



**Application to the  
Missouri Charter Public School Commission**

**Respectfully Submitted by:**

Atlas Public Schools' Founding Board of Directors

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## Executive Summary

The mission of Atlas Public Schools is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so that all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. Our mission was created in partnership with families, community members, and fellow educators. We envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits to be successful in the 21st century and where St. Louis is a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. At Atlas, we leverage the unique resources of our amazing city to provide unforgettable learning opportunities for our kids. Our school model is designed not only to ensure that our students are academically exceptional, but are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, and collaborative team members.

Located in the racially and socio-economically diverse, accessible, and resource-rich St. Louis Central Corridor, Atlas will enroll a group of 130 kindergarten and first grade students beginning in the Fall of 2021. Atlas will grow one grade per year, ultimately serving a community of 468 diverse students, kindergarten-fifth grade. To date, we have received 22 letters of support from community members, as well as over 360 signatures supporting Atlas' opening. Atlas will achieve its mission through implementing a model centered on the following key components:

**Place-Based Learning:** Place-based learning is the process of harnessing the richness of the local community and environment as both a starting point for inquiry and as a context for exploring and applying concepts and skills across the curriculum.

**Diverse-by-Design:** Atlas' staff and student population reflects the diversity of our city across race, income, and cultural backgrounds. Our commitment to diversity extends beyond recruitment to our anti-bias, anti-racist approach to curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion and ongoing professional development for our team.

**Year-Round Education:** At Atlas, we create an equitable learning environment that sets all students up for success. Our year-round model is broken up into seven academic sessions, each consisting of approximately five weeks of instruction followed by a two week intersession break. During intersession breaks, students have the opportunity to participate in free enrichment programs.

**Investing in Educators:** To effectively execute our mission, we need an incredible team of educators. At Atlas, we work hard to provide our staff with an excellent educator experience, from scheduling and coaching, to resources and compensation.

As a result of our innovative school model, not only do Atlas kids love coming to school, but they are equipped with the critical thinking and problem solving skills needed to thrive in the 21st century. Our students flourish because we focus on educating the whole child, and are committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective educators.

## Technical Review Checklist

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## **A.1 - Mission, Vision, Philosophy & Goals**

Atlas Public Schools is applying to open a K-5 Local Educational Agency (LEA) in the Fall of 2021 in the heart of St. Louis' Central Corridor. Atlas will launch with kindergarten and first grade, and grow an additional grade each year; by 2025-2026 we will be a K-5 elementary school. We will partner with the St. Louis community to meet our goals and fulfill our mission.

### **Our Mission**

**The mission of Atlas Public Schools is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with authentic, real-world experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond.**

We aim to intentionally recruit and serve a diverse set of students from across the city of St. Louis, mirroring the richness of cultures in the city. Atlas will create a rigorous learning community that is embedded in meaningful real-world contexts, and where children are deliberately taught to see the connections between school and the world. We know that all children are capable of thriving academically, emotionally, and socially, and deserve a learning environment that acknowledges who they are as a learner. Our school embodies a mix of backgrounds, instructional approaches and people. We are driven by equity and will have systems and people in place to set all students up for success academically, socially and emotionally. Atlas offers free year-round educational opportunities that are strategically designed to promote a deep love of learning in our students. We leverage the unique resources of our amazing city to provide unforgettable learning opportunities for our kids. As a result, not only do Atlas students love coming to school, but they are equipped with the 21st century skills such as creativity and critical thinking that they need to thrive. Our students flourish because we focus on educating the whole child, and are committed to recruiting, developing, and retaining highly effective educators.

### **Our Vision**

**At Atlas we envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed to be successful in the 21st century, and where St. Louis is heralded as a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. We believe that high quality public schools will be the catalyst for community transformation that will result in a thriving city.**

## Core Values

**Joy:** We love coming to school. We enthusiastically celebrate our success and each other.

**Equity:** We celebrate working with others across lines of difference. We challenge our own assumptions, and seek to make the world more just.

**Integrity:** We do the right thing, even when nobody's watching. We are honest, keep our commitments, and take responsibility for our actions.

**Excellence:** We have a growth mindset and learn from our mistakes to grow stronger. We focus on achieving our goals, and when we reach them, we raise the bar even higher.

**Stewardship:** We are change-makers. We are empowered to be active citizens and work to make a difference in our community.

## Educational Philosophy

Below are the five pillars of Atlas' educational philosophy. Each pillar is upheld in every element of our school design, and manifests in our work with students, families, educators, and the community.

### **We Celebrate Diversity & Practice Equity**

At the root of our educational philosophy, we believe that all children are capable of thriving academically, emotionally, and socially, and deserve a learning environment that acknowledges who they are as a learner and takes into account their specific strengths and areas for growth. We acknowledge the importance of diversity within our classrooms and believe that every student is unique and should be celebrated for what makes them special. For example, at Atlas we celebrate diversity during community circles each day and at awards banquets that take place at the end of each academic session. We are also intentional about identifying systems of oppression and strategically working to dismantle them. At Atlas, equity means that every child receives exactly what they need to be successful, even if that varies across lines of difference, so that each individual student has an equal chance to thrive. By providing equitable outputs of time, resources, and positive experiences for students, we will work towards accomplishing educational equity so that a child's outcome (i.e. well-being, academic proficiency, college graduation rate, future income) is not predetermined by race, socio-economic status, or any other factor.

### **We Learn Through Meaningful, Real-World Experiences**

We seek to instill a true love of learning in each of our students that lasts well beyond their elementary school experience. At Atlas, we believe that students learn best when they are engaged in experiences that are relevant and allow them to apply their prior knowledge in meaningful ways. Through place-based education, students learn locally in the natural, built, historic, and cultural

environment. By grounding the learning in real-world topics and authentic experiences, we give students the opportunity to work collaboratively, think critically, and be true problem solvers. We believe that when students are challenged, engaged in the learning, and a part of a joyful learning community that they are more likely to develop a life-long love of learning.

### **We Acknowledge the Power of Excellent Educators**

We know and value the role quality educators play in our students' trajectory, and believe that there is a direct correlation between teacher quality and the overall success of our students. We believe that we must recruit, develop, and retain high quality teachers who are equipped with the resources, structure, and creative autonomy needed to support all students. Teaching can be extremely challenging and educators often feel undervalued and overworked. At Atlas, we encourage our teachers to work in cycles by giving them time to reflect and grow stronger, and have developed systems for intellectual preparation, collaboration, support. These structures are designed to help ensure that each of our teachers have the skills and resources needed to be successful while maintaining a healthy work-life balance.

### **We Hold High Expectations while Instilling a Growth Mindset**

At Atlas, we know that all kids are capable of rigorous work when given the differentiation and support needed to be successful. Based on this belief, we set high expectations and lofty goals for each of our students. Our team works alongside students and their families to provide the targeted instruction our students need to accomplish their goals. That said, we know that there will still be times when our students will undoubtedly struggle. This is why we will work to instill a growth mindset in our students. Because we know that each of our students is capable of accomplishing amazing things, we will never lower the bar when a student does not reach their goal. Instead, we work as a team to reflect, strategize and determine next steps so that each of our students thrive.

### **We Build Community Through Partnerships**

We believe that student success is a shared responsibility that requires a strong partnership between families, the community, and the school. The most important partnership Atlas has is with our families. We know that families love their children and want them to be successful. We appreciate the fact that parents and families know their children best. Together we will work to support each child so that they will learn to their fullest potential. Through partnerships with revered community organizations such as the Grand Center Arts District, Saint Louis University, and Forest Park Forever we will provide students opportunities to engage with the city and its rich resources. In addition, non-profit partners will work to provide basic resources and wraparound services to help ensure every child who attends Atlas has the foundation they need to thrive.

## School Innovation

At Atlas, we are reimagining what the traditional school experience looks like for students, families, and educators. We know that educators are working hard all across St. Louis, yet after engaging with families and community members, we agree that more has to be done to provide an equitable education for all students. As a result, we have spent the past two years visiting 67 schools across the country to gain inspiration and learn best practices. At Atlas, we are incorporating lessons learned from the fields of education, organizational leadership, and non-profit development while pushing ourselves to think outside of the box, moving beyond mere improvement to true school innovation.

The following four tenets of our school design highlight the structures we will put in place to ensure that our students flourish through learning experiences that are rooted in community context and driven by students' needs. We believe that these components, when integrated together and done well, will provide a world-class education for our students.

### Place-Based Learning

The major question facing schools across the county is how to best prepare our children for the ever-changing world they are entering. Students must develop the skills, understandings, and mindsets necessary to prepare them for the careers and challenges of tomorrow. We know that students need multiple and varied strategic opportunities to explore, practice, and perfect 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, citizenship, character, critical thinking, and creativity<sup>1</sup>. Children learn by doing and emphasizing hands-on, real-world experiences makes learning more meaningful to students and helps lessons stick. For these reasons, Atlas strives to connect lessons learned in the classroom with authentic, place-based learning experiences.

Place-based learning is the process of using the local community and environment as both a starting point for inquiry and as a context for exploring and applying concepts and skills across the curriculum. Place-based education weaves together concepts from English Language Arts, math, science, social studies, and the arts, rather than teaching them exclusively in isolation. Place-based units are embedded with opportunities for students to practice 21st century skills. See A.2 - *Curriculum & Instruction* for more information on place-based learning.

### Diverse-by-Design

We want to prepare our students for the world in which they live, by teaching them to talk, work, and respect those across lines of difference. Across America, schools are more segregated today than they were in the 1960s. This particularly rings true for schools in St. Louis, as segregation in schools is closely tied to

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on 21st century skills, see:  
<https://bookcreator.com/2017/10/what-are-the-6cs-and-why-are-they-important/>

segregation in housing patterns and attendance zone lines.<sup>2</sup> Research that spans the past 50 years suggests that racial and socioeconomic integration is one of the best design principles for a successful school.<sup>3</sup> Diverse schools produce high results for both students and society, and research shows all students benefit from learning in a diverse environment. By creating an intentionally diverse elementary school, Atlas' staff and student population will reflect the diversity of our city across race, income, and cultural backgrounds. Our facility's centralized location will allow us to recruit a diverse group of families who reside in and around the Central Corridor.

However, our commitment to diversity extends beyond recruitment to our Anti-bias, Antiracist (ABAR) approach to curriculum and instruction, schoolwide practices that promote equity, and ongoing professional development for our team. Ultimately, we will create a diverse, inclusive and equitable community that 1) serves as a model of what is possible in schools, businesses, and organizations throughout the St. Louis region. 2) prepares Atlas students to become allies, champions, and change makers who are prepared with the skills and conviction needed to be effective leaders for equity throughout the city. 3) works together to accomplish our school's mission and long-term vision.

### **Year-Round Education**

The majority of schools in St. Louis follow an agrarian calendar, with two 13-week semesters followed by 12 weeks of vacation during the summer months. This traditional school calendar was created for a previous era with significantly different economic and social priorities, but no longer reflects the needs of most families today, nor does it set students up for success. Research shows that the achievement gap widens during the summer break.<sup>4</sup> Students from low income backgrounds lose on average two to three months of reading and math achievement, while students from middle and high-income backgrounds make gains in their development. Summer break is an extremely inequitable time for youth, especially for those who are not exposed to learning or extracurricular opportunities.

At Atlas, we aim to create an equitable learning environment that sets all students up for success. Our year-round model is broken up into seven academic sessions. Each session consists of roughly five weeks of rigorous academic instruction followed by a two week intersession break. This schedule has been adopted by another local charter school in an effort to avoid the "summer slide" and maximize instructional time. The winter and spring breaks will be closely aligned with the St. Louis Public Schools' calendar, and while our summer break is not as long, a portion will overlap with their calendar as well to ensure our students are able to spend time with family. During the two-week intersession breaks, student programming is available and provided by community partners such as

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<sup>2</sup> Potter, H. and Quick, K. (2018). *Diverse-by-Design Charter Schools*. [online] The Century Foundation. Available at: <https://tcf.org/content/report/diverse-design-charter-schools/?agreed=1> [Accessed 23 Sep. 2019].

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> CSBA Guide: Summer Learning Matters. (2016). [online] Summer Matters. Retrieved from <http://www.summermatters.net/csba-guide-summer-learning-matters/>. [Accessed 23 Sep. 2019].

Unleashing Potential, LitShop, COCA, Building Futures, Little Medical School, and Circus Harmony. This helps accommodate families' work schedules as well as provide additional learning opportunities for kids.

## **Investing in Educators**

To effectively execute our mission, we know that it starts with an incredible team of educators. In order to have thriving students, we need thriving teachers. At Atlas, we work hard to provide our staff with an excellent educator experience, from scheduling and coaching, to resources and compensation. For decades research has shown that human capital is the single most significant in-school factor for improving student achievement.<sup>5</sup> At Atlas, we seek to recruit, develop, and retain talented educators who maximize every student's academic and personal potential.

By providing significant resources and support, Atlas will develop, attract and retain exceptional teachers, and equip them with the tools and infrastructure needed to help their students succeed. By utilizing best practices, homeroom teachers at Atlas will receive:

- a rigorous base curriculum,
- two 50 minute plan times each day,
- designated time to internalize and customize their lesson plans,
- time to participate in regular data team meetings,
- personalized coaching with feedback from a mentor,
- a school calendar that builds in more than 30 full days of professional development.

While many of the items mentioned above are considered best practices, what puts teachers at Atlas on a different trajectory is the 30 full days of professional development that has been built into our school's yearly calendar during intersession breaks and is reflected in our staff's salary. For teachers, the first week of the intersession break will offer opportunities for professional growth. Teachers will have time to reflect on lessons, analyze data, and plan for the next academic cycle. Moreover, teachers will be able to participate in professional development opportunities that are aligned with the school's strategic priorities and are designed to help them grow as educators. Each intersession also has vacation time built in for staff, giving teachers more frequent opportunities to rest and grow stronger. By embedding more frequent opportunities for professional development as well as time off for staff, we are creating a more sustainable work-life balance for our team members.

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<sup>5</sup> Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). [\*A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.\*](#) Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

## Target Population

As a tuition-free, diverse-by-design public charter school, Atlas is committed to serving the students of St. Louis and is open to all children living within the city's borders. When fully grown, Atlas will enroll kindergarten through fifth grade students with the possible addition of an early childhood program. While the exact location of our facility has not been finalized, Atlas aims to be strategically located in the heart of St. Louis' Central Corridor, preferably in either the 63108 or 63110 zip code. This area is comprised of roughly five distinct neighborhoods: The Central West End, Grand Center, The Hill, Forest Park Southeast, and Shaw. Atlas aims to be an institutional asset to these neighborhoods so our lottery policy gives preference to students living in the 63108 and 63110 zip codes.

The Founding Team<sup>6</sup> at Atlas is committed to enrolling a diverse student population that reflects the demographics of the city. From meetings with parents, community leaders and other stakeholders, we have learned that there is a demand for more intentionally diverse, high quality, public school options in St. Louis. Parents<sup>7</sup> have overwhelmingly voiced their desire for more inclusive schools. This is why Atlas chooses to be diverse-by-design and have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status and race/ethnicity.

Atlas' curriculum, teaching methods and services are designed specifically to meet the educational needs of our target student population. Atlas believes, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that all students are capable of excellence and can learn at high levels when supported properly. Atlas aims to develop students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars. In order to ensure that all students realize our graduate aims, we put supports and structures in place that are tailored to meet the needs of each individual student.

## Graduate Profile

**Creative and Critical Thinkers:** Our graduates think outside of the box. They see every opportunity as a learning experience and approach vexing challenges with perseverance and creativity.

**Lifelong Learners:** Our graduates have a true passion for learning. They are insatiably curious and question everything. Our graduates are self-aware and can identify both their strengths, and areas for growth. They are highly motivated and have the ability, and desire, to self-direct their learning. They have a growth mindset and work hard. They show academic grit and do not give up. Our students are ambitious goal setters and know how to stay organized in order to achieve their goals.

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<sup>6</sup> The term "Founding Team" refers to Atlas' Co-Founders, Colby Heckendorn and Genevieve Backer

<sup>7</sup> The terms "family" and "parent" are used throughout this document to refer to people who are the primary caregivers, guardians, or significant adults in the lives of children.

**Culturally Competent Citizens:** Our graduates know why diversity is important and why it makes the world a better place. Our graduates know who they are and what makes them unique. Students use culture as a vehicle for learning.

**Well-Rounded Individuals:** Our graduates are well-rounded individuals, having interests and passions both inside and out of the classroom. When our students graduate they are responsible decision makers, socially and self-aware, have strong relationship skills, and are good at self-management.

**Collaborative Team Players:** Our graduates are collaborators. They are able to work together in a group as equals to reach a common goal. They have the ability to delegate tasks, communicate effectively, and produce quality outcomes with other individuals.

**Academically Exceptional Scholars:** Our graduates excel academically, and leave us performing on or above grade level. They are on a trajectory to thrive in middle school, high school, college or in the career of their choice.

**Performance Goals**

**Goal 1 - Missouri Assessment Program:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, at least 70% of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas will score Proficient or Advanced on the MAP Mathematics & English Language Arts Assessment.

In addition, the overall average score of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will score within 10 percentage points of the overall school average.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

**MAP Target Proficiency Rates**

Year	Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP <sup>8</sup>	Subgroup Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	At least 60%	At least 50%
Year 4: 2024-2025	At least 65%	At least 55%
Year 5: 2025-2026	At least 70%	At least 60%

<sup>8</sup> Target Proficiency Rates for students who have been in attendance at Atlas for three consecutive years.

**Goal 2 - MAP Performance Index:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, Atlas Public Schools will earn an MPI equivalent to the DESE Academic Achievement Status Target of “On Track” which currently is a score of 375 in both Mathematics and English Language Arts.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

**MAP Target MPI Scores**

Year	MPI Benchmark Goal for ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	325
Year 4: 2024-2025	350
Year 5: 2025-2026	375

**Goal 3 - Reading Growth & Proficiency:** At least 80% of students at Atlas Public Schools who are enrolled for the full school year will read at, or above, grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

In addition, at least 80% of students at Atlas who are enrolled for the full school year and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will read at or above grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

**Goal 4 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Students will demonstrate growth in Emotional Intelligence competencies. 80% of students will meet or exceed their SEL goal which is determined by each individual student, their teachers, and their families.

**Goal 5 - Creative Problem-Solvers:** Students will demonstrate high levels of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills. 80% of students will score “accomplished” or “exemplary” on Atlas’ Problem-Solving rubric by the end of each school year.

**Goal 6 - Attendance:** At least 85% of students at Atlas will attend school at least 90% of the time.

**Goal 7 - Re-Enrollment:** By our third year of operation, 80% of students who are enrolled at Atlas on October 1st will be re-enrolled at Atlas on October 1st of the following school year, with the exception of the students whose families move out of the city of St. Louis.

**Goal 8 - Diversity & Inclusion:** As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas will have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status (30–70 percent low-income) and race/ethnicity (largest racial/ethnic group is no more than 70 percent).

**Goal 9 - Family Engagement:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Family Engagement,” or the degree to which families become involved with and interact with their child’s school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will score at or above the 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 10 - School Climate:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “School Climate,” or the perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 11 - Teacher Readiness:** 95% of teachers and staff members will complete the Panorama “Teacher and Staff Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Educating All Students,” or faculty perceptions of their readiness to address issues of diversity. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 12 - Cash on Hand:** Atlas Public Schools will have 60 days of unrestricted cash on hand by the end of Year 3 with a yearly positive trend.

## **Vision of Success**

In order to ensure we are mission-aligned and working to achieve our long-term vision, we have outlined our vision for success after our first, third, fifth, and tenth year of operation.

### **1 Year Vision**

Atlas will open in the fall of 2021 with 130 kindergarten and first grade students. We will have recruited, hired, and successfully trained a diverse teaching staff who are committed to our school model, are mission aligned, and work to ensure the success of each of our students. By the end of the first school year, all students will have hit their academic and socio-emotional goals. As an

organization, we will have solidified community partnerships and laid the foundation that sets Atlas up for long-term growth and success. By the end of the first year, it will be clear to all stakeholders that Atlas is on the path towards achieving its mission.

### **3 Year Vision**

At the end of our third school year our inaugural class of first grade students will have just completed third grade. Third grade is the first year that Missouri students take the MAP test. While we'll have other benchmark data to let us know if our students are on track, the results of the MAP test will show how Atlas' students are performing in comparison to students across the state. If our results are positive, as we believe they will be, we will begin to engage with the community and discuss plans for expansion. While we are committed to operating an amazing school, if there is support from the community and demand from our families, the Founding Team envisions Atlas growing into a network of schools. With a positive reception from the community, the Founding Team will work to begin expansion plans after three years of operation. We aim to expand into middle school for the school year 2026-2027 and open a second Atlas Elementary School for the 2028-2029 school year. In addition, we aim to grow our impact by offering early childhood programming within our first five years of operation.

### **5 Year Vision**

Five years after opening our doors, Atlas will be fully grown, serving kindergarten through fifth grade students. Atlas will be successfully functioning as a high-quality learning institution and each of our performance goals will be met. The progression of our Interdisciplinary Students units, which are grounded in the local context of St. Louis, have built upon each other to purposely teach our students the Missouri Learning Standards through authentic, hands-on experiences. Our fifth graders will be creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent, well-rounded and academically exceptional. We will have worked hard to actively engage our families and the community and plans for expansion into middle school and the launch of a second elementary school are well under way.

### **10 Year Vision**

After ten years of operation, Atlas Public Schools aspires to prove to the city of St. Louis what is possible in public education. We will be an example in which other local and national schools can learn from, in respect to our intentional diversity, as well as our deeper learning curriculum and school design. Atlas will be an open source school, with our curriculum and professional development available to all schools throughout the region. We will have successfully launched a second elementary school and expanded into middle school. The supports we put in place for teachers will not only lead to improved outcomes for our students, but will make the work more sustainable for our teachers. Atlas' teacher retention rate will be one of the highest in St. Louis, and teachers from around the region will want to work at Atlas because of the development opportunities and work-life-balance we offer.

## A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction

### Program Design Overview

The mission of Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. Our approach to curriculum and instruction is based on research and best practices and works to fulfill Atlas' mission. Atlas' philosophical approach to curriculum ensures that our priorities are meaningful, manageable, measurable, and are focused on yielding high student outcomes.

At Atlas, we envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed to be successful in the 21st century. Atlas' overall instructional philosophy will be apparent and consistent across all classrooms. Atlas believes that all students are capable of rigorous work, so we hold high expectations and instill a growth mindset in each and every student. See *A.1 - Mission, Vision, Philosophy & Goals* for more detail on our education philosophy. We believe that in order to have a school that is truly equitable, we must create a rigorous academic program with structures in place to ensure that all students, especially those from at-risk backgrounds, will be set up for success. Atlas Public Schools' academic model is grounded in our philosophical foundations; central to our model is the relationship between our academic goals and graduate aims for our students. See *A.7 - School-Specific Goals & Objectives* for Atlas' detailed academic goals.

Below is a program design overview of the curriculum and instruction at Atlas:

**Standards Driven:** The [Missouri Learning Standards](#) (MLS)<sup>9</sup>, as well as the [Next Generation Science Standards \(NGSS\)](#)<sup>10</sup> and the [National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies](#) (NCSS)<sup>11</sup> are used as a foundation to guide curriculum and instruction.

#### Strong Core Curriculum with a Hybrid Model

At Atlas, we place students at the center of learning by providing relevant, rigorous, and meaningful learning opportunities. We believe that elementary students need a balance of structured instruction, particularly within literacy and mathematics, as well as time to explore and learn interdisciplinary concepts through hands-on real-world experiences. At Atlas, we have created a detailed graduate profile. We want our students to become creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team

<sup>9</sup> For more information on the Missouri Learning Standards, see:

<https://dese.mo.gov/college-career-readiness/curriculum/missouri-learning-standards>

<sup>10</sup> For more information on the Next Generation Science Standards, see: <https://www.nextgenscience.org/>

<sup>11</sup> For more information on the National Curriculum Standards for Social Studies, see:

<https://www.socialstudies.org/standards/introduction>

players, and academically exceptional scholars. To accomplish our goals and develop students who are prepared to thrive starts with our curricular choices. This is why we have adopted two researched-based curriculums from EL Education and Achievement First. Our core values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence, and stewardship are woven throughout each of our curricular programs.

### EL Education

After conducting a comprehensive curriculum review process and meeting with both researchers and industry experts, the Atlas Founding Team has chosen EL Education, formerly Expeditionary Learning, as their English Language Arts Curriculum. Below are a few of the underlying principles of the Grades K-5 Language Arts Curriculum.

**Equity Matters** - EL Education is fiercely focused on equity for all children. All children deserve schools that foster their unique abilities, give them the real opportunity to achieve high academic standards, and help them take their full place in a society for which they are well prepared when they leave school. Equity is the foundation on which the entire curriculum rests. From this foundation of equity comes what EL Education calls the Dimensions of Student Achievement. They include:

- **Mastery of knowledge and skills:** Students demonstrate proficiency and deeper understanding, apply their learning, think critically, and communicate clearly.
- **Character:** Students work to become effective learners, to become ethical people, and to contribute to a better world.
- **High-quality work:** Students create complex work, demonstrate craftsmanship, and create authentic work.

These three dimensions are the aspirational outcomes for the entire Grades K-5 Language Arts Curriculum. Achievement is more than mastery of knowledge and skills or students' scores on a test. Habits of character and high-quality work are also taught and prized.

**Substantive Content Matters** - Research shows that the deeper a student's content knowledge, the more they are able to understand what they read, and the more they are able to speak and write clearly about the same content. In fact, remarkably, research shows that students are even more able to successfully read about and understand new content on the same or a related topic.

EL Education's Language Arts Curriculum has been created with substantive content understanding--science, social studies, or literature--at its heart. Students acquire a deepening understanding of that content and they simultaneously acquire all the key literacy standards of reading, writing, speaking, and listening, which have been carefully embedded within the content.

**Curriculum is a System** - In the K-5 Language Arts Curriculum, the sequences of skills in the lessons have been carefully designed so they work together to help students learn. As a whole, the curriculum is a system that benefits students while also providing support to teachers that helps them grow as professionals.

***Students Excel in Diverse and Inclusive Settings*** - EL Education's K-5 Language Arts Curriculum recognizes that students learn from one another--and learn to respect one another--when they learn together in the same classroom. At the same time, students sometimes have needs that require various types of differentiation. The curriculum provides support and resources for differentiation where needed, within all components of the curriculum.

Teachers are able to provide for students with disabilities, as well as students who may need academic extensions. And to engage all students, module lessons heavily emphasize differentiation; tools and scaffolding that support all learners; and flexibility in the ways information is presented, the ways students respond, and in the ways students are engaged.

***Students Own Their Learning*** - From the earliest grades, students using EL Education's curriculum learn to see themselves as active learners with agency in their own education. With teachers' guidance, they articulate specific learning targets ("I can...") for every lesson. They learn to set goals, assess their own learning, and use feedback from peers, themselves, and their teachers to make progress.

***Families and Guardians are Partners*** - EL Education's curriculum welcomes students' families and guardians as partners in education. Students learn best when families have the opportunity to be part of the educational journey. The curriculum includes sample letters teachers can send home to describe what students will learn during the given module, and how guardians can support that learning and, for Grades 3-5, specific homework assignments. Students are encouraged to share what they are learning with their family, and sometimes interview family members about their expertise and experiences.

***Curriculum is Powerful Professional Development*** - EL Education's curriculum is designed to help teachers build on their existing expertise and continue to improve their ability to make strong instructional decisions during planning and while teaching. Teachers are provided rich resources and opportunities to make sound and specific instructional decisions based on their students' needs.

### **Achievement First Math Curriculum**

After visiting over 60 innovative schools<sup>12</sup> across the country, Atlas has chosen to use the open source [Math Curriculum](#)<sup>13</sup> from the Achievement First network. Mathematica Policy Research's 2010 report suggests that the Achievement First school model and curriculum has a "positive, substantial and significant" impact on its students' academic outcomes.<sup>14</sup> Atlas' Founding Team is confident that Achievement First's Math Curriculum will provide Atlas' students with a solid foundation in mathematics, especially when combined with our community schooling model,

<sup>12</sup> See *Appendix A.2.1* for a list of schools the Founding Team has visited.

<sup>13</sup> For more information on Achievement First's Open Source Curriculum, see:

<https://www.achievementfirst.org/opensource/>

<sup>14</sup> Teh, B., McCullough, M., Gill, B. (2010). "Student Achievement in New York City Middle Schools Affiliated with Achievement First and Uncommon Schools." Mathematica Policy Research, Inc. [online pdf]. Retrieved from <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED511094.pdf>. [Accessed Sept. 23, 2019].

wrap-around student services and place-based learning opportunities. Achievement First has shared resources pertaining to organization, operations and academics, to stay true with their core tenet of “theory of change.” This gives Atlas access to unit plans, lesson plans, assessments, planning tools and rubrics at no costs. Upon sponsorship, Atlas will join the [Achievement First Navigator Program](#),<sup>15</sup> which will provide Atlas staff ongoing in-person professional development and feedback on curriculum implementation from the Achievement First team. Atlas staff will also have the opportunity to participate in school visits at the Achievement First elementary schools in New York City through this program. By adopting curriculum and implementation plans which are rooted in data, research, and collaboration, Atlas will ensure that our school delivers an equitable and rigorous education to all our students. Below are the five tenets of Achievement First’s Mathematics Program:

**Problem Solving** - the umbrella under which all the opportunities to increase proficiency and expertise with the mathematical practices fall

- While students engage in problem solving they are making sense of problems, thinking strategically about concept and skill applications, planning and executing a viable approach, and reflecting on process and solutions.

**Conceptual Understanding** - comprehension of mathematical concepts, operations, and relations

- While developing conceptual understanding, students make meaning of mathematics and make connections across mathematical ideas which allows for rapid acquisition of new knowledge, greater retention, and ability to apply in novel contexts.

**Procedural Fluency** - skill in carrying out procedures flexibly, accurately, efficiently, and appropriately

- The development of procedural fluency allows students to focus mental energy on flexibly approaching and thinking through problems, rather than the steps to perform an accurate calculation.

**Strategic Competence & Adaptive Reasoning** - ability to formulate, represent, and solve mathematical problems; capacity for logical thought, reflection, explanation, and justification

- The development of these habits of mind prepares students to solve mathematical problems that they may encounter throughout the rest of their academic and social lives.

**Productive Disposition** - habitual inclination to see mathematics as sensible, useful, and worthwhile, coupled with a belief in diligence and one's own efficacy.

- Students approach challenging situations as opportunities to learn and mistakes

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<sup>15</sup> For more information on the Achievement First Navigator Program, see: <https://www.achievementfirst.org/how-we-work/afaccelerate/navigator/>

made along the way as times for feedback and reflection, not representations of personal failure. This productive disposition is the hallmark of having a growth mindset as opposed to one that is fixed.

### **Integrated Studies with Place-Based Education**

Atlas utilizes thematic, place-based units to engage with material across the curriculum for an Integrated Studies Block in each grade level. Through place-based education, students have real-world experiences as they learn from the local natural, built, historic, and cultural environment in St. Louis. These Integrated Studies Blocks tie Missouri Learning Standards in math, ELA, science, social studies, and related arts together in an interdisciplinary class. In keeping with our core value of equity, themes of social justice and active citizenry are woven through units, as well as an emphasis on learning 21st century skills.

In grades K-2 we will utilize EL Education's Lab lessons as the base curriculum of our Integrated Studies Block. The Founding Team will use this base curriculum and add additional components to make the Integrated Studies curriculum relevant and specific to St. Louis. Labs are typically one hour long and complement the EL module lessons. Combined, these two hours of content-based literacy instruction work together to accelerate the achievement of all students.

Labs are an important feature in the Grades K-2 curriculum because they support and extend student learning from the module lessons. They are designed to help teachers ensure that all of their students get them time to play and explore, become immersed in oral language and content knowledge, and practice skills and habits of character that they need--both to live joyfully and to be fully successful and proficient.

In grades 3-5 we will utilize EL Education's "Additional Language and Literacy" (ALL) Block as the base curriculum for our Integrated Studies Block. The ALL Block is designed to be roughly one hour long and complements the module lessons. These two hours of content-based literacy instruction work together to accelerate the achievement of all students.

Although the Lab lessons in K-2 and ALL lessons in 3-5 are designed to be 60 minutes in length, Atlas has designed the Integrated Studies block to be 90 minutes so that teachers have adequate time to infuse place-based learning opportunities and ground student learning in the local context of St. Louis.

**Curriculum Resources & Teacher Supports:** The base curriculum and assessments for each learning block come from EL Education and Achievement First. Teachers at Atlas are responsible for internalizing lesson plans rather than spending time creating them. This standardization creates consistent high-quality curriculum delivery across all grade levels. In addition, the Leadership Team can track data and make informed decisions on curriculum and instruction throughout the school year based on formative and summative student assessments. The teachers will be observed and receive feedback on a weekly basis from a coach to improve their craft.

## Instructional Approach & Strategies for Educating All Students

In section *A.1 - Mission, Vision, Philosophy, & Goals*, we presented our education philosophy which is the foundation for Atlas' school design and graduate profile. In this section we explain how we pursue understanding of those dispositions through our academic model and program. Specifically, we describe the instructional approaches and strategies that support teaching and learning and create students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team members, and academically exceptional scholars. As a guide to instruction, Atlas uses a variety of instructional best practices and frameworks. Some of which are focused on a single subject, while others encompass several subject areas. The following instructional strategies and frameworks are incorporated into Atlas' daily instructional blocks:

**Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist (ABAR) Education**<sup>16</sup> supports all children's full development in our multiracial, multilingual, multicultural world and gives them the tools to stand up to prejudice, stereotyping, bias, and eventually to institutional "isms".

**Balanced Literacy**<sup>17</sup> is a series of instructional techniques that allow for varying degrees of support and independence via whole and small group instruction in a workshop structure. These techniques balance discrete skills and their application in the context of authentic reading and writing.

***Interactive Read-Alouds:*** The teacher reads a high quality and rigorous text and stops to ask the whole class planned questions that elicit student response. Students learn to think deeply about text, to listen to others, and to grow their own ideas.

***Guided Reading:*** The teacher groups students who have a similar ability level in reading. The text is easy enough for students to read with skillful support; it offers challenges and opportunities for problem solving.

***Independent Reading:*** Students choose books that interest them and are on their reading level, and receive minimal to no assistance from a teacher .

***Phonics (K-2):*** Phonics is a method of teaching students to read by correlating sounds with letters or groups of letters in an alphabetic writing system.

***Modeled Writing:*** The teacher demonstrates the process of writing in a particular genre, while thinking aloud to reveal his/her mental processes while writing.

***Shared Writing:*** The teacher and students compose a text together. The teacher is the scribe. The text becomes a model, an example or a reference for student writing and discussion.

***Interactive Writing:*** This method is very similar to shared writing, with the addition of asking students to write some portion of the text. This technique is used with beginning writers only and focuses on the features of letters and words.

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<sup>16</sup> For more information on Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist (ABAR) instruction, see:

[http://crossroadsantiracism.org/training/antibias\\_antiracism/](http://crossroadsantiracism.org/training/antibias_antiracism/)

<sup>17</sup> For more information on Balanced Literacy, see:

<https://www.sadlier.com/school/ela-blog/overview-of-balanced-literacy-components-strategies>

**Writing Conference:** Teachers converse with students individually about their writing to provide brief targeted coaching, usually focused on one concept or skill.

**Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI)**<sup>18</sup> is a student-centered approach to teaching math, which is based on over 20 years of research. It starts with what students already know and builds on their natural problem solving abilities. Teachers focus on listening to students, asking strategic questions and engage with the student's thinking to expand every students' mathematical understanding. There are multiple ways to solve a problem, and students are encouraged to use their own strategies to solve a mathematical question.

**Data Driven Instruction (DDI)**<sup>19</sup> is a precise and systematic approach to improving student learning throughout the year. The inquiry cycle of data-driven instruction includes assessment, analysis, and action and is a key framework for school-wide support of all student success.

**Place-Based Education (PBE)**<sup>20</sup> immerses students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, using these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum. PBE emphasizes learning through participation in service projects for the local school and/or community.

**Cooperative Learning**<sup>21</sup> is a teaching strategy in which small heterogeneous groups, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of structured learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of the group is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement, team building, interdependence and individual accountability.

**Differentiated/Personalized Learning**<sup>22</sup> is a strategy to tailor instruction to meet the individual needs of each student. The learning objectives, content, and pace may vary in a differentiated learning setting. Ongoing assessment is key to this type of learning strategy.

**Flexible/Strategic Grouping**<sup>23</sup> covers a range of strategies for grouping students to deliver instruction, such as whole class, small group, and partner. Students are grouped and regrouped according to specific goals, activities, and individual needs. Flexible grouping strategies are used to meet curricular goals, engage students, and respond to individual needs of the students. Strategic grouping based on data helps teachers overcome the disadvantages of ability grouping while still attending to individual performance issues.

**Response to Intervention (RTI)**<sup>24</sup> is a multi-tier approach to the early identification and support of students with learning and behavior needs. RTI is a strategy used at Atlas so students get the

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<sup>18</sup> For more information on Cognitively Guided Instruction (CGI), see: <https://www.heinemann.com/cgimath/>

<sup>19</sup> For more information on Data Driven Instruction (DDI), see: <https://www.engageny.org/data-driven-instruction>

<sup>20</sup> For more information on Place Based Education (PBE), see: <https://promiseofplace.org/>

<sup>21</sup> For more information on Cooperative Learning, see: <https://www2.ed.gov/pubs/OR/ConsumerGuides/cooplear.html>

<sup>22</sup> For more information on Differentiated/Personalized Learning, see: <http://www.dreambox.com/personalized-learning>

<sup>23</sup> For more information on Flexible/Strategic Grouping, see:  
<http://www.eduplace.com/science/profdev/articles/valentino.html>

<sup>24</sup> For more information on Response to Intervention (RTI), see: <http://www.rtinetwork.org/learn/what/whatisrti>

targeted instruction they need to be successful. In kindergarten through second grade, students will receive normalized intervention during the 60 minute Reading Foundations block. In third through fifth grade we normalize interventions during the 50 minute Reading Pathways block so all students, regardless of ability level, participate in intervention groups. This means that all students will receive the specific support they need to grow, while also destigmatizing being “pulled out of class”. Through normalized interventions, Atlas will meet the needs of all students, including those with learning exceptionalities, and those who are above grade level. See *A.6 - Special Student Populations* to see how this model supports the needs of all students

## Curricular Materials & Programs

The following commercially produced curricular materials and programs aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards are the foundation for Atlas’ educational program in mathematics and literacy. The Achievement First Curriculum is currently aligned with the Common Core State Standards (CCSS). Atlas will utilize the crosswalks provided by The Missouri Department of Education to align the lessons to the Missouri Learning Standards. See *Appendix A.2.2* for the crosswalks.

**Achievement First Open Source Mathematics Curriculum:**<sup>25</sup> The Achievement First Open Source Curriculum is a free web portal to share the organizational, operational and instructional resources found in their public charter schools. These resources include scope and sequences, unit plans, lesson plans, exit tickets, and other assessments.

**EL Education:**<sup>26</sup> EL Education provides a free open-source platform for K-5 literacy. The K-2 curriculum offers two hours per day of content-based literacy (module lessons and labs) plus one hour of structured phonics (K-2 Reading Foundations Skills Block). All together, these three hours of curriculum are considered comprehensive, meaning that they explicitly teach and formally assess all strands and standards of the Missouri Learning Standards for ELA for each grade level.

The comprehensive Grades 3-5 curriculum offers two hours of content-based literacy instruction per day (module lessons and the Additional Language and Literacy [ALL] block). At the heart of the curriculum--at all grade levels--are the hour-long module lessons. Each grade level includes four modules, which span a full school year. The four modules allow students to build important content knowledge based on a compelling topic related to science, social studies, or literature. Each module uses rich, authentic text throughout.

**Fountas and Pinnell (K-5):**<sup>27</sup> Teachers’ most reliable resource to accurately and reliably identify each child’s instructional and independent reading levels according to the F&P Text Level Gradient™, A–Z and document their progress through one-on-one formative and summative assessments. The *Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment Systems* provide teachers with precise tools and texts to observe and quantify specific reading behaviors, and then interpret and use that data to plan meaningful instruction.

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<sup>25</sup> For more information on Achievement First Open Source Curriculum, see:

<https://www.achievementfirst.org/opensource/instructional-model/>

<sup>26</sup> For more information on EL Education, see: <https://eleducation.org/>

<sup>27</sup> For more information on Fountas and Pinnell (K-5), see: <https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/bas/>

**Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention:**<sup>28</sup> The LLI is a powerful, short-term intervention, that provides daily, intensive, small-group instruction, which supplements classroom literacy teaching. LLI turns struggling readers into successful readers with engaging leveled books and fast-paced, systematically designed lessons. Assessment data will determine who will qualify for the LLI intervention program.

## Mathematics at Atlas

### Math Vision

Atlas' math program aims to prepare students for middle school, high school, and beyond. For students to thrive in the 21st century, they must be able to make sense of the world through a mathematical lens. Rigorous math instruction at Atlas pursues conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application with equal intensity. Atlas' Math Vision focuses strongly where the Missouri Learning Standards focus and provides coherence across grades and links to major topics within grades.

Atlas' math program is designed to promote a cohesive mathematical approach and to meet the core tenets of the Atlas Math program. Our guiding tenets and instructional practices are in service of the three shifts demanded by the Missouri Learning Standards:

**Focus:** Focus strongly where the standards focus.

- Significantly narrow the scope of the content and deepen how time and energy is spent in the math classroom.
- Focus deeply on what is emphasized in the standards, so that students gain strong foundations.

**Coherence:** Across grades and linked to major topics.

- Carefully connect the learning within and across grades so that students can build new understanding on foundations built in previous years
- Begin to count on solid conceptual understanding of core content and build on it. Each standard is not a new event, but an extension of previous learning

**Rigor:** In major topics, pursue conceptual understanding, procedural skill and fluency, and application. The Missouri Learning Standards require a balance of:

- Solid conceptual understanding which supports the other aspects of rigor (fluency and application)
- Procedural skill and fluency. The standards require speed and accuracy in calculation.
- Application of skills in problem solving situations. Students can use appropriate concepts and procedures for application even when not prompted to do so.

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<sup>28</sup> For more information on Fountas & Pinnell Leveled Literacy Intervention, see: <https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/lli/>

The pursuit of focus, coherence, and rigor requires intensity in time, activities, and resources that Atlas is committed to and Achievement First's curriculum takes into account. The full math program from Achievement First that Atlas will be utilizing can be found [here](#).<sup>29</sup> The chart below outlines the elementary math program at a glance.

Elementary Mathematics: Week at a Glance K-5th Grade		
Math Stories (CGI)		
<b>Schedule:</b>  25 minutes  25 min: ½ of kids in Math Stories and ½ in Math Facts then switch	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of Math Stories is to help students develop a strong problem solving approach and conceptual understanding of varied problem types by representing problems, making connections to previously learned content, applying mathematical practices, and solving real-world problems  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Gives students time to grapple with complex real world math problem</li><li>● Student as problem solver</li><li>● Teacher as facilitator</li></ul>	<b>Assessment:</b>  Interim: Interim assessment data to gauge understanding of story problem content taught throughout the year  Daily: Observation data, in-class work
Math Facts		
<b>Schedule:</b>  25 minutes  25 min: ½ of kids in Math Stories and ½ in Math Facts then switch	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of Math Facts is for students to develop a strong number sense and flexibility with numbers which will support more complex problem solving.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Opportunity for students to practice foundational math skills and build automaticity</li><li>● Based on clear routines and thoroughly planned agendas</li><li>● Draws on Every Day Counts math calendar</li></ul>	<b>Assessment:</b>  Interim: Interim assessments to gauge understanding of content taught throughout the year  Daily: Verbal and written observation data, in-class work

<sup>29</sup> For more information on Achievement First's math program, see: [https://www.achievementfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Navigator\\_Overview\\_ElMath16\\_17.pdf](https://www.achievementfirst.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/02/Navigator_Overview_ElMath16_17.pdf)

Math Lessons		
<b>Schedule:</b>  50 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  Through the use of guided inquiry, students develop conceptual understanding of new math topics and strategies aligned to standards by making connections to previously learned content and applying mathematical practices.	<b>Assessment:</b>  Interim: Interim assessments to gauge understanding of content taught throughout the year; includes novel problems  Unit: Unit assessments to gauge conceptual and procedural knowledge along with the ability to apply in novel real-world and mathematical problems  Weekly: Quizzes to assess progress towards mastery of the unit  Daily: Observational data, in-class work, exit tickets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Aim for the Day</li> <li>• Workshop: Independent and Small Group Work</li> <li>• Teacher Circulating</li> <li>• Independent Practice</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Exit Ticket</li> </ul>	

### Mathematics Scope and Sequence

Atlas' math scope and sequence have been adapted from Achievement First's free, open source curriculum. The following charts describe the math scope and sequence in both kindergarten and 1st grade. See *Appendix A.2.3* for the scope and sequence for 2nd through 5th grades.

### Mathematics Scope & Sequence - Kindergarten

Overview
<b>Counting and Cardinality</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know number names and the count sequence</li> <li>• Count to tell the number of objects</li> <li>• Compare numbers</li> </ul> <b>Operations and Algebraic Thinking</b>

- Understand addition as putting together and adding to, and understand subtraction as taking apart and taking from

### **Number and Operations in Base Ten**

- Work with numbers 11-19 to gain foundations for place value

### **Measurement and Data**

- Describe and compare measurable attributes
- Clarify objects and count the number of objects in categories

### **Geometry**

- Identify and describe shapes
- Analyze, compare, create, and compose shapes

### **Mathematical Practices:**

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

## **Unit Description**

### **Unit 1: Sorting & Counting**

Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in a set; counting out a given number of objects; comparing sets or numerals; and modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Students choose, combine, and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the cardinalities of small sets of objects, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects in combined sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.

### **Unit 2: Geometry**

Students describe their physical world using geometric ideas and vocabulary. They identify, name, and describe basic two-dimensional shapes, such as squares, triangles, circles, rectangles, and hexagons, presented in a variety of ways, as well as three-dimensional shapes such as cubes, cones, cylinders, and spheres. They use basic shapes and spatial reasoning to model objects in their environment and to construct more complex shapes.

### **Unit 3: Counting**

Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in a set; counting out a given number of objects; comparing sets or numerals; and modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Students choose, combine, and apply

effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the cardinalities of small sets of objects, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects in combined sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.

#### **Unit 4: Measurement**

Students study three measurable attributes of objects – length, weight and capacity.

**Unit 5: Counting & Comparing** Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in a set; counting out a given number of objects; comparing sets or numerals; and modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Students choose, combine, and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the cardinalities of small sets of objects, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects in combined sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.

#### **Unit 6: Addition & Subtraction**

Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in a set; counting out a given number of objects; comparing sets or numerals; and modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Students choose, combine, and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the cardinalities of small sets of objects, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects in combined sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.

#### **Unit 7: Compose & Decompose Numbers**

Students decompose numbers – understanding that a number can be made using different combinations of parts, with special attention to combinations of 10.

#### **Unit 8: Two-Digit Numbers**

Students continue to compose and decompose numbers with special attention to teen numbers as 10 ones and some more ones as a place value foundation. As a push, students then understand that two digit numbers are made of tens and ones.

#### **Unit 9: Exemplars**

Students use numbers, including written numerals, to represent quantities and to solve quantitative problems, such as counting objects in a set; counting out a given number of objects; comparing sets or numerals; and modeling simple joining and separating situations with sets of objects, or eventually with equations such as  $5 + 2 = 7$  and  $7 - 2 = 5$ . Students choose, combine, and apply effective strategies for answering quantitative questions, including quickly recognizing the cardinalities of small sets of objects, counting and producing sets of given sizes, counting the number of objects in combined sets, or counting the number of objects that remain in a set after some are taken away.

## Mathematics Scope & Sequence - First Grade

### Overview

#### Operations and Algebraic Thinking

- Represent and solve problems involving addition and subtraction
- Understand and apply the properties of operations and the relationship between addition and subtraction
- Add and subtract within 20
- Work with addition and subtraction equations

#### Number and Operations in Base Ten

- Extend the counting sequence
- Understand place value
- Use place value understanding and properties of operations to add and subtract

#### Measurement and Data

- Measure lengths indirectly and by iterating length units
- Tell and write time
- Represent and interpret data

#### Geometry

- Reason with shapes and their attributes

### Mathematical Practices:

- Make sense of problems and persevere in solving them
- Reason abstractly and quantitatively
- Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others
- Model with mathematics
- Use appropriate tools strategically
- Attend to precision
- Look for and make use of structure
- Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning

### Unit Description

#### Unit 1: Counting

Students work to build fluency with counting within 100 and utilize counting to support addition and subtraction.

#### Unit 2: Geometry

Students compose and decompose plane or solid figures and build understanding of part-whole relationships as well as the properties of the original and composite shapes. As they combine shapes, they recognize them from different perspectives and orientations, describe their geometric attributes, and determine how they are alike and different, to develop the background for measurement and for initial understandings of properties such as congruence and symmetry.

**Unit 3: Addition and Subtraction**

Students develop strategies for adding and subtracting whole numbers based on their prior work with small numbers. They use a variety of models, including discrete objects and length-based models, to model add-to, take-from, put-together, take-apart, and compare situations to develop meaning for the operations of addition and subtraction, and to develop strategies to solve arithmetic problems with these operations. Students understand connections between counting and addition and subtraction. They use properties of addition to add whole numbers and to create and use increasingly sophisticated strategies based on these properties to solve addition and subtraction problems within 20. By comparing a variety of solution strategies, children build their understanding of the relationship between addition and subtraction.

**Unit 4: Data and Measurement**

Students develop an understanding of the meaning and process of measurement, including underlying concepts such as iterating (the mental activity of building up the length of an object with equal-sized units) and the transitivity principle for indirect measurement.

**Unit 5: Two-Digit Numbers**

Students develop, discuss, and use efficient, accurate, and generalizable methods to add within 100 and subtract multiples of 10. They compare whole numbers to develop an understanding and solve problems involving their relative sizes. They think of whole numbers between 10 and 100 in terms of tens and ones. Through activities that build number sense, they understand the order of the counting numbers and their relative magnitudes.

**Unit 6: Fractions & Time**

In the first part of the unit, students relate geometric figures to equal parts and name the parts as halves and fourths (or quarters). Students see that as they create more parts, decomposing the shares from halves to fourths, the parts get smaller. Students should also be exposed to non-examples to emphasize the point of equal-sized parts being important when using words like halves and fourths to describe the parts. To end the first part of this unit, students engage in a series of problem-solving tasks that require them to apply their understanding of fractions to equally divide objects. The unit closes with students applying their understanding of fractions to tell time to the hour and half hour. Students will construct simple clocks to see that a clock is a circle partitioned into equal parts, similar to the work they have done with fractions in the unit thus far. They begin to understand the hour hand, then the minute hand, then both together. They should recognize that the hour hand and minute hand move together, and that as the minute hand moves half-way around the clock, the hour hand moves half-way through the hour (and similarly, that when the minute hand moves fully around the clock, the hour hand moves fully through the hour). Throughout each lesson, students read both digital and analog clocks to tell time.

**Unit 7: Story Problems**

Students develop strategies for adding and subtracting whole numbers based on their prior work with small numbers. They use a variety of models, including discrete objects and length-based models, to model add-to, take-from, put-together, take-apart, and compare situations to develop meaning for the operations of addition and subtraction, and to develop strategies to solve

arithmetic problems with these operations. Students understand connections between counting and addition and subtraction. They use properties of addition to add whole numbers and to create and use increasingly sophisticated strategies based on these properties to solve addition and subtraction problems within 20. By comparing a variety of solution strategies, students build their understanding of the relationship between addition and subtraction.

### **Unit 8: Two-Digit Addition and Subtraction**

Students develop, discuss, and use efficient, accurate, and generalizable methods to add within 100 and subtract multiples of 10. They compare whole numbers to solve problems involving their relative sizes. They think of whole numbers between 10 and 100 in terms of tens and ones. Through activities that build number sense, they understand the order of the counting numbers and their relative magnitudes.

## **Literacy at Atlas**

### **Literacy Vision**

Atlas' literacy program aims to prepare students for middle school, high school, and beyond. In order to thrive in the 21st century, students must be fluent, critical, compelling and thoughtful readers, writers, speakers and listeners. Our program ensures proficiency in reading, writing, speaking and listening of complex text and ideas. Through the use of multiple strategies and a balanced literacy program, we help our students develop into lifelong learners both academically and socially. The literacy program is designed to promote a cohesive literacy approach and to meet the core tenets of the Atlas Literacy program.<sup>30</sup>

### **Literacy Program Guiding Tenets**

1. ***Foster Voracious, Lifelong Readers and Writers:*** We are deeply rooted in our commitment to ensuring that students find true joy in the study of literacy and leave our program with a deep appreciation for great books, new information, diverse perspectives, and the power to express ideas of their own. It is true that students who love reading will benefit from a virtuous cycle: when they choose to read on their own, they will invariably develop larger vocabularies, learn more content, receive positive feedback and want to read even more. At the same time, we also believe that reading is an end in itself. Great works of literature open a window into new worlds worth discovering. Similarly, reading and writing mutually reinforce each other in the service of creating fully rounded, literate students. Voracious readers are exposed to increasingly large examples of great writing that they can then emulate themselves. Voracious writers develop ever increasing skills in writing across the various genres for other readers and further develop scholars' ability to recognize the qualities of

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<sup>30</sup> The following tenets are adapted from a combination of Achievement First and EL Education's literacy program.

great writing when they read the works of others. Our writing program should inspire not only the ability to express oneself clearly and concisely, but also ignite a passion for writing as a means of engaging with the world through self-discovery and creative expression. Writing can be a means for our scholars to make their voices heard as they critically examine the events of past, present, and future.

**2. *Build Knowledge of Words & the World Grounded in Critical Topics & Transferable Themes:***

In many ways, the achievement gap is fueled and reinforced by a knowledge and vocabulary gap. We believe that building deep knowledge across a range of essential topics will ensure that students are stronger readers and can access complex, content-rich text. ELA texts and writing assignments are selected intentionally to reinforce both world and word knowledge, and align to our history, science, music and art programs when appropriate.

**3. *Cultivate Critical Curiosity about Our Ever-Changing World:*** We do not build knowledge for the sake of building knowledge; fundamentally, our program must aim to ensure that all students are curious citizens, intent on expanding their own knowledge of the world through asking questions, reading, writing and discussion. We strive to spark students' inquisitiveness and develop a sense of joy for building their knowledge. Students will seek new understandings and question their previous assumptions on a variety of topics, including those central to the human experience and current world landscape.

**4. *Become Critical Consumers of Complex Text:*** All students must be voracious & critical readers of varied, complex literature and informational text; the ability to deeply comprehend and analyze complex texts is a critical component not only to college and career readiness, but to leadership in our communities. We believe that all students must have experiences closely reading rich text from diverse genres and perspectives to develop both their analytical skills and critical thinking. Texts must be selected for their complexity and for their worthiness, ensuring equity of access to examining revolutionary ideas, well-crafted arguments and great literature. In order to lead, in order to affect change, one needs economic, political, and social power; this includes a strong, inclusive canonical foundation that will provide our students with the needed social capital to be successful. Furthermore, a love of great books can and will spark a deep love of reading essential to our program.

**5. *Encourage Rigorous, Evidence-Based Thinking and Argumentation to Ensure Students Communicate Clearly and Persuasively:*** All students must write and talk both independently and collaboratively in a manner that is insightful, persuasive and critical.

The full literacy program that Atlas will be utilizing from EL Education can be found [here](#).<sup>31</sup> The chart below outlines the elementary literacy program at a glance.

Early Elementary Literacy: Day at a Glance KG-2nd Grade		
Reading Foundations - Structured Phonics Instruction		
<b>Schedule:</b>  60 minutes  15-20 min whole group instruction  40-45 min differentiated small group instruction	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of the Reading Foundations is for students to acquire internalized, automatic knowledge of the building blocks of spoken and written language - letter names, sounds, and formation; the ability to break words apart and blend them back together; common spelling patterns; and decoding of words.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Focus on spelling</li><li>● Honoring characteristics of primary learners</li><li>● Additional time and support for students who need it, including targeted re-teaching</li><li>● Variety of student-friendly texts</li><li>● Assessment</li></ul>	<b>Assessment:</b>  Benchmark: Completed in the fall, winter, & spring  Cycle: Weekly assessments to determine groups for small group instruction  Snapshot: Daily exit tickets
Content Based Literacy		
<b>Schedule:</b>  60 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  Students experience four modules over the course of the school year. Each module consists of three, each of which includes one formal assessment. In Unit 1, students read, sing, discuss, dramatize, draw, and write to acquire strong content knowledge as well as the literacy skills needed to complete the end of module performance task. In Unit 2, students begin work with “close reading” of a complex text. In Unit 3, when the performance task is introduced, students are equipped to complete their task and to synthesize their understanding of what they accomplished through supported, standards-based writing.  <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Emphasis on habits of character</li></ul>	<b>Assessment:</b>  Summative: Each module has three formal summative assessments built in  Formative: Daily teacher observations, checklists, & exit tickets

<sup>31</sup> For more information on EL Education's literacy program, see: <https://eleducation.org/resources/k-5-language-arts-curriculum-overview>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Emphasis on oral language development</li> <li>• Daily work with rich, complex text and volume of reading</li> <li>• Daily student goal-setting and reflection</li> <li>• Culminating performance task</li> <li>• Assessment</li> </ul>	
<b>Integrated Studies</b>		
<b>Schedule:</b>  90 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of the Integrated Studies is to build and extend student learning from the module lessons in Content Based Literacy. They are designed to help teachers ensure that all of their students get the time to play and explore, become immersed in oral language and content knowledge, and practice skills and habits of character that they need - both to live joyfully and to be fully successful and proficient. The learning will be rooted in the local context of St. Louis to make learning more meaningful to students.	<b>Assessment:</b>  Summative: Each module has three formal summative assessments built in  Formative: Daily teacher observations, checklists, & exit tickets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading in the Content Area</li> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Authentic Real World Application</li> </ul>	

<b>Upper Elementary Literacy: Day at a Glance 3rd-5th Grade</b>		
<b>Reading Pathways</b>		
<b>Schedule:</b>  50 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of the Reading Pathways is for upper elementary students to get the targeted instruction they need to become stronger readers.	<b>Assessment:</b>  Benchmark: F&P completed in the fall, winter, & spring  Weekly Progress Monitoring for students reading below grade level
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided Reading</li> <li>• LLI</li> <li>• Novel Studies</li> <li>• Lit Circles</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> </ul>	

Content Based Literacy		
<b>Schedule:</b>  70 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  Students experience four modules over the course of the school year. Each module consists of three units, each of which includes one formal assessment. In Unit 1, students read, sing, discuss, dramatize, draw, and write to acquire strong content knowledge as well as the literacy skills needed to complete the end of module performance task. In Unit 2, students begin work with “close reading” of a complex text. In Unit 3, when the performance task is introduced, students are equipped to complete their task and to synthesize their understanding of what they accomplished through supported, standards-based writing.	<b>Assessment:</b>  Summative: Each module has three formal summative assessments built in  Formative: Daily teacher observations, checklists, & exit tickets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Emphasis on habits of character</li><li>● Emphasis on oral language development</li><li>● Daily work with rich, complex text and volume of reading</li><li>● Daily student goal-setting and reflection</li><li>● Culminating performance task</li><li>● Assessment</li></ul>	
Integrated Studies		
<b>Schedule:</b>  90 minutes	<b>Purpose:</b>  The purpose of the Integrated Studies is to build and extend student learning from the module lessons in Content Based Literacy. They are designed to help teachers ensure that all of their students get the time to play and explore, become immersed in oral language and content knowledge, and practice skills and habits of character that they need - both to live joyfully and to be fully successful and proficient. The learning will be rooted in the local context of St. Louis to make learning more meaningful to students.	<b>Assessment:</b>  Summative: Each module has three formal summative assessments built in  Formative: Daily teacher observations, checklists, & exit tickets
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>● Reading in the Content Area</li><li>● Reading Comprehension</li><li>● Writing</li><li>● Authentic Real World Application</li></ul>	

\*Note - The students will receive either Guided Reading, Independent Reading, Close Reading, or Socratic Seminars during the Reading Pathway Block based on each individual need.

### **Content Based Literacy Scope & Sequence**

Atlas' Content Based Literacy scope and sequence have been adapted from EL Education's free, open source curriculum. At each grade level there are four modules per year. Each module provides eight weeks of instruction<sup>32</sup> broken into three shorter units. Each module includes:

- A final performance task that is a more supported project, often involving research
- Three assessments (one per unit), which are almost always "on-demand": Students complete an independent task (or with prompting and support, as the MLS may dictate) on reading, writing, speaking, and/or listening
- Checklists for select reading, writing, speaking and listening, and language standards: Teachers use these checklists throughout module lesson to track students' progress on specific standards or sub-standards

The following charts describe scope and sequence in both kindergarten and 1st grade for the Content Based Literacy Block. For a more detailed [curriculum map](#) from EL Education for grades Kindergarten through Fifth Grade see *Appendix A.2.4*.

### **Content Based Literacy Scope & Sequence - Kindergarten**

<b>Module 1 - Building Literacy in a Collaborative Classroom</b>
<b>Title: Toys and Play</b>
In this module, students build their literacy and citizenship skills as they engage in a study of toys and play. Students consider norms and behaviors for sharing toys and interacting with peers through structured conversations, learning experiences such as role-play and guided discovery of toys, and an analysis of the module texts. Students learn more about toys as they consider what makes something a toy and what makes toys fun. They learn to sort and describe toys by specific attributes. They also begin to think about perspective as they discuss and write about their own toy preferences. Finally, students interview a classmate about his or her preferred classroom toy. They use the information from the interview to create their performance task: an informational piece of writing and drawing about a classmate's preferred toy and how the classmate likes to play with it.

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<sup>32</sup> For K-2, Module 1 is just six weeks long, to allow more time for establishing classroom routines.

## **Module 2 - Learning through Science and Story**

### **Title: Weather Wonders**

In this module, students build their literacy and science skills as they engage in a study of the weather. Students study the science of weather through various informational texts. They create a class weather journal and track their individual learning in a meteorologist's notebook. Students then broaden their study of weather as they think about how weather affects people in different places around the world. They move on to further explore how weather affects people by reading a variety of narratives where the characters are affected by a weather event. Students are prompted to think about how the weather affects the choices people make about what to wear and what to do each day. For their performance task, they plan and write an imaginary narrative featuring a character affected by the weather.

## **Module 3 - Researching to Build Knowledge and Teach Others**

### **Title: Trees Are Alive**

In this module, students explore the big ideas that all living things in the natural world have needs in order to survive and grow. Through a close study of trees and the living things that depend on them, students take on the roles of researchers and scientists to make observations of the natural world. From those observations, they determine patterns that explain how living things live and grow. Students learn what makes something living or nonliving, about different types of living things, and the common needs of all living things. They develop this understanding through research reading and hands-on investigations and record their observations in a Living Things research notebook. Students then engage in whole group and small group research on how trees provide food for animals. Finally, students engage in supported small group research of a particular tree, its needs, and how it supports other living things. They then use their learning to create an informational tree collage, which includes a collage, informative writing, and an animal puppet.

\*Note: Module 3 lays the foundation for Module 4: In Module 3, students build deep knowledge about the scientific topic of living things, and trees, specifically. In Module 4, they then apply this knowledge to make a meaningful contribution to their community.

## **Module 4 - Contributing to the Community**

### **Title: Enjoying and Appreciating Trees**

In this module, students build on their scientific knowledge of trees from Module 3, by exploring the importance of trees to people and their communities. Students learn how different people, both real and imaginary, enjoy and appreciate trees. They consider how real people and characters have used trees to fill a need in their community. Students first learn about the different ways people

enjoy trees through reading literature and considering how characters appreciate trees. They write about the different ways trees can be enjoyed in their Enjoying Trees journal, Part II. They then read about the ways planting trees can contribute to a community through reading informational text, and learn to form and write opinions about where they would choose to plant a tree. Finally, students apply their new knowledge of the importance of trees to people by advocating for the appreciation of trees in their own community. For their performance task, they create a beautiful card that invites others to pause and appreciate the trees around them.

## **Content Based Literacy Scope & Sequence - First Grade**

### **Module 1 - Building Literacy in a Collaborative Classroom**

#### **Title: Tools and Work**

In this module, students build their literacy and citizenship skills as they engage in a study of tools and work. Students first learn about how tools help to do a job through informational text and hands-on experiences. They then extend their understanding of what it takes to do a job when they learn how the “habits of character” of initiative, collaboration, perseverance, and responsibility help them do work. Students also analyze how various characters from literary texts use these habits of character to help them make work easier and solve dilemmas. Finally, students take all they have learned about tools and work to create a “magnificent thing” that fulfills an authentic classroom need (e.g., pencil holder for classroom use). Students share, discuss, and reflect on their creation.

### **Module 2 - What’s Up in the Sky**

#### **Title: A Study of the Sun, Moon, and Stars**

In this module, students build their literacy and science skills as they engage in a study of the sun, moon, and stars. Students begin their study through various narrative texts and begin to understand how and why the sun, moon, and stars inspire authors. Then students focus their study on the scientific concepts of observable patterns of the sun, moon, and stars. Students read informational texts and make observations and take notes in a sky notebook to learn about these patterns. Finally, students synthesize their learning from both their scientific study and study of literature to compose a narrative poem titled “What the Sun Sees.” Students then learn to give feedback to their peers and revise their writing.

### **Module 3 - Building Expertise through Research**

#### **Title: Birds’ Amazing Bodies**

In this module, students build their literacy skills as they engage in an in-depth study of birds’

bodies. The module focuses on the following big ideas: Animals have physical features that help them survive, and animals behave in ways that help them survive. Students begin their study by considering the guiding question: “What makes a bird a bird?” They then build research skills and background knowledge about birds through reading, talking, and representing (through scientific drawing, writing, role-play, music, and movement). Students participate in both whole group and small group research to learn more about the form and function of key bird parts: beaks and feathers. Students show their learning by writing an informational paragraph that describes how beaks or feathers help birds survive. Finally, students create Expert Bird Riddle cards and Expert Bird Scientific Drawing cards for a riddle matching game using facts from their research.

\*Note: Module 3 lays the foundation for the work in Module 4. In Module 3, students build deep knowledge about the scientific topic of living things, and trees, specifically. In Module 4, they then apply this knowledge to make a meaningful contribution to their community.

## **Module 4 - Contributing to the Community**

### **Title: Caring for Birds**

In this module, students continue to build on their knowledge of birds from Module 3 to deepen their literacy skills and explore the guiding question: “Why should we care about birds?” Students begin to consider this question by reading a variety of literary texts with characters that care for birds. They then learn about writing opinions as they investigate a specific bird, Pale Male, who built its nest in the heart of New York City. Students read about people’s differing opinions about this nest and then write their own opinions in response to the evidence they gather. Students also learn about some of the problems birds face more generally, and what humans can do to help them live and grow. They learn about the myriad ways birds are helpful to plants, animals, and people. For the performance task, students create a piece of artwork and writing that serves an authentic need in their school or local community: a Feathered Friend Saver. This performance task includes a high quality portrait of a local bird that is formatted to attach to a window. When displayed in a window, the portrait helps to prevent birds from flying into the window. Students also individually create a short piece of writing to teach the recipient of the Feathered Friend Saver facts about birds.

## **Integrated Studies with Place-Based Education**

Place-based education is defined as an immersive learning experience that places students in local heritage, cultures, landscapes, opportunities and experiences, and uses these as a foundation for the study of language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum.<sup>33</sup> Place-based education is rooted in the local community, and which explores the unique history, environment, people, economy, culture and art of St. Louis. The Rural School and Community

<sup>33</sup> What is Place-Based Education? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://promiseofplace.org/what-is-pbe/what-is-place-based-education>

Trust states, “The community provides the context for learning, student work focuses on community needs and interests, and community members serve as resources and partners in every aspect of teaching and learning. This local focus has the power to engage students academically, pairing real-world relevance with intellectual rigor, while promoting genuine citizenship and preparing people to respect and live well in any community they choose.”<sup>34</sup> Atlas has an Integrated Studies Block that is rooted in the foundational framework of place-based education. Each student will participate in Integrated Studies daily from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Atlas strives to break down the walls between learning and life with implementing a place-based education curriculum. Students need multiple and varied strategic opportunities to explore, practice, reflect and revisit 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication skills. Students must also have strong reading, writing, and mathematical skills, as well as the ability to apply those skills to real life challenges in order to thrive in college or a career. In the elementary years, when foundational academic concepts and learner identities are being developed, we see a unique and timely opportunity for students to develop cross-disciplinary lenses. Children learn by doing and emphasizing hands-on, real-world experiences makes learning more meaningful to students and helps lessons stick.

Research shows that curriculum that is intimately connected to students’ surroundings fuels a sense of belonging and motivation.<sup>35</sup> This, in turn, leads to academic risk taking and meaningful learning. When learning challenges ring true to students, their questioning and problem solving matters, and when students have opportunities to share their learning with a larger audience, we believe there will be a profound impact on academic performance, social and emotional development and school culture. In our current society, where disconnectedness and divisions may appear intractable, place-based education reveals and inspires connections between people, cultures and communities.

Sample Integrated Studies Units that highlight place-based learning can be found in *Appendix A.2.5*. Atlas’ Integrated Studies Rubric can also be found in *Appendix A.2.6*.

### **Goals of Integrated Studies at Atlas:**

- Learn from the St. Louis community and promote understanding of the world around us
- Increase student and teacher engagement
- Improve student achievement

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<sup>34</sup> What is Place Based Learning and how can it be used in your Curriculum? (n.d.). Retrieved from <https://k12teacherstaffdevelopment.com/tlb/what-is-place-based-learning-and-how-can-it-be-used-in-your-curriculum/>

<sup>35</sup> Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). The Theory and Practice of Culturally Relevant Education: A Synthesis of Research Across Content Areas. *Review of Educational Research*, 86(1), 163–206.  
<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654315582066>

### **The following principles are woven into our Integrated Studies Curriculum:**

+ Principle 1: Learning is occurring in St. Louis where our students live, grow, and play.
+ Principle 2: Units are embedded with opportunities for students to practice 21st century skills, or the "6 C's"- collaboration, communication, citizenship, character, critical thinking, and creativity. + Principle 2a: Technology is integrated throughout units in a meaningful way. Students learn to employ technology as a tool in learning across content areas.
+ Principle 3: Integrated Studies is rooted in rigorous experiential learning, supported with appropriate teaching practices, and aligned to Missouri Learning Standards. + Principle 3a: The units rely extensively on hands-on, inquiry-based experiential teaching and learning. + Principle 3b: Units are cross curricular, tying in key concepts in science, ELA, math, social studies and related arts. + Principle 3c: Includes assessments for learning as well as assessments that generate evidence of learning. + Principle 3d: Established clear, but flexible, learning goals that align to robust standards for student achievement.
+ Principle 4: Units allow for students to work in cycles and offer students opportunities to repeat the learning process.
+ Principle 5: Thematic units teach civic engagement and social justice while students learn about the local community.
+ Principle 6: Units cultivate student voice and involve students in democratic practices.
+ Principle 7: Our curriculum has deliberate processes to identify and consider multiple perspectives regarding an issue or project.
+ Principle 8: Each unit provides opportunities for students to learn about potential careers and/or college paths.
+ Principle 9: Student work is authentic, complex, relevant, and publicly shared.

### **Summer Pilot Testing Place-Based Learning Curriculum**

In July 2019, Atlas held a City Makers Summer Camp for rising first and second graders to test components of our place-based curriculum. The students explored components of the city of St. Louis, specifically its architecture, people and natural resources. Collaboratively, and in dialogue with experts, students engaged in literature, math, art and critical thinking to develop a 3D representation of St. Louis and give us a peek into their vision of the future. The City Makers Camp culminated in an open house event led by students that showcased the path they took to learn about St. Louis.

The City Makers Camp curriculum directly aligned with first and second grade MLS in science, social studies, math, reading and writing and was aligned to the above rubric. Our experience with the pilot has demonstrated how a place-based curriculum with hands-on problem learning lends itself to several components of our model. Given the multitude of mediums, materials and ways in which children are able to express themselves, there is greater opportunity for students to match their learning styles to the content or problem at hand. For detailed piloting plans, see *Appendix A.2.7*.

## Social-Emotional Learning

In efforts to live out our mission of developing the whole child, Atlas incorporates social-emotional learning into all aspects of the school day. The Founding Team believes that social-emotional skills should be explicitly taught, in addition to living in all aspects of teaching and programming. The social-emotional learning (SEL) component is explicitly taught during the morning Community Circle in each classroom at Atlas. Social-emotional learning will also take place organically through group and individual conversation, as well as in classroom activities. The [Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#)<sup>36</sup> has created a framework that Atlas has adopted to build a common language around SEL guiding principles:

**Self-Awareness:** Know your strengths and limitations, with a well-grounded sense of confidence, optimism, and a “growth mindset.”

**Self-Management:** Effectively manage stress, control impulses, and motivate yourself to set and achieve goals.

**Social Awareness:** Understand the perspectives of others and empathize with them, including those from diverse backgrounds and cultures.

**Relationship Skills:** Communicate clearly, listen well, cooperate with others, resist inappropriate social pressure, negotiate conflict constructively, and seek and offer help when needed.

**Responsible Decision-Making:** Make constructive choices about personal behavior and social interactions based on ethical standards, safety, and social norms.

Because SEL development is unique to each child, these core competencies can be used by teachers to build their own SEL rubrics and know what to look for in students’ personal growth. Atlas will utilize lesson plans from [UsPlus](#)<sup>37</sup> for explicit SEL instruction during Community Circle. These lesson



<sup>36</sup> For more information on CASEL, see: <https://casel.org/what-is-sel/>

<sup>37</sup> For more information on UsPlus, see: <https://www.usplused.org/>

plans are free and open to educators to use to develop skills in their students such as deep listening, shared problem solving, and productive disagreement. In addition, Atlas is using [Conscious Discipline®](#),<sup>38</sup> a set of trauma informed, evidence-based and research-backed best practices that draws on research about learning, teaching, mental health, human development and neuroscience, to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment. Teachers will participate in ongoing training for both UsPlus and Conscious Discipline. See *A.8 - School Climate & Culture* for more information on Conscious Discipline®.

## **Related Arts at Atlas**

### **Visual Arts**

Students will build skills in Visual Arts throughout their years at Atlas. This will help to build their confidence as artists and critical thinkers and will expand their knowledge base about art and the world. The Visual Arts teacher will collaborate with the grade level teams to create art projects that are aligned to the Integrated Studies Block, showing an intersection between core curriculum and the arts.

### **Performing Arts**

Performing Arts is a combination of music, dance, and acting classes. We believe that these things are integral to every student's creative exploration of the world. The Performing Arts teacher will collaborate with the grade level teams to create music, plays, and dances that are aligned to the Integrated Studies Block, showing an intersection between core curriculum and the arts.

### **Physical Education and Health**

At Atlas, we have a physical education program that teaches students how to keep a healthy and fit lifestyle, which is important to teaching and learning as well as to each individual student's well-being. This curriculum is directly tied to MLS.

## **Professional Development Community**

If teachers are going to prepare every student at Atlas for middle school, high school and beyond, we need to set them up for success by providing high quality guiding documents and resources. One of Atlas' top priorities, and a core component of the school design, is to focus on delivering high-quality, ongoing staff training and professional development. We believe that teacher preparation and training is directly correlated to student academic outcomes. Below is an overview of how Atlas creates time in the schedule to focus on development and implementation of the academic program:

- **Intersession Breaks:** Atlas operates on a year-long calendar, with approximately five weeks

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<sup>38</sup> For more information on Conscious Discipline, see: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/>

on (session), two weeks off (intersession break) for students. Generally, a week of the intersession break is devoted to teacher professional development. See *A-4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule* for a more detailed overview. This allows all faculty to participate in training and collaboratively plan with colleagues without having students in the building.

- **Grade-Level Common Planning time:** Teachers are given two blocks a day without students, in addition to a duty-free lunch. One block is a traditional prep, where teachers can use the time to grade, make copies, etc. The second block is a grade-level meeting led by a member of the leadership team. During this time we will hold data meetings, intellectual planning and preparation meetings, and PD sessions based on our area of focus (see below).

We have adopted a professional development scope and sequence from Achievement First that supports teacher growth and development throughout the school year. During each academic session we will focus on a specific topic. These topics are discussed during team planning meetings, during intersession PD, and through weekly email updates and reminders. For an in-depth explanation for these areas of focus, see the [Arc of the Year](#) from Achievement First.<sup>39</sup>

PD to Take Place During Intersession	Focus Area
1	Core Culture and Academic Foundation
2	Core Rigor Foundation
3	The Power of Relationships
4	Thinking and Engagement
5	Response to Data
6	Crescendo
7	End Readiness

### Professional Development Plan

Atlas will provide professional development (PD) and time for lesson reflection and data analysis throughout the school year. Teachers will participate in summer onboarding, daily grade level team meetings, and 30 full days of development throughout the school year. The chart below describes the topics for professional development at Atlas.

<sup>39</sup> For more information on the scope and sequence, see: <https://www.achievementfirst.org/opensource/instructional-model/arc-of-the-year/>

Topic	Description	Frequency	Lead
<b>Atlas Teacher Academy</b>  A four week orientation that provides teachers with pertinent information around Atlas programs, instructional model, student services, safety, and culture development	Teacher Handbook	Summer Orientation	Heads of School
	Culture & School-wide Norms	Summer Orientation	Executive Director & Heads of School
	Approach to Instruction	Summer Orientation	Heads of School
	School Community (asset mapping)	Summer Orientation	Executive Director
<b>Data Review</b>  A relentless focus on the structure and process of the data improvement process and cycle of inquiry will be important for sustained improvement for student growth and academic achievement and teacher support	Class level assessments	At least twice per week during 50-minute planning	Heads of School
	Benchmark assessments and nonacademic student data	Every other academic session	Heads of School
	Panorama Student Surveys	Classroom Climate Survey collected every other academic session	Head of School - Culture Lead
	IEP/Accommodations	Whole school twice a year during full PD day	Executive Director
<b>School Safety and Culture</b>  A relentless focus on welcoming, safe, and culturally-responsive environment requires initial training and periodic reboots for staff to meet the social-emotional needs of students	Student Information Systems	Summer Orientation	Head of School - Culture Lead
	Conscious Discipline	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
	Equity and Inclusion	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
	SEL & Trauma-Informed Practices	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
<b>Instructional Model</b>	Lesson Plan	Summer Orientation	Heads of School

A relentless focus on grade appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement and teachers with high expectations to improve student outcomes.	Development and Review	Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	
	Analyzing Student Work	Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School
	Instructional Strategies, Collaborative Classrooms, & Inclusive Inclusive Strategies	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School
	Team Teaching	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School & Executive Director
	Coaching Sessions	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and during teacher plan time	Heads of School & Executive Director

## How Staff Needs will be Determined

### Classroom Observations

The Executive Leadership Team will utilize a coaching tool from the Uncommon Schools Network for weekly classroom observations. The coaching tool will help inform the feedback and support needed for each individual teacher. See *Appendix A.2.8* for the coaching tool that will be utilized during the first academic session.

### Weekly Data Team Meetings

The Leadership Team will collaborate with teachers in a weekly data team meeting. The data will be used to identify teachers who may need additional coaching or support if their student data is significantly lagging behind colleagues.

### Teacher Goal Setting Meetings

Teachers will have goal setting meetings with the Leadership Team in order to address individual staff needs. The teachers and Leadership Team will collaborate to determine best ways to support the individual needs of the teacher.

## Teacher Supports at Atlas

At Atlas, we believe that every teacher brings unique strengths to a classroom. We also believe that every teacher can continually grow stronger with targeted development. This is why we have created a Teacher Support Plan for our teachers.

These seven principles live in Atlas' Teacher Support Plan, which includes:

- Individual Development Plans
- Observation, Feedback, and Coaching
- Data Analysis
- Whole Child Meeting
- Intellectual Preparation
- Formal Teacher Evaluation

See sample Teacher Support Plan schedule for an Atlas educator below:

Weekly	Academic Session	Trimester	Biannually
Observations, feedback, and coaching  Intellectual Preparation  Data Analysis	Data Analysis	Individual Development Plans  Whole Child Meeting	Formal Teacher Evaluation

**Individual Development Plans:** Each teacher will have an Individual Development Plan to capture strengths, areas for growth, and learning goals. Each teacher will work with a coach from the Leadership Team to identify an area for improvement, and develop in said area over the course of a trimester (two sessions). At the end of each trimester, teachers will reflect and share their successes and challenges based on the goals set during the week-long professional development week.

**Observations, Feedback and Coaching:** Each teacher at Atlas has a coach from the Leadership Team who will provide ongoing observations, feedback and coaching. The coaches will be in classrooms daily, conducting informal walkthroughs as well as an extensive observation once a week per teacher.

**Data Analysis:** The Leadership Team will monitor student outcomes through interim assessments as well as state assessments as outlined in *A.3 - Assessing Student Performance*. The data from these

assessments will show the Leadership Team which teachers need additional support in specific content areas. The data trends will inform professional development needed during the week-long professional development weeks.

**Whole Child Meeting:** Being true to Atlas’ mission of educating the whole child, the Leadership Team collaborates with each teacher once per trimester. These meetings will monitor the progress of each child, as well as to check-in with the teacher to see if they need any support with developing the whole child.

**Intellectual Preparation:** Adopted from the Achievement First model, Atlas teachers will participate in weekly intellectual preparation meetings with their grade-level team and a member from the Leadership Team. These preparation meetings ensure that teachers have internalized their lesson plans and gives them time to collaborate and discuss lessons before delivery. Based on the Leadership Team’s observations, they may determine a teacher needs additional support in intellectual preparation depending on their participation in the weekly grade-level meetings. This additional support would occur during the intersession professional development time.

**Formal Teacher Evaluation:** The Head of School will provide two formal evaluations for each teacher annually, one midyear and one at the end of the academic school year. The purpose of formal evaluation will be to track progress and growth, incorporate objective feedback into goal setting, and to provide fodder for conversations with peer coaches and other colleagues.

## Instructional Priorities

At Atlas our Founding Team understands that if everything is a priority then nothing really is. We’ve made several key decisions that are designed to set teachers up for success and ensure that students receive the high quality instruction that they deserve. The chart below highlights key components of our school design that supports teaching and learning.

Key Action	Explanation
<b>Math is Departmentalized and Taught Off Team by a Math Teacher</b>	Math is departmentalized and taught “off team” by a certified teacher in a co-taught classroom. In our first year of operation, math will be taught by two certified teachers who will work together to plan, prepare, and deliver math lessons to all five of our kindergarten and first grade classrooms. In subsequent years, math will be taught by a certified teacher and a co-teacher who is either a resident teacher or an aide. By pulling math off team, it takes the responsibility of lesson preparation and delivery off the homeroom teacher.
<b>Achievement First</b>	Atlas will be utilizing curriculum from Achievement First for Math as

<b>Navigator Program</b>	well as Math Facts & Math Stories. Achievement First has established the Navigator Program to support schools and districts who are utilizing their curriculum. The Navigator Program will provide Atlas with a coach who is a curriculum expert. They will help our team develop content knowledge, establish systems and protocols that support teacher development, and provide our teachers and coaches with one-on-one coaching.
<b>Homeroom Teachers to focus on Content Based Literacy and Reading Foundations</b>	Homeroom teachers at Atlas lead Community Circle, teach Content Based Literacy, Reading Foundations or Pathways, Math Facts & Math Stories, and Integrated Studies. While Math Lessons have been moved off team, we realize that this is still a lot of subjects to prepare for each day. While we want teaching and learning in each block to be as strong as possible, our instructional priorities for Years 1 & 2 are Content Based Literacy and Reading Foundations. This means that our building wide initiative such as coaching, professional development and data meetings will focus on these two instructional blocks.
<b>External Professional Development through EL Education</b>	In order to build capacity on our team while ensuring best practice, Atlas will be working with EL Education to get outside support from curriculum experts. EL Education will provide curriculum experts to lead professional development for our entire team, provide coaching to Atlas' coaches, and help establish routines, protocols, and procedures that will help ensure the successful roll out and implementation of the curriculum.
<b>Hiring Full-Time Visual &amp; Performing Arts Teachers in Year 1</b>	Starting in our first year, Atlas will hire a full-time Visual Arts teacher and a full-time Performing Arts teacher. While both of our arts teachers will serve in a co-teacher capacity during other times of the day, bringing on two certified teachers in our first year allows us to develop an arts program that is connected to the learning that is happening inside homeroom classes. We feel strongly that the arts are essential to our students learning and should be both integrated and connected to previous learning as much as possible.
<b>Homeroom Teachers Have Two 50 minute Plan Periods Daily</b>	It is important that teachers at Atlas have adequate time to reflect on student data, internalize lesson plans, and create scaffolds that are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. All homeroom teachers at Atlas have two 50 minute plan periods built into their school day. During one of their plan times they will meet with their grade level team and a coach to prepare for upcoming lessons. This builds teacher content knowledge while promoting collaboration and the sharing of ideas.
<b>30 Days of Professional</b>	Atlas' year-round calendar builds in 30 full days of job embedded

<b>Development Built into Yearly Calendar</b>	<p>professional development. This gives teachers and support staff members time to reflect on data and prepare for upcoming academic sessions. For more information on Atlas' year-round calendar see <i>A.4 - School Calendar and Daily Schedule</i>.</p>
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## **A.3 - Assessing Student Performance**

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is committed to ensuring that students are mastering a rigorous academic curriculum as well as building social-emotional and 21st century skills that will prepare them for success in middle school, high school, and beyond. One of the pillars of our educational philosophy is that we believe in high expectations with a growth mindset. Rigorous standards, stretch goals, and caring educators will push our students to unprecedented growth. Learning will be iterative, and students will work in cycles and grow from their mistakes. Atlas aims to meaningfully integrate the Missouri Learning Standards across the curriculum, and implement multiple and varied measures of assessment in order to ensure that teachers, support staff, school leaders, and families have a holistic picture of student academic proficiency and progress. In order to send students to middle school as creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent, well-rounded, collaborative, and academically exceptional, Atlas will also utilize social-emotional learning and 21st century skills assessments in order to gain a more holistic understanding of how our students are progressing.

As outlined in *A.4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule*, Atlas' unique daily schedule and year-round calendar build in time for teacher reflection on data and the discussion of next steps. The Founding Team recognizes the interconnectedness of curriculum, instruction, and assessment and have developed a robust program for gathering, analyzing, and understanding the instructional implications of data. Atlas will implement a comprehensive assessment system to measure progress toward our vision for student success, which includes tracking student mastery of grade-level standards and requisite skills in each subject area.

### **Atlas' Approach to Student Assessment**

In order to provide a truly supportive and challenging curriculum with rigorous instruction for all students within their zones of proximal development, teachers will continually assess students' knowledge and skills, establish growth targets, and frequently monitor and promote progress towards established goals and objectives.

In the handbook for course-based review and assessment, Martha Stassen defines assessment as "the systematic collection and analysis of information to improve student learning."<sup>40</sup> This definition captures the essential task of student assessment in the teaching and learning process. Student assessment enables teachers to measure the effectiveness of their instruction by linking student

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<sup>40</sup> Stassen, M., Doherty, K. and Poe, M. (2001) "Course-Based Review and Assessment: Methods for Understanding Student Learning." University of Massachusetts Amherst Office of Academic Planning and Assessment. [online]. Retrieved from <https://manoa.hawaii.edu/assessment/resources/pdf/CoursebasedReviewandAssessment.pdf>.

performance to specific learning objectives. As a result, teachers are able to institutionalize effective teaching choices and revise ineffective ones in their pedagogy.

At Atlas, we utilize both formative and summative forms of assessments. A formative assessment is a “snapshot” that captures a student’s progress and explains to what extent that student is learning a concept, skill, or knowledge set. These include, but are not limited to: exit tickets, first drafts of writing assignments, questions asked and answered during instruction, graphic organizers and worksheets, informal observations of student work, pre-tests and practice tests, and homework. In contrast, summative assessments are typically implemented at the end of the unit as they are generally comprehensive in nature. While we will use both forms of assessment at Atlas, our assessments tend to be more formative in nature and are meant to guide instruction. In addition, Atlas uses several different methods of assessments which will be implemented to gain a holistic understanding of each student’s progress toward individual learning goals and grade-level standards.

Data collected from student assessment plays a critical role in the educational program at Atlas. Teachers will assess student performance systematically and use this data to improve teacher instructional practice. One of Atlas’ core instructional commitments is relying on data-driven instruction based on formal and informal student assessment outcomes. See *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction* for more information on how data-driven instruction fits into Atlas’ instructional philosophy. The following table outlines the school-wide assessment systems with the interval at which they will be given.

### **Assessment Overview**

<b>Assessment</b>	<b>Grade Level</b>	<b>Subject(s)</b>	<b>Interval</b>
Missouri MAP Assessment	3rd-5th	Math, Language Arts, Science (5th)	1 time per year (March-April)
NWEA Benchmark Assessments	2nd- 5th	Math, Language Usage, Reading, Science	3 times per year (September, December, May)
Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment	Kindergarten- 5th	Reading	3 times per year (September, December, July)
Reading Foundations Benchmark Assessments	Kindergarten-2nd	Phonics	3 times per year (September, December, July)

Reading Foundations Cycle Assessments	Kindergarten-2nd	Phonics	KG: Every Cycle starting in Module 4 1st: Every Cycle, starting in Module 1 Cycle 2 2nd: 1-2 times per module
Math Unit Assessment	Kindergarten-5th	Math	7 times per year (once per academic session)
Content Based Literature Unit Assessment	Kindergarten- 5th	ELA	12 times per year at the end of each unit
Portfolio	Kindergarten- 5th	Integrated Studies	2 times per year (February, June)
Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey	Kindergarten- 5th	Integrated Studies	3 times per year
21st Century Skills: Problem Solving Rubric	Kindergarten- 5th	Integrated Studies	Ongoing
Checks for Understanding	Kindergarten-5th	Math, ELA, Integrated Studies	Daily

### State Mandated Tests

Atlas believes in the importance of standardized tests and will fully participate in the Missouri Assessment Program (MAP grade level assessments, MAP-A, etc.), pursuant to [RSMo 160.518](#). From 3th-5th grade, every Atlas student will take the Mathematics and English Language Arts MAP assessments; in 5th grade, students will also take the Science MAP test.

### Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) Benchmark Assessments

At Atlas, we understand that each student has specific strengths and areas for growth. We will administer the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments in Reading, Math, and Language Usage assessments three times a year starting in second grade, and the Science assessment will be given three times a year starting in 3rd grade. The NWEA assessment will be used to help identify students in need of intervention, talented and gifted students, students requiring targeted instruction, and students ready for enrichment activities.

In order to gain a better understanding of each student, at the beginning of the year we will administer the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessments in Reading, Math, and Language Usage during our first session (five weeks) of school. Students in 2nd-5th grade will take the MAP Growth 2-5 Assessment. The NWEA assessments are computer adaptive and produce accurate, reliable data that reveal the precise learning level of every student, regardless of the students' ability or grade level. Because the assessments are adaptive, they will begin with a grade-level question, then adapt throughout the test in response to each student's performance. Correct answers trigger a more challenging item to be presented next; if a student misses a question, the follow-up item will be easier.

Even with the adaptive nature of the assessment, all NWEA MAP assessments have been aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards, so it provides teachers with comparative data and the ability to predict proficiency on high-stakes tests. NWEA is also a nationally normed assessment which allows us to compare Atlas' students to students throughout the country.

### **Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment**

We will be utilizing the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS) to determine our students' independent and instructional reading levels. The assessment gives teachers the opportunity to observe student reading behaviors one-on-one, engage in comprehension conversations that go beyond retelling, and make informed decisions that connect assessment to instruction. The data gained from the assessments will be used to form initial groups for guided reading instruction, plan for efficient and effective instruction, and identify students who need intervention and extra help. In addition, the student data and information gained from the assessment will be communicated to families along with specific strategies they can work on with their child at home.

### **Reading Foundations Assessments**

The chart below describes the assessments students will take in kindergarten through 2nd grade in their Reading Foundations Block.

<b>Assessment Type</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Administration Frequency</b>
Benchmark Assessments	Beginning-of-Year Provide diagnostic information to help the teacher: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Determine the phase at which a student currently is reading and spelling</li> <li>• Determine the approximate cycles in the K-2 Continuum that would best fit that student's instructional needs</li> </ul>	Beginning, middle, and end of the year

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gauge whether the student is approximately on grade level (as determined by the MLS)</li> </ul> <p>Middle-of-Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track students' progress toward the end-of-year goals (as determined by the grade-level Scope and Sequence)</li> </ul> <p>End-of-Year</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Measure students' mastery of the end-of-year goals</li> </ul>	
Cycle Assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assess students' progress toward mastery of skills taught up to a given point in the curriculum</li> <li>Give teacher information to help the student set a personal goal around reading proficiency</li> </ul>	<p>KG: Every cycle starting in Module 4</p> <p>1st: Every cycle, starting in Cycle 2</p> <p>2nd: 1-2 times per module</p>
<p>Daily Assessments</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Snapshot Assessments</li> <li>Exit Tickets</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Track progress toward mastery of daily learning targets</li> </ul>	After each lesson

## Portfolio Assessments

In addition to subject specific assessments and state-mandated tests, Atlas will use portfolio assessments to assess student learning in content knowledge as well as deeper learning skills and non-cognitive skills. Portfolio Assessments require students to compile a variety of work products in multiple subjects throughout the year. The portfolio work pieces represent a sample of students' accomplishments, academic progress, interests and reflections. In addition to content, portfolio assessments allow for the assessment of deeper learning skills such as critical thinking, problem solving, communication, and agency. Portfolios also allow the student, parent, and teacher to see the student's growth over time instead of just their performance on a given day. Students will present their portfolio in student-led conferences two times per year at the end of the 3rd and 6th academic session. Before each conference, students will compile their work, reflect on their learning successes, challenges and goals moving forward, and prepare to lead their family member and teacher through that work. Student-led conferences will be scaffolded so they are age appropriate. For example, a first grade student will follow a specific protocol and will also practice their conference in class to build confidence and communication skills. After sufficient practice that student will explain their portfolio to a family member and teacher with support. In contrast, a fifth

grader will lead her or his conference more independently. That student will complete pre-work to develop main points for the conference, practice with peers, and have more flexibility to conduct the conference to meet individual goals.

### **Math Unit Assessment**

Students will take an interim assessment every academic session in math. These assessments are adopted from Achievement First in alignment with the Achievement First curriculum.

### **Content Based Literacy Unit Assessment**

Students will take a formative assessment towards the end of each unit in Content Based Literacy. At each grade level there are four modules each year and each module has three units. Therefore, there will be 12 unit assessments each academic year.

### **Social-Emotional Learning Survey**

Social-emotional learning (SEL) describes the mindsets, skills, attitudes, and feelings that help students succeed in school, career, and life. By asking both students and teachers to reflect on SEL through the Panorama's Social-Emotional Learning Survey, Atlas will gather actionable data to better understand how to support students socially and emotionally. Student competencies are the social, emotional, and motivational skills that help students succeed in school, careers, and in life. The chart below lists some of the student competencies the Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey addresses.

<b>Student Competencies</b>	<b>Definition</b>	<b>Example Question</b>
<b>Grit</b>	How well students are able to persevere through setbacks to achieve important long-term goals.	How often do you stay focused on the same goal for several months at a time?
<b>Growth Mindset</b>	Student perceptions of whether they have the potential to change those factors that are central to their performance in school.	In school, how possible is it for you to change how easily you give up?
<b>Self Management</b>	How well students manage their emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in different situations.	During the past 30 days, how often did you come to class prepared?
<b>Social Awareness</b>	How well students consider the perspectives of others and empathize with them.	During the past 30 days, how carefully did you listen to other people's points of view?

<b>Self-Efficacy</b>	How much students believe they can succeed in achieving academic outcomes.	When complicated ideas are presented in class, how confident are you that you can understand them?
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The Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey can be tailored to meet Atlas' needs and the questions can be modified based on the grade level of students taking the survey. The survey will be administered three times per year. The beginning of the year survey will be used to set individual student goals. The Mid-Year and End-of-Year surveys will be used to measure progress towards student goals. Below is the school-wide goal Atlas has set pertaining to Social Emotional Learning:

**Goal 11 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Students will demonstrate growth in Emotional Intelligence competencies. 80% of students will meet or exceed their SEL goal which is determined by each individual student, their teachers, and their families.

### **21st Century Skills Rubrics**

Atlas is currently researching and developing rubrics to measure 21st century skills such as collaboration, communication, and critical thinking.

### **Checks for Understanding**

Teachers will utilize informal and formal checks for understanding on an ongoing basis to assess student understanding of content. For example, teachers may ask for "fist to five", students flashing white boards with answers to demonstrate understanding, informal observations, and exit tickets.

## **Data-Driven Decisions**

Student performance data will be utilized by all members of the team at Atlas including teachers, students, support staff, leaders, and families. Guided by the Executive Director who is held accountable by the Board, the Heads of School are responsible for monitoring student progress towards identified goals and adjusting the academic program to meet those goals as needed. Data will be collected in a data dashboard, analyzed by school leaders and classroom teachers, and reviewed to monitor student progress toward meeting grade-level standards and to inform instructional practice.

Data analysis happens systematically across three levels of the organization: at the school level, class level, and individual student level.

**School Level Data:** School level data includes results generated and reported by grade, class and subgroup from the assessments described in the prior section. This information informs school-wide

decisions by the Board, Executive Director and/or Heads of School. Identifiable trends in student performance data form the basis for key leadership decisions, including changes in academic program, resource allocation, professional development foci and targeted instructional coaching for teachers. A variety of school-level data is shared with the school community on an on-going basis during scheduled board meetings. The Executive Director reports progress toward the mission and vision of the school and school-wide achievement data. Atlas will demonstrate progress on the aggregate results of mandated state testing by providing a report for each grade level. This report will be disaggregated to show how sub-groups (socio-economic status, racial/ethnic, English proficiency) perform.<sup>41</sup>

**Class Level Data:** Class level data is used to inform decisions within the classroom and across the school, as needed. Teachers use the information gathered from the prior year's assessments, along with the pre-assessments given at the beginning of the year, to inform their instruction. Teachers also report student achievement directly to the Head of School throughout the school year during regularly scheduled data team meetings. In partnership with the principal, teachers reflect on the progress each child is making and the appropriateness of the educational program being offered. Through this work, teachers are coached to modify instructional approaches based on student data. As a result, teachers may choose to re-teach lessons and skills, condense upcoming lessons, or restructure student groupings. Teachers may also use the data to realign their curriculum or revise their pedagogical techniques for future units and or school years. Gaps in student knowledge will become the focus of teacher coaching during regularly scheduled observation and feedback sessions and will help determine appropriate professional development experiences that will take place during intersession breaks.

**Individual Student Data:** Individual student data is used to provide teachers, students, and families with detailed information about each child's achievement. In addition to tracking student progress toward grade level standards, it can be used for in-depth analysis of student's strengths and areas for growth. When necessary, this analysis is used to design intervention programs that will meet student needs. It may be used to help inform supplemental remedial instruction, special education evaluations or more challenging enrichment. Progress reports, based on state standards and school generated goals and objectives, are issued three times a year.

Analyzing data on the school level, class level, and individual student level helps to ensure that everyone at Atlas has a more holistic picture of the academic proficiency and progress of our students. By working in teams to iteratively implement, review, and re-implement instructional practices based on student assessment data, teachers will constantly improve their teaching practices in order to maximize student learning. Atlas' collaborative data analysis system functions

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<sup>41</sup> Subgroup data will be shared publicly once the student population allows for sample sizes large enough to protect student privacy.

as follows: first, classroom co-teachers will share the same plan period each day so they have time to review student data and modify instruction based on formal and informal assessments of student understanding. Second, grade-level teams will meet daily during an additional plan time to strategize how to modify lesson plans and tailor instruction based on data gleaned from student assessments and teacher observations across classrooms. Third, all instructional staff will have dedicated data analysis time during each professional development week for teachers to review student data in teams. During this time, teachers will improve instructional, curricular and assessment strategies in light of student mastery and their struggles in the previous academic block. Teachers will also assign students to mastery-based reading groups for small-group phonics instruction, based on analysis of student data. See *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction* for more information about how normalized interventions fit into Atlas' instructional philosophy.

As a result of using data to drive decisions, Atlas students will demonstrate an understanding of the Missouri Learning Standards. For more school-wide academic and non-academic goals, see *A.7 - School Specific Goals & Objectives*.

## **Use and Reporting of Data**

Access to information and transparency will be key pillars of the work at Atlas. Atlas will implement a comprehensive Student Information System (SIS) to house student and family data, track student growth and learning, and make information available in real-time to all appropriate stakeholders. This means that students and their families may access up-to-date information at school or at home. Recognizing that not all families have internet access at home, Atlas will also send regular paper communication home to families, make phone calls home to discuss progress with families, and regularly discuss learning and growth with students in their classes. The Head of School - Operations Lead, in collaboration with all school staff, will be responsible for maintaining the SIS in accordance with the school's mission and vision.

### **Reporting to Parents**

Atlas will meet with families during orientation each year to share the school's assessment philosophy so families know how to access information independently. Families will have access to standardized testing data and ongoing formative assessment results through SIS. Students will present portfolios to their families twice a year.

### **Report Cards**

Student report cards will summarize student performance, progress and assessment at the end of the second, fourth, and sixth learning session. Atlas report cards will be designed to give meaningful feedback to students and capture their progress regularly. They will detail content-specific mastery, as well as skills and dispositions aligned to Atlas' graduate profile: 1) Creative and Critical Thinkers,

2) Lifelong Learners, 3) Culturally Competent Citizens, 4) Well-Rounded Individuals 5) Collaborative Team Players, and 6) Academically Exceptional Scholars.

Report cards will contain numerical scores based on key rubrics. They will also contain several narrative sections where teachers detail examples of a student's level of development / mastery based on observations, student-work, portfolio submissions, project rubrics, and/or various classroom based and school-wide assessments. Report cards will act as a teacher's commentary on a student's holistic accomplishments, performance and growth areas. Students will have an opportunity to comment and reflect on them during their student-led conference.

The Founding Team at Atlas understands that this type of report card is different from what most families are used to. As such, we will take the time needed to go over our report card and grading policies with each individual family when they enroll. We will also provide an in-depth explanation during our first conference of each school year and answer any questions our families might have.

### **Promotion**

At Atlas, promotion to the next grade means that a student is academically prepared for success in that grade level. It is the school's responsibility to help all students meet promotion criteria through high quality instruction, targeted interventions, and partnerships with families. However, in the event that a student does not meet these criteria, we believe it is a disservice to promote them into the next grade for which they are not yet academically prepared.

Our philosophy is that some students may meet standards at different times, but all students must meet them. At Atlas, our mission is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so all students thrive. We are an intentionally diverse school that believes all students can achieve at high levels when properly supported; this includes students who have been historically underserved, and are considered to be at-risk. The team at Atlas is aware of the risk that non-promoted students could potentially withdraw from Atlas to attend a school with less rigorous academic standards or one that believes in promotion based on age versus academic mastery. As such, we will communicate intensively with families whose children are in danger of retention. At the beginning of each year, and whenever new students enter the school, the Leadership Team will explain the promotion criteria in detail to ensure families understand the rationale behind our high expectations. Promotion criteria will also be clearly and explicitly described in the Family Handbook.

Students must meet the following criteria in grades kindergarten through 5th grade in order to be academically prepared for the next year. Please note that if a student's IEP sets specific targets for promotion, the school will use these criteria. With this exception, all students will be held to the following standards in order to be promoted:

Promotion Criteria	
<b>Fountas &amp; Pinnell Benchmark Assessment</b>	Kindergarten Students: F&P Level of B or higher 1st Grade Students: F&P Level of F or higher 2nd Grade Students: F&P Level of K or higher 3rd Grade Students: F&P Level of N or higher 4th Grade Students: F&P Level of Q or higher 5th Grade Students: F&P Level of T or higher
<b>Course Grades</b>	Students must receive a passing grade (70 percent or higher) in at least three of the four following classes: Math, Math Facts & Math Stories, Content Based Literacy, Integrated Studies

At the end of the second, fourth, and sixth academic sessions we will systematically check in with families and revisit action plans to support students as they work to meet promotion standards. The following table summarizes the type of communication required at each checkpoint if the student is in danger of retention.

Student Orientation	End of Session 2	End of Session 4	End of Session 6
<p>Conversation regarding promotion criteria</p> <p>Family Handbook that addresses student promotion criteria</p> <p>Signed document by family member acknowledging that promotion criteria was thoroughly addressed</p>	<p>Conversation at report card night (if parent is not present, must at least have a conversation on the phone)</p> <p>Letter stating that student's promotion is in doubt &amp; why. Atlas team member will discuss what the school is doing to support the student and how families can support at home</p> <p>Signed document by family member recognizing that promotion is in doubt and why</p>	<p>Conversation at report card night (if parent is not present, must at least have a conversation on the phone)</p> <p>Letter stating that student's promotion is in doubt &amp; why</p> <p>Parent must come in for an in person meeting with teacher and Head of School (beyond report card night meeting)</p> <p>Signed document by family member recognizing that promotion is in doubt and why</p>	<p>Conversation and Letter stating that student's promotion is in doubt &amp; why OR that student will definitely be retained</p> <p>Parent must come in for an in person meeting with teacher and Head of School</p> <p>Signed document by family member recognizing that promotion is in doubt and why</p>

This communication is designed both to ensure families are aware as soon as the possibility of non-promotion arises, and also to engage parents in supporting the specific interventions provided by the school. Family support is particularly important when interventions are provided outside the traditional school day, such as before or after school, or when attendance problems are reducing instructional time for a struggling student.

**Annual Report**

Atlas will utilize the Annual Report prepared by DESE. Student Achievement data will be disaggregated annually to clearly identify academic performance of students by sub-groups (e.g. including by ethnicity, gender, socioeconomic status, English Learners and native English Speakers, Students with and without disabilities).

## A.4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule

Most public schools in the United States operate on a 10-month calendar, starting around September and ending in May or June. This school schedule became the default when children needed to work in the fields during the summer. However, the 10-month school calendar no longer fits the needs of most American children or families. The Atlas Founding Team conducted focus groups, met with parents one-on-one, and surveyed families--the vast majority of whom indicated that they struggle to find quality child care options during the summer months. In addition, many educators, including the Founders of Atlas, worry about a phenomenon known as the "summer slide". This is the tendency for students, especially those from low-income families, to lose some of the achievement gains they made during the previous school year. Research dated as far back as the 1980s era shows wider disparities in test scores between children from low-income and high-income families after the summer holiday.<sup>42</sup> There is ample evidence showing that low-income children are especially vulnerable during summer months, when they lose access to important social services such as food and childcare.<sup>43</sup>

In response to these academic and socio-emotional concerns, Atlas adopted a year-round school calendar, with seven academic sessions of roughly five weeks of class per session, separated by a two-week intersession break. During intersession breaks, families have access to community organizations for additional support for childcare, food, and other social services. Intersession breaks also allow teachers and support the time to work collaboratively with their teams to internalize and strengthen lessons for the next academic session. Atlas' year-round calendar builds in 30 full days of teacher inservice each school year.

Kairos Academies, another St. Louis based charter school, currently operates with the same year-round school calendar. They opened their doors in the fall of 2019 and were fully enrolled with a broad range of family and community support for their year-round model.

### Overview of Year-Round Calendar

Atlas' fiscal year runs from July 1st - June 30th each year. For the 2021-2022 school year, our academic year will begin on September 8th, 2021. While our school calendar shares nearly all vacation and holidays with the St. Louis Public School District, Atlas has a shorter summer vacation

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<sup>42</sup> Cooper, H., Nye, B., Charlton, K., Lindsay, J., & Greathouse, S. (1996). The Effects of Summer Vacation on Achievement Test Scores: A Narrative and Meta-Analytic Review. *Review of Educational Research*, 66(3), 227–268. <https://doi.org/10.3102/00346543066003227>

<sup>43</sup> See, for example: Park KS, Lee MG. (2015). "Effects of summer school participation and psychosocial outcomes on changes in body composition and physical fitness during summer break." *J Exerc Nutr Biochem*. 19(2):81. doi: 10.5717/jenb.2015.15052005.

Jin H., Barnidge, E., Kim, Y. (2015). "Children Receiving Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch Have Higher Food Insufficiency Rates in Summer," *The Journal of Nutrition*, Volume 145, Issue 9, Pages 2161–2168, <https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.115.214486>

and more frequent breaks throughout the course of the school year. Each academic year, Atlas runs seven academic sessions, each of which is roughly seven weeks long (~5 weeks on, 2 weeks off). For the first 5 weeks of each session, students are engaged in Atlas' rigorous instructional model. Then, in the session's sixth week, students go on break, leaving teachers and support staff free to engage in intensive collaboration, lesson reflection, data analysis, and development. Each intersession also includes a full school break for both faculty and students which typically takes place in the seventh week of each academic session.

Each school day runs from 8:00am-3:30pm and in total, students receive 175 days or 1,225 hours (excluding a 30 minute daily lunch break) of regular and extended instruction each school year. The regular school year contains 155 days or 1,085 hours of instruction in accordance with [RSMo 171.031](#), which requires LEAs to provide a minimum of 1,044 hours of instruction each school year. In addition, Atlas has identified 6 makeup days, totaling 42 hours, in case of missed school days due to inclement weather per [RSMo 171.031](#). Make up days for the 2021-2022 school year include February 21st and July 11-15th.

The regular school year is divided into three trimesters consisting of two academic sessions in each trimester. Parents receive progress reports mid-way through each trimester and report cards at the conclusion of each trimester. The total number of instructional days, as well as the number of days teachers take part in an all staff inservice, are summarized in the table below.

	School Days for Students	PD Days for Teachers
<b>First Trimester:</b> Session 1: September 8-October 15 Session 2: November 1-December	28 31 <b>59 Total Days</b>	5 2 <b>7 Total PD Days</b>
<b>Second Trimester:</b> Session 3: January 3-February 11 Session 4: February 22-March 18	28 19 <b>47 Total Days</b>	3 5 <b>8 Total PD Days</b>
<b>Third Trimester:</b> Session 5: April 4-May 6 Session 6: May 23-June 24	25 24 <b>49 Total Days</b>	5 5 <b>10 Total PD Days</b>
<b>Extended Summer Session:</b> Session 7: July 18-August 19	20 <b>20 Total Days</b>	5 <b>5 Total PD Days</b>
<b>Total Number of Days:</b>	<b>175 Days or 1,225 hours</b>	<b>30 Total PD Days</b>

## **Extended Term**

As the chart above shows, Atlas offers 20 days or 140 hours of optional instruction during Session 7 during our extended term. Per the [Missouri Code of State Regulations, 5 SR 20-100.160](#), school districts with “year-round” schedules may conduct components of “summer school” during non-summer breaks in the regular term. The only requirement is that no segment consist of fewer than 30 hours, and that together, they constitute at least 120 hours of normal, planned courses. Atlas meets this requirement with 140 hours of extended term instruction in Cycle 7. While the Summer Session is not required for students, typical instructional will continue, and all families, especially those with students needing remediation, will be encouraged to send their students throughout Session 7.

## **Intersession Breaks**

Throughout the school year, there are seven total academic sessions. Each session is separated by an intersession break. Below are the dates of the intersession breaks for the 2021-2022 school year.

Intersession 1: October 18-20

Intersession 2: December 20-31 Winter Break

Intersession 3: February 14-18

Intersession 4: March 21-April 1 Spring Break

Intersession 5: May 9-20

Intersession 6: June 27-July 15 Summer Break

## **Student Program During Intersession Breaks**

During intersession breaks Atlas will not provide programming for students. However, we understand that it is critical that families have access to childcare during non-traditional school breaks. Based on conversations with families, focus groups, and surveys, the Founding Team at Atlas also knows that families want enrichment opportunities for their children that provide a safe and supportive environment for their kids. For the first two years of operations, the Head of School - Operations Lead will coordinate student programming with community partners that take place during intersessions that fall on non-traditional school breaks. In Year 3, we will hire a full time Director of Strategic Partnerships that will take on this responsibility. Through community partnerships with organizations such as Building Futures and LitShop (see letters of intent in *Appendix A.4.1*), we will connect families to enrichment opportunities during intersession breaks.

## **Teacher Inservice During Intersession Breaks**

Throughout the course of the school year there are 30 full days of teacher and support staff inservice that take place during intersession breaks. During this time, teachers take part in stepback meetings where they reflect on the previous session's lessons, analyze data, look for trends or gaps between subgroups, strategize, and determine next steps. Teachers have time to work collaboratively with their teams to internalize and strengthen lessons for the next academic session.

Teachers will also participate in both school-wide and individualized professional development opportunities.

### **Benefits of Year-Round Calendar**

Our year-round calendar will positively impact students, families and educators in the Atlas school community in the following ways:

#### **Benefits for Students**

Students will have access to a safe environment year-round, either in our school building during academic sessions or with our community partners during intersession breaks. Furthermore, our students will have their basic needs met, including two meals and a snack, through our school-based food program, or through our community partners. With these supports in place, Atlas will create an environment that ensures all students have their basic needs met, in addition to access to enriching opportunities.

Atlas students will have additional time for learning and more opportunities for enrichment compared to a traditional 10-month calendar. LPI's 2017 report on community schooling practices analyzed decades of research on extended learning time, including before-school, after-school and year-round schooling options. According to their report, community schools that provide extended learning opportunities positively impact student achievement, attendance, behavior, relationships, and attitudes when the quality of instruction and leadership is high.<sup>44</sup> Nearly all the studies cited in their report suggested at least some "evidence of a positive relationship between longer days and years on achievement in math or English Language Arts" when instructional quality remained high. A recent meta-analysis of the available research found that students make academic gains with additional learning time taught by certified classroom teachers outside of class time, and students experience social-emotional gains when exposed to high-quality experiential learning opportunities.<sup>45</sup> Based on this research, the Founding Team at Atlas is confident that our year-round model with an extended school calendar will improve student outcomes by combining extended learning time with high quality instruction and leadership.

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<sup>44</sup> Learning Policy Institute. Community Schools- An Evidence-Based Strategy for Equitable School Improvement. Oakes, et. al 2017 Retrieved From: [https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community\\_Schools\\_Evidence\\_Based\\_Strategy\\_BRIEF.pdf](https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/sites/default/files/product-files/Community_Schools_Evidence_Based_Strategy_BRIEF.pdf)

<sup>45</sup> Kidron, Y., & Lindsay, J. (2014, July). *The effects of increased learning time on student academic and nonacademic outcomes: Findings from a meta-analytic review*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Evaluation and Regional Assistance, Regional Educational Laboratory Appalachia.

## Benefits for Families

Not only do students benefit from our year-round calendar, but families benefit as well. Atlas' extended learning options are designed with families' needs at the center. These options include our summer extension term, before and after school options, and programming during intersession breaks through our community partners. Each of these extended learning aspects are designed to be accessible and support families in their search for childcare, programming, and academic enrichment that is the best fit for their child. Atlas assists families in finding appropriate programming for their children during traditional and non-traditional school breaks at an affordable cost, which will take some of the financial burden of childcare off families. Furthermore, before and after school care will ensure that family members can have flexibility in their work schedules while knowing that their child is in a safe, loving and enriching environment at school.

Students are off during traditional breaks to ensure that they can spend time with family and friends in the same way that they would be able to if they attended a school with a traditional academic schedule. At the same time, other intersession breaks occur when traditional schools are still in session, which creates opportunities for families to choose unique enrichment opportunities for their children and give their children time to rest and regroup, which one study suggests is a main concern for some parents regarding year-round schooling.<sup>46</sup> The timing for non-traditional intersession breaks also make travel and vacations more affordable for families who are interested and able to travel with their children.

Our family involvement throughout the calendar year will help build high levels of social trust and communication among families, community partners, and Atlas' faculty and staff. Research has shown that "there is a positive and convincing relationship between family involvement and benefits for students, including improved academic achievement" (Oakes, et. al 2017). Therefore, Atlas' positive relationships with families will improve student outcomes as well. For more on Atlas' approach to family involvement, see *B.6 - Family and Community Involvement*.

The overall impact of our year-round calendar on families will be increased levels of trust, communication and partnership among families and Atlas. Our school will be a resource hub for families, providing academic and extracurricular enrichment opportunities for their children and connections to other community-based social service and childcare providers. As a result, Atlas will be a trusted partner for families in raising their children into safe, strong, and successful young people who can make a positive impact on the world around them.

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<sup>46</sup> Lisa K. P. Olsen, Barry A. Garst & Gwynn M. Powell (2019). "Parental Perceptions of Year-Round School Environments," *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, DOI: [10.1080/02568543.2019.1646360](https://doi.org/10.1080/02568543.2019.1646360)

### **Benefits for Educators**

Atlas' year-round calendar provides benefits for educators as well. As outlined in *B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training*, our school model is designed to promote educators' well-being and maximize their professional capabilities. Atlas builds time into our daily schedule and yearly calendar for educators to collaborate, plan and prepare for high-quality instruction. Educators have time to reflect on lesson implementation and analyze other forms of data such as students' formative assessments each day and at the end of each intersession break. For example, homeroom teachers at Atlas get two 50 minute plan times each day that helps them prepare for classroom instruction, as well as minimize the amount of work they do outside of the school day. Regular intersession breaks provide time for high quality professional development and collaboration among our teaching staff, ensuring that they are ready to receive students during class time.

An overwhelming majority of St. Louis teachers surveyed by our Founding Team indicated they would prefer the year-round model to the traditional 10-month calendar. In addition, those same educators expressed a similar desire to work at a school that was diverse-by-design and had a commitment to place-based learning. Overall, Atlas' year-round calendar, combined with other aspects of our instructional model, will ensure that teachers are fresh, well planned, and equipped to provide high-quality instruction to all students at Atlas.

The proposed school calendar for the 2021-2022 school year is provided below and can be found in *Appendix A.4.2*.



## School Calendar 2021-2022

August 2021							August 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Teacher Onboarding: August 9-September 3						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14							
15	16	17	18	19	20	21							
22	23	24	25	26	27	28							
29	30	31											
September 2021							September 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
			1	2	3	4	6: Labor Day						
							7: Atlas Back to School Bash						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	8: First Day of School						
12	13	14	15	16	17	18							
19	20	21	22	23	24	25							
26	27	28	29	30			Session 1: September 8-October 15 (28 Days)						
October 2021							October 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
					1	2							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9							
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	Intercession 1: October 18-29						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	18-22: Staff Inservice-No Students						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	25-29: All School Break						
31													
November 2021							November 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
	1	2	3	4	5	6	1: Start of Session 2						
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	11: Veterans' Day-No Students						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	17-23: Extended Term						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	25: Thanksgiving						
28	29	30					24-26 Thanksgiving Break-No Students						
							Session 2: November 1-December 17 (31 Days)						
December 2021							December 2021						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
			1	2	3	4							
5	6	7	8	9	10	11							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Intercession 2-Winter Break: December 20-January 3						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	20-21: Staff Inservice-No Students						
26	27	28	29	30	31		22-31: All School Break						
January 2022							January 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
						1	1: New Year's Day						
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	3: Teacher PD-No Students						
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	4: Start of Session 3						
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	17: Martin Luther King Day-No Students						
23	24	25	26	27	28	29							
30	31						Session 3: January 4-February 11 (28 Days)						
February 2022							February 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
		1	2	3	4	5	Intercession 3-February 14-18						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	14: All School Break						
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	15-16: Staff Inservice-No Students						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	17-18: All School Break						
27	28						21: Presidents Day-No Students (Makeup Day)						
							22: Start of Session 4						

March 2022							March 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
		1	2	3	4	5	Session 4: February 22-March 18 (19 Days)						
6	7	8	9	10	11	12							
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	Intercession 4--March 21-April 1						
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	21-25: Staff Inservice--No Students						
27	28	29	30	31			28-1: All School Break						
April 2022							April 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
					1	2							
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	4: First day of Session 5						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16							
17	18	19	20	21	22	23							
24	25	26	27	28	29	30							
							Session 5: April 4-May 6 (25 Days)						
May 2022							May 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Intercession 5--May 9-20						
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	9-13: Staff Inservice--No Students						
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	16-20: All School Break						
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	23: First Day of Session 6						
29	30	31					30: Memorial Day--No Students						
June 2022							June 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
			1	2	3	4	Session 6: May 23-June 24 (24 Days)						
5	6	7	8	9	10	11							
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	Intercession 6--June 27-July 15						
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	27: All School Break						
26	27	28	29	30			28-30: Staff Inservice--No Students						
July 2022							July 2022						
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
					1	2	1-13: All School Break						
3	4	5	6	7	8	9	14-15: Staff Inservice--No Students						
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	4: Independence Day						
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	11-15: Makeup Days						
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	18: Start of Session 7						
31							Session 7 Extended Term: July 18-August 12 (20 Days)						
August 2022													
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
	1	2	3	4	5	6							
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	Intercession 7--August 15-September 5						
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	15-16: Staff Inservice--No Students						
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	17-31: All School Break						
28	29	30	31										
September 2022													
SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT							
				1	2	3	1-2, 6: Staff Inservice--No Students						
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	5: Labor Day--No Students						
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	7: Start of 2022-2023 School Year						
18	19	20	21	22	23	24							
25	26	27	28	29	30								

## Key Components of the Daily Schedule

### Daily English Language Arts Instruction

At Atlas, we have structured our daily English Language Arts (ELA) instruction based on the belief that our students will get better at reading through sustained, long term practice doing real intellectual heavy lifting: reading varied texts independently and together, explaining their thinking about reading, and writing about reading in authentic ways.

At the elementary level, students will participate in at least 120 minutes of ELA instruction daily, with an additional 90 minute Integrated Studies block which incorporates ELA instruction across the content areas. See *A.2 - Curriculum and Instruction* for a detailed overview of the literacy program. The schedule is organized into the following blocks to support student mastery of English Language Arts.

Early Elementary Literacy: Day at a Glance KG-2nd Grade	
Class	Components
<b>Content Based Literacy</b> (60 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Language/Grammar</li> <li>• Writing Workshop</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Foundations</b> (60 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decoding and Fluency</li> <li>• Word Work/Phonics Supplement</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Integrated Studies Block</b> (90 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading in the Content Area</li> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Authentic Real World Application</li> </ul>

Upper Elementary Literacy: Day at a Glance 3rd-5th Grade	
Class	Components
<b>Content Based Literacy</b> (70 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Read Aloud</li> <li>• Language/Grammar</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Writing Workshop</li> <li>• Vocabulary</li> </ul>
<b>Reading Pathways</b> (50 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Guided Reading</li> <li>• Independent Reading</li> <li>• Socratic Seminar</li> <li>• Close Reading</li> </ul>
<b>Integrated Studies Block</b> (90 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reading in the Content Area</li> <li>• Reading Comprehension</li> <li>• Writing</li> <li>• Authentic Real World Application</li> </ul>

### Daily Mathematics Instruction

At Atlas, we have structured our daily math instruction into two distinct blocks that will work together to give students a solid foundation in mathematics. While we value arithmetic and efficiency, we work to move beyond simply teaching procedures, facts, and algorithms to help students develop a more conceptual understanding of mathematics. Our teachers focus on instructional language and facilitating a deeper understanding of mathematical concepts. See *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction* for a detailed overview of the math program. An overview of weekly math instruction for grades K-5 is provided in the following tables:

<b>Elementary Mathematics: Week at a Glance</b> <b>KG-5th Grade</b>					
	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
Math Meeting & Math Facts (50 minutes)	Math Meeting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gives students time to grapple with complex real world math problem</li> <li>• Student as problem solver</li> <li>• Teacher as facilitator</li> </ul> Math Facts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity for students to practice foundational math skills and build automaticity</li> <li>• Based on clear routines and thoroughly planned agendas</li> <li>• Draws on Every Day Counts math calendar</li> </ul>				Assessment
Math (50 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Intro to Aim for the Day</li> <li>• Workshop: small group work, teacher circulating</li> <li>• Independent Practice</li> <li>• Discussion</li> <li>• Exit Ticket</li> </ul>				

### Daily Schedule

Atlas' school day will run from 8:00am to 3:30pm with breakfast starting at 7:30am Monday through Friday. Atlas will also offer before and after school tutoring from 7:00am-8:00am and 3:30-4:30pm for students in need of remediation. Our instructional model and intensive focus around literacy and mathematics will ensure that our students have the strong fundamental skills necessary to tackle challenging, higher level material. The chart below depicts core instructional time at Atlas in lower elementary (K-2) and upper elementary (3-5).

### Core Instructional Time

	Average Daily Instructional Minutes	Total Instructional Minutes per Week
English Language Arts	120	600
Mathematics	100	500
Integrated Studies with a focus on Science & Social Studies	90	450
Related Arts (Visual Arts, Performing Arts, PE)	50	250

The proposed daily schedule for the 2021-2022 school year is provided below. The schedule lists five homeroom classes across the top (3 kindergarten and 2 first grade). As you move down the schedule, you are able to see the different classes that students will have as they go throughout the course of their day. Some of the classes such as Reading Foundations and Math Fact & Math Stories are tailored to meet the unique needs of each individual student and are conducted with small groups of students. At other times, students will be with their homeroom teacher and a co-teacher who is pushing into the classroom to support the diverse needs of the students.

## Atlas Daily Schedule 2021-2022 School Year

Atlas 2021-2022 Daily Schedule					
Time	KG-A	KG-B	KG-C	1st-A	1st-B
8:00-8:10	Community Circle				
8:10-8:20					
8:20-8:30					
8:30-8:40					
8:40-8:50	Content Based Literacy	Content Based Literacy	Content Based Literacy	Math	Math Facts & Math Stories
8:50-9:00					
9:00-9:10					
9:10-9:20					
9:20-9:30	Recess & Bathroom			Math Facts & Math Stories	Math
9:30-9:40					
9:40-9:50					
9:50-10:00					
10:00-10:10	Reading Foundations	Reading Foundations	Reading Foundations	Recess & Bathroom	
10:10-10:20					
10:20-10:30					
10:30-10:40					
10:40-10:50	Related Arts		Math	Content Based Literacy	Content Based Literacy
10:50-11:00					
11:00-11:10					
11:10-11:20					
11:20-11:30	Transition & Bathroom			Reading Foundations	Reading Foundations
11:30-11:40					
11:40-11:50					
11:50-12:00					
12:00-12:10	Lunch & Recess			Math	Math Facts & Math Stories
12:10-12:20					
12:20-12:30					
12:30-12:40					
12:40-12:50	Math	Math Facts & Math Stories	Related Arts	Lunch & Recess	
12:50-1:00					
1:00-1:10					
1:10-1:20					
1:20-1:30	Math Facts & Math Stories	Math	Math Facts & Math Stories	Related Arts	
1:30-1:40					
1:40-1:50					
1:50-2:00					
2:00-2:10	Integrated Studies				
2:10-2:20					
2:20-2:30					
2:30-2:40					
2:40-2:50					
2:50-3:00					
3:00-3:10					
3:10-3:20					
3:20-3:30					
3:30-3:40					
3:40-3:50	Dismissal				
3:50-4:00					

## Atlas Daily Schedule with Staffing

The schedule below mimics the Daily Schedule, but indicates teachers' schedules on the right side of the spreadsheet. This helps clarify when and how teachers are working to support students in various capacities throughout the school day, are on their plan time, or in a team meeting. At Atlas, we encourage our teachers to be "*building teachers*" as opposed to merely "*classroom teachers*." This means that we push teachers to think of every student at Atlas as "their student," not just the kids in their homeroom class. To that end, it is not uncommon for teachers at Atlas to work outside of their designated area. For example, in the first few years of operation, the art teacher will be a co-teacher during Content Based Literacy and Integrated Studies. However, some of these responsibilities will shift as the school grows.

Atlas' proposed daily school schedule with staffing for the 2021-2022 school year is provided below and can be found in *Appendix A.4.3*.

## Atlas Daily Schedule with Staffing 2021-2022 School Year

Atlas 2021-2022 Daily Schedule																													
Time	Class Schedule					Teacher Schedule																							
	KG-A	KG-B	KG-C	1st-A	1st-B	KG-A Lead Teacher	KG-B Lead Teacher	KG-C Lead Teacher	1st-A Lead Teacher	1st-B Lead Teacher	Art Lead	Music Lead	Teacher Aide	Teacher Aide	SpEd Teacher	Math Teacher	Math Teacher												
8:00-8:10	Community Circle					Community Circle						KG-A	KG-B	KG-C	1st-B	1st-A	KG-A	KG-A											
8:10-8:20																													
8:20-8:30	Content Based Literacy			Math	Math Facts & Stories	Content Based Literacy			Plan	Math Facts & Stories	KG-B	Plan	KG-C	1st-B	KG-A	1st-A	1st-A												
8:30-8:40											CBL		CBL	MF & MS	CBL	Math	Math												
8:40-8:50																													
8:50-9:00																													
9:00-9:10	Recess & Bathroom					Recess & Bathroom			Math Facts & Stories	Plan	Recess & Bathroom			1st-A		1st-B	1st-B												
9:10-9:20													MF & MS				Math	Math											
9:20-9:30																													
9:30-9:40																													
9:40-9:50	Reading Foundations			Math Facts & Stories	Math	Reading Foundations					KG-B	KG-C	MF & MS	KG-A															
9:50-10:00																													
10:00-10:10																													
10:10-10:20																													
10:20-10:30	Related Arts			Math	Content Based Literacy	Plan			Content Based Literacy		Plan	KG-B	KG-C		KG-C	KG-C													
10:30-10:40																													
10:40-10:50																													
10:50-11:00																													
11:00-11:10	Transition & Bathroom					Transition & Bathroom			KG Art	KG Music	1st-B	1st-A	KG-A	Duty Free Lunch	Duty Free Lunch														
11:10-11:20																													
11:20-11:30																													
11:30-11:40																													
11:40-11:50	Lunch & Recess					Duty Free Lunch			Reading Foundations				1st-B	1st-A															
11:50-12:00																													
12:00-12:10																													
12:10-12:20																													
12:20-12:30	Math			Math Facts & Stories	Related Arts	Math Facts & Stories			Math Facts & Stories	Plan	Duty Free Lunch		KG-B MF & MS or KG-C Art	KG-B MF & MS or KG-C Music	KG-A	KG-A													
12:30-12:40																													
12:40-12:50																													
12:50-1:00																													
1:00-1:10	Math Facts & Stories			Math	Math Facts & Stories	Math Facts & Stories			Plan		Duty Free Lunch			Math	Math														
1:10-1:20																													
1:20-1:30																													
1:30-1:40																													
1:40-1:50	Math Facts & Stories			Math	Math Facts & Stories	Math Facts & Stories			Plan		Duty Free Lunch			Math	Math														
1:50-2:00																													
2:00-2:10																													
2:10-2:20																													
2:20-2:30	Integrated Studies					Integrated Studies					KG-A	KG-B	KG-C	1st-A	1st-B	Plan													
2:30-2:40																													
2:40-2:50																													
2:50-3:00																													
3:00-3:10																													
3:10-3:20																													
3:20-3:30																													
3:30-3:40																													
3:40-3:50											Dismissal							Dismissal											
3:50-4:00																													

## Teacher Plan Times

The schedule above illustrates how the teaching day at Atlas includes substantial time for planning and collaboration, which we believe are essential ingredients for excellent instruction. Each team member at Atlas receives a 50 minute plan time and 40 minute duty free lunch break. Homeroom teachers also participate in a 50 minute team meeting each day. During team meetings teachers get to collaborate with their grade level colleagues to reflect on lesson implementation, analyze data, and plan for upcoming lessons. At Atlas, teachers will have minimal duties outside of their core teaching responsibilities, so that they can invest their extremely valuable time in academic preparation.

## Atlas Daily Schedule for the 2026-2027 School Year

The daily schedule below indicates what Atlas' schedule will look like when the school is fully grown and includes students in kindergarten through fifth grade. By the 2026-2027 school year, Atlas intends to have three sections of each grade level with 26 students per section.

## Atlas Daily Schedule 2026-2027 School Year

Atlas 2026-2027 Daily Schedule																									
Time	KG-A	KG-B	KG-C	1st-A	1st-B	1st-C	2nd-A	2nd-B	2nd-C	3rd-A	3rd-B	3rd-C	4th-A	4th-B	4th-C	5th-A	5th-B	5th-C							
8:00-8:10	Community Circle																								
8:10-8:20																									
8:20-8:30																									
8:30-8:40																									
8:40-8:50	Math		Math Facts & Math Stories		Content Based Literacy			Math		Related Arts			Math Facts & Math Stories												
8:50-9:00																									
9:00-9:10																									
9:10-9:20																									
9:20-9:30	Math Facts & Math Stories		Math		Reading Foundations			Transition & Bathroom																	
9:30-9:40																									
9:40-9:50																									
9:50-10:00																									
10:00-10:10	Recess & Bathroom																								
10:10-10:20																									
10:20-10:30	Content Based Literacy						Recess & Bathroom		Related Arts			Math Facts & Math Stories		Math											
10:30-10:40																									
10:40-10:50																									
10:50-11:00																									
11:00-11:10	Reading Foundations						Math		Lunch & Recess																
11:10-11:20																									
11:20-11:30																									
11:30-11:40																									
11:40-11:50							Related Arts		Content Based Literacy																
11:50-12:00																									
12:00-12:10																									
12:10-12:20																									
12:20-12:30	Transition & Bathroom		Related Arts			Transition & Bathroom																			
12:30-12:40																									
12:40-12:50	Lunch & Recess					Lunch & Recess											Transition & Bathroom								
12:50-1:00																									
1:00-1:10																									
1:10-1:20																									
1:20-1:30																									
1:30-1:40	Related Arts		Lunch & Recess		Math Facts & Math Stories			Reading Pathways																	
1:40-1:50																									
1:50-2:00																									
2:00-2:10	Transition & Bathroom																								
2:10-2:20																									
2:20-2:30																									
2:30-2:40																									
2:40-2:50																									
2:50-3:00																									
3:00-3:10																									
3:10-3:20																									
3:20-3:30																									
3:30-3:40																									
3:40-3:50																									
3:50-4:00	Dismissal																								

## A Day in the Life of Kevin

### Before Care 7:00-7:30am

Kevin is a kindergartener whose mom and dad leave for work around 7:00am every day. Fortunately, Atlas offers before care that allows them to drop Kevin off as early as 7:00am. As his dad drives Kevin to school, they play a math game in the car. Kevin's dad gives him two numbers. Kevin gets to add up the numbers. Then he gets to subtract the numbers. If Kevin gets both right, Kevin gives his dad two numbers. His dad has to add and subtract the numbers too. They quiz each other till they get to school. Kevin checks in with one of his mentors and is able to work on some math facts that he struggled with the day before in class. Once he finishes some practice, he plays with two of his friends and then checks out two books to take with him to class.

### Breakfast 7:30-8:00am

At 7:30am Kevin's before care mentor signals that it is time to transition to class. Kevin and his classmates practiced making transitions at the beginning of the school year. Transitions happen quickly and quietly at Atlas. That way, everybody stays safe and the students have plenty of time to learn. Kevin and several of his classmates walk down the hall towards their kindergarten classroom. Along the way, several teachers who are standing outside their doors say "good morning". When Kevin gets to his classroom, one of his teachers is waiting outside the door to greet him. He asks Kevin, "What's your H?" Kevin knows that this stands for Hug, Handshake, or High Five. Kevin opts for a High Five! Kevin knows the morning routine and is excited that breakfast is waiting for him in the classroom. Kevin's other teacher is waiting in the room and helping to serve breakfast. Kevin chooses what he wants to eat, then sits down at his table and begins eating. Several of his classmates arrive after him and they grab breakfast, too. When Kevin finishes his breakfast, he cleans up after himself and marks on the board what center activity he wants to transition to. He gets to choose from a building center, a listening center, the classroom library, computer station, and an art station. Kevin chooses to go to the building center because he loves building towers with the MagnaTiles. At 7:58am one of Kevin's teachers signals that it is time to clean up and transition to Community Circle.

### Community Circle 8:00-8:20am

At the beginning of the year Kevin didn't really know what to think about Community Circle. This is a time when everyone in the class checks in and shares how they are feeling. They pass a stuffed bear around the room that has four different colored shapes attached to it. The green shape stands for calm, red for angry/sad, blue for sad, and yellow for happy. When it is Kevin's turn to share, he holds up the yellow circle. Kevin explains that he is happy about the project he's working on during Integrated Studies. Kevin is excited to keep working on this project at the end of the day.



### **Content Based Literacy 8:20-9:20am**

The kindergarten classes just started learning about Toys and Play. They work on this unit in Literacy and Integrated Studies. Kevin and his classmates read about toys during literacy every morning, and they build their own toys during the Integrated Studies Block at the end of every day. Kevin loves to use his imagination. He takes ideas from the books they read in the morning during literacy time, and uses these ideas to build his toy during Integrated Studies. Today his teacher asks the class to think about what makes toys fun to play with. Kevin and his classmates share what makes toys fun by describing specific attributes of different toys. Then, they start the morning read aloud. His teacher starts reading *Toys Galore* by Peter Stein and does silly voices to match the characters. Kevin listens closely to the book and examines the wacky illustrations. This book gives him more ideas for building his own toy! Next, the students move into Writer's Workshop, where his teacher leads a mini-lesson on how to write a complete sentence. She teaches them a cheer with hand motions, "Every sentence has a capital letter... period...space." The kids practice the cheer a few times. Some students get it the first time. Kevin gets the cheer right on the third try, and he is proud! Kevin's teacher gives them the opinion writing prompt: *My Favorite Toy and Why*. The students find their way to their writing stations to work on their writing prompt individually. The teacher pulls a few students for independent writing conferences while Kevin practices his writing. He does not have a conference today so he focuses on his own writing. He thinks about the cheer from earlier. Kevin makes sure that every sentence he writes has a capital letter, period, and space.

### **Recess & Bathroom 9:20-9:40**

Kevin loves to run outside during recess to get a body and brain break! He usually picks up a soccer ball to kick around with his friends during this time, but today he chose to play basketball with a group of classmates. This break is just what he needed to get refreshed and refocused for the rest of the morning.

### **Reading Foundations 9:40-10:40**

Kevin loves to go to Reading Foundations class because he works in a small group of only 8 students and his teacher. They sit at a kidney bean table together, and each person gets their own copy of the book the group is reading. They have fun cheers and chants when it is someone's turn to read a word. Sometimes the teacher even picks a student to "be the teacher"- Kevin loves when he gets to sit in his teacher's chair and say "Get Ready" to his classmates when pointing to a word. Kevin feels so successful in this class because all of his classmates are on the same reading level as him. Sometimes they take a mastery test after they read a story together using the words they just learned and Kevin and all of his classmates get a sticker on their forehead for all of their hard work! The best part of this class is that Kevin can now read books by himself and he loves to read.

**Related Arts 10:40-11:30**

After Kevin's bathroom break, he heads to Performing Arts class with his class. He loves going to this class because they get to do a variety of activities in it. Sometimes they dance, sometimes they play music, and other times they act and even put on performances for the rest of the school to see! Today they are practicing a dance routine that the class has been working on for the past week. Although Kevin did not know that he liked to dance before coming to Atlas, Kevin loves to get his dance moves on now!

**Transition & Bathroom 11:30-11:40**

Kevin's class lines up in the hallway to take a quick bathroom break. Teachers even make this time fun by leading games for Kevin and his friends in line. Sometimes they play a vocabulary game but today they are playing telephone. Kevin likes that his teachers are always making school fun, even during bathroom breaks.

**Recess & Lunch 11:40-12:20**

Kevin and his classmates go to the lunchroom. Kevin has the option to bring his lunch to school or eat a yummy nutritious lunch that the school provides. Kevin loves the cafeteria setup because it feels like the restaurant where his aunt works. The furniture is bright and inviting and the lunchroom is always clean. There are many different options for where to sit: a booth, a bench, or a swivel chair. Kevin gets to choose where he sits and he likes to mix it up. For the first three minutes of lunch, Kevin and his classmates practice "mindful eating." They focus on eating their food and do not talk to other people. Once the three minutes are up, Kevin and his friends talk and laugh. Kevin knows to stay seated at his table. Sometimes he wants to change his mind about where to sit at lunch. But he knows he can pick a different seat tomorrow. Everyone has to stay sitting during lunch. The staff members who run lunch duty are good about rotating to sit with different tables each day to have new conversations with the kids. Once Kevin is done eating, he walks outside for a long recess.

**Math Facts and Math Stories 12:20-1:10**

This math block can be a challenge for Kevin. He still likes it and he learns a lot during this class. They start out with math fluency where they practice their math facts. Right now they are practicing addition and subtraction. Kevin was struggling with this, so his teacher helped his family make a plan to practice at home. His parents started playing math fact games with him on the car ride to school. These games are fun, and recently Kevin has been feeling a lot more confident in math. Next, the class sits on the carpet in a circle around the teacher. It is time for the math story. Today's math story is about a baker trying to count how many leftover muffins he should have at the end of the day. The teacher spreads out a set of paper muffins in the middle of the circle. Some of the muffins are blueberry, and the rest are chocolate chip. The teacher gives them time to solve the problem by using various strategies with the paper muffins. Kevin thinks about the math game he played with his dad in the car this morning. He can use subtraction to help the baker predict the leftover muffins!

**Math 1:10-2:00**

Kevin knows that Math Facts and Math Stories is almost over because he sees his math teacher at the door. Once Math Facts and Math Stories is officially over, Kevin's homeroom teacher rings a chime. This is a reminder to make a smooth transition. Kevin and his classmates walk quietly to the carpet. Their homeroom teacher leaves the room and their math teacher comes in. There are still two teachers in the classroom - the math teacher and a teaching aide. When Kevin gets stuck on a math problem, one of the teachers can work one-on-one with him until he understands how to solve the problem. Kevin loves his math teacher. Even though his homeroom teacher left, Kevin feels supported.

Math always begins on the carpet. During the mini-lesson, the math teacher introduces a new math problem. The class has never solved a problem like this one before. They brainstorm different ways to solve it. After the math mini-lesson, everyone transitions back to their tables to begin working. Kevin works with his table group to collaborate on the math problem that was introduced during the lesson. He likes that he has time to work with others to solve problems, even though working with other people can be hard. Kevin's group practices using nice words and quiet voices. One of his group members, Clara, gets frustrated. Kevin's teacher aide suggests Clara goes to the *Calming Corner* so she can calm down. Kevin and his other tablemates keep working. They miss Clara, but know she will come back soon. Math can be frustrating! Kevin's group members have tools, like manipulatives, to help them solve the problems. This helps them solve problems in more than one way. Kevin and his classmates have been taught "accountable-talk" so they know how to speak respectfully even if they disagree or have a different idea on how to solve a problem. Then, the math teacher rings the chime. It's time to end math for the day. Kevin's homeroom teacher comes back, and the class transitions to Integrated Studies.

**Integrated Studies 2:30-3:30**

Kevin loves Integrated Studies - it is his favorite part of his day! During this time he learns about things in science, reading, math and social studies. Kevin's class goes on expeditions most weeks. During expeditions, Kevin's teacher brings the class off campus for hands-on learning in the city of St. Louis. Last week, Kevin's class went on an expedition to the park. They played at the park with different toys, like balls and bubbles. Today, Kevin and his classmates are engineers. They explore the question: *How can I use everyday materials and my imagination to create a toy?* The two teachers in the classroom ask the students to think back to their expedition to the park. What makes a really great toy? The class brainstorms together. Then they transition into their workstations to keep designing and building a toy of their own. Before they begin, one teacher asks the class, "What does it look like to be fair when sharing materials? What does it sound like to be fair when sharing the materials?" Kevin is used to having group discussions like this before working in groups. Working with other people can be a challenge, but Kevin knows it's an important skill. After his class has a

discussion about working in groups, Kevin begins to design his toy by using everyday materials such as toilet paper rolls and popsicle sticks. Kevin learns that next week his class will be making a site visit to the Build-A-Bear Workshop Headquarters to meet real-life toy makers!

**Dismissal 3:30**

The teacher rings a chime to signal the end of the day. Kevin packs up after a fun and full day and heads to after school care.

**After Care 3:30-5:30**

Kevin only spends about 30 minutes in aftercare until his parents are able to get off work. He starts off with a snack and catches up with some friends. Then he practices some math facts until his parents arrive. Kevin can't wait to tell them about his day at school, and to tell them about the toy he is building in Integrated Studies!

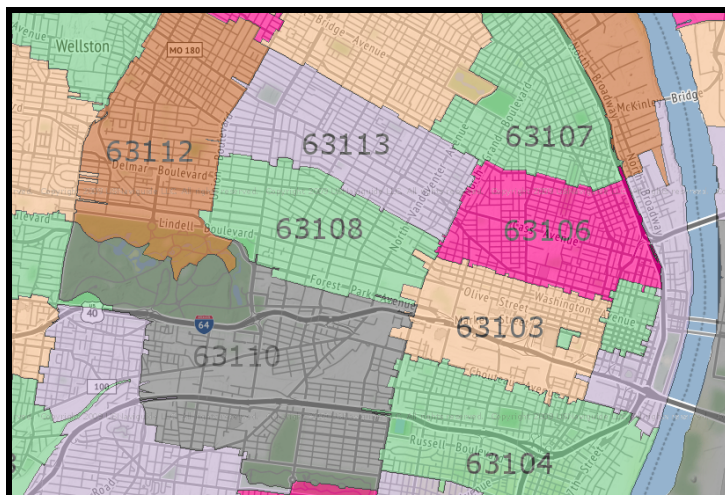
## A.5 - Target Population

As a tuition-free, diverse-by-design public charter school, Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is committed to serving the students of St. Louis and is open to all children living within the city's borders. When fully grown, Atlas will enroll

kindergarten through fifth grade students with the possible addition of an early childhood program. While the exact location of the building has not been finalized, Atlas aims to be strategically located in the heart of St. Louis' Central Corridor, preferably in either the 63108 or 63110 zip code.

This area is comprised of roughly five distinct neighborhoods: The Central West End, Grand Center, The Hill, Forest Park Southeast, and Shaw. Atlas aims

to be an institutional asset to these neighborhoods so our lottery policy gives preference to students living in the 63108 and 63110 zip codes. For more information on Atlas' Lottery Policy, see *B.5 - Student Recruitment and Enrollment*.



While we aim to serve the students and families living in our priority zip codes, Atlas will also recruit students living in surrounding neighborhoods such as: Fountain Park, Vandeventer, JeffVanderLou, Academy/Sherman Park, the Ville, North Hampton, Lafayette Square, The Gate, Compton Heights, Fox Park, Tower Grove East, Tower Grove South, Southwest Garden, and Clayton-Tamm.

### Enrollment Projections

Atlas will open in the fall of 2021 for the 2021-2022 school year with the aim of enrolling a racially and socioeconomically diverse student body. In Year 1, Atlas will recruit 78 incoming kindergarten students (3 classes of 26) and 52 first grade students (2 classes of 26) in accordance with [RSMo 160.053](#). We are intentionally enrolling only two classes of first grade students in the first year because based on our surveys and focus groups, families are less likely to transfer their students into a new school once their child has already completed kindergarten at another school. Each year thereafter, Atlas will add one additional grade level and enroll 78 students per grade. Atlas will be fully grown as a school during the 2026-2027 school year with 468 kindergarten through fifth grade students.

The chart below highlights Atlas' projected enrollment from Year 1 through Year 6.

Enrollment Projections						
Grade Level	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
K	78	78	78	78	78	78
1	52	78	78	78	78	78
2		52	78	78	78	78
3			52	78	78	78
4				52	78	78
5					52	78
<b>Total Enrollment:</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>468</b>

### Student Attrition & Admission Policy

Throughout the school year and as students progress from one grade to the next, we expect there will be some natural attrition as students move away from the community. In the event that a student does leave Atlas, we may replace the student with a child from the waiting list in grades kindergarten through fifth grade. In order to maintain a strong culture and provide consistency for all students, Atlas will not replace students lost to attrition after the start of the second academic cycle of each school year.

As part of our commitment to providing an excellent educational experience for our students and families, Atlas has set the following goal regarding student re-enrollment:

**Goal 7 - Re-Enrollment:** By our third year of operation, 80% of students who are enrolled at Atlas on October 1st will be re-enrolled at Atlas on October 1st of the following school year, with the exception of the students whose families move out of the city of St. Louis.

[Citizens of the World](#)<sup>47</sup>, a diverse-by-design school in Kansas City, had roughly 75% student retention after its first year of operation and now consistently retains close to 90% of their students. Based on our conversations with the leadership team at Citizens of the World, the Founding Team at Atlas believes that an 80% retention rate is a realistic goal.

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<sup>47</sup> For more information on Citizens of the World - Kansas City see: <https://www.cwckansascity.org/>

## Diverse-By-Design

St. Louis has several options for families to choose from when deciding on an elementary school for their children. Unfortunately, many of these school options lack diversity. Research shows that racial and socioeconomic diversity in the classroom can provide all students with a range of cognitive and social benefits.<sup>48</sup> For example, integrated classrooms encourage critical thinking, problem solving, and creativity.<sup>49</sup> We know that diverse classrooms, in which students learn cooperatively alongside those whose perspectives and backgrounds are different from their own, are beneficial to all students because these environments promote creativity, motivation, deeper learning, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. Moreover, a diverse school can help reduce racial bias and counter stereotypes. Children are at risk of developing stereotypes if they live and learn in racially isolated settings. By contrast, when school settings include students from multiple racial groups, students become more comfortable with people of other races, which leads to a dramatic decrease in discriminatory attitudes and prejudices.

Many would agree that segregation is more prevalent in St. Louis than in similar Midwestern cities. Indeed, St. Louis consistently ranks among the most segregated cities in the United States (see, for example, USA Today's July 2019 ranking).<sup>50</sup> St. Louis is divided by many lines because of the deep history that starts with the 100-year history of slaveholding. Although St. Louis operated as a Southern city, the city avoided civil-rights demonstrations for the majority of the 20th century. Segregated housing patterns and a general mistrust amongst races have persisted to the present day.<sup>51</sup> The average Black child attends school with fewer White students than in 1980, showing that public schools remain a vehicle of institutionalized segregation.<sup>52</sup>

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<sup>48</sup> S. E. Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8757.html>;

R. Bigler, & L. S. Liben, "A Developmental Intergroup Theory of Social Stereotypes and Prejudices," *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 34 (2006), 39-89.

<sup>49</sup> S. E. Page, *The Difference: How the Power of Diversity Creates Better Groups, Firms, Schools, and Societies* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2008), <http://press.princeton.edu/titles/8757.html>;

R. Bigler, & L. S. Liben, "A Developmental Intergroup Theory of Social Stereotypes and Prejudices," *Advances in Child Development and Behavior*, 34 (2006), 39-89.

<sup>50</sup> "Detroit, Chicago, Memphis: The 25 most segregated cities in America". *USA Today*. July 29, 2019. Retrieved September 18, 2019. URL:

<https://www.usatoday.com/picture-gallery/money/2019/07/20/detroit-chicago-memphis-most-segregated-cities-housing-policies/1780223001/>

<sup>51</sup> Cooperman, J. (2014). "The story of segregation in St. Louis." *St. Louis Magazine*. [online]. Retrieved from <https://www.stlmag.com/news/the-color-line-race-in-st-louis/>. Accessed September 18, 2019.

<sup>52</sup> Stewart, C. (2015). Misunderstanding Rosa Parks and the Meaning of Integration. *Education Post*. [online]. Retrieved from [https://educationpost.org/misunderstanding-rosa-parks-and-the-meaning-of-integration/?utm\\_source=Twitter&utm\\_medium=social&utm\\_campaign=Bgap&utm\\_content=TwBgapIntegrationCs2](https://educationpost.org/misunderstanding-rosa-parks-and-the-meaning-of-integration/?utm_source=Twitter&utm_medium=social&utm_campaign=Bgap&utm_content=TwBgapIntegrationCs2). Accessed on September 19, 2019.

That being said, St. Louis also ranks as one of the nation's most integrated cities. How is this possible? The answer depends on how you measure racial segregation.

Segregation is often measured using a Dissimilarity Index. This essentially measures the extent to which minority demographics are evenly dispersed throughout the majority demographic. According to this metric, St. Louis ranks extremely low in terms of racial integration, because most people live in neighborhoods that are primarily their own race. Other communities, with far fewer Black residents, rank much higher on this index because the few Black families that do live in those neighborhoods are spread out from one another. This way of measuring segregation has some flaws, including the implication that racial homogeneity and total racial integration should be the goal. Rather, we believe that racial equity should be the goal - people's life outcomes should not be correlated with their race, no matter where they live or who their neighbors are.

In light of this flaw in the Dissimilarity Index model of measuring segregation, segregation can also be measured using a block-to-block measurement. According to this metric, if at least 20% of people on a block are a different racial group than the majority racial group, that block counts as integrated. On this metric, St. Louis ranks as one of the most integrated cities in America. As of 2002, St. Louis was the fifth most integrated city on a block-to-block measurement in the nation.<sup>53</sup> This was the last time that a block-to-block analysis was conducted on national segregation data, and this data is featured in newspaper articles as recently as 2014. This shows that there are many people who value living and working across lines of difference in our community. We are heartened by this data and believe that it further demonstrates the need for more intentionally diverse schools that are rooted in equity and driven by anti-bias, antiracism practices.

### **Atlas' Commitment to Diversity**

One of the cornerstones of Atlas' school model is our commitment to diversity and inclusion. From meetings with parents, community leaders and other stakeholders, Atlas has seen evidence of substantial community demand for more intentionally diverse and high quality public school options. This sentiment is echoed by the fact that [City Garden Montessori](#)<sup>54</sup>, currently the only elementary school in St. Louis recognized by the [Diverse Charter School Coalition](#),<sup>55</sup> a national organization that works to catalyze and support the creation and expansion of high-quality diverse public charter schools, is fully enrolled and has a waitlist of more than 120 students. City Garden Montessori is consistently in the top five highest performing public charter schools in the state, as well as one of the most sought-after schools in the city, with many more applicants than open spots each year.<sup>56</sup> In

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<sup>53</sup> Quinn, Lois M. and Pawasarat, John, "Racial Integration in Urban America: A Block Level Analysis of African American and White Housing Patterns" (2002). ETI Publications. 119. [https://dc.uwm.edu/eti\\_pubs/119](https://dc.uwm.edu/eti_pubs/119)

<sup>54</sup> For more information on City Garden Montessori, see: <http://citygardenschool.org/>

<sup>55</sup> For more information on the Diverse Charter School Coalition, see: <https://diversecharters.org/>

<sup>56</sup> "Best Charter Schools in Missouri." *Niche*. [online source] Retrieved from <https://www.niche.com/k12/city-garden-montessori-charter-school-st-louis-mo/>. [Accessed August 19, 2019].

addition, [Kairos Academies](https://www.kairosacademies.org/)<sup>57</sup>, a diverse-by-design middle school that opened in the fall of 2019, has been fully enrolled since their launch and currently serves 120 sixth grade students. Atlas is responding to this community and family demand for another diverse-by-design school in St. Louis.

The Founding Team understands that for Atlas to be a diverse school we have to be intentional around our student recruitment and enrollment policies. Social science research on racial representation in education has pointed to 70 percent as a possible threshold for creating a diverse learning environment. Research shows that when a single group dominates more than 70 percent of the student body, students in the minority feel increased isolation and alienation, and cross-racial friendships are less likely to develop.<sup>58</sup> As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas will have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status (30–70 percent low-income) and race/ethnicity (largest racial/ethnic group no more than 70 percent).

Based on demographic data from nearby schools, and Atlas' desire to be intentionally diverse, Atlas projects a English Language (EL) population of 6%, and a Free-and-Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) population of 65%. In 2019, 13.5% of the students in the state of Missouri qualified for special education services and 14.4% of the students in the St. Louis Public School District qualified for special education services.<sup>59</sup> Based on this data, we project that 13-15% of our student population will qualify for special education services.

## **Saint Louis City Demographics**

According to the US Census Bureau, as of the 2010 census St. Louis has a total population of 319,294. Approximately 43.9% of the population identify as White, 49.2% as Black or African American, .03% as American Indian and Alaska Native, 2.9% as Asian, 0.0% as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and 1.3% identify as belonging to Some Other Race. In addition, 11,130 people identified as Hispanic or Latino which equals 3.5% of the city's population. The chart below captures this information in more detail.<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>57</sup> For more information on Kairos Academies, see: <https://www.kairosacademies.org/>

<sup>58</sup> Richard D. Kahlenberg and Halley Potter, *A Smarter Charter: Finding What Works for Charter Schools and Public Education* (New York: Teachers College Press, 2014), 122; Madeleine F. Green, *Minorities on Campus: A Handbook for Enhancing Diversity* (Washington, D.C.: American Council on Education, 1989), 116; Jacinta S. Ma and Michal Kurlaender, "The Future of Race-Conscious Policies in K–12 Public Schools: Support from Recent Legal Opinions and Social Science Research," in *School Resegregation: Must the South Turn Back?* ed. John Charles Boger and Gary Orfield (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 249; John B. McConahay, "Reducing Racial Prejudice in Desegregated Schools," in *Effective School Desegregation: Equity, Quality, and Feasibility*, ed. Willis D. Hawley (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage, 1981), 39; and Kevin G. Welner, "K–12 Race-Conscious Student Assignment Policies: Law, Social Science, and Diversity," *Review of Educational Research* 76, no. 3 (2006): 349–82.

<sup>59</sup> 2019 Missouri State Report Card. Missouri School Improvement Program-Annual Performance Report. Retrieved from: <https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/home.aspx?categoryid=14&view=2> on April 23, 2020.

<sup>60</sup> United States Census Bureau. (2018). *St. Louis city, Missouri Quick Facts* [Table]. Retrieved from <https://www.census.gov/quickfacts/stlouiscitymissouri> on August 19, 2019.

## St. Louis City Demographics by Race

Subject	Number	Percent
Total Population	319,294	100%
Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander	74	0.0%
American Indian & Alaska Native	838	0.3%
Some Other Race	4,102	1.3%
Asian	9,291	2.9%
Hispanic or Latinx	11,130	3.5%
White	140,267	43.9%
Black or African American	157,160	49.2%

### What the Data is Telling Us

While the census data shows a relatively equal split between White and Black populations in the city, it doesn't point to the segregated nature of most of St. Louis' schools. At present, the majority of schools in the region are segregated by both race and socioeconomic status. The last available data shows that nearly 80% of students enrolled in the city's district and charter schools are Black, which is almost twice the proportion of Black individuals living within the city limits.<sup>61</sup> Many of these schools, which serve primarily Black and Brown students, are doing a great job of making gains towards educational equity, and generally do so with little to no recognition. Meanwhile, only 20% of students in the city's public schools are White, which is less than half the proportion of people who identify as White living within the city limits. For example, in the St. Louis Public School District, 79.8% of the students enrolled in 2018 identified as Black, 13% as White, 4.5% Hispanic, and 2.6% Asian.<sup>62</sup> Together, this data suggests that many White families that live in the city are choosing to enroll their students in private or parochial schools.

St. Louis is also confronting the challenge of a declining population. Black residents are leaving the city of St. Louis in greater numbers than ever, according to 2017 estimates from the U.S. Census

<sup>61</sup> Student demographics of SLPS and City Magnet Schools. Source. Missouri Department of Education (2013). Note. STL = St. Louis Public Schools. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Student-demographics-of-SLPS-and-City-Magnet-Schools-Source-Missouri-Department-of\\_fig2\\_277901402](https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Student-demographics-of-SLPS-and-City-Magnet-Schools-Source-Missouri-Department-of_fig2_277901402)

<sup>62</sup> St. Louis Public School enrollment data from 2018 District Report Card from DESE. Retrieved from [https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Reports/SSRS\\_Print.aspx](https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Reports/SSRS_Print.aspx). Accessed August 19, 2019.

Bureau. The statistics show more than 4,000 Black St. Louis residents chose to live elsewhere between 2016 and 2017. "Part of what's driving this is that in parts of the city, the quality of life has declined, where residents have decided that they are looking for other homes," said Onesimo Sandoval, a demographer at Saint Louis University. "Better access to schools, better access to opportunities such as jobs, resources."<sup>63</sup>

These challenges are drivers of the mission and vision at Atlas Public Schools. At Atlas, we envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed to be successful in the 21st century, and where St. Louis is a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. We believe that high quality public schools will be the catalyst for community transformation that will result in a thriving city.

## Target Population & Community Demographics

Atlas intends to be located and serve the students and families living in and around St. Louis' Central Corridor, specifically in the zip codes of 63108 and 63110. Therefore, our lottery policy preferences these zip codes. The chart below highlights the racial and socioeconomic diversity of this area.

### Community Demographic Data<sup>64</sup>

Zip Code	Total Population	Median Household Income	Black Population Percentage	White Population Percentage	Total Poverty Rate	Child Poverty Rate
<b>63108<sup>65</sup></b>	20,704	\$46,009	33.8%	51.2%	25.0%	35.1%
<b>63110<sup>66</sup></b>	18,208	\$55,414	32.0%	61.4%	14.8%	13.3%
<b>Total*</b>	38,912	\$51,859	32.9%	55.97%	20.23%	24.90%

\*Calculated via a weighted average of the 63108 and 63110 data

<sup>63</sup> Edgell, H. (2018). "St. Louis continues to lose Black residents as white population makes a comeback." *St. Louis Public Radio*. [online]. Retrieved from <https://news.stlpublicradio.org/post/st-louis-continues-lose-black-residents-white-population-makes-comeback#stream/0>. [Accessed on August 20, 2019].

<sup>64</sup> We were unable to calculate the average family poverty rate, children living with single parents, and child poverty rate because we do not know the percentages of the total population that are families or children.

<sup>65</sup> 2014–2018 ACS 5-Year Narrative Profile. ZCTA5 63108. URL: <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/narrative-profiles/2018/report.php?geotype=zcta&zcta=63108> Accessed on April 23, 2020.

<sup>66</sup> 2014–2018 ACS 5-Year Narrative Profile. ZCTA5 63110. URL: <https://www.census.gov/acs/www/data/data-tables-and-tools/narrative-profiles/2018/report.php?geotype=zcta&zcta=63110> Accessed on April 23, 2020.

In terms of racial diversity, these two zip codes are somewhat a microcosm of St. Louis City. Although community demographics of these two zip codes are not exact, they are similar to the overall city demographics presented above. The racial breakdown in our enrollment zone is 35.51% Black and 55.47% White compared to 49.2% Black and 43.9% White in the city at large. As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas aims to have no racial/ethnic group exceed 70% of the total student population. If enrollment is evenly distributed from these two zip codes alone, Atlas will be considered racially diverse. While Atlas is prioritizing enrollment from the 63108 and 63110 zip codes, we will also strategically recruit students from the surrounding neighborhoods, which will help ensure that Atlas maintains a diverse student population.

### School Age Population

According to data collected by Claritas for Think Health STL, there are approximately 2,302 children aged 3-10 in our target zip codes. There are approximately 851 children ages 3-10 in the zip code 63108, and approximately 1,451 children ages 3-10 in zip code 63110. These numbers were calculated assuming a uniform distribution of children within each age category.<sup>67</sup> For a further breakdown of these numbers, see the chart below:

Zip Code	Reported Number of Children Aged 0-4	Reported Number of Children Aged 5-9	Reported Number of Children Aged 10-14
<b>63108</b>	542	537	492
<b>63110</b>	936	915	813
<b>Total:</b>	<b>1,478</b>	<b>1,452</b>	<b>1,305</b>

In addition to looking at census data, the Founding Team at Atlas also looked into the current enrollment at the public elementary schools located within Atlas' priority zip codes. The charts below highlight each school's overall enrollment along with the percentage of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch.

### Public Elementary Schools Located in the 63108 Zip Code

School Name	2019 K-8 Enrollment	2019 Early Childhood Enrollment	Percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch
<b>The Biome School</b>	178	0	67%
<b>Pamoja at Cole</b>	336	46	100%

<sup>67</sup> Data retrieved from:

<http://www.thinkhealthstl.org/?module=demographicdata&controller=index&action=index&id=24300&sectionId=935>

### Public Elementary Schools Located in the 63110 Zip Code

School Name	K-8 Enrollment	Early Childhood Enrollment	Percent qualifying for free or reduced lunch
City Garden Montessori	227	49	40%
St. Louis Language Immersion School (Papin Campus)	252	0	53%
Stix Early Childhood Center	293	178	100%
Adams Elementary School	222	36	100%

### Meeting the Needs of Our Target Population

Atlas' curriculum, teaching methods and services are designed specifically to meet the educational needs of our target student population. Atlas believes, beyond a doubt, that all students are capable of excellence and can learn at high levels when supported properly. Atlas aims to develop students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars. In order to ensure that all students realize our graduate aims, we put the following supports and structures in place:

**Family Partnerships:** Student success is a shared responsibility that requires a strong partnership between families and the school. Research has repeatedly shown that meaningful school/family partnerships create stronger learning outcomes for students and lead to a more inclusive school environment.<sup>68</sup> Therefore, at Atlas we actively engage families and work to build a relationship that is trusting and supportive. When a student is enrolled at Atlas, the school team will continuously strive to engage and partner with our families in ways that are meaningful to them and have a positive impact on their child's education, consistent with researcher and educator Pedro Noguera's call to "transform urban schools into sources of social stability and support for families and children by developing their potential to 1) serve as sources of intra-community integration, and 2) to provide

<sup>68</sup> Jordan, C., Orozco, E., & Averett, A. (2002). *Emerging issues in school, family, and community connections: Annual synthesis 2001*. Austin, TX: Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.

Mo, T. and Singh, K. (2008) Parents' Relationships and Involvement: Effects on Students' School Engagement and Performance, *RMLE Online*, 31:10, 1-11, DOI: 10.1080/19404476.2008.11462053

Sun, L. "Parent involvement and Science Achievement during students' transition years from elementary school to middle school: a cross-lagged panel analysis using ECLS-K" (2015). Theses and Dissertations--Educational Policy Studies and Evaluation. 37.

resources for extra-community linkages”.<sup>69</sup> The team at Atlas will work in partnership with families to support student learning and, to the extent possible, the larger community. For more information on how Atlas plans to partner with the family and community see *B.6 - Family & Community Involvement*.

**Diversity & Inclusion:** As a diverse-by-design charter school, Atlas will actively recruit students and families across various lines of difference. We practice anti-bias, antiracist (ABAR) education through curriculum and ongoing staff development. This allows us to provide culturally relevant and responsive learning experiences for our students, which has been shown to improve student achievement and engagement across content areas including English Language Arts, mathematics, and science.<sup>70</sup> We work to have an inclusive environment for special education, so students with various needs can be included in the traditional classroom setting as much as possible, which has been shown to improve math and reading scores for students with and without disabilities.<sup>71</sup>

**Real-World, Place-Based Learning Experiences:** At Atlas, we strive to develop students who are not only academically exceptional, but have strong critical thinking skills, are expert communicators, and know how to work as a team to achieve a common goal. We accomplish this by providing relevant real-world experiences through place-based learning opportunities. These authentic experiences that are rooted in the local context of St. Louis helps students develop the skills needed to be successful in the future while instilling a true love of learning. By getting students outside of the traditional classroom and utilizing the amazing resources of St. Louis, Atlas’ students are more aware of our city’s challenges and opportunities as they grow up and become active citizens.

**Year-Round Education:** Atlas has adopted a year-round calendar to meet the needs of our students and families. The Founding Team has met with families from different socio-economic backgrounds and heard overwhelmingly that summertime proves to be a hard time of the year to find childcare, programming, and learning opportunities for their children. Our interviews are consistent with research that shows that low-income children are especially vulnerable during summer months, when they lose access to important social services such as food and childcare.<sup>72</sup> Our year-round

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<sup>69</sup> Noguera, P. (2001). “Transforming urban schools through investments in the social capital of parents.” In M. Warren (Ed.), *Social capital in poor communities*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation

<sup>70</sup> Aronson, B., & Laughter, J. (2016). “The theory and practice of culturally relevant education: A synthesis of research across content areas.” *Review of Educational Research*, 86(1), 163-206.

Kana’iaupuni, S., B. Ledward, and U. Jensen. (2010). *Culture-Based Education and Its Relationship to Student Outcomes*. Honolulu: Kamehameha Schools, Research & Evaluation.

<sup>71</sup> Choi, J. H., Meisenheimer, J. M., McCart, A. B. and Sailor, W. “Improving Learning for All Students Through Equity-Based Inclusive Reform Practices: Effectiveness of a Fully Integrated Schoolwide Model on Student Reading and Math Achievement.” *Remedial and Special Education* (2016): Vol 38, Issue 1, pp. 28 - 41.

<sup>72</sup> See, for example: Park KS, Lee MG. “Effects of summer school participation and psychosocial outcomes on changes in body composition and physical fitness during summer break.” *J Exerc Nutr Biochem*. 2015;19(2):81. doi: 10.5717/jenb.2015.15052005.

calendar will ensure that our target student population will have sufficient support to achieve at high levels throughout the school year, and reassure families and educators concerned about the “summer slide.” Our intersession programming that takes place when school is not in session will be provided on a sliding scale so it is accessible to all families, especially those from low-income backgrounds. This will help mitigate the inequities we see in children with school breaks and learning loss. For more on our school calendar and intersession programming, see *A.4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule*.

**Investing in Educators:** Atlas invests in its teaching staff to ensure that teachers are equipped to guide each child towards high academic achievement and social-emotional development. Teacher quality is the most important in-school factor related to students’ academic success, and low-income students benefit most when taught by skilled teachers.<sup>73</sup> To be the most effective, teachers need to have time for ongoing professional collaboration and reflection. With that in mind, Atlas prioritizes effectively and efficiently recruiting, training, and retaining our instructional staff. Teachers have time each day to engage in collaborative lesson-planning, and our regular intersession breaks allow for week-long professional collaboration among our instructional staff. See *B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training* for more on how our focus on educators promotes student achievement.

**Wrap-Around Services:** The team at Atlas recognizes that the social-emotional development of our students is critical to their holistic growth. Therefore, Atlas will hire a full time school social worker starting in the first year of operation. By Year 3 we will recruit and hire a Director of Student Support Services who will work to ensure that all students are set up for success and will be responsible for the management of all special education programs. Furthermore, we will partner with community organizations that can help us support our students and families. See sections *B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training* and *B.6 - Family & Community Involvement* for more on how our wraparound services promote student achievement and engagement at school.

**Normalized Interventions:** We normalize interventions by prioritizing small group work and flexible groupings, so students get the instruction and practice they need to be successful. Students are grouped and regrouped according to specific goals, activities, and individual needs. Flexible grouping strategies are used to meet curricular goals, engage students, and respond to individual needs of the students. Strategic grouping helps teachers overcome the disadvantages of ability grouping while still attending to individual performance issues. Teacher aides, math and reading specialists, and

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Huang, J., Barnidge, E., Kim, Y. “Children Receiving Free or Reduced-Price School Lunch Have Higher Food Insufficiency Rates in Summer,” *The Journal of Nutrition*, Volume 145, Issue 9, September 2015, Pages 2161–2168, <https://doi.org/10.3945/jn.115.214486>

<sup>73</sup> Hanushek, E., Kain, J. and Rivkin, S. (1998). “Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement”. Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research. Available at [http://www.cgp.upenn.edu/pdf/Hanushek\\_NBER.PDF](http://www.cgp.upenn.edu/pdf/Hanushek_NBER.PDF).

general education teachers will work with students during targeted learning blocks so children can get the academic support they need without the stigma of being pulled out of class. See A.2 - *Curriculum & Instruction* for more on Atlas' use of normalized interventions to ensure educational equity and high achievement for all students.

**High Expectations:** Atlas' high expectations, and accompanying supports, are a manifestation of our commitment to diversity and inclusion. We are truly committed to helping every child master the Missouri Learning Standards and our school's rigorous academic content. Research has shown that teachers' implicit and explicit biases contribute to racial and ethnic achievement gaps in reading and mathematics.<sup>74</sup> Research has also shown that typically, non-Black teachers have lower expectations for Black students than Black teachers have for the same Black students.<sup>75</sup> Therefore, regular professional development time will be dedicated to ensuring that our staff members maintain high expectations for all students and that our teachers are equipped to help each student progress towards greater academic, social and emotional development with a racial equity lens. For more on Atlas' school culture and climate, see section A.8 - *School Climate & Culture*.

**Rigorous Curriculum:** Atlas provides a rigorous curriculum that is aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards and is embedded with instructional approaches and practices that are designed to meet the needs of diverse learners. These frameworks and strategies include but are not limited to:

- Balanced Literacy
- Cognitively Guided Instruction
- Data-Informed Instruction
- Place-Based Learning
- Cooperative Learning
- Differentiated/Personalized Learning
- Flexible/Strategic Groupings

In particular, Balanced Literacy and Cognitively Driven Instruction are student-centered instructional approaches that allow for varying degrees of support and independence during ELA and mathematics instruction, respectively. Our curriculum not only prepares students to achieve at high levels on state standardized tests, but prepares them to succeed in middle school, high school and beyond. See A.2 - *Curriculum & Instruction* for more information.

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<sup>74</sup> Peterson, E. R., Rubie-Davies, C., Osborne, D., & Sibley, C. (2016). Teachers' explicit expectations and implicit prejudiced attitudes to educational achievement: Relations with student achievement and the ethnic achievement gap. *Learning and Instruction*, 42, 123-140.

Friedrich, A., Flunger, B., Nagengast, B., Jonkmann, K., & Trautwein, U. (2015). Pygmalion effects in the classroom: Teacher expectancy effects on students' math achievement. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 41, 1-12.

<sup>75</sup> Gershenson, S., Holt, S. B., & Papageorge, N. W. (2016). Who believes in me? The effect of student-teacher demographic match on teacher expectations. *Economics of Education Review*, 52, 209-224.

**Intercession Enrichment Opportunities:** Enrichment opportunities during intercession breaks will provide students with multiple and varied strategic opportunities to explore, practice, reflect on and revisit 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, such as critical thinking, collaboration, and communication. Enrichment during intercession breaks will also expose children to a variety of experiences that will build their background knowledge while helping them develop a sense of curiosity towards, belonging in, and stewardship of the world around them. Atlas will encourage families to use intercession breaks as a time to supplement our school-based learning experiences, and will work with parents to ensure that all students have access to meaningful intercession break experiences.

## High-Risk Student Populations

A “high-risk” student is defined as one who is at least one year behind in satisfactory completion of coursework or obtaining credits for graduation, pregnant or a parent, homeless or has been homeless sometime within the preceding six months, has limited English proficiency, has been suspended from school three or more times, is eligible for free or reduced-price school lunch, or has been referred by the school district or other charter schools recommended for enrollment in an alternative program.<sup>76</sup> At Atlas, we will identify high-risk students after they have been enrolled by giving families the opportunity to disclose this information on enrollment forms, and when applicable, by requesting records from all schools the student previously attended within the past year.

As a school that values diversity in all its forms and strives to create a welcoming and inclusive environment, we understand that many of our students will experience challenges and come from at risk environments. Atlas’ supports and structures are designed to support the students who are in at risk environments. Atlas’ school model specifically addresses the educational needs of this segment of our target population in the following ways:

**Curriculum:** Atlas’ curriculum of balanced literacy, cognitively guided instruction, and place-based education allows for varying degrees of support and independence while ensuring that all children have the support they need to achieve at high levels of academic success. Our high-risk students, including those students on free or reduced-price lunch and/or those experiencing homelessness will have access to all of the same academic and extracurricular offerings as our more economically secure students, and will have the necessary academic, social and emotional support to take advantage of these opportunities.

**Teaching Methods:** Atlas’ use of data-informed instruction, regular professional development, team-teaching, flexible groupings, and year-round schooling will ensure that Atlas professionals will be up to date on students’ academic performance and will ensure that no child slips through the

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<sup>76</sup> Definition of “at-risk” comes from [RSMo 160.405](#)

cracks, including our highest-risk students. High-risk students will receive ongoing and personalized support from Atlas' team, including behavioral, emotional and academic support such as additional tutoring and re-teaching. Furthermore, due to our year-round schooling model, high-risk children will not be away from the school building and its associated resources for longer than two to three weeks at a time, even during the summer holidays. Therefore, our students will continue to build social and academic progress through the course of the calendar year, without a dramatic decrease in abilities or access to resources during traditional summer months.

**Services:** Not only will Atlas' teaching methods and curriculum ensure a high quality of education to high-risk students, the school's extracurricular services will also support the success of high-risk students at Atlas. Atlas will partner with local community organizations to connect our students and families in need of additional services and resources for child and family welfare. For example, Atlas Public Schools will partner with the Little Bit Foundation, a non-profit organization in the St. Louis region that "serves as the convener of programs and services that support district and school performance goals and address the needs of the whole child – body, mind and spirit – so that they can focus on their education. Little Bit does this by marshaling resources and specialized providers when necessary, and working one-on-one with each child to support his or her comfort, dignity and self-esteem; health and wellness; and academic enrichment." By partnering with local community organizations and family and child welfare organizations such as the Little Bit Foundation, Atlas will ensure that our high-risk students and families have access to the resources they need to thrive at school and beyond. Atlas' community partnerships are outlined in greater detail in *B.6 - Family & Community Involvement*.

## A.6 - Special Student Populations

### Commitment to All Learners

Atlas Public Schools is committed to meeting the needs of all learners so that each and every student is prepared to thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. We believe that all students are capable of excelling academically, socially, and emotionally, and know that each child has their own unique strengths and areas for growth. At Atlas, we offer an inclusive learning environment, with highly differentiated and scaffolded supports for each student. Our academic program is designed to meet the needs of students from various backgrounds, including students who struggle academically, gifted students, English Learners, and students with disabilities.

Atlas will provide a free and appropriate education (FAPE) to all enrolled students, that is the least restrictive and “suitable” supportive. Atlas’ academic model and daily schedule will challenge students academically while providing opportunities for reteaching, remediation, and enrichment. The vast majority of the school day is spent in a small group setting with targeted instruction or in a co-taught class with two educators. This allows teachers to better serve the diverse needs of our students while providing as inclusive of an environment as possible. Moreover, special education services will be provided to qualifying students according to state and federal law.

### Response to Intervention (RTI)

#### Tier 1 Interventions

In the context of the Atlas Public Schools’ Response to Intervention framework, Tier 1 interventions are differentiation techniques that are available to all students in their regular classrooms. Interventions delivered quickly and systematically are the most effective in helping students get on track academically. If a student demonstrates a high error rate and struggles to learn new content, teachers will provide more explicit or systematic instruction with ample opportunities for practice and feedback.<sup>77</sup>

At the beginning of the school year, Atlas will administer the [Fountas and Pinnell \(F&P\) Benchmark Assessment System \(BAS\)](#)<sup>78</sup> to all students in order to determine each child’s independent and instructional reading levels. During these assessments, teachers are able to observe a student’s reading behaviors one-on-one, engage in comprehension conversations that go beyond retell, and make informed decisions that connect assessment to instruction. Assessment data from each

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<sup>77</sup> Vaughn, S., Wanzek, J., Murray, C. S., Roberts, G. (2012). Intensive interventions for students struggling in reading and mathematics: A practice guide. Portsmouth, NH: RMC Research Corporation, Center on Instruction.

<sup>78</sup> For more information on the Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System, see: <https://www.fountasandpinnell.com/bas/>

student will be collected and analyzed during regularly scheduled grade level team meetings, and Tier 2 interventions will be determined.

### **Tier 2 Interventions**

Tier 2 interventions are small group interventions, which are designed by teachers to address a specific skill that students have not mastered. These are generally delivered either by the homeroom teacher or co-teacher during the course of the normal school day. Throughout the course of the intervention, teachers take running records to track student progress. This data is analyzed during team meetings. If the student is showing signs of growth, then the teacher will continue to implement the intervention with fidelity. If the student's growth is stagnant or if the student regresses, a more intensive Tier 3 intervention will be considered.

### **Tier 3 Interventions**

Tier 3 literacy intervention is systematically built into Atlas' daily schedule during the Reading Foundations and Reading Pathways blocks (see *Appendix A.4.3* for Daily Schedule). We do this to normalize interventions in order to reduce the stigma associated with being *pulled out* of class.

Reading Foundations is a daily 60-minute structured phonics block in kindergarten through second grade. The purpose of the Reading Foundations is for students to acquire internalized, automatic knowledge of the building blocks of spoken and written language - letter names, sounds, and formation; the ability to break words apart and blend them back together; common spelling patterns; and decoding of words. The first 15 minutes of the Reading Foundations block is conducted in a whole group setting, while the following 45 minutes is differentiated small group instruction based on student needs. Because of our co-teacher model, we are able to normalize our Tier 3 interventions and offer them during the 45 minutes of differentiated small group instruction..

Reading Pathways is a 50 minute intervention block for students in grades 3-5 that is designed to provide targeted instruction to groups of students who are performing at nearly the same instructional level. During this time, all upper elementary students participate in small group instruction that is tailored to meet their specific needs as learners. Because the work is differentiated, all students are challenged and ambitious growth goals are set. Atlas strategically chooses to normalize interventions by having all students participate so that no child feels singled out. All students, including gifted students, English Learners, and students with disabilities, based on their IEPs, will participate in Reading Pathways and receive Tier 3 intervention.

Tier 3 Literacy interventions are organized into three skill categories:

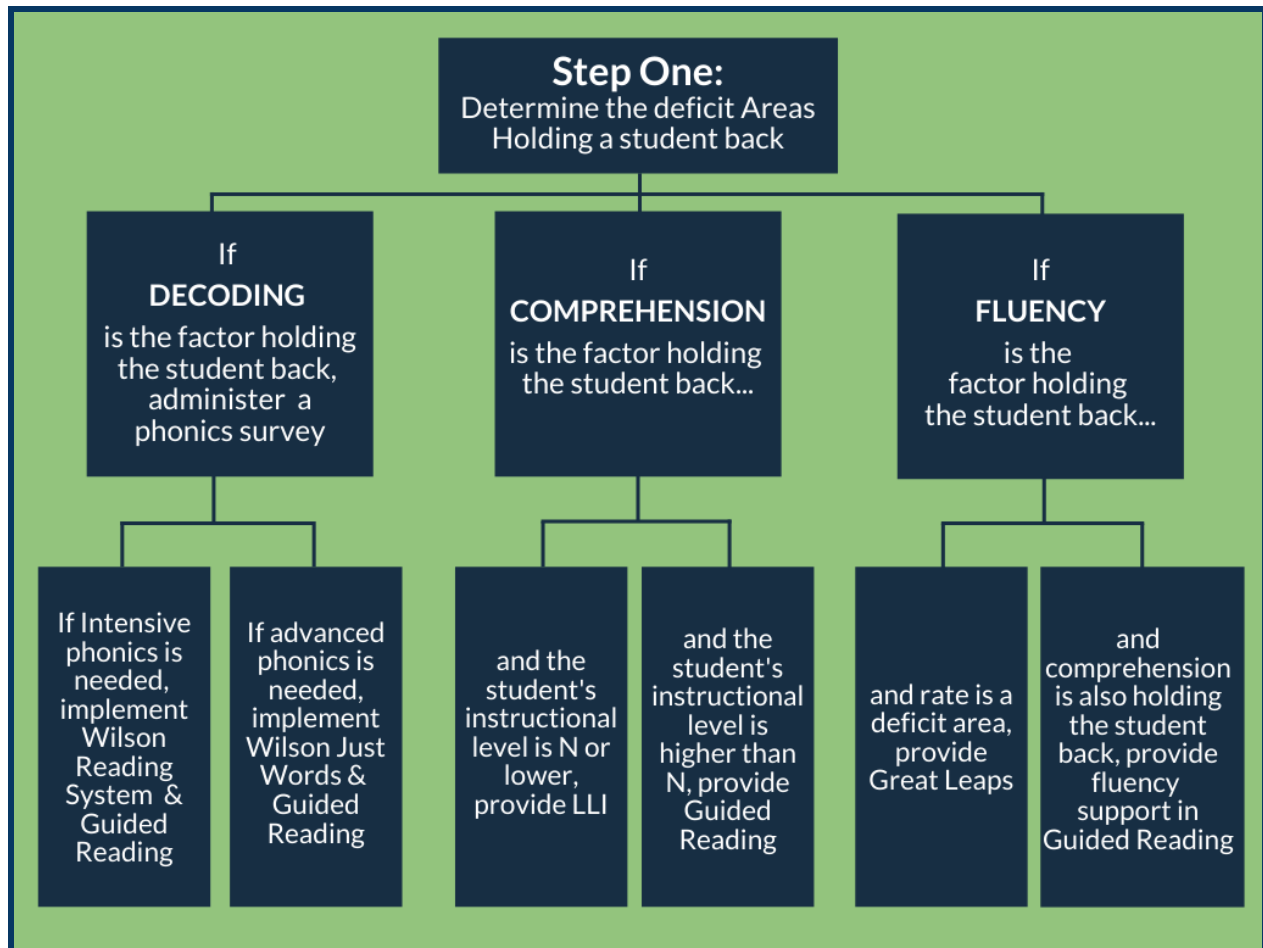
- Decoding
- Fluency
- Comprehension

Each category has specific, data-driven triggers and recommended programs which are designed to build student skills. This way, teachers are able to identify struggling students early, utilize the correct intervention, and immediately address the skills deficit.

As stated above, the primary screening method to identify students in need of literacy intervention is the *Fountas and Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (F&P BAS)*, an individually administered formative assessment that indicates the student's reading level, and which skill category needs to be addressed. The F&P Benchmark Assessment will be administered at least three times annually, but students can also be identified for intervention by grades, interim assessments, or state test results. In these cases, F&P will be administered to ensure that the appropriate intervention is chosen.

The F&P assessment classifies students into four categories: Remedial, Below Proficient, Proficient, and Advanced, based on grade level and time of year. While all Atlas students receive targeted instruction during Reading Pathways, students scoring in the Remedial and Below Proficient categories will participate in groups with fewer students and certified teachers. The Heads of School, and eventually the Academic Deans, are responsible for ensuring that all students are placed in the proper intervention.

After students are identified for intervention, it is essential to place them in an intervention that directly addresses the factor that is holding them back. The following flow chart illustrates the process for matching students with appropriate interventions:



Once the appropriate skill area for intervention is identified, teachers use the following intervention programs.

Intervention Category	Intervention	How it Works
<b>Comprehension</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b> Guided Reading & Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI)	<p>Guided Reading develops the students ability to put meaning to text. It is an instructional approach in which you bring together a small group of students who are similar enough in their reading development that they can be taught together for a period of time.</p> <p>Leveled Literacy Intervention (LLI) is a structured form of guided reading. Our experience has been that teachers increase their success with lower skilled students by using the structures of LLI.</p> <p>If decoding or fluency difficulties are also identified, additional interventions will be paired with guided reading.</p>

<b>Decoding</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b> Wilson Reading System and Wilson Just Words	<p>Phonics teaches students a sequence of sound letter correspondences and the rules about when to apply which sounds.</p> <p>Phonics must be coupled with guided reading in order to give students practice applying sounds in the context of reading.</p> <p>If the phonics survey indicates that the student has not mastered all consonants, short vowels, or basic diagraphs (ch, th, etc.) Wilson Reading System should be used in grades K-2.</p> <p>If the phonics survey indicates that students have not mastered more advanced phonics, Wilson Just Words is indicated.</p>
<b>Fluency</b>	<b>Recommendation:</b> Great Leaps	<p>Fluency is an umbrella term that describes the rate, intonation, phrasing, stress, and integration of a student's oral reading.</p> <p>Oral reading rate triggers are set for each F&amp;P reading level. Students falling below these cutoffs will receive intervention using Great Leaps.</p> <p>If the student struggles with comprehension and fluency, then teachers will provide fluency support in the context of Guided Reading.</p>

As noted above, intervention time is built into the daily schedule to ensure that students can get back on track as quickly as possible, or if students are reading at Proficient or Advanced levels, that they are able to receive targeted instruction and enrichment activities. The Head of Schools are responsible for the overall implementation of the Response to Intervention program, including reviewing F&P data to identify students for intervention (in collaboration with teachers during weekly data meetings), determining appropriate interventions, and tracking student progress. The success of the intervention program will be assessed by the school leadership team based on student progress. This progress will be disaggregated and reviewed roughly every six weeks during full PD days, and the Head of Schools will determine if adjustments are necessary based on this review.

### **Meeting the Needs of All Students**

Atlas is a diverse-by-design school that allows opportunities and access for all students in the learning environment regardless of their learning needs or backgrounds. This commitment is

reflected in our staffing schedule which can be found in *Appendix A.6.1*. Our staff to student ratio never exceeds 1:8, and for the vast majority of the school day, students either work in a small group setting, receiving targeted instruction, or are in a co-taught classroom with a teacher to student ratio of 1:13. By having two educators in the room, Tier 1 instruction is more effective because differentiation is easier and teachers are able to respond faster to individual student needs. In addition, Atlas' co-teacher model allows more students to receive targeted Tier 2 intervention seamlessly. Below is an example of what Tier 2 intervention looks like in a kindergarten math class with 26 students and two educators in the room.

In a kindergarten math class, students are working to write their numbers to 20. The teacher introduces the lesson and uses explicit instruction to gradually turn the *"heavy lifting"* over to students. About 15-20 minutes into the lesson, students get the opportunity to practice independently, and the teacher has designed a check for understanding (CFU) to gauge students' understanding. The CFU is rigorous and aligned to the Missouri Learning Standards (in this example, *K.NS.A.4 - read & write numerals & represent a number of objects from 0 to 20*).

While students work independently, both educators circulate throughout the classroom, stopping to answer questions, support individual students, and see which students got the CFU correct and which students need additional support. If the teacher sees that less than 75% of the class (20 students) did not answer the CFU correctly, they will stop and reteach. However, if 20 students or more were able to successfully answer the CFU then they will move into the next phase of the lesson.

Students who got the CFU correct will start independent practice, while students who still need additional support and coaching will move into a small group and work with the teacher. Because the class is co-taught, the second educator in the room is available to circulate and help the roughly 20 students who initially answered the CFU correctly with their independent practice. When they finish their independent practice, the teacher is able to quickly check the students' answers to ensure they *"practiced perfectly"* and offer additional guidance if needed. Once they have successfully completed their assignment, groups of students begin playing a math game that reinforces the skills they were just working on.

For the roughly six students who needed additional support and were pulled into a small group with the math teacher, they had roughly 30 minutes of targeted Tier 2 intervention. The teacher had already prepared how they were going to reteach the material to students who initially struggled during a Team Meeting the week before. They presented the lesson in a new way and scaffolded in support that enabled each of these students to be successful.

The example above illustrates how the co-teacher model at Atlas works to set all students up for success in the general education classroom. While this example highlights a math class, a similar framework is utilized during the Content Based Literacy Block.

### **More Time for Teacher Planning & Preparation**

At Atlas, we believe that in order for teachers to be fully prepared to meet the diverse needs of our students, they need significant time embedded during the school day to plan and prepare. This is why all homeroom teachers at Atlas have both a 50 minute plan period and a 50 minute team meeting built into their daily schedules, in addition to a 40 minute duty-free lunch.

During the Team Meeting, teachers meet with one of the Heads of School, or starting in Year 3, one of the Academic Deans, to discuss student progress and determine next steps. Daily Team Meetings allow teachers ample time to reflect on their lessons, analyze data, and adequately prepare for future lessons. For an example of a model math lesson resource with what Intellectual Preparation looks like at Atlas, see *Appendix A.6.2*.

## **Students with Disabilities**

As noted above, Atlas' instructional model features co-taught classes, small group instruction, an intensive reading focus, data-based instructional decisions, and interventions in reading and math, which are based on both a special education and Response to Intervention model. Atlas aims to serve the majority of our special education students in a full inclusion setting with the understanding that some students may need additional support along the special education continuum and/or related services such as speech therapy, occupational therapy, social work, and paraprofessional support.

As a part of professional development, all teachers will be trained in how to read and understand an IEP and how to implement services for all students with varying needs. General education staff will provide self-reflective feedback through online surveys regarding specific areas of professional growth to better serve students with disabilities. This will help inform targeted professional development for teachers throughout the year – outside of regularly scheduled professional development – to support the quality of instruction for all students, especially those who are most at-risk.

In Year 1, Atlas will hire one certified special education (SPED) teacher, and in Year 2, Atlas will hire an additional certified SPED teacher. A SPED-certified teacher, with support from the Executive Director, will serve as the Special Education Coordinator (SEC) for the first two years of operation, and will have, at the very minimum, a cross-categorical special education certificate. The SEC ensures all Atlas faculty comply with all legal provisions regarding students' disabilities. That includes identifying learning resources and supports required by a student's IEP or 504 Plan. If those include external services, the Executive Director contracts with trusted vendors. In Year 3,

Atlas will hire a Director of Student Support Services who will coordinate all special education programming.

### **Legal Compliance**

Since school admission will be determined by a blind lottery, Atlas will not discriminate based on student need. Atlas provides a free, appropriate, responsive, equitable, and high-quality education to all students, regardless of sex, race, color, national or ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, or disability.

Within the framework of RTI, all special education programs and services at Atlas Public Schools shall be provided in accordance with all state and federal laws governing special education and in accordance with the student's Individual Education Plan (IEP). This includes best practices in serving students identified under the law as having disabilities, as well as Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 (ADA), Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. Atlas will abide by the Education for All Handicapped Students Act of 1975 and [RSMO 162.670-995](#), which addresses Special Education Services. Atlas Public Schools will ensure that the special education services and programs indicated on each student's IEP will be provided directly to the student during school hours. Atlas will work with prior school districts to transfer IEP documentation, and the SEC uses [Lumen Touch's Bright SPED](#)<sup>79</sup> to maintain files (securely and in accordance with FERPA and the IDEA) demonstrating Atlas' IEP compliance. The Executive Director, with support from the Head of School - Operations Lead, reports that information annually to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE). Beyond external reporting, the Head of Schools are responsible for Atlas complying with the letter and the spirit of relevant laws.

Atlas will offer a continuum of services to support a diverse learning community. When appropriate, SPED teachers co-teach alongside the general classroom teachers in the mainstream environment. If an IEP precludes that, modifications occur in the least restrictive environment appropriate, and Atlas provides the necessary supports and resources. SPED teachers may modify lessons in accordance with the student's IEP and if appropriate, establish standing "pull-out" instruction.

Any student whose needs are met outside of a mild/moderate setting will have an enrollment meeting led by our SEC. At this meeting, the least restrictive environment (LRE) will be determined for the student in compliance with FAPE and as deemed appropriate and allowed by the student's IEP or 504 plan.

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<sup>79</sup> For more information on Lumen Touch's Bright SPED, see: <https://www.lumentouch.com/sped>

For students whose IEPs require transportation, the Head of School - Operations Lead arranges appropriate transportation. If necessary, they also contract out the following services: speech and language therapy, occupational therapy, physical therapy, assistive technology, orientation and mobility training, sign language interpreting, and special transportation. Atlas will also contract with a school psychologist for IEP evaluations and reevaluations.

### **Diagnosed Disabilities**

Students enrolling at Atlas Public Schools will not be discriminated against based on a physical and/or mental disability. When students are admitted to the school, part of the intake survey will ask whether students have been identified, currently or in the past, as qualifying for special education services. In addition, Atlas staff will follow up with each student's previous school to determine whether the student has an IEP. Atlas staff will then make sure these records are transferred to Atlas prior to the start of the school year. Based on previous experience, the Founding Team at Atlas knows that at times it can be challenging to receive student records from the school the student previously attended. Atlas is committed to working diligently with families to ensure records are received in a timely manner so that Atlas can provide a free appropriate public education (FAPE). When a child with a disability transfers to Atlas, IDEA 2004 requires the following:

In the case of a child with a disability who transfers school districts within the same academic year, who enrolls in a new school, and who had an IEP in effect in the same state, the LEA shall provide such child with a free appropriate public education, including services comparable to those described in the previously held IEP, in consultation with the parents, until such time as the school district adopts the previous IEP or develops, adopts, and implements a new IEP that is consistent with Federal and State law.

Parents and teachers will attend a meeting led by our Special Education Coordinator to determine appropriate services to be delivered at Atlas. Atlas Public Schools is committed to complying with all laws and provisions regarding students with IEPs. The school is committed to implementing IEPs as written, and if a child's IEP needs to be reviewed for updated goals and services, or to determine continued eligibility for special education, the school will refer the student to the Student Intervention Team (SIT) for a review of the IEP.

### **Identifying Undiagnosed Disabilities**

The Response to Intervention framework at Atlas ensures that all students who need additional support receive intervention in a timely manner. Rather than asking, "which students need extra help, and what specific services are required by the IEP?," our RTI system assumes that all students must meet the same high standard, and that we must build a system of interventions into the fabric of the school in order to support every student in reaching this standard. Students are identified for possible intervention according to a regular system of data analysis, which includes clearly defined

benchmarks for performance. A response to intervention team will be convened to review each student not meeting these benchmarks, and to identify the appropriate interventions.

There are three categories of disabilities:

**Category 1:** Suspected severe to profound disability

**Category 2:** Suspected mild to moderate disability

**Category 3:** Early childhood - pre-kindergarten suspected developmental delays

Since Atlas serves kindergarten through 5th grade students, we will focus specifically on Categories 1 & 2.

### **Category 1: Suspected Severe to Profound Disability**

These students present indicators of an obvious disability(ies) that will not respond to regular education interventions. Obvious disabilities are usually suspected when a medical/outside report has been received that identifies a speech disorder (articulation/phonology, voice and/or fluency), or a severe to profound disability (e.g., Intellectual Disability, Deaf/Blindness, Traumatic Brain Injury, severe Autism).

This category also includes students: 1) who may present behavior that endanger themselves or affect the safety of others and those whose suspected disability is not documented by an outside report or 2) whose obvious physical, sensory, social or cognitive impairments significantly prevent meaningful participation in the general education environment.

Category 1 referrals for a special education evaluation are made without prior implementation of Student Intervention Team interventions when the student has an obvious disability.

Note: For Speech Only, the SEC should confer with the speech & language pathologist and initiate the collection of existing data. The findings are reviewed by the Student Intervention Team along with the speech & language pathologist.

### **Category 2: Suspected Mild to Moderate Disability**

These students present difficulties in the school setting that could possibly be remediated by the use of research-based interventions, or students for whom a medical/outside report diagnoses a mild to moderate disability of any kind, except Speech.

Category 2 referrals for special education evaluations are made when the student has failed to respond to appropriate research-based interventions monitored by the Student Intervention Team.

Atlas utilizes a comprehensive three-tier Response to Intervention (RTI) model that includes both academic and social-emotional behavioral support and interventions at all tiers. On the academic side, Atlas' RTI framework (described above) focuses on literacy based on the belief that reading on grade level is a foundation necessary for success in all subjects.

Atlas also implements a similar social-emotional framework with three tiers of intervention. Tier 1 intervention focuses on class-wide management. Well-managed classrooms are built on a foundation that includes explicitly teaching behavioral expectations to students and using proactive strategies to manage group behavior. Tier 2 interventions occur above and beyond core instruction and can take the form of small group programs, mentoring support, or individual check-ins with the school social worker. At the Tier 3 level students receive more intensive interventions that are individualized and target the student's specific skill deficits.

Throughout the RTI process, teachers collect data on student progress to make a data-based decision about the effectiveness of a particular intervention. If an intensive Tier 3 intervention, implemented with fidelity, fails to accelerate a student's progress, the SIT team will consider evaluating a student's special education needs. It may also choose to adjust the type or frequency of the Tier 3 intervention before referring a student for evaluation. On the other hand, if the data indicates that the student is making adequate progress, the intervention will continue, but the team will no longer consider evaluation for special education.

Note: Regular education intervention activities that precede consideration of the need for a special education evaluation involves a minimum of two separate meetings. These meetings are scheduled in accordance with an individually determined timeline.

Documentation is required that a group of individuals meeting the requirements of an IEP team and other qualified professionals, as appropriate, review all relevant existing data on the child in accordance with Special Education Compliance, Program Review Standards and Indicators, DESE, Section 200.30.

### **Required Participants**

- Representative of the LEA: Typically, Head of School or designee
- Student's Regular Education Teacher
- School Psychologist/Psychological Examiner
- Speech-Language Pathologist/Diagnostician (Speech only)
- Individual Interpreting Instructional Implications of Evaluation Results
- Other qualified professionals having pertinent information to share about the student

Invited by not required:

- School Social Worker
- Parent
- Student at any age, if appropriate

## **Roles and Responsibilities of the Review of Existing Data Meeting Participants**

All team participants have the responsibility of preparing for the Review of Existing Data Meeting.

The information reviewed should include:

- Evaluations and information provided by the parents of the child
- Performance on current classroom-based assessments
- Performance on state and school-wide assessments
- Classroom-based observations
- Observations by teachers and related services providers, if available and applicable

Additionally, information to be reviewed should include but is not limited to:

- Latest report card
- Work samples
- SIS information: attendance, discipline, etc.
- Appropriate anecdotal records
- Any outside reports
- Student Data Profile
- School health records, if a vision, hearing, general health or motor concern has been previously identified

Advance preparation involves several activities important to the overall success of the meeting.

These responsibilities may include, but are not limited to, the described activities for each participant.

Local Education Agency (LEA) Representative: This staff member, typically the Head of School or their designee, must have the authority to commit agency resources to implement the IEP and ensure that whatever services are set out in the IEP will not be vetoed at a higher administrative level within the agency in accordance with Special Education Compliance, Program Review Standards and Indicators, Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, Section 200.670.

This individual is any designated member of the school staff who meets the following requirements:

- Qualified to provide or supervise the provision of Special Education
- Knowledge of the general curriculum
- Knowledge of the availability of agency resources

The LEA Representative:

- Shares any knowledge of the student
- Requests an education surrogate for students who have no parent or someone acting as a parent
- Explains Procedural Safeguards to the parent
- Monitors compliance with federal, state and local guidelines

- Makes the necessary arrangements for designated staff to attend the Review of Existing Data Meeting
- Assists the team in making appropriate decisions regarding the need for additional information
- Assures documents are appropriately completed and submitted in a timely manner
- Ensures completion of the Notice of Action

School Psychologist/Psychological Examiner and/or Speech-Language Pathologist/Diagnostician for a Speech Only meeting:

- Schedules the Review of Existing Data (RED) meeting
- Completes the Notification of Meeting (NOM)
- Prints and Sends NOM to the parent via mail or email
- Documents the attempts to contact the parent
- Conducts the RED meeting
- Completes all required documentation

Parent/Guardian<sup>80</sup>:

- Shares information regarding the student's strengths, abilities and needs
- Assists the team in making appropriate decisions regarding the need for additional information
- Signs the Notice of Action, if appropriate

Student, if appropriate:

- Indicates school activities they enjoy and would like to pursue
- Shares concerns and/or questions, indicates accommodations that have been helpful
- Participates in the discussion regarding their strengths and needs
- Assists the team in making appropriate decisions

Regular Education Teacher: at least one regular education teacher of the child must attend the Review of Existing Data Meeting

- Provides and discusses anecdotal, work samples, and other information relevant to the student's current performance in relationship to the general education curriculum, including behavior and attendance patterns
- Identifies instructional and classroom management strategies that have been successful
- Identifies the student's learning style in the general education classroom and discusses special factors that may impede the student's learning
- Assists the team in making appropriate decisions

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<sup>80</sup> Parent/guardian, a person acting as a parent, or foster parent or an educational surrogate appointed by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

Other Qualified Professionals (who were identified as required members of the Student Intervention Team or who have expertise in the area(s) of concern):

- Assists the team in making appropriate decisions about the need or additional information

Following the Review of Existing Data Meeting, the team must make 1 of 2 evaluation decisions.

**Decision 1:** No Additional Data is Needed. In this case, the team must provide the parent with prior written Notice of Action and an Evaluation Report that includes an eligibility determination based on the Review of Existing Data.

**Decision 2:** Additional Data is Needed. In this case, the team must provide the parent with prior written Notice of Action for intent to evaluate and provide a description of the area(s) to be assessed and the tests to be administered, if known. Parental consent is required to initiate the evaluation.

### **Parental Requests**

Parents may also request their child be evaluated for a disability. At a parent's request, the Special Education Chair begins the collection of existing data and schedules a Review of Existing Data (RED) Meeting. During the RED meeting the team will review data in the areas of health, motor skills, vision & hearing, speech/language, cognitive skills, adaptive behavior, academic skills, social/emotional behavioral, post-secondary transition, and assistive technology needs. After reviewing the data, the team will come to one of the two decisions listed above, issuing a Notice of Action within 30 days explaining the rationale for the decision. Parents may avail themselves of a due process complaint if they disagree.

### **Evaluating Undiagnosed Disabilities**

If it is determined by the Student Intervention Team during the RED meeting that additional data is needed, then Atlas will issue a formal written evaluation request to the parent or guardian. The Notice of Action for evaluation includes the following components:

1. Rationale for the referral, including any applicable progressing monitoring data, reports, or records
2. Description of the interventions implemented prior to the referral under the Identification Process
3. Description of the content of any parental involvement in the Identification Process.

A copy of this request, along with the procedural safeguards notice is sent to the student's parents in their native language. After receiving written consent, the evaluation is completed and reported to parents within 60 days.

If the evaluation indicates a disability, an IEP team convenes within 30 days to determine entitled special education services. The IEP team consists of an LEA representative, the student's general education teacher, the Special Education Coordinator, the student's parent/guardian, and other professionals as needed. The IEP team creates an IEP for the student that details accommodation, modification, and the least restrictive environment.

### **At-Risk Students**

Given the demographic diversity of our target population, we anticipate that many of our students will exhibit risk factors at some level. We believe risk is not an individual property of children; rather, risk resides within systems in which children live.<sup>81</sup> Atlas' mission and school model are designed to set all students up for success and normalize interventions so that no child feels singled out. Atlas will work alongside families and community partners to provide wraparound services that help ensure that the basic needs of all of our students are being met. Moreover, Atlas strives to create a school culture where all students feel both physically and emotionally safe.

### **Disaggregated Data**

During Team Meetings, homeroom teachers, with the help of the Heads of School will analyze data from various assessments such as the F&P Benchmark Assessment, NWEA, and interim teacher created assessments. Team members will disaggregate this data and analyze it by subgroup. The subgroup data will then be compared to the overall class average to determine gaps. From there, teachers can adjust course and provide targeted instruction to support all students. It is important that all teachers at Atlas hold all students to the same rigorous expectations. Disaggregating data helps to ensure that no subgroup is systematically ignored.

### **Dyslexia**

Atlas will screen students for dyslexia, pursuant to [RSMo 633.420](#) and consistent with DESE guidelines. Faculty receive at least two hours of training on dyslexia and related disorders during their first inservice week. Students with dyslexic tendencies will receive special support and accommodations but not an IEP unless otherwise qualified.

### **Students Experiencing Homelessness**

Based on the diverse socio-economic population of where Atlas will be situated, Atlas anticipates the possibility of enrolling students who meet the definition of homeless. Atlas Public Schools will ensure full compliance with the McKinney Vento Homeless Assistance Act (42 U.S.C 11431 et seq.) made applicable to Missouri under [RSMo 167.020](#) which outlines registration requirements for homeless children and youth which shall mean a person less than twenty-one years of age who lacks a fixed, regular and adequate nighttime residence including a child or youth who:

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<sup>81</sup> Mingus, M. (2010). "Changing the Framework: Disability Justice." *Resist Newsletter*. November Issue, 2010.

1. Is sharing the housing of other persons due to loss of housing, economic hardship, or a similar reason; is living in motels, hotels, or camping grounds due to lack of alternative adequate accommodations; is living in emergency or transitional shelters; is abandoned in hospitals; or is awaiting foster care placement;
2. Has a primary nighttime residence that is a public or private place not designed for or ordinarily used as a regular sleeping accommodation for human beings;
3. Is living in cars, parks, public spaces, abandoned buildings, substandard housing, bus or train stations, or similar settings; and
4. Is a migratory child or youth who qualifies as homeless because the child or youth is living in circumstances described in subdivisions (1) to (3) of this subsection.

Atlas will identify students and families in need of homeless/migrant services for new students by including a space for identifying homeless/migrant student status in the initial enrollment of a student. Additionally, because students can become children in transition at any point, Atlas will identify existing students in need of homeless/migrant student services through counselor/teacher referrals and proactive communications with parents/guardians and families about available supports. To assist in identification and avoid misidentification, Atlas will follow the broadly defined definition of homeless as set forth in the Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to House Act of 2009 (P.L 111-22, Section 1003), remaining cognizant of the evolving and complex nature of defining homelessness.

## **English Learners**

Atlas has procedures in place to identify students who meet the federal definition of an English Learner. As stated in Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, an English learner is an individual who is:

- A. age 3-21
- B. who is enrolled or preparing to enroll in an elementary or secondary school
- C. (i) who was not born in the United States or whose native language is a language other than English; (ii)(I) who is a Native American or Alaska Native, or a native resident of the outlying areas; and (II) who comes from an environment where a language other than English has had a significant impact on the individual's level of English language proficiency; (iii) who is migratory, whose native language is a language other than English, and who comes from an environment where a language other than English is dominant
- D. whose difficulties in speaking, reading, writing or understanding the English language may be sufficient to deny the individual – (i) the ability to meet the state's proficient level of achievement on the State assessments ...; (ii) the ability to successfully achieve in classrooms where the language of instruction is English; or (iii) the opportunity to participate fully in society.

## **Enrollment**

During the enrollment process, Atlas team members will ask parents or guardians to respond to the following questions:

- What was the student's first language?
- Which language(s) does the student use (speak) at home with others?
- Which language(s) does the student hear at home and understand?

If the answer to any of these questions notes a language other than English is either spoken or understood, the student is potentially an English learner and Atlas will take active steps to determine if the student qualifies for Language Instruction Educational Program (LIEP). Atlas' enrollment packet will also include a Language Use Survey (LUS). Atlas uses the LUS suggested by the Missouri Department of Education which includes three tiers of questions meant to understand more about the student's linguistic and educational background.

Atlas will provide most information regarding language assistance services in a visible location and will also provide information upon request.

## **Initial Screening**

Every student identified as a potential EL by the LUS will be screened within the first 30 calendar days after enrollment. Atlas will use WIDA's Online Screener for students in 1st grade (second semester) through 12th grade. First semester kindergarten students will only take the speaking and listening sections of the Kindergarten Screener and must take the ACCESS for ELs 2.0 in the spring. Second semester kindergarteners and first semester first graders must take all four domains of the paper-based Kindergarten Screener. All screeners will be administered by a trained employee.

The screener will produce a series of scores by domain and an overall English language proficiency (ELP) score. The Kindergarten Screener for kindergarten and first semester first graders will produce a combined score for speaking & listening and individual scores for both reading and writing. Please see the chart below for specific scores that determine eligibility for ELD services.

## Eligibility Criteria for ELD Services<sup>82</sup>

Grade Level	The Student IS ELIGIBLE for ELD Services if (s)he:	The Student is NOT ELIGIBLE for Services if:
<b>1st Semester Kindergarten</b>	Has a combined score of 28 or lower on listening and speaking on the W-APT. See below for scores of 29-30.	All first semester kindergarten students identified as potential ELs can receive support until earning a passing score in all four language domains. See below for scores of 29-30.
<b>2nd Semester Kindergarten-1st Semester 1st Grade</b>	Has a combined score of 28 or lower on listening or speaking, OR Has a score of 10 or lower on reading, OR Has a score of 11 or lower on writing.	Has a combined score of 29 or higher on listening and speaking, AND Has a score of 11 or higher on reading, AND Has a score of 12 or higher on writing.
<b>2nd Semester 1st Grade through 12th Grade</b>	Has an overall composite proficiency level of 4.5 or below	Has an overall composite proficiency level of 5.0 or higher.

If the student is eligible, the student will be placed in Atlas' Language Instruction Education Program (LIEP) and the parents or guardians will be notified in a language they can understand. Atlas utilizes DESE's recommended notification form. There are occasions where parents may opt-out or reuse the services provided by Atlas. Although parents are entitled to do so, Atlas will still take the necessary steps to overcome language barriers that potentially prevent students from achieving proficiency on content assessments or participating in a classroom instruction. Once returned, the notification form will be kept in the student's permanent file. In addition, Atlas will accurately code the students in the Missouri Student Information System (MOSIS).

### English Immersion Program & Services

Students at Atlas who are English Learners will achieve proficiency in the English language as quickly as possible through the use of Atlas' services and teaching methods. Atlas ensures that EL students will not be excluded from curricular or extracurricular activities based on an inability to speak and understand the language of instruction, and also that EL students will not be assigned special

<sup>82</sup> Missouri Department of Education. Identifying and Reclassifying English Learners. Guidance on Missouri's Entry and Exit Criteria. Retrieved from: <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/curr-eld-entry-exit-criteria.pdf>

education because of their lack of English proficiency. Parents whose English proficiency is limited will receive notices and information from Atlas in their native language to encourage participation in school activities. Parental outreach may also be conducted through home visits by an Atlas team member and, where necessary, an interpreter.

All students who are English Learners will be expected to become proficient in the English language at a rapid pace.

Atlas plans to provide all necessary staff and specialized curricular materials to enable EL students to achieve proficiency and attain the high standards established for all students at Atlas. These will include a mix of school-developed resources and EL-specific curricula if needed. Teachers will incorporate the four language skills of speaking, listening, reading, and writing across the curriculum. The core English Language Arts instructional strategies described in *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction*, with appropriate modifications, will help EL students develop English language proficiency. Interventions that build phonemic awareness and phonics mastery, as well as vocabulary work, are particularly appropriate for English Learners. Guided reading is also an effective strategy to help English Learners practice comprehension and analysis skills. These techniques are flexible in that they allow teachers to target specific skills identified through assessments, and they are structured to provide multiple levels of scaffolding and support. These differentiated instructional techniques along with supports to ensure that students comprehend instruction, are put in place so that students with limited English proficiency can make academic progress while they acquire English language skills.

Atlas will directly provide, or make referrals to appropriate support services as needed by EL students in order to maintain a satisfactory level of academic performance. Atlas' Head of School - Operations Lead will serve as the English Language Coordinator with the support of the Executive Director. Atlas is prepared to address the needs of students who are struggling with the structured English immersion program by providing, if it is determined to be the best course of action, pull-out instruction and/or assignment to a certified aide, teacher or qualified consultant under contract who speaks the child's non-English language. Atlas will seek to hire at least one full-time teacher who speaks the foreign language that is most common among our students, which in all likelihood will be Spanish. Parents of EL students will be kept abreast of their child's progress in English language acquisition in the language that they best understand.

### **Guidelines for Reclassification**

In addition to a student's ACCESS score, Atlas will collect additional evidence in a portfolio to be used when making reclassification decisions. The additional evidence collected in the portfolio will support inferences about an EL's English language proficiency as used in general education classrooms and will directly confirm or dispute individual domain scores earned on the ACCESS.

The goal of the portfolio is to ensure that Atlas is exiting students according to the “Goldilocks Principle” - just the right time, in just the right manner. According to research, If an LEA exits a student too early, they are at risk of academic failure; however, prolonging a student’s time in an EL support program potentially limits educational opportunities and demoralizes students.<sup>83</sup> Since exited students should be able to demonstrate full academic potential in content area classrooms without additional English language support services, Atlas will use multiple measures taken from various content areas to comprehensively verify any reclassification decision.

Atlas will follow guidance from DESE, outlined in the chart below, when considering reclassification.<sup>84</sup>

Access Scores	Atlas Actions
<b>4.7-6.0</b>	The student must be exited barring compelling evidence in the EL Portfolio suggesting the student should remain in the LIEP.
<b>Below 4.7</b>	The student must remain in the LIEP barring compelling evidence that the student is capable of fully participating in a classroom where English is the language of instruction. The portfolio must include evidence that any unsatisfactory domain score on the ACCESS is not indicative of her or his ability.

As stated above, Atlas will take into account both the EL’s ACCESS Score along with documentation from the student’s portfolio. Once a decision has been made, Atlas will utilize the Reclassification Agreement recommended by DESE to ensure that the exit criteria is objective and that opinions are not included and to increase communication and collaboration between the school and home.

Atlas will follow all guidelines set by ESSA regarding English Learners. Atlas will monitor EL students who have been exited from the LIEP for two years and document their progress. EL students are exited from the program with the condition that they continue to perform on par with their English-speaking peers. Monitored students follow all the same rules and procedures as all other students. They do not receive accommodations, modifications or alternative assessments, and do not take the ACCESS for ELs. If a monitored student begins to struggle or if concerns arise that

<sup>83</sup> Linquanti, R. (2001). *The redesignation dilemma: Challenges and choices in fostering meaningful accountability for English learners (Report No. 2001-1)*. Oakland: University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute.

Callahan, R., Wilkinson, L., Muller, C., & Frisco, M. (2009). “ESL Placement and Schools: Effects on Immigrant Achievement.” *Educational Policy*, 23(2), 355–384. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0895904807310034>

Robinson, J. P. (2011). “Evaluating Criteria for English Learner Reclassification: A Causal-Effects Approach Using a Binding-Score Regression Discontinuity Design with Instrumental Variables.” *Educational Evaluation and Policy Analysis*, 33(3), 267–292. <https://doi.org/10.3102/0162373711407912>

<sup>84</sup> Missouri Department of Education. Identifying and Reclassifying English Learners. Guidance on Missouri’s Entry and Exit Criteria. Retrieved from: <https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/curr-eld-entry-exit-criteria.pdf>

English language proficiency is a barrier to achievement, that student can be placed back into the LIEP and continue as if they never left the program. This includes taking the yearly ACCESS for ELs 2.0. Atlas will utilize DESE's Monitoring Form to document progress. This form will be kept in the student's permanent file.

## **Gifted & Talented Students**

At Atlas one of the five pillars of our Education Philosophy is that *We Hold High Expectations with a Growth Mindset*. We believe that it is imperative to hold high expectations for all students in order to have an excellent school where all students are flourishing. These high expectations extend to our gifted and talented students. At Atlas, students spend the majority of the day in targeted small group instruction or in a co-taught class with two educators. In the same way these structures support students who initially struggle, they are designed to meet the needs of students who show strengths in an area.

For example, each day during the Reading Foundations block, kindergarten through second grade students receive targeted phonics instruction. However, if students "tests out" of phonics then a group will be created to provide extension and enrichment opportunities. The same holds true during the Content Based Literacy block. During this time students receive the intervention they need based on what skill is holding them back: decoding, fluency, or comprehension. Unlike some schools that simply pull intervention groups made up of the students who struggle, at Atlas, we think it's important that interventions are normalized so that all students receive the targeted instruction they need and no student feels singled-out or less than. This also allows us to push our gifted and talented students to new levels and tailor instruction to meet their needs.

At the end of each day, students take part in the Integrated Studies block. This is a time where all students get to express their creativity and work on projects that interest them. During this time, teachers will be able to easily provide enrichment opportunities for Atlas' gifted and talented students.

### **Teacher Preparation During Daily Team Meetings**

Homeroom teachers at Atlas will take part in daily Team Meetings led by the Head of School. During this time, teachers take part in professional development such as "Intellectual Preparation" in order to internalize lesson plans and prepare for upcoming lessons. Teachers will use this time to plan differentiated instruction which is designed to meet the needs of all students. Teachers will also prepare extension activities for students who finish the regular assignment early and need more challenging tasks.

## A.7 - School-Specific Goals & Objectives

At Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) we believe that all children are capable of thriving academically, emotionally, and socially, and deserve a learning environment where they feel both physically and emotionally safe. We recognize that every student is unique, and understand that each child has specific strengths and areas for growth. Our mission is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with authentic, real-world learning experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond.

One of the five key pillars of our educational philosophy that is outlined in section A.1 - *Mission, Vision, Philosophy, & Goals*, is that *we believe in high expectations with a growth mindset*. At Atlas, we know that it is imperative that we hold high expectations for all students, families, teachers, and support staff in order to have an excellent school where all students flourish. This means that we set academic goals that are challenging, yet attainable, and support all of our students to master the Missouri Learning Standards. This alone is not enough. Our students must also have the social emotional skills, character traits, and 21st century skills such as collaboration, creativity, and critical thinking they need to thrive in our changing and diverse world. This expanded definition of student success ensures that our students are prepared for the future of work. As outlined in our Graduate Aims section, it is important that our students become:

- |                                  |                                      |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1. Creative & Critical Thinkers  | 4. Well-Rounded Individuals          |
| 2. Lifelong Learners             | 5. Collaborative Team Players        |
| 3. Culturally Competent Citizens | 6. Academically Exceptional Scholars |

To achieve these ambitious outcomes and ensure that students at Atlas are truly prepared to thrive, we must first set rigorous academic goals that are tied to the Missouri Learning Standards. Because we believe in an expanded definition of student success, we have also set goals connected to social-emotional learning and 21st century skills.

In order to accomplish our academic goals, Atlas must have a joyful school environment where all students feel both physically and emotionally safe and have a true sense of belonging. This is why we set goals that are linked to school culture such as student attendance, re-enrollment, diversity and inclusion, and family engagement.

Atlas Public Schools is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization incorporated and registered with the State of Missouri and upon approval and authorization by the Missouri State Board of Education, Atlas will act as a Local Educational Agency (LEA). As such, it's important that the organization set finance goals that help ensure the stability and longevity of the organization.

The chart below highlights Atlas’ rigorous goals and the remainder of the section addresses the assessment tool utilized as well as the rationale for each goal.

### Atlas Performance Goals

**Goal 1 - Missouri Assessment Program:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, at least 70% of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas will score Proficient or Advanced on the MAP Mathematics & English Language Arts Assessment.

In addition, the overall average score of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will score within 10 percentage points of the overall school average.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

#### MAP Target Proficiency Rates

Year	Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP <sup>85</sup>	Subgroup Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	At least 60%	At least 50%
Year 4: 2024-2025	At least 65%	At least 55%
Year 5: 2025-2026	At least 70%	At least 60%

**Goal 2 - MAP Performance Index:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, Atlas Public Schools will earn an MPI equivalent to the DESE Academic Achievement Status Target of “On Track” which currently is a score of 375 in both Mathematics and English Language Arts.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

<sup>85</sup> Target Proficiency Rates for students who have been in attendance at Atlas for three consecutive years.

### MAP Target MPI Scores

Year	MPI Benchmark Goal for ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	325
Year 4: 2024-2025	350
Year 5: 2025-2026	375

**Goal 3 - Reading Growth & Proficiency:** At least 80% of students at Atlas Public Schools who are enrolled for the full school year will read at, or above, grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

In addition, at least 80% of students at Atlas who are enrolled for the full school year and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will read at or above grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

**Goal 4 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Students will demonstrate growth in Emotional Intelligence competencies. 80% of students will meet or exceed their SEL goal which is determined by each individual student, their teachers, and their families.

**Goal 5 - Creative Problem-Solvers:** Students will demonstrate high levels of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills. 80% of students will score “accomplished” or “exemplary” on Atlas’ Problem-Solving rubric by the end of each school year.

**Goal 6 - Attendance:** At least 85% of students at Atlas will attend school at least 90% of the time.

**Goal 7 - Re-Enrollment:** By our third year of operation, 80% of students who are enrolled at Atlas on October 1st will be re-enrolled at Atlas on October 1st of the following school year, with the exception of the students whose families move out of the city of St. Louis.

**Goal 8 - Diversity & Inclusion:** As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas will have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status (30–70 percent low-income) and race/ethnicity (largest racial/ethnic group is no more than 70 percent).

**Goal 9 - Family Engagement:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Family Engagement,” or the degree to which families become involved with and interact with their child’s school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will score at or above the 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 10 - School Climate:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “School Climate,” or the perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 11 - Teacher Readiness:** 95% of teachers and staff members will complete the Panorama “Teacher and Staff Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Educating All Students,” or faculty perceptions of their readiness to address issues of diversity. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Goal 12 - Cash on Hand:** Atlas Public Schools will have 60 days of unrestricted cash on hand by the end of Year 3 with a yearly positive trend.

## **Academic Goals**

The following set of academic goals assumes that the current state accountability structure and system (MSIP-5) remain in place through the 2025-26 school year. We are aware that new state assessments may be adopted prior to the end of our first charter term, and we would recalibrate the school’s academic performance goals based on those new assessments. Atlas Public Schools will set interim grade level goals for each year and report the results to the Board. As state MAP testing begins in 3rd grade, Atlas will utilize formative and benchmark assessments to monitor progress towards MAP proficiency targets.

## **Aim: Thriving Students**

### **Objectives:**

1. Students will be highly skilled readers and writers of the English Language
2. Students will be strong in applying mathematical skills and reasoning
3. Students will have the Social-Emotional and 21st Century Skills needed to thrive

**Goal 1 - Missouri Assessment Program:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, at least 70% of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas will score Proficient or Advanced on the MAP Mathematics & English Language Arts Assessment.

In addition, the overall average score of students who have completed three consecutive years at Atlas and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will score within 10 percentage points of the overall school average.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

#### MAP Target Proficiency Rates

Year	Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP <sup>86</sup>	Subgroup Target Proficiency Rates in ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	At least 60%	At least 50%
Year 4: 2024-2025	At least 65%	At least 55%
Year 5: 2025-2026	At least 70%	At least 60%

**Assessment Tool:** Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Mathematics & Communication Arts

**Rationale:** Atlas Public Schools has set performance targets that are rigorous yet realistic given current performance in the state. On the 2018 Mathematics MAP test, the average proficiency rate for the State of Missouri for third graders was 46.9% while the St. Louis Public School District (SLPS) rate was 18.9%. In Communication Arts, the average proficiency rate for third graders in the State of Missouri was 48.6% while the rate in SLPS was 19.7%. The table below depicts this information along with the proficiency rates for the Clayton School District, one of the top performing districts in the state.

#### 2018 MAP Results

	3rd Grade ELA Proficiency Rate	3rd Grade Math Proficiency Rate
State of Missouri	48.6%	46.9%
St. Louis City	19.7%	18.9%
Clayton School District	73.7%	78.5%

<sup>86</sup> Target Proficiency Rates for students who have been in attendance at Atlas for three consecutive years.

Moving from state and district level data to individual school data, the chart below shows the 3rd grade proficiency rates on the 2018 MAP assessment for both the English Language Arts and Mathematics Assessments. The five schools represented in the chart were chosen for a variety of reasons, including the diversity of their student population, the similarity of their academic programming to Atlas, and their high levels of student proficiency rates.

**Mason Elementary** is one of the highest achieving elementary schools in the St. Louis Public School District. It has a diverse student body with 4.4% of students identifying as Asian, 41.7% Black, 16.6% Hispanic and 36.7% White. Moreover, 28.9% of students are English Language Learners and 21% of students qualify for special education services.

**MRH Elementary** in the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District focuses on inquiry based learning and incorporates place-based learning and investigations into their curriculum. MRH also has a diverse student body with 3% of students identifying as Asian, 20% Black, 4.6% Hispanic, 10.3% Multi-Race, and 61.8% White. In addition, 42.9% of the students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.

**North Side Community School** is a charter school in the city of St. Louis that focuses on educating the whole child. They believe in high expectations and that academic and character development go hand in hand. 99.4% of their students identify as Black and 100% of students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch

**City Garden Montessori** is a charter school in the Shaw Neighborhood of St. Louis. They are currently the only Diverse by Design charter school in St. Louis that has been recognized by the Diverse Charter School Commission. They have an Anti-bias & Anti-Racism (ABAR) commitment and specialize in Montessori learning.

**Captain Elementary** is one of three elementary schools in the Clayton School District, and is consistently one of the top performing schools in the state. Captain has a relatively diverse student body with 7.3% of students identifying as Asian, 15.4% Black, 3.0% Hispanic, 9.7% Multi-Race, and 64.1% White. However, Captain lacks diversity when it comes to socioeconomic status; only 11.8% of their students qualify for Free or Reduced Lunch.

## 2018 MAP Results

	3rd Grade ELA Proficiency Rate	3rd Grade Math Proficiency Rate
Mason Elementary in SLPS	56.9%	41.2%
Maplewood Richmond Heights (MRH) Elementary	60.6%	43.3%
North Side Community School	37.5%	42.5%
City Garden Montessori School	46.4%	46.4%
Captain Elementary	72.8%	72.1%

Based on the data above, the Atlas Founding Team feels that our first academic goal is realistic and attainable.

**Goal 2 - MAP Performance Index:** By the end of our fifth year of operation, Atlas Public Schools will earn an MPI equivalent to the DESE Academic Achievement Status Target of “On Track” which currently is a score of 375 in both Mathematics and English Language Arts.

The table below depicts the interim benchmark goals for which Atlas expects to be held accountable.

### MAP Target MPI Scores

Year	MPI Benchmark Goal for ELA & Math on MAP
Year 3: 2023-2024	325
Year 4: 2024-2025	350
Year 5: 2025-2026	375

**Assessment Tool:** Missouri Assessment Program (MAP) Mathematics & English Language Arts

**Rationale:** The targets identified by Atlas will meet the Missouri DESE benchmarks to be “On Track” within the first 5-year charter term and within the first three years of testing according to the

[Comprehensive Guide to MSIP5](#) (2018).<sup>87</sup> Below is a table that compares the MPI of the St. Louis Public School District and the Clayton School District along with two comparative schools, MRH Elementary and Mason Elementary in SLPS.

**2018  
MAP Performance Index**

	<b>District MPI English Language Arts</b>	<b>School MPI Mathematics</b>
St. Louis City	250	221
Clayton School District	404	402

**2018  
MAP Performance Index**

	<b>School MPI English Language Arts</b>	<b>School MPI Mathematics</b>
Mason Elementary in SLPS	361.6	322.7
Maplewood Richmond Heights (MRH) Elementary	374.7	299.3
North Side Community School	336.0	336.8
City Garden Montessori School	362.8	297.7
Captain Elementary	400.0	382.9

Based on the results of the schools listed above, the Atlas Founding Team feels that this academic goal is realistic and attainable. To ensure that we are working to accomplish our goal by our fifth year of operation, we have laid out the following yearly benchmarks.

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<sup>87</sup> For more information on the Comprehensive Guide to MSIP5, see:  
<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/MSIP-5-2018-Comprehensive-Guide.pdf>

**Benchmarks**

Year	MAP Target Proficiency Rates for ELA & Math
Year 3: 2023-2024	At least 325
Year 4: 2024-2025	At least 350
Year 5: 2025-2026	At least 375

**Goal 3 - Reading Growth & Proficiency:** At least 80% of students at Atlas Public Schools who are enrolled for the full school year will read at, or above, grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

In addition, at least 80% of students at Atlas who are enrolled for the full school year and are included in one or more of the following four subgroups: 1) students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, 2) Black, 3) Hispanic, and 4) English Learners, will read at or above grade level and/or make more than one year of academic growth by the end of the school year as measured by the Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System.

**Assessment Tool:** Fountas & Pinnell Benchmark Assessment System (BAS)

**Rationale:** A child’s reading skills are critical to their overall success in school as they will allow them to access the breadth of the curriculum and improve their communication and language skills. In addition, reading can be a fun and imaginative time for children, which opens doors to all kinds of new worlds for them. As such, Atlas Public Schools will assess and progress monitor students’ reading development from the beginning to ensure they are developing the necessary skills to access complex and rigorous curricula demands.

## Progress Monitoring by Instructional Text Reading Level

GRADE	MONTHS OF THE SCHOOL YEAR									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
<b>K</b>	–	A	B	B	C	C	C	D	D	D
<b>1</b>	D/E	E	F	F	G	H	H	I	J	J
<b>2</b>	J/K	K	K	K	L	L	L	M	M	M
<b>3</b>	M/N	N	N	N	O	O	O	P	P	P
<b>4</b>	P/Q	Q	Q	Q	R	R	R	S	S	S
<b>5</b>	S/T	T	T	T	U	U	U	V	V	V

**Goal 4 - Social Emotional Learning (SEL):** Students will demonstrate growth in Emotional Intelligence competencies. 80% of students will meet or exceed their SEL goal which is determined by each individual student, their teachers, and their families.

**Assessment Tool:** Panorama Social-Emotional Learning Survey

**Rationale:** The Panorama Social Emotional Learning Survey can be tailored to meet Atlas' needs and the questions can be modified based on the grade level of students taking the survey. The survey will be administered three times per year. The beginning of the year survey will be used to set individual student goals. The Mid-Year and End-of-Year surveys will be used to measure progress towards student goals.

**Goal 5 - Creative Problem-Solvers:** Students will demonstrate high levels of critical thinking, creativity and problem-solving skills. 80% of students will score "accomplished" or "exemplary" on Atlas' Problem-Solving rubric by the end of each school year.

**Assessment Tool:** Atlas' Problem-Solving Rubric

**Rationale:** 21st Century skills such as creativity, critical thinking, and problem solving are key to our students long term success. Atlas' Problem-Solving rubric will give teachers actionable data that they can use to support students. Students will understand their scores and know what they need to do in order to improve.

## **Aim: Joyful School Environment**

### **Objective:**

1. Students enjoy coming to school and families feel confident in their decision to send their children to Atlas
2. Student absence will not hamper their learning.
3. Student learning is strategically fostered from unit to unit and grade level to grade level. Consistent enrollment is critical to student success.

**Goal 6 - Attendance:** At least 85% of students at Atlas will attend school at least 90% of the time.

**Assessment Tool:** Daily attendance and subsequent reports to DESE using the Average Daily Attendance (ADA) calculation tracked by individual students.

**Rationale:** Atlas Public Schools' attendance goal is based on the fact that in 2018 the overall proportional attendance rate in the Saint Louis Public School District was 80.4%. The Atlas Founding Team believes that a proportional attendance goal of 85% is lofty yet obtainable. By tracking attendance on the individual student level we are able to easily identify students who are chronically absent and work with them and their families to help ensure regular attendance. We know that children who are chronically absent in preschool, kindergarten, and first grade are much less likely to read at grade level by the third grade. Students who cannot read at grade level by the end of third grade are four times more likely than proficient readers to drop out of high school.<sup>88</sup>

**Goal 7 - Re-Enrollment:** By our third year of operation, 80% of students who are enrolled at Atlas on October 1st will be re-enrolled at Atlas on October 1st of the following school year, with the exception of the students whose families move out of the city of St. Louis.

**Assessment Tool:** Student Enrollment Data

**Rationale:** Atlas Public Schools wants to create an environment where students and their families feel like they are a part of a strong and vibrant school culture that has high academic expectations while working to instill a love for learning in students. As an intentionally diverse school, it is important that members of our community, including students, families, and staff learn to work across lines of difference. Student retention data is a strong indicator of overall culture and is critical to our success as a school.

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<sup>88</sup> Chronic Absenteeism in the Nation's Schools. (n.d.; based on 2015-2016 Civil Rights Data Collection). *United States Department of Education*. Retrieved from <https://www2.ed.gov/datastory/chronicabsenteeism.html>. Accessed September 22, 2019.

[Citizens of the World](#)<sup>89</sup>, a diverse-by-design school in Kansas City, had roughly 75% student retention after its first year of operation and now consistently retains close to 90% of their students. Based on our conversations with the leadership team at Citizens of the World, the Founding Team at Atlas believes that 80% retention is a realistic goal.

**Goal 8 - Diversity & Inclusion:** As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas will have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status (30–70 percent low-income) and race/ethnicity (largest racial/ethnic group is no more than 70 percent).

**Assessment Tool:** Student Enrollment Data

**Rationale:** Social science research on racial representation in education has pointed to 70% as a possible threshold for creating a diverse learning environment<sup>90</sup>. Research shows that when a single group dominates more than 70% of the student body, students in the minority feel increased isolation and alienation, and cross-racial friendships are less likely to develop. Guided by this measure, The Century Foundation considers schools to be racially diverse if the largest racial or ethnic group in the school comprised no more than 70% of the student body, and, similarly, socioeconomically diverse if 30–70 percent of students were low-income (eligible for free or reduced-price lunch).

**Goal 9 - Family Engagement:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Family Engagement,” or the degree to which families become involved with and interact with their child’s school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will score at or above the 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Assessment Tool:** Panorama Family School Relationships Survey

**Rationale:** The Founding Team at Atlas believes that it is critically important that we hear from the vast majority of our families which is why we aim to have at least 95% of our families respond to the Family School Relationships Survey. We aim to have 80% or more of survey respondents have a favorable response in the area of Family Engagement. Since the Family School Relationship Survey is nationally normed, Atlas will be at or above the 80th percentile nationally in the Family Engagement domain of the survey.

**Goal 10 - School Climate:** 95% of students will have a family member complete the Panorama “Family School Relationships Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response”

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<sup>89</sup> For more information on Citizens of the World - Kansas City see: <https://www.cwckansascity.org/>

<sup>90</sup> Potter, H. and Quick, K. (2018). *Diverse-by-Design Charter Schools*. [online] The Century Foundation. Available at: <https://tcf.org/content/report/diverse-design-charter-schools/?agreed=1> [Accessed 23 Sep. 2019].

in the area of “School Climate,” or the perceptions of the overall social and learning climate of the school. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Assessment Tool:** Panorama Family School Relationships Survey

**Rationale:** Similar to our Family Engagement goal, our School Climate goal starts with our desire to hear from the vast majority of our families which is why we aim to have at least 95% of our families respond to the Family School Relationships Survey. We aim to have 80% or more of survey respondents have a favorable response in the area of School Climate. Since the Family School Relationship Survey is nationally normed, Atlas will be at or above the 80th percentile nationally in the School Climate domain of the survey.

**Goal 11 - Teacher Readiness:** 95% of teachers and staff members will complete the Panorama “Teacher and Staff Survey” and 80% of survey respondents will have a “favorable response” in the area of “Educating All Students,” or faculty perceptions of their readiness to address issues of diversity. In addition, by the end of our third year of operation, Atlas will rank at or above 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

**Assessment Tool:** Panorama Teacher and Staff Survey

**Rationale:** Two key components of our school model is that we are diverse-by-design, meaning we are intentional about our student and staff diversity, and that we invest in our educators. We want our teachers to have the resources, time to adequately prepare, and the professional development needed for them to be successful. At Atlas, we also believe that all students can learn at high levels and that it’s our duty to provide an equitable education for all our students. This is why it is critically important that teachers at Atlas feel confident in their readiness to address issues of diversity. This is why we set a goal of at least 80% of our teachers will have a favorable response in the area of Educating All Students on the Panorama Teacher and Staff Survey. In addition, we set a goal for us to rank at or above the 80th percentile nationally in this domain.

## **Aim: Financial Solvency**

**Objective:** Have sufficient financial resources to ensure stable educational programming and support the school’s educational mission.

**Goal 12 - Cash on Hand:** Atlas Public Schools will have 60 days of unrestricted cash on hand by the end of Year 3 with a yearly positive trend.

**Assessment Tool:** Annual Secretary of the Board Report

**Rationale:** The amount of cash on hand indicates how many days a school can pay its expenses without another inflow of cash. Best practice from the National Resource Center on Charter School Finance & Governance (NACSA) recommends that schools have 30-60 days of unrestricted cash on hand<sup>91</sup>. This is particularly important given the cyclical nature of reimbursements and fund restrictions.

Unrestricted days cash on hand (unrestricted cash divided by (total expenses / 365))

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<sup>91</sup> Resource Center on Charter School Finance & Governance. Assessing Fiscal Health: A Financial Benchmarking Tool for Charter Schools. Retrieved From:  
[https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/sites/default/files/files/field\\_publication\\_attachment/TFPFiscalHealthTool\\_0.pdf](https://charterschoolcenter.ed.gov/sites/default/files/files/field_publication_attachment/TFPFiscalHealthTool_0.pdf)

## A.8 - School Climate & Culture

### Atlas' Climate: Spirit, Ethos, & Norms

At Atlas we believe in equity and our educational model is designed to set each student up for success in middle school, high school, and beyond. When students leave Atlas we aim for them to be academically exceptional, and have built a school model around high expectations, rigor, and multiple layers of support to ensure that our students are set up for success from an academic standpoint. However, we also aim to develop students who are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, and collaborative team players. We believe that educators must explicitly teach social-emotional and 21st century skills to our students and give them opportunities to practice these skills. We also know the value that educators play in our students' trajectory, and believe that educators need to continually develop so they can better support our students. Most importantly, we feel that learning should be fun, and we seek to instill a true love of learning in each of our students that will last well beyond their elementary school experience.

These beliefs led us to [Conscious Discipline](#),<sup>92</sup> an evidence-based, trauma-informed approach to student discipline, behavior management, and climate and culture setting. Conscious Discipline provides an array of behavior management strategies and classroom structures that teachers will utilize to turn everyday situations into learning opportunities. The Conscious Discipline approach is upheld throughout every element of our school design, and manifests in our work with students, families, educators, and all stakeholders.

Conscious Discipline encourages schools to *"create a school family"* as a way to systematically build a positive school climate that is inclusive, compassionate, and bully-free. Historically, we have unconsciously used the metaphor of a factory when creating our classrooms and schools. The goal of a factory is to create standardized products through a rewards and punishment paradigm. Research and experience prove that we need a new metaphor if we wish to build successful and safe educational institutions. The School Family, built on a healthy family model, is this new metaphor. The goal of a healthy family is the optimal development of all members. At Atlas, our school family will be created through routines, rituals and structures which will work together to foster a positive school culture that is integral to our students' academic success. The School Family builds connections between families and schools, teachers and teachers, teachers and students, and students and students to ensure optimal development of all.<sup>93</sup> Atlas' School Family shares five core values: joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship.

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<sup>92</sup> For more information on Conscious Discipline, see: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/>

<sup>93</sup> <https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/school-family/>

## Atlas Core Values

**Joy:** We love coming to school. We enthusiastically celebrate our success and each other.

**Equity:** We celebrate working with others across lines of difference. We challenge our own assumptions, and seek to make the world more just.

**Integrity:** We do the right thing, even when nobody's watching. We are honest, keep our commitments, and take responsibility for our actions.

**Excellence:** We have a growth mindset and learn from our mistakes to grow stronger. We focus on achieving our goals, and when we reach them, we raise the bar even higher.

**Stewardship:** We are change-makers. We are empowered to be active citizens and work to make a difference in our community.

All members of the Atlas School Family are necessary, loved and supported - including students, families, staff, faculty, leaders, community partners, vendors and board members. Likewise, all members of our School Family are held accountable to embodying our common values and caring appropriately for one another.

As a result of our shared values and mutual care, every member of our community - including students, families, staff, faculty, leaders, community partners, vendors and board members continually grows and develops. Atlas is a community of *creative and critical thinkers* who think outside of the box. We are *lifelong learners* who have developed a true passion for learning. We are *culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals* and *collaborative team players* with interests and passions both inside and outside of the classroom. Finally, we are *academically exceptional scholars* because of our access to unique experiences and opportunities. These characteristics define Atlas' climate of learning and also comprise our Graduate Profile. For more on these characteristics of our school climate, see *A.1 - Mission, Vision, Philosophy, & Goals*.

### **Atlas' Culture: Expectations, Collective, & Perception**

Atlas' school culture is characterized by high expectations with a growth mindset. This applies for all members of our School Family, including students, families, staff, faculty, leaders, community partners, vendors and board members.

Our school embodies a mix of backgrounds, instructional approaches and people. As this section will outline in greater detail, we prioritize equity and have systems and people in place to set all students up for success academically, emotionally, and socially. At Atlas, we believe that all children are capable of thriving, and deserve a learning environment where they feel both physically and emotionally safe. Our unique year-round model allows us to support children throughout the year, including traditional summer months when other schools close their doors. Our approach to student discipline promotes a safe and orderly learning environment, and we rely on legally sound policies for student discipline, suspension, dismissal and expulsion. As a School Family, Atlas works together to create a strong learning environment to ensure that all of our students are supported and ready to learn. The collective perception of Atlas Public Schools is that we are a diverse, inclusive and joyful learning community.

Atlas explicitly teaches social-emotional skills during morning Community Circle, and uses the Conscious Discipline® approach to promote our school climate and culture with students, board members, faculty, staff, parents, community and vendors. We are intentional about our community's interpersonal relations and social interactions, and we organize our school processes and structures in order to develop and maintain our school climate and culture.

### **Student Behavior Philosophy**

At Atlas, behavior is thought of in the same way as academics—it must be taught. Effective behavior instruction, like effective academic instruction, is modeled, practiced, and reinforced. Teachers work with students to visualize how an activity should look and model the desired behavior. Students then practice the model, and are provided with meaningful, positive, corrective feedback. The Atlas approach to student behavior will be overwhelmingly positive. Research finds that positive recognition of good behavior is more likely to fundamentally improve student behavior.<sup>94</sup> Atlas teachers work to recognize all students for their accomplishments, even if they are small. Both achievements of high standards and improvement are celebrated with students and parents. Parents regularly receive positive phone calls, as well as texts and notes home from teachers. Our high expectations will be crystal clear to our students, and poor behavior choices will be addressed quickly and effectively. We will establish a positive, caring, warm-demanding atmosphere where students feel safe and successful.

We understand that each student has specific strengths and areas for growth. At the same time, we have high expectations for student behavior and do not tolerate under any circumstances any behavior that is dangerous, criminal, or destructive to the school's climate and culture. As a school committed to inclusion, diversity, and equity, racist or bigoted behavior will not be tolerated by any

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<sup>94</sup> Law, B. M., Siu, A. M., & Shek, D. T. (2012). Recognition for positive behavior as a critical youth development construct: conceptual bases and implications on youth service development. *TheScientificWorldJournal*, 2012, 809578. doi:10.1100/2012/809578

stakeholder under any circumstances. Any behavior that is contrary to Atlas' core values of joy, equity, curiosity, integrity, community, and achievement will be taken as a learning opportunity for that individual and for the collective school community. When necessary, systems and structures will be redesigned to meet each person's needs so that all children are ready to learn and feel supported and valued by their Atlas School Family.

Atlas does not believe in suspension as a reliable tool for addressing student behavior because it removes children from their school community and often isolates children from support and resources they need from school. To that end, Atlas will use suspension and expulsion as a last resort and will rely primarily on proactive strategies that ensure that children make choices consistent with the values of the Atlas School Family. In the event that a child does not make a choice that is consistent with Atlas School Family values, Atlas will engage in restorative discipline practices with that child and any other affected party. Under no circumstances does Atlas Public Schools condone shame, ridicule, or intimidation as a response to a child's or other school community member's transgression of our School Family values.

Atlas faculty will track data on student behavior to help our team become proactive over time and redesign systems and routines to set students up for success. When necessary, Atlas will create teacher- and/or parent-led problem solving teams to brainstorm solutions to persistent student behavioral challenges or other challenges in the Atlas School Family. Atlas will have a School Code of Conduct Handbook for staff and families available by spring of 2021.

### **Community Circle**

The Founding Team believes that in attending to the whole child, social-emotional learning (SEL) should be explicitly taught, as well as embedded throughout the school day. It is the job of all staff at Atlas to continually model and practice SEL strategies for students through all lessons and activities. Durlack and Weissberg conducted a meta-analysis of 379 SEL programs and concluded that focusing on SEL in schools produced a wide variety of positive effects for students. Such effects include; students attended school at higher rates, students performed better in their classes and on assessments, and students were less likely to be suspended or expelled.<sup>95</sup> It is for these reasons that every classroom at Atlas will begin their day with a Community Circle. See *A.4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule* for a detailed daily schedule. Here, students and teachers focus on specific skills such as building healthy relationships, managing emotions, showing empathy and understanding, setting and working towards goals, engaging in conversations about diversity and inclusiveness, and making responsible decisions. By working towards developing skills such as these, the school culture and climate at Atlas will be even stronger by giving students a toolkit to handle emotions and behaviors in a proactive way. See *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction* to see how Atlas plans to use the CASEL

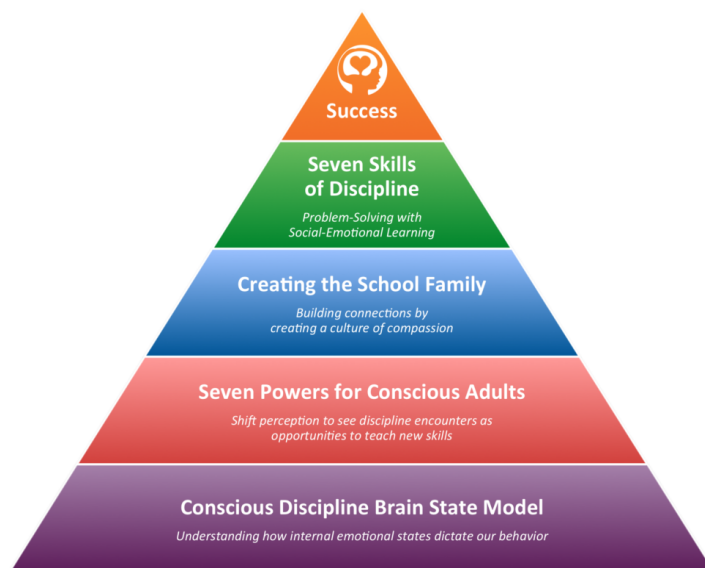
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<sup>95</sup> Durlack, J., Weissber, R., Dymnicki, A., R., & Schellinger, K. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social-Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development*, 405-432.

framework as well as lesson plans from UsPlus during Community Circle in addition to Conscious Discipline® during this time.

### Conscious Discipline®

Atlas uses the Conscious Discipline® approach to develop and sustain a safe and orderly climate. This approach supports fulfillment of our educational goals to educate the whole child for success in middle school, high school and beyond. Conscious Discipline® is a comprehensive classroom management program and a social-emotional curriculum. It is based on current brain research, and contains a set of trauma informed, evidence-based and research-backed Social Emotional Learning (SEL) best practices that draws



on research about learning, teaching, mental health, human development and neuroscience to ensure a safe and orderly learning environment. Dr. Bailey, founder of Conscious Discipline, describes the approach as an “educational process of helping adults and children become aware of their goals, their actions and the consequences of their choices.”<sup>96</sup> The graphic on the left shows the basic tenets of Conscious Discipline. At the foundation is a science-based, and trauma-informed, brain state model, which demonstrates that internal emotional states dictate our behavior. Conscious Discipline draws on this brain state model to shift adults’ perspectives, and this empowers Atlas to create a school-wide culture of compassion. Atlas’ school-wide climate and culture comes together with a focus on problem-solving with social-emotional learning. All members of our School Family are supported and held accountable for collective and individual achievement through ongoing routines, conversations, trainings and other strategies from the Conscious Discipline approach.

As featured on [Conscious Discipline’s informational site](#),<sup>97</sup> a [recent report by the Harvard Graduate School of Education](#) funded by the Wallace Foundation notes that “Conscious Discipline provides an array of behavior management strategies and classroom structures that teachers can use to turn

<sup>96</sup> Bailey, Becky A. *The Theoretical and Scientific Basis of Conscious Discipline®*. Page 1. ConsciousDiscipline.com © 2017 Loving Guidance, Inc. Webpage URL: <https://consciousdiscipline.s3.amazonaws.com/CD-Methodology/Theoretical-and-Scientific-Basis-of-Conscious-Disciplin e.pdf>. Accessed 8/26/19.

<sup>97</sup> For more information on Conscious Discipline, see: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/conscious-discipline-excel-in-analysis-of-top-25-social-emotional-learning-programs/>

everyday situations into learning opportunities.” The Harvard report compares Conscious Discipline to 24 other SEL programs and concludes:

Conscious Discipline offers the second greatest focus on emotional processes.

Conscious Discipline is one of only three programs reviewed to offer extensive climate supports.

Conscious Discipline is one of six programs to offer professional development opportunities that focus explicitly on building *adult* social-emotional competence, and one of only two programs to offer tools for assessing positive changes in adult behaviors or skills.<sup>98</sup>

Other studies find that Conscious Discipline practices are correlated with reductions in student aggression, hyperactivity and conduct problems<sup>99</sup> as well as correlated with increased social-emotional learning skills, school climate, school readiness and pro-social behavior.<sup>100</sup> These outcomes are consistent with Atlas’ first priority, which is to keep students safe at school, and aligns with our mission to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so all students will thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. Conscious Discipline helps children develop key academic and social-emotional skills such as time management, emotional regulation and oral communication. These skills developed through Conscious Discipline will empower our students to thrive in middle school, high school and beyond.

Furthermore, the Conscious Discipline approach reflects Atlas’ education philosophy that all children are capable of thriving academically, emotionally, and socially, and deserve a learning environment where they feel both physically and emotionally safe. Atlas recognizes that every student is unique, and understands that each person has strengths and areas for growth. Conscious Discipline is an approach that empowers our School Family to differentiate social-emotional learning for each member of our community, including students, staff, and faculty members. It also lays the foundation of strong shared community norms and provides a framework to proactively address any bullying, harassment, violence, and/or other dangerous and criminal behaviors that may arise among Atlas’ community members. Atlas takes the well-being of all stakeholders, especially our students, extremely seriously. Student safety is our school’s first priority, and we will address all school-related situations in accordance with Missouri Safe Schools Act [RSMo 160.261](#). Currently the

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<sup>98</sup> “Conscious Discipline Excels in Harvard Analysis of Top 25 SEL Programs.” Conscious Discipline online blog. Published July 5, 2017 by Conscious Discipline. Webpage URL: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/conscious-discipline-excels-in-analysis-of-top-25-social-emotional-learning-programs/>. Accessed 8/26/19.

<sup>99</sup> Jones, Stephanie, Katharine Brush, Rebecca Bailey, Gretchen Brion-Meisels, Joseph McIntyre, Jennifer Kahn, Bryan Nelson, and Laura Stickle. *NAVIGATING SEL FROM THE INSIDE OUT: LOOKING INSIDE & ACROSS 25 LEADING SEL PROGRAMS: A PRACTICAL RESOURCE FOR SCHOOLS AND OST PROVIDERS (ELEMENTARY SCHOOL FOCUS)*. Harvard Graduate School of Education. MARCH 2017.

<sup>100</sup> Rain, J. S. (2014). Loving Guidance, Inc. Final report: Conscious Discipline Research Study.

Maplewood-Richmond Heights School District and City Garden Montessori use Conscious Discipline in the St. Louis area.

## Stakeholder Engagement

As mentioned previously, all members of the Atlas School Family are expected to embody our common values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship. Atlas will use a variety of strategies to support our stakeholders in upholding our school's core values. With the support of The Opportunity Trust, Atlas Public Schools is partnering with [Panorama Education](#)<sup>101</sup> to collect reliable feedback from students, families, teachers and staff about school climate and culture, engagement, and communication two times a year. These surveys will be monitored by the Leadership Team to adjust approaches to school culture if needed.

**Students:** Children will feel safe at school, and will be expected to contribute to the well-being of the Atlas community by upholding our shared values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship. Students will be supported academically, socially and emotionally through regular interventions, flexible academic groupings, counseling services, family services, after school and before school care, and with other trauma-informed, culturally competent strategies that ensure that all children are set up for success and are able to uphold our shared values.

**Faculty:** As Conscious Discipline explains, the teacher's main job is to keep his or her students safe, and the "biggest threat to a child's sense of safety is an out-of-control adult."<sup>102</sup> Teachers and leaders will engage in regular professional development to build their capacity to create a sense of safety at school and to develop the traits and skills for effective leadership. Faculty members will have the time and energy to continue to develop their professional skills due to Atlas' unique daily and year-round schedules that promote collaboration and reasonable work-life balance for faculty members.

**Staff:** Staff at Atlas play a key role in developing and maintaining the climate and culture of our school. Staff members will receive support and recognition for developing skills and traits for effective collaboration and stewardship of Atlas' facilities, students, families, and all other stakeholders. Staff members will be treated with respect and compassion by all members of the Atlas community.

**Parents and Families:** Atlas believes that student success is a shared responsibility that requires a strong partnership between families and the school. Throughout the time a student attends Atlas

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<sup>101</sup> For more information on Panorama Education, see: <https://www.panoramaed.com/>

<sup>102</sup> Seven Powers for Conscious Adults. Conscious Discipline online resource. Webpage URL: <https://consciousdiscipline.com/methodology/seven-powers/>. Accessed August 26, 2019.

Public Schools, we will work to help families stay committed to actively supporting student learning and, to the extent possible, the larger community. Atlas will provide opportunities such as Family Council, parent surveys, and a Parent Working Group for parents and families to become an active part of the Atlas School Family and help uphold our values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship.

**Community Partners:** Atlas relies on our community partners to help us support our students and families. Our community partners will work with Atlas faculty to develop clear communication pathways with students and families and consistent behavioral expectations for students engaged in place-based learning and enrichment activities outside of school hours. Community partners will be actively engaged in conversation around Conscious Discipline practices, especially the adult skills and traits necessary for creating a culture of compassion and student success. Community partners will be explicitly coached by Atlas faculty to help uphold our school values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship.

**Board Members:** Atlas' board members play a vital role in determining the direction and success of our school community and in creating and sustaining a positive school culture. As valued members of our School Family, Atlas board members make decisions that help uphold our values of joy, equity, integrity, excellence and stewardship. Board members will work with other stakeholders, especially Atlas leaders and faculty, to determine the best direction for the school and to embody the values of our school. Some strategies that Atlas may use to engage board members in Conscious Discipline practices include routines during regular board meetings, board member trainings, and annual board retreats.

**Vendors:** Vendors contribute to Atlas' climate and culture and will receive support and recognition for developing skills and traits for effective collaboration with Atlas faculty, leaders, and all other stakeholders. Vendors will be treated with respect and compassion by all members of the Atlas community.

### **Other Wraparound Services and Social and Emotional Supports for Students**

We will partner with community organizations that support child and family welfare in the St. Louis area, including organizations like the Little Bit Foundation, Kingdom House, A Sound Mind Counseling, Foundations for Change, and JFCS Safe Surf. In addition to partnering with community organizations to support our students and families outside of school, Atlas will also have a school social worker on staff starting in Year 1. See *B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement & Training* for our staffing model. Students will be supported academically, socially and emotionally through regular interventions, flexible academic groupings, social work services, family services, after school and before school care, and with other trauma-informed, culturally competent strategies that ensure that all children are set up for success and are able to uphold our shared values.

### **Discipline of Students with Special Needs**

Children with special needs, including children exposed to trauma and racism, will receive the supports they need to thrive in school academically, emotionally and socially. Under no circumstances will a child with special needs be made to feel excluded or de-valued by the Atlas School Family, and they will be held to similar high standards as all other students for behavioral expectations and code of conduct.

In addition to the discipline procedures applicable to all students, the following procedures are applicable to students with disabilities. Atlas shall maintain written records of all suspensions and expulsions of students with a disability including the name of the student, a description of the behavior engaged in, the disciplinary action taken, and a record of the number of days a student has been suspended or removed for disciplinary reasons. Students for whom the Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) includes a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP) will be disciplined in accordance with the BIP. If the BIP appears not to be effective or if there is a concern for the health and safety of the student or others if the BIP is followed with respect to the infraction, the matter will be immediately referred to the SPED Director for consideration of a change in the guidelines.

### **Disciplinary Legal Compliance**

Atlas complies with all state and federal statutes pertaining to school safety, including but not limited to [RSMO 160.261](#), the Missouri Safe Schools Act.

**Employees:** Employees receive annual instructions related to Atlas' discipline policy and any interpretations necessary to implement policy provisions in the course of their duties. These include approved methods of dealing with acts of school violence, disciplining students with disabilities, and instruction in the necessity and requirements for confidentiality. Staff members also get yearly instructions regarding mandated reporting of suspected child abuse. Atlas does not employ teachers with revoked or suspended teaching licenses.

**Suspension & Expulsion:** Suspension decisions are made by the Head of School and expulsion decisions are made by the Executive Director and approved by the Board. These decisions exclusively depend on whether the student poses a threat to the safety of any child or school employee and whether such student's unsupervised presence within one thousand feet of the school is disruptive to the educational process or undermines the effectiveness of the school's disciplinary policy. In advance of such hearings, Atlas notifies families, the student, and when applicable, the appropriate division of the juvenile or family court, pursuant to [RSMO 167.161](#). Suspensions and expulsions are a last resort after Atlas has exhausted its in-school discipline system, as required by [RSMo 167.164](#). Policies for specific in-school disciplinary measures will be developed and approved by the sponsor prior to opening.

**Mandatory Reporting:** All faculty report suspected truancy, child abuse, or educational neglect to the [Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline](#)<sup>103</sup> of the Missouri Department of Social Services per [RSMo 210.115](#). Teachers and staff can call in seven days a week, 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. As mandated reporters, Atlas faculty can make an online report for non-emergencies. If it is an emergency or life-threatening situation, teachers will call 911 immediately and then report it directly to the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline.

**Corporal Punishment:** Atlas does not permit corporal punishment or spanking. Corporal punishment is any form of physical punishment administered by an adult to the body of a child for the purpose of discipline, reformation, or to deter attitudes or behaviors deemed unacceptable.

**Confinement & Restraint:** Atlas teachers and staff do not seclude or confine students, as defined by DESE Rule 160-5-1-.35, except in an emergency situation while awaiting law enforcement or Emergency Medical Services (EMS). Seclusion and confinement mean leaving students unattended in a locked space. Likewise, Atlas faculty only physically restrains students in emergency situations where they pose immediate danger to themselves or others, and they do not respond to behavioral interventions, verbal directives, and other de-escalation techniques. This type of restraint does not include chemical, mechanical, or prone restraint (as defined by DESE Rule 160-5-1-.35), all of which are prohibited at Atlas. Faculty terminate physical restraint if a student no longer poses a threat, cannot be restrained safely, or appears in severe distress. Guardians are notified of any physical restraint within one school day. Guardians are notified immediately if emergency medical or law enforcement personnel are called.

**Threats of Violence:** Employees who receive information concerning threats of violence (suicidal and/or homicidal) will report the information to the Head of Schools and Social Worker. The student who made the threat will never be left unattended. The Head of School will investigate and if necessary, the Social Worker or other trained professional, will administer either a suicidal or homicidal risk assessment, determine next steps, and report the findings to the Head of School. The Head of Schools will respond according to policy based on the risk level identified through the risk assessment. If law enforcement or EMS are asked to respond, families will immediately be notified.

**Notification:** Atlas will notify parties of criminal conduct required by [RSMo 168.071](#) and will report all crimes that occur on school grounds to law enforcement, including those outlined in [RSMo 160.261](#).

- First or second-degree murder under RSMo 565.020, .021.
- Voluntary or involuntary manslaughter in the first or second degree under RSMo 565.023, .024, .027.

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<sup>103</sup> For more information on the Child Abuse and Neglect Hotline, see: <https://dss.mo.gov/cd/keeping-kids-safe/can.htm>

- Kidnapping in the first or second degree under RSMo 565.110,.120 RSMo.
- First-, second- or third-degree assault under RSMo 565.050, .052, .070.
- Sexual assault or deviate sexual assault under RSMo 566.040, .070.
- Forcible rape or sodomy under RSMo 566.030, .060.
- Burglary in the first or second degree under RSMo 569.160, .170.
- Robbery in the first degree under RSMo 570.023.
- Manufacture of a controlled substance under section 579.055
- Delivery of a controlled substance under section 579.020
- Possession of a weapon under chapter 571.
- Arson in the first degree under RSMo 569.040.
- Property damage in the first degree under RSMo 569.100.
- Child molestation in the first, second, or third degree pursuant to RSMo 566.067, .68, .69
- Sexual misconduct involving a child pursuant to RSMo 566.083.
- Sexual abuse pursuant to RSMo 566.100.
- Harassment in the first degree under RSMo 565.090.
- Stalking in the first degree under RSMo 565.225.

**Records:** The Head of School - Operations Lead ensures records are maintained for any act of school violence or violent behavior; any offense that occurs on school property, on school transportation, or at a school activity which is reported to law enforcement officials, and any offense which results in an out-of-school suspension for more than ten school days.

## B.1 - Missouri Non-Profit

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated and registered with the State of Missouri (See *Appendix B.1.1*). Atlas was established to provide students a nonsectarian education, and, as such, Atlas will maintain nonsectarian programs, admission policies, employment practices, and other operations. Atlas' articles of incorporation and bylaws are consistent with [RSMo Chapter 355](#), Missouri Nonprofit Corporation Act, and can be found in *Appendix B.1.2 & B.1.3*. Atlas has received tax-exempt status from the Internal Revenue Service. See documentation in *Appendix B.1.4*.

Atlas Public Schools is applying for sponsorship from the Missouri Charter Public Schools Commission (MCPSC). Atlas' MCPSC application is available online at [www.atlaspublic.org](http://www.atlaspublic.org) and was submitted to the Superintendent of St. Louis Public Schools (See *Appendix B.1.5*). Upon approval from the Missouri State Board of Education, the MCPSC will be the entity that holds the charter and is responsible for the governance of the school and ensuring the terms of the legal charter agreement and performance contract are met.

Atlas will ensure financial sustainability in accordance with Missouri statute and norms, along with developing and executing the schools' strategic priorities and policies. Atlas expects MCPSC to provide public oversight and accountability per [RSMo 161.092](#) and [RSMo 160.400-160.425](#). Atlas also expects MCPSC to adhere to roles and responsibilities outlined as best practices by the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' (NACSA) [Quality Standards](#).<sup>104</sup> The contract between Atlas Public Schools and MCPSC will be a five year-term, beginning upon approval of this application by the Missouri State Board of Education. With approval from its sponsor, The Atlas Board may vote to amend its charter contract. MCPSC will conduct annual evaluations of Atlas to ensure they are conducting themselves in accordance with performance goals and other measures established in the charter performance contract and this application.

Upon approval and authorization by the Missouri State Board of Education, Atlas will act as a Local Education Agency (LEA). As a charter network, Atlas will be exempt from laws and rules regulating other Missouri public school districts except those articulated in [RSMo 160.400-420](#). Despite those exemptions, Atlas will still be subject to regulations regarding public governmental bodies pursuant to [RSMo 610.010-30](#). These include giving adequate public notice, providing public accessibility, recording minutes and voting records, making minutes available to the public, allowing attendees to record meetings, keeping records of closed meetings, and following rules regarding electronic transmission of messages relating to public business.

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<sup>104</sup> For more information on the National Association of Charter School Authorizers' Quality Standards, see: <https://www.qualitycharters.org/for-authorizers/principles-and-standards/>

Members of the Atlas Public Schools' Board of Directors (the Board) will operate in alignment with the mission and vision of our organization (outlined in *A.1 - Mission, Vision, Philosophy, & Goals*) as they work to fulfill the obligations and responsibilities described below. The Board comprises experts in various areas pertaining to charter network management. Board members have committed a minimum of 8 hours per month for oversight responsibilities, public engagement, monthly board meetings and, as necessary, ad hoc committee meetings. Board members understand their role and responsibilities as decision-making public servants and stewards of public funds and will adopt exemplar governance policies from the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA). In addition, Board members shall annually report conflicts of interest, and must sign a conflict of interest statement (see *Appendix B.1.6*) obligated by [RSMo 105.450](#) and the Missouri Ethics Commission.

Since the Atlas Board is subject to the same liability for acts in office as if they were a duly elected school board or any other public school district in the state, the Board will secure approved liability insurance (see *Appendix B.1.7*).

The Board recognizes the value of community involvement and has sought input from students, families, community members, local business owners and non-profit leaders in the governance process as outlined in *B.6 - Family & Community Involvement*. The Board and Founding Team will continue to seek input from students, families, and the broader community on an ongoing basis. In order to be adequately prepared to govern the organizations, board members will attend ongoing training led by the MCPSA and/or Education Board Partners to stay informed of ethical and legal obligations and learn best practices. Board members are elected to three-year terms.

As a condition of service, all Atlas board members must complete and pass a St. Louis City/County criminal background check and a family-care safety check, as required by RSMo [160.400.14](#). Atlas' founding board members have begun this process (see documentation in *Appendix B.1.8*). Nominees convicted of a felony or Class A misdemeanor are automatically disqualified; Class B/C misdemeanors and infractions trigger a Board review and are evaluated case by case. Background checks are publicly available and furnished upon request.

As public trustees, board members are responsible for Atlas' academic, operational, and financial performance. The Board adheres to the [Sunshine Law](#)<sup>105</sup> and state ethics requirements when conducting Board and committee meetings. Therefore, Atlas' Charter, board meeting minutes, attendance rosters, and most recent annual report card will be maintained and kept for the purpose of public record (with closed meetings and records allowed in limited circumstances) in accordance with [RSMo 160.522](#).

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<sup>105</sup> For more information on the Sunshine Law, see: <http://revisor.mo.gov/main/OneChapter.aspx?chapter=610>

As part of its fiduciary oversight, the Board will ensure school officials submit to the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education all data and reports as required by law and/or by regulations of the Missouri State Board of Education. The Annual Report will be completed and submitted in accordance with department regulations; it will also be available to all patrons of Atlas and to each member of the General Assembly representing a legislative LEA that contains a portion of the attendance area of the school.

## **Board Responsibilities**

While day-to-day management of Atlas will be delegated to the school's administrative team, the Board maintains authority over, and accountability for, financial, organizational, and academic health.

The Board is further responsible for:

### **Planning & Advising**

- In conjunction with the Executive Director, the Board will aid in the development of the strategic plan that guides the schools operations;
- The Board will ensure that Atlas has strong, clear, measurable annual goals and establish a system for monitoring progress toward those goals;
- The Board will counsel and advise the Executive Director on matters related to the sustainability and success of Atlas; and
- The Board will monitor and support student recruitment efforts to ensure the school is fully enrolled.

### **Evaluation & Progress Monitoring**

- The Board will monitor the school's performance and progress toward annual academic goals through site visits and monthly reports from the Executive Director;
- The Board will ensure effective school leader evaluation processes along with the evaluation (and if/when necessary termination) of the Executive Director; and
- The Board will evaluate its own effectiveness each year through a board self-assessment process, setting goals for improvement, and monitoring progress towards those goals.

### **Compliance**

- The Board will develop and execute academic and organizational policies according to the organization's mission;
- The Board will ensure that Atlas abides by its charter, governing documents, and relevant federal, state or local laws and regulations; and
- The Board will conduct relevant work with the state charter sponsor.

### **Finance**

- The Board will provide appropriate oversight of all financial aspects of Atlas, including budget development, approval, monitoring, and fiscal controls;
- The Board will ensure that audits of the schools' finances are conducted as required by law; and
- The Board will publish annual financial reports aligned with Missouri law and requirements.

### **Hearings**

- The Board will hear grievances filed by parents in accordance to Atlas' Formal Complaint Procedure. For more information see *B.6 - Family, Community, Higher Education, & Employee Involvement*;
- The Board will hear complaints filed pursuant to relevant charter school regulations; and
- The Board will hear appeals by parents on matters of student discipline - including student expulsions.

### **Fundraising**

- The Board, in conjunction with the Executive Director, will work to develop and implement Atlas' fundraising plan;
- The Board will provide leadership, financial support, and connection to donors and potential donors; and
- The Board, in conjunction with the Executive Director, will work to pursue Atlas' fundraising goals in support of the organization.

## **B.2 - Governing Board Composition**

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) will be governed by a non-profit Board of Directors (the Board) in accordance with its adopted corporate bylaws (see *Appendix B.1.3*), which shall be consistent with the terms of this charter. The Board shall consist of at least three (3) community members with a broad range of backgrounds and areas of expertise. Atlas seeks board members who have experience in one or more of the following areas: education, government, law, business, finance/accounting, fundraising, facilities, and public relations, but shall not prohibit interested candidates from serving on the Board if otherwise qualified.

Atlas currently has six board members who have varying expertise, and are able to offer advice, direction and guidance to the school's leadership and representative bodies. Board experience includes a range of roles in traditional public and charter schools, urban private schools, law, large nonprofits, private business, and consulting. With a balance of expertise in education, finance and operations, the Board will ensure the initial launch of Atlas sets a precedent of high academic achievement as well as strong organizational practices. The Board has the capacity to oversee the successful development and implementation of the education program, the responsibility to manage public funds, and the capacity to oversee and be responsible for the school's compliance with its legal obligations.

All current Board members live in St. Louis and are committed to Atlas' mission, vision, and values. Each board member understands the need for high quality public elementary schools and believes that all students have the right to a quality education. Board members consistently engage with the community and have worked to gain a better understanding of their needs. Each board member is dedicated to ensuring that Atlas provides a world class education for their students and ensures graduates are creative and critical thinkers, lifelong learners, culturally competent citizens, well-rounded individuals, collaborative team players, and academically exceptional scholars.

Atlas is a member of the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) and Board members participate in their trainings for continual board development. The majority of our board has prior experience serving on nonprofit boards, bringing a level of expertise to the role. Board members participated in a training on board obligations and performance management, and have a thorough understanding of their governing role, the importance and relevance of the charter agreement and performance contract, and ultimate responsibility for the school.

## Board of Directors

Board Member's resumes can be found in *Appendix B.2.1*. In addition, their background checks, family care safety registration are found in *Appendix B.1.8*, and the Survey of Prospective Charter School Board Members and Conflict of Interest Disclosures are in *Appendix B.1.7*.

The chart below highlights each Board Members' area of expertise.

Trustee	Title	Area of Expertise
<b>Julius Anthony</b>	Founder and President of St. Louis Black Authors of Children's Literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofit management</li> <li>• Former Principal, 20+ years of urban ed experience</li> <li>• Connected community stakeholder</li> </ul>
<b>Kwofe Coleman</b>	Managing Director of The MUNY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofit management</li> <li>• Connected community stakeholder</li> </ul>
<b>Alice Dickherber</b>	Director of Marketing and Communications at Villa Duchesne/Oak Hill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attorney</li> <li>• Marketing and Communications</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• Connected community stakeholder</li> </ul>
<b>Russ Kirk</b>	Former Vice-President of Martiz	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Project Management</li> </ul>
<b>Gay Lorberbaum</b>	Founder of Building Futures, Professor at Washington University, Child Psychologist and Architect	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nonprofit management</li> <li>• Architecture</li> <li>• Child Psychology</li> </ul>
<b>Marcus Robinson</b>	Executive-in-Residence at The Opportunity Trust, Former Charter School Founder	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launching a school</li> <li>• Philanthropy</li> </ul>

**Julius Anthony** is Founder and President of St. Louis Black Authors of Children's Literature. Julius has enjoyed more than 20 years as an early childhood and elementary education professional and has served as a classroom teacher, principal, director of curriculum and instruction, and adjunct professor. In October of 2014, Julius published his first children's book entitled "Me! Ten Poetic Affirmations" which debuted at the National Black Child Development Institute's annual conference in Detroit, Michigan. One achievement Mr. Anthony is particularly proud of is his current upstart "The Believe Project" which seeks to ensure all children are confident and competent readers by the end of third grade. Julius B. Anthony is the Founding Principal of City Academy, a highly successful independent day school located in north St. Louis city. Additionally, Julius volunteers with distinction on several Boards including: Riverview Gardens Education Foundation, St. Louis Regional Literacy Association, Missouri Literacy Association, St. Louis Regional Early Childhood Council, and Turn the Page STL. Julius B. Anthony is a proud graduate of Howard University (Washington, DC). Julius is also a 2001 graduate of Leadership St. Louis and a 1995 fellow of Washington University's (St. Louis, MO) National Endowment for the Humanities' (NEH) Harlem Renaissance Project.



**Kwofe Coleman** is the Managing Director of The Municipal Theatre Association of St. Louis (The Muny), the oldest, largest and one of the most iconic musical theatres in the country. Kwofe has held a number of other positions at The Muny including staff accountant and digital communications manager. Kwofe is an active contributor to the St. Louis community, serving on the Mayor's Vanguard Cabinet, Keystone of St. Louis, The Urban League's Save our Sons program, and was the recipient of the St. Louis American's Salute to Young Leaders award. He earned his bachelor's degree in English from Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia.



**Alice Dickherber** has a decade of experience working in education. She has a B.A. from Marquette University and a J.D. from Saint Louis University School of Law. Alice's path to education was unique; she transitioned from law practice to law school admissions in 2010. Since then, Alice has worked with hundreds of students and families both at SLU LAW and as the Director of Admissions at Saint Louis Priory School. Alice currently serves as the Director of Marketing and Communications at Villa Duchesne and Oak Hill School. Alice is passionate about working to expand access to quality education for children in the St. Louis region.



**Russ Kirk** is the former Vice President of Maritz, Inc. (headquartered in St. Louis, Missouri), the world's largest performance improvement company. Currently, Kirk serves as liaison between Maritz and Patrick Henry Downtown Academy connecting the two with financial and professional services. Prior to his retirement, he served on the Board of directors of UrbanFuture, a non-profit providing tutoring and mentoring services to St. Louis public schools. Kirk has served as a substitute teacher in the Bayless School District and as a full time building substitute at Patrick Henry. Kirk has volunteered over 100 days a year at Patrick Henry. Kirk has a Bachelor of Journalism degree from the University of Missouri.



**Gay Lorberbaum** has an established track record of service and teaching in the community. After graduating with bachelor's and master's degrees in Architecture from Washington University in her native St. Louis, Gay worked for the London Borough of Lambeth and the renowned Finnish architect Reima Pietilä. During her 34 years at WUSTL, she led studios within the College of Architecture and initiated interdisciplinary courses linking architecture, engineering and environmental studies. In a parallel practice, Gay has acted as a human development teacher in psychology. In 2003, Lorberbaum created the New School – a group workshop that combines psychotherapy with creative process. In 2012, Gay and her husband started the non-profit, Building Futures, which provides educational programs with an emphasis on hands-on problem-solving for the St. Louis youth community grades 4th - 12th.



**Marcus Robinson** is the Executive in Residence at The Opportunity Trust. He previously served as the CEO of the Memphis Education Fund, a \$240 million philanthropic collaborative that invests in education improvement initiatives for Memphis schools. Prior to the Memphis Education Fund, Marcus was the Chancellor and CEO of the high performing Tindley Accelerated Schools for 14 years. As the founder and instructional leader, Robinson led Tindley's flagship school to national prominence as its student performance exceeded the district and state averages on the state test as well as the national average on the SAT, working with a student population that was primarily high need and low income. As the state's first Early College High School, Tindley maintained consistently high graduation rates and 100 percent four-year college placement. Marcus was able to grow Tindley from one school with 160 students to six campuses and one district turnaround school with more than 2,000 students in one of the most challenging neighborhoods in the city.



### Atlas Public Schools Board of Directors Skills Matrix

Atlas' Board was strategically constructed of individuals with diverse backgrounds and skill sets in order to effectively govern the school. Members of the Board must also demonstrate a commitment to the mission and vision of Atlas Public School and to fulfilling the role of the Board as outlined below. Specific expertise contained on the Board includes, but is not limited to non-profit management, finance, school start up leadership, finance, and facilities. The chart below illustrates the collective skills of the founding board. It is important to note that the Board was constructed with key skills in mind, both individually and as a functioning group.

	Board Experience	Executive Experience	Facilities	Finance	Fundraising	Human Resources	Legal	Marketing	Non-Profit Mgmt	School Start Up
Julius Anthony	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X
Kwofe Coleman	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	
Alice Dickherber	X				X	X	X	X	X	
Russ Kirk	X	X		X	X	X		X		
Gay Lorberbaum	X	X	X		X				X	
Marcus Robinson	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X

## **Development, Training, and Preparation**

The Atlas Founding Team worked with the community and the Board to develop the school's mission, vision, and values. All Board members will receive a handbook containing the Board's school charter, bylaws, Missouri charter law, the articles of incorporation, 501(c)(3) documentation, policies, as well as member biographies. This handbook ensures members understand their duties and responsibilities as they sit on the board of a public school ([RSMo 105.450](#)). All Board members attend an orientation upon joining the Board. Board members will attend trainings by MCPSA, EdOps, Education Board Partners, and Saint Louis University and meet all standards set forth by the Missouri Charter Public School Commission. For example, Board members will be trained on the parent grievance policy and formal complaint procedures.

## **Structure**

The Board of Directors will include officers in addition to other members. The officers may include Board Chair, President, Vice-President, Treasurer, and Secretary. Board Members will be assigned to one or more committees (based on their expertise) which will focus on different needs of the school, such as executive, finance, programs & operations, facility, and development. Directors will be elected to serve for a term of three years or until their successor has been elected and qualified.

## **Board Meetings and Duties**

At a minimum, the Board will meet at least twelve times a year, or on a monthly basis. All Board meetings will comply with [RsMo 610.011](#) of the Sunshine Law: Missouri's open meetings and record law. Meetings will take place at a time and location set by the school's bylaws. An agenda will be posted at least 72 hours prior to a regular meeting, which contains a brief general description of each item to be discussed at the meeting. Notices and agendas will be posted online as well as a hard copy at the meeting site. The Board Secretary will be responsible for recording each meeting.

The school's Board shall be the governing body charged with the responsibility for the operation of the public charter school. The most notable responsibilities shall be as follows:

- Create and support a clear mission, vision, and performance objectives;
- Review and maintain bylaws;
- Establish, interpret and enforce policies consistent with the mission;
- Ensure fiscal health of the school including capital assets, operating budgets, fundraising, and endowments;
- Adopt the annual financial budget;

- Approve monthly General Fund and other reports and approve expenditures as required by Board policy;
- Hire, support, manage, and assess the Executive Director;
- Require reports of the Executive Director concerning the school's progress;
- Evaluate itself annually and develop itself through orientation, ongoing education, and leadership succession planning;
- Establish strategic plans;
- Comply with Missouri's Sunshine Law by adopting a Sunshine Law policy as required by law and otherwise ensuring the board and school comply with the provisions of the Sunshine Law, Ch. 610, RSMO;
- Ensure all members are actively involved in the work of the board and committees;
- Assure compliance with federal and state laws, regulations and rules;
- Assist in development of plans and specifications and provide financing for school facilities;
- Act as a final appeals board for personnel, parent, and student grievances;
- Hear communications, either written or oral, from stakeholders related to matters of policy;
- Act as charter school advocates and liaisons between the community and school;
- Meeting the terms of the charter and attaining established goals and objectives set forth in the charter document; and
- Meeting the legislative intent of raising student achievement and ensuring the school operates in a fiscally responsible manner evidenced by an unqualified audit annually.

### **Election and Terms of Office**

Each director named in Atlas' articles of incorporation shall hold office until the second annual meeting of the members and until the term of office of such director's successor has commenced, or until such director's earlier death, incapacity, disqualification, resignation or removal. At the second annual meeting, as the first order of business of the meeting, new directors shall be elected by the members to succeed those directors whose terms expire with such annual meeting. A person so

elected as a director shall serve a three year term and until the term of office of such director's successor has commenced, or until such director's earlier death, incapacity, disqualification, resignation or removal. Any director may be elected for successive terms.

### **Recruiting New Board Members**

Potential new Board members will be sourced using the current Board's extensive personal and professional networks. Moreover, the Board will form an *ad hoc* Board Development Committee which will abide by a written procedure for adding new Board members. This may require service on a Board committee before full membership; an interview with the Board chair; and a nomination by a Board member. Recruitment and succession planning for the Board is imperative to the success of the school. The Board will create a process that ensures future members are mission aligned as well have the skills and expertise needed to govern Atlas.

### **Board Member Ongoing Engagement**

The Board will host members of any student leadership teams that may be created by the school to gather perspectives and solicit feedback. The Board will also regularly solicit input and advice from family advisory groups formed at the school. When appropriate, parents or other community members may be asked to serve on Board committees. While the Board of Directors value input from all Atlas constituents, unelected committee members (e.g., parent advisors) will not vote on Board resolutions. To guarantee we fulfill our fiduciary duties, the Board retains exclusive governing prerogatives over the organization.

## **Board of Advisors**

In addition to the Board of Directors, Atlas has a designated Board of Advisors who are continually offering support and strategic guidance to ensure the success of the school. Advisory members for Atlas are a non-voting group of experts. However, they support the Board by providing professional guidance when requested. For example, they help ensure that Atlas is in compliance with its legal obligations and that public funds are responsibly managed.

<b>Marketing</b>	<i>Ralph Sherman, former Senior Partner, Ogilvy &amp; Mather</i>
	<i>Brooke Foster, Principal, We Are Novella</i>
<b>Finance</b>	<i>Roger Steinbecker, former Audit Partner, PriceWaterhouseCoopers LLP</i>
	<i>Paul Greenwood, Regional Director, EdOps</i>
<b>Legal</b>	<i>Andy Leonard, Equity Partner, McCarthy, Leonard and Kaemmerer Law Firm</i>
	<i>Mia Howard, Partner, The Opportunity Trust</i>

	<i>Keith Kehrer, Partner, Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner LLP</i>
<b>Facilities</b>	<i>Michael Backer, Commercial Real-Estate Broker with Intelica</i>
	<i>Brooks Goedecker, Executive Director of Saint Louis University Redevelopment</i>
	<i>Linda Henke, Former Superintendent, Maplewood Richmond Heights</i>
	<i>Chris Hansen, Executive Director of the Kranzberg Arts Foundation</i>
	<i>Jassen Johnson, Founder of Renaissance Development Associates</i>
	<i>Stacey Wehe, Shareholder, Christner Architects</i>
<b>Community Engagement</b>	<i>Aaron Massey, Community Organizer, WEPOWER</i>
	<i>Dan Huebner, Director of Leadership &amp; Community, Teach For America</i>
<b>School Design &amp; Strategy</b>	<i>Dr. Linda Henke, Former Superintendent, Maplewood Richmond Heights</i>
	<i>Rob Strain, Founder + Principle, Rob Strain Consulting</i>
	<i>Rebecca Rubin-Schlansky, teacher and consultant, Ladue School District</i>
	<i>Krista Galleberg, founder of AlignED</i>
	<i>Dr. Douglas Thaman, Missouri Charter Public School Association</i>
	<i>Dr. Gary Ritter, Dean of Education, Saint Louis University</i>
	<i>Morgan Hill, Dean of Culture, Patrick Henry, and WEPOWER Fellow</i>
	<i>Bene Webster, Founder of UsPlus+</i>
<b>Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion</b>	<i>Sonia Park, Executive Director, Diverse Charter School Coalition</i>
	<i>Ashley Heard, Managing Program Director, Diverse Charter School Coalition</i>
	<i>Christie Huck, CEO, City Garden Montessori</i>

## B.3 - Management & Operation

For the first two years of operation Atlas will have a three person leadership team, with an Executive Director and two school leaders who will serve as co-Heads of School. The Executive Director will lead the organization and will be responsible for driving Atlas Public Schools toward the realization of its mission. Atlas' co-leader model is similar to other successful charter schools across the country such as Larchmont Charter Schools and New School San Francisco. Each leader will have a distinct role and responsibilities. For example, one leader will focus on school operations and the other will prioritize school school culture systems. Both of our heads of school will be instructional leaders, and will be responsible for leading academics, coaching teachers, and organizing professional development. The charts below highlight some of the responsibilities for our executive director and each of our heads of school. More detailed job descriptions for each of these roles are found later in this section.

Organizational Leadership	
Executive Director	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Finance</li> <li>• Facilities Planning</li> <li>• Operations</li> <li>• Managing Partnership with EdOps</li> <li>• Community Engagement</li> <li>• Fundraising</li> <li>• HR: Benefits &amp; Payroll</li> <li>• Board Management</li> <li>• Compliance</li> <li>• Manage Heads-of-School</li> <li>• Growth and Expansion</li> </ul>	

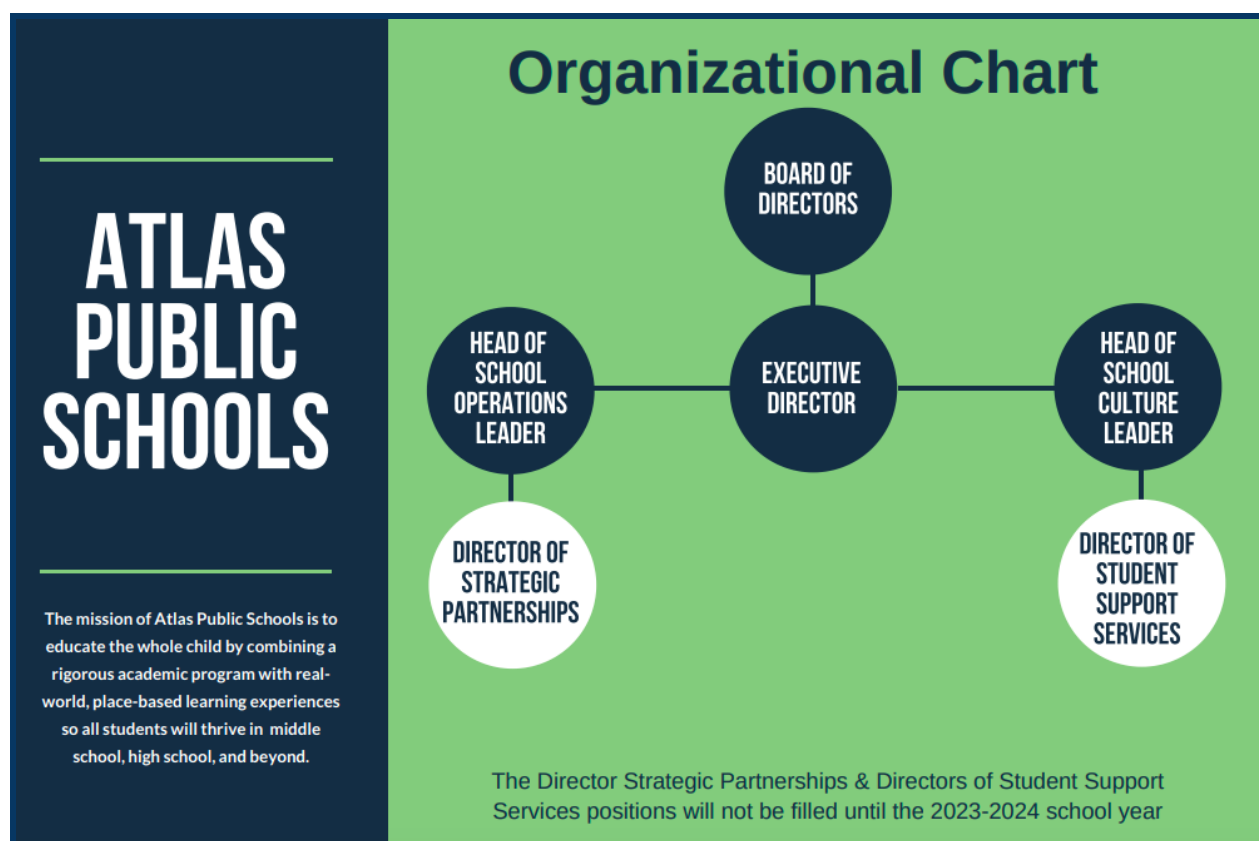
School Site Leadership	
Head-of-School Operational Leader	Head-of-School Culture Leader
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Leader - ELA <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Teaching, Learning, &amp; Development of ELA Curriculum</li> <li>◦ Coach &amp; Support Teachers in Content Based Literacy, Reading Foundations, and Reading</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instructional Leader - Math <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Teaching, Learning, &amp; Development of Math Curriculum</li> <li>◦ Coach &amp; Support Teachers in Math and Math Facts &amp; Math</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<p>Pathways</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Operations Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student Enrollment</li> <li>○ Student Data Management</li> <li>○ Facilities - Daily Operations</li> <li>○ Manage the Building Operations Manager and Office Coordinator</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Community Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage the Director Strategic Partnerships</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<p>Stories</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● School Culture Manager <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Student Recruitment</li> <li>○ Family Retention</li> <li>○ Manage the Family Engagement Specialist</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Coordinator of Student Support Team <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Manage the Director of Student Support Services</li> <li>○ Manage Specialists, Behaviorists, and Clinicians</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Special Education</li> </ul>
<p><b>Shared Responsibilities</b></p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Teaching &amp; Learning - Integrated Studies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Related Arts</li> </ul> </li> <li>● Staff Recruitment &amp; Hiring</li> <li>● Professional Development</li> </ul>	

Starting in the third year of operation, Atlas will hire a Director of Student Support Services and Director of Strategic Partnerships. The Director of Student Support Services will oversee the support plan for students with disabilities and EL students. In addition, they will coordinate all student support services, oversee the Student Support Team, and work to create a positive school climate. The Director of Strategic Partnerships will manage relationships with our community and non-profit partners and oversee student programming that takes place during intersession breaks. For the first two years of operation, the Executive Director will assume the responsibilities of the Director of Strategic Partnerships and the Director of Student Support Services, with assistance from the Heads of School.

The Executive Director and Co-Heads of School will be hired prior to the first year of school, while the Director of Strategic Partnerships and Director of Student Support Services positions will be filled by the third year of operation, or the 2023-2024 school year.

The organizational chart below illustrates how personnel will be managed and organized in order for Atlas to fulfill its mission. The chart has been designed to ensure clear reporting lines and accountability.



### Executive Director

The Executive Director (ED) at Atlas is responsible for setting the school's vision and leading the organization toward the realization of its mission. They lead strategic planning, budget development, setting of organizational and instructional priorities, legal compliance of the school, and ultimately oversee day-to-day operations of the school. They will be responsible for the overall operations and outcomes of the LEA. The ED directly supervises the Head of School - Operations Leader and the Head of School - Culture Leader. The ED reports monthly to the Board of Directors, and is evaluated by the Board semi-annually. In the first year of operation, the ED will assist the Co-Heads of School in their duties as necessary. Selection of the Executive Director by the Board of Directors will be based on proven experience in educational leadership, educational vision and relevant experience with our targeted student population, demonstrated ability in program design and/or development, and commitment to educational reform.

Mr. Colby Heckendorn, Atlas Co-Founder, is the prospective Executive Director (See resume in *Appendix B.2.2*).

### Qualifications:

- Bachelor's degree (required)

- Relevant experience with school and organizational leadership and educational innovation (required)
- Relevant successful experience as a school leader and teacher; a minimum of four (4) years of teaching experience and two (2) years of administrative experience is preferred
- Master's Degree in Education and/or Administrative Credential (highly preferred)
- Experience in curriculum design, supervision and evaluation
- Ability to communicate effectively with diverse groups, the Board and the community
- Interest in Atlas' innovative model of public education and commitment to the school's success
- Experience with school operations including finances, fundraising, facilities, health and safety and other operational management
- Other qualifications and/or qualities deemed important by the Board
- Belief in the mission and values of Atlas Public Schools
- An incredible work ethic and passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture

### **Responsibilities:**

The Executive Director shall perform assigned tasks as directed by the Board of Directors and shall be required to undertake some or all of the tasks detailed below. These tasks may include but are not limited to the following:

- Ensure Atlas Public Schools lives up to its mission and vision and communicate Atlas' mission and educational philosophy to the larger community
- Communicate and report to the Board of Directors
  - Monthly Board reports on academics, operations, development, and community relationships;
  - A calendar for the upcoming school year, finalized no later than December of the preceding year, for Board approval
  - A fiscally conservative annual budget to the Board that supports Atlas' academic, social, and professional mission, in consultation with the Board Finance Committee, by at least April 30th (two months prior to the close of our fiscal year)
  - Reports to federal, state, or private grant organization, including federal Title I LEA Plan describing the school's Title I services pursuant to the provisions of the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001
  - Reports on activities, organizational development progress, and student achievement to our sponsor, DESE, and other applicable state and federal reporting agencies
- Draft, submit to Board, and publish an annual report to community stakeholders including
  - School success metrics (achievement data, student statements)
  - Audited financial statements

- Complete and submit required documents as requested or required by the charter and/or Atlas' Board of Directors, Sponsor, and the State Board of Education
- Coach, evaluate and support the Head of Schools to ensure mission alignment in:
  - Curriculum and pedagogy
  - Professional development and teacher onboarding
  - Faculty, parent, and student engagement
- Coach, evaluate and support the Head of School - Operations Leader to ensure mission alignment in:
  - Vendor/contractual relationships including back-office provider
  - School finances (ensuring up-to-date financial records are maintained to promote financial stability)
  - The enrollment process (ensuring Atlas is open to all students, including those with special needs)
  - Compliance with the Board's internal controls and policies
- Initiate, participate in, and oversee fundraising for Atlas to ensure the long-term financial health of the organization
- Identify staffing needs, oversee employee hiring, development, promotion, progressive discipline, and/or dismissal
- Ensure compliance with all applicable state and federal laws and help secure local grants
- Communicate regularly with parents, recruit new families and students, and assure families of academic growth
- Take responsible steps to secure full and regular attendance at school of the students enrolled in accordance with policies established by the Board
- Ensure that appropriate evaluation techniques are used for both students and staff
- Work with the Head of School - Operations Leader to establish and maintain a system for collecting and reporting tasks such as student records including attendance, health recording and immunization status, teacher records, teacher credentialing information, contemporaneous attendance logs, purchasing, budgets, and timetables
- Ensure the security of the school building and the safety of students
- Promote and publish the Charter Program in the community and promote positive public relations and interact effectively with media
- Manage student discipline and, as necessary, implement the suspension and expulsion process
- Cultivate and sustain diverse partnerships with:
  - The Family Council
  - The St. Louis Public School District and other St. Louis charter schools
  - Grand Center Arts District, Saint Louis University, Delmar Makers District, and more
  - Elected officials and policy advocates

- Secure initial facility, recruit founding faculty, and establish necessary partnerships during pre-opening
- Oversee hiring practices, in consultation with the Executive Leadership Team, including:
  - Recruiting new faculty, teaching assistants, and residents
  - Screening applicants during interview process

## **Head of School - Operations Leader**

The Head of School - Operations Leader (HoS-Ops) will act as one of the instructional leaders as well as the school operations leader. The HoS-Ops is responsible for leading a rigorous, engaging, and joyful ELA and Integrated Studies academic program. In consultation with the ED, the HoS-Ops will be responsible for setting the ELA instructional priorities. They will work with the teaching staff to adopt and refine the EL curriculum and ensure that teachers have the resources and preparation needed for strong lesson implementation. The Head of School - Operations Leader works with the Head of School - Culture Leader to ensure a strong academic program that is in compliance with all special education, EL and 504 laws. Together the Heads of School carry out the instructional leadership at Atlas, and they determine the professional development needs of instructional staff to align coaching, training, and supports throughout the year. The HoS-Ops will directly supervise all instructional staff in the area of ELA and Integrated Studies.

The HoS-Ops will be responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operations of the school.

Mrs. Genevieve Backer, Atlas Co-Founder, is the prospective Head of School - Operations Leader (see resume in *Appendix B.2.2*).

### **Qualifications:**

- Master's Degree preferred
- Demonstrated experience in designing systems to support high academic achievement
- 5 years of experience in education preferred
- Demonstrated experience in designing an effective school culture
- Strong communication skills with students, staff and families
- Belief in the mission and values of Atlas Public Schools
- An incredible work ethic and passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture

### **Responsibilities:**

The Head of School - Operations Leader will be an instructional leader at Atlas, and will be responsible for creating a rigorous, engaging, and joyful academic ELA and Integrated Studies

program. Both Heads of School will oversee all academic staff and report to the Executive Director. The Head of School - Operations Leader will be expected to:

- Establish and promote high standards and expectations for all students and staff for academic performance and responsible behavior
- Provide Instructional Leadership
  - Supervise Instructional Team
  - Develop, and implement compelling vision for Atlas' curriculum and instruction to ensure rigorous and standards-aligned instruction and instructional supports in every classroom, for every student
  - Direct academic service areas (i.e. instructional improvement, curriculum and instruction, gifted services, English as a Second Language, etc.)
  - Provide coaching and support to teachers
  - Assume a leadership role on Executive Leadership Team and assist with long-range strategic planning, development of budgets, plans, policies and activities
  - Support informed decision-making by the Executive Director and the Board by monitoring and effectively interpreting the latest research, trends and development in all areas of education
  - Deliver written and oral presentations on academic accountability to various stakeholders (i.e. the Board, teachers, parents and community groups)
  - Apply research and best practices to inform theories of pedagogy and ensure consistent delivery of high-quality instruction aligned with key standards (i.e. classroom-to-classroom, grade-by-grade)
- Ensure equity and student success
  - Cultivate a commitment among all Atlas staff to enable all students to achieve at high levels
  - Confront preconceptions and model open dialogue around race, culture, class and other issues of difference
  - Operate with a lens of cultural proficiency, sensitivity, and equity to ensure students' needs are met
  - Assess the distribution of academic supports with a clear racial equity lens, ensuring allocations provide the best resources to equitably and effectively meet the needs of all Atlas students, families, and staff members
- Manage, evaluate, and supervise effective and clear policies and systems related to instructional programs, and extracurricular activities
- Establish the annual master schedule for instructional programs, ensuring sequential learning experiences for students consistent with Atlas' philosophy, values, and mission
- Implement the school's accountability plan, educational program, and annual plans

- Identify and implement data systems to ensure the school is on track to achieve academic goals
- Establish direction for school improvement efforts by monitoring the progress of school performance, student achievement objectives and academic excellence indicators to aligned strategies for school improvement
- Create the conditions that enable all educators to provide rigorous, authentic, and personalized experiences for all students, particularly historically underserved populations
- Keep the staff informed and seek ideas for the improvement of the school
- Conduct meetings, as necessary, for the proper functioning of the school, such as weekly meetings for full-time staff and monthly staff meetings
- In partnership with the ED, support fundraising efforts
- Coach, evaluate and support the Director of Strategic Partnerships to ensure mission alignment in:
  - Developing and sustaining partnerships with community organizations and alliances that enhance student achievement, community development, family involvement, parent advocacy, and student recruitment and support
  - Coordinating programming with non-profit partners during intersession breaks
  - Providing opportunities for meaningful, inclusive, and supported family involvement in the school
- Assist the Executive Director in preparing materials needed for federal, state, and local grant applications and compliance reporting including but not limited to:
  - Data for the annual report card as prescribed by RSMo 160.522
  - Student population data required by RSMo 160.415.1
  - Bimonthly Core Data reports to DESE
- Work with back-office provider (e.g., EdOps)
- Manage organizational finances and balance sheet
  - Design and adjust multi-year financial plan for growth and stability
  - Draft annual budget with assistance from Executive Director
  - Propose organizational budgets for items such as operations, salaries, & technology
  - Collect and maintain invoices, receipts, and other documents in compliance with internal financial management policies
  - Coordinate with DESE and back-office provider to manage disbursements of monthly federal, state, and local revenues
- Ensure essential policies and procedures are followed in a timely manner
- Maintain a system for student records pursuant to law, including by not limited to:
  - Attendance, immunization records, and food service
  - Records of academic performance and standardized test results
  - Documentation for students with disabilities
  - Free-and-reduced priced lunch documentation

- Records in the student information system
- Implement policies for human resources, employment contracts, and employee benefits
  - Manage payroll processes in conjunction with outside vendors
- Address facility needs (repairs, etc.) in order to maximize student learning
  - Ensure common areas are safe, attractive, and conducive to learning
  - Ensure the school facility is safe, attractive, and meets the academic needs of students and staff
- Contract and manage day-to-day communication with vendors:
  - Building maintenance, security, and janitorial services
  - IT support
  - Digital Subscriptions
  - Catering
  - SIS
  - Back-Office provider
  - Substitute Teachers
  - Support and transportation services as necessary for LEP, homeless, and SPED Students
- Coordinate all English Language Services
- Manage non-instructional operations staff and ensure completion of their duties
- Respond to student, parent, and staff inquiries regarding operational issues, and redirect other inquiries to the correct person or department
- Maintain social media, newsletter, and marketing accounts to ensure consistent branding and updated contacts
- Carry out other duties as assigned

## **Head of School - Culture Leader**

The Head of School - Culture Leader (HoS-CL) will act as one of the instructional leaders as well as lead Atlas' school culture systems. The HoS-CL is responsible for leading a rigorous, engaging, and joyful math and academic program. In consultation with the ED, the HoS-CL will be responsible for setting the math instructional priorities. They will work with the teaching staff to adopt and refine the Achievement First curriculum and ensure that teachers have the resources and preparation needed for strong lesson implementation. The Head of School - Culture Leader works with the Head of School - Operations Leader to ensure smooth functioning of an academic program that is in compliance with all special education, EL and 504 laws. Together the Heads of School carry out the instructional leadership at Atlas, and they determine the professional development needs of instructional staff to align coaching, training, and supports throughout the year. The HoS-CL will directly supervise all instructional staff in math.

The HoS-CL will take the lead on creating and managing the school culture systems that support all students for, and oversees all academic team members. The HoS-CL partners with families to build an authentic school-wide community at Atlas.

Ms. Tierrus Nance, Atlas Co-Founder, is the prospective Head of School - Culture Leader (see resume in *Appendix B.2.2*).

**Qualifications:**

- Master's Degree preferred
- Demonstrated experience in designing systems to support high academic achievement
- 5 years of experience in education preferred
- Demonstrated experience in designing an effective school culture
- Strong communication skills with students, staff and families
- Belief in the mission and values of Atlas Public Schools
- An incredible work ethic and passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture

**Responsibilities:**

The Head of School - Culture Leader will be an instructional leader at Atlas, and will be responsible for creating a rigorous, engaging, and joyful academic math program. Along with The Head of School - Operations Leader, the Head of School - Culture Leader will oversee all academic staff and report to the Executive Director. The Head of School - Culture Leader will be expected to:

- Establish and promote high standards and expectations for all students and staff for academic performance and responsible behavior
- Provide Instructional Leadership
  - Supervise Instructional Team
  - Develop, and implement compelling vision for Atlas' curriculum and instruction to ensure rigorous and standards-aligned instruction and instructional supports in every classroom, for every student
  - Direct academic service areas (i.e. instructional improvement, curriculum and instruction, gifted services, English as a Second Language, etc.)
  - Provide coaching and support to teachers
  - Assume a leadership role on Executive Leadership Team and assist with long-range strategic planning, development of budgets, plans, policies and activities
  - Support informed decision-making by the Executive Director and the Board by monitoring and effectively interpreting the latest research, trends and development in all areas of education

- Deliver written and oral presentations on academic accountability to various stakeholders (i.e. the Board, teachers, parents and community groups)
  - Apply research and best practices to inform theories of pedagogy and ensure consistent delivery of high-quality instruction aligned with key standards (i.e. classroom-to-classroom, grade-by-grade)
- Ensure equity and student success
  - Cultivate a commitment among all Atlas staff to enable all students to achieve at high levels
  - Confront preconceptions and model open dialogue around race, culture, class and other issues of difference
  - Operate with a lens of cultural proficiency, sensitivity, and equity to ensure students' needs are met
  - Assess the distribution of academic supports with a clear racial equity lens, ensuring allocations provide the best resources to equitably and effectively meet the needs of all Atlas students, families, and staff members
- Ensure a safe, orderly environment that encourages students to take responsibility for behavior and creates high morale among staff and students
- Manage, evaluate, and supervise effective and clear policies and systems related to instructional programs, extracurricular activities, and discipline systems
- Establish the annual master schedule for instructional programs, ensuring sequential learning experiences for students consistent with Atlas' philosophy, values, and mission
- Implement the school's accountability plan, educational program, and annual plans
- Identify and implement data systems to ensure the school is on track to achieve academic goals
- Establish direction for school improvement efforts by monitoring the progress of school performance, student achievement objectives and academic excellence indicators to aligned strategies for school improvement
- Create the conditions that enable all educators to provide rigorous, authentic, and personalized experiences for all students, particularly historically underserved populations
- Keep the staff informed and seek ideas for the improvement of the school
- Conduct meetings, as necessary, for the proper functioning of the school, such as weekly meetings for full-time staff and monthly staff meetings
- Respond to student, parent, and staff inquiries regarding culture issues
- Maintain social media, newsletter, and marketing accounts to ensure consistent branding and updated contacts
- Coach, evaluate and support the Director of Student Support Services to ensure mission alignment in:
  - Establishing structures for creating a safe, healthy, and educational environment for students and staff

- Ensuring that all students with disabilities at Atlas are provided a free and appropriate public education through the provision of instructional programs and related services
  - Performing the duties of Local Education Liaison in accordance with Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the Missouri State Plan for Homeless Children and Youth
- Oversee student outreach and recruitment processes, including participation in the school lottery, student registration and management of the waitlist as well as:
  - Coordinate with the Missouri Charter Public School Association to enroll in the St. Louis Central Application
  - Request student records from transferring school within two days of student enrollment at Atlas and respond to such record requests from other schools or districts within five business days, per RSMO 167.020.7
- Coordinate and implement a school-wide behavior management system with meaningful proactive strategies, incentives and redirection techniques
- Partner with parents and families to build an authentic school-wide community
- Lead recognition assemblies, parent academies, community meetings and other school-wide culture building activities.
- Work closely and effectively with children who have/are experiencing trauma resulting in behavior challenges.
- Engage their families, partner with behavioral health organizations and support services to execute individual individualized behavior interventions when needed
- Facilitate staff trainings on student-teacher relationships, classroom management, parent partnership and school culture
- Conduct regular school culture walk-throughs to help staff maintain a high bar of excellence
- Supervise and/or lead school morning circle, breakfast, lunch, recess, dismissal and transitions to ensure they are positive
- Accurately monitor and analyze daily student attendance, homework and discipline data; create new systems and structures to proactively address school's areas of need
- Enforce and monitor the enforcement of the student code of conduct including but not limited to: attendance, behavior, dress code
- Carry out other duties as assigned

## **Director of Strategic Partnerships**

The Director of Strategic Partnerships is responsible for coordinating strategic community partnerships that positively impact student learning and achievement, including school business

partnerships, volunteers, mentors, and special projects that support school initiatives such as intersession programming. The Director of Strategic Partnerships is responsible for building strong relationships with and between the school, its staff and families, as well as local community members and organizations. They will develop the school's ability to support all families and embrace the opportunities and challenges of being a truly diverse school. They will work to ensure that parents and families have a strong voice in their child's education and the school's success. In addition, they will work to develop a school culture that is joyful, equitable, supportive, respectful, reflective, and open.

**Qualifications:**

The Director of Strategic Partnerships will report directly to the Head of School - Operations Leader and will meet the following criteria:

- Bachelor's degree (required)
- Knowledge of St. Louis and related community organizations
- Understanding of the issues facing St. Louis families and strategies and services to address them
- Community and/or parent organizing experience (preferred)
- Capacity-build, training, or coaching work with families or educators
- Experience working in urban schools or community-based organizations (preferred)
- Strong communications and interpersonal skills; preferably bilingual
- Ability to work with and across multiple cultures and groups
- Belief in the mission and values of Atlas Public Schools
- An incredible work ethic and passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture

**Responsibilities:**

- Develop, enhance and maintain effective strategic community partnerships and alliances that enhance student achievement, community development, family involvement, parent advocacy, and student recruitment and support
- Organize, coordinate, and oversee before school and after school learning opportunities
- Build a broad network of community partnerships that support the school's recruitment, student welfare, family support, and parent advocacy efforts
- Coordinate programming with non-profit partners during intersession breaks
- Recruit and support mentor and volunteer programs
- Serve as a liaison to community groups and organizations
- Ensure opportunities for meaningful, inclusive, and supported family involvement in the school
- Work with teachers, students, and community organizations to support and increase parent involvement

- Develop a communication and feedback structure for information sharing with parents to provide regular, relevant, and accessible communications between school and home, as well as community partners
- Develop annual plans for student recruitment

### **Director of Student Support Services**

The Director of Student Support Services will work to ensure that all students are set up for success and will be responsible for the planning, development, coordination, and management of all special education programs, services, budgets and personnel and shall ensure compliance with state and federal regulations governing the delivery of services to students with disabilities. With assistance from the Head of School - Culture Leader, Executive Director, and other staff members, the Director of Student Support Services will work to create a positive school climate. They will coordinate student support services, oversee the Student Support Team, and other aspects of student well-being. In addition, they will ensure that Conscious Discipline is being implemented with fidelity.

#### **Qualifications:**

The Director of Student Support Services will report directly to the Head of School - Culture Lead and will meet the following criteria:

- At least 2 years teaching and/or counseling experience at the elementary level
- A minimum of a master's degree in a related field (social work or psychology preferred)
- Knowledge of positive behavioral interventions and support
- The ability to build positive relationships with students, staff, parents, and community members
- Belief in the mission and values of Atlas
- An incredible work ethic and passion for being part of a team-oriented, mission-driven school culture

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Establish and maintain structures for creating a safe, healthy, and educational environment for students and staff
- Ensures that all students with disabilities at Atlas are provided a free and appropriate public education through the provision of instructional programs and related services
- Perform the duties of Local Education Liaison in accordance with Title VII-B of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act and the Missouri State Plan for Homeless Children and Youth
- Effectively manage the resources for which they are responsible including personnel, finances, facilities, programs and time.
- Plan and implement the physical, social, and emotional well-being program for students

- Work with the Head of School - Culture Leader and other staff members to develop measures of accountability and milestones for students
- Build and implement student support systems in order to meet the needs of all students
- Assists the Head of School - Culture Leader in the recruitment and employment of properly licensed personnel as required to provide services to students with disabilities consistent with their IEPs as well as counseling, social work, and student support staff
- Ensure the school uses the latest evidence-based approaches to create a trauma sensitive school
- Oversee the school's Student Support Team (social workers and counselors)
- Participate in IEP meetings
- Develops methods of disseminating information regarding the importance of regular school attendance and laws relating to families and children for the use of parents, pupils and school staff.
- Maintains a familiarity with current educational issues through a process of ongoing personal development
- Conducts on-going assessments to identify needs within the district for use in planning of budgets and programs
- Conducts the application process required for receipt of funds under federal grant projects
- Develops local policies and procedures to ensure compliance with state and federal regulations
- Develops policies and procedures to govern the delivery of special education and related services, including staff assignments
- Develops policies and procedures to govern the evaluation of students referred for special education services, including staffing patterns and organizational structure
- Prepares mandated state and federal reports and Board of Trustee reports within the area of responsibility
- Carry out other duties as assigned

### **Relationship of the Board of Directors to the Organization**

The Board will manage the performance of the Executive Director, who oversees all academic and operational aspects of the school. The Heads of School, who report to the Executive Director, will act as the instructional leaders, including hiring and directly managing instructional staff. The Heads of School and school staff will bear primary responsibility for engagement with students and parents, but ultimately the success or failure of the school rests with the Executive Director. Board members will work with the Executive Director to ensure that the school meets its academic and mission goals. The following chart illustrates the breakdown of key activities between the Executive Director and the Board.

## Division of Labor Between the Executive Director and Board

Category	Executive Director	Board
Operations	Manages day to day operations of the school in collaboration with the Head of School - Operations Leader.	Set policy and ensure that school operations are running smoothly via financial and academic results but otherwise does not closely manage.
Finances	Provides financial information and transparency to the Board.	Responsible for financial health and strategic financial oversight. Approves the budget, sets fiscal policy, and conducts audits.
Human Resources	Hires and manages all staff in collaboration with the Co-Heads of School.	Hires and holds the Executive Director accountable. Evaluates the ED semi-annually.
Academics	Oversees the Co-Heads of School who are responsible for the daily implementation of the academic program.	Holds Executive Director Accountable for results. Provides strategic guidance for academics and curriculum. Ensures strategic priorities are mission aligned. Sets/approves goals for the school.

### Executive Leadership Team

The Executive Leadership Team at Atlas Public schools will meet weekly and as needed to collaborate on school wide initiatives. As a team, they will work to advance the mission and vision of Atlas and ensure that the school is on track to meet its goals. Together, they will set strategic priorities and work to ensure the long-term success of the organization.



## Staffing Schedule

The chart below details the staffing plan for the first six years of operation and is aligned to the school budget referenced in *C.1 - Budget*. Atlas puts a staffing emphasis on teachers, their development, and how we set them up for success. This plan allows for either two teachers, a teacher and a resident teacher, or a teacher and an aide in every classroom the majority of the school day. In addition, the staffing schedule provides for daily essential classes such as visual arts, performing arts, and physical education. Moreover, it ensures that homeroom teachers each have two planning periods a day, and an administrative framework that guarantees teachers ample guidance and feedback, while running the organization in an efficient manner. The staffing chart below shows our calculated growth from just 130 students in year one, to 468 projected students by year six. It also reflects the changing needs of our school as it grows, and shows that our Staff to Student Ratio is always less than 1:8.

Staffing Schedule							
	Position	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
Administrators	Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Head of School - Operations Lead	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Head of School - Culture Lead	1	1	1	1	1	1
Core Instructional Staff	Kindergarten Teachers	3	3	3	3	3	3
	1st Grade Teachers	2	3	3	3	3	3
	2nd Grade Teachers	0	2	3	3	3	3
	3rd Grade Teachers	0	0	2	3	3	3
	4th Grade Teachers	0	0	0	2	3	3
	5th Grade Teachers	0	0	0	0	2	3
	Math Teachers	2	2	2	3	4	4
	Reading Interventionist	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Elementary (K-5) SPED Teachers	1	2	2	3	3	4
	Resident Teachers	0	1	2	3	4	4
	Art Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Music Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1
	PE Teachers	0	1	1	1	1	1
Student Support Staff	Director of Student Support Services	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Nurse	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Teaching Aide	2	4	6	8	10	10
	Social Worker/Counselor	1	1	1	2	2	3
Instructional Support	Dean of Academics	0	0	1	2	2	2
Operations Staff	Director of Strategic Partnerships	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Office Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Family Engagement Specialist	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Building Operations Manager	0	0	1	1	1	1
	<b>Total Employees:</b>	17	26	38	48	55	58
	<b>Total Student Enrollment:</b>	130	208	286	363	442	468
	<b>Staff to Student Ratio:</b>	1 to 6.19	1 to 7.17	1 to 7.33	1 to 7.11	1 to 7.62	1 to 7.67

Per [RSMo 160.420.2](#) and [RSMo 168.133](#), Atlas will not hire employees until they pass a criminal background check and family care safety registry check. Prospective hires convicted of a felony or Class A misdemeanor are automatically disqualified; Class B/C misdemeanors and infractions trigger a review by the Executive Director and are evaluated case by case. No more than 20% of full time equivalent instructional staff will be filled by non-certified personnel.

## B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement & Training

For decades, education researchers and policy analysts have found that human capital is the single most significant in-school factor in improving student achievement.<sup>106</sup> Human capital is also the most expensive investment that school systems make.<sup>107</sup> However, at present, there is a national teacher shortage primarily affecting low-income schools. In 2016, more than 100,000 classrooms across the nation could not be staffed with qualified teachers. Educator attrition - teachers leaving the profession before retirement - is responsible for about two-thirds of this educator shortage.<sup>108</sup> High attrition rates among teachers are due to many factors, some being inadequate pre-service teacher preparation, insufficient support for new teachers, challenging work conditions, and dissatisfaction with pay.

With that in mind, Atlas is serious about effectively and efficiently recruiting, developing, and retaining its staff. The following section demonstrates Atlas' plan for building and maintaining a high-quality staff. Atlas' approach to professional capital - our hiring and retention practices - will prove what is possible for public schools serving low-income students of color.

### Staffing Plan

The Atlas staffing plan is rooted in the projected number of students enrolled at Atlas each year. It also takes into account the student to teacher ratio, the importance of establishing a strong culture of learning, student demographics, and our instructional model.

**Executive Leadership Team:** The Executive Director and Heads of School positions will be filled by the Board of Directors by the Fall of 2020, a full year prior to the launch of the school. Colby Heckendorn is the prospective Executive Director. Genevieve Backer is the prospective Head of School - Operations Leader, and Tierrus Nance is the prospective Head of School - Culture Leader. By the third year of operation, Atlas will add a Director of Strategic Partnerships and a Director of Student Support Services. For more information regarding job descriptions and organization structure please see *B.3 - Management & Operation*. In addition, the resumes of our founding Executive Leadership Team can be found in *Appendix B.2.2*.

For the first year, Atlas' Executive Director (ED), with support from the Heads of School, will lead the recruitment and hiring process for all school staff. After the first year of operation, the Heads of

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<sup>106</sup> "the broad consensus is that "teacher quality" is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement." - OECD report "Teachers Matter: Attracting, Developing and Retaining Effective Teachers." 2005.

<sup>107</sup> "Human capital is the largest single investment K-12 districts make. Staff salaries and related benefits account for approximately 80 percent of current district expenditures<sup>1</sup> and 70 percent of total education spending." JEANNIE MYUNG, KRISSIA MARTINEZ, AND LEE NORDSTRUM, "A HUMAN CAPITAL FRAMEWORK FOR A STRONGER TEACHER WORKFORCE" by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching and Learning. 2013.

<sup>108</sup> Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). *A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.* Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

School, in conjunction with the ED, will be responsible for hiring school based staff.

**Instructional Staff:** Atlas will serve 130 students in Year 1 and will grow to 468 students in Year 6. Class sizes will be no more than 26 students with two staff members to a class the majority of the school day. In order to honor this instructional commitment, in the first year of operation we will need a minimum of five core teachers (3 kindergarten and 2 first grade) two related arts teachers (visual and performing arts), two math teachers, and two teacher aids. This number will grow to 40 instructional staff members by Year 6. See *Staffing Schedule* below and in *Appendix A.6.1*.

**Specialized Experts:** Atlas understands that there will be a number of students who are below grade level, classified as English Learners (EL), or who require Special Education services. Our instructional model allows all students to receive targeted small group instruction at several points throughout the school day. For more information on our Reading Foundations and Pathways Reading Blocks see *A.2 - Curriculum & Instruction* & *A.4 - School Calendar & Daily Schedule*. We are proposing one Special Education teacher and two teacher aides at the beginning of the year. The Executive Director will manage the Special Education Program for the first two years of operation. By Year 3, we will recruit and hire a Director of Student Support Services who will manage the Special Education Program. We anticipate between 10-15 percent of our student body will require Special Education services which would keep the teacher caseload to less than 20 students. We will revisit our Special Education and EL needs based on actual student enrollment.

**Instructional Support Staff:** We believe that having high quality teachers is critically important to the long term success of Atlas and that all teachers need coaching, time for reflection and data analysis, and professional development. For the first two years of operation, the Heads of School, with support from the Executive Director, will be responsible for coaching the instructional staff. One of the co-leaders will be responsible for supporting our English Language Arts blocks which include Reading Foundations, Content Based Literacy, and Reading Foundations. The other co-leader will support our Mathematics program which includes Math Lessons and Math Facts & Math Stories. Both leaders will support our Integrated Studies Block. In Year 3 we will bring on one Academic Dean to help coach and support teachers, and in Year 4 we will hire an additional Academic Dean to coach upper elementary teachers.

**Student Support Staff:** The team at Atlas recognizes that the social-emotional development of our students is critical to their holistic growth. As a result, we will hire a full time school social worker starting in the first year of operation. By Year 3 we will recruit and hire a Director of Student Support Services who will work to ensure that all students are set up for success and will be responsible for the management of all special education programs. For the first two years of operation, the Executive Director will manage the special education program.

**Operations Staff:** The Head of School - Operations Leader, with support from the Executive Director

and Office Coordinator, will be responsible for managing the day-to-day operations at Atlas. By Year 3, Atlas will hire a Building Operations Manager and a Director of Strategic Partnerships to further assist with the operational needs of the school.

## Staffing Schedule

Below is the staffing schedule along with projected student enrollment for the first year of operation through the sixth year, when the school is at full capacity. In the first year of operation, Atlas plans to enroll 130 students and employ 17 staff members. By year six we will grow to 468 students and 58 staff members. Our staff to student ratio never exceeds 1:8. If at any time Atlas fails to meet enrollment projections we have developed contingency plans which are explained in *C.1 - Budget*.

Staffing Schedule							
	Position	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
Administrators	Executive Director	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Head of School - Operations Lead	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Head of School - Culture Lead	1	1	1	1	1	1
Core Instructional Staff	Kindergarten Teachers	3	3	3	3	3	3
	1st Grade Teachers	2	3	3	3	3	3
	2nd Grade Teachers	0	2	3	3	3	3
	3rd Grade Teachers	0	0	2	3	3	3
	4th Grade Teachers	0	0	0	2	3	3
	5th Grade Teachers	0	0	0	0	2	3
	Math Teachers	2	2	2	3	4	4
	Reading Interventionist	0	1	1	1	1	1
	Elementary (K-5) SPED Teachers	1	2	2	3	3	4
	Resident Teachers	0	1	2	3	4	4
	Art Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Music Teachers	1	1	1	1	1	1
	PE Teachers	0	1	1	1	1	1
Student Support Staff	Director of Student Support Services	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Nurse	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Teaching Aide	2	4	6	8	10	10
	Social Worker/Counselor	1	1	1	2	2	3
Instructional Support	Dean of Academics	0	0	1	2	2	2
Operations Staff	Director of Strategic Partnerships	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Office Coordinator	1	1	1	1	1	1
	Family Engagement Specialist	0	0	1	1	1	1
	Building Operations Manager	0	0	1	1	1	1
	<b>Total Employees:</b>	17	26	38	48	55	58
	<b>Total Student Enrollment:</b>	130	208	286	363	442	468
	<b>Staff to Student Ratio:</b>	1 to 6.19	1 to 7.17	1 to 7.33	1 to 7.11	1 to 7.62	1 to 7.67

One critical component of the Atlas instructional and staffing model is that at nearly every time during the day, across all grade levels, students will either be working in small groups or there will be two adults in each classroom. This could be two certified teachers, a certified teacher and a resident teacher, or a teacher and a teacher's aide. The teacher aide will be appropriately certificated for

paraprofessionals, with the ideal candidate having completed one of the following: 60 college hours of study, attained an associates degree, or completed a formal state approved paraprofessional assessment.

### Professional Development Plan

Atlas Public Schools will provide professional development (PD) and time for lesson reflection and data analysis throughout the school year. Teachers will participate in summer onboarding, daily grade level team meetings, and 30 full days of development throughout the school year. The chart below describes the topics for professional development at Atlas.

### Professional Development Activities

Topic	Description	Frequency	Lead
<b>Atlas Teacher Academy</b>  A four week orientation that provides teachers with pertinent information around Atlas programs, instructional model, student services, safety, and culture development	Teacher Handbook	Summer Orientation	Heads of School
	Culture & School-wide Norms	Summer Orientation	Executive Director & Heads of School
	Approach to Instruction	Summer Orientation	Heads of School
	School Community (asset mapping)	Summer Orientation	Executive Director
<b>Data Review</b>  A relentless focus on the structure and process of the data improvement process and cycle of inquiry will be important for sustained improvement for student growth and academic achievement and teacher support	Class level assessments	At least twice per week during 50-minute planning	Heads of School
	Benchmark assessments and nonacademic student data	Every other academic session	Heads of School
	Panorama Student Surveys	Classroom Climate Survey collected every other academic session	Head of School - Culture Lead
	IEP/Accommodations	Whole school twice a year during full PD day	Executive Director
<b>School Safety and Culture</b>	Student Information Systems	Summer Orientation	Head of School - Culture Lead

A relentless focus on welcoming, safe, and culturally-responsive environment requires initial training and periodic reboots for staff to meet the social-emotional needs of students	Conscious Discipline	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
	Equity and Inclusion	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
	SEL & Trauma-Informed Practices	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day	Head of School - Culture Lead & Executive Director
<b>Instructional Model</b>  A relentless focus on grade appropriate assignments, strong instruction, deep engagement and teachers with high expectations to improve student outcomes.	Lesson Plan Development and Review	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School
	Analyzing Student Work	Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School
	Instructional Strategies, Collaborative Classrooms, & Inclusive Inclusive Strategies	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School
	Team Teaching	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and in Weekly Data Meetings	Heads of School & Executive Director
	Coaching Sessions	Summer Orientation Ongoing during full PD day and during teacher plan time	Heads of School & Executive Director

## Criteria for Hiring

At Atlas, it is critical that we recruit and hire educators who are mission aligned and reflect the diversity of our student body. The Founding Team at Atlas has set an internal goal that 50% of Atlas' staff members are people of color. Teacher quality is the most important in-school factor related to students' academic success, and low-income students benefit most when they are taught by skilled teachers.<sup>109</sup> At Atlas, it's important that we build a team of educators who are strong in the following competencies: Teaching Ability, Classroom Management, Commitment to Achievement, Personal Responsibility, & Constantly Learning. The chart below defines each competency and lists the indicators associated with each competency.

### Atlas Selection Criteria<sup>110</sup>

Competency/Criteria	Indicators
<b>Teaching Ability: Demonstrates an appropriate knowledge of content and pedagogy</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Provides reasonable examples of effective lesson-planning</li><li>• Instruction is focused on student achievement</li><li>• Conveys ideas and information clearly</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Addresses the multiple and varied needs of students in the classroom</li><li>• Makes content meaningful to students</li><li>• Sets concrete, ambitious goals for student achievement</li><li>• Indicates confidence that all students should be held to high standards</li><li>• Reflects on successes and failures</li><li>• Maintains high expectations for students when confronted with setbacks; continues to focus on students' academic success</li></ul>
<b>Classroom Management: Demonstrates ability to build strong relationships with students and deal effectively with challenging student behavior</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Aware of how one's own background and assumptions can influence one's perspective and interactions with others</li><li>• Demonstrates the ability to effectively and appropriately interact with students and others in the school community</li><li>• Remains productive and focused when confronted with challenges</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Assumes accountability for classroom management and culture</li><li>• Handles difficult situations appropriately</li><li>• Conveys reasonable understanding of potential challenges involved in teaching</li><li>• Demonstrates ability to deal effectively with challenging student behavior</li><li>• Effectively navigates scenarios or experiences with challenging interpersonal situations with appropriate norms of interactions</li><li>• Persists in offering viable and realistic</li></ul>

<sup>109</sup> Eric A. Hanushek, John F. Kain, and Steven G. Rivkin, "Teachers, Schools, and Academic Achievement" (Cambridge: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1998), available at [http://www.cgp.upenn.edu/pdf/Hanushek\\_NBER.PDF](http://www.cgp.upenn.edu/pdf/Hanushek_NBER.PDF).

<sup>110</sup> Adapted from TNT's open source Selection Criteria

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Displays willingness to adapt classroom manage style to meet the particular needs of the school or culture</li> </ul>	<p>strategies to deal with classroom management challenges</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conveys willingness to try multiple strategies or something new when things change or when confronted with challenges</li> <li>• Speaks of students, teachers, and community with respect</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commitment to Achievement: Demonstrates success in achieving student learning and other goals</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on concrete, measurable results</li> <li>• Teaching success related to specific, measurable student achievement</li> <li>• Demonstrates initiative and general willingness to take on challenges as well as a history of overcoming them</li> <li>• Sets and meets ambitious goals</li> <li>• Believes that students from all backgrounds can and must learn at high levels</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Describes, in detail, a significant, quantifiable goal demonstrating excellence</li> <li>• Earns formal recognition or awards for achievement</li> <li>• Demonstrates pattern of going above and beyond normal expectations</li> <li>• Possesses accomplishments with students and or in other endeavors</li> <li>• Sets ambitious and concrete goals for teaching performance and or student success</li> <li>• Describes specific examples of taking on challenges or initiatives</li> <li>• Discusses using benchmarks and or concrete goal setting as a general habit</li> <li>• Conveys belief that all students have the ability to learn at high levels</li> </ul>
<p><b>Personal Responsibility: Assumes accountability for reaching outcomes despite obstacles</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses on own capacity to impact situations rather than on external barriers</li> <li>• Understands challenges within larger context</li> <li>• Takes initiative to solve own problems</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Holds self accountable for student learning</li> <li>• Assumes responsibility for classroom environment and culture</li> <li>• Takes ownership of failures</li> <li>• Identifies lessons from past failures</li> <li>• Provides examples of maintaining focus on the big picture and addressing obstacles in past professional or personal experiences</li> <li>• Speaks specifically about setbacks in past experiences and/or scenario questions and is able to maintain appropriate focus and optimism</li> <li>• Persists in offering viable/realistic strategies to address scenarios</li> <li>• Provides examples of being self-reliant</li> </ul>
<p><b>Constant Learning: Draws lessons from previous experiences and applies them to</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Incorporates a variety of resources to achieve results</li> </ul>

<p><b>future endeavors</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Reflects regularly on performance to identify areas for improvement</li> <li>● Sees and welcomes feedback from others</li> <li>● Accesses resources to support self-development</li> <li>● Draws lessons from previous experience and applies them to future endeavors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Generates strategies that involve a range of resources</li> <li>● Seeks and welcomes feedback from others</li> <li>● Describes examples of professional development and other learning in order to become a more effective teacher</li> <li>● Reflects on previous professional experience and how they relate to teaching</li> <li>● Conveys willingness to learn from other perspectives</li> </ul>
<p><b>Commitment to Equity: Respectful of students and others in all situations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Aware of how one's own background &amp; assumptions can influence one's perspective &amp; interactions with others</li> <li>● Strives to understand the opinions and experiences of others</li> <li>● Demonstrates the ability to effectively and appropriately interact with students and others in the school community</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Handles difficult situations appropriately</li> <li>● Can articulate how their own background and understanding of a situation plays a role in situations they describe</li> <li>● Shows ability to consider others' perspectives in scenarios and past experiences</li> <li>● Demonstrates self-confidence and presence</li> <li>● Shows evidence of being able to contribute to a school's effectiveness by working collaboratively with others</li> <li>● Exhibits professional conduct and tone throughout interview</li> <li>● Effectively navigates scenarios or experiences with challenging interpersonal situations, with appropriate norms of interactions</li> <li>● Speaks of students, teachers and community with respect</li> <li>● Demonstrates willingness to learn from and understand the perspectives of others</li> </ul>

Based on these competencies, criteria, and indicators, the Executive Leadership Team at Atlas will create an interview guide with specific questions linked to each of these competencies. This will help ensure that we find candidates that are mission and vision aligned and will be a strong addition to the Atlas team.

### Teacher Recruitment Strategy

Atlas Public Schools is committed to hiring a diverse and instructionally strong staff that is mission and vision aligned, dedicated to the students and families we serve, and committed to their own personal growth. Research indicates that the quality of the classroom teacher is the most important

in-school factor in student achievement<sup>111</sup> and that the best teachers must “convey ideas in clear and convincing ways; create effective learning environments for different types of students; foster productive teacher-student relationships; be enthusiastic and creative; and work effectively with colleagues and parents.”<sup>112</sup>

St. Louis is a competitive market for attracting and retaining highly effective teachers. When the Founding Team was considering a year round calendar with shorter, but more frequent breaks, they met with and surveyed more than 50 current St. Louis educators. The overwhelming majority of teachers surveyed indicated they would prefer the year-round model. In addition, those same educators expressed a similar desire to work at a school that was diverse by design and had a commitment to integrated studies with place-based learning. Atlas’ commitment to diversity and inclusion, year-round calendar with more time built in for teacher development and more frequent breaks, along with our instructional model will help attract quality educators.

We aim to have a faculty and staff made up of at least 75% experienced teachers with three or more years of experience. In addition, we aim to have at least 50% of our faculty and staff to be people of color who reflect the diversity of our student body. Research shows that same-race primary school teachers tend to have a positive impact on students’ achievement, as measured by performance on standardized tests. Same-race teachers for Black students in grades 3-5 have been shown to also have long-term effects such as decreasing the likelihood that Black males drop out of high school and increasing the likelihood that Black students of both sexes will attend a four-year college.<sup>113</sup>

## **Legal Compliance**

Atlas complies with state and federal laws regarding employment, hiring, and staff grievances. Upon sponsorship, Atlas’ Board will adopt the Missouri Charter Public School Association’s Human Resources Policies. Atlas intends to hire teacher candidates who hold a valid Missouri teaching certificate, but [per RSMo 160.420.2](#) may employ non-certificated instructional personnel; provided that no more than 20% of the full-time equivalent instructional staff positions are filled by

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<sup>111</sup> “of all the controllable factors in an education system, the most important by far is the effectiveness of the classroom teacher.” - McKinsey report “Closing the talent gap: Attracting and retaining top-third graduates to careers in teaching” Sept. 2010

<sup>112</sup> “Most of the research has examined the relationship between measures of student performance, most commonly standardised test scores, and readily measurable teacher characteristics such as qualifications, teaching experience, and indicators of academic ability or subject-matter knowledge. Such research generally indicates that there is a positive relationship between these measured teacher characteristics and student performance, but perhaps to a lesser extent than may have been expected. A point of agreement among the various studies is that there are many important aspects of teacher quality that are not captured by the commonly used indicators such as qualifications, experience and tests of academic ability. The teacher characteristics that are harder to measure, but which can be vital to student learning include the ability to convey ideas in clear and convincing ways; to create effective learning environments for different types of students; to foster productive teacher-student relationships; to be enthusiastic and creative; and to work effectively with colleagues and parents.”

<sup>113</sup> Gershenson, Seth, Cassandra MD Hart, Constance A Lindsay, and Nicholas W. Papageorge. “The Long-Run Impacts of Same-Race Teachers.” Institute of Labor Economics. March 2017.

non-certificated personnel. This is consistent with [Title I Guidelines](#),<sup>114</sup> which mandates that schools receiving federal funding meet applicable teacher certification and licensure requirements.

When interviewing non-certified teacher candidates, Atlas considers relevant experience, training, and skills including by not limited to:

- Undergraduate and Master's degrees in applicable fields
- Evidence of technical training and career experience
- Teaching certificates issued by other states or prior teaching experience
- Certification by the National Standards Board

All staff members at Atlas Public Schools are at-will employees. Atlas will not employ teachers whose teaching license has been suspended or revoked by the Missouri State Board of Education in accordance with [RSMo 168.071](#). No candidate will be hired that does not pass a criminal background check and complete the Family Care Safety Registry.<sup>115</sup>

Atlas' Executive Director and Head of School - Operations Lead will work with a back office provider such as EdOps to manage payroll and HR logistics. Per [RSMO 160.420.3](#), personnel will be enrolled in the Public School Retirement System of the City of St. Louis.

The Atlas Board of Directors will ensure that a staff handbook is developed by the Fall of 2020 and is in compliance with all state and federal laws regarding employment, hiring, and staff grievances.

### **Recruitment Pipelines**

Atlas will focus teacher recruitment efforts on identifying a diverse, dynamic, and experienced group of prospective teachers through both traditional and non-traditional means. When recruiting Founding Team Members for our inaugural school year, Atlas' Executive Leadership Team will recruit heavily from their extensive professional networks in addition to the following recruitment pipelines:

Prospective traditional recruitment strategies Atlas will use are:

- [MOREAP](#),<sup>116</sup> Missouri's teacher hiring platform

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<sup>114</sup> For more information on Title I Guidelines, see: <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg2.html#sec1114>

<sup>115</sup> Candidates convicted of a felony or Class A misdemeanor are automatically disqualified; Class B/C misdemeanors and infractions trigger a Board review and are evaluated case by case.

<sup>116</sup> For more information on MOREAP see: <http://www.moreap.net/>

- Partnering with local teacher preparation programs, such as [Saint Louis University](#) (SLU)<sup>117</sup>, [Harris-Stowe University](#),<sup>118</sup> [Webster University](#),<sup>119</sup> and the [University of Missouri - St. Louis](#) (UMSL)<sup>120</sup>
- Recruiting through Atlas' school website
- Teacher referral program

Atlas will also focus on non-traditional recruitment strategies. Prospective partners for recruitment through non-traditional channels are:

- [Teach For America - St. Louis](#)<sup>121</sup>
- [Educators Rising](#), a teacher pipeline organization that supports diverse high school students to become teachers and leaders in education<sup>122</sup>
- [Black and Brown Teaching Trust](#), a local community engagement initiative that connects Black and brown educators with education leaders<sup>123</sup>
- [Historically Black Colleges & Universities](#)<sup>124</sup>
- [Breakthrough Collaborative](#), a national network that provides diverse college students with hands-on classroom experience and provides them resources to pursue careers in education<sup>125</sup>
- [National Association of Community College Teacher Education Programs \(NACCTEP\)](#), a national organization that supports high-quality teacher education at the community college level and that supports the recruitment and retention of diverse candidates in teaching<sup>126</sup>
- National cohort scholarship programs like the [Posse Scholarship](#), which recruit and support low-income students to be the first in their family to attend college<sup>127</sup>
- [St. Louis Teacher Residency Program](#)<sup>128</sup>
- [Latinos for Education](#)<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>117</sup> For more information on Saint Louis University (SLU) see:

<https://www.slu.edu/education/index.php><https://www.slu.edu/education/index.php>

<sup>118</sup> For more information on Harris-Stowe University see:

[http://go.hssu.edu/rsp\\_content.cfm?wid=11&pid=46&CFID=1611890&CFTOKEN=8a0adb769ae2dd24-229AFCBA-F653-C50A-FADD0D7269CF2B40](http://go.hssu.edu/rsp_content.cfm?wid=11&pid=46&CFID=1611890&CFTOKEN=8a0adb769ae2dd24-229AFCBA-F653-C50A-FADD0D7269CF2B40)

<sup>119</sup> For more information on Webster University see:

<http://www.webster.edu/education/academics/teacher-certification.html>

<sup>120</sup> For more information on University of Missouri - St. Louis (UMSL) see:

<https://coe.umsu.edu/advising/certification/teacher.html>

<sup>121</sup> For more information on Teach for America see: <https://www.teachforamerica.org/where-we-work/st-louis>

<sup>122</sup> For more information on Educators Rising see: <https://www.educatorsrising.org/>

<sup>123</sup> For more information on Black and Brown Teaching Trust see: [https://twitter.com/teach\\_314?lang=en](https://twitter.com/teach_314?lang=en)

<sup>124</sup> For more information on Historically Black Colleges and Universities see:

<https://newsone.com/3683842/hbcu-unique-role-training-skilled-black-educators-howard-university-teacher-shortage-diversity-john-king/>

<sup>125</sup> For more information on Breakthrough Collaborative see: <https://www.breakthroughcollaborative.org/>

<sup>126</sup> For more information on NACCTEP see: <http://nacctep.riosalado.edu/new/home.html>

<sup>127</sup> For more information on Posse Scholarship see: <https://www.possefoundation.org/>

<sup>128</sup> For more information on St. Louis Teacher Residency see: <https://www.stlteacher.org/>

<sup>129</sup> For more information on Latinos for Education see: <https://www.latinosforeducation.org/>

- [Black Males in Education - STL](#), an organization an organized movement to influence, advocate, connect, and empower. BMESTL is committed to creating spaces for people and organizations interested in the recruitment, development, supporting, and mentoring of current and future Black educators.<sup>130</sup>

## Hiring Process

Prospective teachers will engage in a multi-step hiring process. First, a written application will measure a teacher's writing ability, and will allow them to share their standardized test scores, qualifications, and experience, factors which correlate to workplace success.<sup>131</sup> Candidates will also have the opportunity to share how they are aligned to Atlas' mission, vision and values.

Applicants who advance will participate in a phone interview and complete a performance task. Applicants who pass this round of the interview process will be invited to an hour-long in-person interview with the Head of School & Executive Director. The ideal candidate would be someone who exhibits Atlas' core competencies of quality teaching and who grew up and still lives in the same community as Atlas' students.

During this interview, school leaders will ask open-ended questions that are aligned to Atlas' core competencies, criteria, and indicators. During the interview leaders will analyze the prospective candidate's cultural competence, as well as their ability to clearly and convincingly convey ideas, empathize with different types of people, imagine and enact solutions to complex problems, and foster productive professional relationships. School leaders will also assess the candidate's enthusiasm and creativity during the in-person interview.

From there, candidates will be invited to participate in a mock teaching demonstration and teach-back. Teach-backs are a form of professional development in which teachers role-play an instructional lesson, get feedback from their colleagues, and re-teach the lesson incorporating the feedback.

School leaders will use the quantitative data from the interview rubrics as well as qualitative/experiential data such as personal conversations with the candidate and intuition to make hiring decisions.

Atlas will use a software system such as Frontline to electronically process applications. The chart below provides a description of the components of the Atlas hiring process.

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<sup>130</sup> For more information on Black Males in Education - STL see: <https://bmestl.com/>

<sup>131</sup> Schmidt, F. L., & Hunter, J. E. (1998). [The Validity and Utility of Selection Methods in Personnel Psychology—Practical and Theoretical Implications of 85 Years of Research Findings](#). Psychological Bulletin, 124(2), p. 262.

Step	Action Item	What is Involved
1 Recruit & Initiate	Recruit Staff	Recruit teachers through advertisements in appropriate networks, online job search engines, professional organization websites, and through connections with universities and teacher preparation pipelines
	Applicant prepares a resume and cover letter	Applicant prepares relevant documents to apply for the position
	Submit Online Application	Applicant submits a resume and cover letter for the position they are applying for.
2 Preliminary Work	Review Application	The Executive Leadership Team will review applications and screen for minimum requirements
	Phone Interview	Conducted by a member of the Executive Leadership Team to determine if the candidate has the experience, background knowledge, philosophical and instructional acumen for the Atlas culture. Applicants selected will move to a formal interview.
	Performance Task	The candidate will be provided with a student data overview appropriate to the candidate's content area and the candidate will analyze the student profile and decide on the next steps.
3 In Person	Formal Face-to-Face/Video Interview	Led by the Head of School (year 1) and the Hiring Team (subsequent years) with help from the Executive Director. Will conduct a standardized interview. Interview questions with a rubric is used for both teachers and leadership.
	Mock Teaching with Teach-Back	Potential candidates will create a 10 minute lesson in advance and teach the lesson in front of the hiring committee. They will then receive feedback from the Head of School, and reteach the lesson.
	Review Performance Task	The hiring team will review and score the response to the performance task.
4 Decision	Reference Check	Atlas staff will call the references listed by the applicant. One reference must include a current or former employer.
	Offer of Employment	Atlas will offer employment through a formal letter/contract and phone call. Included in the offer of employment letter

		will be the job position, title, salary, and at-will employment statement. All potential employees are expected to sign the employment offer. Refusal will result in the applicant not being hired by Atlas Public Schools.
	Background and Family Safety Checks	All potential Atlas employees must conduct fingerprinting and participate in the criminal background and complete the Family Care Safety Registry processes.
	Acceptance of the Offer	The applicant will sign an offer letter and contract to accept employment for the applied position. The applicant will be considered an at-will employee and any refusal will result in the applicant not being hired by Atlas.

## Staff Retention

This section outlines Atlas' strategies for retaining its staff. Staff retention is especially important because of widespread teacher attrition in the larger education system.<sup>132</sup> Three of the main reasons for teacher attrition are lack of support for new teachers, challenging working conditions, and dissatisfaction with compensation.<sup>133</sup> In light of this, Atlas intentionally designs an excellent educator experience as a means of retaining its staff and ensuring high quality education for its students. Moreover, Atlas' year-round academic calendar with regular intercession breaks, high quality professional development, collaborative culture, and competitive salaries will help improve educator retention. Experienced educators have a greater positive impact on student achievement than inexperienced educators do<sup>134</sup> which is why our teacher retention efforts at Atlas are so important.

Atlas Public schools will seek to retain teachers through the following measures:

- **Competitive Compensation:** Atlas offers a competitive salary and benefits package and is a leader in the city of St. Louis and shows educators that we value the work they are doing.
- **Year-Round Calendar:** Atlas' year round calendar, with more time built into the schedule for quality professional development, reflection on lesson implementation, and data analysis. Our calendar provides more frequent breaks for teachers to rest and grow stronger.

<sup>132</sup> Sutchter, L., Darling-Hammond, L., & Carver-Thomas, D. (2016). [A coming crisis in teaching? Teacher supply, demand, and shortages in the U.S.](#) Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute.

<sup>133</sup> For an infographic of this information, see "[Why do Teachers Leave?](#)" created by the Learning Policy Institute. For the full report, see: Podolsky, A., Kini, T., Bishop, J., & Darling-Hammond, L. (2016). [Solving the Teacher Shortage: How to Attract and Retain Excellent Educators.](#) Palo Alto, CA: Learning Policy Institute

<sup>134</sup> Darling-Hammond, Linda. [Research on Teaching and Teacher Education and Its Influences on Policy and Practice.](#) Educational Researcher, Vol. 45 No. 2, pp. 83–91

- **Professional Work Environment:** Atlas has a working environment that is professional and collegial. Our Diverse-by-Design school model and Anti-Bias, Anti-Racist commitment are essential as we work as a team to support each other and our families to acknowledge, honor, and appreciate differences.
- **Co-Taught Classes & Small Group Work:** The vast majority of classes at Atlas are conducted in small groups or are co-taught by two staff members. This allows teachers to provide more individualized instruction, and for students to get the support they need. This leads to higher levels of teacher satisfaction as they see high rates of student growth.
- **Increased Time for Lesson Preparation:** Homeroom teachers at Atlas get two 50 minute plan times each day that helps them be more prepared for classroom instruction and means they don't have to bring as much work home with them. When teachers are prepared they feel more successful and the challenging job of an educator becomes more sustainable.
- **Instructional Support:** Every teacher at Atlas is coached by an experienced educator who provides support and guidance. Coaches deliver targeted feedback and provide continuous development to all staff members in their various roles.
- **Resources:** The Executive Leadership Team will work to ensure that every staff member at Atlas has the resources they need to be successful in their roles. Teachers will not be expected to spend their own money on classroom supplies.
- **Staff Surveys & Problem-Solving Committees:** Staff members will provide feedback through a staff survey each academic session to help identify areas of growth. Then, during the full week of professional development, team members will participate in a problem solving committee around meaningful issues that were identified through the survey. This way all team members help identify challenges and are a part of the solution.

## Salary and Benefits

Atlas will provide a competitive salary and benefits package for its employees. The median starting teacher salary is \$52,500. This salary was based on regional averages and was generated to show that Atlas values the work of its teachers. In addition, no new faculty member earns less than \$45,000 per year. The chart below shows the average regular term teacher salaries for the state of Missouri, as well as the St. Louis Public School District and other charter school networks within the city of St. Louis. Moreover, the chart contains average salaries from some of the surrounding school

districts to provide a more holistic picture of teacher pay in the region.<sup>135</sup> More information regarding Atlas' staffing related budget assumptions can be found in *C.1 - Budget*.

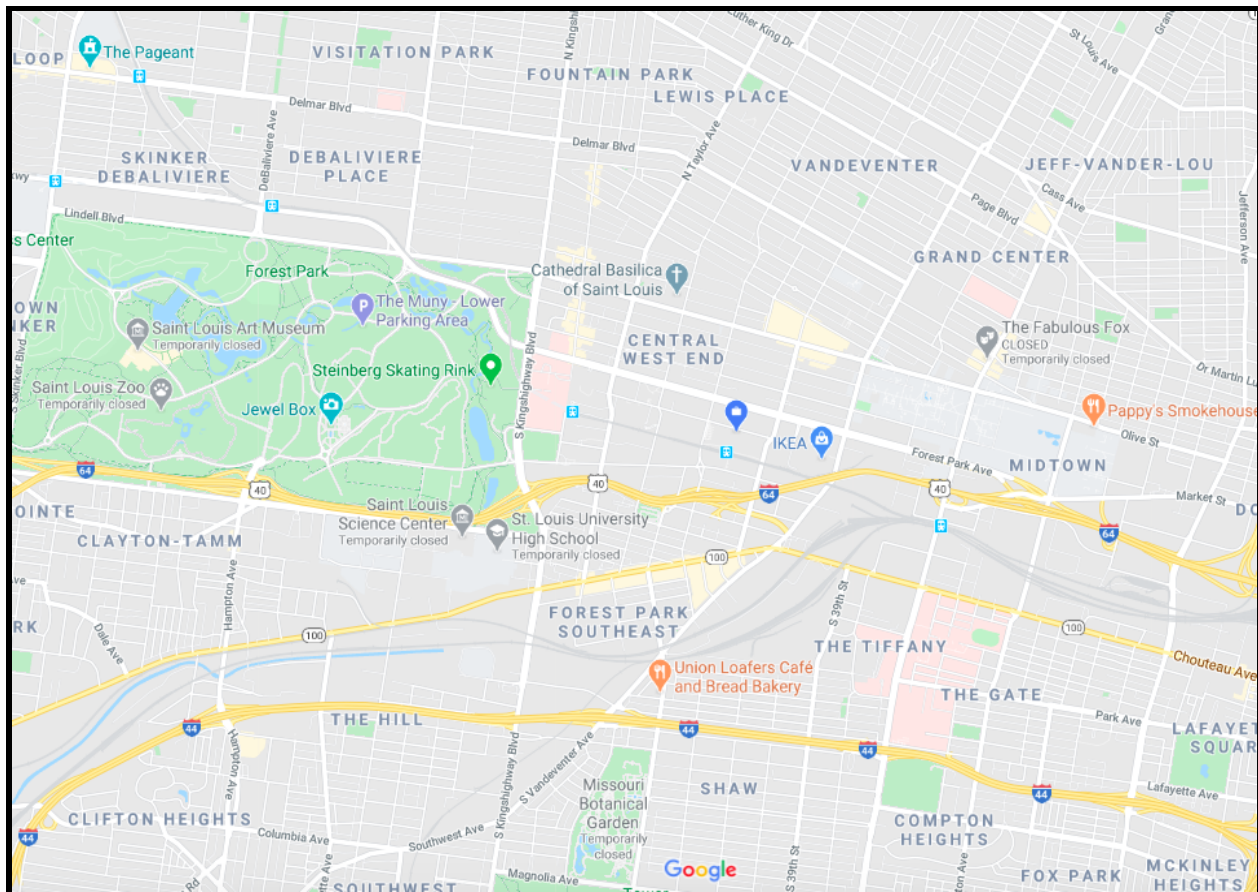
<b>Average Regular Term Teacher Salaries 2018</b>	
<b>State of Missouri</b>	<b>\$ 49,302</b>
St. Louis Public School District	\$ 48,433
KIPP St. Louis Public Schools	\$ 44,950
Lafayette Preparatory Academy	\$ 46,898
Confluence Academies	\$ 46,575
North Side Community School	\$ 46,927
City Garden Montessori	\$ 45,263
<b>Average:</b>	<b>\$ 46,508</b>
Normandy Schools Collaborative	\$ 54,735
Maplewood-Richmond Heights	\$ 57,560
Ritenour	\$ 61,278
Riverview Gardens	\$ 50,904
University City	\$ 59,480
Jennings	\$ 62,951
<b>Average:</b>	<b>\$ 57,818</b>

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<sup>135</sup> Average Regular Term Teacher Salaries was taken from [DESE State and District Report Cards](#) and is based on 2018 data.

## B.5 - Student Recruitment & Enrollment

As an intentionally diverse school that aims to be an institutional asset to our surrounding community, Atlas' student recruitment and enrollment strategy are directly connected to our target population and the neighborhoods surrounding our school. Atlas intends to be strategically located in the heart of St. Louis' Central Corridor, preferably in either the 63108 or 63110 zip code. This area is comprised of roughly five distinct neighborhoods: The Central West End, Grand Center, The Hill, Forest Park Southeast, and Shaw. In order to be an asset to these communities, Atlas' lottery policy gives preference to students living in the 63108 and 63110 zip codes.



While Atlas aims to serve the students and families living in our priority zip codes, we will also recruit students living in surrounding neighborhoods such as: Fountain Park, Vandeventer, JeffVanderLou, Academy/Sherman Park, the Ville, North Hampton, Lafayette Square, The Gate, Compton Heights, Fox Park, Tower Grove East, Tower Grove South, Southwest Garden, and Clayton-Tamm. Collectively, these neighborhoods are rich in both racial and economic diversity.

The Atlas Founding Team believes that the school's location will aid in our student recruitment efforts. As we work to finalize the exact location of our school, we will ensure that the building is easily accessible to our families and is located in the Central Corridor, making it a viable choice for families throughout the city.

The mission of Atlas is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. Our mission was created in conjunction with families, community members, and fellow educators that envision a time when all students in St. Louis have the skills and habits needed to be successful in the 21st century, and where St. Louis is a model of a flourishing, diverse, and empowered community. We believe that high quality public schools will be the catalyst for community transformation that will result in a thriving city.

Due to the fact that Atlas' mission was created with community input, the Founders of Atlas know that St. Louis families will be attracted to several components of our school design. By holding focus groups, meeting with individual families, and conducting surveys, we understand why families want their children in a safe and joyful school environment where they are excited to learn and have a sense of belonging. It became clear that families want their children to learn through relevant, hands-on experiences, and as educators, we know that student engagement is a catalyst for deeper learning. This is why we put an emphasis on place-based learning which promotes learning locally in the natural, built, historic, and cultural environment. Projects and programs encourage partnerships between students, teachers, and community members that strengthen student achievement, community vitality, and a healthy environment.<sup>136</sup>

Families have told us time and time again how hard it is to find programming, childcare, and enrichment opportunities for their children during the summer that is affordable. Their concerns prompted us to consider alternatives; ultimately landing on a year-round calendar that meets the needs of families, but also provides more equitable learning opportunities for students. Additionally, families expressed their desire to send their children to a school that values and celebrates diversity, which is one of the many reasons why Atlas is intentional around our diversity and inclusion efforts.

### **Expanding High Performing School Options**

The Central Corridor is an amazing area that is rich in history and cultural significance. In recent years the neighborhood has seen a resurgence in community investment. For example, the Kranzberg Arts Foundation has invested heavily in the Grand Center Arts District, and a \$30 million housing development backed by philanthropist and arts patron Emily Pulitzer is poised to remake a virtually empty block on Olive Street. Additionally, the nearby Cortex Innovation Community is a hub

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<sup>136</sup> Center for Place Based Education. Retrieved from: <https://www.antioch.edu/new-england/resources/centers-institutes/center-place-based-education/>

of business, innovation, and technology. Unfortunately, many of the families we met with who live in the area have struggled to find an elementary school that is a good fit for their family.

The table below depicts public school options throughout the Central Corridor; specifically looking at elementary school options in the 63103, 63104, 63106, 63108, 63110, and 63113 zip codes. The table highlights the grades served at each school, total enrollment, and the 2019 MAP proficiency rates for English Language Arts and Mathematics for 3rd-5th grade.

### **2019 MAP Proficiency Data for Public Schools Located In and Around the Central Corridor<sup>137</sup>**

St. Louis Public Schools	School Zip Code	Grades Served	K-12 Enrollment	2019 MAP ELA Proficiency			2019 MAP Math Proficiency		
				Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
Hodgen Elementary	63104	PK-6	198	0%	0%	7%	0%	0%	21%
Shenandoah Elementary	63104	PK-6	144	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Siegel Elementary	63104	PK-6	213	0%	9%	0%	0%	12%	21%
Peabody Elementary	63104	PK-5	135	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Carver Elementary	63106	K-5	167	13%	12%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Dunbar Elementary	63106	PK-6	119	0%	0%	0%	21%	0%	0%
Gateway Elementary	63106	PK-5	512	18%	25%	14%	21%	19%	24%
Pamoja at Cole	63108	PK-8	336	0%	0%	20%	0%	0%	17%
Stix Early Childhood Center	63110	PK-2	293	No Test Data Available					
Adams Elementary	63113	PK-6	222	15%	0%	7%	20%	0%	11%
Mullanphy Botanical Gardens	63113	PK-5	381	10%	24%	24%	10%	28%	11%
Washington Montessori	63113	PK-5	262	0%	0%	9%	0%	0%	0%
Public Charter Schools	School Zip Code	Grades Served	Enrollment	2019 MAP ELA Proficiency			2019 MAP Math Proficiency		
				Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5
St. Louis Language Immersion School	63103	K-8	252		26%	33%		29%	33%
Lafayette Preparatory Academy	63104	K-7	302	46%	63%	41%	41%	40%	38%
The Biome	63108	K-4	138	20%	35%		0%	0%	

<sup>137</sup> Data pulled from DESE State Report Card on 4/28/20. Retrieved From: [https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Reports/SSRS\\_Print.aspx](https://apps.dese.mo.gov/MCDS/Reports/SSRS_Print.aspx)

## Student Recruitment

Atlas will initiate a methodical recruitment process that ensures that our school is socioeconomically and racially diverse. Research from The Century Foundation states that 70% racial representation is the maximum possible threshold for creating a diverse learning environment. Similarly, the school body is socioeconomically diverse if 30-70% of students qualify for free or reduced lunch.<sup>138</sup> Based on this research, Atlas has set a goal around student diversity in A.7 - *School Specific Goals & Objectives*. It reads:

**Goal 8 - Diversity & Inclusion:** As a diverse-by-design school, Atlas will have a high level of diversity in terms of both socioeconomic status (30–70 percent low-income) and race/ethnicity (largest racial/ethnic group is no more than 70 percent).

In order to accomplish this goal, the team at Atlas is intentional around our recruitment efforts. We track student applications on a daily basis to ensure that our applicant pool reflects the diversity of our city. For more information see A.5 - *Target Population*.

## Student Enrollment & Recruitment Targets

All students who reside within the St. Louis Public School District boundaries will be eligible to enroll in Atlas Public Schools. The enrollment process will be fully compliant with [RSMo160.410](#), which addresses school admissions. In Year 1, Atlas will recruit 130 incoming kindergarten and first grade students for the 2021-2022 school year (3 classes of 26 kindergartens and 2 classes of 26 first grade students). Each year thereafter, Atlas will grow by one grade level and enroll an additional 78 students. Atlas will be fully grown and at capacity with 468 students during the 2026-2027 school year. The chart below displays our student enrollment projections.

Atlas Enrollment Projections						
Grade Level	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
K	78	78	78	78	78	78
1	52	78	78	78	78	78
2	X	52	78	78	78	78
3	X	X	52	78	78	78
4	X	X	X	52	78	78
5	X	X	X	X	52	78
<b>Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>468</b>

<sup>138</sup> The Century Foundation. Retrieved from: <https://tcf.org/content/report/diverse-design-charter-schools/>

## Student Transience and Attrition

The Founding Team at Atlas aims to create an environment where students and their families feel like they are a part of a strong and vibrant school culture. As an intentionally diverse school, it is critically important that members of our community, including students, families, and staff have a true sense of belonging and that each student's individual needs are being met. Student retention data is a strong indicator of overall culture and is critical to our success as a school.

[Citizens of the World](#)<sup>139</sup>, a diverse-by-design school in Kansas City, had roughly 75% student retention after its first year of operation and now consistently retains close to 90% of their students. Based on our conversations with the leadership team at Citizens of the World, the Founding Team at Atlas has set the following student re-enrollment goal:

**Goal 7 - Re-Enrollment:** By our third year of operation, 80% of students who are enrolled at Atlas on October 1st will be re-enrolled at Atlas on October 1st of the following school year, with the exception of the students whose families move out of the city of St. Louis.

Atlas anticipates a low rate of student attrition, 20% annually, for the following reasons:

1. Atlas will be a high quality school, working to meet the academic and social-emotional needs of all students.
2. Atlas will be a loving and joyful environment where students feel safe and diversity is celebrated.
3. Families make an upfront commitment by choosing to send their child to Atlas, including providing their own transportation.
4. When a child moves within the city limits of St. Louis, they do not need to leave Atlas.
5. Atlas has a proactive approach with families using data, surveys, and frequent communication to address family concerns.
6. Atlas will work with families who do not have access to transportation and will fully abide by the [McKinney- Vento Homeless Assistance Act](#) for students experiencing homelessness or are in transition.<sup>140</sup>

Atlas will backfill at every grade level from kindergarten through fifth grade in order to serve as many students as possible. The table below illustrates Atlas recruitment targets each year which takes into account both new student enrollment and the enrollment needed to backfill due to student attrition. For example, after the first year of operation if we lose 20% of our 78 kindergarten students we would need to recruit an additional 16 rising first graders for the subsequent school year. Sums on the bottom row reflect our total recruitment targets each year.

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<sup>139</sup> For more information on Citizens of the World - Kansas City see: <https://www.cwckansascity.org/>

<sup>140</sup> For more on the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, see: <https://nche.ed.gov/mckinney-vento/>

Atlas Recruitment Targets						
Grade Level	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
K	78	78	78	78	78	78
1	52	16	16	16	16	16
2		11	16	16	16	16
3			11	16	16	16
4				11	16	16
5					11	16
<b>Total:</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>105</b>	<b>121</b>	<b>137</b>	<b>153</b>	<b>158</b>

### Enrollment & Lottery Policy

Atlas will be nonsectarian in its programs, admission policies, and all other operations, and will not charge tuition nor discriminate, for admission or otherwise, on the basis of race, ethnicity, religion, national origin, sexual orientation, disability, gender, income level, or proficiency in the English language. Atlas may limit admission to students within a given age group or grade level, but will not have specific requirements for admission (e.g. minimum grade point average, test scores, discipline records, etc.)

Atlas aims to be an institutional asset to the neighborhoods closest to our school, so our lottery policy gives preference to students in our target zip codes. Seats remaining after the lotteries are open to students in St. Louis City on a first-come, first-serve basis. Pursuant to [RSMo 160.410](#), the enrollment process at Atlas Public Schools will be open to:

- all students who reside within the boundaries of the St. Louis Public School District
- non-resident students who transfer from an unaccredited district
- those eligible under the terms of judicial settlements or through urban voluntary transfer programs as defined by [RSMO 167.131](#)

Families must submit a complete application for their child prior to the application deadline. Atlas will accept applicants through the Missouri Charter Public School Association's Central Application, on which families can sign up to receive updates via cell phone or computer. Parents can also access this application portal through MCPSA's website, Atlas' website, the school's front office, or

their computers & phones. Upon receiving an application, a team member from Atlas will follow up to explain our enrollment process and timeline. Applications must be complete and include release records and required supporting documentation (e.g., proof of residency, immunizations). Applications received on time but incomplete due to circumstances beyond the applicant's control may be included in the lottery at the discretion of the Executive Director (ED). Applicants may always appeal the ED's decision to the Atlas Board of Directors.

If the number of applications exceeds capacity, a lottery will be held.

Atlas will hold two lotteries to enroll students, one in Session 3 on the third Friday in December and one on the first Friday of March during Session 4. If the number of applicants for either lottery exceeds capacity, Atlas will enroll students randomly, with preference for eligible new students given in the following order:

1. Children of faculty & staff
2. Siblings of students currently enrolled as of the lottery date<sup>141</sup>
3. Students who reside in the 63108 or 63110 zip codes<sup>142</sup>
4. Students who qualify for free and reduced lunch, and
5. Other student applicants

Should a lottery be held, all completed and accepted applications submitted during the enrollment period will be publicly drawn in random order until capacity is reached. Lotteries will be randomized by computer and certified by a third-party public official or outside firm to attest to the lottery's fairness.

Additional applicants after the lottery will be added to a "waiting list," which will rank applications that were submitted during the enrollment period. Applications received after the enrollment period will be added to the bottom of the waiting list. These applicants will be identified by number and by grade.

Additional seat capacity after the second lottery will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis to eligible students.

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<sup>141</sup> For the purposes of this policy, the term "sibling" is defined as a child who has at least one biological or adoptive parent in common with the admitted student, or who has been legally adopted by or placed under the legal guardianship of at least one biological or adoptive parent of the admitted student. Step-siblings and cousins are only considered siblings if they reside at the same address as the sibling who is a current Atlas student.

<sup>142</sup> In the event that Atlas is unable to secure a facility in either the 63108 or 63110 zip code, students living in the zip code of our temporary facility will also be included in Atlas' lottery preference.

To begin planning for our special education needs immediately, Atlas will request information about special education services on the enrollment form (not on the application). Within two business days of enrollment, Atlas will request academic, special needs, and discipline records (as required by [RSMO 160.261](#)) from all schools the student has attended in the last twelve months. To determine the number of at-risk students in each enrolling class, Atlas will download direct certification forms and distribute applications for free-or-reduced-priced lunch. Enrolled families are invited to a school orientation event, which will include opportunities to learn more about Atlas, meet staff, and begin coordinating transportation (carpooling, walking groups, etc.). Atlas faculty will visit each admitted student's home to get to know the student and family, review our school model, and sign the Atlas Compact, a parent-student-teacher commitment form.

If students refuse their admission, families on the waitlist will be notified and the above process repeated. It is the responsibility of the families on the waitlist to maintain updated contact information and emergency contacts. However, contact will be attempted by phone and, if available, email; if it is not possible to reach a waitlist family directly, a message will be left on the phone and/or email. In an attempt to be as equitable as possible in our admissions process, an Atlas team member will also attempt a home visit to families who are on the waitlist when a seat becomes available for their child. Families offered a spot off the waitlist will have 72 hours to complete the enrollment process before the opening is offered to the next student on the waitlist.

### **Currently Enrolled Students & Re-Enrollment**

Students who are currently enrolled at Atlas are exempt from the lottery and are guaranteed enrollment in the next academic year; however, families will need to complete and submit the re-enrollment packet for each child that is currently enrolled and returning for the following academic year. The re-enrollment packet must be completed in full and submitted by the specified date to ensure the student is re-enrolled. Atlas team members will follow up with families of students who have not completed their re-enrollment packets to offer assistance as needed. However, if the packet is not received by the specified date, the student's space is no longer reserved and may be filled by the next student on the waiting list.

### **Policy on Mid-Year Enrollment**

Atlas will accept applicants from the waitlist through the start of the second academic session if a seat is available. In order to maintain consistency and provide a stable learning environment for all our students, Atlas will not accept new students from the waitlist after the start of the second academic session. At the end of the year, during *Session 7 - Extended Summer Session*, Atlas will accept new students from the waitlist. During the 2021-2022 school year, this session runs from June 27-July 15.

## Outreach and Recruitment Plan

Atlas will use an inclusive and comprehensive outreach and recruitment plan to build an equitable and diverse school community. We will use both traditional and nontraditional methods to recruit a diverse group of students and families. Our goal is to recruit a student population that is diverse in terms of race, income, and culture. We have budgeted \$25,000 out of our \$40,000 stipend from The Opportunity Trust to meet our recruitment goals.

### Outreach

For the 2021-2022 school year, family outreach will be spearheaded by the Executive Director and Co-Heads of School, but all team members at Atlas will be involved in our outreach and recruitment efforts. We will develop application materials and forms in multiple languages based on the needs of the families in the community. These materials will be available in hard copy and online for families to read and/or complete.

The Founding Team will canvas the community starting in the summer of 2020 by setting up booths at local community events and knocking on doors multiple times per month.

Once Atlas has a strong commitment and following of Founding Families, we will ask the Founding Families to volunteer by canvassing local neighborhoods to spread information about the school and its application process, and by handing out flyers and displaying yard signs and door hangers. The Founding Families will also hand out Atlas information cards to friends and family.

### Recruitment

The following table outlines some of the engagement and recruitment strategies that Atlas Public Schools will utilize to recruit students and families:

### Atlas Student Recruitment Strategy For 2021-2022 School Year

<b>Student Recruitment Council</b>	Form a committee made up of 7-10 individuals, including educators and parents, who spearhead Atlas' recruitment efforts.
<b>At-Home Learning Kits</b>	Mail at-home learning kits for families with children ages 3-5 to at least 100 families in the city. Continue engagement with posting extension activities on social media to keep families and children engaged.

<b>Social Media &amp; Online Marketing</b>	<p>Request that families who participated in pilot share Atlas' Facebook and Instagram posts.</p> <p>Post regularly (at least once a week) to our social media pages.</p> <p>Boost specific Facebook posts that target student recruitment.</p> <p>Specifically follow families who follow children's activities in St. Louis (for example, follow families who follow City Museum with hopes of them gaining interest in our page).</p> <p>Post giveaways such as books and gift cards to those who share and like our Facebook page.</p>
<b>Newsletters</b>	<p>Send out a monthly newsletter beginning June 2020. Families can sign up via social media or the Atlas website.</p>
<b>Virtual Events</b>	<p>Host free online events for families with children under the age of 6 such as read alouds with the founding staff, dance classes over Zoom, and informational sessions with the Founding Team.</p>
<b>Utilizing Personal Networks</b>	<p>Create a database of eligible families from personal networks. Ask eligible families to host a living room conversation and invite friends with small children to learn more about Atlas.</p>
<b>Focus Groups</b>	<p>Recruit families who are interested in our school model and/or had children at Atlas' pilot to participate in focus groups to keep the conversation going.</p>
<b>Strategically Partner with Community Organizations</b>	<p>Partner with directors of Early Childhood Centers. The Founding Team can set up booths in the front lobby of centers to meet with families, as well as host reading labs after school for these families with young children.</p> <p>Partner with middle schools such as Loyola and Kairos to send home marketing materials for younger family members/neighbors/family friends.</p> <p>Partner with nonprofit organizations such as Organizer Zero, EdHub, and WEPOWER.</p>

	<p>Partner with churches in the 63108 and 63110 zip codes to hold ice cream socials for families immediately after services.</p> <p>Hold monthly events in conjunction with community organizations such as Third Fridays with Third Degree Glass Factory.</p>
<b>Summer 2020 pilot</b>	Recruit 3 and 4 year olds for a summer pilot, then encourage families to enroll their child at Atlas.
<b>On-the-Ground Marketing</b>	<p>Partner with Children's Education Alliance of Missouri (CEAM) for petition and door to door Marketing.</p> <p>Hire founding team members to help with on the ground recruitment like passing out flyers at parks, Walmarts, coffee shops, public libraries, and other areas where families congregate.</p> <p>Share information with realtors so they can sell Atlas when a client is looking at a home in our target geographic area.</p>
<b>Other Marketing Strategies</b>	Pay for advertising on bus stops, park benches, and other public areas.

## Community Demand

**Letters of Support:** We have 16 letters of support from families and community organizations in St. Louis. See *Appendix B.5.1*.

**Petition:** We have over 300 signatures of support from St. Louis residents who are in favor of the opening of Atlas in 2021. See *Appendix B.5.2*.

**Prospective families:** Over 100 families signed up for Atlas remote learning kits within the first five days of posting the application on Facebook. Of these families, more than 84% are prospective Atlas families.

**Pilot 2019:** In addition to the 20 families who signed up within two week of posting the summer pilot, we had such high demand we created a waitlist of 6 families before ending the application

process. In addition, the summer pilot had 9 community organizations collaborate with our programming.

**Pilot 2020:** Despite the impact of Covid-19, we had more than 20 families express interest in our pilot with 13 of those families qualifying for our pilot. We plan to hold our pilot as soon as it is safe to do so.

**Social Media:** Atlas launched social media platforms in July 2019 and already has 215 active followers on Facebook and 72 active followers on Instagram.

## **B.6 - Family, Community, Higher Education, & Employee Involvement**

### **Family Engagement**

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is a community made up of students, families, community members, and educators. Throughout the design process, the Founding Team at Atlas has solicited feedback and input from families and community members to build the school *with* the community and not *for* the community. Through individual conversations, focus groups, surveys, and a summer pilot, the Founding Team has consistently sought feedback and made adjustments to the school model to meet the demands of the St. Louis community. Although the Board of Directors are ultimately responsible for making governing decisions about school policy, family and community input is necessary for the relevance and success of those decisions and the school at large. We will establish both a Family Council and Parent Work Group to create a welcoming space for families to come together, give feedback, problem solve, and help make Atlas a better school.

Atlas believes that student success is a shared responsibility that requires a strong partnership between families and the school. However, we feel that it is the school's obligation to actively engage families and work to build a relationship that is trusting and supportive. When a student is enrolled at Atlas, the school team will continuously strive to engage and partner with our families in ways that are meaningful to them and have a positive impact on their child's education. The team at Atlas will work in partnership with families to support student learning and, to the extent possible, the larger community. At Atlas, we believe in being transparent with families regarding their child's academic data so they always know how their child is performing and the progress they are making towards their goals. Moreover, we want families to know exactly what the team at Atlas is doing to support their child while they are at school, and what specific strategies they can use at home to help their child reach their goals.

### **Soliciting Input from Families at Atlas on Design, Governance, & Administration**

Atlas has been built with the input and feedback from parents and community members through focus groups, one-on-one meetings, and surveys. The ideas and concerns the community voiced are interwoven in the fabric of the school we envision. We also understand the need to create formal systems that explicitly incorporate family and community input into the governance and decision-making process so that their voices continue to be heard as the school grows. Atlas plans an active role for parents in the governance and administration of the school to ensure that we best serve their children by incorporating the necessary feedback and direction from parents and by assisting families as they help their children be successful in school. As such, we will work to establish a variety of ways for families to give feedback on their and their child's experience at Atlas.

**Piloting School Design:** During the summer of 2019, The Founding Team at Atlas ran a week-long summer pilot with rising kindergarten-third graders to test various aspects of the school model and to actively engage with students and families. The team held debrief conversations with families throughout the week and surveyed both students and parents at the end of the pilot. Their feedback on the pilot, desires they expressed for the type of school experience they want for their child, and critiques of their student's current school continue to influence Atlas' school design. The team at Atlas will conduct another pilot in the summer of 2020 to continue to test and strengthen the school model and get feedback from students and families.

**Family Council:** Atlas will establish a Family Council in the fall of 2020 that creates a welcoming space for parents and families to come together, learn about school policies and programs, give feedback on ideas and systems, plan events, ask questions, and form relationships with other families, teachers and staff. For the first two years of operation, the Family Council will be led by the Head of School. Starting in the third year of operation, the Family Council will be led jointly by the Head of School and the Director of Strategic Partnerships, and in the fourth year of operation, the Council will be led solely by the Director of Strategic Partnerships.

**Parent Working Group:** Starting in the summer of 2020, the Head of School and Executive Director will form a Parent Working Group that meets bimonthly to gain feedback on various aspects of the school model. Once Atlas opens in the fall of 2021, the Parent Working Group will meet every academic session (7 times a year) discuss proposals for policy changes, new programs that are being developed, or strategies for addressing broad parent and student concerns. The Working Group will be a select group of no more than 15 parents who are willing to volunteer their time, and commit to giving regular feedback on a variety of topics. The Head of School and Executive Director will work to insure that the families who serve on the Parent Working Group reflect the racial, socioeconomic and cultural diversity of our school community.

**Parent Surveys:** At least twice a year, Atlas will provide parents with the opportunity to share their feedback on various aspects of the school through a survey. Surveys will be available digitally and on paper in a variety of languages, depending on the needs of the specific families we serve. These surveys may solicit feedback on any aspect of the school, from the physical structure, to behavior policies, to experiences with staff or overall satisfaction. The survey results will be tracked to gain a more in-depth understanding of the feedback. From there, the Executive Leadership Team will work with the Parent Working Group to put changes in place that strengthens the school. The trends from the survey along with the actions the school is taking to improve, will be communicated to all families using a variety of communication methods so that families know that their feedback is valued and the team at Atlas is willing to continually refine their practices to make the school as strong as possible for all students and families.

Atlas is partnering with [Panorama Education](#)<sup>143</sup> to collect student, staff, and family surveys through this electronic platform. The families will provide feedback on school climate and culture, engagement, communication, and more.

### **Sharing Information with Families at Atlas**

At Atlas we empower families by giving them ongoing access to information regarding the success of their child in the Atlas environment. Effective and frequent communication leads to an environment where students feel supported and all stakeholders feel like their voice is heard. As such, we will use a variety of methods of communication including but not limited to:

- **Regular Progress Reports:** Frequent updates that go out at the beginning of every academic session and include academic updates as well student progress toward goals. Reports will highlight work done during the previous school session and include a brief overview of important school events taking place during the current academic session.
- **Home Visits & Meetings off Campus:** Home visits are important for students, families, and educators. They give teachers insight that can help them better support the child in the classroom, and helps strengthen relationships between the teacher, student and family.
- **Team Accessibility:** Families will be encouraged to email teachers when questions or concerns arise. Families can also utilize programs such as WhatsApp, a free messaging app available on smartphones that uses the phone's internet connection to send and receive messages. Other programs, such as Speak & Translate, a voice and text translator, can help ease communication barriers between the school and families who speak languages other than English. Teachers may set their own reasonable policies about when they respond to emails after hours and on the weekends, but it's important for families to know they can reach their child's teacher when needed. We understand that not all families have smartphones and access to the internet at home, which is why we will always ask families what is the best way to communicate, but it is our hope that using email and programs such as WhatsApp and Speak & Translate will help eliminate some communication barriers.
- **Family Outreach:** Families and teachers may both request conferences to discuss student progress, the need for academic or behavioral support, acceleration, or enrichment. Families can also join their students for breakfast and lunch each day and may request to meet with their child at any point during the school day. In order to maximize instructional time for all students, parents will be invited to schedule appointments with teachers and school leaders

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<sup>143</sup> For more information on Panorama Education, see: <https://www.panoramaed.com/>

if they want to connect in person. Families can also schedule a time with their child's teacher to come into the classroom and observe.

- Conferences/Portfolio Nights: Three times a year Atlas will schedule Family Conferences where students will present their portfolios to their family and show off their growth and accomplishments.
- Social Media: Families will be encouraged to follow Atlas on social media. Teachers will be encouraged to set up private Facebook accounts for their classrooms where the families of students in the class can follow along and get frequent updates.

A family handbook is in the process of being created and will be in compliance with all state and federal laws.

### **Addressing Family Concerns**

At Atlas it is our goal that all families feel connected to the school and become part of a community that transcends lines of difference. When families are truly invested, they not only want what is best for their child, but for all children at our school and in our community. Therefore, families have the right and responsibility to express concerns to the team members at Atlas.

**Informal Complaint Procedure:** An informal complaint is a concern that does not allege the violation of a law or the school's charter. Examples include a concern about a student's grade, the school's uniform policy, or pickup/drop off procedures. A person or group of individuals that has an informal complaint against a school policy or member of the school community is encouraged to contact the appropriate staff member during school hours at Atlas by telephone. All staff members are committed to responding promptly, and will attempt to respond within 48 hours, but in all cases will respond within 72 hours to informal complaints, either in person, by telephone, or in writing. If an informal complaint is not responded to and resolved promptly or satisfactorily, the group or individual should contact the Head of School to discuss the matter. The Head of School shall respond in person, by telephone, or in writing.

**Formal Complaint Procedures:**<sup>144</sup> A formal complaint is a complaint that concerns an alleged violation of law and/or charter. An individual who has a formal complaint against a school policy or a member of the school community may follow the steps below. Please note that these steps are for formal complaints only--meaning complaints which allege a specific violation of law and/or charter.

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<sup>144</sup> Atlas' Formal Complaint Process was adapted from Achievement First

## Formal Complaint Process

**Step 1 - Written Complaint sent to Head of School:** In order to resolve the issues in the most timely fashion, it is recommended that an individual with a formal complaint write a letter to the Head of School or use the “parent complaint process form<sup>145</sup>” to explain the issue. The individual may fax, email, mail, or hand-deliver (to the school’s front desk) the letter. The individual should contact the school’s front desk to obtain contact information for the Head of School. The Head of School will reply within 3 business days, at least acknowledging the complaint has been received, and may take up to 10 business days to investigate and reach a decision. The Head of School will send a written decision to the parent within 10 business days of the school receiving the complaint letter or form. The parent should copy the Office Manager on the complaint form. The Office Manager is responsible for monitoring the implementation and documentation of the complaint system. The Office Manager will put a copy of the complaint form and the principal’s response in the student’s file (if the complaint is from a parent), and the Office Manager will also ensure that a summary of the complaint and resolution is logged in the school’s student information system.

**Step 2 - Written Complaint sent to Executive Director:** If the individual is unsatisfied with the Head of School’s decision, they may write a letter to the Executive Director or use the “parent complaint process form” to explain the issue. The individual can fax, email, mail, or hand-deliver (to the school’s front desk) the letter. The Executive Director will reply within 3 business days and may take up to 10 business days to investigate and reach a decision. The Executive Director will send a written decision to the parent within 10 business days of receiving the letter or form. The Office Manager will put a copy of the complaint form and the Executive Director’s response in the student’s file (if applicable), and the Office Manager will also ensure that a summary of the complaint and resolution is logged in the school’s student information system.

**Step 3 - Written complaint to the school’s Board of Directors:** The individual may write a letter to the school’s Board of Directors or use the “Parent Complaint Process Form” to explain the issue, whether or not they have followed recommended Steps 1 & 2. The parent can fax, email, mail, or hand-deliver (to the school’s front desk) the letter. The Board or its designee will reply within 3 business days and may take up to ten business days to investigate and reach a decision. The Board or its designee will send a written decision to the individual within 10 business days of receiving the letter or form. The Office Manager will put a copy of the complaint form and Board’s response in the student’s file (if applicable), and the Office Manager will also ensure that a summary of the complaint and resolution is logged in the school’s student information system. Please note that If an individual or group voices a complaint at a public meeting of the School’s Board of Directors or to individual members, the

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<sup>145</sup> To be created and approved by the Atlas Board of Directors

members shall not respond to the substance of the complaint, but instead shall thank the individual or group for their time and direct them to this complaint procedure.

**Step 4 - Written Complaint to the Sponsor:** If the parent is not satisfied with the Board's decision, the parent may present their complaint to the Missouri Charter Public School Commission (MCPSC). The MCPSC may choose to investigate and respond. The parent can get the contact information for the authorizer from the school's front desk. (Please note that the school will ask the authorizer not respond to complaints that have not completed at least step 3 above.) The Office Manager will put any information received from the authorizer in the student's file, and they will also log a summary in the school's student information system.

**Step 5 - Written Complaint to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education:** If the parent is not satisfied with the step 4 response, and the concern is regarding Special Education, the parent may present their complaint to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), which may choose to investigate and respond. DESE has the power and the duty to take remedial action as appropriate. The Office Manager will put any information received from DESE in the student's file, and they will also log a summary in the school's student information system.

Please note that if the school gets multiple complaints on the same or a similar subject, the school may elect to consider all of the complaints in one process. We do this because responding individually to similar complaints could take an undue amount of time on the part of school staff.

## Community Involvement

### Partners that Support Place-Based Learning

At Atlas we believe in giving our students authentic, real-world experiences that make learning come to life. A critical component of our model is that we incorporate place-based learning experiences into every unit that we teach from kindergarten through fifth grade. Place-based education is the process of using the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in language arts, mathematics, social studies, science and other subjects across the curriculum.<sup>146</sup> Emphasizing hands-on, real-world learning experiences, this approach to education increases academic achievement,<sup>147</sup> helps students develop stronger ties to their community,<sup>148</sup> enhances

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<sup>146</sup> Sobel, David. *Place-based Education: Connecting Classrooms & Communities*. 2nd ed. Great Barrington, MA: Orion Society, 2005 Print.

<sup>147</sup> Akinoğlu, Orhan and Ruhan Özkardeş. "The Effects of Problem-Based Active Learning in Science Education on Students' Academic Achievement, Attitude and Concept Learning." *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education*, 2007, 3(1), 71-81.

Mergendoller, J. R. , Maxwell, N. L. , & Bellisimo, Y. (2006). The Effectiveness of Problem-Based Instruction: A Comparative Study of Instructional Methods and Student Characteristics. *Interdisciplinary Journal of Problem-Based Learning*, 1(2). Available at: <https://doi.org/10.7771/1541-5015.1026>

<sup>148</sup> Lee, Huei and Chia-Ling Chiang. "Sense of Place and Science Achievement in the Place-Based Science Curriculum." *International Journal of Information and Education Technology*, Vol. 6, No. 9, September 2016.

students' appreciation for the natural world, and creates a heightened commitment to serving as active, contributing citizens. Community vitality and environmental quality are improved through the active engagement of local citizens, community organizations, and environmental resources in the life of the school.

If we are going to fully realize our school's mission and vision, we must have strong community partnerships. St. Louis is an amazing city with a plethora of resources that are woefully underutilized. At Atlas, we plan to tap into the people and organizations that make our city great. We will partner with community staples such as the Saint Louis Zoo, The St. Louis Science Center, Missouri Botanical Garden, Saint Louis Art Museum, and Missouri History Museum as well as organizations that are not as well-known, but just as amazing such as the Litzsinger Road Ecology Center, Pulitzer Arts Museum, Metro Theater Company, and Field House Museum.

Below is a list of some of the community organizations we plan to partner with to make learning come to life for our kids.

Potential Community Partners	
Litzsinger Road Ecology Center	Located in the heart of the St. Louis metropolitan area, Litzsinger Road Ecology Center (LREC) is a unique 34-acre study center with land, facilities, classrooms and an on-site laboratory dedicated to promoting science teaching and learning, environmental literacy, and stewardship of the Earth. Atlas will partner with LREC to create place-based learning experiences for our students and to focus on the school value of stewardship. Place-based education at LREC will immerse students in St. Louis' local heritage and habitats.
St. Louis Public Library	St. Louis Public Library boasts a large video, audio, and readable collection and surrounds its guests with a magnificent architectural and cultural environment. It offers a variety of educational programs for children and parents to enhance early literacy skills and improve parent-child relationships. The library's kindergarten through fifth grade programs mix learning and fun through collaborative efforts of the professional and dedicated staff.
The Missouri Botanical Garden	For over 158 years, The Missouri Botanical Garden has been an oasis in the city, a place of beauty and fun —and also a center for education, science, and conservation. The garden is committed to

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Powers, Amy L. "An Evaluation of Four Place-Based Education Programs." *THE JOURNAL OF ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION*. SUMMER 2004, VOL. 35, NO. 4

	<p>offering discovery opportunities and education to children of all ages. Atlas will take advantage of the garden's educational resources, especially the Doris I. Schnuck Children's Garden and the Great Green Adventures program. Students will not only be exposed to the beauty of nature, but also discover, explore, pretend, search, observe and learn through hands-on activities.</p>
St. Louis Science Center	<p>The St. Louis Science Center is dedicated to creating learning opportunities and science programs for local students and educators. The St. Louis Science Center offers off-site school programs including the STEM Excellence Pathway program and Gateway to STEM program, as well as field trips and other group activities. Atlas' educators will benefit from educator network opportunities, curriculum resources, and other workshops and programs to meet Atlas' specific needs.</p>
Saint Louis Zoo	<p>The Saint Louis Zoo enriches the public's understanding and appreciation of wild animals through a variety of recreational and educational programs. Atlas plans to utilize St. Louis Zoo's space and services to enrich our students' academic and recreational life. Sample educational services include outreach programs, classroom resources, the discovery room, the education gallery, summer camps, zoo tours, and homework helper programs. These services will help Atlas to facilitate the academic and social-emotional development of our students.</p>
Missouri History Museum	<p>The Missouri History Museum focuses on the history of the St. Louis region and is committed to providing the public with exposure, experience, and education about our region's past. Atlas will strategically utilize its space and programs for place-based education. Resources include the museum's Pre-K to 12 Educational Programs, Library &amp; Research Center, and Soldiers' Memorial Military Museum. Museum field trips, led by the museum's professional educators and supervised by Atlas' teachers, bring history to life and give our students real-world learning experiences. The Missouri History Museum also offers educational programs for students and their families including storytelling, theater or musical performances, team-building workshops, and crafts.</p>
Field House Museum	<p>The Field House Museum, the boyhood home of Eugene Field, was opened in 1936 as the first historic house museum in St. Louis. The museum will offer our students with a variety of age-tailored tours and programs. Additionally, the Eugene Field Library, being the home to the largest privately-owned collection</p>

	<p>of Eugene Field's work, will also provide ample resources to enlighten our students and teachers. Students can learn about the Dred Scott Case in this museum, one of the most controversial cases formulated by Eugene's father denying slaves' citizenship. Experiences such as these will immerse our students in the culture and history of St. Louis.</p>
The Muny	<p>The St. Louis Municipal Opera Theatre (The Muny) is an amphitheater located in St. Louis, Missouri. In addition to offering great music and art, The Muny recognizes the importance of children's exposure to music and visual performing arts. The Muny supports education and training initiatives that bring musical theater to local schools. Atlas students who are passionate about performing arts will have the opportunity to partake in such activities and cultivate their love of theater and art.</p>
Saint Louis Art Museum	<p>Saint Louis Art Museum boasts 140 years of collecting, presenting, interpreting high-quality arts and of educating, inspiring and elevating human spirit. Through a partnership, students will be exposed to interactive tours that students with special needs can also access, as well as in-class activities brought by its community program. Meanwhile, family programs are available both on weekdays and on weekends. For our teachers, professional development opportunities will be offered through workshops, interactive discussions, and immersive studio sessions that are focused on interdisciplinary connections.</p>
Pulitzer Art Museum	<p>For three decades the Pulitzer Art Museum has been providing dynamic art experiences to the St. Louis community. Atlas aspires to bring students to exhibitions, programs, and galleries so that young students may gain an early introduction to the power of art history and architecture. The Pulitzer Art Museum will serve as a source for students to become inspired and motivated to develop new ideas and perspectives.</p>
Building Futures	<p>Building Futures works with the St. Louis youth community teaching design and build skills. Through STEAM project-based learning, Atlas will work in partnership with Building Futures to introduce students to career opportunities during their most formative years.</p>
Gateway Greening	<p>Gateway Greening aims to provide St. Louis with a fun, safe, and educational environment for people to connect and discover the power of growing food through sustainable urban agriculture</p>

	<p>projects. These projects will be especially beneficial to Atlas with its Youth Garden Programs. Youth Garden Programs will provide Atlas with free seeds and seedlings, network-wide gardening contests, tool loans, professional development opportunities, site visits, garden curriculum, and the chance to apply for garden expansion grants to in-network youth gardens. It is our belief that this partnership will cultivate a brighter future for our students and inspire neighborhoods and communities at the same time.</p>
Old Court House	<p>St. Louis' Old Courthouse is listed in the National Park Service's National Underground Railroad Network To Freedom. It is closely linked with the story of the Underground Railroad and with legal challenges to slavery. Today, the old courthouse is not only a historic site, but also a unique space for education. Students at Atlas will participate in exciting youth programs such as Junior Ranger programs and Every Kid in the Park Program. Meanwhile, our teachers will benefit from the curriculum materials, professional development workshops, as well as tours and activities in the courthouse space.</p>
Metro Theater Company	<p>Metro Theater Company is an art institution that provides a variety of education and community programs. Students will both have the opportunity to participate in community arts programs both inside and outside of school. Students will be empowered through peer leadership programs offered by Metro Theater Company.</p>

### **Partners that Support Students and Families**

When it comes to educating our children, there's an old saying, "it takes a village," and at Atlas we couldn't agree more. The mission of Atlas Public Schools is to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, authentic learning experiences so all students thrive in middle school, high school, and beyond. By educating the whole child we are not just focusing on traditional academics like reading, math, and science, but incorporating social emotional learning and 21st century skills into the work that we do. We also know that before we start focusing on a child's education we must work to ensure that their physiological and safety needs are met. By working side-by-side with the community and establishing partnerships, Atlas will work to ensure that the needs of our students and their families are met.

### **Partners that Provide Student Programming & Enrichment Opportunities**

At Atlas, one of our graduate aims is to produce students who are well-rounded individuals. We want our students to have interests and passions both inside and out of the classroom. Moreover, when our students leave us for middle school, we want them to be responsible decision makers, socially

and self-aware, have strong relationship skills, and are good at self-management. As a school, we will strategically incorporate these social emotional learning skills into the work we do. Through partnerships with amazing organizations such as the Boys & Girl Scouts and the Chess and Scholastic Center we will be able to offer our students amazing enrichment opportunities. Below is a list of just some of the organizations we plan to partner with that will provide student programming and enrichment opportunities to our students.

### **Atlas' Partnership with Saint Louis University**

At Atlas, we believe developing high quality teachers is key to setting our students up for success. At the same time, we recognize recruiting, developing, and retaining top talent is not an easy task, as several schools throughout the region have voiced a struggle with this component of running a school. For these reasons, Atlas is working to formalize a partnership with Saint Louis University (SLU) to be a Professional Development School. Atlas Co-Founders have nurtured a relationship with the Dean of Saint Louis University's College of Education, Dr. Ritter, for over a year, working on a collaboration between the two organizations that is mutually beneficial. Dr. Ritter provided free classroom space in SLU's College of Education for Atlas' Makers Camp Summer Pilot, which began to start formalizing a partnership. Although a Memorandum of Understanding is still not completed, the two organizations have discussed the following:

- SLU practicum students participate in observations alongside our certified teachers and join in on some of our data team and intellectual preparation meetings.
- Professors at SLU support Atlas by providing programming for our students during intersession breaks as well as helping to create professional development opportunities for our teachers. Ideally, teachers from other schools throughout the city would be able to opt in to these professional development sessions.

See the letter of support from Dr. Ritter, Dean of Saint Louis University's College of Education in *Appendix B.5.1*.

### **Educator Involvement in the Management, Operation, and Vision of Atlas**

Research suggests that educator involvement in the management, operation and vision of the school is positively correlated with student achievement, family engagement, overall school culture, and educator retention. For example, a recent study on teacher leadership by researchers from the University of Pennsylvania and the New Teacher Center<sup>149</sup> concludes:

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<sup>149</sup> Ingersoll, Richard M., Philip Sirinides, and Patrick Dougherty. "Leadership Matters Teachers' Roles in School Decision Making and School Performance." *AMERICAN EDUCATOR*. p. 13-39. Spring 2018.

Teacher leadership is strongly related to student achievement. The results clearly show that teacher leadership and the amount of teacher influence in school decision making are independently and significantly related to student achievement, after controlling for the background characteristics of schools, and this is true for both mathematics and ELA.

The Center for Policy Design's research fellows Kim Ferris-Berg and Edward Dirkswager, along with teacher-leader and researcher Amy Junge, examined educator involvement in school management in their book *Trusting Teachers with School Success: What Happens When Teachers Call the Shots*. They found that schools that grant their teachers meaningful leadership opportunities are likely to "achieve results that are better than their peers' over a period of time." The authors go on to explain:

It makes logical sense that autonomous teachers' choices are 'good' if they emulate the cultural characteristics of high-performing organizations...[Our interviews with teachers] revealed that they experience both successes and struggles in cultivating and maintaining high-performing cultures. Yet they overwhelmingly *do* cultivate and maintain them.

*Trusting Teachers with School Success'* overwhelming findings in favor of meaningful educator involvement in school management helped to launch a [national initiative for Teacher-Powered Schools](#)<sup>150</sup> to improve excellence and equity in public education. This initiative, promoted by Education Evolving and Center for Teaching Quality, provides resources and professional networking opportunities to increase educator leadership in school management. Today there are more than 120 public teacher-powered schools, in which teachers exercise formal collective decision-making authority in at least one of [fifteen areas of school leadership](#).<sup>151</sup> Building on the insights and resources of this initiative, Atlas will provide specific opportunities for teacher leadership in at least two areas of school management, such as broadening assessments beyond state tests and determining professional development during intercession breaks.

Atlas will build formal systems for teacher voice in school management. The year-round structure of our school empowers teachers because there is built-in time for professional collaboration and time to build systems to include teacher voice in school management. For example, during each professional development week (typically week 6 of the academic session), all teachers will participate in problem solving committees around meaningful areas of school improvement. Sample committee topics include: place-based learning, morning routines, recess routines, behavioral interventions, and more. Teachers will have a choice in which committee they want to join and a

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<sup>150</sup> For more information on Teacher-Powered Schools, see: <https://www.teacherpowered.org/about>

<sup>151</sup> For more information on teacher collective autonomy in the fifteen areas of school leadership, see: <https://www.teacherpowered.org/inventory/autonomies>

survey will be distributed in week 4 of each academic session for teachers to rank their choice of committee for the professional development week.

Teachers will have dedicated professional development time to participate in these problem-solving committees. Teacher teams will follow a protocol to ensure that relevant problems are discussed, and systems-level changes are proposed to fix the given problems. Then, teacher committees will submit a proposal to the Executive Leadership Team, who will be responsible for implementing the changes that teachers identify.

Moreover, during professional development weeks, teachers will have dedicated time to complete surveys about their experience at Atlas and systems and structures that need to be improved. By formally allocating time to complete surveys, the Executive Leadership team will help ensure that teachers have sufficient time to explain their ideas in a complete way, and will help formalize meaningful teacher input into school management.

Finally, Atlas will look at the formal systems and structures of teacher-led management of schools similar to ours. For example, the [Teacher Powered Schools National Inventory](#)<sup>152</sup> has three elementary schools that are teacher-powered, serve urban communities, and are chartered. Atlas will look to these schools as we build a culture around teacher voice, and will lean on these schools as resources and inspiration as we continuously improve our systems and structures of educator involvement in school management. These schools are:

[Renaissance Charter School in Flushing, NY](#)<sup>153</sup>

[Southwest Baltimore Charter School in Baltimore, MD](#)<sup>154</sup>

[Professional Preparatory Charter School in Brooklyn, NY](#)<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>152</sup> For more information on Teacher Powered Schools National Inventory see:

<https://www.teachertpowered.org/inventory/list>

<sup>153</sup> For more information on Renaissance Charter School in Flushing, NY see:

<https://www.teachertpowered.org/inventory/renaissance-charter-school>

<sup>154</sup> For more information on Southwest Baltimore Charter School in Baltimore, MD see:

<https://www.teachertpowered.org/inventory/southwest-baltimore-charter-school>

<sup>155</sup> For more information on Professional Preparatory Charter School in Brooklyn, NY see:

<https://www.teachertpowered.org/inventory/professional-preparatory-charter-school>

## C.1 – Budget

Atlas Public Schools' (Atlas) financial strategy is driven by our mission to educate the whole child by combining a rigorous academic program with real-world, place-based learning experiences so all students thrive. The projected five-year budget and statements of cash flow in *Appendix C.1.1* demonstrate Atlas' ability to achieve these priorities while building a financially sustainable model. As represented in the first-year cash flow, Atlas' fiscal year begins July 1<sup>st</sup> and ends June 30<sup>th</sup>.

Atlas utilized the resources provided by the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), in consultation with Doug Thaman at the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA), and Paul Greenwood at EdOps to create the budget. The resulting analyses are a good-faith estimate of the revenues and expenses necessary to realize our educational and organizational plans.

### Budget Model

Atlas' budget shows our capacity to scale instructional and support staff, building and executive administration, and facilities and service costs for Years 1-5. We relied on conservative budgetary estimates to ensure continued financial solvency. For example, although we expect to receive additional grants and donations, our budget only includes grants that have been committed to Atlas in writing for use during operational years. Further, we do not assume any increases in per-ADA federal, state, or local revenue.

Atlas' annual student enrollment totals drive both revenues and costs. As discussed in *B.5 - Student Recruitment & Enrollment*, Atlas will enroll 130 students in Year 1, and an additional 78 students in each class thereafter. Ultimately, Atlas will enroll 468 students by the 2026-2027 school year. The budget maintains an average reserve fund of 10% per annum (minimum 6.77% in Year 1, maximum 16.47% in Year 5).

### Revenues

State aid has been conservatively projected using a foundation formula funding of \$9,100 per WADA (including Classroom Trust Fund dollars for Years 2-5 and before our 1.5% sponsor fee per [RSMo 160.400.11](#)), which is lower than current per WADA payment amounts made to other St. Louis charter schools in FY20. Based on demographic data from nearby schools, and Atlas' desire to be intentionally diverse, Atlas projects a Limited English Proficiency (LEP) population of 6%, and a Free-and-Reduced-Price Lunch (FRPL) population of 65% in Year 1. Although we have included special education staffing and outsourced services in our budget model, we have not modeled

receiving any WADA weight for students who qualify for special education services. Thus, in every way possible, the budget model has been made with conservative projections of state aid.

After Year 1, the budget includes revenues from Proposition C funding at \$995 per prior-year WADA - \$10 less per WADA than current 2019-2020 funding level. Other than start-up funding that has already been committed, the budget includes no donations.

Federal funding for IDEA Part B, Title I, and Title II were calculated using a weighted average of peer- and near-school per-pupil funding. The National School Lunch Program, School Breakfast Program, and After School Snack Program were all calculated based on the most recent reimbursement rates; and food service was expensed at 5% above projected revenues.

## Expenses

**Staff:** To recruit exceptional faculty, Atlas offers leading opportunities for professional growth and compensation. Our median starting salary is \$52,500, and no new faculty member earns less than \$45,000 per year. Health benefit premiums have been modeled at \$400/staff/member. Salaries increases of 2% annually have been modeled. By Year 5, our median staff salary is \$56,000+. At St. Louis Public Schools, by comparison, the base starting salary is \$39,015 and the median faculty salary is \$43,152. For more information see *B.4 - Staff Recruitment, Retention, Replacement and Training*.

**Facilities:** To be pragmatic, conservative while allowing for the flexibility needed to fully vet all facility options, facility costs have been modeled based on industry metrics. The model assumes:


110 sq ft/student

Rent at \$10/sq ft

Operating Costs at \$7/sq ft

Yearly Debt Service Payment of \$30,889 on \$300,000 Loan for Tenant Improvements

The chart below highlights Atlas' facilities plan and shows the total facilities costs for Years 1-5. Although the model allows for up to 15.69% of Total Revenue to be allocated toward facilities, we believe we will be able to find a solution that will bring down this metric as the school grows to scale.

 <b>ATLAS</b> <b>Facilities Plan</b>					
	<b>Year 1 2021-2022</b>	<b>Year 2 2022-2023</b>	<b>Year 3 2023-2024</b>	<b>Year 4 2024-2025</b>	<b>Year 5 2025-2026</b>
Total Student Enrollment	130	208	286	364	442
Square Footage Allocation of Facility based on 110 sq ft. per student	14,300	22,880	31,460	40,040	48,620
Operating Costs Allocation at \$7/sf	\$ 100,100	\$ 160,160	\$ 220,220	\$ 280,280	\$ 340,340
Rent/Debt Service at \$10/sf	\$ 143,000	\$ 228,800	\$ 314,600	\$ 400,400	\$ 486,200
Debt Service for 300k Tenant Improvement	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889
Total Facilities Costs	\$ 273,989	\$ 419,849	\$ 565,709	\$ 711,569	\$ 857,429
Grand Total Revenues	\$ 1,810,684	\$ 2,675,423	\$ 3,736,559	\$ 4,724,808	\$ 5,803,755
Facilities Costs as a Percentage of Total Revenue	15.13%	15.69%	15.14%	15.06%	14.77%

## Contingency Plans

To prevent a financial shortfall, the Board and school management work diligently to stay abreast of enrollment fluctuations, compensation trends in the market, state and national policies, and special education revenues and costs. Each month, the Executive Director (ED) prepares a financial report in consultation with EdOps. First and foremost, Atlas prioritizes fidelity to mission. As such, all contingencies scale our spending to maintain approximately the same ratio of spending in instruction and technology. To guard against serious shifts in anticipated revenues or expenditures, the Head of School - Operations Lead monitors the budget daily and, if necessary, advises the ED on swift corrective actions. These actions may include:

- Renegotiating contracted services or seeking new providers;
- Modifying our facilities plans to save on long term-costs;
- Adjusting school staffing in accordance with the below; and
- Seeking a line of credit with our banking institution to cover temporary cash-flow shortfalls.

Atlas has provided a hiring schedule contingent on student enrollment for each year. Atlas will progress monitor enrollment weekly to ensure enrollment projections are accurate and to give the Executive Leadership Team time to course correct in case enrollment projections are showing under enrollment. In Year 1, Atlas must enroll 75 students (58% of projected enrollment) in order to function as a school. This worst-case scenario enrollment would involve a scale back of staff to include 5 core teaching staff, a SPED-certified faculty member, an Executive Director and Head of School.

To remain conservative, we have excluded fundraising from our five-year budgets outside of what has already been committed. However, Atlas has begun and will continue seeking support from current and prospective funders to safeguard our LEA's long-term financial health. Atlas' fundraising

plan will be developed and tailored by the ED to enrich the academic and operational foundation of the school. We anticipate that fundraising will add approximately 3% to total revenues in the first five years of operation.

## **Pre-Operational Finances**

Because of their belief in our educational model, The Opportunity Trust has agreed to fund staff and marketing expenses during pre-operation (see Commitment Letter in *Appendix C.1.2*). Both Founding Team members will receive a salary from The Opportunity Trust through June 30, 2021. We have included a yearly debt service payment of \$30,889 on a 300K leasehold improvement loan in our operations of plant cost breakdown; and anticipate including any classroom and office furniture that hasn't been donated in that loan. Note that our Year 1 cash-flow shows that we pay for all start-up technology costs in July 2021. While we have not included any fundraising in our 5 year Pro Forma that has not already been committed, we are in communication with the organizations below regarding launch funding.

**NewSchools Venture Fund (\$215,000):** NewSchools Invent is a planning grant to support teams of educators who want to launch new, innovative schools “that prepare young people to achieve their most ambitious dreams and plans.” Atlas applied for the NewSchool Venture Fund in October of 2019 and was recently accepted into their portfolio of schools. Atlas has already been awarded \$100,000 and will receive an additional \$115,000 once we receive authorization.

**4.0 Schools Tiny Fellowship (\$7,000):** 4.0 Schools offers financial and design support for aspiring school founders. They provide coaching from experts, pilot funding, and a community of peers, to run disciplined piloting programs with their communities. Atlas ran a summer pilot in the summer of 2019, and will use the Tiny Fellowship to strengthen our piloting plans in the summer of 2020. Atlas was accepted into the 4.0 Tiny Fellowship in October of 2019 and will receive funding for our summer 2020 pilot.

**Charter School Growth Fund (\$250,000-\$600,000):** The Charter School Growth Fund (CSGF) invests in new, innovative personalized learning schools as part of its Next Generation Schools Portfolio. The Founders at Atlas have met with Andee Hendee, Robert Wheatfall, and Eric Chan from the CSGF. Colby Heckendorn had a deep dive interview in April and will find out in May or June if Atlas is one of the finalists.

**Federal Charter School Program Grant (\$350,000):** Although Atlas Public Schools has not included Federal Charter School Program Grants in our budget, we have registered with the US DOE's SAM and been granted a DUNS (080902277). Atlas will apply for any available CSP grants during pre-operation.

**Walton Foundation Innovative Schools Grant (\$325,000):** The Walton Foundation is piloting an Innovative School Startup Grant to provide funding for education entrepreneurs seeking to open innovative schools to serve high-need populations. This RFP is open to all schools—district, charter, and private—across all geographies, not just in the Walton Family Foundation’s 13 focus cities.

## C.2 – Financial Management

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) is registered as a Missouri nonprofit, see *Appendix B.1.1*, operating within regulations outlined in [RSMo 355.001](#). To abide by fiscal best practices, Atlas will adopt the Missouri Charter Public School Association's financial management policies, which align to state and federal requirements (including ESSA). These policies provide procedures and guidelines for:

- Board Resolution Adoption
- Bank Procedures
- Designation of Financial Institution
- Cash Management
- School Accounting System
- Audit and Financial Statements
- Conflict of Interest Questionnaire
- Payroll Policy
- Federal Fiscal Compliance
- Capital Assets Accounting
- State Tax Sources
- State and Federal Projects
- Borrowed Funds
- Bonded Indebtedness

The Board will review these policies annually and modify said policies as needed to ensure fiscal practices accord with Atlas Public Schools' mission while staying within the law. Atlas' Executive Director (ED) is responsible for setting the school's vision and leading the organization toward the realization of its mission. They lead strategic planning, budget development, setting of organizational and instructional priorities, legal compliance of the school, and ultimately oversee day-to-day operations of the school. They will be responsible for the overall operations and outcomes of the LEA.

Atlas intends to contract with a financial services provider to review accounting policies and procedures, assist in the yearly audit, prepare the annual budget and monthly reports, and professionally develop the school's administrative staff in finance and accounting. That provider will support the ED and Head of School - Operations Lead with financial management, as well as help develop and review Atlas' financial policies manual and employee handbook.

Atlas Public Schools has consulted Paul Greenwood at [EdOps](#)<sup>156</sup> for the past year to design a sound budget and financial management plan. The Board is considering retaining EdOps' services once operational and would only choose another financial services provider who can offer support of similar quality at a better value for the school. While that determination is still pending until sponsorship, we refer to EdOps as our service provider for convenience in the application.

Finalized financial policies will be presented by the Board Finance Committee at least 9 months before opening and adopted by the full Board at least 6 months before opening. Although not

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<sup>156</sup> For more information on EdOps, see:

<https://www.teacherpowered.org/inventory/professional-preparatory-charter-school>

comprehensive, the following details highlight important features of Atlas' financial management plan.

## **Budget**

Atlas Public Schools will operate as an independent LEA with a fiscal year ending on June 30th. The ED is responsible for overseeing, managing, and developing the school budget. Throughout that process, the ED solicits input and support from the Heads of School, EdOps, and, as appropriate, other faculty, stakeholders, and advisors. At least two months prior to the close of the fiscal year, the ED submits a draft of the annual budget and statement of cash flows to the Board Finance Committee for consideration. The Board Finance Committee works with the ED to finalize a detailed budget and statement of cash flows for presentation to the full Board. One month prior to the close of the fiscal year, the Board meets to review and approve the proposed budget and statement of cash flows. The Board Secretary records this approval for review during the annual audit process.

During our pre-operational year, the ED begins drafting a prospective budget for approval by February 1st. This relatively early date, recommended by EdOps, enables the school to begin considering key hires for Year 1 early in the recruiting season. EdOps then helps the school revise its initial budget based on actual funding levels once confirmed by DESE. The ED, in consultation with the Head of School - Operations Lead and EdOps, ensures that Atlas follows a budgeting process consistent with Federal and Missouri statutes, State Board of Education Rules and Regulations, and State Accounting Codes as outlined by the [Missouri Financial Accounting Manual](#).<sup>157</sup> Each month, the ED presents the Board Finance Committee with balance sheets and statements of activity; the Treasurer then presents a summary financial report to the full Board.

The Board will adopt a procurement policy that complies with federal guidelines relating to public schools. No purchase shall be made unless the goods or services purchased are reflected in the Atlas budget. If unexpected costs do arise beyond budgeted categories, the ED and the Operations Manager review the budget and make a recommendation to the Board Finance Committee regarding how best to address the expense. After committee review and approval, the budget modification must then be approved by the full Board of Directors. The Board Finance Committee will develop a policy for handling emergency situations, and a small emergency fund will be included in the budget.

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<sup>157</sup> For more information on Missouri Financial Accounting Manual, see:  
<https://dese.mo.gov/sites/default/files/sf-CompleteFinancialAccountingManual-July2017.pdf>

## Policies, Systems, & Procedures

Consistent with our fiduciary responsibility for public funds, Atlas Public Schools is operated according to a system of internal controls, developed in conjunction with EdOps, which includes the segregation of appropriate financial duties.

### Internal Controls

**Restricted Access:** Only authorized personnel have access to valuable and moveable assets.

**Financial Data Security:** Accounting software is accessible only to the Executive Director and EdOps (or another contracted financial services provider). Individual usernames and passwords are issued for each user, and users' functionality and access is limited according to their role within Atlas Public Schools.

**Document Control:** Accounting system documents are initialed and dated upon recording.

**Records Retention:** Records are maintained as long as required by IRS regulations, federal grant requirements, audit requirements, and, if applicable, other legal needs.

**Processing Controls:** These controls identify errors *before* they are posted to the general ledger. Common processing controls include (i) source document matching, (ii) clerical accuracy of documents, and (iii) general ledger account code checking.

**Reconciliation Controls:** These controls identify errors after transactions have been posted and the general ledger has been run. The process involves reconciling selected general ledger control accounts to subsidiary ledgers.

### Cash Flow

**Petty Cash:** Petty cash is maintained in a locked box in the Head of School - Operations Lead's office in an amount not to exceed \$500. All disbursements from petty cash are documented in writing, indicating the date, amount disbursed, the identity of the individual receiving the funds, and the reason for the disbursement. Receipts from purchases made with petty cash are remitted to the Head of School - Operations Lead's office as soon as practicable. Petty cash funds are not used to cash checks.

**Deposits:** All cash transactions are recorded in writing, signed, and dated by the ED or their designee who has the authority to receive cash on behalf of Atlas. Distinct from cash receipt, the Head of School - Operations Lead is responsible for depositing cash in Atlas' bank account. Deposits are made within a week of cash receipt. Undeposited cash is kept on school premises in a secure location with limited access. A copy of the validated deposit slip is returned to Atlas Public Schools within one business day of the deposit. Checks received are endorsed "for deposit only," and deposits are made weekly by someone other than the person who prepared the deposit. Like cash, undeposited checks are kept on school premises in a secure location with limited access.

**Expenditures:** As a general rule, cash is not used to make purchases except for small outlays from petty cash. School checks are not made payable to "Cash". Only the Board President, Board Treasurer, Executive Director, and Heads of School are authorized to sign checks or credit card receipts on behalf of Atlas Public Schools. Online invoice processing, payment, and payroll with EdOps minimizes check and credit card expenses. All expenditures are documented and accounted for by daily receipts. Any authorized check or credit card receipt for over \$5,000 drafted on Atlas' designated bank account must be signed by both the ED and the Board Chair. Each check must be completed in its entirety before being signed by either party. EdOps will set up the school's online accounts payable platform designed to maximize efficiency around invoice processing and archiving. EdOps will lead the setup and implementation of the financial system, provide training to staff, and update the system with new vendors as they are chosen.

## External Checks

**Conflict of Interest:** Atlas' Executive Leadership Team, and Board of Directors complete a conflict-of-interest questionnaire annually to determine any conflicts of interest as defined by Missouri law. The Board will also adopt a conflict of interest policy, as outlined in *B.1 - Missouri Non-Profit*. No transaction which constitutes a legal conflict of interest is completed. EdOps provides procurement support and manages all requests for proposals when contracting with external vendors, including food service, transportation, insurance, janitorial services, technology, and student information systems.

**Audit:** Atlas' books and accounts are audited annually by an independent certified public accountant in conformance with the Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). The Board, with input from the Executive Director, selects the auditing firm, which in turn reports directly to the Board. The audit is made public pursuant to [RSMo 165.121](#) and included in the Annual Secretary of the Board Report (ASBR), as required by [RSMo 162.821](#). The ASBR is submitted to the Sponsor, the State Board of Education, and parents of students attending Atlas. Atlas files all necessary federal and state tax returns.

**Designation of Financial Institution:** Atlas Public Schools may use a request for proposals or otherwise seek competitive bids for banking services. The Board will adopt a resolution in accordance with its bylaws to designate the financial institution(s) that Atlas Public Schools will use for banking transactions. The Board will authorize the ED to open a business checking account and a business operating account on behalf of Atlas to hold its assets.

## **Record Keeping**

**School Accounting:** Atlas will adhere to the accounting guidelines of the Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. In conjunction with EdOps, which provides accounting functions, Atlas will maintain records that adequately identify the source and application of funds. These records must contain information pertaining to grant or subgrant awards, income, outlays or expenditures, assets, liabilities, off balance sheet obligations, and any other obligations or authorizations. Grants, awards, donations, and program funding will be administered according to federal and state guidelines, including the Code of Federal Regulations, Uniform Grant Guidance (OMNI), and the Education Department General Administrative Regulations (EDGAR). EdOps provides support including tracking accounts payable and receivables, closing monthly accounts, providing financial info for Form 990, analysis of monthly financial statements, preparation of finance presentations, attendance at monthly Board or Finance Committee meetings, management of federal or state grants, and assisting with the budgeting and audit process.

**Payroll:** The Head of School - Operations Leader will work with EdOps to ensure that school employees are paid accurately and on time in accordance with the Fair Labor and Standards Act and other applicable laws or rules. The Head of School - Operations Lead will maintain employee files in a confidential manner on school premises and, in conjunction with EdOps, administer related payroll activities.

**Student Information System:** The Head of School - Operations Leader will be responsible for managing [Lumen Touch's Bright Student](#),<sup>158</sup> a Missouri-based electronic student information system (SIS) that tracks student enrollment, registration, attendance, scheduling, discipline, assessments, achievement, transcripts, transportation, food service, free and reduced lunch eligibility, special education status, and English proficiency. The Executive Director of the first two years, and then the Director of Student Support Services starting in Year 3, will be responsible for [Lumen Touch's Bright SPED](#),<sup>159</sup> an integrated special education compliance and management system that tracks student's eligibility, IEPs, evaluations, data, and progress. Both student information tracking systems are digital, align to state and federal reporting requirements, and accommodate the financial coding system prescribed by the Missouri Financial Manual. Information on both systems will be kept

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<sup>158</sup> For more information on Lumen Touch's Bright Student, see: <https://www.lumentouch.com/student>

<sup>159</sup> For more information on Lumen Touch's Bright SPED, see: <https://www.lumentouch.com/sped>

confidential per mandates in the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and the Safe Schools Act. The Head of School - Operations Lead will be responsible for reporting data from both systems to required state and federal authorities. The systems will track information over multiple years in compliance with laws pertaining to public school information retention.

## **Insurance**

The Board of Directors will acquire and maintain comprehensive insurance coverage for Atlas Public Schools to indemnify the school, its Board, staff, and faculty against tort claims. Liability coverage will be secured from an A+ rated insurance provider. The Board annually reviews, updates, and, when prudent, improves insurance coverage. See *Appendix B.1.7* for insurance quote.

### **Coverage will include:**

- Directors' and Officer' Liability
- Commercial General for Outsourcing Major Operational Tasks
- Comprehensive Liability that expressly covers corporal punishment and athletic participation
- Educators' Legal Liability
- Employment Practices Liability
- Sexual Abuse Liability (either a separate policy or a separate part of general comprehensive insurance with independent limits)
- Workers Compensation Liability
- Excess or Umbrella Liability (i.e., a bundled commercial general liability, directors' and officers' liability, automobile liability, and sexual abuse liability)
- A surety bond for the school's chief financial officer in an amount to be determined based on the cash flow of the school or evidence that school's liability insurance covers employee theft insurance
- Include evidence to support the budget expense assumptions related to insuring the schools such as copies of broker or agency estimates

## C.3 - Facility

The Atlas founding team understands that finding a suitable facility is often one of the greatest challenges facing charter school operators. Finding buildings that are in ideal locations, that have the characteristics of a school, and that can be utilized on the needed timeline can be extremely challenging. While Atlas has not yet secured its facility, we are working with a team of experts who are helping to minimize the risk associated with finding a great facility.

### Facility Advisory Council

The Facility Advisory Council is made up of local experts who have an in-depth knowledge of the real estate market in St. Louis. The council is made up of real estate brokers, developers, architects, and lenders. The Advisory Council is supporting Atlas' Founding Team as we work to identify, and transform, a space that meets the needs of our community. The table below lists the members of Atlas' Facility Advisory Council and highlights their areas of expertise.

Member	Area of Expertise
Michael Backer	Michael is a commercial real-estate broker with Intellica and has extensive knowledge of the St. Louis real-estate landscape.
Brooks Goedecker	Brooks is the Executive Director of Saint Louis University Redevelopment. He previously served as an advisor to Kairos.
Linda Henke	Linda is the former superintendent of the Maplewood Richmond Heights School District. She has a deep understanding of place-based & experiential learning. She helped design MRH facilities.
Chris Hansen	Chris is the Executive Director of the Kranzberg Arts Foundation, an organization that has worked to transform the Grand Center Arts District.
Jassen Johnson	Jassen is a real-estate developer and the founder of Renaissance Development Associates. Jassen has years of experience in urban redevelopment facilitation, design, sales and leasing. He previously served as an advisor to LPA.
Gay Lorberbaum	Gay is a member of Atlas' Board of Director. She is an architect, psychologist and a professor at Washington University. Gay is also the founder of Building Futures.
Marcus Robinson	Marcus is a member of Atlas' Board of Directors. He previously founded Tindley Accelerated Schools, a charter network in Indianapolis. Marcus is currently an Executive-in-Residence at The Opportunity Trust.
Stacey Wehe	Stacey is an architect and shareholder at Christner. She is the Education Market Leader and project manager in the firm. She worked on the COCA expansion and the Community School master plan.

Atlas aims to be located within either the 63108 or 63110 zip code. If a facility is not able to be secured within this area, we will find a temporary facility that is as close to this area as possible, with the aim of finding a permanent space that is located in the 63108 or 63110 zip code.

The Founding Team will use the following criteria when evaluating a location for Atlas:

### **Criteria for Evaluating Facility Location**

When choosing a location for the Atlas school building we consider the following criteria:

- centralized location that is easily accessible to families living in and around the Central Corridor
- neighborhood is perceived as safe and welcoming to families from all backgrounds
- proximity to public transportation
- proximity to Forest Park, the Delmar Makers District, Grand Center, and Saint Louis University
- proximity to community resources such as a public library and par

Part of our academic model focuses on place-based learning which uses the local community and environment as a starting point to teach concepts in literacy, mathematics, science, social studies, and the arts across the curriculum. We emphasize hands-on, real-world learning experiences that makes the learning more meaningful for our kids.

Being located in a neighborhood near the Grand Center Arts District will give our teachers, students, and families easy access to a plethora of resources, and would be in walking distance to amazing organizations and resources in Grand Center as well as Saint Louis University. The neighborhood is home to world-class theater, music venues, and art galleries including the Contemporary Art Museum, The Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Metro Theater Company, and the Grandel Theater.

Our target zip codes of 63108 and 63110 are also home to the new Delmar Makers District which features MADE for Kids - The Magic House and the Craft Alliance. This area also borders Forest Park which is home to the Saint Louis Zoo, Saint Louis Art Museum, the Missouri History Museum, and the Saint Louis Science Center.

In addition, we recognize that the location, and the facility itself, will play a huge role in our recruitment efforts. Parents and families want their children to be in a safe location that is easily accessible by public transportation or private vehicle. Moreover, families want to know that there will be a safe, clean facility ready for students when the school opens. It is difficult for parents to envision sending their child to a school that hasn't secured a building. To this end, we will make every effort to secure a facility as soon as possible.

### **Criteria for Evaluating Facility**


Atlas will find a facility that meets our space requirements and falls within our budgetary restraints. There are several infrastructural features that will support implementation of the Atlas academic model, including space that is easy to reconfigure into different sized rooms based on student need and type of instruction. We want to create a warm and welcoming environment for students to learn in so natural light is extremely important, as well as ample outdoor learning space and easy access to a playground. In addition, the Atlas Founding Team will evaluate the facilities based on space

requirements stated above. However, we know how difficult it is to identify real estate in the St. Louis market and are committed to executing the academic model in this application, on matter the configuration of the building identified.

### Space Requirements

The Atlas Founding Team is committed to finding a suitable facility space that meets our needs and is aligned to the mission of our school. We are pursuing both long term and temporary facility options, but we would ideally find a facility that meets our long-term needs while falling within our budgetary restraints.

After consulting with our Facility Advisory Council, we have determined our facilities needs for the first six years of operation. As shown in the chart below, in the first year of operation, Atlas will serve 130 students. Our square footage needs are roughly 110 square feet per student, so for the 2021-2022 school year we will need roughly 14,300 square feet of space. By year six, our projected student enrollment will grow to 468 students and our facilities needs will expand to roughly 51,480 square feet.

 <b>ATLAS</b> <b>Enrollment &amp; Facility Projections</b>						
Grade	Year 1 2021-2022	Year 2 2022-2023	Year 3 2023-2024	Year 4 2024-2025	Year 5 2025-2026	Year 6 2026-2027
K	78	78	78	78	78	78
1	52	78	78	78	78	78
2		52	78	78	78	78
3			52	78	78	78
4				52	78	78
5					52	78
<b>K-5 Total</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>208</b>	<b>286</b>	<b>364</b>	<b>442</b>	<b>468</b>
Square Footage Needs	14,300	22,880	31,460	40,040	48,620	51,480
110 sq feet per student						

### Requirements for Permanent Facility

- ADA Compliant
- Safe and Convenient area for student pickup and dropoff
- 25 classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)
- Adequate bathroom facilities
- Food Prep Area Ideally with Commercial Kitchen
- 10 offices for support staff
- Multipurpose Room (5,000 sf with 24 ft. high ceilings)
- Nurse's Office with bathroom
- Art Room with sink
- Music Room with sound proofing
- Outdoor Learning Space
- Playground

The table below outlines Atlas' specific space requirements for each of the first six years of operation.

Year	Criteria
<p><b>Year 1</b> 2021-2022</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 7 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>• Administrative Office Space</li> <li>• Teacher Workroom</li> <li>• Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> <li>• Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>• Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>• Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>• Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 2</b> 2022-2023</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 11 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>• Administrative Office Space</li> <li>• 1-2 Rooms for Small Group Work</li> <li>• Teacher Workroom</li> <li>• Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> <li>• Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>• Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>• Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>• Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 3</b> 2023-2024</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 16 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>• Administrative Office Space</li> <li>• 1-2 Rooms for Small Group Work</li> <li>• Teacher Workroom</li> <li>• Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> <li>• Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>• Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>• Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>• Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>• Playground</li> <li>• Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>
<p><b>Year 4</b> 2024-2025</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 19 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>• Administrative Office Space</li> <li>• 1-2 Rooms for Small Group Work</li> <li>• Teacher Workroom</li> <li>• Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>● Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>● Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>● Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>● Playground</li> <li>● Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>
<b>Year 5</b> 2025-2026	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 21 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>● Administrative Office Space</li> <li>● 2-3 Rooms for Small Group Work</li> <li>● Teacher Workroom</li> <li>● Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> <li>● Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>● Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>● Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>● Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>● Playground</li> <li>● Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>
<b>Year 6</b> 2026-2027	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>● 25 Classrooms (~1,000 sf/class)</li> <li>● Administrative Office Space</li> <li>● 2-3 Rooms for Small Group Work</li> <li>● Teacher Workroom</li> <li>● Food Prep Area (Preferably a Commercial Kitchen)</li> <li>● Restrooms (adult &amp; student)</li> <li>● Multi-Purpose Room</li> <li>● Art &amp; Music Rooms</li> <li>● Outdoor Learning Space</li> <li>● Playground</li> <li>● Safe and Convenient Place for Student Pickup &amp; Dropoff</li> </ul>

### Accessibility of the School Site

Atlas Public Schools requires a facility that is ADA compliant and is programmatically accessible to all students who wish to attend. The mission of Atlas does not exempt students with special needs; in fact, our approach to instruction, co-taught classrooms, and targeted small group instruction, ensures that even more students are able to access high-quality curriculum regardless of their background or skill level. Atlas is deeply committed to serving all students in our community and firmly believes that all students should have access to a high-quality education. As such, our Founding Team ensures that, regardless of mobility limitations, students have access to the entirety of its programmatic offerings in a safe space that promotes high achievement. Not only will we ensure that our classrooms, green space, community spaces, and other school spaces are accessible to all of our students and families, we will also ensure that our site visit partners and programming is accessible to all our students regardless of their level of mobility or ability. No child will be excluded from enrollment or the full academic program at Atlas Public Schools based on their ability or mobility level.

### **Maintaining the Site and Complying with Regulations**

The safety and security of our students, staff, and community are the single most important priority of our team. Atlas Public Schools will comply with applicable laws, resolutions, codes, requirements, decisions, statutes, ordinances, rules, and regulations of any governmental or quasi-governmental authority, department, bureau, agency, body or official having jurisdiction over the operation, occupancy, maintenance, alteration, and use of school facilities. Atlas' leadership team will submit an annual report to the Board that documents how our facilities comply with applicable local and federal health and safety laws and regulations. We will also comply with all applicable health and safety inspections by government officials, and take all appropriate steps to ensure appropriate air quality/ventilation, building condition, cleanliness, temperature control, and absence of pests/infestation in compliance with applicable health and safety and building regulations. As stated above, Atlas Public Schools will comply with the Americans with Disabilities Act, ensuring that children with disabilities have access to school facilities as required by law. The Atlas Founding Team will carefully consider such requirements in the selection, configuration or alteration of any existing facility. Atlas will comply with all regulations for fire safety under Ordinance 70796, the 2018 International Fire Code, providing fire safety and emergency training to staff and students, developing fire evacuation and safety plans, and conducting fire and emergency drills in accordance with all such requirements. Emergency routes will be mapped and posted in each room and fire and safety drills will be performed regularly.

### **Financing & Budget Assumptions**

It is important that the Founding Team at Atlas makes sound financial decisions regarding facilities. Industry best practices indicates that total facilities costs should not exceed 15% of total revenue. The Founding Team at Atlas worked with EdOps and IFF to create the Facilities Plan Below which aligns to our budget workbook that is outlined in more detail in *C.1 Budget*. This plan assumes that our Rent/Debt Service will total roughly \$10 per square foot. This number is in line with the market value in the area. In terms of Operating Costs, we have allocated \$7 per square foot which is the industry standard and includes utilities, maintenance, and upkeep. In addition, the total facilities allocation includes the Debt service on pre-opening renovations: Atlas Public Schools has budgeted \$30,889 per year for the debt service on a \$300,000 loan from IFF for tenant improvements. Overall, our Total Facilities Costs hover between 14.77% and 15.69% of Total Revenue.

 <b>ATLAS</b> <b>Facilities Plan</b>					
	<b>Year 1</b> <b>2021-2022</b>	<b>Year 2</b> <b>2022-2023</b>	<b>Year 3</b> <b>2023-2024</b>	<b>Year 4</b> <b>2024-2025</b>	<b>Year 5</b> <b>2025-2026</b>
Total Student Enrollment	130	208	286	364	442
Square Footage Allocation of Facility based on 110 sq ft. per student	14,300	22,880	31,460	40,040	48,620
Operating Costs Allocation at \$7/sf	\$ 100,100	\$ 160,160	\$ 220,220	\$ 280,280	\$ 340,340
Rent/Debt Service at \$10/sf	\$ 143,000	\$ 228,800	\$ 314,600	\$ 400,400	\$ 486,200
Debt Service for 300k Tenant Improvement	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889	\$ 30,889
<b>Total Facilities Costs</b>	<b>\$ 273,989</b>	<b>\$ 419,849</b>	<b>\$ 565,709</b>	<b>\$ 711,569</b>	<b>\$ 857,429</b>
<b>Grand Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$ 1,810,684</b>	<b>\$ 2,675,423</b>	<b>\$ 3,736,559</b>	<b>\$ 4,724,808</b>	<b>\$ 5,803,755</b>
<b>Facilities Costs as a Percentage of Total Revenue</b>	<b>15.13%</b>	<b>15.69%</b>	<b>15.14%</b>	<b>15.06%</b>	<b>14.77%</b>

## Facility Options

Atlas intends to locate its facility in or around Midtown near the Saint Louis University campus and the Grand Center Arts District. We are exploring rental and lease-to-own options that would allow us to scale rental space and cost with student enrollment. In addition, we are working with the [Kranzberg Arts Foundation](https://www.kranzbergartsfoundation.org/),<sup>160</sup> who provides the infrastructure for the arts to thrive in St. Louis through the operation of venues featuring theatre, dance, live music and special events. While the Kranzberg Arts Foundation does not typically work with schools, the organization feels that Atlas Public Schools would be a benefit to the Grand Center Arts District and is willing to help us structure a deal that is affordable in year one and in year 6 when we're fully built out.

All facilities that we are exploring are either already ADA compliant, or will be renovated to allow access for disabled students. We have met with our advisory team to explore several options throughout St. Louis' Central Corridor. Upon sponsorship, Atlas will begin in-depth negotiations to finalize a facility that meets our programming needs and is aligned to our schools mission. Our timeline for renting or acquiring a space depends on facility availability and DESE approval. The Atlas Public Schools Board will submit a final plan to the sponsor by February, 2021 detailing building rental or purchase and rehabilitation costs.

## Potential School Sites

**The Aquinas Institute:** 23 S Spring Ave is located just right off the campus of Saint Louis University and near both Grand Center Arts District and The Cortex Innovation Community. This is a very attractive site not only because of its location in the Central Corridor and it's walkable proximity to SLU, but it is a beautiful and well-kept building. The Aquinas Institute is currently used as a graduate school of theology with two floors of classrooms and offices. They no longer need the whole bottom first floor (approximately 14,000 square feet), which would have the capacity to hold Atlas students from years one through three. They are asking \$25/SF as a Full Service Lease. The Aquinas Institute

<sup>160</sup> For more information on the Kranzberg Arts Foundation, see: <https://www.kranzbergartsfoundation.org/>

is very interested in having us co-locate with them and seem willing to structure a deal so we can afford it in year one and two. We see this site as an amazing option for a temporary space or we could potentially grow our upper elementary into a surrounding building across the street or very close by. The tenant improvements would be minimal with mostly walls, paint, and smaller toilets.

**Fairland Building:** 3868 Washington Ave is the perfect location for Atlas Public Schools. It is on the same block as the Pulitzer and Contemporary Art Museums and within walking distance from all that Grand Center and Saint Louis University have to offer. The building is currently a vacant warehouse that has 23,560 square feet of usable space. The renovations needed to bring this facility up to the standards of a school which is ADA compliant would be extensive. The building is currently on the market for \$695,000.

**Lindell Professional Building:** 4144 Lindell Blvd is a strong option because of its location and due to the fact that it has 64,475 square feet of space available which could accommodate Atlas when it is fully grown. The building was built in 1974 and has two working elevators. The building comes with 48 surface parking spaces and is near public transportation. The Lindell building is currently on the market for \$3,800,000.

**The Former Home of the St. Louis Language Immersion School:** 3975-4029 Papin St. is an attractive option because it recently housed the St. Louis Language Immersion School and is already ADA compliant. While not in our target neighborhood, the facility is located in The Grove, an up and coming neighborhood that is still in St. Louis' Central Corridor. It is roughly 1.5 miles from the facility to the heart of Grand Center, but the building is located by other unique community resources and is within walking distance to the Cortex. The building itself has over 100,000 square feet of space that could be leased as the school grows. The building features 24' ceilings, fenced in parking lots, and 24 hour access to the building. The rates start at \$10/SF with some TI provided by the Landlord.

See *Appendix C.3.1* for Potential School Site Specifications.

## C.4 - Contracted Services

Atlas Public Schools (Atlas) anticipates that it will provide or procure most of its own contracted services including, but not limited to, accounting, food service, student and instructional support, insurance, legal, auditing, technology, and transportation. Atlas has worked with a variety of local nonprofits and other charter schools this past year to learn more about service providers and future qualified third-party contractors. As a diverse-by-design school, and as a continuum of our mission, we are deeply committed to hiring vendors who have pledged to Anti-bias, AntiRacist (ABAR) practices. The current vendors we have selected both show promise in execution as well as a commitment to ABAR. Many of the vendors have been recommended by City Garden Montessori and Kairos Academies, as both St. Louis charter schools are diverse-by-design and hold similar values as Atlas.

Procurement policy:

1. The purchase complies with Atlas' documented procedures
2. The purchase is necessary
3. There is open competition among vendors
4. A conflict-of-interest policy is in place
5. Proper documentation for the purchases is maintained
6. Goods or services costing \$50,000 or more require a request for proposal (RFP) and Board approval

### Accounting

Atlas will set its own policies and procedures for recording employee work hours, and dealing with issues of overtime, absences, leaves, vacation and other adjustments. Currently, Atlas is on a retainer with the backend provider, [EdOps](#)<sup>161</sup> for budget creation and support. The EdOps contracting work will be directly managed by the Head of School - Operations Lead. We have a scope of work and rate from EdOps in *Appendix C.4.1* for continual backend support once Atlas is open and fully operational.

### Food Service

Atlas conservatively anticipates a 50% free and reduced lunch student population and expects this percentage to stay constant through the first five years of charter operations. Atlas has not yet confirmed a food service provider for students. However, the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) recommended American Dining Creations (ADC). They offer both on-site dining services and off-site culinary production and delivery. Since we have not yet obtained our facility, this option will work even if we do not obtain a fully operational commercial kitchen. ADC prices their

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<sup>161</sup> For more information on EdOps, see: <http://www.ed-ops.com/>

services to match National School Lunch, Breakfast, and After School Snack reimbursement rates. Atlas adheres to minimum nutritional quality standards for individual food items. ADC prioritizes nutrition and has been recognized for their healthy options by the US Surgeon General.

## Student and Instructional Support

**Substitute Teachers:** In the event of multiple teacher absences, we will utilize [Kelly Services](#).<sup>162</sup> With that being said, we have a high staff to student ratio and may be able to fill in absences with other staff in the building on a case-by-case basis. Atlas has budgeted \$5,000 for substitute teachers in year one, and \$17,500 for substitute teachers by year five. If Atlas hits an additional \$50,000 fundraising goal, we plan on hiring an additional full-time staff member to work as the building substitute teacher.

**G Suite:** G Suite for Nonprofits is free of charge for nonprofits. We are utilizing this platform for Google cloud tools such as gmail and Google Drive. Upon sponsorship, we will transition to [Google for Education](#) for all staff to utilize free of charge.<sup>163</sup>

**Student Information System:** Atlas has not yet secured a Student Information System platform but is currently exploring options. [Lumen Touch](#)<sup>164</sup> has been recommended by EdOps, and Atlas is also considering [Tyler SIS](#).<sup>165</sup>

**Panorama:** Atlas is one of several schools in St. Louis chosen by The Opportunity Trust to participate in a fully-funded [Panorama](#)<sup>166</sup> student, staff, and family survey program. These surveys will help track feedback surveys, students' progress, and social-emotional learning.

**Special Education Services:** In addition to a SPED teacher we are hiring in year one, Atlas has budgeted an additional \$1,250 per child anticipated with special education requirements. These funds will be used to contract for services such as but not limited to physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, and special transportation. For students with IEPs who require transportation, Atlas will contract with a transportation service per [RSMo 302.010](#).

**Nursing:** Atlas is currently exploring partnerships for nursing services with organizations such as Saint Louis University as well as telemedicine clinics for years 1 and 2. Atlas faculty will be trained to deliver CPR and at least two of our full-time staff members (non-classroom teachers) will be trained

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<sup>162</sup> For more information on Kelly Services, see: <https://www.kellyeducationalstaffing.us/>

<sup>163</sup> For more information on Google for Education, see: [https://edu.google.com/?modal\\_active=none](https://edu.google.com/?modal_active=none)

<sup>164</sup> For more information on Lumen Touch, see: <https://www.lumentouch.com/about>

<sup>165</sup> For more information on Tyler SIS, see: <https://www.tylertech.com/products/tyler-sis>

<sup>166</sup> For more information on Panorama, see: <https://www.panoramaed.com/>

to deliver student medication and basic first aid. We have budgeted for a full-time nurse to join staff in year 3 of operation.

**Insurance:** Atlas has obtained quotes for insurance from Christopher Nazaruk at [Daniel and Henry](#).

<sup>167</sup> See *Appendix B.1.7* for quotes. The quotes include insurance for:

- Directors' and Officers' Liability
- Commercial General Comprehensive Liability
- Educators Legal Liability
- Employment Practices Liability
- Sexual Abuse Liability
- Automobile Liability
- Excess Liability or Umbrella
- Workers Compensation Liability

## Legal

Currently Atlas has been using Keith Kehrer at [Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner](#) for legal needs.<sup>168</sup>

Moving forward, Atlas is considering [Capes Sokol](#), attorneys Katie Landfried and Mark Goodman, for future legal counsel.<sup>169</sup>

## Audit

Atlas is considering [Anders](#) for auditing purposes.<sup>170</sup> This St. Louis City accounting firm has a strong reputation for working with nonprofit groups. Jeanne Dee has been recommended by a Board member to conduct audits.

## Technology

Atlas is considering running technology procurement internally, although we will release a Request for Proposal (RFP) for technology such as projectors, document cameras, student and staff laptops, charging carts, a school camera system, and copy machines upon sponsorship.

## Transportation

In efforts to recruit students from our target enrollment zip codes, Atlas has decided to not offer bus transportation to and from school for our general student body. Other diverse charter schools such as Kairos Academies, City Garden Montessori, and Lafayette Preparatory also have made this

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<sup>167</sup> For more information on Daniel and Henry, see: <https://danielandhenry.com/about/team/>

<sup>168</sup> For more information on Keith Kehrer at Bryan Cave Leighton Paisner, see: <https://www.bclplaw.com/en-US/people/keith-j-kehrer.html>

<sup>169</sup> For more information on Capes Sokol, see: <http://www.capessokol.com/>

<sup>170</sup> For more information on Anders, see: <http://anderscpa.com/>

decision as it directly impacts recruitment for target demographics. We also plan on being located near the busiest bus line in St. Louis, the 70 Grand Line, which will be a viable transportation option for several potential families.

If a child needs transportation because of an IEP or if a child is eligible because of the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act, Atlas will arrange a transportation plan with the family by using modes such as A. Best Taxi Service, LLC, Metro Call-A-Ride, and RideFinders. All transportation options must have background checks and appropriate licensing. Atlas will not request state dollars for transportation funding.

Atlas does provide bus transportation to and from site visits during the school day. We have budgeted \$60 per student per school year for site visits. We plan on using [First Student](#) for transportation related to site visits.<sup>171</sup>

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<sup>171</sup> For more information on First Student, see: <http://www.firststudentinc.com/>

# D.1 - Pre-Opening Plan

Overarching Goal(s)		Atlas Pre-Opening Plan	Owner	July 2019	Aug 2019	Sept 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020	Feb 2020	March 2020	April 2020	May 2020	June 2020	July 2020	Aug 2020	Sept 2020	Oct 2020	Nov 2020	Dec 2020	Jan 2021	Feb 2021	March 2021	April 2021	May 2021	June 2021	July 2021	Aug 2021	Sept 2021		
ED= EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR HOS=HEAD OF SCHOOL FT=FOUNDING TEAM DCSG= DIVERSE CHARTER SCHOOL COALITION FB=FOUNDING BOARD																																
Path to Approval	1) The charter is approved by June 2020.  2) There is a broad range of community support and demand for Atlas, with 150 founding families committed to Atlas by April 2021.	Authorization																														
		Work with EdOps for budget	ED	X																												
		Draft charter application	ED/HOS	X	X	X																										
		Hold writing retreats and audit sessions	ED/HOS/FT	X	X	X																										
		Revise charter application	ED	X	X																											
		Meet with Kairoa team to prep for forum	ED/HOS					X																								
		Practice with founding board prior to community forum	ED/HOS										X	X																		
		Participate in MCPSC interview and public hearing	ED/HOS													X																
		Submit application to state Board of Education	ED											X	X	X																
		School Design	1) We have detailed articulation of what Atlas will achieve with students, how we are going to achieve it, and how we will measure it.  2) Atlas has systems in place to show that students have a sense of belonging and have a great student experience, there is robust parent engagement and satisfaction, and strong staff culture and retention.  3) Systems show no discrepancies across gender/race/income.  4) We have determined what assessments Atlas will be using to measure academic growth.  5) We have developed a calendar and schedule that is aligned to our mission and strategic priorities and sets students and teachers up for success.  6) We've created a place-based curriculum specific to St. Louis that is rooted in rigorous experiential learning, and is embedded with opportunities for students to practice 21st learning century skills.	Family Engagement																												
Leverage connections to meet potential parents, host living room conversations	ED/HOS			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
Schedule one-on-one meetings to identify potential Atlas Families	ED/HOS			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X															
Hold focus groups for feedback on school design	ED/HOS/FT			X	X	X																										
Community map Early Childhood Centers in target enrollment zone	ED/HOS/FT			X	X	X	X	X																								
Church leaders identify 30-40 family members	ED/HOS							X	X																							
Send quarterly updates to potential founding families	HOS																	X														
Community outreach via social media/website	HOS			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Collect survey data from families who participated in pilots	ED/HOS			X	X													X	X													
Commitments from 30+ founding families to attend the forum	ED									X	X	X	X	X	X																	
		Culture Systems																														
		Create 2 page articulation of school culture plan that includes rituals and practices	ED/HOS		X																											
		Formalize partnership with Panorama to use student, staff and parent surveys for the 2021-2022 school year	ED															X														
		Hold audit sessions of school culture plan	ED/HOS							X																						
		Create observation tool that is aligned to school culture plan	HOS							X	X																					
		Schedule Multiple Site Visits to gain inspiration from schools with strong culture	ED/HOS		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																		
		Apply for TFA-Schools to Learn From	ED												X																	
		Schedule full team equity training as part of onboarding process	HOS																								X					
		Engage families who had children in our 2020 summer pilot to review and audit culture systems	ED/HOS		X													X														
		Work with City Garden on their CD Roll-Out and PD Plan	HOS		X	X	X	X	X									X														
		Academic Systems																														
		Apply to attend RELAY Leadership Trainings	ED/HOS															X	X	X												
		Partner with Achievement First and adopt their Balanced Literacy and Math Programs	ED/HOS	X	X																											
		Partner with Affinity for strategic guidance around academic programs and systems	ED/HOS	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X																
		Create and/or adopt assessments and rubrics	HOS	X	X													X	X	X												
		Engage potential Atlas staff in multi-day writing retreats	ED/HOS/FT	X	X																											
		Create professional development scope and sequence	HOS															X	X	X	X											
		Hire PBE consultant to assist with writing PBE units	ED/HOS	X	X													X	X	X	X	X	X	X								
		Create scope and sequence for curriculum	HOS	X	X													X	X	X												
		Finalize contracts with providers and secure staff for SPED services	ED																													
		Create IEP protocol and process	ED/HOS																	X	X	X										
		Finalize SPED services plan for incoming students	ED/HOS																								X	X				
		Create coaching program overview for staff	HOS															X	X	X												
		Purchase program assessment materials such as NWEA	ED																					X	X	X						
		Create rubrics to measure graduate aims and SEL	ED/HOS/FT	X	X																											

See Attachment



## D.2 - Closure Plan

In the event of closure or dissolution of Atlas Public Schools (Atlas), the Board of Directors shall manage the dissolution process in partnership with our charter sponsor to ensure the orderly closure of the school. The dissolution process will be in accordance with [RSMo 160.400.16\(6\)](#) and [RSMo 160.405.15](#), Atlas' charter, and be informed by the most recent dissolution plan provided by the Missouri Charter Public School Association (MCPSA) see *appendix D.2.1*. Any liabilities of the LEA shall be satisfied in accordance with the Sponsor's closure procedures and the procedures provided for in [RSMo 355](#), Nonprofit Corporation Law, and in full compliance with [RSMo 160.405.15.1\(17\)](#). Our goal will be to protect the best interests of displaced students, families, and staff and ensure a successful transition for all parties involved. The school closure plan detailed below maps the timing of activities that range from actions taken immediately following a decision to close through post-closure tasks.

### Immediate Tasks

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
<p><b>Establish Transition Team and Assign Roles</b></p> <p>A team to close down the school's business and smoothly transition students and staff. Team to include (at a minimum):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Atlas Board President</li> <li>2. Atlas Executive Director</li> <li>3. Atlas Head of School - Culture Lead</li> <li>4. Atlas Head of School - Operations Lead</li> <li>5. Lead officer at sponsor</li> </ol>	Board President	Within 1 week of decision to close
<p><b>Assign Transition Team Action Item Responsibilities</b></p> <p>Share contact information between members of Transition Team, set calendar for meetings, and assign dates for completion of each charter school closure action item. The Transition Team will then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establish a plan to enroll students in a high-performing school of their choice. The plan will solicit student/family input, establish clear deadlines for key activities, and continue until every student has been enrolled in a new school.</li> <li>• Designate a School Closure Coordinator to give families, staff, and other stakeholders access to a direct line of support throughout the transition.</li> </ul>	Board President	Within 1 week of decision to close

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Press Release</b></p> <p>Draft and distribute a press release which includes the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• History of the school</li> <li>• Cause(s) for school closure</li> <li>• Expression of support for students, families, and staff</li> <li>• Contact information for the School Closure Coordinator</li> </ul>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within 1 week of decision to close
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Notification Letter: School Community</b></p> <p>Distribute letter to faculty, staff and parents outlining:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Reason(s) for school closure</li> <li>2. Initial timeline for transition</li> <li>3. Contact information for the School Closure Coordinator</li> </ol>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within 1 week of decision to close
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Notification Letter: State &amp; Local Agencies</b></p> <p>Send a letter to local LEA's (informing them for the purpose of enrolling Atlas students) and to the State Board of Education which includes:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Notification materials distributed to faculty, staff and parents</li> <li>2. Reason(s) for school closure</li> <li>3. Copy of any termination agreement(s) (if applicable)</li> </ol>	Head of School - Operations Lead	Within 1 week of decision to close

### Ongoing Tasks

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Instruction</b></p> <p>Continue current educational program per Atlas' charter contract until the end of the regular school year.</p>	Executive Director	Ongoing
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>MAP Testing</b></p> <p>Administer all necessary MAP tests scheduled for that year in accordance with regulations and policies.</p>	Executive Director	Ongoing
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Board Communication</b></p> <p>Make conspicuously and publicly available all copies of Board meeting agendas, minutes (including supporting attachments), financials, and other documents outlined in this checklist.</p>	Board President	Ongoing

<p><b>Maintain Insurance for Atlas' Assets and Personnel</b></p> <p>Ensure that any assets in the care of the school are protected against theft, misappropriation, and deterioration by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Maintaining existing insurance coverage for the facility and other assets until disposal, sale, transfer, or termination of lease.</li> <li>• Negotiating facility insurance with entities that may take possession of the school facility (lenders, mortgagors, bond holders, etc.)</li> <li>• Maintaining existing directors and officers(D&amp;O) liability insurance until final dissolution of the school.</li> </ul>	Head of School Operations Lead	Ongoing
<p><b>Financial Condition Report(s)</b></p> <p>From the month of the closure decision until the final closure, Atlas Public Schools will prepare the following financial documents for the previous month by the close of the current month:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A current month end balance sheet</li> <li>• A current monthly income statement</li> <li>• A cash flow statement projecting the necessary in and outflows to operate the school through the closure date and accounting for the full disposition of assets</li> </ul>	Head of School - Operations Lead	Ongoing

### Pre-Closure Tasks

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
<p><b>Establish Reserve Funds</b></p> <p>Reserve and define the acceptable use of funds to support orderly closure of the school. These funds may be used to pay the following entities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers and staff</li> <li>• Employment taxes and federal taxes</li> <li>• Audit preparation</li> <li>• Private creditors</li> <li>• Overpayments from DESE</li> </ul>	Board President	Within 30 Days of decision to close
<p><b>Transition Letter: Parents/Guardians</b></p> <p>Atlas will follow the initial notification with a letter detailing the</p>	Head of School	Within 30 Days of

<p>transition plan. Notification will include but not be limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Date of the last day of regular instruction</li> <li>• Cancellation of any planned summer school</li> <li>• Date(s) of any planned events or experiential learning trips</li> <li>• Contact and enrollment information for charter, parochial, public, and private schools in the area</li> <li>• Information on obtaining student records before closure</li> <li>• Date for upcoming family closure meeting</li> <li>• Contact information for the School Closure Coordinator</li> </ul>		<p>decision to close</p>
<p><b>Employees and Benefit Providers</b></p> <p>Atlas will enclose information regarding termination of employment and/or contracts, including an official termination date, in the Transition Letter for faculty and staff. Atlas will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notify benefit providers of the pending termination of all employees</li> <li>• Notify payroll processor of the school's pending closure</li> <li>• Notify employees and providers of the termination date for all benefit program contracts</li> <li>• Terminate II benefits programs as of the last date of service in accordance with applicable law and regulations</li> </ul>	<p>Head of School &amp; Executive Director</p>	<p>Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>
<p><b>Transition Letter: Staff/Faculty</b></p> <p>Atlas will outline transition plans and timelines for staff in a letter including information about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Board's commitment to transition staff</li> <li>• The Board's commitment to transition all students into positive new educational settings</li> <li>• Any anticipated new employment assistance provided by the Board</li> <li>• Timelines for compensation and benefits</li> <li>• Timelines for outstanding professional development issues</li> <li>• COBRA</li> <li>• Processing of year-end tax documents (W-2s, 1099s, etc.)</li> <li>• Pertinent licensure information</li> <li>• Date for upcoming staff/faculty closure meeting</li> <li>• Contact information of the School Closure Coordinator</li> </ul>	<p>Head of School - Operations Lead</p>	<p>Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Faculty/Staff Meeting</b></p> <p>Atlas will convene an all-staff meeting to discuss the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to continuing school operations during closure transition</li> <li>• Plan to assist students and staff during the transition</li> <li>• Reasons for closure</li> <li>• Timeline for transition details</li> <li>• Compensation and benefits timeline</li> <li>• Contact information for the School Closure Coordinator</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Board President</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Institutional Partners</b></p> <p>Atlas will notify the following institutional partners of closure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public School Retirement System</li> <li>• All other Organizations and/or institutions with which the school has partnered</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Head of School Operations Lead</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Contracts/Vendors</b></p> <p>Atlas will notify all active contractors and vendors about school closure, cessation of operations, and:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Instruct contractors and vendors to remove any property from the school (copying machines, water coolers, and other rented property).</li> <li>• Retain records of past contracts as proof of full payment.</li> <li>• Maintain telephone, gas, electric, water, insurance, and Directors and Officers liability insurance long enough to complete all closure procedures.</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Head of School Operations Lead</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Creditors and Debtors</b></p> <p>Atlas will notify all creditors and debtors and calculate the total accrued and unpaid for each. Atlas will also:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Solicit a final accounting of the school's accrued and unpaid debt from each creditor; compare the figures provided with the school's calculation of the debt and reconcile; and, where possible, negotiate a settlement of debts consummated with a settlement agreement reflecting satisfaction and release of the existing obligations.</li> <li>• Contact all debtors to demand payment, and if collection efforts are unsuccessful, consider turning the debt over to a commercial debt collection agency. Records regarding such collection or disputes by debtors will be</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Head of School - Operations Lead</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">Within 30 Days of decision to close</p>

retained.		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Engage Final Audit</b></p> <p>The Board of Directors will choose an independent auditor (subject to DESE approval) to conduct a final audit of school operations. Atlas will submit a signed and dated copy of the engagement letter to DESE along with an estimated timeline for the start and completion of the audit.</p>	Board President	Within 30 Days of decision to close

### Post-Closure Tasks

Action	Responsibility	Deadline
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Final Report Cards</b></p> <p>Atlas will send families copies of final report cards, notice of where else student records were sent, and contact information for that institution.</p>	Executive Director	Within one week after the last day of instruction
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Archival and Transfer of Student Records</b></p> <p>Atlas will ensure that complete student records (academic, health, special education, etc.) are archived and transferred to each student's new school. Record will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final grades</li> <li>• Materials associated with Individual Education Plans</li> <li>• Immunization records</li> <li>• Family information</li> </ul>	Executive Director	Within one week after the last day of instruction
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Payroll and Employment Verification Reports</b></p> <p>Atlas will provide a list of all payroll reports (including taxes, retirement, and contract adjustments) and an employment verification report to each employee, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A signed dated letter from the payroll provider assuring timely and completed processing of payroll documentation (W-2s, 1099s, etc.)</li> <li>• An employment verification report including dates of employment, position(s) held, and salary history</li> </ul>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within one week after the last day of instruction
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Itemized Financial Records</b></p> <p>Atlas will review, prepare, and make available:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fiscal year-end financial statements</li> </ul>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within one week after the last day of instruction

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cash analysis</li> <li>• List of compiled bank statements for the year</li> <li>• List of investments</li> <li>• List of payables (and determinations of when a check used to pay the liability will clear the bank)</li> <li>• List of petty cash</li> <li>• List of all payroll reports including taxes, retirement or adjustments on employee contracts</li> <li>• List of all accounts, which will be closed once transactions have cleared</li> <li>• List of all unused checks, which will be voided</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Final Reports</b></p> <p>Atlas will submit all final reports and cooperate with any remaining oversight requirements of the sponsor, DESE, or the State Board of Education.</p>	Executive Director	Within one week after the last day of instruction
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Inventory and Plan for Disposition of Assets</b></p> <p>Atlas will plan for the disposition of all assets, property, and inventory, segregating assets purchased with Missouri State and Federal Dollars. Within 60 days of the last day of instruction Atlas will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Note source codes for funds and price for each purchase</li> <li>• Establish fair market value, initial and amortized for all fixed assets</li> <li>• Ensure that all Atlas liabilities and obligations are paid and discharged to the extent possible by the school's assets</li> <li>• Return unobligated Missouri State dollars to DESE</li> <li>• Donate all other assets, pursuant to Atlas' incorporating documents.</li> </ul>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within one week after the last day of instruction
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Archiving Corporate Records and Operations</b></p> <p>The Atlas Board of Directors will maintain all corporate records related to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees (background checks, personnel files)</li> <li>• Loans, bonds, mortgages and other financing</li> <li>• Contracts</li> <li>• Leases</li> <li>• Assets and asset sales</li> <li>• Grants (records relating to federal grants must be kept in accordance with 34 CFR 8042)</li> <li>• Governance (minutes, by-laws, policies)</li> </ul>	Board President	Within one week after the last day of instruction

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accounting/audit, taxes and tax status</li> <li>• Employee benefit programs and benefits</li> <li>• Any items provided for in the closure action plan</li> </ul>		
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Submit Final Audit</b></p> <p>Atlas will submit a final closeout audit (by an independent CPA firm or Missouri State auditor, as determined by statute), which documents the disposition of all liabilities.</p>	Head of School Operations Lead	Within one week after the last day of instruction