



SLIT Prep Academy
"Turning *Risk* into **Promise**"

The School's Mission

The mission of the St. Louis Institute of Technology Preparatory Academy (SLIT) is to provide a uniquely designed STEAM program that academically challenges male learners, “Turning *Risk* into **Promise**” by promoting high standards and high expectations in a structured and supportive environment. We are ensuring that every learner is exposed to Coding, Robotics, Drone Technology and Digital Arts instruction, preparing them for secondary and post-secondary graduation and entry into the workforce with 21st century skill sets.

The Target School Population

The SLIT Prep Academy has chosen to design a charter school to increase male learners' engagement in STEAM related instruction and career fields. SLIT Prep Academy learners will be male students that live within the proposed attendance zone of said school. Learners will be between grades kindergarten thru 12th grade, with grades K thru 8 setting the stage for enrollment in year one. Many of the learners 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 and literacy
2. living in a single parent household, with mother or grandparents being the primary caregiver, homeless, foster care and/or at-risk.
3. low income and eligible for free or reduced lunch
4. learners facing recurring issues from PTSD/Hood Disease

Thus, placing them in a forth sub-group, “at risk” males, the most significantly impacted group among school-age students in the United States. Poverty is a likely experience for these learners where the absence of adequate resources and supports is a concern. According to the Missouri Foundation in Health, children in poverty are more likely to suffer from poor health, leading to poor educational outcomes and a lack of opportunities later in life. A 2011 research study show that an estimated 34.3% of African American families with children under age 18 fall below the poverty level. This is nearly three times the rate for white families (15.5%). One reason for this disparity is the large number of African American families headed by females only.

Research conducted by www.blackdemographics.com, a top resource for information regarding African Americans, from 2002-2009 the four-year graduation rate increased from 52.8% to 57.4% for black males compared to 59.4% to 63.6% for black girls. Further, in 2013 black males ages 16 to 64 had a lower participation rate in the labor force of 67% compared to ‘all males’ fairing at 80%. Black males ages 16-64 who worked full time had median earnings of \$37,290 in 2013 compared to \$48,099 for ‘all men’. Only 42% of working black men held white collar jobs compared to 75% of ‘all men’. White collar occupations include but are not limited to jobs in management, business, computers, office, legal, education, while blue collar occupations, comprised of 36% of working black males ages 16-64, include employment in construction, maintenance and repair, installation, production and transportation. Service occupations include healthcare support, protective service, food preparation and serving. According to the

study, although 51% of black men have never been married 50% of ‘all men’ are currently married. Black men are also slightly more likely to be separated from their spouses (4%) compared to all men at 3%. In addition, black men are much less likely to outlive their wives and therefore are less likely to be widowed (3%) compared to 10% of ‘all men’.

From poverty to education, employment to relationships, the trajectory for at-risk males continues to detrimentally lag other key subgroups. Hence, leading them to minimal education accomplishments, limited career options and opportunities the dire need to launch SLIT Prep Academy specifically designed to strengthen basic skills, stretch opportunities to think critically and engage in STEAM curricula. Thus, preparing SLIT learners for success in post-secondary education and careers. SLIT Prep Academy will implement a social emotional learning model that will include counseling for stress related behaviors attributed by PTSD/Hood Disease.

The School Design

SLIT Prep Academy will contain elements of past and current hybrid educational models that combine multi-faceted educational ideas. The first idea will embrace all male gender school embedded with STEAM principles and a deeper knowledge of Coding, Drone Technology and Robotics thematic approaches to learning. Overall, SLIT will consist of one charter school serving grades K-12 over a period of 5 years. Each year we will add students (9-12) to the school according to a staggered predetermined schedule. Although there are other all male gender schools in St. Louis County, SLIT Prep Academy will offer one of a kind special programming that differentiates the needs of the population it intends to serve. ALL 9-12 students will participate in the SLIT ROTC Program starting in 9th grade - 12.

SLIT Prep Academy is a non-traditional charter school that provides intentional levels of support for male learners who find themselves underachieving in core courses required for graduation. Due to the climate of poverty, violence, drugs and gangs in urban communities, these students yearn for specific resources to help them navigate stressors of anxiety, anger, depression, suicide and other issues that attribute to symptoms of post traumatic stress disorder. Plainly put, there is simply no place for them in a traditional school setting.

These are also students whose life challenges and experiences prevented them from mastering the 4 cores of education. Upon enrollment, each SLIT Prep Academy learner will receive their own Individualized Learning Plan, customized to help them reach and/or exceed their grade level achievement benchmarks. These goals will be developed as a cooperative effort among the student, their teacher, their counselor, and their parents.

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

At SLIT Prep Academy the day will contain a unique model that integrates two different educational concepts: The academic focus of our school will be STEAM, and the instructional structure of the program will be inclusively built on early on relations building activities. You can see throughout the day students engaged in the classrooms, walking the campus in a controlled respective manner. You can see parent s volunteering and having collegial conversations with staff and other volunteers in the parents educational hub office. You will also see the staff nurturing and giving students feedback on education

but more importantly being relational, real and relevant so that their process during rigorous instruction leads to massive results that close the achievement gap. Lastly daily you will see our students participating in DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) Program. Everyday for 30 minutes the entire campus shuts down and commits to 30 minutes of silent reading.

Expected Outcomes

Academic

Goal 1: SLIT Prep will perform above the level that would place it on the priority schools list. The school will meet all targets (current and state performance Targets). Students will demonstrate proficiency and improvement over prior years' performance.

Measure 1: During each year of the charter term learners will take the NWEA reading test four times a year showing an increase in their Lexile reading score by 5%.

Measure 2: During each year of the charter learners will show an average 10% quarterly gain in base knowledge of the core classes through formative assessments.

Measure 3: SLIT Prep will increase the baseline scores on the coding curriculum that is being used through our Code-Crew collaborative.

Goal 2: SLIT Prep will demonstrate post high school readiness.

Measure 1: Students will score within 10% of the state average meets or exceeds pass rate on the Missouri high school writing test each year for first time test takers.

Measure 2: 100% of all students will complete a college inventory survey.

Measure 3: 90% of students will read at and/or above grade level if they stay within our educational program for 5 years minimum.

Goal 3: SLIT will work to increase the average daily attendance

Measure 1: The charter will increase the initial baseline attendance rate by 10% per year.

Measure 2: 95% of will work with their teacher and parents on their ILP (Individualized Learning Plan) on a monthly basis; which includes academic, attendance, career, reading and testing goals that will guide the student toward graduation and college acceptance.

Measure 3: SLIT Prep will increase the parent involvement by 25% per year from the baseline parent engagement entry points that will be tracked with our technology systems.

Operational / Financial / Governance

To ensure effective organizational planning and financial stability, the governing board will periodically review the school's performance and alignment to the mission and charter. The governing board will maintain a close relationship with the principal and the CFO, who will produce timely reports that include but are not limited to testing results, enrollment, and financial reports, which can be indicators of the strengths and weaknesses of the school. The governing board should actively work with the staff and administration to devise a strategic plan for the school, while also sharing this plan with the parents and the community at large. The governing board will have the following three areas: (1) Academic Achievement; (2) Fiscal Health; (3) Operational Compliance. SLIT Prep Academy will adhere to

Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP) and applicable mandates of state and federal law and ensure that the school's financial policies are in line with state and federal laws and best practices.

The School's Innovation

In addition to the unique STEAM knowledge and experiences of the SLIT Academy staff, we have acquired a partnership with Code-Crew. Code-Crew expose students to producing technology providing them extensive training that keeps them interested and engaged across every subject and grade level. The subjects include mobile app development, web app development, game development, robotics, and drone programming, all while teaching fundamental computer science concepts that apply long term to all levels of the field. We believe the Code-Crew addition will add an immense amount of value further encouraging our male learners to attain a deep interest in STEAM learning and related careers.

SLIT Prep Academy will also apply a laser focus on strengthening male learners' social and emotional learning skill sets, beliefs and values. The 2000 report from the Justice Policy Institute titled *Cellblocks or Classrooms? The Funding of Higher Education and Corrections and Its Impact on African American Men* found that more African-American males were under the jurisdiction of a federal, state, or local penal system (791,600) than were enrolled in higher education (603,032). (American Council on Education, 2018). The study of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and their negative repercussion on adult health outcomes is well documented. In a population of insured Californians, a dose-response relationship has been demonstrated among 10 ACEs and a host of chronic physical health, mental health, and behavioral outcomes. Less widely studied is the prevalence of these ACEs in the lives of juvenile offenders, and the effect of ACEs on children. Within the study contained 13,000 white, black and hispanic males where 81% reported experiences of family violence, 78% separation or divorce, 65% household member incarceration and 31% emotional neglect and abuse. This brings us to the dire need to ensure SLIT learners are protected and supported with social emotional learning interventions and strategies to successfully guide them from their elementary years through to STEAM careers after college.

The Founding Team 501c3 Board Members

MDonnell Tenner Registered Agent/Board of Directors

Dr. Keith Stephenson President/Board of Directors

Dr. Afina Lockhart Vice President/Board of Directors

Natasha Woodard Executive Secretary

Bishop Calvin Scott / Community Advocate Board Member

Chuck Hoots / K12 Advisor / Board of Directors

Donna Price

Dr. Jerri Johnson / Board of Directors

Identified Staff:

Dr. Leslie Bonner / Founding Principal / Staffing

Donna Price -Human Resources

Dr. Lockhart -Curriculum & Programming Coordinator

Bishop Calvin Scott - Community Engagement

Dr. Jerri Johnson - Staffing and Hiring

Dr. Stephenson - Educational Training