

November 2015

# JAMAA LEARNING CENTER

ANNUAL SPONSOR REPORT  
2014-2015 ACADEMIC YEAR

**Charter School Operations  
College of Education**



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University of Missouri

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## Office of Charter School Operations General Information

### Vision

*Challenging all learners to reach their full potential.*

### Mission

*Improve the quality and performance of charter schools in Missouri by collaborating with stakeholders to achieve exceptional educational outcomes for all students.*

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**Executive Summary**

The 2014-2015 school year is the fourth year in an original five-year charter with the University of Missouri. In a letter dated June 30, 2015, OCSO indicated that at the end of the next school year, it will allow the charter to lapse, but that oversight would be provided until that time.

Our annual monitoring activities resulted in the following general concerns that Jamaa Learning Center (JLC) may wish to address as they pursue other avenues to continue operation. Specifically:

- The school has continued to struggle financially without a plan for remediation or significant external fundraising or grant writing activity.
- The school has not yet established a stable student culture that affords all students a safe and orderly environment where all are able to focus and learn.
- Academic performance is a continued concern.

These findings are described in more detail below and additional evidence can be found in the staff and teacher survey results in the Appendix.



GOVERNANCE				
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Operations and Policies</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board may wish to review policies and procedures to incorporate updates to the federal changes in fiscal requirements (OMNI).</li> <li>• The board and school need to address separation of duties issues that have been raised in the annual audits.</li> <li>• Board minutes and agendas need to be posted on the website.</li> <li>• Attendance at board meetings is sporadic, often requiring cancellation at the last minute.</li> <li>• Only two members responded to the sponsor survey, thus allowing no ability to provide valid feedback.</li> </ul>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Development</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board added one member this year.</li> <li>• Individual or whole-board training is recommended.</li> </ul>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Planning</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The board has engaged in strategic planning with a consultant this year.</li> </ul>			
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School Oversight</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School leaders regularly attend and report at board meetings.</li> <li>• The board has not held the CEO or other school leaders to measurable performance standards.</li> <li>• The board is over-reliant on the CEO to manage all activities, financial and academic.</li> </ul>			



FINANCES & OPERATIONS	Inadequate	Approaching	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
<b>Fiscal Health &amp; Stability</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school continues to operate with a deficit that requires taking loans to meet ASBR carryover requirements, without which the school would be considered financially distressed.</li> <li>• The school carries consistently high payables and unpaid loans.</li> <li>• Budgets are not stable throughout the year, requiring frequent adjustments.</li> <li>• The lender is expected to seek a resolution regarding the Delmar building.</li> </ul>
<b>Data Collection &amp; Reporting</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jamaa generally meets reporting and compliance requirements and deadlines.</li> <li>• There were issues in reporting daily attendance to DESE. However, these have been resolved.</li> </ul>
<b>General Operations</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Facilities have some deferred maintenance and teachers and staff report lack of necessary supplies and equipment.</li> </ul>
<b>Fundraising and Grants</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Little successful fundraising or grant activity, however the board did start a capital campaign.</li> <li>• Inadequate board and staff expertise or resources to engage in fundraising or grant writing.</li> </ul>



<b>CULTURE &amp; ENVIRONMENT</b>	<b>Inadequate</b>	<b>Approaching</b>	<b>Meets Expectations</b>	<b>Exceeds Expectations</b>
<b>Leadership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers and staff report a positive and supportive environment.</li> </ul>			
<b>Physical Environment</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has some deferred maintenance.</li> <li>Teachers, staff and students find the environment to be less than safe and orderly.</li> </ul>			
<b>Culture</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The leadership team is flexible and supportive of each other and the other teachers.</li> <li>While teachers and staff feel Jamaa is a supportive family, serious culture issues remain.</li> <li>The school still lacks a consistently applied schoolwide behavior plan.</li> <li>It is clear from site visit data that some teachers are overwhelmed by a few students and they do not have adequate support to address the challenges.</li> <li>Student and teacher turnover were high.</li> </ul>			
<b>Outreach</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>There have been few parent or community complaints.</li> <li>Jamaa continues to engage with numerous community partners to provide additional services and opportunities for students.</li> </ul>			



ACADEMIC OUTCOMES	Inadequate	Approaching	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
<b>Assessments</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2014 MAP results place Jamaa near the bottom of the state and all charter schools.</li> <li>• The school uses multiple assessments, but the board is not provided consistent reports on progress, or lack of progress.</li> <li>• Student data is not being used to address lack of achievement. And low achievement is not being addressed for individual students.</li> </ul>
<b>Teacher Quality &amp; Effectiveness</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher turnover remains a significant problem.</li> <li>• Teachers do not have adequate support or mentoring and survey responses indicate ongoing lack of planning time, breaks and daily support from aides or others when classroom challenges arise.</li> <li>• The school continues to loop teachers without adequate training or curriculum guidance.</li> </ul>
<b>Curriculum</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The lowest response on the teacher survey was to the statement “the school has a clearly defined, high quality curriculum.”</li> <li>• The second lowest response was “teachers at this school have the necessary supplies (i.e. papers, markers) to support learning.</li> </ul>
<b>Special Populations</b>				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and staff indicate problems addressing behavioral challenges and Title I and MAP results indicate lack of progress.</li> </ul>



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Appendix: Survey Results**

Every year, the OCSO performs a survey of all board members, teachers and staff. Other surveys may be performed as needed, or requested.

This year, only two board members responded to the survey. Results are not included due to lack of response.

Nine teachers and eight staff members responded to the survey and those results are included.

Each survey item will show the median response, the range and the standard deviation. Each report is highlighted in green to show positive or above average responses, and in orange to show less desirable responses. In general, the highest and most consistent scores were noted as positive and the lowest, and most variable scores were highlighted for attention and reference.



## Jamaa Learning Center 2015 Teacher Survey Results

Based on responses from 9 teachers with 2 –20 years of teaching experience and 1-2 years at Jamaa.

**Part I: Please answer the following questions using the 5-point scale below:**

**5**                      **4**                      **3**                      **2**                      **1**  
**strongly agree**      **agree**              **neutral**          **disagree**        **strongly disagree**

Question	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The school environment supports student learning.	2-5	3.6	1.174
2. The school environment is safe and orderly.	1-4	3.2	1.135
3. School facilities support student learning.	2-5	3.3	1.059
4. Teachers at this school believe that all students can learn.	4-5	4.6	.516
5. The school's daily schedule supports student learning.	2-5	3.6	.966
6. Teachers at this school have high expectations for student learning.	4-5	4.7	.483
7. Teachers at this school have high expectations for student behavior.	4-5	4.5	.527
8. Teachers at this school collaborate to improve student learning.	3-5	4.4	.699
9. Teachers utilize effective instructional strategies in lesson delivery to promote student learning.	4-5	4.5	.527
10. Teachers utilize assessments to evaluate student progress and to guide instruction.	2-5	4.2	1.033
11. The school has a clearly defined, high quality curriculum.	1-4	2.4	.882
12. Goals and objectives are clearly articulated	3-5	3.8	.632
13. The Title I plan is effective in supporting student needs.	2-5	3.3	1.165
14. Staff follow a mandated process for identifying and supporting special education students.	2-5	3.6	1.333
15. The delivery of special education services meet students' needs.	1-5	3.2	1.398
16. On-going professional development supports best practices and promotes student learning.	2-5	3.9	.876
17. Teachers at this school have necessary supplies (i.e. paper, markers) to support learning	2-4	2.5	.850
18. Teachers at this school have necessary instructional materials (i.e. textbooks) to support learning.	2-4	3.1	.568
19. Teachers at this school have the necessary technology to support learning.	2-4	3.3	.675
20. Students are actively engaged in their learning.	3-5	3.8	.632
21. Policies/procedures for student behavior management are consistently communicated.	1-5	3.4	1.350
22. Policies/procedures for student behavior management are consistently implemented.	1-4	3.0	1.155
23. Teachers at this school feel supported by school administration.	2-5	3.7	1.160



24. School administrators effectively communicate teacher expectations.	3-5	4.2	.632
25. School administrators effectively communicate student expectations.	2-5	3.9	.876
26. Teachers at this school receive effective administrator feedback and guidance on instructional practice	3-5	4.1	.738
27. The administrative staff exhibits high standards of professional behavior.	4-5	4.5	.527
28. Administrators exhibit strong leadership skills.	3-5	4.3	.675
29. Good communication exists between all stakeholders.	2-5	3.9	.876
30. All stakeholders in the school treat each other with mutual respect.	3-5	4.3	.823

## COMMENTS SUMMARIZED BY MAJOR THEMES

### A supportive environment for all learners.

- Most teachers at Jamaa treat other adults and scholars w/ respect. At Jamaa we feel more as a family working with scholars to improve their lives and grow as students.
- In our culture all the staff try hard to help each other and support each other.
- The school creates a very family kind of feel, for staff and students. The scholars feel supported and the staff feel supported.
- The culture of the school is effective, overall; we are all still "a work in progress", making leaps and bounds to reach our goal(s).
- Jamaa employs communally-focused motivation and culture to drive individual scholars to achieve excellence.
- We, at Jamaa, are passionate, student-centered advocates for a more scholarly experience for St. Louis City scholars than SLPS, in general, provides. We are new, we are learning, we will keep moving forward. We realize a school must have a whole-team approach that includes parent input to teach our lofty goal of helping students become life-long learners.
- Most scholars can tell you the expectations and recite our school creed. When others enter class we have a standard communication so all understand what the vocabulary means. Teachers are supportive of one another and students.

### Improvements are being noted.

- Teachers have high expectations for all students. Students are exhibiting an improvement in behaviors throughout the entire day. I enjoy coming to work at Jamaa.



**Behavioral issues remain a problem, especially in the middle school.**

- If negative behaviors would decrease, I think the culture would improve. Also, we need to be more consistent on consequences when (bad) behaviors do happen.
- Still very concern with safety and respect of other students and teachers. Also follow through with expectations of culture such as uniform infractions.
- The culture of the school as a whole can be described as chaotic at times due to behaviors. I feel like my classroom culture is very loving and sometimes can be chaotic at times due to behaviors.
- The staff atmosphere is positive and supportive, but there are still struggles with getting scholars to "buy in" to the system.
- The culture is very disturbing. Lots of behavioral issues cause scholars less learning opportunities.

**Other changes are still needed.**

- Also lack of planning time and no lunch is a major concern for me.
- Staff morale is low due to long work hours with inconsistent breaks.
- We have high expectations, but rarely enforced by all.
- The culture of Jamaa isn't consistent. Also, professional training for new staff is misunderstood.



## Jamaa Learning Center 2015 Staff Survey Results

Based on responses from 8 staff members with 1-21 years doing their current or similar jobs, and 1-5 years at Jamaa.

**Part I: Please answer the following questions using the 5-point scale below:**

**5**                      **4**                      **3**                      **2**                      **1**  
**strongly agree**      **agree**              **neutral**            **disagree**          **strongly disagree**

Question	Range	Mean	Standard Deviation
1. The school environment supports student learning.	2-4	3.5	.756
2. The school environment is safe and orderly.	1-4	2.9	1.246
3. School facilities support student learning.	1-4	2.8	1.035
4. Staff at this school believe that all students can learn.	3-5	4.0	.535
5. The school's daily schedule supports student learning.	2-4	3.6	.744
6. Staff at this school have high expectations for student learning.	2-5	4.0	.926
7. Staff at this school have high expectations for student behavior.	2-5	3.6	.916
8. Staff at this school have necessary supplies (i.e. paper, markers) to support learning.	1-4	2.8	1.035
9. Staff at this school have the necessary technology to support learning.	2-5	3.3	1.165
10. Students are actively engaged in their learning.	2-4	3.0	.756
11. Policies/procedures for student behavior management are consistently communicated.	2-4	3.0	.756
12. Policies/procedures for student behavior management are consistently implemented.	2-4	2.5	.756
13. Staff at this school feel supported by school administration.	2-4	3.3	.886
14. School administrators effectively communicate staff expectations.	2-5	3.8	.886
15. School administrators effectively communicate student expectations.	3-5	3.9	.835
16. Staff at this school receive effective administrator feedback on job performance.	3-4	3.4	.518
17. The administrative staff exhibits high standards of professional behavior.	3-5	4.1	.641
18. Administrators exhibit strong leadership skills.	3-5	4.3	.707
19. Good communication exists between all stakeholders.	2-4	3.3	.707
20. All stakeholders in the school treat each other with mutual respect.	3-5	4.1	.641



## **COMMENTS ORGANIZED BY MAJOR THEMES**

### **A supportive environment for all learners.**

- Staff flexibility is the biggest strength of the school as they work with a variety of students and their surrounding issues on a daily basis.
- Jamaa is a school that gives all students an opportunity to succeed regardless of any past mistakes, failures or rejections the student may have had in the past. Jamaa works as a "village" to produce change and does not give up.
- I believe our culture continues to improve. We have come a long way since I started. I hope that we will continue to grow stronger together as a staff so that we are able to support each other as well as the scholars who depend on us for their education. With our current goals and plans we will continue to meet our school goals each year.
- The culture of the school is extremely different depending on the grade. The culture in the elementary grades is more positive than negative. There is more motivation from both scholars and parents to be successful in school.
- The culture of the school is like a family. We are growing together, learning together and supporting each other in the process as we strive for academic and behavior excellence!

### **Improvements are being noted.**

- Changing effectively to adjust to the changes needed mostly based in the physical environment.
- The school and organizational culture is continuing to strengthen. Showing great improvement from the previous year and is reflective of a typical school/organization in its infancy stages (year 2 after restart in 2013). Strongest culture is evident with staff that was here last year and shows real promise for some staff that began this year.

### **Behavioral issues remain a problem, especially in the middle school.**

- The culture in middle school seems to be more negative than positive at times. The middle school scholars lack pride in where they go to school.
- Behavior is a huge detriment to academic success, especially when inappropriate behaviors are not resolved.
- There is no consistency with consequences for inappropriate behaviors.
- The lack of support staff in my opinion, strongly contributes to the behavior management problem.



**Other changes are still needed.**

- The culture of Jamaa is always changing. There is a staff disconnect. There is a huge lack of planning and preparedness by administration.
- This school needs a building that is conducive to learning. More space, more supplies. I feel some of the teachers have low expectations and don't academically challenge their class.
- I feel Jamaa can still be a great educational institution for the children of St. Louis with a few minor adjustments!