

Notes from the Leadership

The old psychological theory of the 7-Year-Itch may be more relevant for relationships than schools, but as The Soulard School wraps up its 14th year, we are seeing that every seven years brings change. Fourteen years ago, a group of parents and teachers started a school with 10 kindergartners at Trinity Lutheran Church. Seven years ago, we expanded our programming to include STEAM, Buddy Circles, instructional coaching, and special education. This May, we'll see our largest class of graduates, with 15 fifth graders heading on to middle school, following the path of more than 75 alumni graduates before them. This will be our last graduating class as an independent school.

Starting in the fall, our elementary program will have converted to a charter model. Our board asked us to explore this path in late 2017 as a way to become more financially sustainable, as well as lower barriers for families. As we began to research what this could mean for the school, we met with eligible sponsors and charter administrators, toured charter schools, and investigated the ins and outs of public school choice in Missouri. We realized that what it means to be a charter has broadened considerably in the past decade and has made way for some great innovation. By ultimately deciding to become a charter sponsored by UMSL, we are joining a richly varied school community, and will be able to share our own vision and knowledge with other schools, as well as grow from their experiences.

The process of writing the charter has allowed opportunities for us to think more deeply about education issues, and has presented the chance to better articulate what makes us our approach innovative, unique, and authentic, summed up in four guiding pillars:

OUR FOUR PILLARS



Diversity & Inclusion

Strong sense of community & belonging, diversity of all kinds.



Child Well-Being

Build executive function, peer support and healthy habits.



Integrated Studies Curriculum

Connect learning across subjects and build on student interests



Community Engagement

Engage actively with parents and institutions across the city.

With our 2019-20 elementary lotteries now past us, we anticipate nearly 120 students joining us for our inaugural year as a charter school. This blend of

and returning students and families will experience firsthand these areas of emphasis with a sense of newness and novelty, while also feeling the familiarity of our founding mission and philosophy.

Our elementary program grew out of The Little School and Gym, and we cannot lose sight of our early childhood program in this transition. Our PreK and Nursery program will continue to serve the youngest members of our community through supported experiential learning and natural inquiry. Our PreK students have spent the trimester exploring the concept of identity, and have investigated skin color, family structure, and habitats as a way of learning more about themselves and others. PreK will remain in Quietude classroom for the coming school year. Over at the Nursery change is coming as we prepare to move to a new location, 1111 Victor, directly across the street from the "big school." This new space will provide deeper and more meaningful connections within our programs, staff, parents and students.

We know these changes mean growth, stability and possibility for the school. We know our community of teachers, students and families are assets. Through them, we will work to keep our mission and vision of connectedness, volunteerism and collaboration alive. We are an active community and those that continue to find us, join us to be in that mission. Just as we do every year, we will welcome our new families and students and build and grow together.

THE ALCHEMY CLASS HAS GOT THE BLUES



The Alchemy (2nd/3rd grade) class recently wrapped up a study of the history of blues music. Working in partnership with a COCA teaching artist, students learned the stories of the genre's roots in The Great Migration. The students deepened their understanding with discussions connected to social justice.

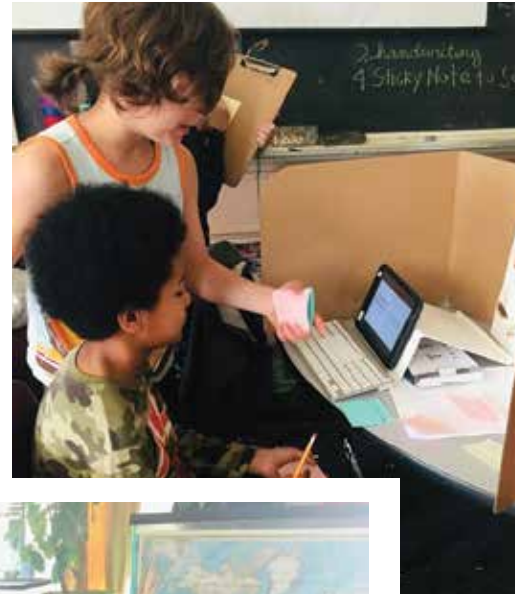
To bring the study to life, Alchemists wrote and performed their own 12-bar-blues progression. They brainstormed about what gives them "the blues" and created lyrics.

Field experiences also played an important role in our blues study. The class attended "Nothing But the Blues", an educational blues review hosted by The Sheldon Concert Hall. The performance chronicled the evolution of the blues from its African roots to its modern influence on rock, country and folk music. Students also explored the Blues History Museum and made connections to the artists' stories on a self-guided tour.

The students also spent time researching influential blues musicians. They worked in pairs collecting information about their artist's life experiences and unique contributions to blues music. Students shared their completed artist bios in an exhibit to wrap up the unit.

Fourth Grade Explores Family History

In the fall, the Mosaic (4th grade) class explored ancient civilizations. Beginning in January, students began furthering their exploration of what it means to be human by expanding their research to their own familial heritages, backgrounds and cultures. We called this the History of Me. Within this unit, students examined their own ancestral beginnings by engaging in research on their last names and countries of origin. They studied heraldry and created their own personal coat of arms that they felt represented who they are. Students also participated in family interviews in which they conversed with a member of their family from a different generation to learn what life was like when that family member was their age. They took this interview and used it to generate a strong story idea. They then mapped out, wrote, and published a historical fiction narrative based on this interaction. We reflected on things that matter or are important to us, and found pictorial representations of those things in magazine clippings, quotes, and photos. To tie all of this work together, we created a gallery walk in which students set up their work for display, and took note of differences and similarities between each other's work. We reflected and discussed, as a class, what these findings meant for us as students at The Soulard School, citizens of Soulard, the US, and the larger global community.





To the Moon!



The Enigma first grade teachers noticed that students were naturally curious about the super blood wolf moon that took place in January. This led to questions about the patterns, cycles, and phases that the moon goes through, and a deeper moon study. We began documenting the moon phases through a moon journal. The first graders also had the opportunity to create a birthday moon mosaic. We smashed plates against the wall and used the pieces to make individual representations of what the moon looked like on the night we were born. As we learned more about the properties and features of the moon, we participated in a design challenge to create lunar rovers. Students really enjoyed this study and look forward to continuing the focus on patterns and cycles in other areas as spring arrives.

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Food writing by the Alchemy

(2nd/3rd) grade class

The Alchemists have been focusing on descriptive writing. In writing on the food Monica and the student chefs make daily in for our lunch, students brought a new level of reflectiveness to their meals, as they considered how to capture the experience on paper. Here they reviewed a lunch of Zupa Ogorkowa, a Polish soup containing pickles, served with bread, salad and mixed fruit.

POLISH SOUP BY CLYVE

The soup was rich, fulfilling, and made my day. Being the main course, the soup got a large like. I'm so glad our chef, Monica let us have big portions. The soup made me feel warm. The pear was a surprise with taste. I expected a bitterish sour taste but the pear stunned me with sweetness and moist. The grapes were a deliciousness of sweet and sour. The sweet won a war against the sour just a bit. The bread overjoyed me with joy. It was a sweet softness to remember. I would pay to have it again. The salad gave a startling cranberry bitterness not an original taste for salad. All Four Stars.

ZUPA OGORKOWA BY PAYTON

I walked into a dark orange room. I smelt a familiar smell, like pickle or onion. The taste of the soup was tangy, smooth and watery. The salad was creamy. The bread was super sweet. The salad was savory. I give this 2 and a half out of 4 because it was not my thing but I recommend this to anyone who wants a plain meal to go!

IN THE MCGURKS ROOM CHEF MONICA MADE A DELICIOUS MEAL.. BY AGNES

The pears are smooth but bumpy. The Polish soup tastes like chicken. It's also bumpy. The grapes are smooth, squishy and juicy. The bread is very sweet! It is an oval-ish shape. The salad is slightly spicy. Four stars. The only thing I don't like is the spicy-ness of the salad. I recommend this to people who like sweet and spicy food!

MONICAS AMAZING FOOD BY CLYDE

If you're looking for unexplainably good soup. The Soulard School is the perfect place! If you're vegetarian that's okay 'cause there's always a vegetarian option Every day there is to-die-for food! The soup was sour and very unexplainably good. All four stars!

FOOD REVIEW BY SOPHIA

Today we are having pears, Polish soup, and bread. The pears are slimy but taste good. They have an aftertaste but since it tastes good, does it matter? Now the bread is sweet. The top is crumbly which is good. The skin is sweet which is probably the source. The soup! It's kind of stiff but still in the liquid section. It has dill pickle juice and carrots and chicken. I rate this meal four out of four. I recommend it to any traveler and people who love flavor. If you want to know, Zupa Ogorkowa is the name of the dish and that is all for today!



Spring Updates from the Parent Association

The Parent Association is winding up another successful year of fundraising and community building. Our spring events include the School Birthday Party in April and a last day of school Ice Cream Social. Heading into 2019-20, we are looking for parents to fill open officer positions, as well as more members to come to meetings and get involved! Please contact Samantha for more details (samantha.fisher123@gmail.com).

2019-20 Parent Association:

Presidents: Samantha Fisher

Vice President: Open

Treasurer: Heather McCorkle

Secretary: Rachel Kryah

**Social Events Co-Chairs:
Annie Lehrer and Open**

**Lead Home Room Coordinator:
Jim Noonan**

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"HAVE A GREAT SUMMER"