

MISSOURI CHARTER SCHOOL APPLICATION COVER SHEET

NAME OF PROPOSED CHARTER SCHOOL: **ST. LOUIS CHARTER SCHOOL**

NAME OF NOT-FOR-PROFIT (501(C)(3)) ORGANIZATION THAT WILL HOLD THE CHARTER: **THE ST. LOUIS CHARTER SCHOOL ACADEMY**

PRIMARY CONTACT PERSON: **TRACY GARRETT**

TITLE/RELATIONSHIP TO NON-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION: **HEAD OF SCHOOL**

MAILING ADDRESS: **5279 FYLER AVENUE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63139**

TELEPHONE: **314-645-9600**

EMAIL ADDRESS: tagarrett@stlcharterschool.org

EDUCATIONL SERVICE PROVIDER: **NONE**

PARTNER ORGANIZATION: **NONE**

DISTRICT IN WHICH THE SCHOOL WILL BE LOCATED: **ST. LOUIS**

PHYSICAL ADDRESS OF THE SCHOOL: **5279 FYLER AVENUE, ST. LOUIS, MO 63139**

OPENING DATE: **August 2000**

PROPOSED CHARTER TERM: **10 YEARS**

ENROLLMENT PROJECTIONS:

SCHOOL YEAR	GRADE LEVELS	PROJECTED ENROLLMENT
2010-2011	PK-8	950
2011-2012	PK-8	960
2012-2013	PK-8	970
2013-2014	PK-8	980
2014-2015	PK-8	980
2015-2016 THRU 2016-2020	PK-8	1000

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SCHOOL DESCRIPTION

St. Louis Charter School will provide the children of the City of St. Louis an individualized education rich in academics and character, so the children we serve today can be the leaders of tomorrow. We will serve children in grades pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Located in south St. Louis, St. Louis Charter School currently serves 930 students and will eventually serve 1000 students after adding seventy new preschool students.

APPLICATION CERTIFICATION

I certify that I have the authority to submit this application and that all information contained herein is complete and accurate. I recognize that any misrepresentation could result in disqualification from the application process or revocation after award. The person named as the contact person for the application is so authorized to serve as the primary contact for this application on behalf of the organization.

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

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EDUCATION PLAN

Mission, Vision & Educational Philosophy

Mission

St. Louis Charter School will provide the children of the City of St. Louis an individualized education rich in academics and character, so the children we serve today can be the leaders of tomorrow.

Vision

We, the Board of Directors of St. Louis Charter School, are building a school where anything is possible for each and every student. It is our vision to create an academic environment where each child is educated according to his or her needs in order to reach academic success. Through building a community that works together, to support each child holistically, we will build leaders that are strong in mind and in character. The students we serve today will be the spirit of St. Louis tomorrow.

Educational Philosophy

We believe that there is no one way of teaching that meets every need. In focusing on the growth of our students, so they are strong in academics and character, we use methods of instruction that will nurture both. The idea is to have students learn in different ways in order to be complete, strong leaders. This will require that we have talented teachers trained in using varied teaching methods together to in turn, see results in the students. The school continues to seek a diverse population reflective of the rich cultural heritage of St. Louis.

St. Louis Charter School serves children in grades Kindergarten through Grade 8. Currently there are five classrooms at each grade level. We believe in educating the students early to prevent learning delays in the future. With this in mind, the school has targeted offer pre-Kindergarten classes beginning in the fall of 2010.

It is also necessary to have the time necessary to achieve our academic and character goals. This includes offering a creative summer program that can address learning needs and need to approach school from a more relaxed direction.

Need

St. Louis Charter School is in its tenth year of operation within the city of St. Louis. During this time the school has continually enrolled students from across the city, boundary to boundary with no exceptions. We strive to give access to every student within the city. According to the report *Public School in St. Louis: Place, Performance, and Promise* published by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers (NACSA) ((NACSA), 2009), St. Louis Charter School was the only charter school meeting

criteria of a “tier 1 school” giving access to children without restriction on area of residence within the city or elite academic performance.

Our community needs us and supports us strongly. We currently serve 930 students and have a waiting list with approximately 400 children. There are many unique challenges and opportunities that face us as we serve many diverse areas that are truly representative of the city as a whole. The Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) tests for the year 2008-09 further illustrate the need for St. Louis Charter School to serve the city of St. Louis. Our school is accountable for 14 subgroups on this test. Of these 14 areas St. Louis Charter School met AYP in 11 areas. By comparison, St. Louis Public met in only 1 of 18 areas.

To further highlight the need for St. Louis Charter School, the free and reduced population must be reviewed. We currently operate with just under 70% of our students needing assistance through this program. These are the students that are most at risk and we enroll an average of 650 per year. Without St. Louis Charter School, those children would have to seek out underperforming schools.

Additionally, St. Louis Charter School is located just west of one of the four areas targeted by the NACSA study of students needing access to “tier 1 schools”. Having access to this school is important for the children living in this area.

Copies of this charter will be available to the public and provided upon request.

Curriculum and Instruction

The approach that the school uses with respect to curriculum and instruction is to give the students what they need in order for them to be successful in high school and beyond. In building independent thinkers, learners and leaders it is essential that the curriculum grow and change as the standards set by the state or federal government change. The goal of the curriculum at St. Louis Charter School is to introduce, master and refresh topics throughout the years. Beginning in the 2007-2008 school year, St. Louis Charter School began work revising our curriculum documents to coincide with the implementation of Missouri’s GLEs Version 2.0 by the 2009-2010 school year.

The curriculum team used to create the curriculum, described below, will continue to meet four times a year to review the curriculum implementation and evaluate, based on assessment results, the degree to which the curriculum is meeting the goals of the school. The team will conduct this review one subject at a time so that each subject area of the curriculum is reviewed once a year. The team will drill down on both content area and grade level when looking for curricular changes that might be necessary.

Standards Document(s)

Our team consisted of classroom teachers, building administrators, content area specialists, and special educators. This group began by examining issues found in our current curriculum. Chief among these were vague wording of instructional goals, lack of continuity from grade to grade, and lack of additional support documents (such as resources or sample assessments).

Our curriculum is standards-based. With that being said, we began with Missouri's V2.0 GLEs for math and communication arts. Our teams reviewed every GLE in these documents. We first dissected each standard. For example, a standard for adding and subtracting integers was broken into two standards, one for adding, and one for subtracting. This allowed us to be very specific about what exactly needed to be covered.

We next reviewed all GLEs for clarity. In cases where a GLE was unclear or vague, our team reworded the standard. In cases where there was a lack of continuity for a standard across grade levels, we added additional standards or moved standards to other grade levels. We also recognized that the scope of our standards document was such that teaching all to mastery over a given school year was unlikely. Where possible, we eliminated or moved standards to ensure that our curriculum was viable and could reasonably be expected to be taught during a school year.

We next identified the power standards that would make up the foundation for each grade level. We color coded these standards for teacher convenience. We also designated those standards that would be introduced, developed, and extended or maintained. We then collected resources and sample assessments to further clarify standards. DESE served as one resource for these items, but they were collected from multiple other sources as well.

Finally, all of these items were inserted into an electronic standards document and burned on CDs for teacher use. The benefit here is that when planning a lesson, a teacher can view all standards and quickly determine how they fit together according to their color codes. Various key words in standards, those that might need to be more clearly defined, have been turned into hyperlinks, linking directly to a glossary. Where applicable, standards have also been hyperlinked to sample assessments to demonstrate expected rigor and other resources. An example of a resource is a grade-level appropriate reading passage or an example of a graph in math. The attached documents in **Appendix 1** represent our standards, resources, glossary, and sample assessments.

Classroom Curriculum

St. Louis Charter School has developed standards documents outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level and for each subject area. These standards documents are based on Missouri's Grade Level Expectations Version 2.0. All classroom instruction is directly based on these standards. For the 2009-2010 school year, all unit and lesson planning will be completed using the electronic planning program Build Your Own Curriculum.

The standards document is new for the 2009-2010 school year, as a result, our classroom curriculum is changing as well. This is a year-long process with teachers, through department collaboration meetings and in consultation with curriculum team specialists, translating our new learning standards into curriculum. We are using a curriculum tool called Build Your Own Curriculum to develop our units, lessons, and assessments. This tool is web-based and follows the curriculum template of Wiggins and McTighe as outlined in *Understanding by Design*. In order to monitor our classroom curriculum, as it is being created, we have established a username and password for Build Your Own Curriculum that can be used for that purpose. Build Your Own Curriculum is located at

<http://admin.buildyourowncurriculum.com/admin/login.aspx>. Select Missouri as the State and St. Louis Charter School as the District. You can gain the same access our teachers have to view all developed units and lessons in all grade levels and departments by entering the username UMSL and the password “password”. Sample lesson plans can be found in **Appendix 2**.

Instruction

The educational program is based upon:

- Teacher presented/direct instruction
- Student directed learning
- Project based learning
- Differentiated instruction
- Understanding by design
- Project Construct

Teacher presented/direct instruction

Teacher presented instruction is used to teach initial information and skills necessary to build knowledge upon. This type of instruction might be whole class, small group or individual depending on the level of individualization necessary within the particular lesson. Using the presented/direct instruction method the teacher is the sole source of instruction and information. Students are then required to apply these skills.

Student directed learning

Student directed learning is any increase in knowledge, skill or performance pursued by an individual. “Students are more likely to exhibit independent self-management in non-training situations when teachers use a student-directed approach to self-management training.” (Mithaug) An SDL program will foster the development of a lifelong, natural and individual learner. In this type of learning students are responsible for the direction of their learning. This can be seen when students select topics for research, make choices at learning centers or create their own project on a particular topic.

Using SDL, the students use their own choices in academic matter and social situations. This leads to development of strong leaders that are able to balance ideas and make good choices.

Project based learning

Working hand in hand with the student directed learning is exploration and application through the use of projects and authentic learning experiences. According to the Brock Institute:

Project Based Learning is an instructional approach built upon authentic learning activities that engage student interest and motivations. These activities are designed to answer a question or solve a problem and generally reflect the types of learning and work people do in the everyday world outside the classroom. Project Based Learning is synonymous with learning in depth. A well-designed project provokes students to encounter (and struggle with) the central concepts and principals of a discipline.

Differentiated Instruction

Using differentiated instruction teachers are able to adapt lessons and assignments to fit the needs of the children in the classroom on an individual basis. This approach recognizes that all children are not at the same place academically and therefore the lessons necessary to enhance their depth of knowledge are going to be different. Differentiated instruction involves the teacher giving quality time to each student rather than a set amount of general educational time or instruction to the entire class.

Understanding by Design

Understanding by Design (UbD) is a planning process used to further student understanding and depth of knowledge. According to Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe, authors of Understanding by Design, "Understanding by Design is a framework for improving student achievement. Emphasizing the teacher's critical role as a designer of student learning, UbD works within the standards-driven curriculum to help teachers clarify goals, devise rewarding assessments of student understand, and craft effective and engaging learning activities"

When using UbD our teachers start with the end goal and plan the lesson after the end goal and the assessment measures have been developed. This allows the teacher to focus on lessons that meet curricular objectives rather than planning lessons that are "fun" but possibly shallow in value. In turn, the students will develop a deeper understanding of the topic covered. This is in essence, planning for success not merely randomly achieving success.

According to Wiggins and McTighe, "Student and school performance gains are achieved through regular reviews of results (achievement data and student work) followed by targeted adjustments to curriculum and instruction. Teachers become most effective when they seek feedback from students and their peers and use that feedback to adjust approaches to design and teaching."

Project Construct

We looked through several different models of early childhood curriculum and felt that the Project Construct model fully encompasses the joy and natural way of learning that we want to instill in all of our students. Since the school as a whole has always used the Project Based learning model, we felt that Project Construct was a natural fit for our Early Childhood department.

Our five kindergarten teachers and their grade level administrator attended a week-long Project Construct institute in July 2009. Since that training, the kindergarten teachers have been working very hard to build their classroom communities around this constructivist curriculum. With the start of our new preschool program, we will have all early childhood teachers trained in the teaching of this curriculum model.

School Calendar and Daily Schedule

St. Louis Charter School will create a calendar each year that reflects an extended year of up to 190 student contact days. Summer school, when offered, will be in addition to these days. This exceeds the state required 174 days and covers the required six day inclement weather closure days. See attached calendar for the 2010-2011 school year in **Appendix 3**.

Currently, the school hours are 8:30-3:45, with students entering the building at 8:15 for breakfast. Daily schedules can vary between grade levels. For example, in the formative grades, Kindergarten, first and second a much larger reading block will be reflected in daily schedules than you might see in seventh grade. Daily schedules are created to maximize core instructional time while balancing students' need for downtime within the day. Attached you will find sample schedules for several grade levels. See attached schedules in **Appendix 3**.

Target Population

St. Louis Charter School operates city-wide within the city of St. Louis. We are in the unique situation that we are currently at capacity and allow the school to develop within a natural progression, not targeting any particular area of the city or "type" of student. This has led us to the following student breakdowns (as of September, 2009)

- 64% of our students qualify for free or reduced lunch (October 2009)
- 52 students are considered homeless
- 99 students have limited English proficiency
- Our students speak 13 different languages
- 150 students qualify for special education services

In a conscious effort not to target just one type of student but rather be a school for all within the city, we have an extremely diverse school on many fronts. Most notably is our ethnic breakdown which currently mirrors very closely the city of St. Louis as a whole.

Special Student Populations

In the event that a child has special needs or is suspected of having some concerns that need to be addressed in order for academic success, we have developed a process that will look at all aspects of that child's development. This process is very step oriented and the following is a summation of that process. The school will, as required, follow the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) and comply with the regulations set forth.

Identification for students with disabilities by school referral:

St. Louis Charter School's CARE team provides a collaborative environment where teachers can find support, ideas and innovation. CARE team offers a creative brainstorming forum where a multi-disciplinary group unites to help develop intervention plans using evidence based practices for individual students who are presented with academic and/or behavioral challenges in the classroom environment. We hold the goal that all students will be able to make progress and benefit from the instruction they are receiving at SLCS. Listed below is the CARE team process.

- A teacher notices a concern in the areas of academics, health, motor, vision, hearing, speech, language, intellectual abilities, emotions, behaviors or social interaction
- The teacher begins to document the issue and discusses concerns with the parents. The teacher begins to prepare the following documents to bring to CARE team:
 - Most recent Stanford 10/Pearson/MAP scores
 - Student work in areas of concern
 - Documentation of behaviors
 - Alternative strategies used
 - Visit resource binders for strategies in library and therapy room.
- The teacher fills out a "CARE team referral form" and gives it to the Head of Special Education.
- The Schedule of CARE team meetings will be sent to teachers through email based on a first come first serve basis.
- The teacher with initial concerns attends the CARE team meeting for the student. CARE team meets with the teacher and discusses:
 - Overview of Student
 - Description of Concerns
 - Description of learning experiences and academic level, mainly in the areas of reading, writing and math
 - Alternative Intervention Strategies
 - Screenings needed
 - Observations are scheduled, if needed
- The teacher implements Alternative Intervention Strategies, CARE teachers complete observations and screenings.

- The CARE team schedules a Follow up meeting. This meeting is usually anywhere from four to six weeks after the initial meeting to allow time for interventions, observations and further assessments.
- The CARE team meets with teacher to Review all Existing Data and Interventions.
- The CARE team makes a determination of the next step, which usually consists of offering additional strategies or possibly referring the student for an Initial Psycho-Educational Evaluation.
- If the team suspects a disability, then this becomes the referral date. Parents are notified within five days and given the Procedural Safeguards.
- Within 30 days parents are sent a Notice of Action to sign for consent for evaluation and given an opportunity to meet with the school to discuss the impact this will have on the education of their child, as well as the exact assessment plan.
- After written consent is returned from parent, the evaluation will be completed and the staffing will be held within 60 calendar days to Determine Eligibility for Special Education.
- Evaluations will be completed by qualified personnel including: the on-staff School Psychologist, two Speech and Language Pathologists, and Occupational Therapist. We have a contract with Rehab Outreach for any Physical Therapy referrals.
- A multi-disciplinary team consisting of Parent, Administration, Special Education Teacher, General Education teacher, and any individual who evaluated the student or is relevant to the student's education (i.e. counselor, nurse) determines if the student meets the state eligibility standards as a student with a disability.
- If a student is identified with a disability, an IEP meeting will be held to develop a plan to meet the needs of the student.

Identification for students with disabilities by parent referral:

- Parent/Guardian lets any team member know that they are requesting, either in writing or verbally, an Evaluation for their child.
- The Director of Special Education gives the parents the Procedural Safeguards within five days and sets up a Review of Existing Data meeting with the parent and teacher that will be held within 30 days. The Director will also explain the process and help walk the parent through the rest of the steps.
- At the meeting, we review any and all information from the teacher and parent and determine if there is a suspected disability.
- If there is a suspected disability, the parent will sign a Notice of Consent for Evaluation and an Assessment Plan will be written.
- A Staffing will be held within 60 calendar days to determine eligibility for Special Education.
- Evaluations will be completed by qualified personnel including: the on-staff School Psychologist, two Speech and Language Pathologists, and Occupational Therapist. We have a contract with Rehab Outreach for any Physical Therapy referrals.
- A multi-disciplinary team consisting of: parent, Administration, Special Education Teacher, General Education teacher, and any individual who evaluated the student or is relevant to the student's education (i.e. counselor, nurse) will determine if the student meets the state eligibility standards as a student with a disability.

- If a student is identified with a disability, an IEP meeting will be held to develop a plan to meet the needs of the student.

Educational Plans for students with disabilities

- Students with disabilities will be educated and serviced through the IEP (Individual Education Plan) process.
- Parents will be notified of an IEP meeting a minimum of ten days prior to the meeting. They are strongly encouraged to participate in the process and the meeting will be rescheduled if they do not attend.
- The IEP team will consist of a multi-disciplinary team including but not limited to; an Administrator, Special Education Teacher, General Education Teacher, parents, to any participants the parent would like to attend, and an Individual to Interpret Instructional Implication of Evaluation Results. Other relevant members, may include; Speech Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapist, Counselors, Nurses, Para-professionals, and related service providers.
- The team will then discuss the following: How the child's disability affects his/her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, strengths of the child, concerns of the parent/guardian, changes in current function since the last IEP, summary of most recent evaluation and summary of most recent state and district assessments.
- Team will consider all Federal and state requirements and how the school needs to address them according to the individual needs of the child.
- Team will write individualized goals so the student can make progress in the areas of the student's disability.
- Team will discuss specific Special Education services that need to be provided for the student, starting with the Least Restrictive Environment (accommodations in the General Education classroom) and moving up the continuum to Monitoring, then Class within a Class (Special Education teacher goes into the General education classroom), inside the General Education classroom more than 80% of the day, inside the General Education Classroom no more than 79% of the day and no less than 40%, inside the General education classroom less than 40%, Private School placement, State School placement, and Homebound. Team will also discuss any related services that may need to be provided such as Speech, Language, Occupational or Physical Therapy. Para-professional services may also be needed by the student and will be determined by the team.
- Team will discuss necessary accommodations for State and District wide assessments
- Team will discuss Functional Behavior Assessments and Positive Behavior Support Plans, if necessary for the student.
- Team will discuss any and all modifications/ accommodations that are needed during the school day for the student.

Implementation of Educational Plans for Students with Disabilities

Disabilities we are currently or have previously serviced:

- Autism (including Aspergers Syndrome)
- Hearing Impaired
- Blind and Visual Impaired
- Emotional Disturbances
- Intellectual Disabilities (previously known as Mental Retardation)
- Multiple Disabilities
- Other Health Impairments
- Specific Learning Disabilities (including: written expression, oral expression, reading fluency, basic reading skills, reading comprehension, listening comprehension, mathematics calculation and mathematics reasoning.
- Speech or language Impairments
- Traumatic Brain Injuries
- Young Child with Developmental Delays

St. Louis Charter School is committed to following every student's IEP plan. We have staffed our school with the following individuals:

- One Head of Special Education- coordinates and supervises the entire Special Education process
- Eight Special Education teachers- implements Special Education services. Caseloads are determined by the state standard formula
- One School Psychologist- evaluates students (cognitive, academic achievement, social/emotional)
- Two Speech and Language Pathologists- evaluates and services students with Speech Language impairments
- One Occupational Therapist- evaluates and services students with Motor concerns
- Five Educational Assistants- helps provide modification/accommodations for students in both the SPED and Gen Ed. classrooms
- Para-professionals- Number as needed according to current IEP's. Gives one on one support to students with significant disabilities

Services are provided with the least restrictive environment possible. A student receives services if they are unable to make academic progress without additional support. We are currently or have previously provided the following services to students with disabilities in our school:

- 504 services
- General Education with accommodations and modifications
- Maintenance services
- Class within a class
- Counseling

- Occupational Therapy
- Speech and Language Therapy
- Social Skills groups for students on the Autism spectrum
- Social Skills groups for emotionally disturbed students
- Vocational Skills training for students with Transition Plans
- Individualized instruction in Reading, Math, Writing, Social Studies, Science
- Homebound instruction

If we are unable to provide the appropriate services that an individual needs, we have current contracts to help provide support for students needing:

- Applied Behavioral Analysis Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Private school placement (students with significant disabilities that cannot be served in a general education school, even with significant Special Education support)
- Vision Itinerant and Mobility Specialists
- Counseling services beyond what our School Counselors can provide

ELL Students

All core curriculum classes are taught in English, with support for English Language Learners (ELL) provided on a regular basis. This approach recognizes:

- The importance of preparing ELL students for content instruction in English
- The importance of integrating students of all cultures in a common academic program

The students enrolled in St. Louis Charter School represent many nationalities and cultures. Many of these students arrive with limited proficiency in the English language. Some students have developed a high level of oral skills, but perform below grade level due to their limited ability to read and write in English. A supplemental program is required to help these students become successful in the regular academic classroom. St. Louis Charter School provides a language acquisition program designed to teach ELL students character, social, and academic skills, as well as, cultural aspects of the English Language necessary to succeed in the academic environment.

The outline of our program is as follows:

Goals:

- Use English to communicate effectively in a social setting
- Use English to achieve academic standards in all content areas
- Use English in socially and culturally appropriate way

Selection process:

- Students are identified through a home language survey upon enrollment at St. Louis Charter School
- Students are assessed to determine English language proficiency

- Based on assessments and a review of the student's records, the student may be determined as eligible to receive ELL services

The ELL Instructional Program:

- ELL students are provided instruction to help them develop and refine listening comprehension, oral expression, reading, writing and thinking skills. Instruction incorporates grade level academic topics as often as possible
- Students participate in ELL instruction at least once a week
- Students are formally evaluated annually by the State of Missouri/ LAS Links. Results from the evaluation, as well as information collected from the classroom teacher and other educators, are used to determine the student's progress.

School-Specific Goals and Objectives

Goal: Student Performance: Develop and enhance quality educational/instructional programs to improve performance and enable students to meet their personal, academic, and career goals.

Objective #1: To increase student achievement in communication arts with 100% of students scoring minimally at the proficient level, with annual growth targets, by April 2014. This will be measured using the MAP assessment test.

Strategy: Using teaching methods that are considered best practice and rooted in scientifically based research.

Action steps:

- provide multiple opportunities for small group instruction and scaffolding lessons
- implement activities and interventions centered around the 5 components of reading (phonological awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary and comprehension)
- continued professional development on balanced literacy with Missouri Reading Initiative
- use reading specialists for pull out model to assist struggling readers

Objective #2: To increase student achievement in math with 100% of students scoring minimally at the proficient level, with annual growth targets, by April 2014. This will be measured using the MAP assessment test.

Strategy: Using teaching methods that are considered best practice and rooted in scientifically based research.

Action steps:

- provide multiple opportunities for small group instruction and scaffolding lessons
- implement activities and interventions centered around the process standards (problem solving/critical thinking, reasoning & proof, communication, connection and representation)
- continued professional development with 21st century math learning targets
- use math specialists for pull out model to assist individual students

Objective #3: To provide standards-based curricular programs and services reflecting current research, best practice and technology integration for 100% of student population. This will be evaluated by a committee reviewing the curriculum every two years.

Strategy: Maintain ongoing cycle of curricular evaluation/revision for all programs/services.

Action steps:

- Incorporate 21st Century Learning Skills into curricular programs
- Implement year one of three year technology plan
- Conduct revision process with curriculum team to address gifted and character education goals

Objective #4: To implement professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators to develop the capacity to effectively integrate technology into teaching and learning. Of the goals, 90% should be met according to staff evaluations.

Strategy: Provide professional development that promotes differentiated instruction through the use of technology in order to sustain technology integration through April 2014.

Action steps:

- provide workshops and in-service opportunities that target hands-on training in educational technology and network resources
- Promote web page design and use as well as software application use
- Provide distance learning opportunities for students and staff

Goal: Highly Qualified Staff: Recruit, attract, develop, and retain highly qualified staff to carry out the mission, goals, and objectives.

Objective #1: To ensure faculty and staff can satisfactorily deliver programs and services to 100% of student population. This will be measured during a staff evaluations.

Strategy: Implement structure to ensure 80% or greater teaching staff will be certified in their area of instruction.

Action steps:

- Ensure all current staff members are highly qualified under NCLB
- Hire only new teachers who meet highly qualified criteria
- Monitor teacher performance using supervision/evaluation tool

Objective #2: To implement the professional development plan that is scaffolded for new and veteran teachers. The professional development plan will be approved by the state and included in our Title I plan.

Strategy: Provide differentiated professional development opportunities through the three year cycle plan

Action steps:

- Continue to implement 3 phase coaching/mentoring plan
- Embed best instructional practices through coaching, modeling and collaboration
- Implement professional learning communities that meet twice a month

Goal: Safe, caring supportive learning environment: Provide and maintain appropriate resources and training to create an environment that is safe, caring and comfortable to learn in.

Objective #1: To ensure that the adopted core ethical values of respect, responsibility and caring are being implemented. This will be measured by a character evaluation each spring. The school must be rated a three or higher on a five point scale during this evaluation.

Strategy: Implement a sense of autonomy, competence and belonging to students and staff.

Action steps:

- Provide class meeting and cooperative learning training
- Ensure crisis management plan are current and coordinated
- Conduct trimester student and staff climate surveys
- All administrators attend the year long leadership academy in character education (LACE)

Goal: Parent Satisfaction: Promote, facilitate, and enhance parent, student, and community involvement educational programs

Objective #1: maintain and improve communication regarding programs, services and key challenges. This will be measured annually on a parent satisfaction survey. Knowledge of programs will be expected by 75% of the parent population.

Strategy: Build a shared understanding of the school goals with key stakeholders .

Action steps:

- Implement communications plan
- Develop and implement a public engagement strategy plan
- Conduct periodic parent satisfaction surveys
- Implement a parent advisory team that meets regularly

Assessment

Parents, teachers and administrators want to know as much as possible about how to meet the ongoing needs of our students. Our expectation is to provide the best educational programs possible and strive to meet the individual needs of every child. St. Louis Charter School views our assessment plan as an important tool to meet this challenge, because it helps us monitor student learning on a consistent basis. The relationship that exists among the curriculum, classroom instruction, and assessment measures, all aid in the desired outcome of increased student learning.

Assessments, both formative and summative, provide valuable information for teachers as they plan curriculum and instruction for the students, as well as parents as they monitor their child's academic and cognitive growth. Additionally, it allows the school as an LEA to evaluate programs and performance in a specific and thoughtful way. St. Louis Charter School chooses assessments that add value to our instructional process in a timely fashion.

Although we adhere to an assessment calendar (attached is the Reading Assessment calendar **Appendix 4**), the assessment plan is embedded throughout the day-to-day school operations. Teachers prepare students to think critically about content throughout the year, and they are exposed to a variety of assessments in order to practice the retention of knowledge.

- The Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA) is given 3 times a year to allow teachers immediate data for planning an effective balanced literacy program
- Benchmark tests are given 3 times a year in order to track progress of cohorts over time
- Annual MAP testing
- Annual Stanford 10 testing

Appropriate preparation for any standardized norm-referenced or criterion-referenced test comes from instructing students using a research-based, standards-aligned local curriculum. St. Louis Charter School has developed standards documents outlining what students are expected to learn at each grade level and for each subject area. These standards documents are based on Missouri's Grade Level Expectations.

Parents and families can track student progress in a number of ways. The school issues mid-trimester reports at the mid point of each trimester. We also issue report cards and hold conferences 3 times per year, at the end of each trimester. During these conferences, teachers meet with families and students to review grades, discuss student progress, and make recommendations for continued growth.

Assessment results are disseminated as soon as possible following the assessment. In the case of state MAP tests the results are disseminated in August to both teachers and parents. Parents are offered one on one conferences to discuss results as well as written communication on how to best understand the results and determine what they might mean for their child. Teachers and administrators will go through a thorough review of the data including individual student results as well as standards results and question results. This review will include a minimum of two teacher release days in the fall for data review. Additional assessments will be used to drive daily instructional decisions. When teachers give a benchmark assessment they will use the data to form the topics for any review lessons necessary. DRA assessment data is used to move students to harder and harder levels of reading instruction as appropriate. This data will also be used to monitor the student body as a whole to determine which students might be lagging behind in reaching the grade level standards.

Response to Intervention Reading Plan:

Through this plan we will look at reading achievement at each grade level. The process will determine the students progressing well and those that are not. For those that are not, interventions are put in place to work specifically with reading instruction. The following is how we implement this process.

Tier 1/Instructional Support Team: schedule and meeting model

- SEPT 14-30: Developmental Reading Assessment administration window
- OCT 2: DRA report forms completed
- OCT 5-9: Focus for Instruction Class Profile work week (teachers)
- OCT 9: Focus for Instruction turn-in to administrator
- OCT 12-16: Instructional Support Team Meetings
 - By grade level

- 3 meetings/administrator
- 1meeting/grade level
- WHEN: After school
- FACILITATOR: Grade Level administrator
- NOTE TAKER: Reading Specialist
- ATTENDEES: GL teachers, TLC, ELL, Reading Specialist, Administrator
- MEETING STEPS:
 - Brainstorming activity for topics included under each key reading component
 - Attendees brainstorm specific interventions under each key reading component (for differentiated core curriculum)
 - Attendees will receive copy of meeting notes prior to leaving meeting in order to document dates implemented (to be brought to future TIER 2 Child Study Team Meeting)

Tier 2/Child Study Team: schedule and meeting model

- WHEN: Grade level plan time, after school, before school
 - One time frame for each grade level
- FACILITATOR: Reading Specialist
- NOTE TAKER: Administrator
- ATTENDEES: GL teachers, TLC, ELL, Reading Specialist, Administrator
- MEETING STEPS:
 - After TIER 1 (IST) meeting, administrator sends grade level DRA ranking form to all attendees
 - Administrator sets specific days for individual students (in bottom 20% of ranking form) to be discussed in Child Study Teams
 - Teacher of ranked child is responsible for completing and bringing pre-meeting report including a minimum of 6 points of data
 - In looking over pre-meeting report and 6 points of data, attendees narrow focus to one area of concern (& perhaps a specific focus)

- Group brainstorms specific targeted and intentional intervention plan for each individual student
- Plan is made for each ranked child based on collaboration
 - Child Study Meeting Report completed – including questions and additional comments page
 - Any person responsible for plan will receive copy of plan prior to leaving meeting
- Administrator follows-up to fill out intervention check column on plan form (in December)

School Climate and Discipline

Attending St. Louis Charter School is a choice made by students and their parents. St. Louis Charter School believes in an individualized education rich in academics and character. We are developing the leaders of tomorrow. It is vital that students, teachers, and parents be partners in our small educational community, and that these individuals are also connected to our larger St. Louis Community, in order to realize our mission. Please see the Student Handbook, **Appendix 5** for more information.

Caring, Respect, and Responsibility are the three principles in which our conduct policy is based. Beyond these principles, we leave many specific rules unstated. We have chosen to do this because St. Louis Charter School stands by the belief that “fair” does not mean “the same for everyone”. We expect honesty and good judgment from our students in their choice making and the assistance of our teachers, staff, and parents in role playing, discussing, and brainstorming how to make the best choices possible. Each member of the school community will be helpful and supportive of the other members of the school community and show respect for others at all times.

We expect the cooperation and support of parents in helping us to uphold these standards. If parents and the school work together to establish the environment and boundaries necessary for students, we will have few discipline problems and will develop a strong sense of academic focus, trust, leadership and community in our students, and their families, and the community at large.

Respect

We expect that all St. Louis Charter School Students will treat others with consideration both inside and outside of the classroom. Students’ treatment of each other must be respectful at all times whether or not an adult is present. Students are also expected to treat any and all adults with respect. St. Louis Charter School encourages students, faculty and parents to accept, tolerate, and welcome differences.

Stealing and Vandalism

Willfully taking what does not belong to you or intentionally damaging what belongs to another person undermines the trust we share in our community and is considered a serious offense. Any damage caused to school property – playground equipment, classroom supplies, the school building, etc. – will be charged to the responsible student(s).

Student Whereabouts

Students must keep the school accurately informed of their whereabouts at all times when under the school's jurisdiction. The following rules govern the whereabouts of students on school days. It is expected that each student will remain in the school building or on the school grounds until his/her last commitment of the day when he/she will leave on a designated school bus or in a car driven by a parent or guardian (with school permission granted). Each student is expected to be in his/her assigned location at all times, unless given specific permission by a staff member to go elsewhere. Changes in transportation need to be noted with the office.

Treatment of Others

Teasing and/or physical aggression (pushing, kicking, hitting, etc..) towards another student or students will not be tolerated and is considered a serious offense. Putting down, ridiculing, bullying, or being physically aggressive towards another person is not accepted. These offenses constitute harassment and are punishable offenses. The St. Louis Charter School community prohibits bullying, ethnic, racial, sexist, or gender orientation abuse, or any sort of cruelty, and regards such acts as serious discipline offenses.

It's important to understand that in a public school environment the use of physical or verbal aggression as a means of responding to another's actions is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. St. Louis Charter School is well supervised and every adult is available to help. Students are expected to seek help from an adult in solving a problem as opposed to using physical or verbal aggression. Therefore, parents are asked NOT to direct their children to hit/fight back if someone is aggressive towards them. It's important to understand that if a child does choose to use aggression as a means of problem solving, whether they started the problem or not, they risk the possibility of serious consequence including suspension or expulsion from school.

Trust

Cheating is a serious academic offense and will not be tolerated at St. Louis Charter School. The teachers trust the word of every student at St. Louis Charter School and we assume that when a student hands in work the work has been completed by that student to the best of his/her ability. If a student claims to have completed work that he/she has not done, this is a serious breach of the trust that the teacher had in the student and is a form of cheating. It is also cheating to help another student to be deceptive.

In some instances, working together with a classmate or classmates is acceptable and can encourage cooperative learning. However, if only one student in the pair or group is doing all the work for others in the group, this type of work can be harmful to the education of the students and can also constitute cheating.

Use of Fire

Any unauthorized use of fire (e.g. cigarettes, candles, incense, firecrackers, etc.) on school property is a potential threat to the safety of others and is not permitted.

Weapons and Simulated Weapons

No student at St. Louis Charter School is allowed to carry any type of weapon or simulated weapon to school; examples include guns, knives (regardless of size), peashooters, toy guns, etc. The St. Louis Charter School Administration reserves the right to determine if an item brought to school could be classified as a weapon or simulated weapon.

Discipline/Due Process Proceedings

Discipline is intended to serve as a learning experience for the student(s). We administer consequences, when necessary, with compassion and firmness, encouraging students to take responsibility for their own conduct and behavior. We do have a system of consequences; however, as far as the welfare of the community allows, we consider the needs and age of the individual student as well as the circumstances of the offense and the student's previous choice.

Our discipline system is based on the philosophy that, if a child is honest in admitting mistakes, his/her straightforwardness is the first step in accepting responsibility for the mistake, learning from the experience, and not repeating it. We recognize that an admission of error can be difficult for an elementary school student, so we count on the support of parents and teachers to help the student to be honest about making mistakes. In the best interest of the child, we expect cooperation on the part of parents to uphold our discipline codes and proceedings.

Every student at St. Louis Charter School has a right to learn and thrive in a school atmosphere that is safe as well as conducive to academic achievement and social growth. Any behavior on the part of a student that threatens to disrupt the learning process or poses a danger to themselves or others is reprehensible and may result in consequences.

Classroom Standards and Behavior

At St. Louis Charter School, we regard the relationship between the student and teacher as the most important ingredient for successful learning and growth. We ask parents, teachers, administrators, and other staff members to support these relationships so that children can thrive.

Discipline matters are handled with the classroom teacher in consultation with the school's administration. Under the umbrella of our school-wide standards, Respect, Responsibility, and Caring, each teacher has the right to set his/her own classroom standards in regards to homework policies and

behavior. These standards and policies will be discussed with students at the beginning of the academic year so that students and parents will have a clear picture of the teacher's expectations and standards. In addition, each teacher has the right to assign consequences for unacceptable behavior in his/her individual classroom. These consequences may range from a call to parents/guardians to some type of before school, after school, or Saturday morning detention. We ask for parental support of these classroom policies and the resulting consequences.

All adults at St. Louis Charter School – teachers, administrators, staff members, school volunteers, etc. – are expected to uphold the St. Louis Charter School Community Standards so that students and adults may thrive in a safe atmosphere that is conducive to learning. Students and parents/guardians are expected to honor and uphold consequences related to violations of Community Standards. Refusal to serve penalties for Community Standards violations or continued violations of Community Standards may result in in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, or expulsion.

Detention

Although not regularly scheduled, St. Louis Charter School reserves the right to enforce a before school detention program. Students arriving for the detention more than 5 minutes late, or not attending their assigned detention, will not be accepted into the detention room and assigned a Saturday morning detention and will acquire further, possibly more severe, consequences. Saturday Morning Detentions are used as necessary. Students not attending two assigned morning detentions will have waived the assignment of morning detentions as a consequence.

Referral to Administration

In general, the following referral guidelines will be followed.

- Situations in which staff members are needed in order to stop physical situations will be considered severe and dealt with as such
- Consequences for offenses will typically be assigned in a level of progression. They may include but are not limited to a warning, conference with parents or administrators, assignment to an Alternative Classroom Placement, or out-of-school suspension.
- Long term suspension will be decided upon at the discretion of the school's Head of School.
- Although alternative classroom placement and out-of-school suspensions are assigned for a specific number of days, it is the expectation that students complete all assigned class work that is missed. In addition, a parent conference may be held and a positive choice-making plan developed. If a parent conference is not held within 5 days following the student suspension the school may be required to make a referral to the Missouri Division of Family Services for educational neglect.

Parent/Legal Guardian Pick-Up

At times the severity of a student's behavior or choice may require the necessity of a parent/guardian to pick the student up from school. It is expected that the school will have on file any contact information used for such emergencies. A contact telephone number is one in which the parent or legal guardian can be in verbal communication with the school within a 30 minute time period. If the school is unable to reach the parent/legal guardian, the parent/legal guardian refuses to pick up the student within a 60 minute time period, or the parent/legal guardian displays uncooperative and inappropriate behavior, the school may be required to make a referral to the Missouri Division of Family Services for educational neglect.

Referrals to the Board

The school administrators have the authority to assign an out-of-school suspension of a student up to 60 consecutive days. The Head of School has the authority to assign an out-of-school suspension of a student up to 90 consecutive days. Any recommendation for an out-of-school suspension exceeding 90 days, or student expulsion, will be brought to representatives of the St. Louis Charter School Board for review. Administrators reserve the right to refer any student's harmful action to the Board. Students and their parents will be notified in writing of the time and date for this hearing as well as the reasons for the penalty. Parents may decide to forego the hearing if they so desire. Failure to attend the hearing without properly notifying the school will result in an upholding of the suspension or expulsion. Under MO State Law, a student has the following procedural rights when facing a long-term suspension or expulsion:

- Written notice of the charges;
- The right to be represented by a lawyer or advocate;
- Adequate time to prepare for the hearing;
- Access to documented evidence prior to the hearing;
- The right to request that witnesses attend the hearing, and to question them;
- A reasonably prompt written decision including specific grounds for the decision

Re-admission after Expulsion

Within a reasonable time (minimum 6 months) after a student has been expelled, if parents would like St. Louis Charter School to consider re-admitting the student to the school, parents may write a letter to the school's Head of School asking for reconsideration. The request will be taken to the St. Louis Charter School Board responsible for recommending the expulsion. The St. Louis Charter School Board will decide, based on many factors including input of the classroom teacher and administration, whether or not the student should be eligible for re-admission. If the student is determined eligible they may then put their name in the lottery.

Suspension/Expulsion and Special Needs

The above proceedings must be altered if the student being considered for suspension or expulsion is a special education student. The Head of School, and administrators are familiar with the MO State Laws concerning serious discipline considerations for special education students. If the student facing a suspension (beyond 10 day)/expulsion hearing with the St. Louis Charter School Board is a special

education student with an IEP, the special education coordinator or a trained special education teacher will be included in the hearing in order to ensure the student's rights and to make recommendations as to appropriate penalties or actions.

Examples of Conduct Possibly Leading to Suspension or Expulsion

The following are examples of inappropriate conduct that could result in suspension or expulsion. They include but are not limited to:

- Truancy, excessive tardiness or absenteeism
- Failure to comply with the St. Louis Charter School Community Standards
- Inappropriate dress
- Cheating
- Habitual refusal to complete assignments
- Refusal to obey school staff
- Profanity
- Trespassing
- Insult/Abuse of school staff or students
- Defiance of authority
- Endangering the health and safety of others
- Theft
- Threats of bodily harm
- Extortion
- Violation of transportation rules
- Violation of the Acceptable Use Policy
- Intimidation, assault, or sexual harassment
- Conduct involving property damage, vandalism, and arson
- Conduct involving illegal/prohibited substances
- Conduct involving weapons or simulated weapons

Searches By School Personnel

St. Louis Charter School officials have the authority to search students' property (including purses, lockers, backpacks, gym bags, etc.), provided that the search is reasonable under all the circumstances. To maintain the safety and welfare of students and staff as much discretion as possible will be exercised in all searches. Strip-searches are NOT conducted by school officials, under any circumstances. Lockers and desks assigned to students remain the property of St. Louis Charter School and may be searched by school officials with or without notice.

St. Louis Charter School officials will also call in law enforcement officials when they deem it necessary, appropriate or otherwise required by law. Those law enforcement officials may also conduct searches and take other appropriate action pursuant to their authority.

Sexual Harassment

Included in our student handbook is a copy of the St. Louis Charter School Sexual Harassment Policy. We define sexual harassment as a form of sexual discrimination that occurs when one person subjects another person to unwanted sexual attention, coerces him or her into sexual activity, and/or punishes his or her refusal. Sexual harassment may be manifested verbally, which includes, but is not limited to, touching, patting, pinching, brushing-up against another's body, physical assault, rape, or subtle pressure for sexual activity.

The following are some examples of conduct that may constitute sexual harassment depending upon the totality of the circumstances including the severity of the conduct and its pervasiveness:

- Unwelcome sexual advances, whether they involve physical touching or not
- Sexual epithets, jokes, written or oral references to sexual conduct, gossip regarding one's sex life, comment on an individual's body, sexual activity, sexual orientation, deficiencies, or prowess
- Displaying sexually suggestive objects, pictures, or cartoons
- Unwelcomed leering, whistling, brushing against the body, sexual gestures, suggestive or insulting comments
- Inquiries into one's sexual experiences
- Discussion of sexual activities

The accusation of sexual harassment is a serious one, and all cases will be given immediate individual attention with the strictest confidentiality imposed. The following response procedures are recommended by the school in order to help stop the inappropriate behavior so that each person can operate freely within the school and feel unencumbered by unwelcomed comments or gestures.

Informal Response

Any student who believes they have been sexually harassed should tell the offending party to stop. If this is not possible, if the behavior does not end, or if the offending behavior is sufficiently troubling, the student should bring their concern to a trusted adult member of the St. Louis Charter School Community (teacher, directors, Head of School, counselor, etc.) this individual will listen, act as a sounding board and explore possible choices to resolve the situation quickly.

The adult will consult with St. Louis Charter School's Head of School to determine what response, if any, is appropriate. The response will generally include meeting both parties, counseling, mediation, or any other measure appropriately addressing the student's concerns. The parents of the students involved will be contacted.

The Head of School will follow up with all appropriate parties to make sure that the situation has been resolved to prevent recurrence and to ensure that neither student is subjected to acts of retaliation. All students should take note that retaliation against an individual who has complained about sexual harassment or retaliation against individuals for cooperation with an investigation of sexual harassment, will not be tolerated.

Formal Response

- If an informal resolution cannot be reached, if the alleged harassment has not stopped, or if the alleged incident is sufficiently serious to warrant formal proceedings, the student, or an adult acting on the student's behalf, will initiate formal proceedings. This individual will submit to the Head of School, a written, signed, confidential complaint describing in detail the alleged incident(s) of harassment. The parents of the students involved will be notified of the complaint.
- The accused, along with his/her parents, will be notified as soon as possible and given a copy of the report. This individual, along with his/her parents, will be required to provide a written, signed, confidential response to the Head of School within 48 hours.
- Both the complainant and the accused will be offered psychological support by the school counselor.
- The Head of School will gather facts, and conduct confidential interviews with the complainant, the accused, and all other individuals with information relevant to the charge. The Head of School will resolve the matter and make any determinations necessary after the investigation.
- After the matter is resolved, the Head of School and school counselor will follow up to make sure the situation has been corrected and to make sure that neither student is suffering any retaliation.
- Parents of both students will be kept informed.

ORGANIZATIONAL PLAN

Governing Body

St. Louis Charter School Board of Directors acknowledges that they are decision making public servants according to RSMo 105.450. St. Louis Charter School further acknowledges its exemption from all laws and rules relating to schools, governing boards and school districts with the exception of the laws and conditions contained in RSMo. 160.400 to 160-420 (Missouri's Charter School Law). In addition the school acknowledges its responsibility to future state and federal requirements for charter schools. As required by statute, the school will be nonsectarian in its programs, admissions policies, employment practices and all other aspects of its operations. The school will comply with all state and federal laws pertaining to health, safety, civil rights and minimal education standards. The school will also comply with all required state and federal reporting requirements including financial accountability.

St. Louis Charter School, a Missouri not-for-profit corporation, is the legal entity applying to the sponsor for this charter. We take responsibility for all decisions concerning the school. The members of the Board of Directors are willing to submit affidavits to assure the sponsor of the background and suitability of the board members to serve on the governing board of a Missouri charter school (see **Appendix 7**). We may expand the Board in accordance with provisions of our articles of incorporation and bylaws (see **Appendix 6**). The school is also operating as its own Local Education Agency (see **Appendix 6**).

The general responsibilities of the Board of Directors are to:

- Define the school's mission
 - Each year at the school's strategic planning session the mission and goals will be reviewed in order to keep the school moving forward in the direction intended by the charter.
- Set overarching policy
 - Through committees and committees of the whole the Board will review proposed policies and amend current policies as necessary. All policies will come before the full Board for discussion and approval.
- Approve the annual budget
 - Through the Finance committee the Board will review financials, monitor the annual budget and set new budgets to be proposed to the full Board.
- Monitor school performance and operations
 - Through Board meetings, committee meetings and school interactions the Board will review and monitor school performance and operations to ensure the school is working toward goals set. Board meetings will consist of regular school reports that address goals and progress measures set.
- Oversee third party contracts

- Through the Finance committee the Board will review third party contracts to ensure all laws are being followed, that contracts are fair and have been bid appropriately using an RFP when necessary.
- Report student achievement results to the city, parents and the community
 - Annually the Board will provide a Report Card that address school performance for the year prior. This report will be submitted to the state, the sponsor and available for public review.
- Develop an accountability plan in accordance with the charter with the school's sponsor
 - After each review from the sponsor, the Board will develop and approve the accountability plan that address future growth for success. This plan may be developed using a smaller committee and presented to the full Board for approval.

Final responsibility on all matters concerning the school will rest with the Board of St. Louis Charter School of Missouri.

A resume of each Board member is included with this application. All Board meetings and minutes of such meetings are subject to the Freedom of Information Act and the Missouri Open Meetings Act, in addition to the Sunshine Law requirements as well as other applicable statutes. Meeting notices will be posted outside of the Main Office of the school as well as on the school web site. Meetings will take place in open session and may move to closed session only as necessary. Meeting minutes will be archived in the office, available for copies upon request.

Each Board member has one vote, and adoption of any issue shall be by simple majority. The Board of Directors shall meet a minimum of six meetings per year, with special or additional meetings being called by the Board Chair or by any three Board members.

Parents are fully engaged in our school as partners by serving on the Parent Teacher Organization Board, Parent Advisory, standing committees, and as volunteers in our school and classrooms. The school pursues assistance from private businesses both financially and in terms of practical experiences for the students.

The Parent Advisory group is a group of parents that are willing to meet every other month to focus on current issues that face the school. Community members may also be members of the group. Parents will constitute the majority of members. The group will play a vital role in advising the Head of School on school policies and programs. This group is open to all but we ask for consistency in attending for one school year at a time.

Governing Board Composition(current as of 10/27/09)

The governing board is composed of members of the community with a desire to improve the educational opportunities within the City of St. Louis. The SLCS Board of Directors is made up of 5 to 15 citizens volunteering their time to provide oversight to the school as the governing body. Board Directors work to set policy, provide governance, and ensure that the school is fiscally responsible, legally sound, and operating within the parameters of the charter. The Board of Directors meets at the school throughout the school year with the date and time posted well in advance. Board meetings are meetings held in public with a period of open forum included for those interested in addressing comments to the Board. All Board meetings are posted following the Missouri Sunshine Law. Meetings are posted by the main entry to the school as well as in the school office.

Copies of the Board of Directors' By-Laws are available, by request, in the school office.

It is the goal of the board to represent various skills and abilities within the members of the board. Each spring the board will entertain nominations of perspective members. Special attention will be paid to evaluate the skills and talents of each board member and perspective members to ensure a Board skilled in many areas. Decisions will be based primarily on skills sets missing from the board. Each nominee will be asked to spend some time at the school before the making the commitment to become part of the board. All board members will go through a through screening before being asked to join the board.

The Board schedules two retreats per year to allow time for strategic planning and Board training or professional development. These events occur each August and February. The August session will focus on the training of new board members as necessary.

Complete resumes can be found in **Appendix 7**.

Joe Blomker – Chairman – Mr. Blomker has been the President of Maryville Technologies, Inc. since 1994. Mr. Blomker recently completed a six-year term as Trustee for Mary Institute Country Day School where he was the Chair of the Education Policy Committee and served on the Executive and Finance Committees.

Colleen Wilson – Vice-Chairman –Ms. Wilson is a former St. Louis Charter School teacher. She currently works as a full-time mother and volunteers for the PTO at Claymont Elementary School. Before teaching, Ms. Wilson served as the After-School Program Coordinator at the College School of Webster Groves. She has a BS in Elementary Education from University of Missouri St. Louis.

John Clancy, Ph. D. – Secretary - Dr. Clancy is an Adjunct Professor at Washington University in St. Louis. Dr. Clancy has also been a Guest Lecturer at St. Louis University, Maryville University, and JFK University. He is also a regular speaker at National and International conferences on manufacturing automation. Dr. Clancy is a resident of St. Louis City.

David Mueller – Treasurer – Mr. Mueller is currently the Director of The Fortune Group in St. Louis. Mr. Mueller is a Certified Public Accountant. He is a past Trustee and served on the Executive and Finance Committees of Mary Institute Country Day School. Mr. Mueller also Chairs the Audit Committee of the St. Louis Zoo.

Lynn Yearwood – Director – Ms. Yearwood is a former Vice President/COO of Healthlink/Wellpoint in St. Louis. Her recent focus has been on organizational development of non-profit management. Ms. Yearwood is currently involved with Social Venture Partners, BoardLink Training Team, Ready Readers and Oasis.

Alan Mandel – Director – Mr. Mandel is the Managing Partner for Schlueter, Mandel, and Mandel, a law firm in St. Louis, Missouri. Mr. Mandel is a member of Missouri and Illinois Bars United States District Courts, Eastern Missouri and Southern Illinois. Mr. Mandel is a resident of St. Louis City.

James Hill – Director – Mr. Hill currently works for Concepts Marketing as a Representative. Mr. Hill is a Graduate of St. Louis University and holds a degree in Business Administration. He has worked as an Investment Broker for A.G. Edwards and as a Marketing Representative for both John Hancock and Mutual of New York. Mr. Hill is a resident of St. Louis City.

Tullia Hamilton – Director – Ms. Hamilton is an Independent Consultant in St. Louis and a member of the Adjunct Faculty for Washington University in St. Louis. Ms. Hamilton has 20 years experience in philanthropy and nonprofit management. Ms. Hamilton is a resident of St. Louis City.

Management and Operation

The school is divided into three sections, primary (K-2), intermediate(3-5) and middle(6-8). When preschool is added they will have their own program and administrator. The administration team mirrors this with the following structure:

Head of School

Head of Primary

Head of Intermediate

Head of Middle School

Head of Special Education

Head of Teaching and Learning

Director of Finance and Operations

The Board of Directors will determine the title of school's primary leader. For purposes of this document, that leader will be called the Head of School.

The Head of School is responsible for the implementation of the charter and overseeing of the school's operation and, in consultation with the staff, for the development of school programs and policies for Board review and approval. The Head of School is responsible for administering the budget approved by the Board of Directors, recruiting new students, supervising all staff members regarding school policy and curriculum, assessing and evaluating all staff, and for overseeing student progress. The school's Head of School reports directly to the Board of Directors. It is also the Head of School's responsibility to ensure that health and immunization records are updated as required by law.

The Head of School oversees the Administrative Team, which consists of the Head of Middle School, the Head of Intermediate Education, the Head of Primary Education, Head of Teaching and Learning, the Director of Special Education, and the Director of Finance and Operations. The Head of School, along with the Administrative Team, is responsible for overseeing the interviewing candidates for all other staff positions and for making employment decisions.

The Head of School has the authority to hire and terminate all staff. All employees are directly responsible to the Head of School. The staff is expected to bring issues of concern to the Head of School's attention. If staff members feel that their concerns have not been addressed satisfactorily, they may petition in writing to the Board Chair to have their concerns heard at a Board meeting.

Job descriptions for the administrative team can be found in **Appendix 8**.

Staffing and Human Resources

Teachers

Teachers are an integral part of the school and are primarily responsible for the students' classroom education. Teachers at St. Louis Charter School have a unique opportunity to help develop a school modeled on national best practices and local vision. Teachers are given a significant role in the development of school policies and programs. A collegial atmosphere characterizes the school's environment.

Teachers at the school are expected to have a firm belief in the instructional methods and in the curriculum set forth in this proposal. Teachers understand and are committed to the philosophy of the school. They have a strong desire to help all students learn. They set high expectations for all of their students. They ensure that all students meet the school's academic goals and they are trained to provide a challenging yet supportive learning environment. We hold our teachers accountable through the school's evaluation system. The teachers hired meet state requirements as well as the definition of highly qualified through the federal No Child Left Behind Act. Per statute, at least 80% of the school's teachers hold Missouri teaching certificates. All teachers annually begin work in August and work no less than 200 days of the calendar year in each full school year. See **Attachment 9** for the teacher evaluation document and a job description.

PROFESSIONAL EXPECTATIONS

In order to deliver a quality academic experience to each student we must maintain high expectations. Each SLCS member will be expected to:

- Arrive to work no later than 8:00 a.m. and leave no earlier than 4:00 p.m.
- Attend team meetings whenever they are scheduled.
- Create an effective behavior management plan that establishes consequences and offers positive reinforcements.
- Be highly knowledgeable of the SLCS curriculum, have created a curriculum map, and frequently review and revise this map to improve instruction.
- Ensure that all instruction is specifically linked to Missouri standards.
- Value and effectively implement a character development program.
- Understand and frequently use student data collection to inform and drive decision-making.
- Effectively differentiate instruction for students, including differentiation of planning, instruction, assignments, and assessment.
- Model effective learning strategies for students.
- Establish an effective communication system to provide regular feedback on students' academic progress, accomplishments, and behavior.
- Sponsor an Eagle Hour club in order to further students' academic and social development.
- Participate in school-wide activities and functions such as conferences, open houses, concerts and other evening events.
- Understand the value of professional development by creating a personal professional development plan and actively pursuing professional growth.
- Serve on school committees and support decisions made by school committees.
- Ask questions rather than makes assumptions.
- Be willing to take responsibility for the academic and social growth of all SLCS students.
- Treat all members of the SLCS family, including students, their families, and SLCS team members with respect, kindness, compassion, understanding, and professionalism.

Description of the School's Plan for Securing Personnel

St. Louis Charter School secures personnel by advertising in the local print media and by contacts through the career placement centers at each of Missouri's post-secondary teacher training institutions, the MOREAP system, as well as post-secondary teacher training institutions throughout the country and other means of advertisement and recruitment. Candidates are invited to provide application materials and resumes. Because of the team approach to education at the school and its emphasis on educational outcomes, an educational team consisting of a wide variety of staff members, will determine the method for screening and interviewing applicants. With the guidance of the Board, the Head of School has full authority to determine employment.

All faculty and staff at St. Louis Charter School will be screened in accordance with Missouri law. This will include a fingerprinted criminal background check and a child abuse registry check. In addition, all new personnel will be subject to an alcohol and drug screening. The school reserves the right to require an alcohol and drug screening at any time of any staff member.

The school will participate in the St. Louis Public Teacher Retirement System as required in RSMo 160.420.

Personnel Policies

See St. Louis Charter School Personnel Handbook, **Attachment 9**.

Professional Development

Goals/Objectives

- The overall goal for Professional Development is to ensure that all faculty and staff can satisfactorily deliver programs and services to all students at St. Louis Charter School.

Related SMART goals:

- Ensure that all staff members are highly qualified under NCLB and meet state certification requirements.
- Build skills and knowledge to implement the programs and services that improve student learning outcomes
- Prepare staff to monitor achievement on internal performance measures; address individual needs of students who do not meet targets
- Prepare staff to monitor performance on state achievement tests; address individual needs of students who do not meet state standards

Individual PD goals:

In efforts of setting high professional growth standards each team member at SLCS will be required to make 3 goals to work on for the school year:

- One goal must be directly tied to the mission and vision of St. Louis Charter School
- One goal must be developed with input from the administration staff based on previous performance
- One goal can be a personal goal that will have a positive impact on the environment of the school and/or the achievement level of students
- Each team member will be required to report on the progress of their goals using an interactive web-based tool. In addition there will be ongoing monitoring from the Head of

PD and Instruction in order to chart individual progress and ultimately use that data for individual and organizational growth.

- The paths of professional growth and leadership opportunities will be linked back to the data showing the individual strengths

University Affiliation

Per statute, the sponsor, the governing board and the staff of St. Louis Charter School shall jointly review the school's performance, management, and operation at least once every two years. The school notes that expenses are associated with sponsorship and according to RSMo 160.415 the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education will retain one and five-tenths percent of the amount of state and local funding allocated to the school, not to exceed one hundred twenty-five thousand dollars, adjusted for inflation.

Within the charter term of ten years and per statute, the sponsor may revoke the charter at any time if the charter school commits a serious breach of one or more provisions of its charter or on any of the following grounds: failure to meet academic performance standards as set forth in this charter; failure to meet generally accepted standards of fiscal management; or violation the of law.

The charter may be amended by mutual agreement of the board of directors of St. Louis Charter School and the sponsor. All amendments shall be submitted in writing sixty days in advance and shall be posted at the school for public viewing and comment during that same time period. At the end of the sixty days, signatures from the chairman of the board of St. Louis Charter School and a representative of the sponsor shall authorize the amendment, which will then be included within the original charter and noted as amendment by date and title.

The school will complete and distribute an annual report card to be submitted to the state as well as the sponsor.

Student Recruitment and Enrollment

The school recruits and accepts students citywide. We enroll all students, up to capacity, who can demonstrate proof of residency in St. Louis City and respond by submitting timely applications. When the number of applications exceeds the capacity of the school, a lottery is used to determine admission. Each time a lottery is held numbers are randomly assigned to ensure equal opportunity to all students on the school's waiting list exclusive of siblings and children of parents employed at the school. Admission is limited to the grades and ages of pupils served as described under Education Philosophy. The school acknowledges its right, per statute, to give enrollment preference to siblings of students already attending or accepted to the school, and to children of parents employed there. The school will

not restrict admissions based upon race, ethnicity, national origin, disability, gender, income level, proficiency in English, or athletic ability.

Upon enrollment of a student the school shall request, within two days, academic and discipline records required by subsection 9 of section 160.261, RSMo, from all schools previously attended by the pupil within the last twelve months. As per state guidelines, any such request we receive as a school shall be filled within five business days of receiving the request.

Parent and Student Expectations

St. Louis Charter School believes that by taking shared responsibility for learning we can ensure that the children enrolled will be successful learners and members of our community, future leaders – the spirit of our community. The SLCS Team Members, Parents, and Students will pledge to work together to:

- Set high standards and high expectations for all children.
- Provide and support sound instruction to all children.
- Make our schools safe and drug free.
- Apply modern technology in our daily learning.

High Standards:

St. Louis Charter School agrees to offer a rigorous and challenging academic program.

St. Louis Charter School agrees to provide extended learning opportunities and to assign meaningful homework, with an emphasis on reading and writing in all content areas.

St. Louis Charter School parents will insure that their children come to school each day prepared to learn.

St. Louis Charter School students will come to school each day planning to succeed.

Shared Responsibilities:

St. Louis Charter School parents agree to monitor homework completion and send students to school on time and prepared to learn.

St. Louis Charter School students will complete their homework assignments daily.

St. Louis Charter School parents agree to support learning at home by reading with their child for at least 15 minutes every night.

St. Louis Charter School agrees to communicate regularly with families about student progress.

St. Louis Charter School parents agree to attend, with their child, the four Individual Student Goal Planning Conferences scheduled throughout the school year.

Shared Responsibilities (continued):

St. Louis Charter School agrees to involve parents in the school through various groups and programs.

St. Louis Charter School parents agree to volunteer at least ten hours a year at the school.

St. Louis Charter School students will help their teacher(s) and classmates.

Safe Schools:

St. Louis Charter School will set firm and fair safety, discipline and drug enforcement policies.

St. Louis Charter School parents agree to speak to their children about the dangers of drugs, weapons, and alcohol.

St. Louis Charter School students will serve as role models to their peers by following basic principals **BE CARING, BE SAFE, BE HONEST, BE RESPECTFUL, BE RESPONSIBLE, and BE COOPERATIVE.**

Modern Technology:

St. Louis Charter School will provide all children with access to the tools and technology that is needed to be an active learner.

St. Louis Charter School parents will encourage and support their children's use of technology by reviewing the school's Acceptable Use Policy with their child.

St. Louis Charter School students will use technology appropriately in school and at home. All students will sign an Acceptable Use Policy.

Community Involvement

We believe that a school must be connected to the community it seeks to serve. To be truly connected to the school, the community needs to be involved in the school in as many ways as possible. In turn, the school must also seek to serve the community in as many ways as possible.

To guide this process of engagement, we follow the following standards for parent and community involvement:

- Communication between home and the school is two-way and meaningful
 - We schedule four conferences per year and request both the parent and the student at the conferences to allow for appropriate goal setting for the student.
 - Monthly school wide newsletter
 - Classroom newsletters
- Parenting skills are promoted and supported
 - Monthly newsletters focus on school activities as well as how parents can help their children become better students
 - Evening sessions will be offered several times per year that focus on parenting, in the past, a few of the offerings have been:
 - Discipline with Love and Logic
 - Homework help

- Understanding math in school today
 - Healthy cooking
 - Establishing homework routines
- Parents play an integral part in assisting student learning
 - Parents are welcome at the school, and their support and assistance are sought
 - Parents are full partners in the decisions that affect their children and families

Community Use of School Facilities

- Community resources are used to strengthen the school, families, and student learning
 - The community has the opportunity to use the school facility in the evening with proposed activities being approved by the school's administration or Board of Directors.
 - Parent education programs are provided on a regular schedule under the development of the school's Leadership Team and the school's Parent Teacher Organization (PTO).
 - School-wide events (i.e. the book fair) are advertised on the outside of the school to welcome community attendance.
 - Community outreach within classrooms
 - Teachers are encouraged to develop a relationship with a business or organization in our community. The class is further encouraged to do all they can to help this business or organization in some way (i.e. fund raising, collections, donations, etc.).

Community Collaboration

The school has worked with various counseling agencies including The Family Resource Center to offer the facility as a site for counseling. The school has also served as a site through the HDC for energy relief sign-up.

The school will continue to seek other agreements with community-based agencies to allow for the use of facilities to provide such services as family literacy, job search service, family support services, transitional housing, etc.

BUSINESS PLAN

Budget

The school prepares a budget annually for review and approval by the Board of Directors. The budget is based on current information from state, local and federal funding sources. The budget includes a surplus and a contingency reserve.

The forecast for the 5 years ending 2015 was based on the following:

- Year ending 2011 assumptions
 - Weighted average daily attendance (WADA) is maintained at 1081
 - E-rate discounts are included for internet, phone and cell phones
 - State funding increased slightly. State funding per WADA was reduced by \$200 for the 2010 year. This funding is to be re-instated over the next 2 years.
 - Included ARRA (stimulus) funding and related expenses.
 - Benefits are decreased by 5% (assume change in employer paid spouse insurance and change in dental coverage).
 - All other costs including salaries to increase by 2%.
 - Elimination of one full-time substitute teacher however increased daily substitute pay budget.
- Year ending 2012 assumptions
 - Weighted average daily attendance (WADA) is maintained at 1081
 - E-rate discounts are included for internet, phone and cell phones
 - State funding increased slightly. State funding per WADA was reduced by \$200 for the 2010 year. This funding is to be re-instated over the next 2 years.
 - Stimulus funding substantially removed as grant period expires. Funding for ELL and Reading specialist position funded by the stimulus funds will be funded by private trust/donations.
 - Reduced facility costs by looking to outsourcing some of the services.
 - All other costs including salaries to increase by 2%.
- Year ending 2013 – 2015 assumptions
 - Weighted average daily attendance (WADA) is maintained at 1081
 - State funding increases by 2%
 - All expenses increase by 2%
 - No unusual items

Cash flow

The school continues to forecast an operating surplus. Cash flow from operations is anticipated to be able to fund all debt obligations, facility repairs and renovations, classroom resources and technology.

Financial Management

The Director of Finance and Operations has been with the school since June 2009. She has over 20 years of experience in nonprofit management and started her career at KPMG as a certified public accountant. She directs a part-time bookkeeper and will be employing additional staff as necessary to help manage the financial records. In addition, she directs the school registrar who controls the student data base and other core data required for state and federal programs.

The financial statements are compared to the budget each month and a written report is sent to the Board for their review and comment at each board meeting. Local and federal funding reports are compared to enrollment reports and other supporting documentation to ensure funds are received on a timely basis. Expenditure accounts are reviewed against the budget and the prior year actual. The school has operated at a net surplus for the past several years and continues to budget and anticipate a surplus for the next 5 years. The surplus will eliminate the negative net asset balance within the next 2-3 years.

The school is audited annually in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles receiving an unqualified opinion with no significant or material weaknesses noted. The school records are maintained in accordance with the Missouri Financial accounting manual. The school will be reviewing the need to convert to a new general ledger software package to better track expenditures to funding sources. In addition to the audit report the school files public information via a form 990. An annual report to the school community will be developed and posted on the web-site as a part of the school's communication and marketing plan.

The student data base, managed by the registrar, is reviewed with the Head of School, the Head of Federal Programs and her key staff, the Head of Special Education and the Director of Finance and Operations. Statistical information concerning the student population is reviewed for accuracy with the above mentioned individuals and with prior year data. The student records are maintained by the registrar and are in a locked closet. Access to online records is limited to individuals that are in direct contact with the student and the school educational administrators.

Over 65% of the student population qualify for free or reduced priced lunch. The Head of School's executive assistant manages the certification of the students. This information once received is also maintained in the locked student record area.

The school assures that financial audits will be conducted each year and submitted to DESE as required. Copies of audits will be available in the school or thru DESE.

Facility

The school rents a former state managed health and education facility of approximately 100,000 square feet. The school entered into a 15 year lease agreement with an option of an additional 10 years ending 2024. The school has substantially renovated all of the space and within current funding sources is able to maintain the property at a high level. The renovation costs were funded by bonds and the school is currently able to meet the bond funding costs including investment, repairs and maintenance reserves.

Transportation

The school currently transports approximately 60% of the student population. Transportation costs have been shared with a charter high school by utilizing the same buses. The sharing of these costs has helped to control the expense. For the 2009-2010 school year, the school entered into a three year renewable contract with a new vendor. This vendor has demonstrated their ability to provide a high level of service with consistent knowledgeable drivers. The drivers are experienced and have developed relationships with the children by knowing their names and pick-up or drop-off locations. The contract with the vendor is renewable over three years with a maximum annual cost increase of 3 percent. Transportation may change as the needs of the school change and options such as a reduced transportation radius or eliminating transportation are possible.

Insurance

See attached **Appendix 10** with insurance policies.

