

# Uphams Corner Charter School

Annual Report

2006

*Humanitas, Libertas, Felicitas*

# Mission.

The Uphams Corner Charter School offers an academically rigorous, rhetoric-centered education in the liberal arts and sciences, leading to sound understanding, earnest reflection, self-discipline, integrity, and action.

Our community is devoted to outstanding student performance and whole character formation.

We will graduate all our students as powerful, articulate, moral citizens, working for the benefit of all.

# Table of Contents.

Introductory Description	4	
Letter from the Chair of the Board of Directors		5
School Profile		7
Governance Profile	9	
Accountability Goals		11
Student Profile		19
Staff Profile	21	
NCLB Report Card		22
High School Placement		27

# Introductory Description.

The Uphams Corner Charter School is located at 7 Elkins Street, South Boston, 02125. In the academic year 2006-2007, we will offer programs for fifth through eighth grade to serve 200 students—our maximum—with a waiting list, as of July 27, 2006, of zero. As of October 2005, we served grades fifth through eighth, with a student population of 200.

## Contact Information:

School Phone:	617-268-4695
Head of School:	Edward M. Cook
Director of Studies (Instructional Leader):	Michael Mayo
Web Site:	<a href="http://www.uphamscorner.com">www.uphamscorner.com</a>

# Letter from the Chair of the Board of Directors.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I submit the 2006 Uphams Corner Charter School annual report.

With great pride, on June 16, 2006 parents, staff, and friends celebrated the commencement ceremony of the first graduating 8<sup>th</sup> grade class of the Uphams Corner Charter School. The 8<sup>th</sup> grade cohort of sixty-two, individuals all, showed in their comportment and in individual remarks a dignity and joy that spoke of their pride in themselves as pioneers and as exemplars of the Uphams Corner Charter School mission of individual excellence in service to larger purposes, always guided by a strong moral sense. The ceremony ended with the recitation of the school's Athenian oath in Vietnamese, Haitian and Cape Verdean creole, Spanish, and, finally, with students, teachers, staff, family, and friends reciting the oath in English. We expect our 8<sup>th</sup> graders to carry forward the Uphams Corner tradition as they attend a variety of public and private high schools, including all of the Boston exam schools and other BPS high schools, charter schools such as Codman Academy, City on a Hill, and MATCH, and private schools such as Boston College High, Newman Prep, and other Catholic schools.

The 2005-2006 school year saw the first tangible fruits of the revised curriculum and new administrative structure that were put in place the previous year. We are particularly pleased by strong evidence of greatly increased reading and math abilities in all four grades. Improvements accelerated over the course of the year, so that we ended the school year with a heartening sense of momentum. As a result of the school's ongoing analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the academic program, the administration found clear evidence that the most successful students are those who have been with the school from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade. This carries over into social success and integration into the school culture as well. As we enter the 2006-7 year, teacher retention rates and student enrollment retention rates are up significantly. We expect that these stability metrics will lead to continued academic growth.

A critical feature of this year's plan for academic achievement was the strong emphasis on teacher development and mentoring, cross-classroom norming, and rigorous association of all aspects of the curriculum, from frameworks through to the specific benchmarks that are the building blocks of each student's learning experience. These activities constituted the main role of the Director of Studies. We strongly believe that our commitment of significant resources to this plan paid off handsomely in the marked improvement in student scores that we saw in the second half of the year.

For the first time, the 2005-2006 school year saw a modest deficit. This was due largely to unexpectedly high numbers of students requiring special education services. We anticipate that high rates of special education will continue (approximately 25% for 2006-2007). The administration has hired an additional special education teacher, which will allow us to cut some of the high consulting costs associated with special education this year. On the revenue side, the board and the administration planned and executed our first gala fundraiser this spring, featuring an exciting band that includes our music teacher. As a result of this and other private fundraising, we raised approximately \$20,000, a substantial improvement over previous years.

Grant writing has already resulted in the receipt of approximately \$40,000 so far for the coming school year, with additional grants in the pipeline. We are planning for a much greater rate of grants and other fundraising this year.

As we enter our charter renewal year, we look back with pride at the obstacles we have overcome and at the growing success of our students. We look forward with hope to increasing our academic strength within the context of our school's mission. And we look forward with excitement to the process of "coming home" to a new school in Uphams Corner itself.

For the Board of Directors,

Christopher C. Binns  
Chair

# School Profile.

## Summary of Educational Philosophy

Everyone in the learning environment, from headmaster to faculty to students to parents to sponsors to janitors, is at a point in life which, given the right stimulus, can be a significant starting point for growth. Students tend to think that only THEY are struggling with growth/learning/who-am-I issues. It's hard for them to grasp that older doesn't mean wiser always, and few will realize on their own that the cycle (should) never stop(s).... So, in forming a learning community, turn the inevitable uncertainty of self into a motor. Every person has growing to do; experiences within the school will challenge each member to grow--and the challenge is an invitation.

- William Skinner, adviser to the school, and former Board member

How do children learn? That, in my opinion, is not the question we should be asking because it is an oversimplification which obscures three crucial aspects of the problem. The first is, how do you release the intellectual-motivational energies of the child to want to learn? The second is, how do you harness and direct those energies? The third is the equivalent of the "chain reaction": Having released and harnessed those energies, how can it become a self-sustaining feature of the individual's way of learning? Put in another way, what *context* of learning best puts flesh on the bones of those aspects? I sum this up in the phrase "the context of productive learning," a context absent in all but a miniscule number of classrooms, an assertion that includes charter schools. Learning is quintessentially (and obviously) a reflection of social-interpersonal contexts.

- Seymour Sarason

We believe that students learn by struggling with experience and by bringing their own lives, values, and emotions to bear upon them. We agree with a modified constructivist concept of cognition: students bring their prior knowledge structures to the table and, with the help of teachers skilled in linking this prior knowledge with new content and in guiding this very personal struggle, they can articulate their thinking and thereby create new meaning for themselves. This process of negotiation, restructuring, and reevaluation encourages deep thinking and intense, emotional engagement with the material--prime motivators for student success. Students must also be given room to decontextualize the learning by abstracting it, applying it, playing with it, owning it.

Our educational program, based on our mission, provides clear structures to link the adolescent's intense, "inevitable uncertainty of self"--the "who-am-I" issues--with the process of careful, logical, communicable thinking. In this "chain reaction," academic excellence becomes a deeply personal experience, and yet is automatically linked to the social world beyond the individual student. Thus Sarason's "context of productive learning" is built through explicit structures.

This structure begins, in every class and in every aspect of school life, when students are asked to articulate their knowledge structures and to integrate new material. Students are taught to *experience* their world deeply ("What does this information mean to me?"), *reflect* upon it ("What does this say about me? How does it fit in, or not fit in, with what I know?"), and *discern action* based on their findings ("What does this mean for other people? What must I do?"). Every moment of a student's life--field trips, community service,

athletics—must be open to this process of reflective learning, explicated with the help of trusted teachers and fellow students.

This process is essential to our mission to cultivate students who can think with honesty and innovation. We mean to free them from boilerplate thinking by respecting their individuality and their capacity for new insight, while at every moment demanding answers as to how this individuality relates to academic excellence, to careful thinking, and to their fellow human beings.

## School Days and Hours

We had 180 days of school last year. We began September 6, 2005, and ended school June 23, 2006. Our school day ran from 8:00 a.m. to 3:40 p.m.

## Summary of External and Internal Standardized Test Results

Please see the section on Accountability Goals.

# Governance Profile.

The Board of Directors holds the school charter and is legally, morally, and ethically responsible for the health of the school. In accordance with its by-laws, the Board can be comprised of no fewer than nine members, selected to include a diversity of skills as well as a diversity of age, race, socioeconomic background, sexual orientation, and gender. The Board assumes responsibility for all fiduciary, legal, and regulatory compliance issues, and will ensure that the school adheres to its charter, to its by-laws, and to all applicable state and federal guidelines.

The current Board consists of ten members, five men and five women, seven whites, two African-Americans, and one of Cape Verdean ancestry. Our Governance committee, led by Bill Collins, continues to recruit candidates with special skills and a strong commitment to urban education in general and the Uphams Corner mission in particular.

Throughout the year the Board continued an active and careful fiscal oversight under the leadership of Finance chair Desiree Baynes. We have established a budget for 2006-2007 that provides for a substantial surplus to accommodate unexpected changes in our fiscal circumstances and to begin development of our permanent site.

The Facilities committee, chaired by Board member Steven Rumpler, has completed preliminary planning for a permanent facility in Uphams Corner, currently centering on the landmark Columbia Square building. We are currently negotiating with the owners of this building.

For the coming year, the Board plans to improve our fundraising, establish an academic oversight subcommittee, develop a permanent site, and implement a strategic plan for our second five years.

## Membership of the Board of Trustees

### **Christopher Binns**

Board Chair  
Joined board May 2003  
Term ends May 2009

### **Desiree Baynes**

Treasurer  
Member of Founding Board (received charter in February 2002)  
Term ends March 2008  
Committees: Finance, Accountability

### **Paul Bowen**

Chair of Development Committee  
Joined board December 2005  
Term ends December 2008  
Additional Committees: Finance

**William Collins**

Chair of Governance Committee

Joined board July 2004

Term ends July 2007

**Verdell Hayes**

Joined board April 2005

Term ends April 2008

Committees: Governance, Accountability

**Stephen Leahy**

Joined board March 2005

Term ends 2008

Committees: Accountability

**Anne Lynch**

Joined board April 2006

Term ends 2009

Committees: Finance, Development

**Aminah Pilgrim**

Joined board March 2005

Term ends March 2008

**Steven Rumpler**

Joined board March 2005

Term ends March 2008

Committees: Facilities

**Molly Sherm**

Elected to board membership April 2006

Term ends April 2009

**Summary of Major Policy Decisions Made by the Board of Directors**

The Board passed no major policies this past year.

**Charter Amendments Approved by the Commissioner or the Board of Education**

None. We submitted a number of amendments to the Department in the spring of 2006.

**Summary of Official Complaints Received by the Board of Trustees**

The Board received no official complaints.

# Accountability Goals.

The data from internal and external academic assessments indicate significant improvement in student performance in both English and math assessments, as well as the areas of science, social studies, and Latin. With mixed results in Years One and Two, with stronger reading results and weaker math results in a difficult Year Three, we entered Year Four with clear data and a formalized curriculum and instructional structure, and therefore have enjoyed increased—and increasing—student achievement from this growth.

We have begun a partnership with the Massachusetts Public School Performance Project, a network of highly successful Massachusetts charter schools paired with a team of educational consultants. The MPSP team has developed a test battery aligned in content and difficulty with the MCAS. They administer assessments to students six times per year, giving teachers and school leaders regular feedback on their progress toward meeting MCAS goals. MPSP analyzes the data; reports the data back to the school within forty-eight hours; coaches teachers in how to grow in their areas of weakness; works with school leaders to understand broader, structural factors behind a school's successes and weaknesses; and links teachers and leaders to resources and practices in other network schools. Our partnership will deepen and enrich our already strong culture of instructional improvement, providing us with the resources and expertise necessary to bring about necessary change. We are thrilled by our selection by MPSP as one of their member schools.

The school uses several measures of performance to benchmark student progress. In the school's first two years, we administered the Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement (WJ-III) to every student. A one-on-one test administered by a psychologist, the WJ-III became unwieldy, and we changed our assessments to group-administered tests. Our statistics consultant, a psychometrician for Riverside Publishing (the publishers of the WJ-III), advised us that comparisons of Standard Scores across tests is statistically valid.

The Standard Score, a norm-referenced score, describes a student's place along the bell curve, comparing students to their peers across the country. The bell curve has a mean Standard Score of 100, with 67% of students falling between 85 and 115. A student with a score lower than 85 is therefore in the bottom sixth of the curve; a score higher than 115 puts the child in the top sixth. When considering progress over time, an increase of zero Standard Score points indicates the child made average progress—she made progress, but so did everyone else. An increase in one's Standard Score, therefore, indicates above-average progress. We use the Standard Score primarily to measure reading progress; our math assessment, the Iowa Test of Basic Skills, uses a unique definition of Standard Score that requires our use of other indicators from the test.

For purposes of defining “grade level” for the Accountability Plan, we define students within nine points of the mean as being at grade level. (The Standard Score is far more reliable—and, importantly, more difficult to raise—than the more easily understood and more common Grade Equivalent.)

**Assessment Instrument Summary:** The MCAS measures our achievement of the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. We also administer the Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) three times per year to assess students' oral reading fluency, phonemic awareness, and decoding. To assess reading comprehension, vocabulary, sentence comprehension, passage comprehension, and listening comprehension, Uphams Corner administers the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) test. We also administer the Iowa Test of Basic Skills: Mathematics Battery as an additional assessment of math performance. For science, social studies, and Latin, the school uses the MCAS as well as internal assessments, based on the Frameworks.

# Literacy

## MCAS

Uphams Corner has helped students make significant gains in achievement as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) test.

**Composition:** In the area of composition, Uphams Corner is far exceeding its Accountability Plan goal: “Two-thirds of students will show competence in writing, as defined by a score of at least 6 in the composition section of the seventh-grade MCAS.” In spring 2005, 38 out of 39 (97%) seventh-grade students met this goal. We see this as a result of the students’ having written widely in many genres, as writing and expression are key parts of the school’s mission.

**General Test:** In our first administration of the ELA MCAS, in spring 2005, all Uphams Corner students passed the test.

	Number	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improvement	% Warning/Failing
2005	40	3	38	59	0

We are encouraged that all students passed the test. At the same time, we recognize the need for further improvement—most specifically, to get all students into the Proficient and Advanced categories. Our results on the GRADE test (see below) give us an early indicator of our reading achievement in Year Four, and we hope this translates into improvement on our ELA MCAS scores.

## GRADE

The GRADE test examines reading comprehension and vocabulary. We administer the test to all students in the fall, to get baseline data, and again in the spring to measure progress.

Our Accountability Plan states that “all students will read at or above grade level, as defined by a nationally normed test, after three years at the school,” using GRADE as the metric. Two cohorts of students—those entering in 2002 (Cohort 1) and in 2003 (Cohort 2)—have been at the school three years, and thus provide data for our Accountability Plan.

*Percentage of Students at Grade Level After Three Years • GRADE, May 2006, Cohort 1*

	10 or more Standard Score (SS) points below 100	Between 9 SS points below and 9 SS points above 100	10 or more SS points above 100
Percentage	24%	72%	3%

Thus, 75% of Cohort 1 is now at or above grade level. It’s important to note that these students, upon entering the school in 2002, had an average Standard Score of 89.4—far below the national average. In May

2006, those same students had an Standard Score average of 96.2—within the margin of error of *average* for their grade level. We therefore made significant progress toward our Accountability Plan goal.

*Percentage of Students at Grade Level After Three Years • GRADE, May 2006, Cohort 1*

In the academic year 2003-2004, we admitted only eight students, per our charter. Many of those students have since moved to other schools or out of Boston, and we now have evidence of progress for one student. Therefore, the numbers are too small to determine a trend for this cohort.

• • •

*School-wide Improvement in Literacy Instruction • Standard Scores from 2002 to 2006*

Our Accountability Plan also states that “each successive class will receive a higher average score on a nationally normed test than the class of the previous year.” Rates of achievement have, by and large, increased each year (see below). We attribute this success to our growth, maturation, and increasing stability as a school. With a coherent curriculum, clearly articulated instructional expectations, and continuous, rigorous assessment, our capacity has evolved quickly—only to be augmented, significantly, with our Year Five work with MPSP.

	Increase in median SS: Class of 2006	Increase in median SS: Class of 2007	Increase in median SS: Class of 2008	Increase in median SS: Class of 2009
Year One	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Year Two	5	5	n/a	n/a
Year Three	-1	5	10.7	n/a
Year Four	4	5	1.5	1.5

Even in Year Three, as we faced many changes, our focus on literacy was rewarded—to some degree on the MCAS, and most certainly with the Class of 2008, which entered the school that year with an extremely low Standard Score median of 84 (in the bottom sixth of American readers their age) and ended the year with a median of 95—close to the national norm. In addition, by using other indicators, we saw an across-the-board positive movement in reading—a median increase of 18 percentile points and a median increase of 1.9 Grade Equivalents in one year.

In Year Four, as we noted above, we shifted attention and resources to higher-level literacy. This led to gains unlike any we had yet seen.

*Schoolwide Improvement in Reading, September 2005 to May 2006 • GRADE*

	Fifth Grade		Sixth Grade		Seventh Grade		Eighth Grade	
	<i>Fall 05</i>	<i>Spring 06</i>	<i>Fall 05</i>	<i>Spring 06</i>	<i>Fall 05</i>	<i>Spring 06</i>	<i>Fall 05</i>	<i>Spring 06</i>
Stanine	5	5	4	5	4	5	4	5
Percentile	40	48	28	48	36	50	34	41
GE	4.4	5	4.25	6.6	5.5	7.8	6.3	7.6
SS	96.5	98	92.5	94	95	100	93	97
NCE	45	50	40	42	43	50	40	46

In every grade, in every category, students' median scores rose from the fall to the spring. While the fifth grade rose 1.5 Standard Score points and 8 percentile points. The eighth grade made stronger gains—gaining 4 Standard Score points, 7 percentile points, and 1.4 Grade Equivalents. The seventh grade was stronger still, rising 5 Standard Score points, 14 percentile points, and 2.3 Grade Equivalents. And the sixth grade made equally strong gains—rising 2 Standard Score points, 20 percentile points, and 2.35 Grade Equivalents. We are proud of these outstanding advances, and look forward to even greater progress to come.

The school disaggregates the data in dozens of ways, using these numbers to inform instruction and curriculum, as well as professional development.

## Composition

We surpassed our Accountability Plan goal, which calls for two-thirds of our students to show competency in writing, as defined by a score of at least a six on the composition section of the seventh-grade English Language Arts MCAS. Ninety-seven percent of our seventh graders scored at least a six on the 2005 MCAS.

## Math

Our Accountability Plan calls for all students to demonstrate “proficiency at or above grade level in mathematics, as defined by a nationally normed test (the Iowa Test of Basic Skills-ITBS), after four years at the school.”

We have finally, in Year Four's ITBS results, begun to show significant gains in mathematics—a strong foundation for next year's work. We look forward to our math MCAS results, hoping for similar gains in that assessment as well.

*ITBS Mathematics Achievement, Year Four (Fall 2005 - Spring 2006)*

	Median Percentile Rank increase	Median Grade Equivalent increase
Fifth Grade	5	1
Sixth Grade	5	0.9
Seventh Grade	1	0.8
Eighth Grade	6	1.1

These increases are most remarkable in context: all grades were implementing new curriculum, all math teachers were new to the school and new to the profession—and yet, with the stability and support Uphams Corner is now able to offer, all classes saw a median rise in math achievement. (We are particularly, though modestly, pleased with the achievement of the seventh grade, in which most students were new to the school and presented many significant disciplinary problems. Despite these challenges, they made positive progress; without this added challenge next year—i.e., without this influx of new seventh-graders, and with a tighter disciplinary system—we anticipate greater success next year.)

We see this as a strong step toward fostering outstanding student achievement. We use these data to make determinations in curriculum development (particularly unit plans), regular and reliable assessments, and, again most importantly, excellence in instruction.

## Science, Social Studies, Latin

Our Accountability Plan calls for a clear system of predetermined goals in each subject area, with students meeting these goals as defined by teacher-written rubrics. We have met these goals. We cite as evidence our published curriculum—benchmarks, scope-and-sequences, unit plans, and lesson plans—aligned with our database, which allows us to track each student’s progress along these goals over time.

## Rhetoric

Our Accountability Plan states that “all students will demonstrate proficiency in the art and practice of rhetoric,” with all eighth-grade graduates having passed at least five progymnasmata. This year, Rhetoric became its own course in all grades, using Writer’s Workshop and the progymnasmata as its foundation.

We’re happy to report that all our eighth graders passed the prescribed progymnasmata, culminating in the most interesting and passionate: the Vituperation. Students declaimed all their progymnasmata from the podium at Friday Forum, and kept their work on file in their Portfolios, to be used again during their Portfolio Defense.

Our Accountability Plan also states that “all students preparing to graduate from the [eighth grade] will present and receive a rubric-based grade of at least a 3 on a multimedia analysis of the mass media.” This year, we did not ask our eighth-graders to complete this project; instead, we focused on invigorating the progym-

nasmata and shoring up their literary and composition skills, across the curriculum and by the addition of a daily rhetoric class in every grade.

At the same time, the school saw a flourishing of its rhetoric-based mission in countless ways, including the following:

**Rhetoric-centered curriculum:** Uphams Corner was designed on a unique school model, with rhetoric as the linchpin. As we noted in our 2002 application, “All disciplines will center themselves in the art and practice of classical rhetoric—the power to use words responsibly for social and personal change... In all classes, students will learn how language and persuasion work, how these forces influence them, and how they can use their own influence responsibly, expressing and defending their ideas for themselves and their communities for the rest of their lives.” We are proud of this model and stand, and speak, by it. As the central pillar of school culture, mission, and organizational coherence, it has worked. It remains the central operating principle of the school.

Our students are encouraged to speak and reason and argue and decipher and take Latin and think for themselves. They are empowered to express original thought in schoolwork, artwork, science class, music class, sports, field trips, community projects, and talent shows. Channeling this energy can be a challenge, and as administrators, teachers, and Board members we take seriously our role in guiding our students within a strong academic and social framework. New teachers are trained in this aspect of the school’s culture, exemplified as one of the eight rules of the Code of Collegiality: “Be yourself, and speak your mind whenever you can. Recognize the times when you need to wait.”

Some examples of student expression are illustrated below. We remain committed to our unique focus on rhetoric, and are pleased at the response of the students to the school’s mission. We’re delighted that several of our graduating students will continue to study Latin in high school at Boston Latin Academy, Boston College High School, Newman Preparatory School, and other schools. Most importantly, we’re delighted that all our graduates have been empowered, we trust, to continue to respect themselves, their work, and their colleagues at whatever high schools they attend—and in their daily lives.

**Portfolios and Portfolio Defenses:** The portfolio is a collection of a student’s best work over the school year, plus a series of reflections about the student’s own achievement and goals. It is a powerful (and, frankly, beloved) example of the accumulating knowledge of our students. To see a student near the end of the year preparing for her final Defense before faculty, carrying her (heavy) portfolio with her all day as a representation of her individual progress and achievement, is to witness a proud realization of a student’s own capacity, talents, and achievement.

**The Uphams Corner Oath:** Our school oath is based on the ancient Athenian oath that has stood the test of time:

*We will never bring disgrace to this our school by any act of dishonesty or cowardice, nor ever desert our comrades. We will fight for the ideals and sacred things of this school, both alone and with each other. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of public duty. And so, in all these ways, we will transmit this school and this city not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than they were transmitted to us.*

The oath is a regular affirmation at school events and Friday Forums and is important, we believe, in guiding and shaping and defining our community. At our first graduation in June 2006, the oath was recited in Haitian Creole, Vietnamese, Spanish, and Cape Verdean Creole by students and an administrator, before being recited by all students and the entire community—parents, siblings, teachers, and friends—in English.

It's our school's emblem, and we hope it is embedded positively in our students so they will carry it with them beyond our school walls.

**Friday Forum:** We believe that students must understand their relationships and responsibilities to their peers and to the community. One powerful mechanism toward this goal is the Friday Forum, a weekly convocation where individual students make speeches, engage in debate, publish their work, and guide the school according to their own ideas. It is a means by which students can engage that "public sense of public duty" by organizing their thoughts, fashioning a theme, developing presentation skills, and learning about listening, civility, and community discussion. The Friday Forum remains an identifying part of our school and important to student formation, and we look forward to watching our students grow within this framework for years to come.

**Progymnasmata:** At the heart of the school's rhetoric program is the progymnasmata, a series of rhetorical exercises developed in ancient Greece and taught in Europe through the Renaissance. As we described in our charter application, the progymnasmata uncannily represent modern, research-based approaches to writing instruction. All students move through the exercises over their time at Uphams Corner, from the easiest exercise, the Fable, to the most challenging and satisfying for middle-schoolers, the Vituperation. After many revisions, the work is declaimed at Friday Forum. They are among the most exciting, challenging, and intellectual experiences at the school, and we remain committed to their use and development.

**Student Senate:** The Senate is comprised of two student-elected representatives from each class. They meet weekly during lunch to deliberate matters ranging from school policy to self-discipline. The Senate regularly makes recommendations for changes to school policy in the best interests of their school and their constituents. Leaders of the Senate have met with the Board to express the views of students on such issues as the school dress code ("some find it too restrictive and would like more options"); detention ("we think it's too short"); and food ("all agree—could be better!"). The Board found the Senators articulate and politically astute—particularly during a visit to an actual Senate meeting. Students were debating what the school should do to help eighth-graders struggling in math: Should the school lower its standards? The answer was a resounding, articulate, and colorful "no." As always, when called upon to make their school "greater, better, and more beautiful," the Senators rise to the task.

**Community Projects:** Community projects represent a major part of the Uphams Corner experience. Getting the students into the community and analyzing practical issues and their impact on daily life and society are critical to our concept of education and character formation. Research shows that students are more motivated when their learning is given a social context, especially a context of service learning. This too is part of our mission: not to have students passively putting their hands to a task, such as cleaning a park, but to use their academic skills to analyze and change the world in their own way.

The last two weeks of school are devoted to "work in the field." One year, students spent two days in Uphams Corner interviewing residents, business-owners, and passersby to discover what, if anything, Uphams Corner lacked in city services and amenities. One group elected to continue the previous year's trash investigation; another decided to follow up on the concern of several residents that not enough of their neighbors vote regularly; a third group explored the steps needed to increase the number of neighborhood gardens; and a fourth devoted themselves to a campaign designed to encourage Uphams Corner's children and adults to read at least one book during the summer. At the end of the project, students presented their findings, plan of action, and supporting data to the entire school, and to constituencies in Uphams Corner itself.

In another example of our philosophy of academic service, we have designed with the Harvard Medical School the “Young Investigators Program.” For the past two years, seventh-graders have paired individually with a student at HMS and with an HMS professor to conduct original research on asthma—one of the most pressing public health issues in our neighborhood. The three-person teams defined their areas of concern, did a review of the literature, designed individual studies, and reported their original results to the school, to the Uphams Corner Health Center, and to faculty of the Harvard Medical School. This model of education—the production of *new knowledge* for the benefit of all—is at the heart of our mission of academics and public duty.

**Serving the Community:** In our charter we pledged to serve principally the young people of Uphams Corner, one of the most diverse and most academically challenged neighborhoods in the Commonwealth, and one underrepresented in terms of school options for young people. We are pleased that the majority of our student population has indeed come from Dorchester and Uphams Corner, and that we have been able to provide these extremely needy and extremely talented young people, as well as many of their counterparts around Boston, with a challenging and safe school environment.

In sum, we believe that our school has fully met its goals in terms of faithfulness to our charter, and we are excited about continuing—and expanding—that work in the next charter term.

Finally, it wouldn’t be appropriate to end this section without letting our students speak for themselves, so we’re pleased to present a brief selection:

*I’ve learned that people can change. For example, there was this one student who never did his work. When the teacher spoke to him about the consequences of not doing his work, eventually he realized that he should change his ways and he did. I can’t say who it is. Well, it happens to be me...*

*Sometimes it’s hard, and our students sometimes act like they hate this school and upset this school, but they actually like this school. How else would they have met their friends, or found out that a certain number is equal to another certain number? Or how else would they learn Latin?*

*We stand together as a family and as citizens of Boston. In the middle of the school year, for instance, we stop getting into arguments the way we did at the start. This change happens because our school is small and our teachers care....*

*More importantly, we use our learning for community service, which is something you’d rarely see other schools do. For example, last year a group of kids made a website that helps fundraise for those in need of food and shelter. Another group decided to try to stop gang violence and graffiti. I think these are some of the things that not even Mayor Menino could do or anyone else. They’re usually busy, but we’re there to fill in for them.*

– Saul Nunez, sixth-grader, June 2006

*[A student volunteered to help write this year’s Student Handbook. A selection:] Uphams Corner is a school where every one is different, and it’s OK! Uphams Corner will teach you and have you understand that everyone is not perfect. Uphams Corner will teach you to be an individual not a robot. Individuals are heard.*

*Unlike many schools, we have a Senate. A Senate is where everyone in office has equal power, unlike the president and his cabinet. You elect two people from each class, each term, to represent your class. You elect whomever you believe would voice your opinion best. Senators meet every Monday and Wednesday during your lunch period. The senate is one way that you could be heard.*

*With that being said, here at Uphams Corner Charter, we strive to hear what we have to say—to hear what the youth want to say. Uphams Corner is a “by the students, for the students” school.*

– Shaquise Elie, seventh-grader, July 2006

*At other schools, students have to walk in the halls extra quiet. Here, we take every chance to talk to each other and connect....More important to me is that we’re all different cultures and colors, we’re all connected, too. Everybody mixes together. At other schools, people are segregated into their little groups. Here, it doesn’t matter. It makes me think of Uphams Corner itself.... In Uphams Corner, we don’t have any State House, but we see people talking, having relationships, joking around, all with their different cultures*

and ideas... [P]eople think all of Uphams Corner is a bad place to live. It's not—I love it. The news never comes when there's a peace walk, only when there's a shooting. The media give us a terrible reputation, and it's time for us to speak up. That's what this school is all about. The world needs to hear from us.

– Claudia Barbosa, eighth-grader, June 2006

# Student Profile.

## Student Demographics

	Number	Percentage
Fifth Grade	18	10%
Sixth Grade	54	29%
Seventh Grade	51	28%
Eighth Grade	62	34%

	Number	Percentage
African-American	158	85%
Asian	5	3%
Caucasian	4	2%
Latino	18	10%

	Number	Percentage
Female	85	46%
Male	100	54%

	Number	Percentage
Free Lunch Status	146	79%

	Number	Percentage
Full-price Lunch Status	39	21%

	Number	Percentage
Regular Education	152	82%
Special Education	33	18%

English Language Learners: 15%

Total Number of Student Applications Received for 2005-2006 School Year: 250

### Student Attrition Data

Total number of students who left the school—enrolled as of October 1, and not enrolled at end of year: 18.

Total number who finished year but aren't coming back: 12

Summary of reasons for withdrawal: moving, METCO.

### Number of Students Expelled

One student was expelled this school year for bringing a knife to school.

### Number of Students Who Served In-School and Out-of-School Suspensions:

Ninety-five.

# Staff Profile.

## School Leader and Instructional Leader

The Head of School remains Edward M. Cook, who joined the school in December 2004. The Director of Studies (the instructional leader) is Michael Mayo, who founded the school in February 2002. There was no attrition or change in the administrative staff this academic year.

## Summary of Classroom Teacher Qualifications

Number of teachers	21
Average number of years in the profession	3.3
Average number of years at the school	1.5
% Highly Qualified	90%

## Teacher Attrition

Two teachers (10% of the faculty) left the school before the end of the year—one left for medical reasons, and another was fired for low performance. Six teachers (30%) finished the year but will not return next year (two are relocating, one finished his Harvard College internship, two left for other teaching positions, and one left for personal reasons). Because we will have slightly fewer teaching positions for 2006-2007, the percentage of veteran faculty will be 76%.

# NCLB Report Card

This report card contains information required by the No Child Left Behind Act for our school, including the following: teacher qualifications, student achievement on the MCAS, and school accountability.

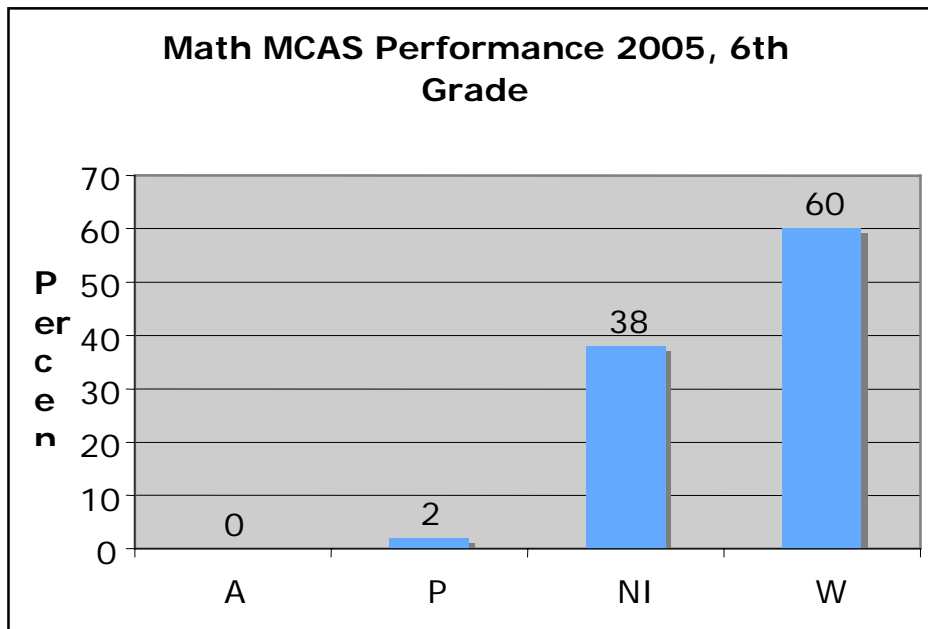
<b>Enrollment: 2005-06</b>	
Total Count	185
Race/Ethnicity (%)	
<i>African-American</i>	85%
<i>Asian</i>	3%
<i>Latino</i>	10%
<i>Native American</i>	0%
<i>White</i>	2%
Gender (%)	
<i>Male</i>	54%
<i>Female</i>	46%
Selected Populations (%)	
Limited English Proficiency	15%
Low-income	78%
Special Education	17%
First Language Not English	25%
Migrant	0%

<b>Teacher Data: 2005-2006</b>	
Total # Of teachers	21
Total # of Teachers in Core Academic Areas	16
Student/Teacher Ratio	8.1 to 1
% of Core Academic Teachers Identified as Highly Qualified	90%

## Mathematics

	Included in Re- sults		% Students at Each Performance Level			W/F
	#	%	A	P	NI	
<b>STUDENT STATUS</b>						
Regular	30	100	0	3	40	57
Disabled	5					
Limited English Proficient	7					
<b>GENDER</b>						
Female	17	100	0	0	24	76
Male	25	100	0	4	48	48
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>						
African American/Black	38	100	0	0	42	58
Asian or Pacific Islander	1					
Hispanic	3					
White	0					
<b>LOW INCOME</b>	27	100	0	0	44	56
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	42	100	0	2	38	60
<b>STATE</b>	74729	99	17	29	30	23

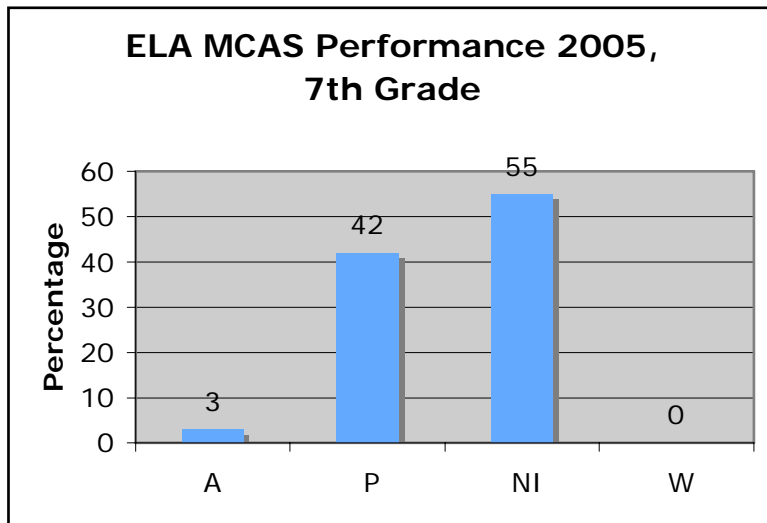
NOTE: MCAS results for groups with fewer than 10 students are not shown to protect student confidentiality.



## English Language Arts

	Included in Re- sults		% Students at Each Per- formance Level			
	#	%	A	P	NI	W/F
<b>STUDENT STATUS</b>						
Regular	31	100	3	39	58	0
Disabled	1	100				
<b>GENDER</b>						
Female	17	100	6	44	50	0
Male	22	100	0	36	64	0
<b>RACE/ETHNICITY</b>						
African American/Black	30	100	3	35	62	0
Asian or Pacific Islander	3	100				
Hispanic	5	100				
White	1	100				
<b>LOW INCOME</b>	31	100	3	42	55	0
<b>ALL STUDENTS</b>	38	100	3	42	55	0
<b>STATE</b>	75325	97	10	56	27	8

NOTE: MCAS results for groups with fewer than 10 students are not shown to protect student confidentiality.



## Adequate Yearly Progress Report

ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS													
Student Group	2005				Mid-Cycle (2005) Data					2005			AYP 2005
	Participation				Performance			Improvement		Attendance			
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target	N	CPI	Met Target	CPI Change	Met Target	%	Change	Met Target	
Aggregate	38	38	100	Yes	39	77.6	No			93.2	1.7	Yes	No
Lim. English Prof.	6												
Spec. Ed	1												
Low Income	31	31			31	79.8				93.5	1.8		
Afr. Amer./Black	30	30	100		29	75.9				93.7	1.4		
Asian or Pacific Islander	3												
Hispanic	5												
Native American	0												
White	0												

MATHEMATICS													
Student Group	2005				Mid-Cycle (2005) Data					2005			AYP 2005
	Participation				Performance			Improvement		Attendance			
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target	N	CPI	Met Target	CPI Change	Met Target	%	Change	Met Target	
Aggregate	42	42	100	Yes	42	38.7	No	-12.5	No	93.2	1.7	Yes	No
Lim. English Prof.	7												
Spec. Ed	5												
Low Income	25	25			25	38				93.5	1.8		
Afr. Amer./Black	35	35			35	38.2				93.7	1.4		

Asian or Pacific Islander	1												
Hispanic	3												
Native American	0												
White	0												

### Adequate Yearly Progress History

		2004	2005
ELA	Aggregate	n/a	no
	All Subgroups	n/a	no
MATH	Aggregate	no	no
	All Subgroups	no	no

*Identified for improvement in math.*

# High School Placement

Uphams Corner graduates will be attending high schools around the city in 2006-2007, including the following:

Bedford High School (METCO)

Boston College High School

Boston Community Leadership Academy

Boston Latin Academy

Boston Latin School

City on a Hill Charter Public School

Codman Academy Charter Public School

Excel High School

Fenway High School

Media and Technology Charter School

New Mission High School

Newman Prep

Prospect Hill Charter Public School

Snowden High School

Urban Science Academy