

# THE SOULARD SCHOOL

Application for Charter Renewal 2023

Sponsored by University of Missouri - St. Louis

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# Introduction

The Soulard School has spent the past 5 years working to successfully transition smoothly from an independent school to charter in the midst of a pandemic, meeting new challenges for federal and state accountability while staying true to its central mission and approach. Through it all, the school has maintained stable enrollment, staffing and leadership, and has produced student performance results that exceed those of many comparable charters and district schools.

Established as an independent school in 2004, the school grew from a neighborhood early childhood program, with the founding staff and families at that time working hand-in-hand to create a different type of schooling for their children. This partnership continued as the school transitioned to a public charter school in fall 2019, broadening the school's ability to serve all residents of the city.

Throughout these transitions, an elementary program rooted in the practices and values of early childhood has remained strong. The school teaches that learning can be active, playful and joyous, that developing social-emotional health and well-being is valuable, and that empowering children to independently problem-solve for themselves and with their peers is worthwhile. It is this "different type of schooling" that is still felt as visitors, students, staff, and parents explore our halls and observe our classes in action. It has also served our students well, as they continue to demonstrate high levels of academic achievement in our school and beyond.

The Soulard School is seeking its first 5 year renewal from UMSL, its Charter Sponsor, as well as DESE and the Missouri State Board of Education for the period 2024-2029. The school provides assurance that the information, practices and structures outlined in our original charter application are still in place, with the exception of the updates provided in this renewal document.

We are proud of our successes in our first few years:

## Academic Success:

- Exceeded UMSL goals, state average, and scores of most other charters in St. Louis on MAP English Language Arts in 2022, with 49% scoring Proficient/Advanced.
- Exceeded UMSL goals and scores of most other charters in St. Louis on MAP Mathematics in 2022, with 32% scoring Proficient/Advanced.
- APR - earned 83% of possible points under first APR of MSIP 6 in 2023, putting the school in the top 25% for the state, and as one of the top charter schools in the city.

#### Financial success:

- With funding from IFF, was able to purchase school building in 2019 just prior to the start of the first year as a charter. The school had previously leased the space as a private school since 2005.
- Ended 2023 with a 40% ending cash fund balance
- Clean yearly audits with no material findings

#### Student Recruitment and Retention Success:

- Was able to recruit full classes K-5 from year 1. Interest remains strong, with wait lists at most grade levels each year.
- Able to retain students during each school year at a high rate (i.e. few mid-year transfers) - 97% in 2021 and 87% in 2022.
- Kept students and families year-to-year - of the “engine” first class of kindergarteners to start in 2019, 60% are still enrolled 4 years later.

#### School Community Success:

- Staff and parent satisfaction
  - In 2023 annual parent survey, 93% indicated the school was a good fit for their child, and a similar percentage said their child enjoys coming to school.
  - In 2023 annual staff survey, 100% said they have been able to build positive relationships with parents, students, and coworkers. 96% agree that coworkers are committed to the school’s values and philosophy.
- Pandemic response
  - Continued to have high attendance and participation rates during covid pandemic, both in-person and in distance learning. Distance learning included both academics and Extended Core (i.e. PE, music).
  - Worked collaboratively with staff, board, other charter leaders, SLPS and City officials to coordinate formulation of covid response policies, opening/closing plans, and distance learning to minimize impact on student learning.
  - Supported student mental health using various state and federal funds to convert part-time Counselor/Social Worker to full-time, supporting students in person and remotely.
  - Expanded our Buddy circle approach to Parents/Guardian to support parent mental health during and post-pandemic

## Education Plan

### A.1 Mission, Vision, Philosophy and Goals

The school engaged in a strategic planning process during the 2022-23 school year which included revisiting and revising our Mission and Vision statements and adding a Purpose

statement. These were crafted by a committee of stakeholders after consideration of all that makes the school special.

### Purpose Statement

To foster an environment of belonging that inspires learners to make a difference for themselves and their communities.

### Mission Statement

The Soulard School is a community dedicated to educating its children so they can be empowered academically, grow emotionally and build authentic connections.

### Vision statement

The Soulard School will be a school that reflects the rich diversity of the neighborhood and surrounding communities; a school that actively involves families in their children’s educational life; a school committed to developing physical, social-emotional, and intellectual competencies. The Soulard School will serve as an example of the profound and real possibilities of a community dedicated to educating its children.

## A.2 Student Population, Recruitment and Enrollment

### Grades Served

The Soulard School serves grades K-5th, with one class of approximately 24 students per grade level. Each class is team-taught by two co-teachers.

*Table 1: Enrollment Summary*

	Students	Free-Reduced Price Lunch %	Students of Color %	Special Education %
2019-20	117	20.5%	23.9%	6.8%
2020-21	121	14.8%	23.9%	8.2%
2021-22	129	25.5%	25.5%	7.7%
2022-23	128	23.4%	23.4%	10.1%
2023-24 (Projected)	142	22 returning + TBD new students	40.8%	TBD

2024-2025 (Projected)	140	TBD	TBD	TBD
2025-2026 (Projected)	144	TBD	TBD	TBD
2026-2027 (Projected)	150	TBD	TBD	TBD
2027-2028 (Projected)	150	TBD	TBD	TBD
2028-2029 (Projected)	150	TBD	TBD	TBD

The Soulard School converted from private to charter in part with the goal of being accessible to all families in St. Louis and building a school community that more closely mirrored that of the city. The charter opened in 2019 with 117 students, of which 24% were non-white (identified by parents as Black, Hispanic, Asian, Native American or multi-racial) and 20.5% qualifying for free/reduced lunch. For 2022-23, enrollment had increased to 128 with 33.6% of the student population identifying as non-white, and 23% qualifying for free/reduced lunch. For 2023-24, total enrollment is projected to increase to 142, and the percentage of non-white students to increase to 41% based on current enrollment as of summer 2023.

The school has similarly increased its count of students receiving special education services and built out its special education program to accommodate student needs. While only 6.8% of students received special education services in 2019-20, that number has increased to 10% for 2022-23 and is anticipated to increase further for 2023-24 based on incoming student data supplied by parents. Special education staffing has similarly expanded to support all learners (see Section A.9 for more information).

### Recruitment

The covid pandemic complicated recruitment and enrollment, as the school had previously relied on in-person events to connect with prospective families. Instead, the school utilized virtual tours and online advertising, and updated its website to better connect online. With the end of the pandemic, the school has been able to return to a more robust recruiting effort including:

- Monthly school tours
- Annual open house
- Targeted Facebook ads for city residents with school-aged children
- Targeted mailings to city residents with school-aged children
- Participation in citywide school choice fairs
- Outreach to local preschools, daycare centers and afterschool programs

- Active social media presence including updated website and active Facebook and Instagram sites

The Souldard School became a charter just as a change in Missouri law allowed for charters to give weighted enrollment preference to low-income students. This has helped other charters ensure that they are building a diverse student body and serving their full community. The Souldard School has elected to see how natural enrollment and demographics changes affect the student body through the private-to-charter transition, and data so far indicates that the school is shifting to serve more low-income families and students of color. Moving forward over the next five years, the School Structure Committee will continue to monitor demographic shifts and consider whether a change in charter to include preference for low-income applicants is needed to continue increasing diversity of all kinds.

The school has worked to remove barriers in the application process for all applicants. In 2020, the school switched from a paper application to an online form, and removed the requirement to provide birth certificate and proof of residency upon application, electing instead to collect those items only from families who are admitted. The school also opted to move the lottery date from February to March to allow more time for families to be included in the first-round lottery after an analysis of applications indicated that families of color and low-income families tended to apply later.

## Projected Enrollment

As reflected in Table 1 above, school enrollment has increased gradually from 117 in 2019-20 to a projected 142 in 2023-24. The 2023-24 enrollment is very nearly at capacity for the school's current facilities (approximately 24 students each in 6 elementary classrooms). While parent surveys continue to indicate a desire for a middle school, and the school begins each year with waiting lists at most grade levels, there are no plans to increase enrollment in the next renewal period.

## A.3 School Climate and Culture

The Souldard School has always had a strong school culture. Focus groups and interviews with current families, teachers, students, alumni and general community members conducted during the creation of our Strategic Plan in 2022-23 emphasized that there is something special about The Souldard School. Individuals referenced the sense of love and familiarity that they feel within the school. One family member shared "it's crunchy...but in a good way" when describing the school. A similar sentiment was shared in the annual parent survey when a respondent shared "I love The Souldard School and I'm blessed to have found such a wonderful place. My child



would not enjoy or thrive in a traditional school system (sit at your desk all day and open your books, etc.). I love how the school is so 'homey' for the students and parents."

This concept of The Soulard School being "more" than just academics was emphasized in conversations with current families who participated in Strategic Plan focus groups. When asked what this meant, families indicated that they believed their children were learning things about being a "good person" or developing a positive character as a result of their attendance at the school. One family explained that while their student was gaining the foundational academic concepts, they were also learning how to be a well-rounded person and that was something the family did not believe they could easily find at another school. In a 2022 parent survey, one parent wrote, "We chose Soulard because of the social/emotional learning focus and the impact that we felt it would have on [name of student]. We feel that Soulard has more than surpassed our expectations in that regard." Alumni students shared similar sentiments when they talked about the emphasis on social emotional learning (SEL) that they gained during their time at The Soulard School and how it had helped them as they transitioned to middle school.

The Soulard School is guided by 4 foundational pillars:

- *Diversity & Inclusion* - It is our mission to establish a strong sense of community and belonging within our students, parents and staff
- *Child Well-Being* - Through our programming and social emotional curriculum, The Soulard School proactively creates a school culture that respects and values all students, fosters understanding of all kinds, and incorporates health and wellness.
- *Integrated Studies Program* - Everything is connected - in life and in learning. Our integrated studies program combines curriculum for two or more subjects, allowing students to see how ideas are connected to arrive at more meaningful and authentic understanding.
- *Community Engagement*- As a school, we are privileged to share a foundational time in both children and their parents' lives. Education is something that we do with our students and families, not for them.

The school's pillars continue to guide decision making as we seek to build a responsive and inclusive culture where staff, students and families feel a sense of belonging. Several relate directly to school culture and saw growth in our first period as a charter.

In our commitment to *Diversity & Inclusion*, we worked with the Education Equity Center in 2021 to engage our community in an Equity Audit. The process gathered both descriptive and quantitative data of equity indicators from a variety of organizational stakeholders. The audit was able to provide insight into areas of strength and opportunities of growth. According to the inquiry data, there are *strong* indicators of equity in curriculum and instructional practices. What The Soulard School founding board and stakeholders originally envisioned for learning,

curriculum and instruction is holding true today. The school is continuing to process the Equity Audit and gather feedback from parents, staff and board members about additional ways the school can be sure that it is welcoming and supporting all types of students and families.

Since becoming a charter we have supported our commitment to *Child Well-Being* in part by adding a Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) on staff starting in our first year, 2019. This role oversees our Buddy Circles program, a peer mentoring program developed in-house, as well as provides one-on-one counseling plus weekly in-class lessons on SEL. Healthy eating is also key to our approach to child well-being. While the pandemic disrupted some of our Culinary Arts/Nutrition initiatives, we have built back, and continue to provide all students free, delicious meals and snacks prepared onsite, as well as weekly lessons in Culinary Arts/Nutrition. In the 2022-23 school year we were able to return to family-style lunches for the first time since the pandemic, encouraging students to build social connections and healthy practices around food.

*Community Engagement* is seen through ways in which we involve all members of the community in the educational process and success of the school community. See Section B.6 for a full description of the ways in which the school works to engage with families and the larger community.

## Staff, Parent and Student Satisfaction

The school has been conducting annual surveys of parents and staff since spring 2020. The results show consistently high levels of overall satisfaction with their experience at the school. They also indicate an overall positive school climate where staff and families feel respected and cared for. For example:

2023 Parent Survey (92 parents responding):

- 93% agreed/strongly agreed that the school is a good fit for their child
- 93% said would recommend the school to others
- 92% agreed/strongly agreed that their child enjoys coming to school
- 92% said their family feels safe and welcome at school

2023 Staff Survey (24 staff members responding):

- 100% agree that most parents treat staff with respect
- 100% agree have been able to build positive relationships with parents
- 100% agree have been able to build positive relationships with students
- 92% agree have consistently worked collaboratively & closely with my supervisors
- 100% agree staff treat one another with respect
- 96% agree that staff are committed to school values and philosophy

## Responding to Student Behavior: Discipline

With its focus on Social Emotional Learning, the school has always taken a positive approach to problem solving around student discipline. Within the classroom, there is a focus on redirection and individual discussions when conflicts or disruptive behavior arise. Prevention techniques such as teaching yoga, using the calming area, fidget toolboxes, taking “movement breaks” and setting clear classroom expectations help establish a positive climate that can prevent many issues and help students meet their needs without disrupting learning for themselves and others. The Student Support Coordinator (LCSW), School Psychologist and Principal are available throughout the day to step in when situations require additional support. Responding to student behavior relies heavily on explanations, reinforcement, and modeling. This may consist of some combination of providing students time to calm down, discussion of their choices, an alternative activity, and parent contact.

In addressing students who have ongoing struggles with their behavior, the Student Support Team meets regularly with all classroom co-teaching teams. There is a focus on gathering data regarding antecedents to behaviors and problem solving, rather than punitive measures. See Section A.4 for more information on SST.

## Plans to Improve School Climate

While the school's original vision and mission continue to shine through, the years impacted by the pandemic did not allow all new families, staff and students to experience all of our core practices. With covid restrictions lifted in the 2022-23 school year and through our Strategic Plan priorities, we have identified the following goals to improve our school climate and reclaim core Soulard School approaches over the next 5 years:

- Revise New Parent Orientation materials and presentation
- Develop procedures, policies and practices surrounding daily interactions with parents and visitors
- Document schoolwide practices that support student well-being and engagement - use documentation to ensure consistency among staff and classrooms, as well as to share practices with others
- Provide ongoing, incremental professional development around schoolwide practices and philosophy
- Review school philosophy and practice with all stakeholder groups

This plan was informed through our yearly staff and parent surveys in which both groups indicated a desire to recapture pre-pandemic activities and practices. Through our equity audit we found inconsistency across the school in regards to staff-family communication, culture-building, and approaches to conflict resolution. Parents want more information about what their children are learning and to understand their children are being challenged appropriately. While 86% of parents in 2020 agreed that they knew what their child was learning, that number dropped to 68% for 2023. This may indicate a gap in teacher

communication, but likely also reflects changing parent norms post-covid - after helping their children closely with assignments during distance learning, they feel that they are missing out on information now that their children are back in school full-time.

Additionally, staff and administrators report that the pandemic has brought a need to increase parent engagement and understanding of school approach and practices that may have been lost during the pandemic. Staff survey responses from spring 2023 included statements like, "Our work on reclaiming our own ways of being TSS and what that means for us as staff, what we want, will also play into our ability to build this into new staff and families." Another wrote, "Now that the pandemic has mostly passed, it's time to step up our community building game! In particular, taking advantage of the talents and skills of our parent body and finding ways to motivate participation and reward efforts."

## A.4 Curriculum & Instruction

Since 2019, the school has worked to combine a desire for flexibility and teacher/student input with a need for greater consistency across grades and data-driven accountability. The result has been a "firming up" of the curriculum, with purchase of several key curriculum pieces to build consistency across grade levels in Literacy and Mathematics. The goal is still to have a dynamic curriculum that includes cross-curricular projects and subjects that students and teachers are passionate about (foundational to the school under the Integrated Studies pillar), while also ensuring that all learners are making consistent academic progress and meeting all the Missouri Learning Standards.

Please see Appendix A for a summary of The Soulard School curriculum.

### Success and Areas for Growth in Curriculum & Instruction

The school's Strategic Plan focus groups in 2022-23 and surveys across the years have found that both families and students believe that they are gaining a quality education at The Soulard School. Alumni students discussed how things that they learned during their time at the school influenced what they wanted to continue studying in middle school. Current students emphasized a love for reading and appreciation for opportunities for experiential learning through the culinary program and STEAM. In the 2022-23 parent survey, 80% said they were satisfied with the academic program, while a similar number believed that their child's individual learning needs were being met. Ninety-three percent said they would recommend the school to others.

Parents overall have a positive perception of the school's approach to curriculum and instruction, and it appears that it is resulting in concrete benefits to student learning as well. As discussed in the Introduction, our MAP scores demonstrate our students' academic strengths, as they out-performed nearly all other charters in the city in 2022 and continue to show improvement.

One area in which the school has room for improvement is the achievement of Student Groups (formerly known as Sub Groups). See further discussion in Section D.1.

## Plan to Improve C&I

The Souldard School plans to build on our successes and continue to improve in Curriculum & Instruction.

*Literacy:* The new DESE Read, Lead, Exceed Initiative will help provide focus as we consider purchasing a full reading curriculum, as well as look more closely at how we are identifying and supporting struggling readers. As of fall 2023, the staff-based Literacy Committee is reviewing the two curriculum packages approved by DESE for funding, and considering which one would best meet our students' needs. The school has embraced the LETRS training offered by DESE and others, and worked to incorporate more phonics-based instruction. To this end, the school purchased and implemented the Sonday phonics/phonemic awareness curriculum starting in 2021.

*Math:* The staff Math Committee in 2020-21 identified a need for a standardized math curriculum, reviewed math curriculum options and recommended purchasing the Investigations Math curriculum. This was approved by the board and purchased in fall 2021. Additional professional development and staff feedback about implementation continued in 2022-23. The school has set strong math goals for the renewal period (see Appendix F) and full implementation of the math curriculum across the grade levels is expected to help students make gains in this area.

*Extended Core/Science/Social Studies:* The Strategic Plan sets a goal to build out full scope and sequence plans for each of these areas by 2025. Staff committees will work during designated monthly meetings to meet this goal.

*Classroom Practice:* The school has entered into a partnership with UMSL through the St. Louis Translational Fellowship in Education Program - participating schools identified an issue they wanted to address to strengthen teaching and learning. The school focused on enhancing the co-teaching classroom relationship, and will be working with an UMSL post-doctoral fellow in 2023-24 and 2024-25 to analyze and strengthen the ways co-teaching supports instruction.

*Table 2: Six Approaches to Co-Teaching*

One teach, one observe- the observer is looking for and taking data on specific student outcomes and both teachers analyze results after lesson	One teach, one assist- one teacher takes the lead while the other supports students as needed	Parallel teaching- the class is divided into two groups and each teacher provides the same instruction to their small group
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Station teaching- classes are set up in 2 or more activity centers, with each teacher supervising/providing instruction at a center. Some centers may provide independent practice.	Alternative teaching- one teacher provides instruction to most of the class, while one teacher provides alternate instruction to a small group needing additional support.	Team teaching- teachers work side-by-side to provide instruction together
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Friend, Marilyn, Cook, Lynne. (2016). *Interactions: Collaborations for school professionals*. 8th Ed. Adapted from Connecticut State Education Learning Center.  
<http://ctserc.org/component/k2/item/50-six-approaches-to-co-teaching>

## Summary of Academic Interventions

Academic interventions at The Soulard School occur within the framework of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports. Students needing support may be identified through parent/guardian request, teacher gathered observation and data, or benchmark assessment. The Student Support Team (see Section A.8) meets regularly with teachers to problem solve, create and revise intervention protocols, and track intervention data and progress.

*Table 3: Multi-Tiered System of Supports at The Soulard School*

Tier 1	Interventions that are provided to all students as a part of regular instruction within the philosophy of the school. These universal practices are evidence-based methods of instruction and student support, including such practices as co-teaching classrooms (1:12 teacher-student ratio), small group work, student choice and individualization, yoga and movement breaks, healthy meals and snacks.
Tier 2	Interventions that occur within the classroom and are provided by the classroom teachers, often with support from the SST (Student Support Team). Intervention protocols are designed to target specific areas of concern for a student, and may be delivered within a small group or one-on-one reteaching and practice. Individual accommodations such as more time, frequent breaks or preferential seating may be recommended. Students that may benefit from a Tier 2 intervention have specific skill acquisition or generalization gaps in academics or social emotional behavior learning. Tier 2 instructional support builds on the foundational core instruction of Tier 1. Data is taken to determine what interventions are tried and whether they result in positive growth.
Tier 3	Interventions that may be needed for a small number of students to make progress. The focus is on the needs of individual students who are experiencing

	<p>significant problems in academic, social, and/or behavioral domains. At this level the instruction is more intensive and individualized and will often occur one-on-one with a teacher or staff member daily. The student progress is documented and reviewed by teachers and SST members frequently.</p>
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### A.5 Assessment

Since becoming a charter in 2019, the school has recognized the need for updated and streamlined assessment across the grade levels. Starting in fall of 2020, the school began administering the STAR test three times a year to all students. This has replaced previously used tests including Fountas and Pinnell, TEMA and CMAT assessments. In addition, the school is continuing to adapt to changing needs and rules. Starting in 2023, the school will add a formal kindergarten assessment (Kindergarten Observation Form) and a new Missouri-based STAR literacy assessment at the K-3rd grade levels.

*Table 4: Assessment Chart*

Assessment Tool/Method	Grade Level	Description and Use
Missouri Assessment of Progress (MAP)	3-5	<p>Norm-referenced online tests created by DESE and administered by teachers each spring in Math and ELA in grades 3-5. Tests in science are administered to grade 5. Tests consist of a variety of multiple choice, extended response and performance tasks aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards.</p> <p>Individual results are provided to families. Group/school results will be analyzed by teachers and administration to consider learning needs and curriculum adjustment. A data presentation is provided at a public board meeting annually. Results are used to determine whether the school met goals set by UMSL, its charter sponsor, and will be used by DESE to determine APR scores.</p>
STAR Early Literacy, Reading and Math	K-5	<p>An adaptive online test consisting of multiple choice items created by Renaissance Learning Inc. Administered by teachers 3 times annually to monitor reading and math skills. May be administered additional times for students receiving interventions.</p> <p>Individual results are shared with families at conferences and in trimester Progress Reports. Individual and class results will be reviewed by administration and teachers and help determine MTSS/intervention placement and progress monitoring. Schoolwide results will be included in the annual data presentation at public</p>

		board meetings at least twice a year.
DIBELS	K students & new students	A dyslexia screener administered individually by teachers to all new students and any student that shows at risk on the STAR assessment.
Teacher-Created and Curriculum-Based Assessment	K-5	Assessments created by teachers or supplied as part of a purchased curriculum package. Used to determine how students are progressing with basic academic skills and provide timely and efficient data on student learning to inform instruction.  Data used by teachers to evaluate individual student mastery of a skill taught in class, as well as to assess whether additional instruction is needed for the whole group or individuals. Data directly informs trimester Progress Reports.
Student Risk Screening Scale (SRSS)	K-5	Universal screening tool used two times per year to identify students who may be at risk for challenging, antisocial behavior. Completed by teachers to identify students who may need additional social/emotional support or counseling
STAR Missouri Early Literacy Screener	K-3	New for 2023-24, an adaptive online assessment completed by all K-3rd grade students to identify those who have Significant Reading Deficits (SRD) of 1 grade level or more.  The school has selected this as part of our Evidence Based Reading Instructional Program starting in 2023. Shared with parents, results are used to determine which students need Reading Success Plans.
Kindergarten Observation Form (KOF)	K	Screener completed by kindergarten teachers for all new kindergarteners each fall. The school has selected this as our Kindergarten Entry Assessment tool starting in 2023.

## A.6 Professional Development & Instructional Staff

### Staff and Learning Connections

The past few years have been a tumultuous time for the field of education - the pandemic and public response have resulted in additional pressures on teachers and schools. However, our staff remains overall positive and upbeat about the school and their relationships within it.

On a spring 2023 survey, 100% of staff indicated they agreed that staff are caring and respectful of students. 100% also agreed that they were able to build positive relationships with students and parents. 92% reported that they had consistently worked collaboratively and



closely with their supervisors and 91% said that meetings with their supervisor were helpful and productive. 92% reported that they were able to work positively and collaboratively with their co-teacher. 96% agreed that most students want to learn and do their best, and 100% said that most parents treat staff with respect. These survey responses indicate that overall staff are satisfied with the school, the profession, and the support they receive from the school community.

## Professional Development Plan for Contract Term

The Souldard School sees developing its staff as it develops its students - keeping our core philosophical pillars in mind, we seek to individualize and support staff interest and skill building, while also working to build a community with shared knowledge and values. Staff work with the principal and to set individualized goals for themselves, while participating in shared experiences throughout the year as well.

A typical year of Professional Development includes:

*Table 5: Professional Development*

Event	Timing	Purpose
New Staff Orientation	2 days in August	Introduce new staff to school's history, mission and approaches.
August PD Week	5 days in August	All staff participate in a variety of workshops, meetings and events to lay groundwork for the year.
Staff Meetings	Weekly after school	Weekly check ins include a rotation of staff curricular planning committees, mandatory trainings, information sharing and events
Professional Development Days	5 days throughout the school year	Similar to August PD, provides additional time to focus on special topics identified by administrators and in staff surveys such as new curriculum training, revisiting of school philosophy/approaches and presentations from outside experts.
Principal Meetings	Semi-Weekly	Principal meets every other week with each grade level co-teaching team and Extended Core teacher to discuss curriculum, lesson plans and student needs.
SST Meetings	Monthly	See Section A.8.
New Teacher Mentoring	Semi-Weekly	New teachers are paired with a veteran

		teacher who provides regular mentoring over the course of 1-2 years.
New Co-Teacher Mentoring	Ongoing	Teachers who are new to the school are paired in their classrooms with an experienced TSS teacher who assists in acclimating to the school philosophy and approach to learning.

In responding to teacher feedback and looking to our strategic plan for guidance, our professional development plan for the next contract term includes careful attention to balance and blend our core philosophical approaches with the newly added curriculum and instruction materials. As discussed in Section A.4, there are changing approaches and mandates that the school is building responsive plans around and supporting staff to grow their knowledge and skills in. Through the strategic planning process we set goals to focus on the areas of:

- Multi-tiered systems of support
- Co-teaching
- Identifying key PD opportunities that align with our philosophical approaches

Soulard School staff will participate in professional development workshops on Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS) annually during opening week professional development sessions beginning in 2023-24. These workshops will include an overview of the philosophical structure of the MTSS framework. Group discussion and feedback will be used to refine our work. This will be followed by grade level team meetings to discuss transition of students with historical classroom supports and interventions.

Throughout the next three school years (2023-26), MTSS will be featured on the agenda of school staff meetings and/or PD days at a minimum of monthly. The following sample list of topics will be highlighted for discussion, problem solving and implementation:

- Student Support Team (SST) protocols for referrals and team meetings
- SST protocols for intervention implementation
- SST protocols for progress monitoring and fidelity checks
- Soulard School universal screeners
- Soulard School Tier 1 universals
- Soulard School Tier 2 protocols for academics and SEL
- Soulard School Tier 3 protocols
- Soulard School Special Education
- Brain science and the impact on learning and behavior
- Culture and the impact on learning behavior

Over the next two years we will be working with UMSL and the fellow paired with our school to focus on our site-based problem of practice. We have identified co-teaching as our focus area with a goal to improve the implementation of our co-teaching model as a way to support instruction and increase student achievement. Teachers will receive teacher training and coaching by our UMSL Fellow related to embedding core science of learning principles into instructional materials during the school year and summer. We will also have access to a web-based data analytics dashboard that monitors implementation of the learning principles and helps us track the success of our teachers. (see Section A.4)

In the 2023 staff survey, teachers commented on the need for more professional development around the integrated studies approach. Through the strategic plan process, one goal under Philosophy was to develop ongoing PD reflective of schoolwide practices and pillars and by the 2026 service year. This would provide continuity in teacher development in core philosophical practices of project-based learning, connecting between subject areas, SEL practices. This work will track that all staff are provided with consistent PD opportunities as they progress at Soulard School.

## A.7 Performance Goals

See Appendix F for Performance Goals for the coming contract term.

## A.8 Special Student Populations

### Special Education

The school has greatly enhanced its ability to identify and serve students with special developmental, academic and behavioral education needs since 2019. The changes are outlined in Table 6. The program has grown in response to student, family and staff needs. The school has also purchased SpedTrack, a cloud-based program used to create and manage student special education records.

The student support process is built through the Student Support Leadership Team - a committee consisting of the Principal, Special Education Coordinator, School Psychologist, School Counselor, Speech Language Pathologist, Occupational Therapist, Special Education Teacher and General Education Teacher. This team meets twice monthly to review existing data and also when referrals are requested by teachers, intervention protocols, and student data. Members of this team meet with each classroom teaching team a minimum of once a month to problem solve, develop and refine intervention plans and review data within a Multi-Tiered

System of Supports (MTSS) framework. See Section A.4 Summary of Academic Interventions for more information.

*Table 6: Special Education Staff Growth, 2019-2024*

2019-20	2023-24
F/T Assistant Principal providing special education instruction and documentation P/T Paraprofessional Contracted speech/OT/evaluation services	P/T Special Education Coordinator F/T School Psychologist F/T School Counselor/Social Worker F/T Special Education Teacher F/T Paraprofessional P/T Paraprofessional P/T Occupational Therapist P/T Speech Pathologist (shared w/ another charter) Contracted PT services

### English Language Learners

No changes to consider in this area for the upcoming contract period.

### Homeless

No changes to consider in this area for the upcoming contract period.

### Plans for Improvement in Serving Special Student Populations

For the coming contract period, the school will continue to work to build out and fine-tune the special education and referral processes. The school will continue to offer professional development on MTSS, the intervention process, and how special education services dovetail with classroom instruction. See Section A.6 for more details on professional development plans.

### A.9 Optional Programs

No changes to consider in this area for the upcoming contract period.

# Management & Operations

The Souldard School has emerged from its first contract period as a charter school (during a pandemic) with strong governance and operations. The Board of Directors meets its obligations for oversight, while a steady and consistent administrative team provides structure for a staff and family body who know who to turn to when they have questions.

## B.1 Governance, Management and Operations

The Souldard School is governed by its Board of Directors (see Section B.2), with daily operations managed by its administrative staff. While staffing changes are inevitable, the overall structure has changed little since 2019, with the Principal supervising staff and curriculum, while the Executive Director serves as the thought leader for the school, as well as the liaison between the staff and the Board, UMSL and DESE.

The Board's goal is to be a representative body bringing diverse talents and areas of expertise to support and oversee the school, including the fields of law, education, entrepreneurship and finance. The Board's most recent self-assessment, conducted in spring of 2023, reflects their confidence in their role - 100% of respondents indicated they feel involved in the school and that their contributions are valued. All also agreed that board members share a common understanding of the school's mission, and that major policy and strategy decisions are made with the mission in mind. Since 2019, the Board has developed a committee structure that works for the organization, resulting in effectively monitoring school academic and financial performance, navigating the pandemic years, and developing a responsive and successful plan to standardize and increase teacher compensation.

Looking ahead to the upcoming contract term, the Board's self-assessment survey indicated a need to increase the size of the Board, as well as a desire to review the formal recruitment process, prioritize specific skills/expertise from new board members, and monitor term limits. Diversity within the Board is a shared goal as well, as board members understand that Board composition should reflect the school's and the city's diversity in terms of race/ethnicity and gender as much as possible.

## B.2 Governing Board Composition and Corporate Organization

The Soulard School is governed by a Board of Directors who meet monthly in public meetings to review all aspects of school operations with the Executive Director and other school personnel.

All meetings of The Soulard School Board of Directors are in accordance with Missouri Sunshine Laws. Agendas, minutes, financial statements and other relevant documents are posted on the school's website for public viewing. Meetings are held monthly according to a calendar posted annually. Following the pandemic, meetings have been held virtually, and the link is made available on the school's website. The meeting minutes include the date, time, place, members present and a record of all votes taken.

In 2023, the Board of Directors updated the school's Articles of Incorporation to update the closure plans and name University of Missouri, St. Louis. Updated Articles of Incorporation can be found in Appendix B.

### Plans for Board Improvement

In the next contract period, the Board will continue to set goals around formalizing the recruitment process and building a diverse board in terms of talents, as well as backgrounds. This need was reflected in the 2023 board self-assessment. The Board has also built out committees in the past few years and will continue to recruit non-board committee members who bring special expertise or who can contribute to special projects.

The Governance Committee will be increasing activity around board recruitment, onboarding, development processes. The Education Committee will continue to oversee curriculum work and student achievement, including monitoring academic goals set out in the UMSL Performance Contract. A new Facilities Committee will be formed to implement the recommendations of the Strategic Plan regarding assessing facilities needs and growth.

*Table 7: 2023 Current Soulard School Board Members*

Name	Board Title/Committee Involvement	Expertise	Years Served
James DeLong	President	Business, Alumni Parent	5
Steven Groves	Secretary, Governance Lead	Law	5
Jamie Boyer	Finance Lead	Education Law	4

Pamela Retzlaff	Education Lead	Education	2
Anne Lehrer	Member	Medical/Health, Alumni Parent	1

### Philosophy & Approach to Governance

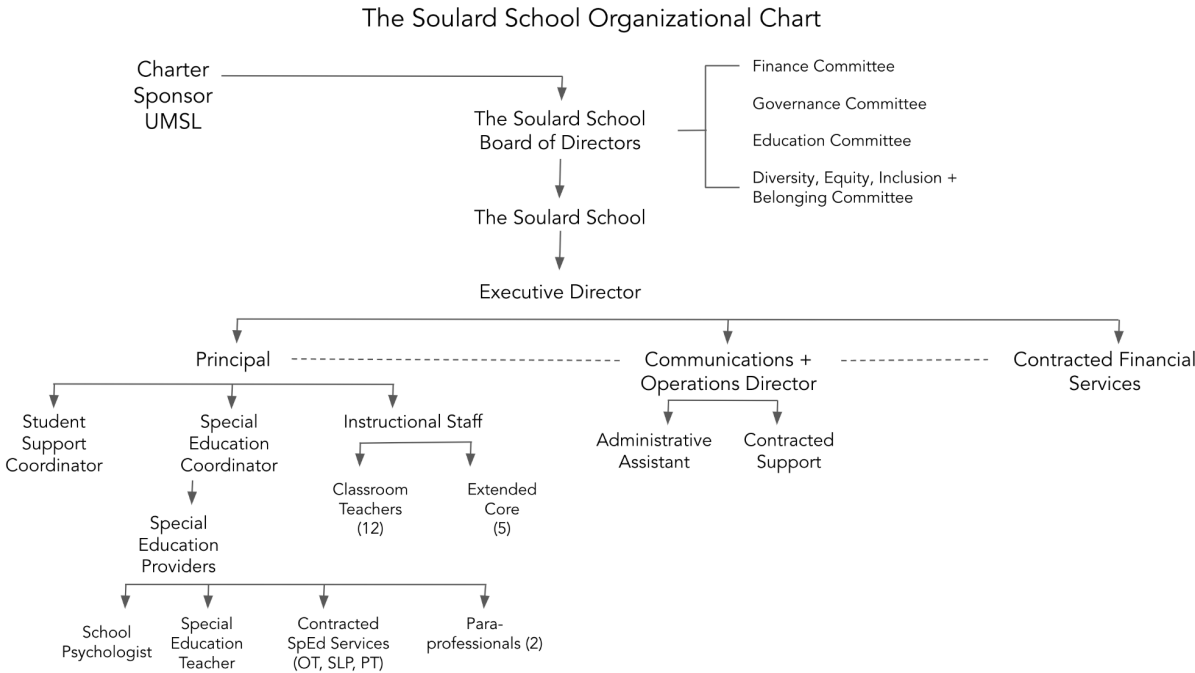
The Board entrusts everyday leadership of school to the Executive Director and provides oversight through monthly meetings and committees. The Board’s role includes financial oversight, academic accountability, long-range planning (oversight of, involvement in and implementation of the Strategic Plan) and continued professional development and self-assessment.

### Strategic Planning & the Board

The Soulard School Board of Directors took an active role in developing the school’s current Strategic Plan, including selecting a consultant group (Gladiator Consulting) to lead the process, participating in focus groups, receiving monthly updates and providing feedback. The Board approved the current Strategic Plan at their June 2023 meeting.

## B.3 Staffing Plan

Table 8: The Soulard School Organizational Chart



## Reflection on growth since original charter

The teaching staff numbers and structure has remained relatively unchanged from the original charter structure in 2019 - each grade level has 2 co-teachers, with 5 “extended core” teachers teaching special areas such as PE and Studio Art to all grade levels. The main change has come in building out the special education department to meet student needs, including adding a full-time special education teacher, paraprofessionals, part-time speech pathologist and special education coordinator. See section A.8 for further details.

## Administrative Leadership Duties

### *Executive Director*

The Executive Director is the thought leader for the school, acting to build connections between the school staff, board, charter sponsor and wider community and ensuring the school’s long-term growth and adherence to its philosophical roots.

- Providing leadership in shaping and maintaining the school’s philosophy and vision.
- Liaison between the Board of Directors and others in the school community.
- In coordination with the administrative team and Board, establishing the annual budget for Board approval.
- Acting as a community liaison, building relationships and educational partnerships with the neighborhood and the city.
- Providing ongoing supervision of the school's budget and finances in coordination with other administrators and school personnel.
- Serving as the public face of The Soulard School to create visibility and stature in the public, philanthropic and policy making communities;
- Enhancing the current communications strategy to drive local and regional understanding and awareness of The Soulard School;
- Anticipating, identifying, and addressing the strategic challenges The Soulard School will face as it transitions into the next phase of its growth.

### *Principal*

The Principal is responsible for implementing and developing the school’s mission and philosophy in the long-range management of the school, as well as supporting the teachers in their role as lead learners in their classrooms. This includes:

- Taking the lead in hiring and training new staff members.
- Acting as a community liaison, building relationships and educational partnerships with the neighborhood and the city.
- Developing and organizing professional development opportunities for all staff that include: in-house training, guest presentations, opportunities away from school.
- Managing and oversight of teachers in all areas of their development including: consistent review of lesson plans, bi-weekly teacher meetings, weekly observations (both in person and through the use of video), and formal performance evaluations.



- Assisting teachers in creating and maintaining a yearly professional development plan and supporting a continuation or advancement of their professional certifications.
- Working with Special Education Coordinator and others to document and report student behavior and academic data, as well as use that data to create (with teacher feedback) school goals in support of increased student progress in both areas.
- Developing class schedules for extended core and support personnel.
- Maintain the student trimester report system and support teachers with implementation as needed.
- Coordinating student transition to middle school; liaison with alumni.
- Meet with students, staff and families to mediate issues as needed.

### *Special Education Coordinator*

The Special Education Coordinator works with the Principal, teachers and parents to support student success in the classroom. Specifically:

- Coordinating special education and student support staff, the Student Support Team and outside providers to ensure that students with special needs get assessment and services as needed.
- Ensuring services for English Language Learners, Homeless students, and other special populations are provided according to state and federal laws.
- Supporting teachers in building academic and behavioral supports for all students through a system of tiered monitoring.
- Working with parents to support them in navigating the special education process and make the best decisions for their children's education.
- Providing professional development and support for teachers in developing strategies to meet the needs of specific students academically.
- Working with the Communications & Operations Director to ensure compliance and tracking of all special education services and reporting to DESE and other government entities.

### *Communications & Operations Director*

The Communications & Operations Director supports the Executive Director, Board, Principal and staff in day-to-day management of TSS. Specifically:

- Managing day-to-day finances in coordination with contracted financial experts, including payroll, benefits and pension contributions
- Planning and hosting Open Houses and other outreach and admissions events.
- Managing the school's website and social media sites.
- Facilitating communication with staff, parents and community members via newsletters, social media, community meetings, etc.
- Managing day-to-day communication including phones, visitors, tours, email inquiries.
- Managing building, grounds and equipment maintenance and supply inventory.
- Organizing and managing student and employee records, including prospective TSS student applications.

- Assisting teachers in securing necessary supplies, outside resources and transportation for field trips and special activities.
- Facilitating and tracking parent volunteer projects.
- Coordinating daily scheduling, including tracking staff absences and arranging for subs.
- Ensuring all city, state, and federal tax requirements, regulations and rules are met.
- Tracking all income and expenses and reporting to the Executive Director, Board, and state and federal agencies as required by law.
- Creating and filing all relevant financial reports with DESE including Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR).
- Managing student and staff information including overseeing student information systems and monthly uploads to DESE (Core Data, MOSIS, Tiered Monitoring, etc.).

## Plans for Staffing Changes

The Soulard School at this time has no plans for major changes in the staffing plan in the renewal period. The Strategic Plan laid out a goal to revisit the staff and administrative roles and responsibilities and this could result in the future addition of other personnel to support student learning (i.e. assistant principal, curriculum coordinator, reading/math specialist). The school remains committed to its co-teaching model and the inclusion of multiple Extended Core (specialist) programs such as STEAM and Performing Arts.

## Succession Planning

In 2019, as the school transitioned from private to charter, the Principal who had served for many years announced that she would be leaving in 2020. A hiring committee of staff, parents and administrators screened and evaluated dozens of internal and external candidates and was able to select a great candidate, Shenika Bishop, who has stayed with the school since summer 2020. This process can be repeated for upper-level administrative positions when they come available.

The administrative team has been working to codify information sharing and documentation of work duties and procedures. The team meets weekly and communicates regularly to ensure that knowledge is not siloed in one position and is instead shared across roles. The team also utilizes the Basecamp project management program to document annual tasks and to-do lists for reuse. A goal laid out in the 2023 Strategic Plan is to further document and revisit roles and responsibilities for all administrative positions with an eye toward both succession planning and maximizing efficient distribution of workload to support students and staff.

## B.4 Financial Operations and Data Management

The Soulard School has hit the ground running to meet board, sponsor, DESE and federal guidelines for financial operations and data management. Overall the school has met expectations and emerges from its first contract period on strong financial footing.

Since 2019, the school has:

- Established steady, increasing enrollment that will be near capacity for the 2023-24 school year (see Section A.2) with strong student and staff retention rates.
- Paired steady enrollment with strong attendance data, even through the pandemic. The school has consistently met attendance goals set in the prior Performance Contract, increasing from 86% of students to having 90% or greater attendance.
- Worked consistently with contractor Shannon Spradling to keep and report all financial records to the Board, UMSL and DESE in a timely and comprehensive manner.

Since its first year of operations in 2019-20 the school has conducted the required financial audits. The school has received clean audits with no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses. In addition, the school has sustained its ending cash fund balance for each fiscal year (See Table 9).

Since 2019, the school also made updates to its student information reporting systems and duties. The school purchased a new student information system, Infinite Campus, in fall 2022 after finding that the prior system (eSchoolCore) did not meet the school’s needs. At that time, school personnel also took on the task of all state reporting in MOSIS and Core Data. This work had previously been contracted out, but the school administration felt that this change would help better ensure compliance and continuity of knowledge.

*Table 9: Ending Cash Fund Balance by Year*

	Ending Cash Fund Balance
2019-20	26.56%
2020-21	28.12%
2021-22	45.15%
2022-23	40%
2023-24 (projected)	39%

Responding to employee requests, the Board Finance Committee developed a salary scale to help establish consistency in compensation. The scale was introduced to staff during the

2022-23 school year and is scheduled to be fully implemented starting in the 2024-25 school year. See Appendix C for draft salary scale.

## B.5 Contracted Services

The school does not anticipate making significant changes to contracted services from the current contract period to the next.

Current contracted services include:

- Shannon Spradling - Accountant
- Miriam Learning Services - Physical Therapy services
- JaniKing - Custodial Services
- Regency Computer Services - Payroll and taxes
- Schmersahl Treloar & Co. - Auditor
- Caravus - Insurance benefits and HR management
- Informed Improvement - Data analysis

## B.6 Stakeholder Engagement

The Souldard School has always had the approach of “with us, not for us.” The school was founded in part by involved parents and has always valued parents as its most central stakeholder partners, along with students and staff.

Parent engagement in the school is many layered - it is the goal of the school that all parents feel welcome and included and can participate to the extent they are able. Components of parent engagement include:

Annual parent events that facilitate home-school connections:

- New Family/Host Family Summer Meet-Up
- New Parent Orientation
- Meet-the-Teachers
- Back-to-School BBQ
- Volunteer Rally (coordinates large-scale parent volunteer program)
- Curriculum Night/ESEA presentation
- Parent-Teacher and Parent-Teacher-Student conferences
- State of Learning Meeting

Ongoing or special events that facilitate home-school connections:

- Active Parent Association that meets monthly and coordinates fundraising and community-building events
- Parent volunteer Room Coordinators serve as liaisons between the Parent Association, the school, and parents to organize special events or share information

- Parent volunteerism - parents can sign up for dozens of committees which are organized using online project management software
- Parent workshops and support groups (Parent Buddy Circles)
- Private parent Facebook group to facilitate parent communication
- Class group email lists allow for communication between parents, as well as with teachers

In addition, parents are invited to participate in school committees and focus groups including hiring committees, strategic planning focus groups and committees, and board sub-committees. Several board members are current or alumni parents.

The covid pandemic limited parent engagement for several years, and the school has been working to rebuild this central tenet of our approach to education. Moving forward in the next contract period, the school set a goal in its Strategic Plan to revitalize the New Parent Orientation process to help families connect more easily with the school, as well as create documentation that will more succinctly communicate to prospective and new parents, staff, board members and donors about the school.

Other stakeholder groups are important to the school as well. The school has worked to build partnerships with individuals, nonprofits, universities and small businesses across the city. See more details in section B.8.

*Table 10: Community Partnerships*

Community Partner	Purpose of Partnership
BWorks	Student afterschool classes, student safety education
Cardinals Care	Grant support to purchase classroom materials
COCA	Professional development, classroom cross-curricular projects
The Franklin Room	Fundraising and event in-kind support
Gene Slay's Girls and Boys Club	Space usage agreement - rental of their gym, library, art room and playground during school day
Innovative Technology Education Foundation	Grants to support student learning and technology purchases
John D. McGurk's Irish Pub	Fundraising and event in-kind support, musical partnership
The Leona	Fundraising and event in-kind support
Litzsinger Road Ecology Center	Outdoor education, professional development

Metro Theater	Professional development, classroom cross-curricular projects, field trips
Miriam Learning Services	Contracted special education support services
Missouri Public Charter School Association	Professional development, connections and networking between charter leadership and staff, legislative support
New Earth Farm	School and community composting, staff professional development, student field trip and guest speaker
St. Louis Christmas Carols Association	Grant support to purchase of classroom materials
St. Louis Public Library	Professional development, student field trips, student assemblies
Seed St. Louis	Community garden support through grants, professional development, student classes and volunteer partnerships
Therapy Log	School health services, materials and training
Together Credit Union	Student financial education
Tom Lange Produce	Fresh produce donation to support health lunches
YMCA of Greater St. Louis	Extracurriculars for students - co-ed basketball and soccer

### B.7 Educational Service Providers

The Soulard School does not utilize an Educational Service Provider.

### B.8 Partnership Beyond the School

Partnership beyond the school is a defining strength of The Soulard School. We have a responsibility to build relationships with fellow schools, organizations that serve our families and students, and universities that are working to prepare the next generation of educators.

Since becoming a charter, the school leaders have sought to work collaboratively with other schools in the city. The school has taken an active role in Missouri Public Charter School Association (MCPSA) school leader meetings - this became especially useful as schools worked together to coordinate responses to covid in 2020 and 2021.

More recently, the Executive Director participated in The St. Louis Schools Collaborative (SLSC), an informal group of leaders from St. Louis Public Schools and local charter schools that work together on initiatives that benefit all public school students in the City of St. Louis. School leaders are pursuing coordination opportunities that lead to better educational system outcomes, develop collective priorities and recommend changes to the current educational landscape based on a holistic systems perspective, informed by parents and educators.

Through the SLSC, the Executive Director led a Special Education Shared Services workgroup that established The Special Education Co-op. This co-op works to enable cost-effective, high-quality special education service sharing between charter schools in St. Louis City.

Additionally, our Board President and Executive Director were both invited to serve on committees to help develop the Blueprint for the Citywide Plan for Education, which was finalized and unveiled by the St. Louis Public Schools in summer 2023.

The school has a long-standing partnership with Webster University. Webster University regularly sends its students to Soulard School for practicum placements and other classroom observation/experience projects. For nearly 10 years (before and after becoming charter), the school has been an active participant in a graduate level class, *Teaching In A Diverse Society*, which is also hosted on-site. Soulard School teachers mentor university students and partner with them to create a special hands-on experience in their elementary classrooms.

The school maintains relationships and partnerships with other local universities as well. In 2022-23, the school hosted an intern from the Washington University Brown School of Social Work. Additionally, the school has worked with both St. Louis University and St. Louis Community College Occupational Therapy students, providing access to classrooms for observations and hands-on learning.

## B.9 Plans for Expansion or Replication

The school does not have any plans to expand or replicate in the next contract period.

That said, the school's Strategic Plan in 2023 identified that the school is reaching the limits of its current facility. In the next 3 years, our Facilities Committee will create a plan for space utilization and facility improvement.

## B.10 Closure Plan

In the event The Soulard School were to close, the school would follow the UMSL closure plan as outlined in the UMSL CSO Handbook.

# Facility and Budget

## C.1. Facility

The Soulard School has occupied its current facility since 2007, and purchased the building in 2019, just prior to opening as a charter. Even in 2019, the space did not fully meet the school's needs, lacking classroom space for Extended Core. In response, the school rented space from Gene Slay's Girls and Boys Club across the street each year for use for programs such as Physical Education and Music, as well as additional recess space.

Since 2019, the school has made some upgrades to its current space, including new grant-funded library bookshelves in the hallway, updated technology infrastructure including upgraded wifi and ceiling-mounted projectors and additional student outdoor gardening space.

The 2023 Strategic Plan identified a goal to address facilities needs to ensure long-term growth of the school. While the number and size of classrooms is sufficient to accommodate 150 students for general academic instruction, the lack of on-premise space for Physical Education, Music and other special programs, and a shortage of on-site recess/play space is an ongoing concern. A Facilities Committee is planned, to be composed of board members, staff members, parents and community experts to make recommendations by 2025 about changes to address long-term facilities needs of the school. In the meantime, the Girls and Boys Club continues to provide space for the school to offer all its programs.

## C.2 Budget

See our 5 year projected budget in Appendix D

The Executive Director and Board of Directors work to set a conservative budget each year. When projecting our 5 year budget, we are prioritizing teacher salaries and benefits which make up 75% of the annual budget, and the ability to maintain our co-teaching model. The Soulard School has a partnership with Soulard Education Center (SEC) to fundraise beyond the state and federal funds provided per student. Each year, the SEC board approves a donation amount that ensures the TSS projected budget is balanced. Through fundraising events, grants and annual donations, SEC can confidently fulfill its approved commitments to the school.



## C.3 Transportation

The Soulard School does not offer transportation, nor do we intend to offer transportation in the new contract period.

# Assessment of Progress

## D.1 Cumulative Performance Review

See the 2019-2024 Cumulative Performance Review completed by UMSL in summer 2023 in Appendix E.

The school has met many goals set by UMSL for each year of the prior contract term. Areas include:

- Governance - all goals met
- School Leadership - all goals met except staff retention (2022)
- Financial Operations - all goals met
- Reporting - all goals met
- Academic Achievement - overall Achievement goals met in ELA, Math and Science, Student Groups/Subgroups Achievement goals not met (see below)
- Attendance - all goals met
- Annual Performance Report (APR) - all goals met

In 2022, the school did not meet the UMSL academic targets for Student Groups in Math, Literacy or Science. As a small school, the number of students taking the test is small (fewer than 75 each year). The number of those within Student Groups is very small (fewer than 20 students).

On one hand, this makes Student Groups scores subject to fluctuation from year to year and makes reliability of data poor. For example, from 2021 to 2022, the percentage of Student Groups scoring proficient/advanced on the MAP Reading test fell by half (31% to 14%) while the percentage in math doubled (5% to 9%) - with such small numbers of students assessed, it is unlikely that these changes were due to any instructional or curricular differences. On the other hand, these small numbers of students make it simpler to identify and offer interventions and supports to those students. We also know that nationwide, these students were the groups that were most affected by the pandemic, and most in need of extra assistance to help them catch up.

Moving forward, further analysis is needed to further identify which students in these groups are making progress and which need more support - are students receiving special education services? Students who are upper grade transfers who may fit into one or more of the Student

Groups, or students who have been at the school longer but are not thriving as they should be? Further purchase and implementation of math and literacy curriculum packages, and full implementation of MTSS, which have already been laid out as goals in prior sections of this document, are part of the work that will help these students make progress and meet goals.

In 2022, the school experienced its highest level of staff turnover and did not meet the staff retention goal set by UMSL (67% vs. 80% goal). In 2019-20 and 2020-21, many staff members stayed put in the midst of the uncertainty of the pandemic. We believe that as the pandemic ebbed, teachers felt the freedom to move again, resulting in a brief dip in retention. This combined with nationwide pandemic-related levels of teacher burnout, to create a bump in the number of staff departing the school. Staff who left cited reasons including leaving the field of education, families relocating and pay scale level concerns. Despite the higher than expected turnover rate, with our co-teaching model the school still retained at least one seasoned teacher per class to maintain continuity for students.

## D.2 Proposed Performance Contract

See the proposed 5 year performance contract for 2024-2029 in Appendix F.

Appendix A: Curriculum

Appendix B: Updated Articles of Incorporation

Appendix C: Draft Salary Schedule

Appendix D: 5 Year Projected Budget

Appendix E: Cumulative Performance Report,  
2019-2024

Appendix F: Performance Contract, 2024-2029