



## 2019-2020 Evaluation of City Garden Montessori School

Saint Louis University has sponsored City Garden Montessori Charter School since City Garden's inception in 2008; SLU has committed to a long-term partnership as City Garden's sponsor. Fundamental to SLU's sponsorship responsibilities are multiple oversight, compliance, accountability, and support activities undertaken by SLU's Office of Charter School Sponsorship to oversee and enhance the quality of the school.

More specifically, SLU's sponsorship of City Garden includes (but is not limited to):

- Establishing – in consultation with the Board Chair and Executive Director – a Performance Contract and related performance standards for student academic achievement, operations, Board governance, and financial performance.
- Monitoring of school achievement of the Performance Contract standards
- Mandating specific actions or plan development when Performance Contract standards are not achieved
- Offering support and guidance for any required or recommended intervention, if appropriate
- Monitoring fidelity to the SLU-City Garden “general” contract
- Attendance at and participation in (as appropriate) all full Board meetings and selected sub-committee meetings
- Monitoring of Board compliance with Sunshine laws and other state regulations
- Classroom observation
- Solicitation of input from/discussion with teachers, staff, parents, students, and other stakeholders
- Monitoring of compliance with state and federal regulations (including special education, title programs, food service, services for homeless students, services for ELL students, etc.)
- Monitoring of admission policies and processes
- Establishing and monitoring achievement of criteria (academic, financial, etc.) for school expansion/growth
- Reporting to DESE on City Garden activities and achievement
- Financial support of City Garden teacher development, academic assessment, and Board development initiatives
- In-kind support of SLU faculty, staff, students, and facilities in support of City Garden's educational mission

Via these and related activities, SLU meets the Standards for Charter School Sponsorship established by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

What follows is SLU's evaluation of City Garden's performance for the 2019-2020 academic year. The evaluation is based on data and related analysis from the sponsorship activities identified above.



## 2019-2020 Sponsor Evaluation: City Garden Montessori School

**Note: Standards from the DESE-mandated “Performance Contract” are identified in the second column of each table below and shaded in gray; all other standards are those SLU established above and beyond minimum state requirements.**

### 1. Student Educational Achievement

*Note: The COVID-19 pandemic forced the cancellation of all MO MAP assessments, upon which the annual academic performance standards in SLU’s Performance Contract with City Garden were based. Accordingly, SLU has asked City Garden to share key results of its students’ performance on the NWEA assessments (administered annually for the past 10 years) with Board members and Academic Excellence Committee members in Fall 2020 to inform the Board’s oversight of academic performance.*

| #   | On Performance Contract? | Standard   | How Documented/Measured | Status/Comments  |
|-----|--------------------------|--|-------------------------|--|
| 1.1 | Yes                      | School-wide, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP English Language Arts assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole.                         | Per DESE MAP Data       | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |
| 1.2 | Yes                      | For the DESE-defined Black subgroup, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP English Language Arts assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole. | Per DESE MAP Data       | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |
| 1.3 | Yes                      | School-wide, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP Mathematics assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole.                                   | Per DESE MAP Data       | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |
| 1.4 | Yes                      | For the DESE-defined Black subgroup, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP Mathematics assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole.           | Per DESE MAP Data       | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |

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| 1.5 | Yes | School-wide, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP Science assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole.                         | Per DESE MAP Data | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |
| 1.6 | Yes | For the DESE-defined Black subgroup, the percent of CGMCS students who score at either the “Proficient” or “Advanced” level on the MO MAP Science assessment shall be 25% greater than for the SLPS District as a whole. | Per DESE MAP Data | n/a in 2019-20; no state MAP testing due to COVID-19 pandemic. |

## 2. Curriculum & Instruction

| #   | On Performance Contract? | Standard  | How Documented/Measured  | Status/Comments |
|-----|--------------------------|---|--|-----------------|
| 2.1 | Yes                      | Curricula are aligned with all DESE-established learning standards/outcomes.  | Per SLU analysis of supporting evidence provided by CG, including curriculum documents   | Met             |
| 2.2 | Yes                      | The school is compliant with the State of Missouri’s and U.S. Department of Education’s requirements for “Highly Qualified” teachers. | Per SLU analysis of supporting evidence provided by CG (and reported to DESE by CG), including a report of the number and percentage of teachers with appropriate licensure, per DESE                                  | Met             |
| 2.3 | Yes                      | City Garden’s teacher evaluation standards and processes are compliant with DESE regulations.   | Per SLU analysis of supporting evidence provided by CG (and reported to DESE by CG), including a copy of evaluation standards and processes used by City Garden and a report outlining a summary of evaluation ratings | Met             |
| 2.4 | n/a                      | Curricula are aligned with applicable Montessori learning standards/outcomes.   | Per SLU analysis of supporting evidence provided by CG, including curriculum documents   | Met             |

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| 2.5 | n/a | All teachers have completed Montessori training adequate for and appropriate to their specific assignment(s).   | Per SLU analysis of supporting evidence provided by CG        | In progress – All but four charter school lead teachers have Montessori certification specific to their assignment; the remaining four are currently enrolled in City Garden’s recently-launched Montessori Institute training program.  |
| 2.6 | n/a | CG has developed and implemented assessments of student achievement of defined Montessori educational outcomes (such that internal goals for student achievement evidenced via these assessments can be incorporated into SLU’s 2020-21 Annual Evaluation). | Per SLU analysis of CG’s internally-collected assessment data | In progress – City Garden is in the process of implementing Panorama to measure key non-academic indicators, such as self-efficacy, self-management and growth mindset. Data from fall, 2019 will be utilized as “baseline” data, and the school will administer the survey in fall 2020 and spring 2021 to evaluate growth. |
| 2.7 | n/a | CG has developed and implemented assessments of student achievement of defined ABAR educational outcomes (such that internal goals for student achievement evidenced via these assessments can be incorporated into SLU’s 2020-21 Annual Evaluation).       | Per SLU analysis of CG’s internally-collected assessment data | In progress – City Garden is in the process of implementing Panorama to measure key non-academic indicators, such as self-efficacy, self-management and growth mindset. Data from fall, 2019 will be utilized as “baseline” data, and the school will administer the survey in fall 2020 and spring 2021 to evaluate growth. |

### 3. State and Federal Compliance

| #   | On Performance Contract? | Standard   | How Measured/Documented   | Status/Comments |
|-----|--------------------------|--|---|-----------------|
| 3.1 | Yes                      | The school complies with all applicable state/federal laws, including those related to special education, title programs, homeless students, English Language Learners, finances, accountability, etc. | Per DESE and U.S. Department of Education communications with SLU.<br>Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, | Met             |

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|     |     |  | as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings.<br>Per SLU's regular meetings with CG CEO and Board Chair.   |   |
| 3.2 | Yes | All state- and federally-required reports/data are submitted by established deadlines and in full compliance with governing regulations. | Per DESE and U.S. Department of Education communications with SLU.<br>Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings.<br>Per SLU's regular meetings with CG CEO and Board Chair.           | Met   |
| 3.3 | Yes | The school participates in the statewide system of assessments.  | Per SLU's regular monitoring of CG exam administration schedule and results.<br>Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings.<br>Per SLU's regular meetings with CG CEO and Board Chair. | Met   |
| 3.4 | Yes | The school makes available data from DESE's annual report card.  | Per SLU's annual review of CG's website.  | Met – see <a href="https://www.citygardenschool.org/about">https://www.citygardenschool.org/about</a> |

**Additional Notes:**

Once again, City Garden's faculty and staff have demonstrated outstanding work ensuring compliance with state and federal reporting and related requirements.

#### 4. Budget & Finance

| #   | On Performance Contract? | Standard   | How Measured/Documented  | Status/Comments |
|-----|--------------------------|--|--|-----------------|
| 4.1 | Yes                      | All required Final Expenditure Reports and the Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR) are submitted to DESE by established deadlines. | Per DESE communications with SLU.  | Met             |
| 4.2 | Yes                      | Annual independent audit is conducted and submitted to all required parties on time, with no material findings.                            | Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings. | Met             |
| 4.3 | Yes                      | The Board approves an annual budget by June 30 of the prior fiscal year.   | Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings. | Met             |
| 4.4 | Yes                      | The monthly check register is reviewed and approved by the Board as required by 5 CSR 20-100.260 and Board policy.                         | Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings. | Met             |
| 4.5 | Yes                      | The Board publicly reviews financial statements monthly against the approved budget, and makes quarterly budget amendments as required.    | Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings. | Met             |
| 4.6 | Yes                      | The school maintains a minimum 8% annual fund balance, calculated per DESE standards.  | Per SLU review of Board meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings. | Met             |

**Additional Notes:**

City Garden is a fiscally-responsible organization – and yet, even after raising hundreds of thousands of philanthropic dollars every year, it still requires more funding to hire the number of high-quality teachers and staff needed to help the school fully realize its vision of educational equity and academic success.

That is a comment on the inadequacy of state funding for public education, as City Garden is a commendable steward of the insufficient public funds it receives. The Board has committed to expansion, in part, as a means to generate the funding necessary to achieve some “economies of scale” and to expand the staff and strengthen the educational program. The challenges going forward include achieving that growth, managing it, and managing financial success until the growth is achieved.

## 5. Governance

| #   | On Performance Contract? | Standard  | How Measured/Documented   | Status/Comments  |
|-----|--------------------------|---|---|--|
| 5.1 | Yes                      | Board member training complies with all state laws.   | Per SLU participation in selected Board training and Annual Retreat, as well as SLU’s review of Board training materials/plans.   | Met  |
| 5.2 | Yes                      | All Board and committee meetings adhere to the provisions of the MO open meetings/Sunshine laws.                      | Per SLU review of Board and committee meeting agenda, materials, and minutes, as well as observation of/participation in monthly Board meetings.  | Met  |
| 5.3 | Yes                      | All Board members have undergone criminal background and FCSR checks as required in section 160.400.14, RSMo.         | Per SLU review of CG policy and practice regarding background checks.   | Met  |
| 5.4 | Yes                      | All Board members submit ethics commission requirements annually as outlined in 105.483 and 105.492 RSMo.             | Per DESE communication with SLU.  | Met  |
| 5.5 | n/a                      | The Board reviews results from major assessments of student learning and appropriately uses them to inform decisions. | Per SLU’s participation in Academic Excellence Committee and full Board meetings, as well as our thorough review of all related materials/data/reports.<br><br>Per SLU’s regular meetings with the CAO, CEO, and Board chair. | A new Academic Excellence Committee of the Board was established to expand the Board’s understanding and use of data in decision-making; the committee is led by an experienced K-12 administrator with expertise in analyzing standardized test data for school improvement use.<br><br>The committee spent the year primarily planning for new data to |

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|     |     |   |   | <p>collect, particularly related to affective development and ABAR-related outcomes (the group also had a notable role in the principal search process).</p> <p>In early Spring 2020, SLU provided City Garden academic and administrative leaders with an extensive, six-year analysis of City Garden’s NWEA testing data (with an emphasis on individual student growth across those six years); a summary of that analysis (updated as necessary) should be shared with the board in Fall 2020 and be used for discussion of current status and future planning for curriculum, pedagogy, and student academic support. This is especially important given that the MO MAP a) was not administered in 2019-20 and b) has not been essentially the same exam across multiple years.</p> |
| 5.6 | n/a | The Board has a strategic planning process and the Board uses the strategic plan as a tool for board discussion and planning.                         | Per SLU’s regular participation in and observation of strategic planning sessions and Board meetings.   | <p>City Garden’s strategic planning process has been deliberate and comprehensive.</p> <p>The approved strategic plan is regularly referenced and continually guides discussion and planning.</p> <p>We expect City Garden to continue to include a rigorous analysis of academic data and comprehensive market research and community engagement in its Greenlighting Criteria for growth.</p>   |
| 5.7 | n/a | Anti-bias, antiracism (ABAR) principles and commitments demonstrably guide the policies, planning, and decisions in school operations and governance. | <p>Per SLU’s monitoring and analysis of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CG’s articulated ABAR principles and commitments</li> </ul> | City Garden’s board and leadership go through significant ABAR training and have developed procedures to embed an ABAR lens in policy   |



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|     |     |   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Board policies</li> <li>▪ Board and school leadership fidelity to policy implementation</li> </ul> <p>Per SLU's monitoring of parent/staff/community complaints regarding the Board's or school leadership's embodiment of articulated ABAR principles and commitments</p> | <p>development and decision-making. Examples include significant attention to ABAR principles and concerns in a) Board meeting deliberations; b) reviews of responses to RFPs for vendor/consultant selection; c) board monthly and annual self-evaluations; d) hiring processes for teachers and school leaders; and e) appointment of Board members.</p> <p>In response to parent and staff concerns expressed in 2019-20 about the organization's ABAR commitment, the Board held special listening sessions with each constituent group (staff, parents) and discussed ways to better communicate and make more transparent its ABAR-related work.</p> |
| 5.8 | n/a | The Board has an adopted profile of member diversity, expertise, and perspectives needed on the Board – and the Board manages its membership according to that profile. | Per SLU's periodic review of the Board's profile documentation and our monitoring of Governance Committee and full Board activity.  | The Board has such a profile and revisits the required expertise and experiences of Board members regularly, especially when seeking and reviewing the qualifications/backgrounds of potential new members (both in the Governance and full Board meetings).   |
| 5.9 | n/a | The Board has an agreed upon yearly schedule of meetings that includes at least 10 regular public meetings and maintains a quorum at each meeting as needed for voting. | Per SLU review of the Board meeting schedule, and through our regular participation in those meetings.  | Met  |