated that, though challenging at first, they feel comfortable with remote teaching and the technological tools that support it.

- (d) Instructional practice:
  - o **COVID Related:** Teacher interviews indicated they struggled with teaching writing and reading with virtual students.

○ Classroom Zoom observations indicated that teachers:
          ▪ Pushed students to think through questions the teacher posed.
          ▪ In general, provided opportunities to practice skills.
          ▪ Checked for understanding throughout the lesson.
          ▪ Were fairly effective at keeping students on task and engaged.
 	
• (e) Student progress-tracking:
    ○ Teacher interviews and survey indicated that they utilize both formal and informal assessments, including STAR; assignment trackers and one-on-one student meetings to:
          ▪ Track progress
          ▪ Differentiate learning goals and instruction
          ▪ Group students and offer targeted intervention.
	• (e) Student progress-tracking:
	    ○ Continue developing teacher skills in collecting, analyzing and using data to drive instruction.

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:
   o **COVID Related**: Teacher interviews indicate that due, in part, to the pandemic, overall communication with parents and families has increased and improved.
   o Teachers communicate regularly via newsletters, phone calls, emails and zoom meetings.
 	
• (b) Input from stakeholders:
   o TSS surveyed parents on two occasions to solicit feedback on school programs and long-term planning.
      ▪ The partnership survey indicated that most parents are very satisfied with their relationships with TSS.
	• (a) Parent and community engagement:
	   o Teacher interviews indicated that a small minority of parents are not engaged in supporting their children's learning in spite of multiple efforts to communicate with them.
	   o **COVID Related**: The Title I Parent Survey indicated that the pandemic, combined with busy work schedules, have made it very difficult for some parents to be as involved with TSS as they would like. TSS should consider:
	      ▪ Investigating this further to determine if this is concerning primarily for low-income and/or single parent families.
	      ▪ Basing adjustments in engagement processes on findings.

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:
  o General satisfaction with SPED support.
  o Satisfaction with and appreciation for TSS's social worker.	

Dr. Thurma DeLoach's Review	

Leadership
• Soulard School is in its second year as a public charter school. Soulard previously operated as an independent private school (since 2005).
  o Soulard School promotes a school vision that embraces all learners—including those with special needs. Project-based instructional strategies emphasize student interests, inquiry, and community building.
  o Social-emotional learning is a high priority for Soulard school. Although a school-wide set curriculum for SEL is not currently
	Leadership
	• The administrative leadership team is aware of the need for more defined procedures and processes specific to special education and other student support services. Classroom teachers expressed a need for greater clarity and training in this area. The newly hired student support/special education administrator identified this as a high priority before the start of the new year.
	  o Written procedures and documentation forms for special education referrals, dyslexia screening/intervention supports, and Tier 2/3 data-based problem solving is recommended.

available, classroom teachers incorporate this teaching into their classroom lessons and routines. The Educational Support Counselor (ESC) provides SEL lessons in the classroom (virtual and in person)

- o Normally, 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 was not possible during Covid closure and the need to shift to virtual instruction.) This co-teaching model allows for most students to be fully supported within the regular classroom using small group and differentiated instructional methods.
    - Soulard administration is interested in assisting its teachers acquire special education certification as a strategy for providing special education supports/services within the general education setting as an alternative to pull out services when appropriate. Discussions are underway with the UMSL School of Education about facilitating this preparation.
- A new principal started at Soulard this school year. Although she is a first-year principal, she brings strong experience from her prior school district specific to student support services including data-based problem solving, dyslexia screening, reading intervention and social emotional learning.
- The principal and the part time student support/special education administrator are observing in general education classrooms together as a strategy for supporting classrooms with academic and behavioral challenges. This team approach to observing students and instructional practices in the classroom is an effective way for the two administrators to learn from each other and identify needs as they collaborate on designing multi-tiered systems of support.

Special Education Services
- The Soulard School is in its second year of providing special education services to its eligible students. Assuming responsibility for all aspects of special education from St. Louis City Public Schools has been a challenge; however, the staff has welcomed this responsibility and is learning how to do special education in a small school. There are currently 8 students identified as eligible and several students being evaluated for eligibility.
- Despite being a small school (enrollment around 125 students), Soulard serves students with a wide range of disabilities—including Specific Learning Disabilities, Other Health Impaired, Emotional Disturbance, Speech Disordered, Language Impaired, Autism. Most of

- Soulard School is not currently participating in Medicaid School District Administrative Claims (SDAC) or Direct Service Claims for IEP based therapies. Although Soulard does not have a high number of economically disadvantaged students, Medicaid could be a potential source of additional revenue to support student support services. Missouri School Boards Association assists districts and charter schools initiate this process at a minimal cost.

Special Education Services
- Procedures for referring students for evaluation are informal. Teachers share their concerns with the principal or with the special education director typically through email and a decision is made jointly to evaluate or not. Several teachers expressed an interest in more explicit referral procedures when they suspect a student may have a disability.
  - o 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

these students participate in the general education classroom for 80% of their school days or more. This is reflective of the highly inclusive mindset of Soulard School.

- The overall perception of teachers and administrators is that Soulard serves students with IEPs successfully. Each student is viewed as unique and plans developed for each child support their individual needs.
    - o Soulard's co-teaching model in regular classrooms provides a strong inclusive framework for any child with special needs. The special education director is considering more focused training on co-teaching practices that support all students—including students with disabilities.
- The assistant principal/director of special education and other student support services resigned unexpectedly in November 2020. A part time special education coordinator was secured through a private agency until a replacement could be hired and some timeline compliance issues occurred during this interim. An experienced special education/student support services director was hired for 2 days per week starting in January. This person does not provide instructional minutes to students with IEPs and thus is able to fulfill the administrative responsibilities of the role on a part time schedule.
    - o Parents were introduced to the new special education administrator through Zoom meetings.
    - o Soulard leadership team expressed confidence in the support, advisement, and procedures developed by the new special education/support services administrator. She is already assessing the student support systems at Soulard and beginning to develop formal procedures and policies for all aspects of special education, student support, and compliance requirements. Consistent procedures for referral and intervention are being developed and include documentation forms, data collection, and team decisions.
- Special education services are provided by a part time (29 hours per week) special education teacher, a speech-language pathologist contracted through a private agency, and an hourly Occupational Therapist. The Educational Support Counselor provides mental health counseling minutes required through students' IEPs. This staffing appears to be appropriate for the range of disabilities and services currently required by Soulard students.
    - o Special education staff reported that the shift to virtual classroom instruction for students with IEPs generally went well. The biggest issues were with those few students who did not participate/log in regularly. Students who logged in

in the staff handbook and documentation forms maintained on a shared Google drive.
- o Annual review of the referral process should be incorporated into the early fall staff PD calendar.
- During the first 2 years as a public charter school, the Soulard special education administrator provided classroom teachers with *IEPs at a glance* which included critical information about the student's IEP and with strategies for supports and accommodations. Classroom teachers reported this to be helpful. As the 2021-22 SY begins, this responsibility should shift to the special education teacher.

regularly made adequate progress. Virtual lessons were provided 1-1 or in very small groups.
- o Most students with IEPs came into school for in-person services through the Resource Center staffed by the special education teacher and the prior assistant principal/special education director. Students who received these direct in-person services did not show significant regression on IEP goals.
- o Classroom teachers reported that support and collaboration from the special education/student support services team is strong. Although collaboration meetings are not regularly scheduled, the smallness of the school allows for on-the-spot collaboration and support as needed. Teachers reported that student support staff are responsive to both teacher and student needs.
- SpedTRack was purchased this winter as the special education management program at the recommendation of the new special education director. This tool has helped streamline special education compliance documentation and monitoring. Teachers and administrators expressed appreciation for this new tool.
- In preparation for continued school closure in August, Special education staff worked with parents to complete IEP Form G for all students with IEPs, as required by DESE—Special Education. Parents participated in determining which goals, instructional minutes and services would be provided virtually during school closure. Special education staff reported that this process was effective and helpful in figuring out a realistic plan for students with IEPs. Plans focused on meeting the individual needs of the student and the families.
- As an alternative to continued virtual instruction at the start of the school year, an on-campus Resource Center was available for students with IEPs to receive special education services in person. This strategy was developed specifically because of the challenges experienced by students and families accessing special education services virtually during the spring 2020 school closures
- Plans for student support and special education staffing for the 2021-22 school year include:
  - o Continued 2 day per week special education/student support administrator
  - o Full time special education teacher
  - o Hourly Speech-Language Pathologist and Occupational Therapist hired by Soulard School (not a private agency).

This will be less expensive and should ensure service consistent with Soulard philosophy.
  - o Full time school psychologist intern (clinical supervisor yet to be determined)
  - o Hourly based Physical Therapist
  - o Full time Educational Support Counselor/social worker (school-wide role—not limited to IEP minutes)
- Classroom teachers participate in all special education process meetings including Review of Existing Data, Eligibility and IEPs.
- Soulard School conducted its DESE Special Education Self-Assessment in January 2021 (Cohort 1). This was a year sooner than anticipated and in the midst of replacing the special education administrator. This reviewer assisted the newly hired special education director conduct the self-assessment. Most of the files reviewed were in good order and generally compliant with federal and DESE compliance requirements. Required compliance documents, including evaluation reports, IEPs, Notices of Action, Notices of Meetings, signed consents, and transfer file reviews were in available for the review.
  - o Several evaluation/initial IEP timelines were out of compliance during the gap in time between special education administrators.
  - o Several Notice of Action forms were not fully compliant.
  - o Corrective Action is anticipated and will be addressed in the fall.

Social-emotional learning & Mental Health Supports
- Social emotional learning is a focus area for Soulard School. The school philosophy reflects the importance of SEL. Numerous social-emotional-behavioral practices are incorporated into classroom routines including
  - o Yoga and Movement breaks
  - o Mindfulness practice
  - o Self-regulation strategies (ALERT program)
  - o Sensory tools/supports
- Soulard School joined the Missouri Foundation for Health grant in partnership with BJC Behavioral Health for the 2020-21 SY. This funding enabled the current part time social worker to work full time as an embedded Educational Support Counselor (clinical social worker) with support/supervision from BJC-BH.

Social-emotional learning & Mental Health Supports
- Soulard School does not currently use a published, evidence-based social-emotional learning program. Several staff members expressed strong interest in using a program that would ensure consistency of concepts, language, and strategies across grade levels.
  - o *2nd Step* is one of very few evidence based SEL programs currently available. It is based on the CASEL (Collaborative for Academic, Social, Emotional Learning) framework. Numerous area school districts, including the Boone County Mental Health Collaborative, have adopted Second Step as their Tier 1 classroom SEL program. This program should be considered as a potential school wide SEL program.

- o Students are referred to the ESC for supports by classroom teachers, principal, or parents.
  - o Students new to Soulard are invited to participate in Buddy Circles as part of their initial orientation to Soulard.
  - o Because of Covid closures, therapeutic services were initially provided virtually to students and families; however, as students returned to campus, direct in-person services and supports were available.
  - o Small group therapy and social skills instruction are provided as "Buddy Circles".
  - o The ESC provides individual therapy for several students with more intense social emotional needs.
- Soulard School applied for a Cigna grant to help fund the full time clinical social worker role and parent outreach for the upcoming school year. Unfortunately, they did not receive this grant.

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. Soulard School conducted the required screening procedures for the fall and winter.
  - o STAR was used as the general school-wide benchmarking tool and was also used for the initial fall dyslexia screener for grades 1-5. All students took this virtually due to the Covid pandemic campus closure. STAR is an adequate initial screener; however, additional follow up assessments are needed to assist teachers target specific skill areas for supplemental/intensive instruction.
  - o Dibels Curriculum Based Measures (CBMs) were used to conduct the winter screening. Classroom teachers conducted this screening for the winter cycle.
    - ▪ The principal organized Dibels data on a Google form for review with classroom teachers.
    - ▪ Teachers reported that Dibels provided more information for targeting specific skills than the STAR screening alone.
  - o 20 students were identified as having reading concerns through this screening. Classroom teachers are responsible for providing supplemental reading supports for their students. Progress monitoring of student growth is expected a minimum of 3 times between screening cycles.

- School-wide screening for social-emotional-behavior risk was not completed this year. The School Risk Student Survey (SRSS) is a required screening tool included in the MO Foundation for Health grant. This is a free and easy to administer quick screen for social-emotional risk and should be consider moving forward as an effective tool for ensuring all students are regularly screened for potential social-emotional support needs.
  - o Although the MO Foundation for Health grant is over and the partnership with BJC-Behavioral Health is not continuing, the SRSS should be considered as an easy to administer school-wide screener in the fall, winter, and spring.
- A specially designed sensory/motor area would provide an additional resource for students needing these breaks and supports during the school day. However, space is at a premium. The OT could help plan such an area—perhaps utilizing outdoor space or hallway motor walks. Several area schools have created these areas using hallways and tight corners and could be consulted for ideas. An UMSL Charter School office mini-grant might be a funding resource for these tools.

Dyslexia Screening and Intervention Support
- The building principal serves as the literacy coach for teachers. This is not uncommon in a small school. If Soulard grows in enrollment, consideration of adding a literacy specialist to the instructional team should be considered—perhaps in a dual role as a classroom teacher and coach. In the meantime, LETRS training provides an excellent foundation for all classroom, special education teachers and the principal on the fundamental principles and practices of effective literacy instruction based on the science of reading development.
  - o DESE is funding LETRS training and materials for this summer and fall. Applications are due by May 15.
- 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.
- Although some teachers shared dyslexia screening results with parent during conferences, the required notification letters were not sent to parents this year. Parental notification of the results of screening and intervention/supports plans need to be provided after each screening.
- Although STAR screening provides initial screening information as to which students need to be screened more thoroughly, additional screening with the Dibels CBMs (curriculum- based measurements) will ensure that gaps in the development of critical early literacy skills

- o *Spire*, *Haggerty,* and *Bridge the Gap* are supplemental reading resources available to classroom and special education teachers.
- All Soulard teachers participated in two hours of dyslexia PD provided virtually by Bev Columbo, the RPDC dyslexia consultant and LETRS trainer for the St. Louis region.
- Several primary-level teachers participated in LETRS (Language Essentials for Teachers of Reading and Spelling) training in June 2020. Participants reported this training to be transformational in their understanding of how children learn to read and the developmental needs of beginning readers, specifically in phonemic awareness and phonics.
- 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.

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- The following Student Support policies were reviewed last spring. IDEA Child Find, ESEA and Physical Restraint policies are published in the parent handbook.
  - o Child Find
  - o Homeless
  - o English Language Learners (ELL)
  - o Physical Restraint, Isolation, Seclusion (drafted and includes guidance for documentation and reporting; still needs to be board adopted)
  - o Suicide and Bullying
  - o Federal Programs EESA
    - ▪ Parental complaints
    - ▪ Parent involvement
    - ▪ Parents Right to Know
    - ▪ School-parent Compact
- Annual Staff Training—all required trainings were conducted.
  - o 2 hour required Dyslexia—December 18, 2020
  - o De-escalation—2/23/21
  - o Physical Restraint—2/26/21

are identified for early intervention. Classroom teachers stated the Dibels screening results helped them identify the specific areas of individual student need for targeted intervention.
  - o Data review meetings should be held after each round of screening to ensure that those students in need of supplemental or intensive intervention in targeted areas are identified and connected with necessary interventions/supports. The school psychologist intern (hired for the 2021-22 SY) and principal would be the appropriate staff to meet with each grade level team to conduct this review and identify appropriate interventions.
  - o On-going training for teachers on using screening data to make decisions about literacy interventions is recommended. The school psychologist intern could be utilized to provide some of this training during data review meetings with the grade level teachers.
- Evidence-based literacy instructional practices are used by teachers; however, a consistent, school-wide literacy instructional program is not currently provided for teachers. Teachers are interested in a school-wide program to ensure consistency in skills, language, and strategies. EdReports is an excellent resource for identifying effective evidence-based reading programs.

General Compliance: Student Support Policies and Procedures
- Soulard has developed/adopted all required student support policies. However, it is unclear if all policies have been board adopted.
  - o It would be helpful to include the date of the board adoption on the policy document.
  - o Critical student support policies should be available on the school website for parental access.
- Several student support policies are published in the parent handbook.
  - o Consideration should be given to including all required policies in the parent handbook under a state and federal policy tab.
- Although the enrollment form screens for potential ELL, ACCESS screening was not conducted as the required follow up for a student identified on the enrollment form. The student support/special education administrator is aware of this omission and has identified this as a need for the new school year. The enrollment form should be reviewed annually to ensure it is current with all federal and state requirements related to ELL, homeless, migrant, and other special needs. Procedures for following up on any identified potential special needs should be documented in a written procedure included in the staff handbook.

o Suicide and Bullying—1/6/21 and 2/10/21 • Annual Federal Programs (Title 1) parent meeting –power-point sent out via email. 10-09-2020	• 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***.

Student Support Resources and Processes: General Observations
• Despite being a very small school, Soulard has effectively compiled a cadre of student support services staff and resources to successfully serve its students with special needs. The staffing plan for the upcoming school year should provide additional embedded expertise specific to use of data and tiered intervention.
• Soulard does not currently have students identified for ELL, Migrant or Homeless services/supports. However, in anticipation of these needs at some time in the future, general policies and procedures were developed in the prior school year to respond to these needs. The new Director of Student Support Services is reviewing these general policies and revising to provide more specific guidance on implementation procedures.
• 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 are intended to provide the first round of support to classroom teachers to identify and plan tier 2 supports for small groups and individual students.
    o Teachers reported this is a helpful process for initial problem-solving around individual and small group support needs in the classroom.
    o The building principal plans to develop specific procedures and documentation for individual problem solving for students in need of more intense tiered supports.
• The flexible use of student support services staff minimizes reliance on special education to serve students with mild to moderate challenges in academic, behavior, sensory-motor, and social-emotional learning.
    o The special education teacher, Speech-Language therapist, Occupational therapist, and school social worker provide intervention supports for students without IEPs as part of their
	Student Support Resources and Processes: General Observations

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.

- Soulard School rarely used OSS as a disciplinary consequence—no OSS assigned this year.
  - Soulard School is philosophically well aligned for Restorative Discipline.

Continuity of Instruction During Covid School Closure
- Prior to finalizing school opening plans in August, the Soulard administrative team met regularly with teachers and conducted several parent surveys. As a result, a plan for hybrid instruction with a gradual return to in-person instruction was developed.
  - Students with IEPs or other significant learning needs for whom virtual instruction was deemed ineffective were able to attend the resource center in-person 2 days a week instead of virtual instruction. In some cases, high needs students were able to attend the resource center 4 days a week. This type of individualized planning is representative of the child-center responsive planning of Soulard staff.
- Soulard does not have a school nurse; however, a Covid Safety plan was developed and implemented by school staff. Regular participation in St. Louis City Department of Health and Children's Hospital seminars helped ensure their planning was current with local Covid safety requirements and guidance. The plan included building routines for safety including a gradual return to school starting with primary students, daily temperature checks, morning check in with parents, mask wearing, hand washing, and other facility cleaning procedures. As of this review, no cases of school transmission of Covid have occurred.
  - Soulard administrative team hoped to secure a part time school nurse through a partnership with Children's Hospital Foundation and Healthy Kids Healthy Minds starting this spring 2021. Budget constraints prevented this. As additional funding resources come available, these discussions can be renewed.
- Staff reported that they had some general training on virtual instruction, including Google Classroom, See Saw, and the EdPlus workshop offered through the UMSL Charter School office. They also reported a strong collaborative spirit among teachers—sharing virtual resources, helping each other with student engagement and participation challenges.

- As Soulard returns to a normal school schedule in the fall, exploration of training in restorative practices is suggested. Character Plus offers this training at a reasonable cost.

• Generally, teachers reported good student participation and adequate progress during virtual lessons. Students who struggled with virtual lessons or who did not show up for lessons were identified for individualized planning/supports. • Soulard staff continued to show responsiveness, flexibility and creativity in providing instruction and student support services during the continued disruption caused by the Covid pandemic.	