



Annual Report

August 1, 2006

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
248 Colrain Road
Greenfield, MA 01301
413-775-4577**

www.FourRiversCharter.org



Mission

Four Rivers Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous academic program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes--nature, technology and community--pervade teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, fruitful interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? The school works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and to learn from the many resources of Franklin County.

Introductory Description of the School

Four Rivers Charter Public School was awarded a charter by the Department of Education in 2002 to serve 192 students in grades 7-12. It opened in September, 2003 with 64 students in 7th and 8th, added 9th in 2004 and 10th in 2005, bringing the 2005-06 enrollment to 136. The school is adding 11th grade this September, and will become fully enrolled with the addition of 12th grade in September, 2007. As a regional Commonwealth charter school, Four Rivers draws primarily from the six secondary school districts of Franklin County: Frontier Regional, Gill-Montague Regional, Greenfield, Mohawk Trail Regional, Pioneer Regional, and Ralph C. Mahar Regional. The school is located at 248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, adjacent to Greenfield Community College. Edward Blatchford is Director and Co-Founder. Susan Durkee is Assistant Director and Co-Founder. Harlan Smith is Director of Operations. They may be reached at 413-775-4577.

Four Rivers Charter Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

Table of Contents

I.	Introduction	page	4
II.	Accountability Plan	page	7
III.	School Profile	page	20
IV.	Governance Profile	page	28
V.	Student Profile	page	30
VI.	Staff Profile	page	33
VII.	Financial Profile	page	37
VIII.	Dissemination	page	41

I. Introduction

Letter from Board of Trustee's Chair

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

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

I am pleased to report that the conclusion of our third year of operation has seen continued growth and healthy development of Four Rivers Charter Public School. A strong, vibrant program is in place with clear standards that are guided by the Massachusetts Frameworks, our affiliation with Expeditionary Learning, and the school's themes of nature, technology and community. This sentiment is reinforced by the positive report we received from the Department of Education Charter School Office's Year Three Site Visit in May.

This past year has seen significant achievement in the long-term development of the school, as our affiliated non-profit, the Four Rivers Educational Foundation, purchased our new high school building and surrounding property in the early Fall and leased it to the school. This was made possible, with the approval of your office, by a long-term, low-interest loan from the United States Department of Agriculture Rural Development Program. Combined with an earlier purchase, also with USDA funding, this acquisition completes our facility, stabilizes our facilities costs, and contributes to the long-term strength of the school.

In addition to the growth of our physical plant, the past school year also saw the addition of another grade to our school. With grades 7-10 fully enrolled this year—and grades 11 enrolled for 2006-07-- our teaching staff and program have continued to expand proportionately.

The Board of Trustees remains a central part of the school's growth and development. We meet monthly and have been involved in all aspects of the school's governance. The past year has seen new leadership in the officers of the Board. I undertook the Chair position from Dan LaRose, who had led the Board for three years, and the transition has been without difficulty. I believe this continuity reflects our longevity and ability to provide the school with dynamic and effective oversight and guidance.

Our faculty stands deeply committed to the students and our school community. Through their efforts, Four Rivers Charter Public School has gained a reputation of high standards, quality education and an exceptional student body. We are proud of our accomplishments in our first three years, and we look forward to contributing still more to the education of young people in Franklin County in the years ahead.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin S. Murray, Chair

Executive Summary

On June 22, 2006, our last day of school, Four Rivers held its third Stepping Up Ceremony. Not yet ready for graduation, our students and their families were gathered to celebrate “stepping up” to the challenges of the next grade. The ceremony was outside, in the courtyard created by our three buildings—on one end, the Farmhouse built in 1777, on the other our High School building completed this past September, and in between the Middle School “barn” built in our first year. Students paraded into their seats, each carrying a completed portfolio of the year’s work. Faculty advisors spoke with admiration and humor of each grade as students came forward to present their approved portfolio to their teachers. The students were applauded roundly, and with a spontaneous extra burst when mention was made of a student earning “honors” for distinguished work. That extra applause was striking: it showed so clearly our collective appreciation of excellence and hard work. The ceremony was soon over, and with it, quite amazingly, our third year!

A day later, in our closing faculty meeting, we paused for an hour to have our own spontaneous appreciations. Teacher after teacher spoke with admiration, humor, and gratitude for the extraordinary efforts of one colleague or another to serve our students. There was hearty applause and a few tears. And like the day before, it was a striking tribute to excellence and hard work. This faculty had “stepped up” for the students, for each other, and for Four Rivers.

The third year of Four Rivers Charter Public School has had many such striking moments. It has been a year of challenges and achievements, with much to be thankful for. Here are some highlights:

- Interest in the school keeps growing. We had 116 applicants for 46 spaces for 2005-06, and interest in the coming year has been even stronger. Retention remains high.
- We are attracting and retaining a faculty of exceptional dedication and quality. All of the full-time faculty members are returning next year. They are committed to the mission of the school and they know and work well with our students. Even this summer, they are working vigorously on various committees to strengthen our program. As the scenes above suggest, they can be seen as the heart of our school.
- Our students, coming from all over Franklin County, are growing with the school. They are creating a strong sense of community and, for the most part, are rising to the challenges of our curriculum. Each grade coming in seems to understand better the standards we strive for. The portfolio process gains strength and clarity with each year, and students show pride in their Passage Portfolio presentations at grade 8 and 10.
- Our affiliation with Expeditionary Learning continues to provide exceptional professional development for our faculty and offer effective methods to support our mission. Through EL, we are connected with a network of innovative schools in our region and across the country.
- The parents and guardians of our students take a strong interest in the school. Many work closely with the faculty to support their children. Many also support the school through an active Family Council and various volunteer and fund-raising initiatives, for which we are deeply grateful. They are strong advocates for the school in the community.

- Our board of trustees is comprised of dedicated volunteers who are devoted to the school and understand well the board's crucial role in setting policy, holding the charter, and monitoring accountability. The Board has gone through a smooth transition in leadership this year.
- Through the good work of our Board and Harlan Smith, Director of Operations, the new High School building was completed within the first week of school and then purchased in October by the Four Rivers Educational Foundation. The foundation now owns all three buildings and the seven surrounding acres, and leases it all to the school. In just our third year, we have permanent facilities in our ideal location.
- Four Rivers had another positive and helpful report from Department of Education Charter Office Year Three Site Visit team. The Site Visit Report had many encouraging findings, such as this: "In all observed classrooms, teachers created an environment that facilitated teaching and learning that was engaging and pushed higher-order thinking and questioning skills."

Still, large challenges remain as Four Rivers moves into its fourth year:

- We are continuing to review and improve our methods for reporting on standards-based assessment. We are also looking hard at various ways to support every student in "meeting" our identified standards.
- We have begun a process of curriculum articulation and mapping that will be a major focus of faculty work this coming year. Intensive summer meetings of teachers in each discipline, with a consultant facilitating the process, have provided a strong start.
- We want to continue building core elements of our school culture and character, with the focus of developing more coordinated practices and expectations for our Advisory Program and exploring more opportunities for student leadership.
- As the High School moves into 11th grade and what we are calling "Division 3", we will be implementing plans for special opportunities for that age group, including internships and independent study. Our new college counselor will provide important guidance in planning for each student's education after Four Rivers. We will strengthen the forms and instructional practices in 9th and 10th grades as well.
- As we deepen our implementation of Expeditionary Learning Core Practices, we want to build more learning expeditions that engage students in active, challenging work with our school themes of nature, technology and community.
- With the addition of our Leadership Team last year and more administrative leadership this year, we will develop more effective support of teachers in their supervision and professional growth, as well as strong systems of communication among the school's three divisions and the administration.
- Finally, we need to continue to budget prudently, controlling expenses and keeping our priorities clearly focused on what is essential to fulfill the core mission of Four Rivers.

We thank all who have supported Four Rivers so strongly in its first three years, and we look forward to our fourth year with confidence that the school is growing into its full promise.

Edward Blatchford
Director

II. Accountability

Summary of School Performance in Relation to Accountability Plan

Accountability Plan: 2004-2008

Submitted: August 1, 2004

FOUR RIVERS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL MISSION

Four Rivers Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous academic program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes--nature, technology and community--pervade teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, fruitful interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? The school works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and to learn from the many resources of Franklin County.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

GOAL 1: English Language Arts -- Writing

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to communicate clearly in writing for different purposes and audiences.

Indicators

- MCAS: 70% of students who have attended Four Rivers Charter Public School (FRCPS) for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.

Progress toward goal: Our highest grade was 10th this year, and the results of their ELA MCAS this spring are not yet available to report on this goal. In last year's 7th grade ELA MCAS, Proficiency (meaning scores at either Advanced or Proficient levels) was achieved by 88% of the Four Rivers 7th graders.

- MCAS: Students in grade 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 10th grade ELA MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn. (Note: The average scores of the sending schools will be calculated as a weighted mean.)

Progress toward goal: *Since the results of the 10th grade ELA MCAS are not yet available, progress toward this goal is not yet known. It is interesting to note now, however, that the rate at which Four Rivers 7th graders achieved Proficiency in the 2005 ELA MCAS exceeded the weighted mean of the Franklin County districts from which our students are drawn by 24%.*

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Language on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

Progress toward goal: *Scores from the Spring 2006 Terra Nova are not available at this time. Results from the Spring 2005 administration of the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments, when compared with the Spring 2004, show that this goal has not yet been met. Class of 2009 (in 9th grade this past year): Mean NCE in Language in Spring of 7th grade was 63.9; in Spring of 8th grade it was 62.2. Class of 2008 (in 10th grade this past year): Mean NCE in Language in Spring of 8th grade was 67.4; in Spring of 9th grade it was 65.9*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements in the Writing component of Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: *Goal met this year. In our second 8th grade Passage Portfolio process in June, 100% of the students successfully met the requirements in the Writing component. In our first 10th grade Passage Portfolio process this June, 90% met.*

- Progress Reports: 95% of all students will show improvement in at least one of the core standards in Writing on their Progress Reports over the course of the three marking periods each year.

Progress toward goal: *In grades 7-10, there was an overall average improvement in Writing of 94%. In grades 7 and 8, 97% of the students showed improvement in writing on their Progress Reports over the course of the year; in grades 9 and 10, 91% showed improvement. (Note that this calculation includes students who performed steadily in the Meeting+ or Exceeding levels over the course of the year, since holding those grades represents a significant achievement as the work gets more demanding during the year.)*

GOAL 2: English Language Arts -- Reading

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to effectively comprehend, analyze and interpret literature and non-fiction texts.

Indicators

- MCAS: 70% of students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.

***Progress toward goal:** As explained above, our highest grade was 10th this year, and the results of their ELA MCAS this spring are not yet available to report on this goal.*

- MCAS: Students in grade 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 10th grade ELA MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.

***Progress toward goal:** As mentioned, scores are not yet available for this year's 10th.*

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Reading on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

***Progress toward goal:** Scores from the Spring 2006 Terra Nova are not available at this time. Results from the Spring 2005 administration of the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments, when compared with the Spring 2004, show that this goal has not been fully met. Class of 2009: Mean NCE in Reading in Spring of 7th grade was 65.7; in Spring of 8th grade it was 65.7. Class of 2008: Mean NCE in Reading in Spring of 8th grade was 64.3; in Spring of 9th grade it was 67.*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Reading component of the Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

***Progress toward goal:** Goal met this year. In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio, 100% of students successfully met the Reading requirement, while in 10th grade 97% met.*

- Progress Reports: 95% of all students will show improvement in at least one of the core standards in Reading on their Progress Reports over the course of the three marking periods each year.

***Progress toward goal:** At 7th grade, 83% met this goal; at 8th, 97% met; at 9th, 70% met; and at 10th, 63% met. Thus, an overall average of 78% of students showed improvement in Reading on their Progress Reports in the course of the year.*

GOAL 3: Math

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Indicators

- MCAS: 60% of students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the Math MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.

***Progress toward goal:** Scores from our first 10th grade to take the Math MCAS have not yet been received. The school focused more support and resources toward Math in 9th and 10th grades this year, knowing the challenges of attaining this goal based on the performance of the this year's 10th grade on their last Math MCAS in 8th grade..*

- MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 8th and 10th grade Math MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.

***Progress toward goal:** While we do not have results from this year's 10th grade Math MCAS, the results of the 2005 8th Grade Math MCAS show Four Rivers students attained Proficiency at nearly the same rate (within 2%) as a weighted average of scores in the school districts from which the students came.*

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Math on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

***Progress toward goal:** Scores from the Spring 2006 Terra Nova are not available at this time. Results in Math from the Spring 2005 administration of the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments, when compared with the Spring 2004, show that this goal has been partially met. Class of 2009: Mean NCE in Math in Spring of 7th grade was 62.1; in Spring of 8th grade it was 63.6. Class of 2008: Mean NCE in Math in Spring of 8th grade was 60.6; in Spring of 9th grade it was 65. .*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Math component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

***Progress toward goal:** In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process, 100% of students successfully met the Math component; in our first 10th grade Passage Portfolio process, 82% of students successfully met. Thus an overall average of 91% successfully met, attaining our goal.*

- Progress Reports: 95% of all students will show improvement in at least one of the core standards in Math on their Progress Reports over the course of the three marking periods each year.

Progress toward goal: At 7th grade, 96% met this goal; at 8th, 87.5% met; at 9th, 97% met; and at 10th, 100% met. Thus, an overall average of 95.1 % of students showed improvement in Math on their Progress Reports in the course of the year.

GOAL 4: Science

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply scientific knowledge and methods to solve problems and conduct experiments and research.

Indicators

- MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 8 and 10th grade Science MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.

Progress toward goal: Scores from the 10th grade Science (Biology) MCAS taken this spring are not yet available. Last year, on the 8th grade Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS, 47% of Four Rivers students achieved Proficiency (Advanced and Proficient), which was a rate of Proficiency 25% above the weighted average of the sending districts in Franklin County.

- Research: 95% of students will complete a Science research project related to the school themes and of portfolio quality annually.

Progress toward goal: In 7th grade, 100% of students completed a Science research project related to the school themes that met this goal. In 8th, 80% of students met this goal; in 9th, 90% met and in 10th 85% met. Thus an overall average of 89% of the students completed a research project related to the school themes of nature, technology and community which met the standard for portfolios.

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Science component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process, 100% of students successfully met the Science component, and in 10th, 97% met the requirements of the science component of their Passage Portfolios. This goal was met.

- Progress Reports: 95% of all students will show improvement in at least one of the core standards in Science on their Progress Reports over the course of the three marking periods each year.

Progress toward goal: At 7th grade, 100% of the students met this goal; at 8th, 100% met; at 9th, 96%, and at 10th, 96%. Thus, an overall average of 98% of students showed improvement in Science on their Progress Reports in the course of the year.

GOAL 5: Social Studies/History

Students will be able to apply historical insights and research skills to better understand United States and world history.

Indicators

- MCAS: Students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 10th or 11th grade Social Studies/History MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.

***Progress toward goal:** There is no information to report on this goal; our students will take the US History MCAS in 11th grade for the first time next year.*

- Research: 95% of students will complete a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes and of portfolio quality annually.

***Progress toward goal:** In 7th grade, 89% of students completed a research project related to the school themes that met this goal; in 8th, 90% met; in 9th, 66% met; and in 10th, 91% met the goal. Thus, an overall average of 84% of students completed a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes of nature, technology and community which met the standard for portfolios.*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Social Studies/History component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

***Progress toward goal:** In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process, 100% of the students met the Social Studies/History research project component; in 10th, 82% met. Thus, the overall average was 91%, meeting the goal.*

- Progress Reports: 95% of all students will show improvement in at least one of the core standards in Social Studies/History on their Progress Reports over the course of the three marking periods each year.

***Progress toward goal:** At 7th grade, 97% met this goal; at 8th, 91% met; at 9th, 75% met; and in 10th, 85% met. An overall average of 87% of the students showed improvement in Science on their Progress Reports.*

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

GOAL 6: Enrollment

Four Rivers Charter Public School will be fully enrolled each year.

Indicators

- The school will reach its goal of growth by 32 students/year to full enrollment in 2007-08.

***Progress toward goal:** The school met this goal again this year with an average of 136 students in grades 7-10. Enrollment is projected at 168 students in 2006-07, and full enrollment of 192 when 12th grade is added in 2007-08.*

- 90% percent of the students eligible and able to return to Four Rivers Charter Public School will reenroll for the following school year.

***Progress toward goal:** With 92% reenrollment of students eligible and able to re-enroll, this goal was met.*

- Applications each year will exceed the number of places available by 25%.

***Progress toward goal:** Total applications for 2005-06 exceeded places available by 152%. There were 67 applications for 34 spaces in 7th grade, 7 applications for 4 spaces in 8th, 36 applications for 3 spaces in 9th, and 6 applications for 3 spaces in 10th. Applications for 2006-07 were even higher.*

GOAL 7: Faculty

Four Rivers Charter Public School will retain qualified, committed and effective full-time teachers.

Indicators

- The school will retain annually 75% of the full-time teachers who have received good or outstanding evaluations and who are able to continue teaching at Four Rivers Charter Public School.

***Progress toward goal:** The school has retained 100% of the full-time teachers this year.*

- In an annual survey, at least 75% of the parents responding will report satisfaction with the effectiveness of the faculty in areas of academic challenge, support, and communication.

***Progress toward goal:** In our Parent Survey this June, the following results speak to this goal:*

84% of the parents responding indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child's

school program.”

84% indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: “I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child.”

84% indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: “Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate,” and 96% agree or strongly agree with the statement: “Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate.”

GOAL 8: Board

The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of Four Rivers Charter Public School, will fulfill its responsibilities to set policies, monitor progress, and plan effectively for the needs of the school.

Indicators

- The Board will meet monthly and maintain membership consistent with the by-laws.

***Progress toward goal:** The Board met every month of the year except August, and it maintained at least the minimum number of 10 members consistent with by-laws.*

- The Board will set goals annually with the school director and will evaluate the director based on those goals.

***Progress toward goal:** Goals were set with the director early in the Fall of 2005, and a comprehensive evaluation was completed in June, 2006.*

- The Board will oversee the Accountability Plan through semi-annual reports from the director.

***Progress toward goal:** The Board reviewed and commented upon the school’s first report on its Accountability Plan in the 2005 Annual Report, and at several meetings in the course of the year. For instance, the October meeting included a full discussion of the school’s first MCAS scores, and the April and May meetings included reports on the school’s preparations for its Year Three Site Visit from the Department of Education. The Board is apprised of other crucial goals (#6-9) in the Organizational Viability section of the Accountability Plan on an on-going basis.*

- The Board will develop, implement and assess a Board Action Plan annually.

***Progress toward goal:** The Board revised its on-going Board Action Plan in June, 2005 and monitored it regularly during the year. It was reviewed in preparation for a Board retreat in May, 2006, and the Action Plan will be updated for 2006-07 in order for it to remain a guiding document of the Board and its committee work.*

GOAL 9: Finances

Four Rivers Charter Public School will be a fiscally sound and solvent organization.

Indicators

- Annual expenditures, excluding depreciation, will not exceed annual revenues.

***Progress toward goal:** The annual expenditures in 2005-06 have not exceeded revenues. For details of meeting this goal, see the financial records in Financial Profile section.*

- The school will attain a cash reserve equivalent to three months' operating expenses by the end of the 5th year.

***Progress toward goal:** See financials. Progress toward this goal, as stated, has been challenging, but the Finance Committee and the Director of Operations have managed the available funds this year so that no outside borrowing was necessary to cover end-of-quarter expenses prior to receipt of quarterly tuition payments, which is one of the anticipated needs behind this goal.*

- The school will meet the annual fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees in the annual approved operating budget.

***Progress toward goal:** The school surpassed its fundraising goals this year. While the Annual Fund appeal fell short of its target, other gifts and private grants made up for it. The combined revenues of competitive grants, gifts and Annual Fund appeal were \$54,400.*

- The annual independent audit for Four Rivers Charter Public School will report no major findings.

***Progress toward goal:** An independent audit for fiscal year 2005 reported no major findings. The audit for fiscal year 2006 is not yet complete.*

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

GOAL 10: Themes: Nature, Technology, Community

Four Rivers Charter Public School will use the themes of nature, technology, and community to engage and advance student learning.

Indicators

- Once per year, all students will complete individual or small group projects that address the essential question in the school's mission: *How do we find the healthy, fruitful interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community?* 90% of these projects will be of *Meeting* quality, as judged by the evaluations of experts and visitors to the school.

Progress toward goal: *The school's themes of nature, technology and community provide a stimulus for engaging investigations in many projects over the course of a year, from science to social studies and English. At this stage in the school's growth, some of these investigations address the essential question in the school's mission, and some involve the interplay of two of the themes, such as nature and community, or technology and nature. None of the projects has yet been formally judged by experts or visitors to the school, but we expect to take that step in certain grades in the coming year.*

In 7th grade this year, every student addressed the themes through successful work in their learning expeditions. In 8th, at least one science project engaged with the themes, while in English and social studies the major spring project of research and interviews of people with disabilities spoke dramatically to the theme of community and, in several cases, medical technology. The 9th grade Environmental Science class investigated several questions directly involved with our themes, such as global warming, the true cost of oil, and the capabilities of various alternative sources of energy to power vehicles well. At 10th grade, English classes explored the interplay of nature and community in American literary movements such as the Transcendentalists and the Harlem Renaissance.

GOAL 11: Character & Community

Four Rivers Charter Public School will engage students in character growth and service to the school and the community.

Indicators

- Students will engage in effective goal-setting for personal and academic growth, as documented in advisory records and student-led conferences.

Progress toward goal: *As reported by the three advisors at each grade, 90% of the 7th graders were able to engage in effective goal-setting; 86% of 8th met the goal; while*

58% of the 9th graders and 54% of 10th graders met the goal. Thus, averaging the four grades, 72% of Four Rivers students demonstrated effective goal setting for personal and academic growth, as documented in advisory records and student-led conferences. Plans are already underway to strengthen the methods of establishing and monitoring effective goal-setting in our growing high school next year.

- The school will maintain a positive school culture, as reflected in an annual survey of parents and students, student and faculty retention, and observations by visiting educators.

Progress toward goal:

a) In the school's Parent Survey this June the following elements of a positive school culture were addressed:

84% of the parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment."

86% of parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop his or her strengths of character."

89% of parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe that at least one of my child's teachers knows and understands him or her well."

b) In a Student Survey administered to 9th and 10th graders in June, the following elements of a positive school culture were noted::

91% of the students responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I feel safe and comfortable at Four Rivers."

87.5% of students responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I feel that I fit in and have friends at Four Rivers."

72% of students responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "At least one of my teachers knows and understands me pretty well."

74% of students responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "Expectations for behavior at school are clear."

c) Strong faculty retention (100% of full-time faculty) and student retention (92%) also speak to this goal.

d) Observations by visiting educators are overwhelmingly positive but still anecdotal. In two instances, however, the positive observations were presented more formally:

1) In November, three graduate students in an education class at Antioch New English Graduate School and their professor spent a morning at Four Rivers as part of their multi-school study of what makes a great school and what makes great teachers. They presented their observations in a five page letter, which included direct affirmations of the strength of our teachers and school culture, such as, "We were hard pressed to find a student who did not speak highly of their Four Rivers experience" as well as thoughtful suggestions for next steps.

2) *In March, Alan Fraker, a Four Rivers trustee and educator with extensive experience in school inspections, spent two full days visiting classes, interviewing teachers and students, and reviewing student work. Among his many commendations and recommendations were the following highlights related to positive school culture: Student enthusiasm for ‘active learning;’ secure, nurturing community/culture; extraordinary professionalism of faculty; and well-formed relationships between students and teachers.*

- Students will participate in service activities within the school and in the Franklin County community, as documented by advisory records and portfolios.

Progress toward goal: *As reported by the advisors and documented in students’ portfolios, there was spirited participation in service activities at all levels. Each advisory in 7th grade took part in a student-designed service activity, including raising funds to support flood relief in Greenfield last fall and for the Pioneer Valley Humane Society. At 8th, there was high participation in service activities designed by each advisory, such as baking apple pies to sell with the proceeds to benefit Toys for Tots and local flood relief, collecting bottles and cans to recycle with the funds raised going to the Red Cross for local and Katrina flood relief. The 9th grade advisories worked as a team to organize and present a music festival featuring local student bands (including several from Four Rivers) to benefit the Brick House, a local community resource center for teens. The 10th grade advisory service activities included a 22-hour food fast raising \$1250 to support 12 students in a school in Haiti with which one of the advisors has close ties; a work day at a local therapeutic riding stable where one of the students volunteers; and a grant-supported community-building breakfast for the high school.*

GOAL 12: Expeditionary Learning

The school will implement and disseminate Expeditionary Learning Core Practices.

Indicators

- The school will continue to improve its implementation of Expeditionary Learning Core Practices, as evidenced on the annual implementation review scoring by Expeditionary Learning consultants.

Progress toward goal: *In its third Implementation Review conducted by Expeditionary Learning for Four Rivers, the results continue to be very encouraging. On a scale of 0-4, with 0 indicating no implementation and 4 indicating full and exemplary implementation, the school earned an average rating of 2.4 for the Core Practices of Learning Expeditions, Active Pedagogy, and School Culture and Character. The implementation rate was still higher among faculty in their second or third year at Four Rivers, not a surprising fact when one considers fully implementing EL methods takes considerable training and practice, and three of four core teachers in the high school and one in the middle school were new to Four Rivers and Expeditionary Learning this year. Here are some concluding comments from the Implementation Review, written by Steven Levy, our primary EL consultant: “Active pedagogy is happening in most*

classrooms. Students are engaged in their work, and classroom culture is strong. I witnessed excellent lesson design, inquiry and discovery, and self-motivated students working independently in every class I visited throughout the year... Four Rivers is on the way to becoming a powerful model of an exemplary Expeditionary Learning school.”

- The school will disseminate practices and products expressive of high quality Expeditionary Learning Core Practices to other schools and communities annually.

Progress toward goal: *The faculty of Four Rivers is eager to disseminate Expeditionary Learning practices and products to other schools and communities. For instance, dissemination activities this year have included:*

1) Mandy Locke, 7th grade teacher of Math and Science, presented a master class to educators from across the country attending the Expeditionary Learning National Conference in March. In the class, she guided the participants through the various components of a highly successful learning expedition called “What Is Waste?” which she has developed over three years at Four Rivers.

2) In 8th grade, English teacher Leif Riddington and his students created a book of original fables with scratchboard illustrations entitled “The Wolf That Would Forgive and Other Fables of Experience,” epitomizing the value of a culminating product and an authentic audience to an EL investigation or unit of study. This book was later praised for its extraordinary “craftsmanship” (another EL value) in an on-line publication of the Center for Educational Reform, which has a national readership of educators.

3) Ms Locke, in partnership with Matthew Leaf, 7th grade English/Social Studies teacher, and Susan Durkee, art teacher (and Assistant Director), completed an interdisciplinary learning expedition called “Fading Footprints,” which was an illustrated investigation of endangered species in Massachusetts. The final product of the expedition is a CD which will be distributed to area schools and libraries as a resource for students and a vivid representation of EL practices.

4) In collaboration with the Family Diversity Projects, an Amherst-based educational organization with national reach, Mr. Riddington and the 8th grade this Spring produced a 97-page book entitled “Who We Are: Portraits of People with Disabilities”. It was the culmination of a learning expedition in which students interviewed young people and adults with disabilities, edited the interviews, and then published them as “monologues” with accompanying introductions and handsome photographs. The students also conducted research on each disability included, and published their findings in the glossary for the book. The first printing sold out quickly and received very positive coverage in the local newspapers. It is expected that a second edition will receive still wider circulation through the Family Diversity Project. This is the third in a series of annual books of monologues published by the 8th grade under Mr. Riddington’s guidance, and they have been distributed widely through the EL network as powerful examples of EL practices of literacy and service in action.

III. School Profile

Summary of Educational Philosophy

To fulfill its mission, the school is guided by four basic commitments we have articulated to students, parents and the community, and by our powerful affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound.

1. *Expecting the best.* Four Rivers expects high levels of achievement in academic learning, effort, and teamwork. We challenge students to dig deeper and work harder than most have done before. With talented and enthusiastic teachers, our program seeks to prepare every student for college. The curriculum grows from the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with an emphasis on excellence in reading, writing and math, ensuring readiness for the MCAS. Its real energy comes from teachers working with small classes to develop challenging projects, through which students learn essential knowledge, skills, and values. They teach with clear standards for top quality work, respect for individual differences, and the conviction that every student can and wants to strive for the best.

2. *Learning by doing.* At Four Rivers, learning is active, not passive. Meaningful, engaging projects are central to our curriculum. Several times a year classes go on “learning expeditions”: in-depth investigations of a theme or topic, guided by questions, which may extend from four to six or more weeks. Students do original research and fieldwork, often involving experts in the community. Expeditions promote responsibility and collaboration; they speak to diverse learning styles, reveal new strengths, and deepen understanding. Typically, learning expeditions end with the students producing work—a report, a publication, a performance—that has a real purpose and a real audience.

3. *Exploring big questions.* The school’s themes of nature, technology and community engage teachers and students in basic questions that promote active learning and bring them in touch with our area and our times. What does the natural world have to teach us? What does technology, and the creative power of invention behind it, offer us? How do they work together for the good of all? There is endless learning to be explored -- and a cause to be served -- in our themes. Our answers can shape the future, here in Franklin County and in the world beyond.

4. *Building character and community.* At Four Rivers, the development of character and community are as important as academic achievement. Our school is small, with a place for everyone. Every student is known by all; each is valued as bringing a unique gift to the school. All of us are called on to think and act for the common good. Through our advisory program and our curriculum, we guide each student’s quest for the strength of character and insight to make healthy choices and set positive goals. We encourage student leadership and initiative in helping one another, strengthening our school, and serving the community beyond. We emphasize six character virtues, and we also have a clear code of conduct, with no tolerance for behavior that is unsafe or hurtful to an individual or the community.

Expeditionary Learning Schools: The methods for our mission. Since its founding, Four Rivers has drawn strength from its affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Schools/Outward Bound (EL), a national non-profit model for comprehensive school reform. Expeditionary Learning is rooted in a rich tradition of innovative approaches to active learning, academic rigor, and character growth, and it is a vital resource to help Four Rivers realize our unique mission and our charter. The Expeditionary Learning model is based on ten “Design Principles” and five “Core Practices”.

The Design Principles, providing the original philosophical underpinning of Expeditionary Learning, are listed here in their short form: *The Primacy of Self-Discovery, The Having of Wonderful Ideas, Responsibility for Learning, Empathy and Caring, Success and Failure, Collaboration and Competition, Diversity and Inclusion, The Natural World, Solitude and Reflection, and Service and Compassion.*

The Core Practices describe Expeditionary Learning in action. EL has articulated an extensive set of benchmarks for each Core Practice, providing clear guidance to full implementation of the model. Here are the five Core Practices, with highlights from the benchmarks:

1. *Learning Expeditions:* Learning expeditions are long-term, in-depth investigations of a topic that engage students through authentic projects, advancing skills and content understanding aligned with state standards. The benchmarks give detailed indicators on implementing learning expeditions across the school; designing compelling topics and guiding questions; designing products and linked projects; incorporating fieldwork, local expertise, and service learning; and producing and presenting high quality student work.

2. *Active Pedagogy:* The model is not just about learning expeditions; more basically, it calls for using active and engaging instructional practices school-wide, as much as possible. Benchmarks include teaching reading and writing across the disciplines; teaching math, science and social studies through inquiry; valuing the arts as a vehicle for learning; and using effective assessment practices.

3. *Culture and Character:* Benchmarks in this crucial area promote building a positive school culture and fostering character; ensuring equity and high expectations; fostering a safe, respectful and orderly community; promoting adventure and fitness; developing a professional community; and engaging families in the life of the school.

4. *Leadership and School Improvement:* Leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools provide leadership in curriculum, instruction and school culture. Benchmarks also call for sharing leadership and building community partnerships, using multiple sources of data to improve student achievement; and assessing school progress and planning for improvement continually.

5. *Structures:* Expeditionary Learning benchmarks in this area focus on ensuring that schedules accommodate project work and flexible grouping, as well as time for planning and professional development for faculty. Still more importantly, they call for ways for all students to be known well and supported by caring adults.

Expert Expeditionary Learning consultants provide our staff with support in implementing the Core Practices, regular coaching matched to our students and curriculum, a variety of workshops at Expeditionary Learning sites during the school year and the summer, and a national network of other Expeditionary Learning schools from which to learn and grow.

Summary of external standardized test results

The MCAS and the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments provide external standardized test data for the school.

Terra Nova. Four Rivers administers the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments (Form C) in Reading, Language and Math for incoming 7th graders in the Fall of each year, to establish a baseline. In the fall of 2003, our first year, we also administered the test to our incoming class of 8th graders, for the same purpose. We administered a comparable form of the test (Form A) in the Spring of 2004, both to indicate progress for the year and, more importantly, to establish a Spring baseline with which to gauge yearly progress. We have continued to use the comparable Form A of the Terra Nova for Spring testing in 7th grade. In the Spring of 2005 and 2006 the Terra Nova was given to all 7th, 8th, and 9th graders, and the school will continue to give it to those grades at the end of each year. Test results have not yet been received for Spring 2006. Here are highlights of the testing over two full years, reported in mean normal curve equivalents (NCE), as well as the Fall 2005 results for the incoming 7th grade only. While they show some patterns--such as relative strength in Reading and Language when compared with Math--their primary value for our accountability process will come into play only when we have accumulated Spring test results over several years. Given the small size of our groups, we also need to identify the effect of students who enter or leave a class after 7th or 8th grade. Meanwhile, we use group and individual data from Terra Nova testing to extend our understanding of student needs and strengths as learners.

Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments 2003-2005 Baseline Data and Yearly Spring Testing, by Classes (Data from Spring 2006 not yet received)			
<i>Class by year of FRCPS Graduation</i>	<i>No. of students (No. w/ accom- modations)</i>	<i>Mean Normal Curve Equivalent Fall, only in entry year</i>	<i>Mean Normal Curve Equivalent Spring</i>
<i>Class of 2008</i>		<i>Fall 2003 c*</i>	<i>Spring 2004 a*</i>
8 th Reading	32 (6)	66.8	64.3
8 th Language	32 (6)	61.4	67.4
8 th Mathematics	32 (7)	61.4	60.6
			<i>Spring 2005 c</i>
9 th Reading	34 (8)		67.0
9 th Language	34 (8)		65.9
9 th Mathematics	34 (8)		65.0
<i>Class of 2009</i>		<i>Fall 2003 c</i>	<i>Spring 2004 a</i>
7 th Reading	32 (7)	66.0	65.7
7 th Language	32 (7)	65.2	63.9
7 th Mathematics	32 (7)	62.5	62.1
			<i>Spring 2005 c</i>
8 th Reading	33 (10)		65.9
8 th Language	33 (10)		62.2
8 th Mathematics	33 (10)		63.6
<i>Class of 2010</i>		<i>Fall 2004 c</i>	<i>Spring 2005 a</i>
7 th Reading	33 (7)	60.2	70.1
7 th Language	33 (7)	64.9	65.7
7 th Mathematics	33 (7)	61.8	67.8
<i>Class of 2011</i>		<i>Fall 2005 c</i>	
7 th Reading	34 (7)	68.9	
7 th Language	34 (7)	69.6	
7 th Mathematics	34 (7)	67.8	
* Note: c = Terra Nova Form C a = Terra Nova Form A			

MCAS.
below

The table
tracks the

performance of Four Rivers students on the MCAS in the Spring of 2004 and 2005. The results from this year’s administration—including our first at 10th grade—have not yet been received.

Four Rivers MCAS Results by Performance Category Spring 2004 & Spring 2005 (in bold)					
	Students tested	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improvement	% Warning
Grade 7 English Language Arts					
2004 <i>Class of 2009</i>	32	3	69	25	3
2005 <i>Class of 2010</i>	33	9	79	12	0
Grade 8 Mathematics					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	28	56	6
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	0	26	59	15
Grade 8 Science & Technology/Engineering					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	34	38	19
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	3	44	47	6

Grade 7 ELA: As shown above, 88% of the Four Rivers 7th graders in Spring 2005 demonstrated Profic

iciency (by scoring in the Proficient or Advanced performance categories), and no student received Warning. This compares with State levels of 66% of students achieving Proficiency and 8% Warning.

Grade 8 Math: In Math, 26% of Four Rivers students achieved Proficiency (below the State level of 39%), and 15% received Warning (below the State level of 31% at Warning). Recognizing the challenge math achievement presents to a significant number of the students in this grade, the school deliberately placed more staffing and resources in Math classes, tutoring opportunities and summer work for the group this year.

Grade 8 Science & Technology/Engineering: Here 47% of Four Rivers students achieved Proficiency, and 6% received Warning in Science & Technology/Engineering. These scores compare with State levels of 33% Proficiency and 26% Warning.

Other external school measures

Adequate Yearly Progress. As a school only in its third year, Four Rivers is just beginning the process of being measured for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the DOE. AYP is intended to indicate whether a school is on course to have all of its students score in the Proficient and Advanced performance categories on the MCAS ELA and Math by the year 2014. The table below presents the school’s history of AYP. The school does not yet have statistically meaningful subgroups for accountability purposes and does not have an ‘accountability status,’ meaning that the school is not currently subject to any consequences as part of the Massachusetts accountability system.

Adequate Yearly Progress History								Accountability Status	
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	
ELA	Aggregate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	Yes	No Status
	All subgroups	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	
MATH	Aggregate	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Yes	No	No Status
	All subgroups	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	

Summary of internal assessment methods and results

The internal assessment system at Four Rivers has several components, and the results are reported in different ways.

1) **On-going assessment for learning** is conducted in the classrooms almost daily. The faculty develops rubrics for most projects and major assignments, often with input from the students. The rubrics provide clear descriptors for each component of the assignment, with gradations indicating the characteristics of work done to the *Beginning, Approaching, Meeting,* and *Exceeding* levels. Clear models of high quality work are often critiqued and emulated. In these ways, most students are able to understand and even assess their own progress. As well,

effective use of rubrics and models gives the teacher the clear means of assessing work to promote further learning, and the results are shared directly. All this serves our goal at Four Rivers of setting high expectations for high quality work from every student.

2) **Progress Reports** are issued at the end of each trimester. Brief interim reports are issued in the middle of each trimester for student-led conferences among the advisor, the parents, and the student. Progress Reports include a course description, a set of standards to which the grades *Beginning, Approaching, Meeting* and *Exceeding* are applied, and a narrative comment. Clear levels of achievement for passing and earning credit, as well as for earning distinction and honors, have been established. Through the use of grading software, the faculty is able to generate updates as frequently as needed, and to quantify progress and deficiencies such as poor or incomplete work quickly and explicitly. This became particularly important as a trimester was drawing to a close, to ensure the best results possible for the student. In the 9th and 10th grades, faculty regularly included in their weekly meetings a time for each advisor to hear from the other teachers whether an advisee was falling behind or needed extra monitoring. In addition, as the year progressed, students at risk of not passing were notified and the consequences of deficient work, such as summer work or lack of full credit for the course, were made very clear to students and parents. In a number of cases, student learning was spurred by the increased amount of concrete feedback our Progress Reports, student-led conferences, and other reporting gave the student. Data from the Progress Reports has been reported in the Accountability Plan section above.

3) **Portfolios** continue to grow as a vital part of the Four Rivers internal assessment system. Students at each grade are required to assemble a portfolio, including their best work in all the specified areas, from core academics to service and character. In contrast to timed, standardized tests, portfolios allow for time, revision, and multiple ways to show learning. Students at 7th and 9th prepared portfolios of the current year's best work. Students at 8th and 10th had the additional challenge of preparing "Passage Portfolios" which included work from two years and involved a presentation to a panel of faculty, parents and peers. At the Passage Portfolio presentations, each lasting 20-30 minutes, the student described areas of strength and needed improvement in key areas, with samples from his or her portfolio, and thoughtful sharing of interests and goals for the future. Successful completion of Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades are a requirement for advancing to the next grade, and for this reason, among others, most students put extraordinary effort into the Passage Portfolio. As data reported in the Accountability Plan section shows, over 94% of the students met the portfolio standards, and those who didn't are making up the incomplete work over the summer.

4) **Surveys.** The school again administered a Parent Survey in June to gauge satisfaction and assemble data for planning and accountability. A Student Survey was also administered in the final weeks of school, and when full results are available, they will offer useful perspectives for planning the coming year. As in previous years, Parent Survey data from specific items and a summary of responses to open-ended questions are distributed to the Board and faculty, and trends are discussed. Here are the Parent Survey statements on topics relevant for this report, with the percentage of parents responding who indicated they "Agree" or "Strongly Agree" with the statement.

Four Rivers Parent Survey June 2006	Percent who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”
I generally understand the educational approach used at Four Rivers	98%
Academic expectations at the school are clear	82
I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child’s school program	84
The progress reports help me understand my child’s school experiences and achievement	81
I am satisfied with the amount of homework assigned to my child	81
I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child	84
My child is held to higher expectations of academic performance than at previous school	76
The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment	84
Behavioral expectations at school are clear	88
The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop strengths of character	86
I believe at least one of my child’s teachers knows and understands him or her well	89
The newsletters and mailings create a good communication system within the school	91
Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate	84
Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate	96
The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families	84
FRCPS has supported and/or positively impacted my parenting and involvement with my child’s education	79

5) School Inspection. At the invitation of the Director, a “mock” school inspection was conducted over two days in March by Alan Fraker, an educator with extensive experience in school evaluations and a designer of the first inspection process for renewal of Massachusetts charter schools. Mr. Fraker, who also serves as a trustee at Four Rivers, focused on the “academic success” component of the charter renewal criteria. He reviewed school academic documents, including samples of student work and assessment results, observed classes, and interviewed students and teachers, all as if he were actually conducting an inspection. At the end of two very busy days, he reported his findings to the faculty and administration. The major areas of commendation he noted were, in his words:

- Extraordinary professionalism of faculty
- Breadth and quality of portfolios
- Student enthusiasm for ‘active learning’
- Fidelity to school themes and Expeditionary Learning
- Secure, nurturing community/culture
- Blinding [fast] transition to established school
- Bedrock leadership and fiscal stability

Key recommendations for action or clarification were, again in his words:

- Identification of exit standards/goals
- Backward curriculum mapping
- Alignment with external assessments
- Vertical teaming
- Longitudinal student tracking
- [Clarifying] Purpose/use of homework
- Second Transition: School to ? [effective college and post-graduate plans]

Mr. Fraker's inspection report gave more explicit suggestions for strengthening the school program, which the faculty and school leadership are weaving into their plans for the coming year. Several central recommendations—such as curriculum mapping—were also repeated in the Year Three Site Visit report from the Department of Education Charter Office

Number of instructional days

Four Rivers completed 180 instructional days in the past school year, starting September 6, 2005 and ending June 22, 2006. School began at 8:00 am; dismissal was at 3:05 pm.

IV. Governance Profile

Board of Trustees, 2005-06

Chairman, Benjamin Murray, Buckland, MA. Director, Red Gate Farm Educational Center, Appointed 2002, second 3-year term ending September 2008. Facilities and Finance Committee.

Vice-Chair, Marie Bartlett, Leyden, MA. Parent, Community Volunteer. Appointed 2003, 3-year term ending September 2007. Personnel Policies Committee, Committee on Trustees, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Treasurer, Daniel F. LaRose, Shelburne, MA. Professor of Psychology and Human Ecology, Interim Assistant Dean, Greenfield Community College. Appointed 2002; second 2-year term ending September 2007. Facilities and Finance Committee, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Secretary, David Roulston, Greenfield, MA. Attorney-at-Law, Greenfield. Appointed 2003. 3-year term ending September 2006. Development Committee.

Edward Blatchford, Shelburne, MA. Director, Four Rivers Charter Public School, *ex-officio*.

Pamela Brown, Leyden, MA. Former co-director of the New England Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), currently director of social services for town of Enfield, CT. Appointed 2004; term ending September 2007. Development Committee.

Linda Cavanaugh, Professor of Mathematics, Greenfield Community College. Appointed 2002; 3 year term ending September 2007. Facilities and Finance Committee, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Alan Fraker, Greenfield, MA. College Counselor, Assistant Headmaster, Montclair-Kimberly Academy; former director of accountability for the KIPP Foundation. Appointed 2003; term ending September 2007. Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Disa Pratt, Greenfield, MA. Business Owner/Manager, Brattleboro, VT. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2003; 3-year term ending September 2006. Development Committee.

Deborah T. Volland, Greenfield, MA. Community volunteer with technology background. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2004, 3-year term ending September 2007. Committee on Trustees, Personnel & Policies Committee.

Monica Witty, Orange, MA. Human Resources, Wal-Mart, Orange, MA. Appointed 2002; term ending September 2006. Committee on Trustees, Personnel Policies Committee.

Board of Trustees Meetings

All trustee meetings in the school year 2005-06 were held at the school, 7:00-9:00 p.m., on the second Monday of each month. An all-day trustee retreat was held May 20, 2006.

Major Policy Decisions of the Board of Trustees 2005-2006

- Voted to adopt a new policy on Solicitation in the school by staff, students and others.
- Voted to participate in the “Civic Action Account” fundraising vehicles sponsored by Greenfield Savings Bank for other area public schools.
- Voted to approve the First Amendment to the Lease between Four Rivers Charter Public School and FREF, Inc. which restates the new square feet being rented and the new rate per square foot and some other minor changes.
- Voted to approve new annual goals for the School Director's position.
- Voted to reestablish the Task Force on Accountability and Program Planning as the Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.
- Voted to approve the Board action plan with the change of Task Force to Committee.
- Voted to change enrollment process policy. Additional language allows for holding additional lotteries subsequent to the major one.
- Voted to authorize borrowing from Greenfield Savings Bank.
- Voted to approve the Fiscal Year 2007 Operating Budget.

Summary of Official Complaints

One official complaint was received by the Board of Trustees on June 29, 2006. The complaint is a grievance filed by a student's parents regarding the quality of their child's education at the school. The complaint is currently being addressed through the school's established complaint policy and has not yet been resolved. No other official complaints have been received in the 2005 - 2006 year.

V. Student Profile

Four Rivers Charter Public School ~ Student Profile 2005-06

Total Enrollment~134

As of June 22, 2006

Student Demographics

Enrollment by Grade: 7th – 35
 8th – 32
 9th – 33
 10th – 34

Gender:	Male	Female
7 th	18 (51%)	17 (49%)
8 th	23 (72%)	9 (28%)
9 th	20 (60%)	13 (40%)
10 th	20 (57%)	14 (43%)
<u>Total</u>	<u>80 (59%)</u>	<u>53 (41%)</u>

Race/Ethnicity:

2 Hispanic	1.5%
1 Pacific Islander	1%
1 Asian	1%
3 Black/Mixed race	2%
2 Native American	1.5%
125 White	93%

Free and Reduced Lunch:
31 Qualified 23%

Enrolled in Special Education:
28 Enrolled 21%

Limited English Proficient: 0%

Linguistic Minorities: 0%

Attendance Rate Average Daily Attendance for the Year = 94.2%

Number of Student Applications Received for 2005-06 by Town				
Athol	0	0	1	0
Bernardston	0	1	1	0
Buckland	1	0	0	0
Charlemont	1	0	0	0
Colrain	7	0	0	0
Conway	3	0	1	1
Deerfield	3	0	1	0
Erving	3	0	0	0
Florence	0	0	1	0
Gill	5	0	4	0
Goshen	0	0	0	1
Greenfield	22	6	10	0
Heath	1	0	0	0
Leyden	1	0	2	0
Montague	7	0	6	2
North Brookfield	0	0	1	0
Northfield	3	0	0	2
Orange	0	0	2	0
Shelburne	6	0	1	0
Sunderland	0	0	2	0
Warwick	2	0	1	0
Wendell	1	0	1	0
Whately	1	0	1	0
TOTAL	67	7	36	6

Grade 7:

67 Applications for 34 Spaces

Grade 8:

7 Applications for 4 Spaces

Grade 9:

36 Applications for 5 Spaces

Grade 10:

6 Applications for 3 Spaces

Demand ratio: 116 /46 (2.52)

VI. Staff Profile

Edward Blatchford, Director and Co-Founder

B.A. American Studies, Yale University; M.A. English and American Literature, Columbia University; M.S. Special Education, Adelphi University. Mr. Blatchford is an experienced teacher and school leader. He was head of an independent school in Connecticut for 10 years, founded an alternative middle school, and earlier taught and served as an administrator at two independent middle and high schools. Prior to founding Four Rivers, he taught composition at Greenfield Community College.

***Susanne Anderson, Choral Music**

B.A. World Music, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ms. Anderson has been teaching voice and piano for 30 years, and also has experience as a rehearsal pianist for area professional and college dance group, as a director of choruses and choirs, and as a singer. She joined the faculty in 2005.

***Ellen Clegg, Music**

B.A., Psychology, Oberlin College; M.S., Education. Ms. Clegg is a percussion teacher at Greenfield Community College and Valley Community Music School, and a frequent percussion performer in Western Massachusetts and further afield. She also has her own business, *Found Sounds: Community Through Rhythm*, offering classes, workshops and community events. She began teaching at Four Rivers in 2003.

Amanda Cook, 9th and 10th grade Math

B.A. Grinnell College. Ms Cook comes to us from the Parker Essential Charter School in Ayer, MA, where she taught 9th and 10th grade math. She also has several years experience teaching intensive summer math courses, as well as volunteering in Haiti. She joined the faculty in 2005.

Susan Durkee, Assistant Director and Co-Founder, High School Coordinator, Art and Skills Teacher

B.F.A. in Sculpture; M.F.A. in English, University of Massachusetts/Amherst. She has done graduate work in Special Education and was a member of the Friends and Faculty Network at UMass, an organization to which one is nominated for outstanding service to students with learning disabilities. Susan had experience teaching Art in grades K-6 and teaching writing at the college level, before becoming a co-founder of Four Rivers.

Jessica Farwell, 9th and 10th grade Teacher Assistant

B.A. Bard College; currently working on M.Ed. in science education through UMass, Amherst. She has experience teaching general science at middle schools in Orange and Newton, MA. She joined our faculty in 2005.

***Dr. William Fogel, School Psychologist and Counselor**

Ph.D. Child Clinical Psychology, St. John's University; B.A. Psychology and Education, Hampshire College. Certified as school psychologist. Dr. Fogel has worked in clinical and school settings for 10 years and most recently served as school psychologist in the Greenfield Public Schools. He joined the founding faculty in 2003.

***Deborah Gerry, Consultant/Special Education Administrator**

B.S. Education, Fitchburg State College; M.A. Educational Administration, Vermont College; Wilson Language Training, Level One Certification. Ms. Gerry has twenty-four years of experience in the field of Special Education, working as a teacher and an administrator. She joined the faculty as a consultant in 2003.

Nikole Gilbert, 8th grade Math and Science

B.S., Biology, University of Kentucky; M.S. in Environmental Studies, Antioch New England Graduate School. Ms. Gilbert has been a science and environment educator in a variety of settings; prior to coming to Four Rivers in 2005 she taught Biology and Ecology at two small high schools in Rhode Island while completing her masters.

***Amanda Griffith, Physical Education and Health**

B.A. in Sociology and Anthropology, Wells College; MSW, School for Social Work, Smith College. A lifelong athlete, she has coached soccer and played multiple other sports. She joined Four Rivers in 2005 after serving as a social worker for adolescents at The Academy at Swift River.

***Walker Korby, Nature Studies**

B.A. Anthropology, University of Massachusetts/Amherst; currently pursuing an M.S. in Geography. Mr. Korby has studied at the Jon Young Wilderness Awareness School and is an experienced Nature Studies teacher. He has taught Tracking and Nature Awareness at the middle school through college levels. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Matthew Leaf, 7th grade English and Social Studies

B.A. Anthropology with a minor in Religion, Kenyon College. Mr. Leaf has 8 years of middle school classroom experience, and is also trained to teach Nature Studies and Outdoor Education. He joined the founding faculty in 2003.

***Daniel Lederer, Technology Coordinator**

Mr. Lederer has many years experience in technology, including work at Hampshire College and Hilltown Cooperative Charter School. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Amanda Locke, 7th grade Science and Math

B.A. Communication Studies with a minor in Environmental Studies, Hamilton College; M.S. Environmental Education with Middle School General Science Certification, Antioch New England Graduate School. She has nine years experience as an Outdoor Educator and as a Life Skills teacher in youth groups, and completed a year-long internship teaching high school Science prior to joining Four Rivers in 2003.

Melinda McCall, 7th grade Teacher Assistant

B.S. Environmental Design; M.S. Forestry, University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Ms. McCall has extensive experience in environmental work in the area, including work at UMass, Mass Division of Fisheries and Wildlife, and the town of Amherst. She joined the faculty in 2004.

Craig McDonnell, Spanish

B.A. Hamilton College; M.A. Hispanic Literature, UMass, Amherst. Mr. McDonnell joined the Four Rivers faculty in 2005 after teaching Spanish for five years at the Williston Northampton School. He has also served as an Associate Coordinator in Spanish at UMass, and has lived and taught in Spain and the Dominican Republic.

Lily Newman, 9th grade English and Social Studies

B.A. English, Colorado College. Ms. Newman has 5 years of experience teaching English and writing, and has had additional training in Differentiated Instruction. She has taught in Mexico and is fluent in Spanish. She joined Four Rivers in 2004.

***Terry Plotkin, Physical Education**

B.A. Economics, University of Massachusetts/Amherst. Terry has worked for several years as a coach of Ultimate Frisbee, and has worked as a paraprofessional in Special Education. He has also run afterschool programs in Greenfield schools. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Leif Riddington, 8th grade English and Social Studies

B.A. English Literature, University of Massachusetts/Amherst; M.Ed. State Certification with Advanced Standing in Middle and Secondary School English. Leif has nine years of middle school classroom experience; he is also an executive board member of the National Writing Project Western Massachusetts site at UMass/Amherst. He joined the founding faculty in 2003.

Harlan Smith, Director of Operations

B.A. Sociology, Tufts University; Master of Hospital Administration, University of Minnesota/Minneapolis. Harlan has over 30 years of experience in financial management, including 13 years as President and CEO of Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of Greenfield Community College and on the Board of Directors of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce.

Laura Stamas, 9th and 10th grade Science (Environmental Science and Biology)

B.A. Bard College; M.A. in Environmental Studies, Antioch New England Graduate School. Prior to joining Four Rivers in 2005, Laura had several years experience teaching science in high school, special needs classrooms, and after-school settings.

Andrew Stenson, Learning Specialist in grades 9 and 10

B.A. Leeds University; Post Graduate Certificate in Education, Bristol Polytechnic, England; M.A., Education, Smith College. Mr. Stenson has extensive teaching experience in special education and technology, and he has also worked as an Outward Bound instructor. He joined the faculty in 2004.

Leslie Taylor, School Secretary

B.A. American Studies and English, Colby College. Leslie has worked as an administrative assistant for 20 years in business and educational settings, and most recently worked as Executive Assistant at a regional history museum.

***Anne Tumblin-Haxo, Learning Specialist**

B.A. Education/Special Needs, Elms College. Anne had three years experience in Special Education at the elementary and middle school levels prior to joining the Four Rivers faculty in 2003. She is certified in Special Needs (K-9).

Jane Vail, Teacher Assistant

B.A., Windham College. Ms. Vail is an experience middle school teacher with certification in English. She has also worked as a paraprofessional at middle and high school levels, and joined the faculty in 2004.

Andrew Wallace, 9th and 10th grade History/Social Studies

B.A. English, SUNY Geneseo; M.A. in Education, Tufts University; Certificate in Environmental Education, University of Minnesota, Duluth. Before joining the Four Rivers faculty in 2005, Mr. Wallace taught history and English for several years in grades 7 and 8, and taught environmental education.

*** *part-time positions***

Faculty Summary

Full-time Classroom Teachers

11 (9 Highly Qualified; 2 are Highly Qualified in one of the two subjects they teach; 8 have masters degrees)

Full-time Teacher Assistants (paraprofessionals)

3 (3 Highly Qualified)

Part-time Teachers

7 (3.1 FTE; 4 have masters; non-academic teachers include 1 with PhD)

Average Class size: 17

Teacher Turnover

All of the full-time teachers are returning

Six of 7 part-time teachers are returning (1 leaving represents .2 FTE).

There was no turnover during the school year.

VII. Financial Profile

SCHOOL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION (Un-audited) Year Ended June 30, 2006

The following financial statements and information have been prepared by the management of the school and are un-audited.

Financial Highlights

Four Rivers Charter Public School had revenues of \$1,542,985 for the year ended June 30, 2006, of which 96% were operating revenues and 4% were non-operating revenues (private grants, contributions, etc.), the same percentage as FY 2005. The school earned total income of \$18,946 for the year, which was comprised of an operating loss of \$36,284 and non-operating revenue of \$55,230.

Results of Operations

The major deviations from the adopted budget were again related the extraordinary facilities-related costs borne by the school this year. Approximately \$12,000 of technical and legal fees were expended preparing a second application to the United States Department of Agriculture - Rural Development's Essential Community Facilities Direct Loan Program, which resulted in a successful approval of loan funds to allow the purchase of the balance of the school's campus (purchase technically made by Four Rivers Educational Foundation, Inc.), including the high school building completed in September of 2005. Furnishings and equipment for the high school also created a high level of extraordinary expense.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2006, Four Rivers Charter Public School had 138 students and received \$1,389,048 in per pupil funding, which represents 89% of the school's revenue. In addition, Four Rivers Charter Public School received various federal and private grants and gifts, which totaled \$75,899 and \$50,144 respectively.

Budget for Fiscal Year 2007

The budget presented for the 2006-2007 school year reflects a planned enrollment of 168 students. The budget continues to support a commitment to the Expeditionary Learning curriculum model and the acquisition of technology to support the school's mission. Private foundation support to maintain a gradual expansion of the school to its full enrollment is strong. Capital expenditures are therefore reflected within the full operating budget.

Four Rivers Charter Public School
 Operating Budget
 For the Year Ended June 30, 2007

REVENUES	
Revenue from State Sources	\$ 1,766,441
Revenue from Federal Sources	\$ 104,882
Private grants, gifts, & Annual Appeal	\$ 130,547
Student revenues	\$ 800
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,002,670
 EXPENDITURES	
Salaries and Wages	\$ 1,060,527
Payroll Taxes	\$ 45,468
Fringe Benefits	\$ 96,889
Rent	\$ 287,376
Instructional Expenses	\$ 146,596
Business Expenses	\$ 37,215
Operations and Maintenance	\$ 77,698
Physical Plant	\$ 47,309
Student Services	\$ 21,175
Board of Trustees	\$ 10,665
Contingency	\$ 10,013
Utilities	\$ 45,293
Insurance	\$ 35,419
Professional Development	\$ 40,000
Travel	\$ 7,500
Student transportation	\$ 4,456
Fees, Licenses, Dues, Memberships	\$ 4,571
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,953,341
Operating Income (loss)	\$ 49,328
Depreciation expense	\$ 4,208
 CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	 \$ 45,120

Four Rivers Charter Public School
Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes
in Net Assets
For the Year Ended June 30, 2006
(Un-audited)

REVENUES	
Revenue from State Sources	\$ 1,394,024
Revenue from Federal Sources	\$ 110,774
Private grants, gifts, & Annual Appeal	\$ 55,480
Student revenues	\$ 1,643
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 1,561,931
EXPENDITURES	
Salaries and Wages	\$ 727,447
Payroll Taxes	\$ 33,359
Fringe Benefits	\$ 95,973
Rent	\$ 246,883
Instructional Expenses	\$ 116,677
Business Expenses	\$ 44,605
Operations and Maintenance	\$ 72,509
Physical Plant	\$ 69,527
Student Services	\$ 15,559
Board of Trustees	\$ 5,000
Contingency	\$ 0
Utilities	\$ 36,912
Insurance	\$ 27,576
Professional Development	\$ 37,800
Travel	\$ 5,286
Student transportation	\$ 4,125
Fees, Licenses, Dues, Memberships	\$ 3,747
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 1,542,985
Operating Income (loss)	\$ 18,946
Depreciation expense	\$ 8,786
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ 10,160

Four Rivers Charter Public School
Statement of Net Assets
As of June 30, 2006

	Jun 30, 06
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000 - GSB Green Action	294,796
1170 - Petty Cash	123
Total Checking/Savings	294,919
Accounts Receivable	
1100 - Accounts Receivable	10,806
Total Accounts Receivable	10,806
Other Current Assets	
Construction Underway	-1,813
Total Other Current Assets	-1,813
Total Current Assets	303,912
Noncurrent Assets	
1500 - Buildings/leasehold improvement	27,453
1600 - Equipment/hardware	12,524
1610 - Library & Media	232
1700 - Vehicles	24,614
Total Noncurrent Assets	64,823
Other Assets	
1800 - Post and Beam Upgrade	17,834
Loan to FREF	20,000
Total Other Assets	37,834
TOTAL ASSETS	406,569
 LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 - Accounts Payable	15,825
Total Accounts Payable	15,825
Other Current Liabilities	
2060 - Accrued unused vacation salary	9,189
2200 - Deferred Grant Revenue	76,673
2150 - Held Health Insurance	8,863
2140 - Mass Teachers R. B.	4,440
2100 - Payroll Liabilities	2,601
Total Other Current Liabilities	101,766
Total Current Liabilities	117,591
Total Liabilities	117,591
Total Net Assets	288,979
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	406,570

VIII. Dissemination

While only in its third year, with two more grades to grow into before full enrollment, Four Rivers is gladly sharing high quality examples of its Expeditionary Learning model and other practices developed by its more experienced faculty. We look forward to further dissemination of our best practices with other schools and interested educators in our area in the years ahead.

- Leif Riddington, 8th grade teacher of English and Studies, has continued to guide his students in the production of impressive annual publications that receive a wide readership and represent well the mission and methods of Four Rivers. This Spring, in collaboration with the Family Diversity Project, an Amherst-based educational organization with national reach, the 8th grade produced “Who We Are: Portraits of People with Disabilities,” a 97-page book based on interviews conducted by our 8th graders with young people and adults with disabilities. The students also conducted research on each disability included, and published their findings in the glossary for the book. The first printing sold out quickly and received very positive coverage in the local newspapers. It is expected that a second edition will receive still wider circulation through the Family Diversity Project, and the book, like others before it, will be viewed through the EL network as striking examples of EL practices in action.
- Earlier in the year, Mr. Riddington’s 8th graders created and published “The Wolf That Would Forgive and Other Fables of Experience,” a book of original fables with scratchboard illustrations. The first edition of 100 copies sold out quickly, and students visited local elementary schools to read their fables and perform related puppet shows. A few months later, the on-line newsletter of the Center for Education Reform, which reaches a national audience of educators, praised the book for representing the school’s emphasis on “craftsmanship... that has allowed the 8th graders to do what nobody would expect of children their age.”
- Mr. Riddington has also been sharing his commitment to developing strong literacy through student-created publications with area teachers. Beginning last fall, he and another teacher presented a program for the Western Massachusetts Writing Project called *Get Published! A series of workshops for teachers interested in presenting students work to a larger audience.* In January, he led a workshop for 150 teachers in the Chicopee Public Schools entitled *Celebrating Reading and Writing Through Publication: A Real Product for a Real Audience.* In February, he and Deirdre Scott, who taught at Four Rivers the year before and collaborated with Mr. Riddington in a previous publication, presented a workshop related to their publication to teachers at the annual Massachusetts Agriculture in the Classroom conference.
- Mandy Locke, 7th grade teacher of Math and Science (and, like Mr. Riddington, in her third year at Four Rivers), has continued to develop engaging learning expeditions that carry our students and Expeditionary Learning practices into the community. With Matt Leaf, 7th grade teacher of English and Social Studies, and Susan Durkee, Art teacher, Ms. Locke led a learning expedition called “Fading Footprints” about endangered species in Massachusetts, which culminated in the production of a CD to be distributed to local schools and libraries for student and teacher use.

- Ms Locke took her highly successful life science learning expedition “What is Waste?” to the Expeditionary Learning National Conference in Oakland, CA this March. She presented a master class to teachers from around the country, displaying student work from Four Rivers and sharing the steps she has followed in using community experts to understand the waste stream from a school and the wider lessons it has to teach.
- Following inquiries from teachers at Amherst Middle School, Susan Durkee and two 9th grade students made a presentation on the Four Rivers system of portfolio assessment and standards-based grading to the curriculum committee at Amherst. The students spoke with understanding and conviction about the benefits of our approach to assessment, spurring consideration among the teachers present of adopting a similar system.
- As before, Four Rivers welcomed visitors who are interested in learning from our growing school. Last fall, for instance, a professor at Antioch New England Graduate School brought his science education class to observe our classes and talk with students and teachers. During the winter, over 120 people attended presentations by teachers and the school Director to learn about our program and teaching methods as part of our annual admission open houses. In June, on Expo Night, the school had several hundred family members, friends, and visitors viewing presentations of student work from the year.
- In addition to the sharing of our educational practices, Four Rivers has continued to be a resource to charter public schools and other schools who are interested in how we have developed and acquired our facilities so quickly. Harlan Smith, our Director of Operations, has frequently supported his peers in other charter public schools, not only with facilities and financing issues but also with other successful practices in operating a young charter school.