2017 UMSL Annual Review Report
St. Louis Language Immersion Schools

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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.

Summary Page

Please note that the comments in this report reflect our analysis as of the end of the 2016-17 school year.

1. Areas of Strength
   Here are the top strengths that you can leverage to continuously improve and move you towards your vision:
   1. Reorganization into one K-8 building with three language programs woven in.
   2. Student achievement trends in communication arts and math are promising.
   3. Beginning to provide greater focus on low ability students
   4. Diversity and community
   5. Stronger leadership at top
   6. More functional operations
   7. Dedicated teaching staff who care about the students and believe in PD and growth
   8. Board governance during the year
   9. Improved financial operations and financial situation

2. Areas for Improvement
   Here are the key areas for improvement that are holding you back from reaching your vision.
   1. Language Immersion: The school community needs to determine the best language immersion model for the students served by the school.
   2. Student achievement outcomes for the school's more disadvantaged students are weak.
   3. Curriculum work:
      a. Greater focus on low ability students
      b. There's currently tension and an overload in the curriculum standards between Missouri's Learning Standards, full language immersion and IB. In this light, the school should consider the value and effectiveness of its PYP and MYP program in implementing its mission of developing student critical thinking and problem-solving skills. There are many other CT-PBL programs out there to explore.
      c. Continue to improve and refine the L2 assessment process and tools
      d. Strengthen math and science curriculum
      e. Develop a documented curriculum with clear standards, K-8 scopes and sequences for each discipline, grade level scopes and sequences for each discipline that include end of year assessments tied to standards along with unit plans and model lessons.
   4. Culture: Increase the focus on academic success for all students and student investment in their own academic progress.
   5. Unity: Develop better relationship/communication with parents – esp. Chinese School
   6. Board policies: Ensure that all required board policies are in place. Those related to Finance are missing. This must be addressed.

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.	a) Students, parents and staff can articulate the mission and vision.	**Required Documents**:
	b) 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

Element I: Vision	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
• The new mission statement addresses last year's area for improvement that the school has not been focused enough on academic achievement for all of its students. • All stakeholders (governing board, president, staff, teachers, parents and students) strongly believe in the unique features of SLLIS's mission.	• SLLIS's original mission statement is as follows: *The mission of St. Louis Language Immersion Schools is to position all children for success in local and global economies through holistic, intellectually inspiring language immersion programs.* [2009] As part of the recent strategic plan process, the SLLIS community put together a new mission statement that has not yet been approved as of June 20: *The mission of the St. Louis Language Immersion School, an innovative, diverse, socially-conscious, public charter school, is to develop empathetic, high-achieving, bilingual, globally-minded students by providing a rigorous academic foundation that fosters critical thinking and problem solving.* [2017] Most of the statement echoes the original statement, but there are stakeholders, especially parents of students at The Chinese School, who see this revision as a step back from full language immersion as the key means by which the student outcomes will be generated. Given the name of the school and its original mission statement, it is important that the SLLIS leadership and community reach a clear understanding of the role language immersion plays in achieving its mission. This relates to other areas for improvement in this document, especially in Element III: Curriculum and Instruction below.

II. Substantive Student Academic Achievement:
A transformational school:

Standards	Indicators	Evidence
a. Sets and meets clear, meaningful, and measureable academic goals and student learning objectives as stated in the charter through an accountability plan (performance contract) with its sponsor b. Demonstrates high expectations for student achievement	i. Articulates its curricular content and performance standards, including minimum student performance standards for advancement or graduation. ii. Student achievement targets in the accountability plan (performance contract) propel students towards proficient and advanced scores on state assessments and success in future educational and occupational settings. iii. Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth-measures assessments, to inform instructional decision-making. iv. Implements assessments that collect data about students' short-term acquisition and long-term mastery of essential knowledge. v. Analyzes assessments to gauge students' progress towards meeting school performance goals and makes instructional adjustments, as needed, to improve student achievement. vi. Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm referenced measures and state assessments. vii. Closes the achievement gap among sub-groups of students. viii. Complies with the accountability plan (performance contract) established with its sponsor. ix. Maintains an attendance rate that aligns with the school's performance contract. x. Maintains a high graduation rate (secondary schools) that aligns with the school's performance contract.	**Required Documents:** • **Performance Contract** **Other Evidence** • Teacher and instructional coordinator interviews • Internal formative and summative assessment data • MSIP-5 student achievement, attendance and retention data.

Element II: Student Achievement	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
• Schoolwide student achievement in Communication Arts has steadily improved over the past three years and earned status points with an MPI over 300. • Schoolwide student achievement in Math held steady with SY2016 outcomes and is approaching the 300 MPI benchmark.	• The school's academic performance as measured by the state's APR benchmark would place it in the provisional range. Without hold harmless, the APR score, though still within the provisional range, would be 10 percentage points lower. o That stated, if the school's positive trend patterns in

• Middle school outcomes in Communication Arts and Math have steadily improved both at grade level and by grade cohort over the past three years.	communication arts and math as described to the left continue in SY2018, the APR score could improve significantly. • Subgroup scores indicate that the school needs to continue its focus on improving academic performance of its most disadvantaged students.

III. 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

Element III: Curriculum and Instruction	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
All Schools • Reorganization of SLLIS into one K-8 building offers an opportunity for leadership and staff to address academic program and curriculum development challenges in more efficient and collaborative ways. The board, school leaders, and staff are aware of the concerns and challenges detailed in the Areas for Improvement column and are committed to addressing them. • The school has identified learning standards in the four core subject	**All Schools** • SLLIS still lacks a documented, comprehensive K-8 scope and sequence *(see below). The "three big pieces" - Missouri Learning Standards, PYP-MYP (IB), and language immersion – are still segmented. Even though instructional leaders and teacher teams have developed an overarching framework for each core subject (although not for L2) and engaged in some curriculum mapping, school leaders and teachers express deep frustration that:

areas. They've been adapted from IB's PYP documents.
- Teachers appreciate curriculum mapping work that facilitates weekly lesson planning.
- School and curriculum leaders are much more focused on improving skills of the lowest performing students.
- The school used assessment instruments to measure student proficiency in the three L2 languages.
- Most teachers use flexible grouping to differentiate instruction based on analysis of NWEA and internal formative assessments.

Findings Specific to Individual Schools
- TCS: Teacher interviews cited improvement in teaching English due to increased time designated for that language; with the qualification that new teachers from China were not as effective.
- TCS: Teachers use running records and exit tickets to assess student progress on learning goals.
- TCS: Go Math! has been very instrumental in developing math proficiency
- TFS: The school started a guided reading during reading block in English. Teachers are positive about it.
- TFS: Observations reveal that teachers incorporate a variety of instructional modes – whole group, small group and individual work.
- TSS: The school implemented a new, student-centered leveled reading program in Spanish.
- TSS: Observations revealed a wide variety of instructional approaches, some that shift learning responsibility to the student: whole group, small group project, independent reading, whole group instruction.
- TSS: Aides in many classrooms work with small groups and one on one.
- TSS: Observations reveal that a few of the teachers have successfully merged PYP standards with current MO standards as evident by projects in hallways. (1st grade – pop-up animal activity with animal fact sharing)
- TIS: Observations reveal that academic rigor has significantly increased.

- o The amount of curriculum outcomes that teachers are expected to reach with students are overwhelming, especially given the number of students who start out way behind in reading and math. There are too many learning goals flowing from the three big pieces, and teachers don't have the resources or time to cover them all. This causes stress and lowers teacher morale.
- o Low ability students, disproportionately low-income and African American, are not growing enough in literacy and math, as evidenced by state assessment outcomes in ==SY2016: [Adjust if necessary following SY2017 outcomes]==
  - Time devoted to reading intervention in English is not adequate enough to meet the needs of students who are behind in L1 – especially in grades K-2.
  - Furthermore, low reading skills in L2 make it very difficult for these students to engage in PYP inquiry units.
- o Even within the PYP-MYP segment, where instructional leaders have prioritized scope and sequence development for several years, there are significant gaps in documentation. Teachers have to write their own curriculum every year because the content that is supposed to fill in the frame either does not exist or keeps changing. Teachers report that there are not enough resources to address the PYP standards (hands on materials, books, science supplies, etc).
- o Though SLLIS utilized L2 assessments to gauge proficiency, school leaders indicated that they don't have a complete and accurate picture that reveals student acquisition and proficiency relative to national and international norms.
- o With so much to cover, it's usually the PYP-MYP inquiry units that fall by the wayside, reducing time spent on developing critical thinking skills.
- o When school leaders pilot or adopt new core programs in reading or math, they are not merged with PYP-MYP, maintaining segmentation.
- o New teachers don't get enough curriculum and instructional support.

UMSL's CSO understands that SLLIS's leadership had to focus attention on severe financial and operational challenges in recent years and that there was not enough capacity to address academic program challenges. We are pleased that for the first time in many years, SLLIS can focus its attention on addressing the following academic program challenges:
1. Providing an effective academic program that meets the needs

of low-income students as evidenced by their poor performance on the ==SY16== MAP outcomes. ==[Adjust if necessary following SY2017 outcomes]==
   a. Would a one or two-year Pre-K program set students up for greater success in both L1 and L2?
2. Finding the balance point in the curriculum's design and instructional strategies that ensures <u>all</u> students succeed in gaining proficiency in Chinese, French and Spanish while also mastering Missouri Learning Standards in core subjects (ELA, Math and Science). This will require careful research into various language immersion models to determine which model or combination of models will meet all students' learning needs at SLLIS.
   a. Following SLLIS's decision here, curriculum leaders and staff need to develop a written L2 curriculum for each language that is aligned to the adopted model(s). Currently, there is none.
3. Determining the feasibility of integrating the PYP-MYP framework with language immersion and Missouri Learning Standards so that it no longer overwhelms and frustrates teachers and students. It may not be feasible, in which case school leaders must decide whether it's worth keeping.
4. Strengthening the L2 assessment process so that it:
   a. Provides accurate data on student proficiency in L2 at benchmark points throughout the year.
   b. Informs curricular and instructional planning both student facing and program wide.
5. Strengthening the math curriculum and program. For years, SLLIS has not addressed its lack of a strong math curriculum. This involves more than deciding on a commercial program. It involves making a commitment to develop teachers' deep understanding of:
   a. Math standards and objectives
   b. Best practice instructional strategies that move students towards mastery of standards and objectives.
6. The PYP science curriculum lacks clarity and rigor and does not provide teachers enough structure for proper planning and execution lessons. Some teachers search the internet for ideas while others skip science instruction altogether.
7. Teachers feel that SLLIS has implemented curriculum and assessment tools without proper training. This includes Star, Dibels, Engage New York, Everyday Math.

Findings Specific to Individual Schools

- TCS: Some teachers indicate that they administer assessments to gauge proficiency in Chinese, but they are not confident that they truly measure where students are in Chinese and how they're growing.
- TCS: Students struggle with writing in Chinese, as characters are so hard to master.
- TCS: Half of the lead teachers were new this year and struggled with English and the PYP program.
- TCS – My Math Curriculum components are extremely difficult for the students at the grade level at which they are presented.

*   A strong, documented curriculum scope and sequence is aligned with Missouri Learning Standards and across grade levels and subject areas with these components:
  - Clearly stated grade level or course outcomes ("By end of the year, students will …")
  - Model end of year or course assessments
  - Units with
    - Clearly stated unit outcomes aligned to course outcomes
    - Model unit assessments
    - Sample lessons that model high student engagement; such as inquiry or problem based learning
  - Integration-intersection points between disciplines.
  - Information on resources available to develop lessons and units.

These documents will not only ground all staff in the instructional model, but also:
  - Align the curriculum between grade levels.
  - Set teachers up to gather performance data on student academic progress to inform their instructional decisions.
  - Effectively support new staff in their efforts to understand and implement the curriculum.
  - Support teacher professional development and curriculum development around using data, creating assessments and differentiating instruction.

IV. 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

Element IV: Culture of Achievement	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
All Schools • Behavior and focus on academics has improved throughout SLLIS. • Cultural diversity – among students, staff and within the curriculum – continues to be a strength. • There's a strong sense of community in each school. • Students feel safe in their buildings and generally enjoy attending school. They are proud to be SLLIS students. **Findings Specific to Individual Schools** • TFS: Observations - Regardless of instructional mode, students were well-behaved. Teachers could focus on groups they were working with while rest of groups remained on task. • TFS: Teachers are holding students to higher expectations than in past years. There's a greater tone of urgency. • TFS: Teacher-student relationships are strong. • TCS: Teachers indicate that the culture in the school reflects Chinese school culture. Over time, as students get used to the language, they accept the challenge of learning it and are proud of being part of the school. • TIS: Observations and teachers indicate that compared to previous years, students are much better behaved in classrooms and during	**All Schools** • Given academic outcomes, there is still room for greater focus on academic progress. Though students are generally engaged in their lessons, we did not observe a strong sense of urgency to succeed or excel. School leaders should consider ways to build greater student investment in their learning. This involves examining all aspects of the academic, parent outreach, and student support programs. **Findings Specific to Individual Schools** • TIS: Some bullying still occurs, but the Head of School and his staff are much better focused on dealing with it than in previous years.

| transitions. Students are more eager to learn. School culture has greatly improved.
 • TCS: Partnership with Webster University has led to the introduction of 6 interns in the Chinese school classrooms.\ | |

V. 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 provide evidence that the school is a viable school of choice for the community.	**Required Documents**: • **Enrollment Application** • **Marketing/Recruitment Materials** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Observation of lotteries • Enrollment and attendance data • Core data

d) Develops and sustains a school culture conducive to student learning	i. Maintains a clean and safe environment that supports the educational mission of the school. ii. Maintains open, consistent, clear communication among students, staff, parents, and administration iii. Maintains a school culture conducive to learning and continuous improvement iv. Communicates effectively to all stakeholder groups	*Same evidence sources as described in Element IV above.* **Required Documents**: **Other Evidence** • Onsite observations • Parent surveys and interviews • Student surveys and interviews • Staff surveys and interviews • Student support staff interviews (Counselors, nurses, social workers, School Psychologists) • Discipline, suspension and/or expulsion data • Parent complaint/grievance records
e) Employs qualified staff, provides professional development opportunities to improve their performance.	i. Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes instructional effectiveness and continuous school improvement. ii. Conducts personnel procedures and practices in a manner that promotes the recruitment and retention of an effective instructional staff. iii. Provides professional development opportunities for all staff members that are aligned to the school's vision and advances their effectiveness in their roles.	**Required Documents**: • **Staff Organization Chart** • **Employee School Handbook** • **Assurance of Faculty/Staff Background Checks (FCSR and fingerprinting)** • **Staff Professional Development Plan and Calendar** • **Staff Mentoring and Coaching Plan** • **Teacher Evaluation Plan (including blank evaluation forms)** **Other Evidence** • School leader interview • Staff interviews • Student interviews • Staff retention data
f) Understands and complies with the laws, policies, and state and federal requirements that govern charter schools	i. Participates regularly in professional development opportunities, which provide insight into the trends, issues, and potential changes in the environment in which charter schools operate ii. Allocates resources based primarily on their impact on student achievement, learning, and well-being iii. Implements business policies and procedures that promote school sustainability, operational integrity, and a focus on student achievement and learning results iv. Establishes programs and policies that enable all students to be served effectively v. Ensures timely submission of required data and reporting	**Required Documents**: *Health and Safety* • **Health Permits (food service)** • **Fire Safety Permit** • **Building Inspection/Certificate of Occupancy** • **Elevator Inspection Certificate** *Special Education* • **SPED Compliance Plans (IDEA & 504)** *Title I* • **Title I Parent Meetings (sign in sheets)** • **HQ Parent Notification Letters**

| vi. Ensures that school is in compliance with state and federal laws, policies and requirements and provisions in its contract with UMSL in these areas:
   a. Health and safety
   b. Student records:
     i. Thorough and comprehensive
     ii. Secure and confidential
     iii. Appropriate employee access to the data system
   c. Special Education
   d. Title I
   e. Free and reduced lunch
   f. Homeless and ELL students
   g. Fiscal management
   h. State testing
   i. Other operations | *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 |

Element V: School Leadership and Operations	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
President • Has strengthened leadership, collaboration and shared responsibility throughout SLLIS through creating: • A cabinet of senior leaders that prioritizes teamwork, openness, and shared responsibility at their regularly scheduled meetings. • A district-wide instructional leadership (IL) team that guides each school's IL team that meets every two weeks. • A professional welfare committee composed of elected teacher and support staff representatives. • Though morale is low among some teachers (related primarily to academic program challenges – refer to Element III above) it should be noted that it was even lower in previous years and is actually improving. Improvements in leadership at the LEA and building level, front office operations, building safety and cleanliness, and staff communication are connected to this trend. A more transparent and supportive HR department that put together a new salary schedule is another	**President** • The President believes that language immersion (LI) is an essential element of SLLIS's identity and mission, but because she focused attention on academic achievement, some perceive her as uncommitted to LI. This is especially true concerning some parents and staff from The Chinese School. The President should focus on strengthening communication and relationship building with these stakeholders to decrease tensions and foster unity around SLLIS's mission. • Heads of School hope the President will have a more time in SY18 to increase her visibility in the school. • The President and Heads of School need to focus on strengthening cross language unity and active collaboration among the three language teaching staffs – with special attention to building fellowship with Chinese staff. **Enrollment** • Teachers and school leaders report that there is a culture of competition

important morale-raising trend.

- Staff appreciates her honesty; they trust her.
- Most staff support next year's reorganization into one school.
- Has been very supportive of school leaders and empowers them to address challenges in their buildings.
- Has improved the safety and cleanliness in both buildings, especially at Marine.
- Strengthened professional development (workshops and reading groups) for the leadership team on a wide variety of topics, including leadership, educational reform (Michael Fullan), school law, and data driven instruction.
- Worked hard to strengthen communication with parents through SLLIS's website, Facebook, enews, phone blasts and two heavily attended parent forums.
- In general, teachers indicated that the President is open to feedback and supportive of their work.
- The school will close the year with a fund balance over 7.5%. This is a first.

Heads of School

  All Schools

- Provide more direct observation and feedback to teaching staff.

  Findings Specific to Individual Schools

- TCS: Teachers state that they have greater voice SLLIS wide and within TCS – except on matters related to curriculum.
- TFS: Teachers state that the new Head of School is accessible and provides strong support.
- TFS: The Head of School has prioritized increasing academic skills of low-achieving students.
- TFS: Has improved communication and relationships with parents.
- TSS: Teachers indicate that the HOS is supportive.
- TIS: The HOS has played a major role in turning the school around, improving building culture, academic rigor, overall student behavior, teacher collaboration and professional support, and parent support. Teachers feel very supported.

Discipline

- TIS: Suspensions and expulsions were dramatically down over last years' numbers.

Operations/HR

- Operations and office staff report that:
  - Operations staff are finally able to dig in, expose and fix mistakes made in prior years.
  - There is a culture of teamwork in handling day-to-day

between SLLIS schools when seeking new enrollees.

- TFS: Attrition is a serious problem, as the school is unable to replace students from grades 3-5. SLLIS leadership may want to reconsider this policy.

Discipline

- Though student behavior has improved and staff has received de-escalation and PBIS training, staff need continued training on working with low income children that involves not only setting high academic expectations, but building student investment in reaching them.
- Staff interviews, surveys and SWOT results are aligned in revealing concerns about providing stronger consequences – including programs to improve social skills – for students exhibiting inappropriate behaviors.

Communication

- Refer to comment above under the President subhead.

Operations/HR

- None of the schools implemented an active shooter drill – this is a state requirement.
- Buses tend to run consistently 20 minutes late.
- TCS: Teacher turnover is still a concern for the Chinese School; often stressed by the challenges of adapting to American culture.

Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

  All Schools

- Given the poor performance of low-income African American students, SLLIS must provide more PD on differentiation and other instructional methods to improve student performance in both L1 and L2.
- Teachers cited the need for more feedback and support from their Literacy Coaches.
- Though teachers generally appreciate their PD this year, budget constraints made it difficult to meet their individual requests to participate in external PD opportunities.
- Teachers from all three elementary schools state that there has not been enough PYP training.
- Several teachers commented that they feel that SLLIS could benefit from culturally responsive training to improve teacher/student relationships and understanding.

  Findings Specific to Individual Schools

- TCS: Teachers expressed concern about the evaluation process citing over-reliance on one person's opinions and lack of balance between formative (growth) and summative (judgement), tilting toward summative.
- TSS: Some teachers expressed concern that there was not

operations.
- o Everyone is considerably more capable in the handling their daily responsibilities then in years past.
- o They feel supported by administration.
- o Have a voice in decisions that impact their work.
- o There are no attendance tracking concerns.
- o There are no issues with the procedure used for monitoring background checks
- o Teachers are now given a budget for classroom supplies.
- o Teaching materials orders are now expedited to get the items to classrooms quicker than in previous years.
- o The facility has had some tuck-pointing work done that resolved leaks.
- o Employment now demands proper certification in place for all instructional staff.
- o HR was quick to respond when the federal government changed some of the regulation on visas.
- Heads of School report front office operations as vastly improved.
- School staff took de-escalation training.

Reporting
- The school has submitted required documents to UMSL's DropBox site in a timely manner.

Teacher Evaluation and Professional Development

All Schools
- The evaluation process is aligned to Missouri's evaluation guidelines.

Findings Specific to Individual Schools
- TFS: Teachers expressed satisfaction with both formal and informal evaluation structures, stating they are receiving much greater constructive feedback from the Head of School and the Academic Dean than in previous years.
- TSS: Teachers are satisfied with both the formal and informal evaluation structures.

Facilities
- See comment under the President subhead.

enough informal observation-feedback targeting identified areas for improvement.

Facilities
- Facilities continue to provide a challenge in terms of safety, maintenance, and cleanliness.
- Construction in front of Papin created serious logistical traffic problems for the school throughout the year.
- Classrooms at Marine are filled with environmental noise from the HVAC system — blowers, motors, electric humming, etc.

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:
	  o Are tightly aligned to course learning objectives and desired student outcomes.
	  o Build on what students already know and do and provide the scaffolding they need to reach the level of success commensurate with the vision and goals.
	  o Engage students with thought-provoking and ambiguous texts/materials that challenge their thinking and feelings.
	  o Give students opportunities to conduct research to answer a question, explore and take a stand on an issue, or develop solutions to a problem.
	  o Use writing to communicate their reflections and understandings
	  o Incorporate a variety of teaching methods that meet the needs of diverse student learning styles
		Required Documents:
		
		Other Evidence
		• School leader/Curriculum leader interview
		• Teacher surveys and interviews
		• Classroom observations
		• Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans
		• Assessment plans/performance tracking systems
		• Student performance data (including state, formative and internal benchmark assessments)

d. Employs best instructional practices to engage students in learning and raise academic achievement.	i. Keeps instruction student centered and inquiry oriented ii. Continually orients students to content iii. Continually orients students to each other iv. Continually checks for student understanding and makes appropriate adjustments as necessary	**Required Documents**: **Other Evidence** • School leader/Curriculum leader interviews • Teacher interviews • Classroom observations
e. Tracks student progress towards academic and personal growth goals and makes adjustments as necessary.	i. Uses multiple forms of assessment, including growth-measures assessments, to inform instructional decision-making. ii. Evaluates students' progress towards meeting course and school performance goals and modifies goals, as needed, to improve student achievement. iii. Tracks and disseminates growth data for students over time using both norm referenced measures and state assessments. iv. Builds student skills in tracking their own progress and motivates them to take charge of their own academic and personal growth. v. Pursues professional development opportunities to address areas for growth in their own teaching.	**Required Documents**: **Other Evidence** • School leader/Curriculum leader interviews • Classroom observations • Teacher surveys • Course scope and sequence, unit and lesson plans • Assessment plans/performance tracking systems • Student performance data (including state, formative and internal benchmark assessments)

Element VI: Teachers	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**

• See also comments under *Element III: Curriculum and Instruction* and *Element IV: Culture of Achievement* above.
All Schools
• Teachers consistently exhibit a strong work ethic.
• Teachers reach out to parents in a variety of ways and report positive behavior and progress in balance with the negative.
• Teachers collaborate on academics and student support, especially at the grade level.
Findings Specific to Individual Schools
• TCS: Teachers are self-motivated and work hard to improve their skills. They love and care for their students whom they hold to high expectations.
• TCS: From student interviews, we learned that:
   o They feel safe in the building.
   o Teachers are very nice and care about them.
   o If they need help, teachers provide what they need.
• TFS: Stability among the teaching staff has fueled strong collaboration.
• TCS: Primary grades are small and often partner for team teaching opportunities and learning stations.
	• See also comments under *Element III: Curriculum and Instruction* and *Element IV: Culture of Achievement* above.
	All Schools
	• Teachers are asked to do too much and strain under a work load that includes too many uncompensated responsibilities outside the classroom. This is especially difficult for those with families. They do not have the capacity to accomplish everything they're expected to do instructionally. School leaders state that their most successful teachers never feel successful in this environment.

VII. 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 skills for maximum academic, career, and personal/social growth during the school years.	i. Collects and uses academic, behavior and attendance data to: ○ Plan appropriate programs for students both individually and collectively. ○ 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

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Element VII: Student Support System

Areas of strength	Areas for improvement
• TFS/TSS: Teachers appreciate the increased capacity of SLLIS's student support team to support their students with special needs, especially in early grades.	• TCS: Lead teachers expressed concern that there needs to be greater coordination with student support staff around academic support and shared learning goals for special needs students. We wonder if this stems, in part, from lead teachers' lack of understanding of SPED in the U.S.

Dr. Thurma DeLoach's Review

Student Success Team (SST) Process	Student Success Team (SST) Process

• For the past 3 years, SLLIS has consistently worked on design and implementation of a functioning, data driven problem solving team process to identify and intervene with students who are significantly off-track academically and behaviorally. Significant progress has occurred and evidence exists that students are benefitting from this work. The schools are getting better at identifying and intervening. All 4 schools are now implementing the Student Success Team process at some level.
   o Weekly SST meetings are scheduled at the Spanish School and bi-weekly meetings are scheduled at the French, International School, and Chinese School
   o Each school has identified core staff for the SST; -- typically the social worker, school psychologist, special education teacher, and administrator—however, this varies somewhat by school.
   o Student performance and discipline data is used to help the SST better understand the referral issues
   o Procedures for collecting relevant history, achievement and discipline data, and interviewing the referring teacher prior to
	• Teachers expressed concern that referrals to the SST still take too long and that they are not well informed of the timeline for addressing their referrals. Teachers do not always participate in the meetings and communication about outcomes and plans is inconsistent.
	• Because teachers do not participate in the SST meetings, teachers do not have a voice in intervention selection. They also do not benefit from the informal coaching and peer learning/support such team problem solving provides. Scheduling the SST at a time when the referring teacher can participate is a high priority; however, the practice of interviewing the teacher prior to the meeting and using a case facilitator to present the case for the teacher should continue. This practice saves significant time in the meeting, prevents unproductive, cathartic venting — "admiring the problem" -- and keeps the focus on goal setting and intervention problem solving.
	• The SST is the primary mechanism for teachers to get support for students who are off-track academically and behaviorally. Individual problem solving for all student issues in schools as large at SLLIS is not manageable. Consideration should be given to implementing an

the meetings are implemented by most of the teams.
  - o Written plans which include data collection and progress monitoring are prepared and shared through Google Drive
- The SLLIS school psychologist will lead the SST process at both campuses with the assistance of the school psychologist intern in the 2017-18 school year. This structure will ensure greater consistency and shared learning between the two campuses—similar to the new structure of primary and intermediate administrative leadership between the two campuses.
- Most administrative, SST members, and teachers report that student performance improves when intervention plans are implemented.
- Significant professional development time has been devoted to learning and practicing multi-tiered systems of support (MTSS) as the framework for intervention.
- Aimsweb benchmarking is planned for both reading and writing as well as for progress monitoring of interventions.

Academic and Behavioral Intervention Structures
- All 4 SLLIS schools now identify as PBIS schools. Plans are underway to implement a consistent PBIS framework across campuses. An experienced PBIS coordinator has been appointed to support each campus in its PBIS design and implementation with an initial focus on Tier 1 school-wide and classroom universals. Consistent leadership, coaching, and monitoring of PBIS should have a positive impact on effectiveness of the framework and ultimately reduce the number of behavior based referrals to the SST.
- The Student Risk School Scale (SRSS) is conducted 3 times each year to help identify those students most in need of SEB intervention
- A number of Tier 2 Social-emotional-behavioral interventions are provided at SLLIS including: Check In Check Out, Check and Connect, Meaningful Work, Self-monitoring, and Social Skill groups. Tier 3 individualized interventions are provided by the Educational Support Counselor (ESC). Teachers and administrators reported that the ESC is a significant resource and support for students, families, and staff and that noticeable improvement in student behaviors and emotional well-being occurs with ESC support.
- Literacy Intervention staff are available at the Spanish School and the French/Chinese Schools. Their caseloads focus on primary students at the highest level of need.
- The French School is implementing 45 minutes a day of school-wide guided reading in English as a Tier 2 reading intervention.
- Title 1 funds are provided as a school-wide program and funding source. DESE identified SLLIS for a number of Title 1 Federal Program

intermediary step using the Grade Level Teams as the first line of intervention support for clusters of student need. A Professional Learning Community process in which grade levels meet weekly is recommended. Each weekly PLC meeting has a set agenda—usually 2 meetings devoted to PD/planning around curriculum and instruction, and 2 meetings devoted to Data/interventions. Someone from the building-wide SST should help facilitate the data/intervention PLC meetings. In Data/intervention PLC meetings, teacher teams:
  - o Review student data (NWEA, STAR, Aimsweb, discipline)
  - o Identify clusters of students with similar needs,
  - o Design Tier 2 interventions implemented by the grade level staff (e.g. Partner classrooms prepared to accept a student for a brief cool down break; intervention blocks scheduled during the day in which all teachers in the grade level take a readiness group (remedial or enrichment) for additional Tier 2 instruction in reading, writing, or math.
  - o Determine when a student should be referred to the building SST for very significant needs or insufficient response to the Tier 2 interventions within the grade level.
- Most referrals are based on behavior concerns and the teams have significant behavioral expertise among the team members—i.e. social workers, school psychologists. Including the PBIS coordinator on the teams is recommended as a way to incorporate classroom universals into the problem-solving process.
- Consideration should be given to including the literacy intervention staff and the Speech-language pathologist to the SST. Expertise in strategies that promote academic and language development is not well represented in the problem-solving process.
- An Implementation handbook for the SST process and documentation procedures is needed to create stronger consistency across campuses and teams. A visual-graphic model of the standard Tier 2 and 3 interventions would assist grade level and school level problem solving team match interventions with functional behavioral assessment and performance/diagnostic data. This could be a time intensive process; application for an UMSL Charter School mini-grant to help fund staff time to develop this important tool should be considered.
- Given the new administrative structure for the 2017-18 school year, consideration should be given to creating a K-3 and 4-6 School leadership team (for Tier 1 academic/ SEB data review and instructional leadership) and a K-3 and 4-6 Student Success Team (for Tier 2 & 3 data review and intervention problem solving) at both campuses. Both teams should operate under the leadership of the primary and intermediate principals or assistant principals. This will help ensure

compliance issues. The Corrective Action Plan for these issues was implemented this spring and all compliance issues have now been addressed.

- The Diverse Learner team was identified as a strength at both campuses; these team members are respected by administration and teaching staff for the expertise and dedication they demonstrate to the students and to SLLIS.

Special education instruction

- Interviews indicated that special education services at both campuses are strong. Teachers value the services their students receive and believe the services effectively support students. IEPs are implemented with fidelity. Teachers feel well supported by the special education staff in understanding IEP requirements and accommodation needs.
- Special education staff are using several research-based instructional programs including SPIRE, SIPS and Touch Math
- Special education staff members maintain strong relationships and frequent communication with parents. The behavior specialist at the Spanish School was cited by her principal as being especially helpful in some challenging communications with parents.
- Special education teachers use Aimsweb for progress monitoring IEP goals.
- IEP review cycle is moving to the fall semester to ensure that service plans and goals best support students in meeting the expectations for the new classroom environment.
- SLLIS completed its DESE Special Education Compliance review during the 2016-17 school year. Student files were submitted to DESE for review. SLLIS was found to be 100% in compliance with federal and state special education requirements. The Director of Diverse Learning, the School Psychologist, and the special education teaching team should be highly commended for this significant turn around in the attention to the details of special education compliance. Well done!

Other

- The focus of this review is student support services; however, based on these interviews, it is clear that the priority focus for improving student outcomes must be on school-wide classroom instruction and curriculum. There is concern about too many priorities and programs to implement without strong fidelity (IB, PYP, Immersion) and no identified academic curriculum.   Discussions with staff and the board about what could realistically come off teachers' plates at least temporarily until foundational Tier 1 instruction practices and curriculum are stronger should be considered.
- A member of the Student Services Support team was included on the

consistency across campuses for referrals, team membership, data procedures, standard interventions, progress monitoring, and documentation. Leveled teams will also be better equipped to design interventions and supports that are developmentally appropriate and that can be implemented through the grade level teams with the support of intervention staff.

- Consideration to KG screening at the start of each school year which includes speech and language as well as other developmental readiness components would enable early intervention at the start of school—without waiting for the student to demonstrate significant needs. The SLP expressed a willingness to develop and provide a screening process for all newly enrolled Kg and primary students.

Academic and Behavioral Intervention Structures

- Most interviewees emphasized that improvements in academic and behavioral supports need to focus on the general education curriculum, instruction, and data. Over 70% of SLLIS students are identified as off-track either academically or socially-emotionally-behaviorally. The need is too big to be solved through intervention. Intervention must be viewed as a school-wide process that starts with improvements to grade-level curriculum and instruction. Intervention beyond that should be limited to no more than 15 to 20 percent of the students with the greatest need. Moving teacher mindset away from intervention owned by someone outside the classroom and back to the classroom teacher as the primary source for academic and SEB support is necessary for growth in academic and SEB skills is to be accomplished.
- A School-wide (Tier 1) Social Skill program that can be readily implemented and reinforced has not yet been identified. The PBIS coordinator will be a strong resource in identifying an appropriate program and assisting teachers implement this in the classroom.
- A plan for continuous primary and intermediate staff development and implementation coaching/support for all teachers on basic classroom universal routines for teaching behaviors, the Big 5 reading components (phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension) and the reading-writing connection should be defined, developed and monitored. The new administrative structure for primary and intermediate administration serving both campuses makes a SLLIS Tier 1 instructional plan more realistic than under the prior 4 separate schools structure. The PBIS coordinator and the literacy specialists on each campus should be included in this planning and PD. Training resources are available through UMSL education faculty at a reasonable cost.
- Continued staff training on Trauma-informed practices is recommended. Helping staff understand the impact of trauma on urban youth and the

Strategic Planning team. This is sometimes overlooked in the strategic planning process so the inclusion of this team member is notable and commended.

- An agency RN has been contracted to provide school nursing services for the 2016-17 and 2017-18 school years. SLLIS will participate in the grant application for a more comprehensive school health program in partnership with St. Louis Children's Hospital.

role of educators in supporting students who have experienced significant trauma is a vital component of the SEB support landscape at all schools.

- There are no supports for math intervention beyond what classroom teachers provide. As funding improves, adding a math interventionist or coach to the student support team should be considered.
- The Title 1 Literacy staff currently function independently of each other. Under the new SLLIS structure, efforts to create a unified intervention team that works collaboratively to develop consistency across campuses and grade levels for screening, referral, data collection, research-based Tier 2 and 3 interventions and supports, progress-monitoring is recommended. The Director of Diverse Learning and Federal Programs should be identified as the person to lead this effort.
- When intervention staff members provide co-taught or push-in intervention support, the general education classroom teacher should always be present, supporting and engaged in the classroom. Co-taught instruction is based on the concept of "Power of 2" teachers working as a team in the classroom together—when the classroom teacher leaves the room the message is that I'm not responsible for this, someone else is. And the purpose/effectiveness of the co-teaching model is sacrificed.

Special education instruction

- The role of the special education director has dramatically increased in the past year to include Federal Programs, ELL, Nursing Services, and MAP testing. Although she continues to be the administrative lead for the special education department, consideration should be given to appointing a special education department chair or lead teacher to bring the special education teaching team together to build systems, improve procedures/ documentation and to identify research-based instructional programs and strategies which appropriately support academic goals. Inconsistency in instructional strategies and resources exist between the campuses and programs.   The IRIS Center https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu and the National Center for Intensive Intervention http://www.intensiveintervention.org websites offer strong guidance on the most effective, research-based tools and strategies for students with disabilities and other learning challenges.
- Much of special education instruction (and that of other intervention and classroom teachers) is teacher designed. Observations did not include significant evidence that research-based, high-leverage instructional practices are automatic in the teachers' instructional tool kit. Although general education classrooms were not observed, interviews suggest instructional practices are a concern in the general education classroom as well. Targeted training on high leverage instructional practices is

	recommended. The University of Michigan (http://www.soe.umich.edu/academics/bachelors/elementary-teacher-education/high-leverage-practices/ and the Teachingworks website http://www.teachingworks.org/work-of-teaching/high-leverage-practices as well as the recent CEC publication on high leverage practices for special education (e.g. http://www.pubs.cec.sped.org/p6255/ could provide the basis for this training.

VIII. 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.
		Documents
		• **Board Self-Evaluation**
		• **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, 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 responsibilities to UMSL's sponsorship liaison.	i. The Board communicates in a timely manner with UMSL's sponsorship liaison about significant policy, personnel, school performance or legal issues. ii. A written response from the Board that addresses the concerns and recommendations of the annual sponsor evaluation no later than one week following the board's regularly-scheduled October meeting.	**Documents** **Other Evidence** • Board-UMSL sponsor communications • Written response to Annual School Review

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.

Element VIII: Board Governance	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**

• The board:
    o Hired an experienced school leader and supported her efforts to face challenges in SLLIS's academic program, operational system and financial operations. SLLIS has made significant progress these areas.
    o Supported and approved a reorganization plan.
    o Implemented a strategic planning process that included all stakeholders.
    o Increased its membership, adding key skill and knowledge areas.
    o The board responded responsibly and proactively during several crises.
• The board runs well organized and efficient meetings.
• The board is compliant with Sunshine Law
Strategic Plan
• The plan process involved all stakeholders.
• The plan identified the major areas for improvement.
Leader Relations and Evaluation
• Developed a good working relationship, characterized by openness and candor, with the new President.
• With the President, put together an evaluation process that identified specific targeted, quantifiable goals.
Board Survey Results
• Results from the board survey reveal that the board considers the following areas as strengths:
    o Resolving key strategic or policy issues
    o Overseeing the financial performance and ensuring financial solvency
    o Ensuring legal and ethical integrity
    o Tracking and assessing academic performance of the school based on the mission and vision.
    o Developing the school's Executive Director/Principal/Head of School.
	• With all the changes that SLLIS initiated during SY17, the board must strengthen unity between the school and its parents. This involves building open communication lines and a collaborative environment between all factions within the parent community. So much of the planning and execution work that lies ahead depends on putting together a united front that can overcome SLLIS's challenges. (See also Element X: Parents and Community)
	Strategic Plan
	• As written, the plan identified too many initial focus areas. Plan leaders must prioritize them.
	Board Development and Training
	• Members of the board, both experienced and new, did not engage in any board training. This needs to be addressed in SY18.
	Leader Relations and Evaluation
	• There have been times when the ED has felt isolated.
	Board Policies:
	• Review of the board policy manual reveals the lack of a significant number of state-required policies under Finance. <u>The board must address this concern in SY18.</u>
	Board Survey Results
	• Results from the board survey reveal that the board considers the following as an area for improvement:
	    o Developing the financial resources needed to support student performance and school success.

IX. Sound Financial Operations
A transformational school:

Standard	Indicator	Evidence
a. Fulfills its fiduciary responsibility for public funds by ensuring the school operates in a fiscally sound and appropriate manner.	i. Preserves a minimum of three percent budget surplus ii. Maintains accessible and appropriate fiscal records iii. Core Data and other required school reporting is conducted in a timely and appropriate manner iv. Conducts an annual financial audit v. Ensures that school business and expenses, including personnel, are made free of conflict of interest and directed toward meeting the mission of the school.	**Documents** • **Annual Secretary to the Board Report (ASBR)** • **Independent Annual Audit** • **Cash Flow Projection and Analysis** • **Annual Debt Report** • **Tear Sheet and Invoice for Locally Published Annual Audit** **Other Evidence** • Interview with CFO • Payroll and retirement records • Core Date Reports • Evidence in board minutes that check registry has been reviewed and approved by the board.
b. Establishes clear fiscal policies that use public funds appropriately	i. Adhere to an adopted and board approved fiscal policy and procedures manual ii. Ensure fiscal policies include procedures for the authorization of purchases and release of funds iii. Adopt a budget by June 30 for the upcoming fiscal year iv. Ensure that the budgeting process maintains a direct focus on teaching and learning needs with a fiscal balance to cover expenses with revenue	**Documents** • **Annual Budget** • **Monthly Financial Statements** • **Banking Information** • **Account Coding Data FED/LEA** • **Internal Control Policies and Procedures** • **Procurement Policy** • **Federally Funded Purchase Inventory** **Other Evidence** • Interview with CFO • Approved board meeting minutes
c. Ensures financial resources are directly related to the school's purpose: student achievement and learning	i. Ensure that the school's physical space, materials, and supplies are conducive to accomplishing the charter's school-wide learning goals as specified in the charter ii. Establish policies to ensure that contracts reflect fair market value iii. Determine compensation levels for employees that are appropriate for the positions and responsibilities and that are consistent with industry norms	**Documents** • **Staff Salary Records (including average staff salary)** **Other Evidence** • Building walk-through • Classroom observations • Vendor contracts

Element I: Fiscal Management	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**

	• Budget constraints prove challenging in several key ways:
	   o Lack of assistants limit leader capacity.
	   o Lack of essential curriculum materials and resources in core subject areas limit teacher capacity.
	   o Lack of funds for external professional development opportunities limit teacher growth.
	• This year, the new COO uncovered unintentional duplicate payments for expenses related to a few individual invoices. Payment procedures need tightening to prevent this from happening again.

Shannon Spradling's Review

In review and discussion with Arlene Galve Salgado and Lilith Werner, the following is my analysis of SLLIS financial picture:
- FY16 ending cash fund balance per the ASBR was 6%.
- FY17 projected ending cash fund balance is 7%.
- FY18 projected ending cash fund balance is 7%.

Recommendations

The practice of budgeting a surplus combined with the close monitoring of actual revenue versus expenses should continue at all levels of the school and Board.

Financial review
- Standard a
  - ASBR: The ASBR was filed on time.
  - Independent Annual Audit: Complete. Board approved and was submitted to DESE by December 31
  - Cash Flow Projection and Analysis: School has a tool for analyzing cash flow.
  - Annual Debt Report: Submitted to the State
  - Audit Published: School audit was published in Missouri Lawyers Media on December 30, 2016.
  - Evidence - Met with Arlene Galve Salgado and Lilith Werner to review requested information.

  Recommendations: None

- Standard b
  - Annual Budget: Board approved original budget and amended budget.
  - Monthly Financial Statements: Reviewed by the board and approved.
  - Banking Information: Funds are collateralized in excess of $250k by financial institution.
  - Account Coding: Coding is in compliance with DESE Financial Accounting requirements
  - Internal Control Policies and Procedures: SLLIS needs to make sure the following required federal procedures are in place by July 1, 2017:
    - Allowability Procedures (2 CFR Part 200 403) :   Policy is in place
    - Cash Management Procedures (2 CFR Part 200.305): Policy is in place
    - Travel Policy (2 CFR Part 200.474): Policy is in Place
  - Procurement Policy: SLLIS needs to make sure the existing procurement policy includes the following federal procedures by July 1, 2017:

- Procurement Procedures (2 CFR Part 200.318) that include:
  - Conflict of Interest Procedures: Policy is in Place
  - Gratuity Violation Procedures: Policy is in Place
  - Federal Funded Purchase Inventory: Inventory is in place and identified.

<u>Recommendations</u>

In reference to Internal Control Policies and Procedures and the Procurement Policy, it is recommended the school review its approved policies to make sure they are in compliance with recent revisions to federal regulations per DESE.

- Standard c
  - School appears to have adequate resources and will continue to operate out of two facilities, Papin and Marine. Enrollment for FY17 was 737; projected enrollment for FY18 is 770. The school is already encountering difficulty meeting the FY18 projected enrollment of 770. Therefore, administration is taking necessary steps to reduce FY18 expenditures.
  - Average teaching salary approximately $43k.
  - The Board issues Letter of Intent to Hire to all employees reflecting annual salary or hourly rate of pay. There are no board approved agreements for extra/supplemental pay.

<u>Recommendations</u>

Any employee being paid outside of their regular duties should have a Board approved supplemental agreement reflecting rate of pay and purpose. The document needs to be filed with the Letter of Intent to Hire and noted as such.

X. 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	

Element X: Parents and Community	
Areas of strength	**Areas for improvement**
• SLLIS held a series of open parent meetings to introduce plans for restructuring the school. They were well attended. • Each school has an active SAC parent group that meets regularly. • SLLIS created a district parent council where representatives from each school's SAC meet with the President and a board member. • Parents are included in the strategic planning process. • Teachers in all four buildings prioritize communication with parents through a variety of means: Texts, emails, phone calls and newsletters. • All schools hold in-building parent conferences at least two times a year.	• Relations between parents of The Chinese School and both the board and executive director were severely strained this past year over the future direction of the school. School leadership must strengthen communication with these parents, focusing more on informal small-group settings that foster open conversation rather than confrontation. • Widening out beyond parents of The Chinese School, the board must strengthen communication, relations and collaboration with all families to address the challenges facing SLLIS. • All schools – acknowledge the challenge of connecting to some parents of their more low-income students and enlisting their support in working on academic improvement.