

**Codman Academy Charter School
Annual Report 2001-2002**

“To Learn, to Lead, and to Serve”

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Codman Academy Charter School Annual Report 2001-2002

Table of Contents

I.	Letter from the Head of the Board	3
II.	Executive Summary	5
III.	Academic Program	6
IV.	Organizational Goals	9
V.	Are we true to our mission?	11
VI.	Dissemination	15
VII.	Appendices	17
	1. Accountability Plan	
	2. Student Demographics	
	3. Student Enrollment Policy	
	4. List of Board of Trustees	
	5. Huntington Theater Project Evaluation	
	6. Center for Collaborative Education(CCE) Evaluation & appendices	
	7. Financial Assets	
	8. Budget Fiscal year 2003	

July 25, 2002

David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, Massachusetts 02148-5023

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

"Codman Academy Charter School is a powerful learning community. As it continues to grow it will be a school that provides the kind of educational experience and environment that Boston students and their families have wanted for many years. Learning and teaching are active, engaging and rigorous. Students are learning to use their minds well and are able to make connections between the classroom and the world around them. They are beginning to understand that learning takes place wherever you go and that the city, country and the world are all a classroom. These are the ingredients for creating lifelong learners who have a clear sense of purpose and passion as they continue their studies and pursue professional careers."

The Center for Collaborative Education
2001-2002 Year End Assessment

"If you build it, they will come," might have been the motto for our opening year. Our very successful first year at Codman Academy Charter School was made possible by the support and hard work of ninth grade students and their families, an outstanding faculty and a rich array of partners who came together to launch a very ambitious dream: Dorchester's first college preparatory charter high school .

Our groundbreaking drama-based Humanities program with Huntington Theatre shows great promise. Students showed significant gains on standardized reading tests with the class average posting gains of ten percentile points.

Extraordinary student attendance and parent participation demonstrated commitment to education. Average daily attendance was 96% for our six day a week program, which includes hours 9 a.m. - 5 p.m. Monday- Friday and Saturdays 9 a.m. - noon. We had 100% attendance at parent conferences.

Our partners, in particular Codman Square Health Center, Sportsmen's Tennis Center, *The Boston Globe*, The Huntington Theatre and the Museum of Fine Arts, as well as seven colleges and 20 cultural and scientific institutions, made the city truly our classroom. Additionally, we launched two important annual traditions: a Model United Nations and the Huntington Theatre Showcase performance.

Our charter spells out a challenging and innovative academic curriculum and array of support services embedded in a philosophy of Expeditionary Learning. Perhaps the most impressive feat of our first year is that we did everything our charter promise with one exception. We learned that our goal of offering on-line courses was premature and we have delayed their implementation.

Our decision to open with 34 students was the decision we most celebrated this first year since it allowed us the flexibility to build systems and infrastructure for the present and the future. We look forward to welcoming 60 ninth and ten graders and their families next year. We believe, based on our experience this year, that a small college preparatory school can offer students and their families truly limitless opportunities.

Sincerely,

William Walczak
President, Board of Trustees

II. Executive Summary

Mission:

Codman Academy Charter School's mission is to prepare students for full participation in the intellectual, economic and civic life of society, by ensuring their preparation for and access to further education, the skills and vision to undertake a rewarding career, and the motivation and character needed to engage deeply and productively in community life. We view parents and community members as integral partners in this endeavor.

History: Codman Academy Charter School opened in September 2001 on the site of one of its primary partners, Codman Square Health Center in Dorchester. This is Dorchester's first charter high school.

Students served 2001-2002: 29 ninth graders completed the year. The majority of the students served were from Dorchester. 85% of all students are eligible for free or reduced price lunch.

School hours/days: Monday – Friday 9 am – 5 pm and Saturday 9 am – noon.
Supervised study hall Tuesday – Thursday 5 –6 pm.

Number of school days: 208

Faculty/Adjunct Faculty: All core academic teachers have advanced degrees. Faculty hold degrees from Amherst College, Brown University, Columbia Teachers' College, Emory University, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Harvard- Radcliffe, Hofstra University and Wheelock. Two adjunct faculty members hold doctoral degrees in physics from MIT and UC Berkeley. Special Education Director has twenty years experience. Core academic teachers (Humanities, Math/Science) are 100% African-American and male.

Curriculum Design & Teaching Method: College preparatory courses which are project based and interdisciplinary informed by Expeditionary Learning philosophy. Strong field work with off campus work one day per week. Unique partnership developing drama-based Humanities program with The Huntington Theatre included 20 on site days and a culminating Showcase Performance in a theatre at Boston University School of Fine Arts.

Indicators of success:

- 96% daily average attendance
- Class average 10 percentile gain on Degree of Reading Powers test.
- 100% parent participation in Teacher/Student Conferences.
- 100% faculty returning for second year.
- 93% parents gave the school an A or B for overall performance.
- 100% students who completed the year are planning on returning

III. Academic Program

Core Curriculum Requirements

“Answers in the Toolbox,” a report by the U.S. Department of Education notes that particularly for African American and Latino students, a strong academic curriculum is the most significant predictor of success in college. A strong academic curriculum is more significant than class rank, test scores, grade point average or socio-economic status. Based on these research findings, we intend to require our students to fulfill the following requirements or their equivalent for graduation credit:

All Codman Academy Charter School students must complete these core academic requirements by demonstrating their mastery of content through portfolios, exhibition/performances and passing MCAS tests. Learning expeditions are consistent with Massachusetts Curriculum State Frameworks for the secondary level. Students may substitute two college level courses for the two AP courses. They will also have performing arts, learning through internships and physical fitness requirements to fulfill. Finally, they must complete two summers of approved enrichment programs prior to graduation.

In order to receive credit for any course, students must attain a grade of 70 which is equivalent to a C-. Any grade lower than a C- will be marked No Credit (NC). Academic subjects are the only courses offered for a letter grade.

Performance goals

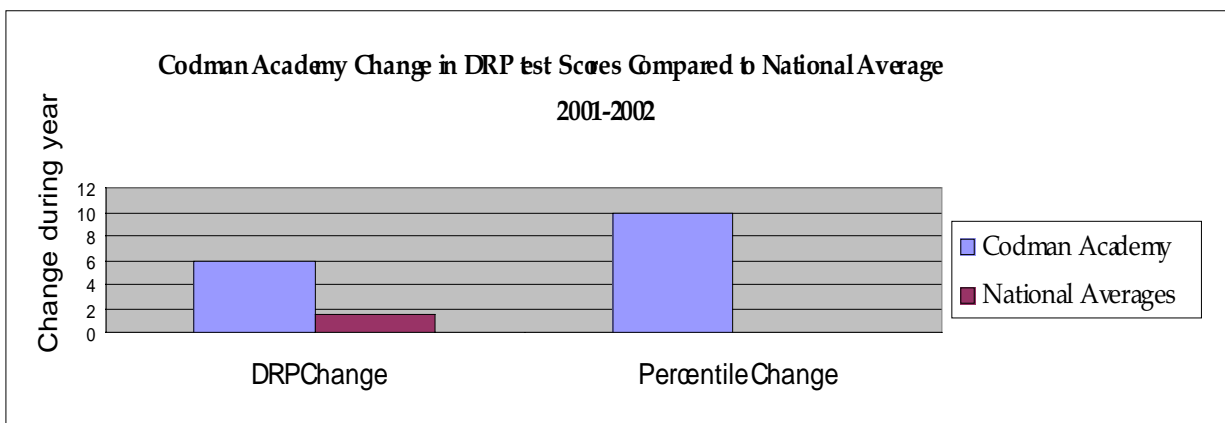
1. By graduation, students should increase reading proficiency as assessed by Degree of Reading Powers (DRP) to read at or above grade level.

Instrument: Degree of Reading Power Test for all incoming students and every spring thereafter for all students. The DRP measures students’ improvement in the ability to process and understand increasingly difficult prose materials. DRP unit scores are reported in accordance with the most difficult text the student can read on his or her own.

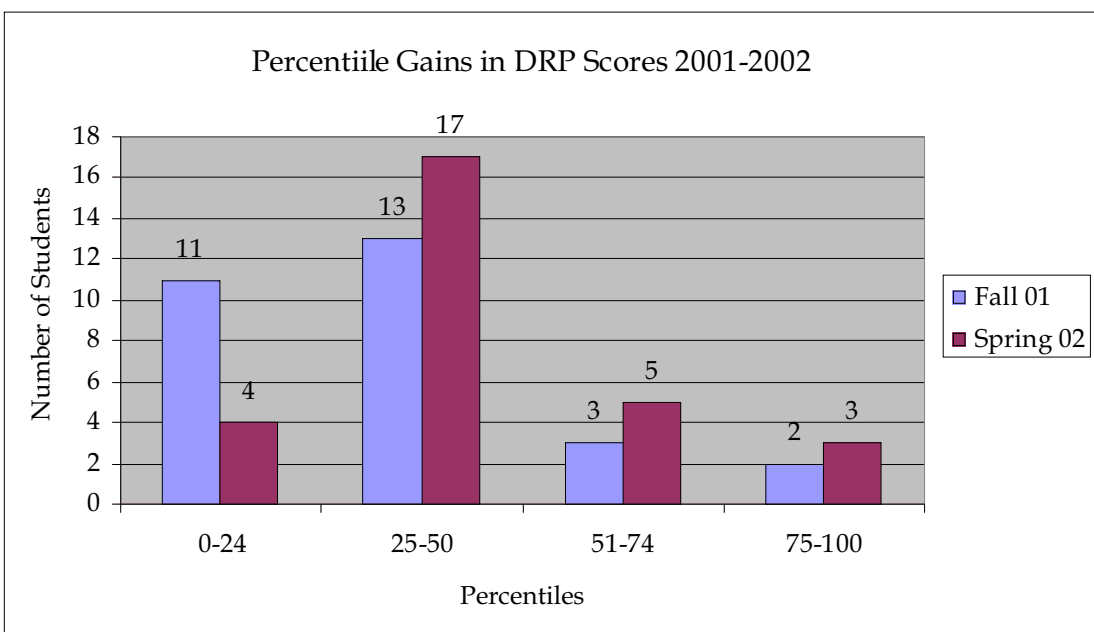
Data: DRP test results compiled twice annually for ninth graders and annually thereafter for students in grades ten through twelve to gauge progress.
85 % students at graduation shall complete goal.

Current Status:

Usually, in high school students increase their DRP score by 1-2 DRP units during the school year. In the fall Codman Academy Charter School students had a class average DRP of 48 placing them in the 29th percentile nationally. This spring the class average was 54 placing them in the 39th percentile nationally. Students’ test scores rose by an average of 6 points raising Codman Academy’s national percentile by 10 points (see Graph 1). This is a substantial gain in quantifiable reading comprehension. Testing scores increased along all ability levels; each percentile rose from fall to spring testing, therefore, advanced students learned just as readily as though who scored lower initially (see Graph 2).



Graph 1: Data collected from the 29 students who completed both fall and spring tests.



Graph 2: DRP gains by percentiles. Each percentile increased testing scores from fall to spring tests.

2. Each student shall complete with a satisfactory grade or higher the required academic curriculum requirements in order to graduate.

Data: Promotion and graduation rates.

Instrument: Student report cards and portfolios.

Current status: 83% of current students were promoted to tenth grade. Students who were retained did not pass Humanities (History and English) and either Biology and/ or Algebra I.

3. Each student shall complete with a satisfactory self-evaluation and supervisor's evaluation a Learning Through Internship (LTI) of at least 30 hours as well as two summers of approved enrichment programming such as internships or courses. LTI's are apprenticeships focused in an area of student interest and career exploration Their purpose is to connect academic learning and service by deepening both. (The term LTI comes from The Big Picture Company Initiative).

Instrument: Submission of Internship Report in loose-leaf notebook. Report shall include: Summary of the Facts: Brief profile of the agency, company or organization where student worked. Organizational chart of where student worked. Type of business, number of employees, geographic location, etc.

- Narrative of what student did and learned. May be either chronological by project or kinds of tasks performed. Describe chores/duties in detail.
- Self-Evaluation: Student takes a good hard look at the experience and tells the good and bad of it. Writing is specific and detailed in describing experience.
- Evaluation by Intern's Supervisor with recommended Passing/No Credit.

(Adapted in part from Boston University College of Communications CM 471 Internship Report Format)

Data: 100% of students shall complete Learning Through Internship Reports at a satisfactory level in order to graduate.

Current status: This year 4 students were eligible to receive credit for successfully completing their LTI requirement. Placements were: Jamaicaway Bookstore, Boston Police Station District C, O'Hearn Elementary School (Boston Public School), and Rise and Shine Day Care.

4. MCAS:

Rationale: State requirement for diploma.

Goal: 75% students pass MCAS on first try.

Current status: Students will take MCAS spring 2003.

IV. Organizational goals

1. The Board of Trustees shall function in an effective manner to carry out the mission of the school and provide oversight of its academic and organizational goals.

Instrument: Board minutes. Observation and feedback by outside evaluator annually.
Annual board retreat to set goals.

Current status: Board meeting was observed by Department of Education Charter School office with a favorable review. Annual board retreat held June 27, 2002. During 2001-2002, the major policies adopted by board of trustees include: Admissions and Enrollment, Attendance and Tardiness, Class Ranking, Code of Discipline, Discrimination and Harassment, Grading, Promotion Requirements, Safety and Community Campus, Snow Days, Tobacco Free School, and the Dress Code. Goals for 2002-2003 adopted as the following:

Codman Academy Charter School Goals for 2002-2003

1. Finalize graduation requirements consistent with state charter and Expeditionary Learning philosophy with goal of all students prepared for and accepted to college.

Indicators:

Revised graduation standards approved by Board of Trustees

75% of 10th graders pass MCAS on first try

9th graders DRP and Stanford 9 math rates of improvement higher than BPS district and national averages

Attendance rate 96%

Competencies established to pass 10th grade

2. **Develop Accountability Plan**

Indicator:

Accountability Plan is approved by Massachusetts Department of Education Charter School Office

3. **Strengthen and make seamless the partnership between CACS and Codman Square Health Center**

Indicators:

Survey distributed to all employees in September and June.

Survey to CACS parents in May.

4. **Develop a plan for supporting Codman students once they are accepted to college.**

Indicator

* Plan approved by Board of Trustees

2. The school shall raise necessary funds and manage cash flow to meet expenses.

Instrument: Independent audit annually.

Data: Budget reports to Board of Trustees.

Current status: Board minutes reflect budget reports provided to Board of Trustees. Audit is scheduled for August 2002. Preliminary financial reports are included as an appendix in this report. Expenses did not exceed revenues this year. Please see attached financial reports Net Assets (unaudited) and the Budget for Fiscal Year 2003) Appendices 5 and 6.

3. Facilities shall be obtained to carry out the school's mission. The school shall open in September 2001 in space to be renovated at 637 Washington Street September 2001, and expand in Codman Square area in September 2002.

Instrument: Contract for renovations with deadline for completion for August 15, 2001. Signed lease.

Data: Certificate of Occupancy approved by Boston City Building Inspector.

Current Status:

Codman Academy Charter School opened in September of 2001 at 637 Washington Street as planned. August 15, 2002 we will take occupancy of 14-16 Epping Street in order to accommodate the additional classroom space needed. Both spaces are leased from Codman Square Health Center. Our current lease is for the term of our charter.

4. Attract outstanding faculty and support their professional development.

Instrument:

- a. Monthly faculty development meetings with Special Education Director
- b. Identify outside staff developer and raise funds to work with faculty 2002-2003.
- c. Annual Performance Review includes self-review

Data: Rate of contracts offered to faculty and management

Current status: There were no changes in faculty during the 2001-2002 school year; all faculty will be returning for 2002-2003. 100% faculty and management offered renewal contracts and have chosen to accept. We applied for a Comprehensive School Reform Design federal grant to work with Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound and have been awarded \$50,000 for 2002-2003 specifically focused on professional development.

All faculty are supervised directly by the Head of School with professional development assistance by the Director of Special Education.

Staff roster (core faculty)

Name	Teaching Assignment	Years Teaching	Years @ school	Degree & Certifications
Thabiti Brown	Humanities	4	1	M.S.
Juma Crawford	Biology and Algebra	2	1	M. Ed
Ain Grooms	Dean of Enrichment	N/A	1	B.A.
Janet Ferron	Director of Special Education	20	1	M. Ed
Margaret Campbell	Head of School	15	1	M.S. C.A.S

V. Are we true to our mission?

“Codman Academy Charter School's mission is to prepare students for full participation in the intellectual, economic and civic life of society, by ensuring their preparation for and access to further education, the skills and vision to undertake a rewarding career, and the motivation and character needed to engage deeply and productively in community life. We view parents and community members as integral partners in this endeavor.”

Indicators of success:

1. *Annual independent evaluation and/or school review.*

Rationale: Structured outside evaluation affords Codman Academy Charter School the opportunity to identify areas of strength as well as areas which need improvement.

Goal: Complete annually, report to Board.

Current status: Center for Collaborative Education completed a Year End Assessment in May and June 2002. Evaluator observed classes, faculty meetings, parent meetings and met individually with students, faculty and other key stakeholders in the school.

The Center for Collaborative Educations Evaluation Summary was as follows,

“Codman Academy is a powerful learning community. As it continues to grow it will be a school that provides the kind of educational experience and environment that Boston students and their families have wanted for many years. Learning and teaching at Codman Academy is active, engaging, and rigorous. Students are learning to use their minds well and are able to make connections between the classroom and the world around them. They are beginning to understand that learning takes place wherever you go and that the city, country and world are all a classroom. These are the ingredients for creating life long learners who have a clear sense of purpose and passion as they continue their studies and pursue professional careers. “

Full report enclosed as Appendix 6.

2. *Offer rich interdisciplinary Expeditionary Learning education steeped in innovative literacy program, liberal and performing arts.*

Rationale: Preparation for lifelong learning includes structured experiences and competency in core academic subjects but also mastery in performing arts, athletics and wellness, and leadership and service.

Goal: Offer rich interdisciplinary curriculum based on Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound design principles.

Current status: All ninth graders required to take Biology I, Algebra I and Humanities. Humanities includes a unique field-based literacy through drama program at The Huntington Theatre with twenty on-site days. Home delivery of *The Boston Globe* encourages students and families to read throughout various parts of daily life. In addition, our partnership with the Museum of Fine Arts afforded students monthly visits to galleries and the opportunity to work with museum educators and artists there. Field site learning this year included visits to the following: Boston Globe, Museum of Science, MIT Museum, Harrison Gray Otis House, Dig Nubia, Envirolab, Franklin Park Zoo and Golf Course, African Meeting House, Massachusetts State House, John F. Kennedy Library, Massachusetts State Archives, Copley Library and Thompson Island Outward Bound Education Center.

On Saturdays, students also had the opportunity to choose among 14 different elective courses offered credit/no credit. These ranged from Studio Art to Robotics. French I was offered for academic credit.

In 2002-2003, we will continue our Huntington Theatre partnership with 20 on site field work days and a culminating Showcase performance and extend our Museum of Fine Arts partnership to offer a parallel program of 20 on site fieldwork days with a culminating presentation. Both Huntington and MFA field work will align with Massachusetts curriculum frameworks.

Our partnership with Codman Square Health Center afforded students the opportunity to participate in single sex Talking Circles with a licensed social worker. Our partnership with Sportsmen's Tennis Center grew over the year into one in which students' explicitly learned the skill of sportsmanship and teamwork. As part of the physical education requirement, students took tennis instruction at Sportsmen's Tennis Center and martial arts, swimming and basketball at the Dorchester YMCA.

3. *Student attendance:*

Rationale: Research indicates student attendance is a good predictor of student achievement.

Goal: 94% daily average attendance for 6 school day week.

Current status: 96% daily average attendance 6 days a week during the 2001-2002 school year.

4. *Students' develop positive attitude towards college:*

Rationale: Motivation key predictor of completion of academic requirements.

Goal: 100% students apply for and are accepted to college.

Current status: Students this year made six college campus visits: Amherst, Emerson, Emmanuel, UMass Boston, Boston College, MIT and Holy Cross. Students completed two "common applications" as practice. 100% of students stated in spring 2002 their desire and expectation to pursue higher education.

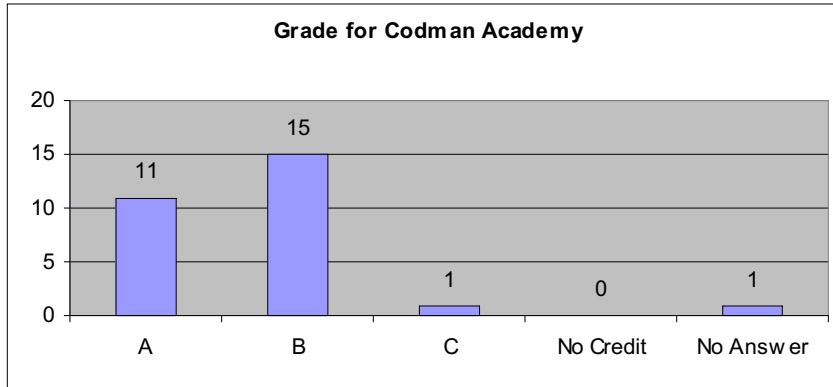
5. *Parent/Family members active partners with Codman Academy Charter School*

Rationale: Research shows students perform better who have parents or other significant family members who value education and encourage and support their children's academic achievement.

Goal: 100% participation in Faculty/Student/Parent Conferences. 90% rate school A or B in annual parent survey.

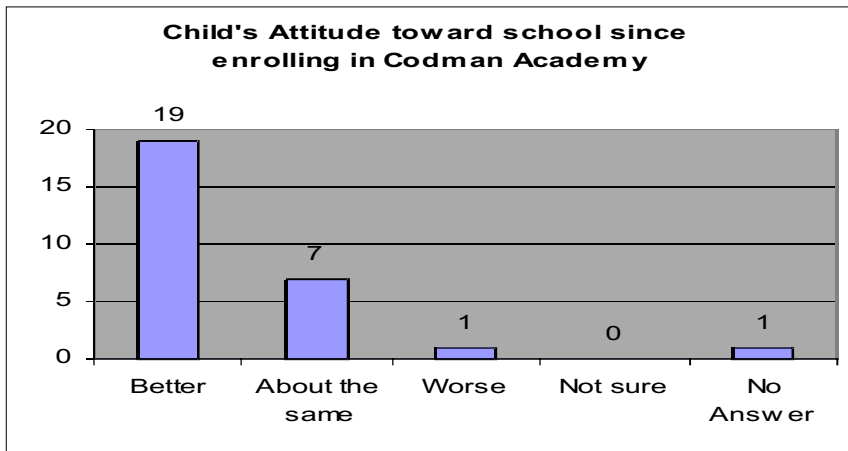
Data: Attendance at parent conference
Annual parent survey

Current status: 100% goal reached. All parents participated in student conferences with faculty members and students. The parents were surveyed at the end of the school year on a variety of subjects; only one parent did not fill out a survey. Results from this survey will be used to continue to shape our parental involvement program. The Dean of Enrichment is in constant contact with parents in order to insure that the school is in partnership with parents. Of the 28 parents surveyed 93% gave Codman Academy Charter School an A or a B (see Graph 1).

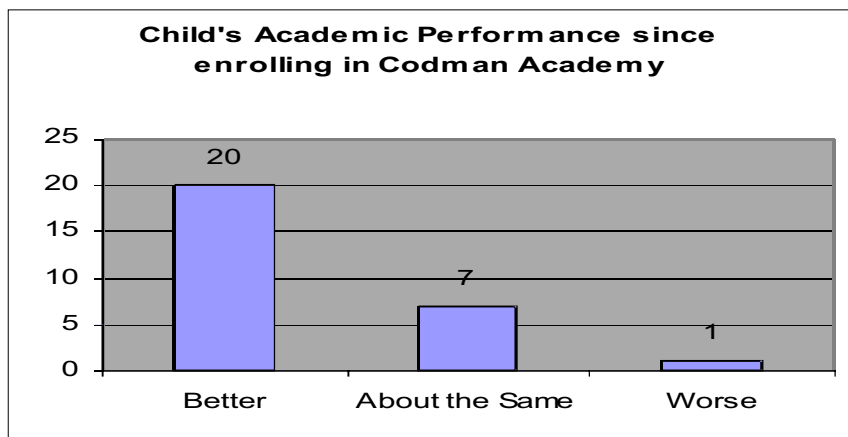


Graph 1: Grade parents gave Codman Academy Charter School after the 2001-2002.

Teachers at Codman Academy Charter School strive to speak with parents throughout the school year in order to keep them abreast of their child's performance and attitude in school. Of the 28 parents surveyed 50% of them spoke with teachers on the telephone at least once a month; in addition 50% of the parents met with teachers face to face once a month. 68% of the parents reported that their child's attitude towards school had improved since enrolling in Codman Academy Charter School(see Graph 2). While 71% of the parents reported that their child's academic performance had improved since enrolling(see Graph 3).



Graph 2: Parents' perception of change in Child's Attitude towards school.



Graph 3: Parents' perception of their child's academic growth after the first year.

6. *Strong community partners*

Rationale: Strong community partnerships extend our capacity to offer students and their families rich learning opportunities.

Goal: Develop strong partnership, Boston Globe, Codman Square Health Center, Museum of Fine Arts, The Huntington Theatre and Sportsmen's Tennis Center.

Data: Survey by Huntington Theatre of students, faculty and Huntington staff
The survey was overwhelmingly positive by all members of the partnership. Please see full report in Appendices.

VI. Dissemination

“While our core mission is the education of our students and their families, we also aspire to serve as an innovative laboratory for rethinking urban secondary education, particularly for new small high schools that are affiliated with community-based organizations. To the best of our knowledge, there is no existing small urban community based high school which provides a serious academic and character development program through a combination of on-line courses, academic learning expeditions and intensive family and community partnerships. Codman Academy Charter School’s unique design is a template for replication by other community-based organizations which are exploring starting charter schools and by existing districts seeking bold alternatives. As part of our commitment to continuous improvement, Codman Academy Charter School also plans to develop a professional development center for the preparation of new urban teachers.”

- *Codman Academy Charter School original Charter*

I. Document our learning as we go

Instrument: Photographer

Written informal weekly Field Notes observations by volunteer

Transcriptions of talks, interviews

Current status: Penny Lawrence, a retired teacher, completed weekly field notes of her observations of the school every Wednesday.

Newsweek award winning photographer Peter Turnley volunteered two days at the school and donated all his photographs taken to us. Robin Radin served as our photographer in residence. Adrienne Campbell-Holt documented additional aspects of the school through her photographs. Selections of these photographs are currently being made into a 2003 calendar for wide dissemination.

II. Sharing Best Practices beyond our school

Instrument: Faculty participation and leadership in local and national educator networks.

Data: Documentation of participation type and extent

Current status: Thabiti Brown, Humanities teacher, was selected to present, at the National Conference of Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. Consulting math/science teacher, Kip Perkins participated in four workshops led by Project in School Innovation. In addition, Thabiti Brown and Ain Grooms were both selected as fellows by the Massachusetts Association of Charter Schools to write articles concerning their experience at Codman Academy Charter School.

III. Teacher and Administrator Preparation and Education

Instrument: Field Experience Placements(FEP) through Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Data: Documentation by HGSE students of their work at Codman Academy Charter School.

Current status: 4 HGSE students completed Field Experience Program courses for academic credit from Harvard for their volunteer work at Codman Academy Charter School. Additionally, 5 other HGSE students volunteered time but did not seek academic credit. Three Harvard Business School students and 1 Harvard Law School student volunteered at the school in order to learn about charter schools specifically concerning their funding and policies regarding them.

