



**Submitted By**

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**Founder and Executive Director**

## **The School's Mission**

Imani Learning and Leadership Academy has decided that the mission of our educational organization is to develop cohorts of male scholars that are academically proficient in all subject areas; viewed as highly disciplined and respectful individuals; socially, culturally, and politically aware and involved; and finally viewed as resources and gatekeepers of their respective community. The Academy will employ parents, caregivers, community organizations, and other stakeholders to provide the necessary support and structure that will enable students to transfer what they learn in classrooms and connect it to the developing their local and global community

## **The Target Student Population**

The Academy has chosen to create educational institutions that will provide programs focused on male scholars residing in and around the urban corridor of Metropolitan St. Louis. These scholars will be students that either lives in the city of St. Louis or are eligible to attend City of St. Louis public schools under the guidelines of the voluntary transfer program. The scholars will be between the ages of 4 through 18 years old (Pre-K -12th Grade). Many of the scholars will be identified as members of three sub-groups or categories that historically apply to students attending schools in urban districts;

1. low performance in the areas of math or science or both
2. living in a single parent household, with mother or grand-parents being the primary caregiver
3. low income and eligible for free or reduced lunch

Thus, placing them in an additional sub-group “at risk” males. This sub-group is currently the most significant group among school-age students in the United States. The Schott Foundation Published the following about graduation and achievement rates of males in Missouri. In 2009-2010 school year 56% of the African American Males graduated compared to 81% of their White counterparts, a difference of 25%. For the 2011-2012 school years, 65% of the African American Males in the cohort graduated compare 84% of the White counterparts, a jump for both sub-groups but a difference of 21%. In the 2012-2013 school year, 66% of the African American males graduated compared to 85% of the White Males, a difference of 19%. The report did not have data for the 2010-2011 school year, and the latest release will not be out until next year. Over that four year reporting period there was an overall growth of 10% for African American Males compared to 4% growth for their White peers, but an average of 21.5% difference in the graduation rate yearly.

## **The School Design**

Imani Learning and Leadership School system will contain schools that are hybrid models that combine two different educational ideas. The first idea is to have a single gender school, and the second is to have a specialty school or school of focus. In all, there will be six all-male schools in the Imani School system; three of the schools will be elementary serving grades Pre-K thru 5th, two middle schools providing education services to students in grades 6th thru 8, and finally one high school. The academic or educational focus of the schools will be on the STEM disciplines and careers.

Due to educational funding laws, there no public gender-specific schools in Missouri. A google search reveals that there are currently 15 single-gender private male schools in the area, but none are Pre-K thru 12 educational organizations. These schools are:

- Abm Ministries-Lighthouse Christian Academy - RRs Box 34725, Piedmont, MO. 63957 (<http://www.abmlighthousechristianacademy.org/>)
- Agape Boarding School - 12998 E 1400 Rd, Stockton, MO 65785 (<http://agapeboardingschool.org/>)
- Anchor Academy - Po Box 124, Vanduser, MO 63784 (brothertrev@yahoo.com)
- Chaminade College Prep – 425 S. Lindbergh Blvd., St. Louis, MO. 63131 (<http://www.chaminade-stl.org/>)
- Christian Brother College High School – 1850 De Salle Dr., St. Louis, MO. 63141 (<http://www.cbchs.org/>)
- DeSmet Jesuit High School - 233 N New Ballas Rd, Saint Louis, MO 63141 (<http://www.desmet.org/>)
- Loyola Academy - 3851 Washington Blvd, Saint Louis, MO 63108 ([www.loyolaacademy.org](http://www.loyolaacademy.org))
- Missouri Military Academy, 204 N. Grand St., Mexico, MO. 65265 (<http://www.missourimilitaryacademy.org/>)
- Missouri Torah Institute - 14550 Ladue Rd, Chesterfield, MO 63017
- Rockhurst High School - 9301 State Line Rd, Kansas City, MO 64114 (<http://www.rockhursths.edu/>)
- St. John Vianney High School - 1311 S Kirkwood Rd, Kirkwood, MO 63122 (<http://www.vianney.com/>)
- St. Louis Priory School - 500 S Mason Rd, Saint Louis, MO 63141 (<http://www.priory.org/>)
- St. Louis University High School - 4970 Oakland Ave, Saint Louis, MO 63110 (<http://www.sluh.org/>)
- Teen Harvest – HC 71 Box 352, Ava MO. 65608 (<http://www.teenharvest.com/>)
- Torah Prep School - 609 North and South Rd, Saint Louis, MO 63130

In the metropolitan area of Missouri, there are three STEM schools listed, these schools are

- Frontier STEM High School (KCPS) <https://www.frontierstem.org/>  
6455 E-Commerce Ave, Kansas City, MO 6412
- Gateway STEM High School (SLPS) <https://www.slps.org/gatewaySTEM>  
Dr. Amy Phillips, principal [amy.phillips@slps.org](mailto:amy.phillips@slps.org)
- Hawthorn Leadership School for Girls <https://www.hawthornschoool.org/>  
1901 N Kingshighway Blvd, St. Louis, MO 63113

Several other schools in the area have STEM programs but are not considered STEM SCHOOLS.

The academic focus of our school will be STEM, and the instructional structure of the program will be modeled after the educational initiative launched by the Indiana Department of Education and its partnering organizations ([www.doe.in.gov/ccr/indiana-stem-education-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics](http://www.doe.in.gov/ccr/indiana-stem-education-science-technology-engineering-and-mathematics)). Indiana is one of few states that have STEM Certified schools. For the schools to receive this title, they must apply for this certification and complete a rigorous process. We have no plans on applying for their certification, but we will implement the key components of the initiative. There are

four different phases or stages of STEM classroom implementation outlined in the Matrix of the initiative; these will be used in the structure of our schools.

The Imani Learning and Leadership Academy will begin with a cohort of Pre K thru second-grade boys. Each year we will add students (Pre-K thru second) to the school according to a staggered predetermined schedule. The goal is to ultimately operate three elementary schools, one middle school, and one high school. Each school will open at a staggered pre-determined time over a ten year period.

### **A day in the life of the school for students, staff, and parents**

Implementing three different levels of STEM infusion or models in the system. Due to the various STEM infusion models, the structure of the school day will look on differently depending on the campus. The following link will provide you with information that gives insight into our three educational models <http://www.doe.in.gov/sites/default/files/ccr/indiana-framework-stem-educationv2.pdf>. The common factor at all the schools is that students will be exposed to all academic areas of study.

### **Expected Outcomes**

#### Academic

The goal of the organization is to have an educational system with graduation rates at or above the national and state average. According to information published by the America's Promise Organization, in there GradNation report the state average is 87.8%. As stated above according to the Scott Report from 2009 to 2013 there was a 10% growth in the graduation rate of African American Male students, but an average of 21.5% difference in the graduation rate yearly. These stats are directly related to the educational preparation that is done at the Pre-K through the 8<sup>th</sup>-grade level. Our academic goal is to make sure the students leave elementary school and enter middle at or above grade level by at least one academic year. Additionally, to be satisfied with the STEM curriculum they will have to be performing at the proficient and advanced level entering middle school in the areas of math and science.

#### Operational/Financial

Our success as a charter school is going to depend mainly on our ability to manage our funds and operate an organization that is fiscally responsible, as well as academically accountable. Our school system has as a financial team in place that is familiar with corporate banking, 501c3 funding, purchasing and payroll, business investments, tax breaks and special funding programs for investors. From the operational perspective, we have individuals that have and or currently working in schools that or doing the work of effectively educating students, engaging the stakeholders, and running buildings and campuses efficiently.

#### Governance

The Academy will have one board; it will serve in the capacity of a traditional school board helping to develop and maintain a policy that will ensure the successful operation of the school. Additionally, the board will work to secure funding for goods, services, and programs not funded through the traditional means and sources. The boards will also serve as the critical voice regarding the quality of service we provide to our students, their families, and the communities in which they live.

Additionally, there be sub-committees made up of staff, students, parents, and community partners. Each of these groups will play a critical role in the development, operation, and maintenance of the school and its culture.

### **Explanation of how the school design can produce those stated outcomes**

The background and skill set of the board, foundational team, and beginning teachers and leadership will make sure that the school maintains the overall focus on student achievement. The finance team's background in banking and 501c3 funding management will help to ensure that we stay fiscally responsible and able to operate in a safe financial space. Because of the engaging learning styles of male students, the interactive curriculum, hands-on materials, state of the art equipment, and STEM-based school design will provide the activity and engagement needed to ensure meaningful and authentic learning experiences. Additionally, teachers will be able to access the learning in some different ways, outside of the standardized assessments.

### **The School's innovation**

Imani Learning and Leadership will be the first all-male Pre-K thru 12th school system in the state of Missouri, public, private, or charter. The rationale for this is to ensure that the students have 14 years of educational programming that is

- 1) designed with their learning styles in mind,
- 2) academically structured to provide engaging activities and learning opportunities;
- 3) and allow for the development of social skills that enable male students to communicate and learn with like-minded peers.

The next innovation is in the educational design model being used. We are using a hybrid of a model that was introduced in Arizona and then recently adopted in Indiana with their STEM Initiative. There are four models of STEM immersion, but we will only be implementing two during the school day, and one as part of the after-school and summer programming. Detailed information outlining each of these models can be found at the link provided above. In short, it has been decided that the "Partial STEM Immersion" model will be used in the elementary schools, and the "Full STEM Immersion" models will be used at the middle and high schools. Because of the foundational needs of the Pre-K thru 2<sup>nd</sup> grades, design decisions are still being decided.

### **The Founding Team**

#### **501c3 Board Members**

Christopher M. Young-El, Ed. D Registered Agent/Board of Directors  
Naeem Ahmad Whitaker President/Board of Directors  
Shonta M. Smith, Ed.D. Vice President/Board of Directors  
Tera Roberts Finance Accounting  
Twanna L. Hill, Esquire Education/Legal Secretary

Identified Staff:

Christopher M. Young-El, Ed. D - CEO/Founding Principal  
Tera Roberts -Director of Human Resources  
Christina Hughes, Ed. D -Science Curriculum Coordinator  
Tiffanni Durham, Ed. D -Math Curriculum Coordinator (Pending)  
Pamela Atkinson-Hamilton, Ed. D -Technology Curriculum Coordinator (Pending)  
Helene Sherman, Ed. D – Math Curriculum Consultant  
Charles Granger, Ph. D - Science Curriculum Consultant  
Keith Miller, Ph. D – Technology Curriculum Consultant

A description of the capacity to open and operate the school

The current team, board, and identified staff, has over an astonishing 200 years of experience in the classroom at the elementary, middle, high school, and colligate level; and an additional 100 years in some educational leadership or administrative capacity.

Dr. Atkinson-Hamilton, Dr. Shona Smith, Naeem Whittaker, and I collectively have over thirty years of educational leadership experience at Pre-K thru 12th-grade levels. This experience includes serving as building level principal, assistant principal, subject area coach, and grade level chairperson. Also, the team has received the following collective degrees; Bachelors of Art/Science Degree in Elementary Education, Master’s Degree in Educational Administration; Educational Specialist Degree with a focus on Administration; Doctorate Degree in Education with a Focus in Curriculum and Leadership.

Dr. Atkinson-Hamilton, Dr. Durham, Dr. Hughes, and I are all recent graduates of the STEM Cohort of 2017 at UMSL under the direction of the three above mentioned professors. Dr. Granger, Dr. Miller, and Dr. Sherman are all faculty in the School of Education at UMSL and were my professors in my recent STEM Cohort. Each of them has worked with local school districts on some teacher training and curriculum focus initiatives. Their background will provide the backdrop to ensure that all the educators receive proper training for efficient content delivery. This team was purposely put together because of the relationship we have developed over the course of our program.

Additionally, each member of the existing team brings to the table with them a group of resources and supporters. These individuals are stationed ready to bring all their resources to the table to ensure the Imani Learning and Learning LLC, and all it school campuses and program are a success