

Southside Family Charter School

District 4162-07

2023-24 Annual Report



Submitted by

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Reader's Guide for Required Elements
(VOA = Volunteers of America, MDE = Minnesota Department of Education)

Required Element	Required By	Page
School's Statutory Purpose	VOA	5
School Enrollment	VOA, MDE	18-19
School Attrition Rates	VOA, MDE	19-20
Board Governance: Elections, Roster, Training	VOA, MDE	7, 8
Employment: Administration and Staffing	VOA, MDE	11, 13-15
Charter Contract Defined Academic Performance Standards	VOA	21-29
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Service Learning Plan and Outcomes	VOA	33
Innovative Practices and Implementation	VOA, MDE	22-23, 31
Future Plans	VOA, MDE	34

Section I: Introduction

Background Information

History and Vision for the Future

Southside Family School began 50 years ago as a dream born out of the civil rights movement. It first began as a project backed by the University of Minnesota through the federal Model Cities grant funding - a program seeking to fund ideas of community members that were committed to antiracism and the elimination of poverty. The founders - teachers and families - dreamed of an integrated school committed to truth telling - having young people understand the origins and devastating impacts of racism, while also learning from the freedom dreams and resistance of movement leaders so that they could become shapers of a different future. Southside evolved over the years, becoming a multigenerational community in Minneapolis committed to connecting our history to our present and dreaming our future. The school became an alternative elementary and junior high school serving students from the Minneapolis Public School district until the 2006-2007 school year when it opened as a charter school. The school was granted a charter in 2005 and is currently authorized by Volunteers of America (VOA). It completed its 17th year of operation as a charter school in June, 2023 with students in grades kindergarten through eighth grade.

One of the founders, Susie Oppenheim, led Southside's freedom dreams with one simple phrase: "We Are One," reminding us that, "If we can dream it, we can find a way to do it –and that message empowers all of us- from the youngest to the oldest- to believe in the power of people united behind a vision." As we enter the 50th year of our school, in the midst of the COVID pandemic, racial uprising and reckoning, climate catastrophe, hateful reactionary politics against Black and Indigenous people, women, queer and trans people, "immigrants" to this stolen land, and people who are unhoused, and a myriad of global crises, it feels as if we are once again at a fresh beginning relearning what justice looks like now and for future generations. This is not a relearning that forgets our rich history, but relies on the history as the foundation for a stronger future.

Mission, Values, and Program Goals

Mission and Values

Our Mission: Southside Family Charter School is a small, K-8 school that meets the needs of a culturally and ethnically diverse population by engaging children in critical thinking and problem solving, involving children in political and social activism, encouraging creative expression, offering a wide range of electives and advocating for children and families.

Our goal is to create a learning environment that reflects our values:

- Freedom from racism, sexism, classism, homophobia and cultural biases

- An opportunity for educational excellence regardless of income
- Involvement in issues of social justice
- Diverse cultural identities are honored
- Our community as an extension of our classrooms
- Community members are encouraged to participate in our programs

Program Goals

The school also has written program goals that outline the overall focus of the school. The goals are to provide active, “hands-on” learning activities through:

- Creative play and artistic expression;
- Structured individual learning;
- Group discussion and problem solving;
- One-on-one instruction and evaluation with a teacher;
- World exploration outside of school—field trips, cultural events, etc.;
- Conversations, lessons, or activities led by youth or adults other than SFCS staff.

Statement of School’s Purpose

The primary statutory purpose of the school is to improve all student learning and all student achievement. Additional purposes include to encourage the use of different and innovative teaching methods, and to create new professional opportunities for teachers, including the opportunity to be responsible for the learning program at the school.

Purpose of Report

This report presents information and data for the 2023-2024 school year as required annually by the school’s authorizer and according to Minnesota Statute 124E.16, subd. 2. It also contains elements required by World’s Best WorkForce legislation, Minnesota Statute 120B.11. The report is organized according to the outline provided by its authorizer, Volunteers of America.

Section II: Authorizer

Authorizer Contact Information:

Volunteers of America of Minnesota (VOA) is the school's authorizer. The authorizer contact is:

Volunteers of America of Minnesota Main Contact:
 Stephanie Olsen, Manager VOA Charter School Authorizing Program
 VOA-MN Education Center
 924 19th Ave S
 Minneapolis, MN 55404
 Phone: 612-345-8271
 Email: solsen@voamn.org

Authorizer Accountability Process

There are five oversight areas VOA includes in its authorizer contract: board governance, school management and operations, school academic performance, school financial performance and legal compliance. As part of school accountability, the authorizer and the school develop goals that measure student performance and overall success of the school. VOA requires the school to gather reading and math data from the Minnesota Comprehensive Assessments (MCA) in areas of proficiency and growth. Specific details and data regarding each goal are in the charter goal and academic performance sections of this report. A member of the VOA Authorizing Program Leadership Team conducts at least one formal site visit each year. In addition, informal visits and monitoring visits are scheduled throughout the year as needed. The authorizer also provides resource and support materials to the school such as the Annual Submission Calendar.

Contract Renewal Information

The 2021-2022 school year was the first of a new five-year contract effective July 1, 2021. This contract expires at the end of the 2025-2026 school year.

Section III: School Board Governance

School Governance

Board Membership and Election Dates

The school's governing Bylaws allow a board ranging in size from five to thirteen members. The majority of the board consists of parents of enrolled students, and also includes at least one teacher and at least one interested community member. Board members are elected in September for two-year terms, as part of the Annual Member Meeting. The 2022-2023 board member election was held on September 22, 2022. The SFCS board currently comprises eleven members who play an important role in governance, financial oversight, and strategic planning. The board forms committees that include members of the board and other interested parents, staff, or community members. The 2022-2023 board membership and details about board members are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Board Member Information

Name	Date Elected	Position	Seat Type	Term Ends	Contact
Alex Berryman	09/2022	Member	Teacher	09/2024	alex.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Jake Gibbons	09/2023	Member	Teacher	09/2025	mr.g@southsidefamilyschool.org
Jacks Howard	09/2023	Board Vice Chair	Parent	09/2025	jacks.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Manny Duerson	09/2021	Board Chair	Parent	09/2023	manny.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Sara Hurley	09/2022	Member	Parent	09/2024	sara.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Winona Gomez	09/2023	Member	Parent	09/2025	winona.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Benjy Nicholie	09/2022	Board Treasurer	Community Member	09/2024	benjy.board@southsidefamilyschool.org
Rick Felder	09/2022	Member	Community Member	09/2024	rick.board@southsidefamilyschool.org

Board Training

As required by Minnesota statute, and in the interest of an engaged and informed board, all new and continuing board members receive annual training throughout their term. In addition, newly elected board members attend training specifically in the areas of governance, employment, and finance. A summary of board training that occurred during the 2023-2024 school year is presented below.

Table 2: Board Member Training

Name of Board Member	Name of Training Attended	Date of Training
Jake Gibbons, Winona Gomez, Jacks Howard	Mandatory Training Series: Charter Source Introduction to Board Training Basics	Over course of year
Manny Duerson	VOA Annual Conference	06/2023
All Board Members	Conflict of Interest Training	02/28/2024
All Board Members	Finance 101 Training	12/12/2023

Strategic Planning Status

Beginning in 2019, the school went through multiple leadership transitions and leadership structures. Because of the multiple leadership transitions, the primary goal for strategic development of the 2022-23 school year was to hire a qualified and mission oriented School Administrator for the 2023-24 School Year. The search successfully resulted in the hiring of Alissa Case as the School Leader for the 23-24 School Year. In dialogue and planning with the returning leadership team members, Jamesha Hodge and Tarik Thornton, the leadership team reorganized leadership duties and tasks across three positions: School Leader, Operations Coordinator and Dean of Students. In relation to school mission and vision, strategic planning focused on reviving travel studies as a core element of the social justice curriculum along with developing sustainable funding structures to include this academic opportunity.

Additionally, the role of the school board in partnership and oversight of finances and mission requires additional strategic planning and support. Therefore, other strategic initiatives identified for the next two years include continued expansive board recruitment, education, training and committee work productivity along with financial sustainability planning and restructuring.

Satisfaction Survey Results

As part of the process for strategic planning and reflection, the school provides opportunities to share feedback through board meeting self-evaluations, annual surveys, staff member meetings and informal check-ins to determine what is working well and what areas need development. Results are reviewed in staff meetings, board meetings at CLT meetings and teacher-specific feedback is shared with individual teachers by the School Leadership Team. A summary of annual survey results is also shared with the Board of Directors, and is discussed in the annual Comprehensive Needs Assessment, from which school wide goals and results are reviewed and revised. Below is a general discussion of results from surveys administered in Spring 2024.

Parent Survey Results

There were 23 parent respondents (comparable with May 2023 response rate). The survey was sent to families in the beginning of May, 2024 and the shared intent for the survey data was to “help Southside review how this school year went, as well as successes and areas of improvement for next year.” The survey included sections on Communications, Community and Belonging, Academics, Programs and Services, Conduct and Discipline, and Board of Directors. Each section had questions on a likert scale inviting respondents to answer questions from Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, and Strongly Disagree. Then each section ended with open ended free response questions. Although the number of respondents isn’t large enough to make generalizations about the experience of families at Southside, the survey highlighted areas of improvement from 2022-23 and offered themes for improvement and growth in the 2024-25 School Year.

Communications

Families were asked to rate the effectiveness of communication both at the school and classroom level. There was overall improvement of families responding to the survey agreed or strongly agreed that the school was effectively communicating what was needed to be informed as a parent of the school moving from 60% (22-23) to 77% (23-24); 83% of families agreed or strongly agreed that their student’s classroom teacher effectively communicated with them on a consistent basis all they needed for their student’s success in their classroom. We also increased to a rate of 91% from 61% strongly agree/agree around families knowing who to connect with when questions or issues arise. We believe some of this improvement is related to the implementation of family suggestions for improvement in the 22-23 School Year surveys.

Community and Belonging

Families were asked 5 questions about connecting with staff, opportunities, and other families at Southside. Due to a 60% and 56% response rate of agree/strongly agree around connecting with staff and volunteer opportunities and feeling connected to the school community, respectively, we focused on how to increase a sense of belonging for all members in the 23-24 school year. Implementing various opportunities for families to connect and volunteer with tools of clear

communication increased our responses to 86% (volunteering and engagement) and 77% (connected to the community) of strongly agree/agree in May of 2024.

Academics, Programs and Services

The survey showed general satisfaction with academic programming while at the same time confusion with the connection to academic standards and social justice values. 87% of respondents strongly agreed/agreed that their child's teacher understands their student's strengths and areas of growth. We greatly improved in the response to families understanding the curriculum goals and definition of a social justice education, moving from 48% (22-23) to 82% (23-24) strongly agree/agree. The programming strengths highlighted in the survey are Art/Spanish, Clubs, and Field Trips. Additionally, the survey overwhelmingly shows (91%) that families are supportive of the social justice mission of the school and see it as the greatest strength of academic programming.

Conduct and Discipline

Families were asked to rate their agreement with whether or not school discipline policies were clearly communicated, in alignment with the mission of Southside, and consistently enforced. This was identified as an area of growth in the 22-23 school year survey. In 22-23, 48% of families strongly agreed/agreed that expectations for student conduct were clearly communicated to families. This improved to 68% of respondents in 23-24. The leadership team is continually seeking feedback from students, families, and staff in how to continually improve communication in this area, especially around education and understanding of restorative practices and accountability. This was a new area of focus in 23-24, supported by the Stronger Connections grant and the inclusion of a position entitled Healing Justice Educator to support the school's ability to align conduct and discipline policy with the mission of social justice. This will continue to be an area of focus and growth for the 24-25 school year.

Board of Directors

Questions pertaining to the Board of Directors and their governance, mission oriented, and seeking feedback from families highlighted a lack of information and/or communication with the majority of responses for each question being either neutral or N/A/I don't know (54%). This highlights board relations and governance being continued areas of improvement for Southside.

Section IV: School Management

Administrative Team

Ongoing adjustments began during the 2021-22 school year and led to changes in leadership structure and titles. When Alissa Case was hired in June of 2023, the leadership team restructured duties and roles collaboratively to best serve students and families. This shift is reflected in the table below.

Table 3: School Administration

Name	Assignment	Administrative License (Y/N)	Years Employed by the School	Left During the 2023-24 School Year (Y/N)	Returning in Fall 2024 (Y/N)
Alissa Case	School Leader	N	1	N	Y
Jamesha Hodge	Operations Manager	N	3	N	Y
Tarik Thornton	Dean of Students	N	7	N	N

Collaborative Leadership Team

The Cooperative Leadership Team (CLT) helps to develop the leadership capacity of Southside Family Charter School by diversifying and flattening the school's leadership. The CLT does work from creating agendas, to advising on challenging HR decisions, to initiating strategic planning conversations. Tasks and decision making are shared by the representatives on the CLT and the School Administrator relies on the diversity of views and experiences on the CLT in making important school decisions. The following staff members served on the CLT during the 2023-24 school year.

Alissa Case, School Leader
 Jamesha Hodge, Operations Manager
 Tarik Thornton, Dean of Students
 Jennie Eisert, Paraprofessional
 Cate Carlis, Special Education Teacher
 Taneisha Grossett, General Education Teacher

Staff members seated on the school's BOD are ineligible to serve on the CLT for the duration of their board term. Staff CLT team members are elected by the staff through a secret ballot. CLT members shall serve staggered two-year terms, with 2 new CLT members each year.

School Administrator Evaluation Process

The School Board conducted its first evaluation of new School Leader, Alissa Case, at the December 18, 2023 board meeting. Below is the summary of key points from the survey administered and verbal feedback provided by the board in the meeting.

Key points:

- Overall, the board's evaluation of Alissa was overwhelmingly positive.
- The board identified no specific areas in which they want Alissa to change course in the operations of the school at this point based on this evaluation.
- The board discussed the need for Alissa to have more support from us in their very challenging role .
- The board acknowledged that there were several ways in which this survey instrument and evaluation process was not as mission aligned or as effective as it should have been.

Some of the verbal feedback given to Alissa included discussion of their strengths in areas including:

- Financial management, especially problem solving and quick action
- Having and communicating a compelling vision for the school
- Driving ambitious fundraising for the travel studies program
- Holding many different duties and problem solving across a wide range of areas
- Doing healing and repair work in areas which have been neglected or where harm has occurred
- Inspiring trust and involvement
- Showing up with authenticity, intentionality, and calm leadership
- Putting forth creative new ways of doing things while keeping the core of Southside's mission at the center
- The board also noted that the survey responses both qualitative and quantitative were overwhelmingly positive
- The board noted a large number of "I don't know" responses - we interpreted this to reflect the timing and design of the survey

Section V: Staffing and Professional Development

Staff Information

Southside Family Charter School employed fourteen licensed teachers during the 2023-2024 school year. In addition to the licensed teaching staff, the school employed ten paraprofessionals over the course of the year. 79% of licensed staff will be returning for the 24-25SY.

Added in Fall 2021 was a contracted partnership with Right Response Minnesota in providing onsite social workers to support in 504 coordination and student support. Words cannot express the value Right Response has brought to Southside students, staff and families. To learn more about Right Response and the services they provide, visit their website at www.rightresponsemn.org.

Information pertaining to licensed and support staff members are presented in the tables below.

Table 4: Licensed Staff Information

Name	Position	Licensure	MDE File Folder Number	Grades	Returning for 24-25 School Year (Y/N)
Darlis Bell-Grass	Teacher	Elementary Education	365470	Kindergarten	Y
Alexander Berryman	Teacher	MS Humanities/ Social Studies (5-12)	1001384	Multi-Grade	N
Heather Busch	Intervent onist	5-12 Communication Arts and Literature	435642	Multi-Grade	Y
Cathryn Carlis	Teacher	Elementary Education/ Communication Arts and Literature	432084	OFP Academic Behavior Strategist	Y

Maggy Deschane	Teacher	Elementary Education	1028461	Multi-Grade	N
Jennie Eisert	Teacher	Academic Behavior Strategist	1029287	Academic Behavior Strategist	Y
Jake Gibbons	Teacher	Elementary Education	518035	First Grade	N
Taneisha Grossett	Teacher	MS Math and Science	507143	Multi-Grade	Y
Kristen Hara	Healing Justice Educator	Elementary Education; 5-8 Communication Arts and Literature	439259	Multi-Grade	Y
Vanessa Hoff	Teacher	Visual Arts	511146	Multi-Grade	Y
Kaylee Isom	Teacher	Elementary Education	508676	Third Grade	Y
Kaarunya Jayachandiran	Teacher	Elementary Education	456395	Multi-Grade	Y
Brynne Macoskco Paguyo	Teacher	Elementary Education	354338	Multi-Grade	Y
Dee Soderstrom	Teacher	Elementary Education	1026142	Multi-Grade	Y

Table 5: Non-Licensed Staff Information

Name	Position	Employed	Returning for 24-25 SY (Y/N)
Kimberly Cruz-Blanco	Special Education Paraprofessional	Full Year	N
Natalie Meyer	Special Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	N
Rashad Rich	General Education Paraprofessional	Full Year	Y
Grant Whiteoak	General Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	N
Eddie Harden	Special Education	Full Year	Y

	Paraprofessional		
Adam Headington	Special Education Paraprofessional	Full Year	Y
Nara Coldwater	Special Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	Y
Dana Cork	Special Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	N
Shuneisha Pearson	Special Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	N
Ella Rausch	Special Education Paraprofessional	Partial Year	Y
Kate Fay	Administrative Assistant	Full Year	N

Teacher Evaluation Process

SFCS has a process established for all teaching staff on a three-year cycle that meets all statutory requirements outlined in Minnesota Statute 122A.40, subd. 8. Probationary teachers (those in their first year of teaching at SFCS or within their first three years teaching in Minnesota) receive three performance reviews during each year of probation**.

The evaluation process includes four steps:

1. Employee Preparation
2. Stakeholder Feedback/Classroom Visit
3. Supervisor Preparation
4. Conduct Performance Review

The employee and the supervisor identify strengths and accomplishments, areas for development, and future growth goals. All sources of information (self-review, supervisor feedback, and stakeholder input) are based on the SFCS community core practices listed below:

- Teaching Social Justice
 - Social Justice Curriculum
 - Promote Key Values
- Active Pedagogy
 - Quality Orientation
 - Results Orientation
- Culture and Character
 - Integrity
 - Accountability

- Leadership and School Improvement
 - Interpersonal Effectiveness
 - Professional Growth

School Staff Professional Development

In addition to training that is renewed every year, the entire staff engaged in professional development in 2023-24 that supported the intersection of the school's mission and healing/wellness. Some of these topics included: healing justice and restorative practices, abolition, practices of self reflection and unpacking systems of power and oppression, meeting the needs of community members who are neurodivergent, community decision making processes and restorative solutions.

Section VI: Enrollment and Student Attrition

Enrollment and Admissions

Enrollment Policy and Procedures

Southside Family Charter School's enrollment policy was last revised in January 2022. The policy is aligned with Minnesota Statutes 124E. A summary of the current policy is provided below.

- Admission is open to all K-8 students.
- Enrollment to kindergarten is limited to students who will turn five years old by September 1st of the year they wish to begin kindergarten.
- Students in grade 8 may only be enrolled at the beginning of the school year and students in grades K-7 may be enrolled no later than January of the current school year. Any exception must be approved by BOD.
- Enrollment capacity for each grade level is determined annually by the board, before the enrollment lottery date, and is posted on the school's website.
- New Student Applications must be received by March 15th for following year enrollment.
- When openings exist, preference is given to siblings of currently enrolled students. After preference to siblings, admission preference is extended to children of SFCS employees if openings are available.
- A general lottery is held on the first Friday after the March 15th application deadline and conducted by the School Administrator with oversight by a representative from the Board of Directors and the School Leader. The enrollment lottery is open to the public for observation.

Determining Enrollment Needs

The school reviews its enrollment needs annually for viability and program capacity and has determined that the current enrollment must increase to meet its mission, goals, and financial sustainability. Student retention, future school size and programming, needs of the community, fundraising strategies, and staffing structure will all help determine the plan for increasing enrollment.

Student Enrollment and Demographic Data

Enrollment Trends

The following chart looks at enrollment trends and historical enrollment from 2020 forward. The tables below summarize the historical enrollment by grade level and by student demographic for the past four school years. The source for all charts is the MARSS Report.

Table 6: Enrollment by grade level

Enrollment (by grade)	2020-2021 SY	2021-2022 SY	2022-23 SY	2023-24 SY
K	9	12	8	10
1	14	15	16	11
2	15	17	13	18
3	15	15	14	8
4	17	18	13	17
5	12	15	18	15
6	16	12	13	17
7	11	14	16	12
8	9	11	11	16
Total Students	118	129	122	124

Table 7: Southside Historical Demographic Information

Ethnicity/Race	2012-2021 SY	2021-2022 SY	2022-23 SY	2023-24 SY
Black/African American	25	28	25	28
White (Non-Hispanic)	51	58	59	59
Latino/Latine/Latin x/ Hispanic	19	15	13	17
Asian American/ Pacific Islander	2	3	6	5
Native American/American	5	2	0	0

Indian/Alaska Native/ Indigenous				
Multiracial	16	23	18	15
Another Way	0	0	1	0
Female	58	63	61	
Male	60	66	61	
Special Education	15	14	16	22
Free and Reduced Lunch	57	55		
MLL/ELL	1	0	0	0
Total Students	118	129	122	124

Student Attrition

7 students transferred out of SFCS after October 1st and 1 additional students were enrolled after October 1st so that the total enrollment decreased by six between October 1st and the last day of school.

The 2023-2024 attrition summary by grade level is provided in Table 9, along with the total attrition summary for the previous three years.

Table 8: Student Attrition 2022-23 SY and Historically

2023-24 SY	Enrolled Oct. 1, 2023	Enrolled After Oct. 1, 2023	Exited After Oct. 1, 2023	Enrolled End of Year
Kindergarten	10	0	1	9
1	11	0	0	11
2	18	0	2	16
3	8	1	0	9
4	17	0	0	17
5	15	0	1	14
6	17	0	1	16
7	12	0	0	12

8	16	0	2	14
Total 2023-2024	124	1	7	118
Historical Results	Enrolled Oct. 1	Enrolled After Oct. 1	Exited After Oct. 1	Enrolled End of Year
Total 2022-23	122	4	3	123
Total 2021-22	129	1	2	128
Total 2020-21	118	10	8	120

Section VII: Academic and School Performance

Overview of Academic Program

Curricular Approach

A social justice curriculum is central to our school's educational model. The purpose of the curriculum is to educate children and the larger community about the underlying social problems that foster racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. By addressing social justice issues at an early age, the school encourages children to see themselves as citizen activists who can change the world and also helps children avoid internalizing the effects of discrimination. The curriculum is embedded in all content areas and is designed to motivate children to improve their basic skills, study history, think critically and aspire to the achievements of the role models they study and meet. Southside Family Charter School's curriculum includes:

- Reading and language arts;
- History and world studies;
- Individualized mathematics instruction emphasizing hands-on activities;
- Biological, physical, earth, and environmental science;
- Art instruction and exploration;
- Spanish enrichment; and
- Electives in areas such as art, music, drama, and sports.

Featured Programs and Curriculum

With its long educational history, Southside Family Charter School has developed a set of programs and services unique to its mission and goals. Programs are primarily during the school day and are summarized below.

- **Community as Classroom.** As part of the larger mission of incorporating social justice into a strong academic curriculum, the school aims to get students out into the world and to bring the world into classrooms. Accordingly, SFCS students regularly engage in community learning activities such as travel study, field trips, guest speakers and community events, all of which are supported by strong parent, family, and volunteer participation in the daily life of the school.
- **Civil Rights Curriculum and Study Tour.** Every three years, students in grades 6-8 tour the southern United States exploring the history of the Civil Rights Movement through the eyes of its participants. As part of the experience, students meet and interview some of the central figures in civil rights movements. Students prepare for the trip throughout their years at SFCS through visits with social justice leaders from Minneapolis and Saint Paul and through their engagement in the school's social justice curriculum. With intensive study and direct contact with historical players, students deepen their

understanding of the vital role young people have in creating change. We successfully fundraised to revive this opportunity by taking 7th and 8th grade students to Detroit in May of 2024 to study the revolutionary work and impact of Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs.

- **Travel Study Curriculum.** In addition to the hallmark Civil Rights Trip, students learn about issues close to home such as Indigenous people’s rights, workers’ rights and immigrant experiences by traveling throughout Minnesota and the surrounding region, connecting to people active in various community issues. This opportunity is available to all middle school students to reinforce classroom learning and assist them with understanding connections between lessons and day-to-day life.
- **Environmental Justice Curriculum.** This curriculum empowers students and families to learn about environmental issues and the disparate impacts of those issues on people of color and the poor. Topics include: energy production and use, water systems, toxins, healthy eating and environmentally safe food preparation, and other environmental issues that affect urban children and other marginalized populations. The school partners with an area farm that practices sustainable agriculture and an organization that educates about environmental law and policy. Students get hands-on experience planting and harvesting through this partnership.
- **Student Leadership.** In keeping with the school’s mission and its goals, SFCS students are guided through activities and projects to assist them in becoming actively engaged citizens. Students are empowered to research issues important to them, and take action through speaking at or attending rallies, walkouts, and educational conferences. Issues range from racism and gun violence to affordable housing and environmental justice.
- **Enrichment Electives.** Southside Family Charter School students are offered “club” options for accessing social, recreational, artistic and academic enrichment opportunities. New club choices are offered each month with teachers and community members teaching the classes, which include subjects such as jewelry-making, recycling arts, team sports and affinity spaces.

School’s Primary Purpose

The school’s primary purpose is to improve all pupil learning and all student achievement. SFCS addresses this primary purpose by adhering to its mission, values and program goals. The school has continued its tradition of small class sizes of grade level classes in K-4 and mixed-age groups with skill-level placement beginning in Grade 5 which facilitates an individualized, developmentally responsive classroom experience. The school also offers full-day kindergarten, Spanish enrichment, art and physical education.

Specific student goals, indicators, and data sources are identified for each of the school’s goal areas. The results are shared with the administrators who, in turn, share the results with the staff. All data are analyzed by demographic groups to provide a forum for discussion of issues related to closing any achievement gaps between students. The process for reviewing curriculum,

instruction, and annual achievement is embedded in the process for reviewing data. Results are reviewed and staff engage in reflective discussion to determine if changes should be made to curriculum, instructional practices, support services, and all areas that affect student learning and behavior.

In addition to academic data, information is gathered in areas that align with the school's mission such as social justice and school climate. Students are surveyed each spring, and student perception of school programs is reviewed to ensure student voice in continuous improvement efforts. Parents/guardians and staff are also surveyed to better understand their experiences. Through this process, the school strives to meet the needs of all stakeholder groups, and to make adjustments where needed.

Overall Academic Results

This section includes the 2023-2024 results of FastBridge testing that we use three times over the course of the year to measure student academic growth in reading and math. Because we have a lower number of students who participate in MCA testing, we have also included our reporting from the 2023-24 World's Best Workforce (WBWF) Annual Report that includes our school's current goals pertaining to literacy and math, utilizing FastBridge in order to see the representation of all of our students rather than just those who elect to participate in MCA's.

All Students Ready for School

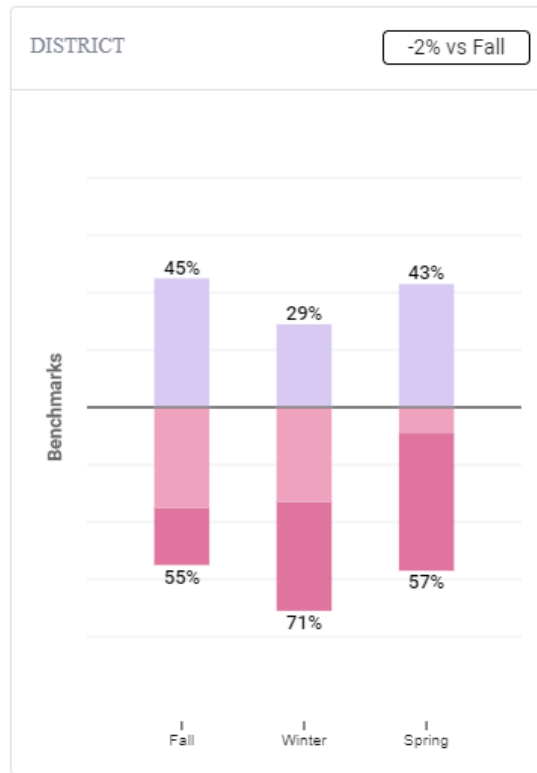
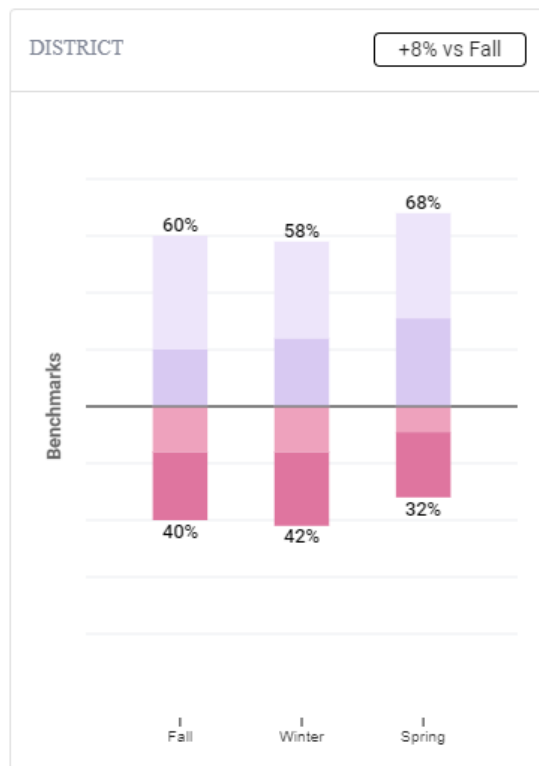
Does your district/charter enroll students in Kindergarten? If no, please skip to the next goal.

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2023-24 SY.</p> <p>Use Beginning of Year (BOY) data (FAST Early Math and Early Reading) to identify incoming kindergarten students in need of additional academic supports and set the baseline data for the year.</p>	<p>Provide the result for the 2023-24 SY that directly ties back to the established goal.</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)</p>

Reading Proficiency: Whole School

% of Ss @ benchmark: K-1 earlyReading

% of Ss @ benchmark: 2nd-8th aReading



All Students in Third Grade Achieving Grade-Level Literacy.

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2023-24 SY.</p> <p>All 3rd grade students will demonstrate average or above average growth on FASTBridge aReading assessment from fall to spring.</p> <p>The percent of 3rd graders scoring proficient (“low risk” or “college pathway”) on FASTBridge aReading assessment will grow from 62% (BOY) to 75% at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Provide the result for the 2022–23 SY that directly ties back to the established goal.</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)</p>

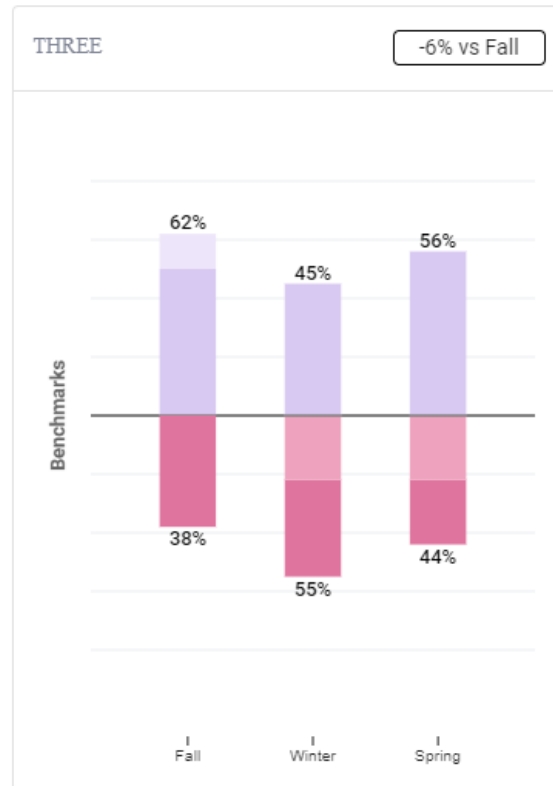
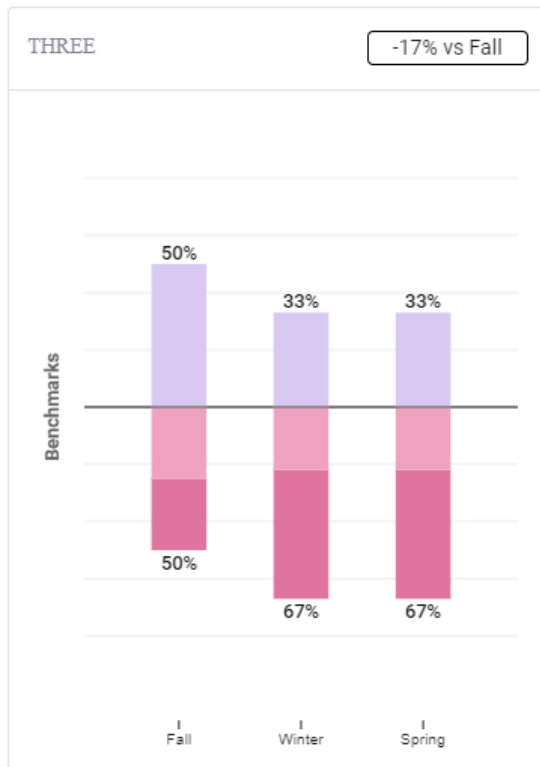
Goal	Result	Goal Status

For Spring 2024, only 38% of 3rd graders demonstrated average or above average growth in reading comprehension (aReading). However, in reading fluency, 63% of students showed average or above average growth. In spring 2024, 56% of students scored proficiency on aReading.

Reading Proficiency: 3rd grade

% of Ss @ benchmark: FLUENCY

% of Ss @ benchmark: COMP



Close the Achievement Gap(s) Between Student Groups

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2023-24 SY.</p> <p>Southside has a multiyear goal of identifying disparities that exist and developing plans to close those gaps.</p> <p>This year's component of that goal was to create the baseline data to use to set the gap closure goals in the coming year.</p> <p>Southside will attend to the educational debt owed to BIPOC students by centering the growth of those students.</p> <p>All BIPOC students will make average or above average growth in reading and math.</p>	<p>Provide the result for the 2022–23 SY that directly ties back to the established goal.</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)</p>

All Students Career and College-Ready by Graduation

Goal	Result	Goal Status
<p>Provide the established SMART goal for the 2023-24 SY.</p> <p>In grades 2-8, the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on the FastBridge aReading assessment will grow from 64% to 70%</p> <p>In grades 2-8, the percentage of students demonstrating proficiency on the FastBridge aMath</p>	<p>Provide the result for the 2022–23 SY that directly ties back to the established goal.</p> <p>2022 MCA Reading Proficiency: 61%</p> <p>2023 MCA Reading Proficiency: 58%</p> <p>2022 MCA Math Proficiency: 49%</p>	<p><i>Check one of the following:</i></p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not On Track (multi-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Goal Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Goal Not Met (one-year goal)</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Met All (multiple goals)</p>

Goal	Result	Goal Status
assessment will grow from 60% to 66%	2023 MCA Math Proficiency: 40%	<input type="checkbox"/> Met Some (multiple goals) <input type="checkbox"/> Met None (multiple goals)

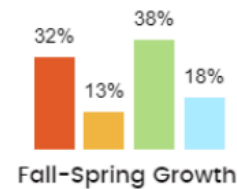
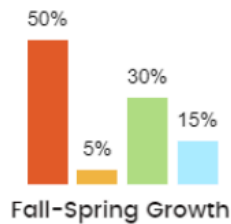
Reading Growth: Whole School

Growth by start score: K-1 earlyReading

Growth by start score: 2nd-8th aReading

Growth Of All Students In Group
By Normative Categories: ?

Growth Of All Students In Group
By Normative Categories: ?



■ 0-20th percentile ■ 20-30th percentile ■ 30th-85th percentile ■ 85th+ percentile

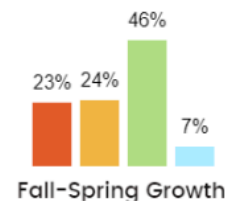
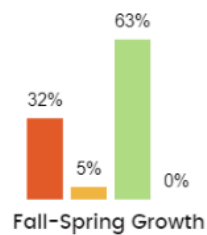
Math Growth: Whole School

Growth by start score: K-1 earlymath

Growth by start score: 2nd-8th aMath

Growth Of All Students In Group
By Normative Categories: ?

Growth Of All Students In Group
By Normative Categories: ?



■ 0-20th percentile ■ 20-30th percentile ■ 30th-85th percentile ■ 85th+ percentile

Section VIII: School Finances

Financial Health And Stability

Historically, the school's financial health and stability was demonstrated by a strong finance committee, a stable fund balance, the active engagement of board members with monthly financial reports, and a successful private donor campaign program. Between the years of 2020-2023, an interim leader and the school board passed a series of deficit budgets that resulted in a steady decline of the school's fund balance. Beginning in the 23-24 school year, the board and new school leadership began to assess the financial realities and made several significant financial decisions in order to end the year with a small surplus as opposed to the board approved and projected deficit of roughly \$225,000. To offset the projected deficit, the school sold a lot they owned near the school, made a withdrawal from an account at the Women's Foundation of Minnesota, and spent conservatively in every category.

Summary of FY23 Audit

As management of the Southside Family Charter School, Charter School No. 4162 (the Charter School), Minneapolis, Minnesota, we offer readers of the Charter School's financial statements this narrative overview and analysis of the financial activities of the Charter School for the fiscal year ended June 30, 2023.

The 2023 Annual Audit was conducted by Abdo, Eick & Meyers, LLP, and the Annual Financial Report was presented to and approved by the Board of Directors on January 23, 2024. The financial highlights outlined in the 2023 Financial Report include the following:

Financial Highlights

- The liabilities and deferred inflows of resources of the Charter School exceeded its assets and deferred outflows of resources at the close of the most recent fiscal year as shown in the summary of net position on the following pages. The unrestricted amount of net position may be used to meet the Charter School's ongoing obligations to students, parents, and creditors.
- The Charter School's total net position decreased by \$102,146 mainly due to a drop in students during the year.
- As of the close of the current fiscal year, the Charter School's governmental funds combined ending fund balances decreased in comparison with the prior year. The decrease is the result of a decline in enrollment and rising costs. At the end of the current fiscal year, unassigned fund balance for the General fund was \$155,682 or 6.8 percent of total General fund expenditures and within the Charter School's fund balance policy. This is a decrease from the previous year fund balance of \$443,629.

- The Charter Schools long-term liabilities decreased during the current year due to the retirement of lease payable.

Factors Bearing on the Charter School's Future

The Charter School is dependent on the State of Minnesota (the State) for its revenue authority. Recent experience demonstrates that legislated revenue increases have not been sufficient to meet instructional program needs and increased costs due to inflation. Thus far the Charter School has been able to meet their instructional program needs by budgeting conservatively. As a result, the Charter School has been able to adequately maintain a sufficient fund balance which will allow the Charter School to maintain normal operations. The Charter School will maintain its long-standing commitment to academic excellence and educational opportunity for students within a framework of financial fiduciary responsibility.

Internal Financial Controls

Beginning FY2022, SFCS contracted the professional services of Creative Planning Business Solutions to ensure internal controls of financial management were thorough and transparent. This was established to resolve a multi-year audit finding from previous audit years.

The board Finance Committee is composed of parent, staff and community member representatives, who meet monthly to review the school's financials. The committee provides comprehensive reports to the board each month (Income Statement, Cashflow Schedule, Balance Sheet, and Budget vs. Actual WADM) in advance of the board meeting, and sufficient time is taken to review financial information and discuss any questions raised by board members. The board also provides complete financial documents to its authorizer, Volunteers of America, on a monthly basis.

It is the policy of the SFCS Board of Directors to approve an annual budget prior to June 30 for the subsequent year, and utilize it as a guideline for revenues and expenditures over the course of the year. Actual revenues and expenditures compared to budget are reviewed at every board meeting. When there are significant revenue or expenditure changes during the year, the board may authorize a budget revision.

Section IX: Innovative Practices

Southside Family Charter School (SFCS) remained committed to innovation and organizational excellence during the 2023-24 school year. Below are some highlights of our accomplishments in this area.

Travel Studies. The school's commitment to a hands-on and authentic approach to history and social studies remains an innovative and unique practice. The school has incorporated many trips and projects that are exciting to the students. Parents and students are highly satisfied with the approach, and it continues to be a unique hallmark of Southside's mission-driven operations. In 2023-24, we were able to return to an out of state travel studies experience to Detroit. Students studied for four months about the philosophy, work, and community built through the labor and imagining of Jimmy and Grace Lee Boggs. Students then spent a week in Detroit with elders, activists, artists, teachers, and community members who have been struggling together for decades, building community solutions and relationships for liberation.

Social Justice Curriculum. The heart of the school's mission, social justice education, is woven into every subject and grade level. Teachers choose their own material and collaborate through learning teams to coordinate and integrate lessons throughout the student experience. Within this unique framework, students learn to view history, literature, and the sciences through the lenses of critical race theory and feminist theory, and from the perspective of marginalized populations. Students learn to question dominant narratives and build a deep understanding of the impact of power and privilege on social systems and the human experience.

Governance Model. The school employs a unique governance model that was developed by staff, parents, and community members to formalize our customary practice of empowering school staff through consensus-based decision-making. The model is founded on the principles of collaboration and non-hierarchical leadership. It includes extensive staff involvement in decision making processes through regular meetings, representation on the school's board of directors, and participation on the Cooperative Leadership Team.

Circles in Classrooms and Restorative Justice. Classrooms are organized around the principle of engaging students as leaders and active participants, and this is supported by the use of circles and restorative justice practices within the classroom. In circle discussions, students learn skills around problem solving, self-regulation, respect and equality, and emotional intelligence. These skills translate into restorative justice practices, which are implemented when an issue arises within the classroom that can benefit from collaborative problem solving to build community, repair harm and facilitate healing. In this setting, the teacher functions as the circle keeper,

facilitating collaboration and restorative practices, and students build these leadership skills as well.

Small Class Sizes. Southside Family Charter School continues to have small class sizes so they can give each student individualized attention and enable collaborative classroom practices. During 2023-2024, the school board voted on a class enrollment of 16-18 for grades 1-8 and 14-16 for Kindergarten attempting to balance financial sustainability and a longstanding commitment to small classes..

Family and Community Involvement. True to its name, Southside Family School works to sustain a sense of strong community and encourages family involvement at every opportunity. In addition to classroom-level and school-level communication with families and family engagement events throughout the school year, there is parent-majority board of directors and high family engagement in community and fundraising events. Parent-teacher conferences take place three times a year, and the school makes accommodations to families, whether in-person, over zoom or by phone, to increase accessibility.

Section X: Service Learning

Southside Family Charter School Service Learning Plan

Southside is dedicated to service learning and the opportunities it affords our students. SFCS features regular service learning activities as a central part of its social justice curriculum. We have developed specific goals to this end for each grade level.

K – 3rd grade Goal:

Students will gain an appreciation of what it means to give back to the community.

Example Activities: Group Neighborhood Cleanup. Making blankets to donate to organizations who distribute them to people experiencing homelessness

4th – 6th Grade Goal:

Students research an issue they feel passionate about to educate community members on solutions for community problems.

Example Activity: Students research various community practices that promote environmental stewardship and justice (biking or busing, recycling, composting, elimination of plastics, elimination of fossil fuel usage, etc). Through their research, students design policies for our school to implement and create a presentation to educate families and community members and changes they can make.

6th – 8th Grade Goal:

Students will partner with a community organization that is impacting social change on an issue they are passionate about. Students will learn about different methods of direct and indirect service and the importance of building community and coalition to create change.

Example Activity: Middle School students partner with a local organization on housing justice and have an opportunity to engage in conversations to impact city statutes, partnering with other organizations fighting for racial and economic justice, talking with local legislators, and participating in fundraising for affordable housing.

Section XI: Future Plans

Over the past five years, Southside has experienced compounding challenges from the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of racial uprisings and reckoning in South Minneapolis, and leadership transition. In May of 2023, SFCS successfully hired a new school administrator who will be working diligently to reground into the school's mission of social justice education by reestablishing community partnerships, reviving travel studies, and clearly articulating a community wide framework for restorative justice. In 2023-24, the school began to focus on meeting enrollment goals as the primary way to maintain financial stability and health. Over the next five years, SFCS will be working on plans for strategic recruitment strategies and increasing our student population to 160 students. This would mean we are fully enrolled at 18 students/grades 1-8 and 16 students/kindergarten. This is a sustainable increase that honors our long standing commitment to small class sizes to support relationship, belonging, and academic success.

A social justice curriculum is central to our school's educational model. The purpose of the curriculum is to educate children and the larger community about the underlying social problems that foster racism, sexism, classism and homophobia. By addressing social justice issues at an early age, the school encourages children to see themselves as citizen activists who can change the world and also helps children avoid internalizing the effects of discrimination. As part of the larger mission of incorporating social justice into a strong academic curriculum, the school aims to get students out into the world and to bring the world into classrooms. Accordingly, SFCS students regularly engage in community learning activities such as travel study, field trips, guest speakers and community events, all of which are supported by strong parent, family, and volunteer participation in the daily life of the school. We also believe that our work around healing justice is crucial for the 21st century. In this work with our students, we are practicing skills for antiracist social emotional learning (SEL that doesn't normalize/prioritize whiteness and values of white supremacy culture), restorative justice (understanding authentic accountability and the steps toward repair), identity development that centers dignity, and co-creating a community of care (practicing dignity, safety, and a sense of belonging so that all students feel an experience of social justice). A future and present of social justice is dependent upon communities who can both heal and repair together. Therefore, this was the focus of the 2023-24 school year supported by being a recipient of the Stronger Connections grant (3 year grant for \$385,000). The grant enabled the hiring of a Healing Justice Educator to help lead our community wide plan and process for healing/restorative justice. In 23-24, the focus was on growing a common language and understanding of restorative justice, gaining input from staff, students, and families on processes for repair and accountability, and supporting staff through professional development and co-teaching.

Finally, one of the primary goals of the 2023-24 school year was to document and publish a K-8 social justice curriculum for our community that will include both state academic standards and social justice standards. Embedded into the curriculum will be intentional community partnerships, local travel study (place based and justice oriented), and regional/national travel study that will intentionally support the learning outcomes and objectives for every grade level. This work happened in small collaborative teams over the course of the year and also in an intensive week of planning with the full teaching staff in July of 2024. In order to meet the goal of simultaneously reestablishing travel study and overall financial health, a strategic budgeting and fundraising plan will need to be created for 2024-25.