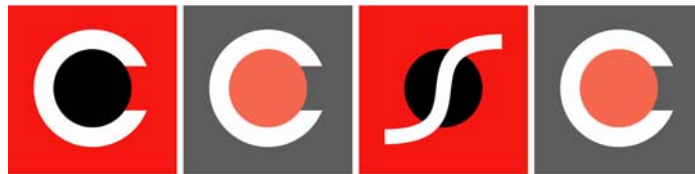


C O M M U N I T Y



CHARTER SCHOOL OF CAMBRIDGE

# Annual Report

2006–2007 School Year

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## Letter from the Board of Trustees Chair

Dear Friends of the Community Charter School of Cambridge,

The Community Charter School of Cambridge has successfully completed its second year of operation. This past year CCSC served 169 students in grades 7–10 in which all students were challenged academically and nurtured individually – each child has an advisor and is known well by all his or her classroom teachers. Over the next 2 years, CCSC will continue to expand its student population, adding one grade per year until the total student enrollment is 360 students in grades 7–12.

CCSC draws a racially and socio-economically diverse student body from the city of Cambridge and 11 surrounding communities. The school is located at 245 Bent Street in close proximity to Kendall Square, and in the heart of one of the world’s premier high tech and biotech centers, a short walk to MIT, the subway and myriad cultural, historical, and arts opportunities. CCSC’s location is integral to the educational experience of our students allowing them to engage and connect with the world around them and to prepare them for success in college and beyond.

In our second year, we are already seeing the fruits of the educational approach and opportunities provided at CCSC. At the end of the year, each student was required to present a portfolio of their work to a “Roundtable” which included their advisor, another faculty member, their parent(s) or guardian(s) and an interested member of the community. These Roundtables were incredibly successful with 100% participation on the part of the parents/guardians. Personally, I attended a number of the Roundtables, and students were well-prepared, thoughtful and articulate about their course work as well as the personal challenges they faced to become better students. In addition to the Roundtables, we have learned from the preliminary results of the 10th Grade MCAS that our students are making huge strides in English Language Arts and improvement in Mathematics in only the one or two years that students have attended CCSC. The Board of Trustees also requested that the faculty administer additional tests to ensure a fair and comprehensive evaluation of our student body which is over 50% low-income and 85% of color. We are currently in the process of analyzing this additional data, and we look forward to sharing our further analysis with the CCSC community in the coming months.

We have also witnessed CCSC’s success in the impressive achievements of our individual students. Two of our students were accepted to the prestigious and highly selective Crimson Summer Academy at Harvard University. The Crimson Summer Academy selects motivated low-income students “with a passion for learning and desire to excel,” and for three summers these children live on Harvard campus preparing for the country’s top colleges. In addition, a CCSC 10<sup>th</sup> grader won second place in the 33<sup>rd</sup> Annual MLK Poetry Contest for her poem entitled “Beauty is Black.”

CCSC students are learning and excelling outside the classroom as well. In an incredible display of the determination of our students, the Boys’ Basketball team won the Massachusetts Charter School Association Championship. This is an impressive feat under any circumstances, but especially given that CCSC does not yet have 11th and 12th grade students unlike our

competitors! Also, our Co-ed soccer team made it to the championship game, and the Girls' basketball team qualified for the Championship Tournament. We are looking forward to continued growth in our athletic program as well as other extracurricular activities including the internship program for our seniors. One of our Associate Principals will be coordinating this program with area businesses so please feel free to contact us if you have suggestions or could provide assistance with this effort.

Looking ahead, in just a few short weeks, CCSC will begin its Third Year and will open the doors on a brand new school building immediately adjacent to the existing building at 245 Bent Street. This new building will house our Upper School where students will enjoy a brand new Science laboratory, new computers and a new learning lab. Please come see our new facility in action, we welcome visitors at all times!

Thank you for being a part of the Community Charter School of Cambridge.

Best Wishes,

Eloise Lawrence  
Chair, Board of Trustees

## Introduction

The Community Charter School of Cambridge has just successfully completed its second year of operation. Serving 169 students in grades 7–10, CCSC provides excellent academics in an environment in which all students are known well. The mission of CCSC is to combine challenging academics with creative use of technology and adult-world experience to prepare a diverse student body, grades 7–12, for postsecondary success and productive citizenship. CCSC is located at 245 Bent Street in Kendall Square, and draws a racially and socio-economically diverse student body from the city of Cambridge and 11 surrounding communities.<sup>1</sup> Over the next three years, CCSC will continue to expand its student population, adding one grade per year until the total student enrollment is 360 students in grades 7–12. As the school expands in the coming year, CCSC has hired an experienced college counselor to work with 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grade students and will continue to develop its college preparatory curriculum in the new Upper School.

## School Profile

### Mission

The Community Charter School of Cambridge (CCSC) combines challenging academics with creative use of technology and real-world experience to prepare a diverse student body, grades 7–12, for postsecondary success and productive citizenship. CCSC students are excellent problem solvers and communicators who contribute to their community through internships and other field experiences.

### Design Principles

- Ensure a **challenging academic program** for every student. All students are held to the same high academic standards and are expected to focus primarily on academics. Teachers are highly qualified, develop and use rich curriculum, and thoughtfully scaffold and construct lessons and projects. All students must complete homework in every class, every day. Reading, writing, and computing are at the heart of the school program. The academic program is rich in content, as well as skills, and teaches students the value of continuous revision and the habit of persistence. Students who have Individual Education Plans receive extra help in Learning Lab and benefit from many co-taught classes. Core courses are co-taught twice per week by regular education and special education teachers.

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<sup>1</sup> CCSC currently draws students from the following communities: Arlington, Boston, Brockton, Cambridge, Everett, Lynn, Malden, Medford, Milton, Randolph, Somerville, and West Bridgewater.

- **Personalization: Know every student very well.** The advisory program consists of small groups, typically 8-12 students who meet regularly during the academic day with a faculty or staff member. The advisory curriculum includes both socio-emotional and academic pieces so that students learn the skills of team building, engage in community service learning, and develop portfolios of their course work. Once a week, advisory groups engage in brief reading, writing, and computing exercises. Advisory is also the starting point for students' Roundtable portfolios– a formative assessment piece that serves as a critical means of self-reflection and gateway to promotion to the next grade.
- **Build adult-world connections** by placing students in internships at partnering community sites and engaging students in curriculum with meaningful ties to the surrounding community. CCSC requires all students to complete a 100-hour internship before graduation. All students should be comfortable working with adults outside of the school setting. In their senior year, students will learn the responsibilities of the work site and, with CCSC faculty, make connections between the internship and the core academic courses. In addition, Incorporating real world issues and problem solving in the core academic courses is at the heart of much of the curriculum.

## Curriculum and Program

The CCSC mission stresses active, personalized learning and authentic connections to the world beyond the school. All students are required to take a full, integrated core program composed of the following academic classes:

Humanities

Mathematics

Science

Spanish or Learning Lab<sup>2</sup>

Wellness and Movement

DEAR (Drop Everything and Read)

Enrichment (elective courses such as Yoga, Spoken Word, Sculpture, Urban Jungle (hiking))

Advisory

In addition, all students participate in a daily school community meeting and many stay after school to participate in a faculty-run Homework Club or one of several sports or clubs.

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<sup>2</sup> Students whose Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) require “resource room” or other “pull-out” time take 3-4 hours per week of Learning Lab in place of Spanish. This arrangement de-stigmatizes students with IEPs and allows them to attend all core academic classes without interruption. Furthermore, the Special Education teachers who teach Learning Lab co-teach in the mainstream academic classes to provide in-class support, and are thus knowledgeable about the curriculum and course expectations and typically plan with mainstream teachers how best to serve *all* students.

## School Year and Hours

Students attended school for 181 school days beginning on August 30, 2006 and ending on June 19, 2007. School begins each day promptly at 8:30 AM. The school day ends at 3:41 PM, except on Wednesdays, when students are released at 1:30 PM to allow for extended faculty meeting time. There is an optional, fully-staffed Homework Club for students on Mondays, Tuesdays, and Thursdays from 3:45– 4:45 PM, daily mandatory homework and discipline detention from 3:45– 4:45 PM and a variety of after-school activities and programs.

## Student Profile

### Student Demographics

Tables 1–4 below show the student composition of CCSC in terms of race/ethnicity, low-income status, gender, special education status, and Limited English Proficiency (LEP) status. It is important to note that the figures for Low Income Status may be underreported, as many families chose not to fill in the federal forms to qualify for free or reduced lunch. CCSC has had a more targeted outreach for new and returning families and will continue this outreach in the fall of 2007.

#### Total School Population: 169 students

Race/ Ethnicity	# of Students	% of Student Population
African American/ Black	127	75
White	20	12
Hispanic	18	11
Asian/Pacific Islander	3	2

**Table 1 Race/Ethnicity of Student Body**

Low Income Status	# of Students	% of Student Population
Qualifies for Free Lunch	67	40
Qualifies for Reduced Lunch	20	12
Does not Qualify for Reduction	82	48

**Table 2 Low Income Status of Student Body**

Special Education and LEP Status	# of Students	% of Student Population
Special Education	36	19
Limited English Proficiency	2	1

**Table 3 Special Education and LEP Status**

Gender	# of Students	% of Student Population
Female	71	58
Male	98	42

**Table 4 Gender of Student Body**

## Student Applications and Retention Information

A total of 285 lottery applications were received for 82 student openings in grades 7, 8, 9, and 10. 183 students were enrolled on the first day of school. Nine new students were enrolled during the school year and began the first day of the second semester, January 31, 2007. The table below shows the number of student applicants by grade and city of residence for the 2006–2007 school year.

Applicant City	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Arlington	1	1		
Boston	49	26	64	4
Brockton	2	1		
Cambridge	26	24	37	7
Everett	3	2	2	
Hingham				1
Lynn	4	1		
Malden	1	1	3	
Medford	4	2	2	
Revere	1		1	
Somerville	5	2	5	
West Roxbury		1	2	

**Table 5** Number of applicants by grade and city for the 2006–2007 school year

Over the year, 23 students left the school, citing the following reasons.

- Significantly different school expectations for homework and behavior. Standards for passing courses were too high; student was in danger of repeating grade or was in danger of earning many low grades (7 students)
- Relocation: Change of residence; commute/transportation issues (5 students)
- Frequent disciplinary actions; students moved to more lenient schools (11 students)

## Student Enrollment Retention Rate for the 2006-2007 School Year

Overall, there was a 77% retention rate from the end of the 2005-2006 school year to the first day of the 2006-2007. The table below shows the number of students who chose not to return for the 2006-2007 school year.

Summer Transfers	Number of Students
Boston	7
Cambridge	16
Malden	1
Methuen (this student re-enrolled for Semester 2 AY '07)	1
Quincy	1

Randolph	2
Salem	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>29</b>

**Table 6** Number of students who did not re-enroll for the 2006-2007 school year

The retention rate for the 2007-2008 school year appears to be significantly higher. As of the beginning of July 2007, 159 of 169 students have indicated that they will re-enroll in CCSC for the 2007-2008 school year. This is a 94% retention rate.

<b>Returning Students by City</b>	<b>Number of Students</b>
Boston	32
Brockton	4
Cambridge	94
Everett	1
Lynn	6
Malden	8
Medford	4
Milton	2
Randolph	2
Somerville	4
South Boston	1
West Bridgewater	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>159</b>

**Table 7** Students planning to return to CCSC in 2007-2008

## **Student Discipline: Expulsions, Exclusions, In-school and Out-of-school Suspensions**

60 students had at least one out-of-school suspension. No in-school suspensions were given. Out of these 60 students, 11 transferred out of CCSC, and one was expelled. No students were excluded. The 12 students who transferred, including the student who was expelled were responsible for 25% of the suspensions.

### Suspension Reasons:

- Skipping detention
- Excessive numbers of detention
- Inappropriate language toward a teacher
- Threatening behavior, language or gestures
- Bullying
- Defiance and/or refusal to follow instructions
- Theft
- Pulling false fire alarms

## **Draft Accountability Plan Goals**

Based on recent feedback given in the Department of Education's Year Two Site Visit Report, the Administrative team and Board of Trustees are currently revising the Draft Accountability Plan to provide more concise benchmarks and metrics for measuring certain of the school's educational and organizational goals. The findings presented below reflect this revision process.

### **Faithfulness to the Terms of the Charter**

#### **Goal: Ensure a challenging academic program for all students**

All CCSC students are required to take the following core academic courses each quarter: humanities, math, science, and Spanish or Learning Lab<sup>3</sup>. Students have substantial daily homework for each class and many students spend at least two hours working on homework outside of school time. All students are required to complete two book reviews (with three edited revisions of each review) each semester for outside reading books. Students are only allowed to choose outside reading books from a set list and must track their reading progress in journals semi-monthly and have their book reviews edited before final submission. High school students are expected to read challenging books that will prepare them for college. All humanities classes require students to use DRT (Direct Reference to Text) and all classes require students to back up ideas with specific evidence. Some humanities classes require students to write 8-10 multi-page essays per year, each with a multi-stage draft process. This level and amount of writing will be requisite for all humanities classes in the 2007=2008 academic year. Future plans also include requiring frequent standardized math skills testing across all grade levels that will focus on a core set of competencies. These competencies will be mapped to high school readiness for middle school students, and to SAT success for high school students.

While most parents and students anecdotally reported that the course work and academic program is academically challenging, the school has not yet formally measured this. The accountability subcommittee of the Board of Trustees is currently developing a set of metrics for this particular goal.

#### **Objective: Personalization– knowing each student well**

As noted in the Year Two Site Visit Report, personalization at CCSC is, "...realized through the school's advisory system, its small class size, and the accessibility of its teachers to the students...Parents described the school as extremely responsive, that the school keeps them aware of their student's academic progress, and positive and negative behavior."<sup>4</sup> Additionally, 100% of parents/guardians were contacted by the faculty advisors at least three times over the

<sup>3</sup> Except students in grades 7–10 whose IEPs specify a Learning Lab course.

<sup>4</sup> Massachusetts Department of Education Charter School Office, Year Two Site Visit Report. July 2006.

course of the year. Many parents have regular, weekly email contact with advisors and/or classroom teachers. Advisors spent either 1.5– 2 hours each week meeting with advisees. At the year-end Roundtable presentations, 100% of parents/guardians were in attendance.<sup>5</sup> Next year, both a Counselor/Director of Guidance and a College Counselor will be added to the faculty. Students have the opportunity to meet individually with these staff members– increasing the personalization of the CCSC experience. A metric to assess the degree to which CCSC is successful at knowing students well is currently being developed.

### **Goal: Build adult-world connections**

The internship program is scheduled to begin for the current class of 2009's senior year. An administrator will assume the role of the internship coordinator and develop the program during the 2007-2008 academic year in order to place all rising seniors in 100-hour academic internships during the 2008-2009 year. An evaluation tool for success of the internships and the degree to which students are able to build adult-world connections is simultaneously being developed and will be an integral part of the internship program. No data will be available for this objective until the culmination of the first set of internships at the end of the 2008-2009 academic year.

## **Academic Program Success**

### **Goal: Meet state standards for academic performance**

#### ***Criterion-Referenced Measure:***

85% of students who enrolled in CCSC during Division I will pass the 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA & Math MCAS on their first attempt.

70% of students who enrolled in CCSC during Division II will pass the 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA & Math MCAS on their first attempt.

100% of Division III students<sup>\*</sup> will have passed the 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA & Math MCAS within the allowed number of retakes<sup>6</sup>.

## **2007 Preliminary MCAS Results**

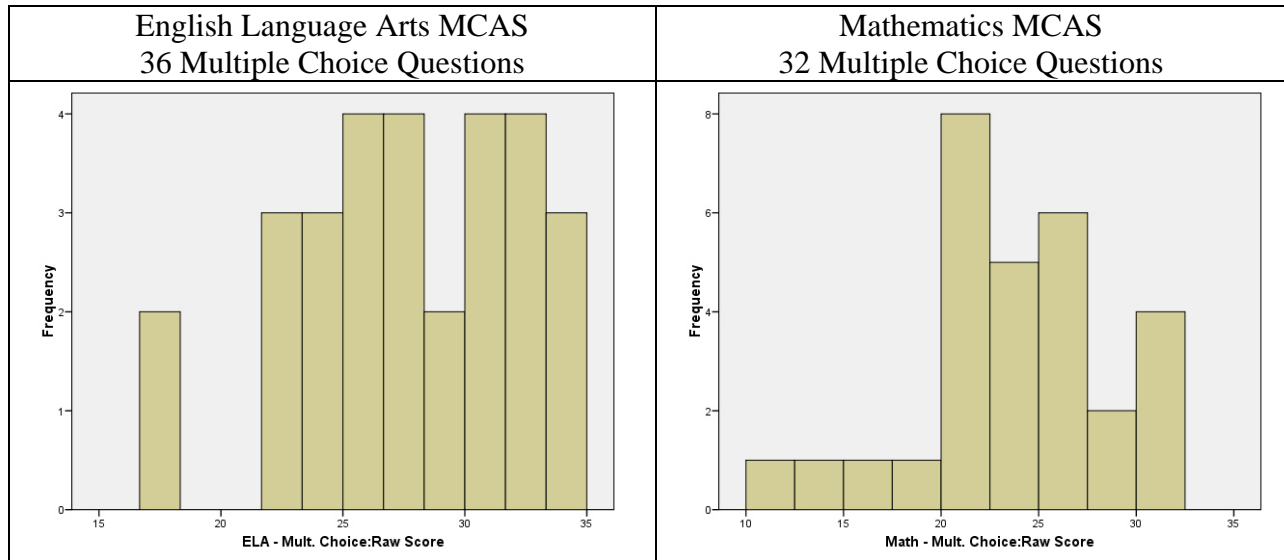
At the time of submission of this report, The Department of Education has released only preliminary results for the 2007 grade 10 ELA and Math MCAS exams. Out of 30 students in 10<sup>th</sup> grade, 29 students took the exam and the remaining student, who was repeating the grade, had passed the MCAS in 2006. The results released to date are for the multiple-choice questions on each exam. The charts below show CCSC students' raw scores for each of these multiple-choice exams. The raw scores represent the total number of multiple-choice questions answered correctly. There are a total of 36 ELA multiple-choice questions and 32 math multiple-

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<sup>5</sup> 9 students out of 169 did not present Roundtables, so the 100% parent/guardian participation refers only to the 160 students who presented.

<sup>6</sup> Students with significant, documented impairments will be excluded from this figure.

choice questions.



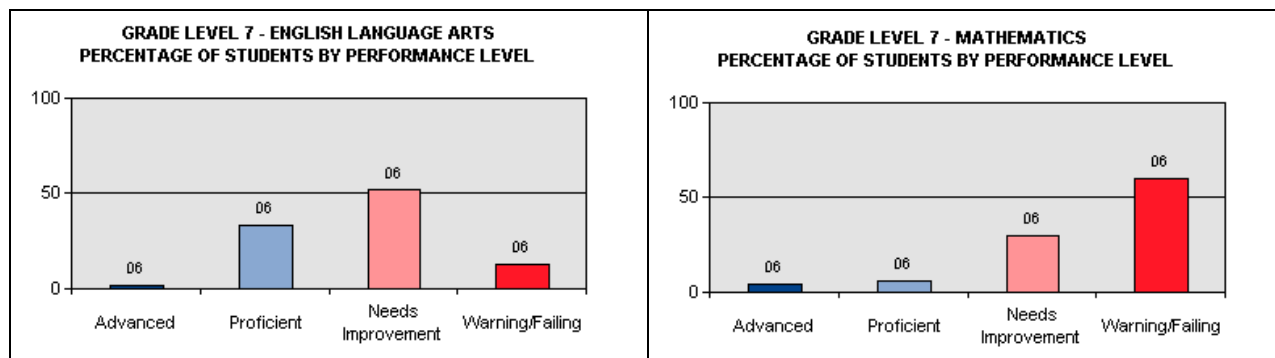
**Chart 1 Multiple-choice scores for 10<sup>th</sup> grade ELA and Math 2007 MCAS tests**

According to the Department of Education’s *2007 Grade 10 MCAS Multiple-Choice Results Interpretive Guide*, students who have a total score on the ELA Multiple Choice between 20–36 have a greater than 90% chance of scoring at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher. 93% of CCSC 10<sup>th</sup> graders earned scores in this range. Similarly, 93% of CCSC 10<sup>th</sup> graders earned greater than 16 total points on the Math multiple-choice questions, and therefore have a 90% chance of scoring at the *Needs Improvement* level or higher. These data should be reviewed with caution, as the final scores depend on students’ performance on the remainder of the exams.

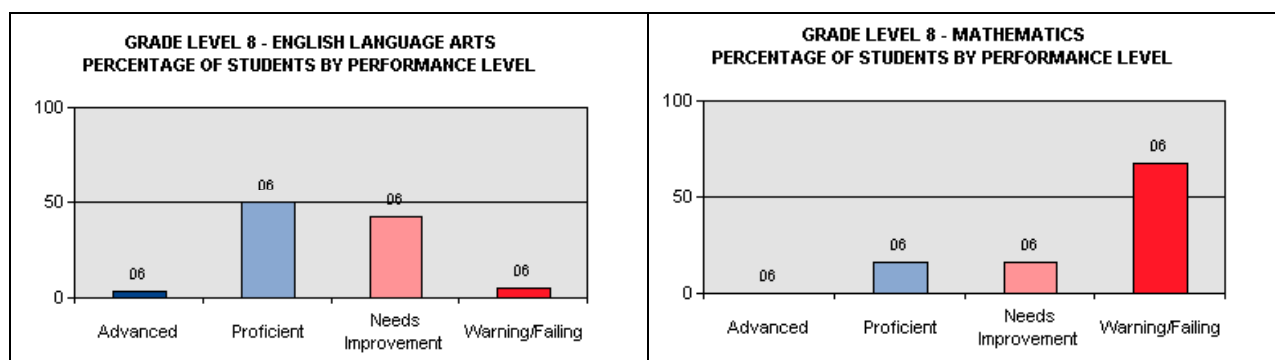
Based on preliminary data, the vast majority of CCSC 10<sup>th</sup> graders has a high chance of passing the ELA and Math MCAS on the first attempt. The goal of meeting state standards is realistic. These preliminary results are encouraging, given the prior poor performance of this particular cohort of students (as discussed below.) The significant improvement demonstrated by this cohort of students is due to the targeted efforts to improve basic skills in ELA and mathematics.

### 2006 MCAS Results

The majority of students who initially enrolled at CCSC demonstrated poor performance on prior MCAS and other standardized exams. As illustrated by their MCAS performance at the end of their first year at CCSC, nine months was hardly enough time for our school to have a significant impact on their test performance. The graphs below show that the majority of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders scored in the Warning/Failing performance level for math. ELA performance was slightly better, but still poor. These results led directly to significant curricular, pedagogical, and schedule changes at CCSC during the 2006-2007 year.



**Chart 2 2006 MCAS performance on ELA and Math tests for grade 7**



**Chart 3 2006 MCAS performance on ELA and Math tests for grade 8**

Strategies for improving math that were put in place during the 2006-2007 school year in response to these scores are listed below.

- Math teachers focused more on teaching or reinforcing basic skills.
- Significant professional development on math curriculum was conducted. CCSC teachers met with the high school math department head from Prospect Hill Academy Charter School to begin to model PHA’s successful curriculum mapping, math portfolios, and *Problem of the Units*.
- Math teachers opened each class with “Do Now” questions from previous MCAS tests.
- Math teachers focused on developing students’ mathematical thinking through work on open-response type questions in which students are required to show their thinking.
- Individual or small-group tutoring was given to students who were struggling in addition to students who were performing at a “proficient” level.
- Enrolling all 10<sup>th</sup> graders in a weekly math-specific MCAS prep course.

Strategies for improving English Language Arts included:

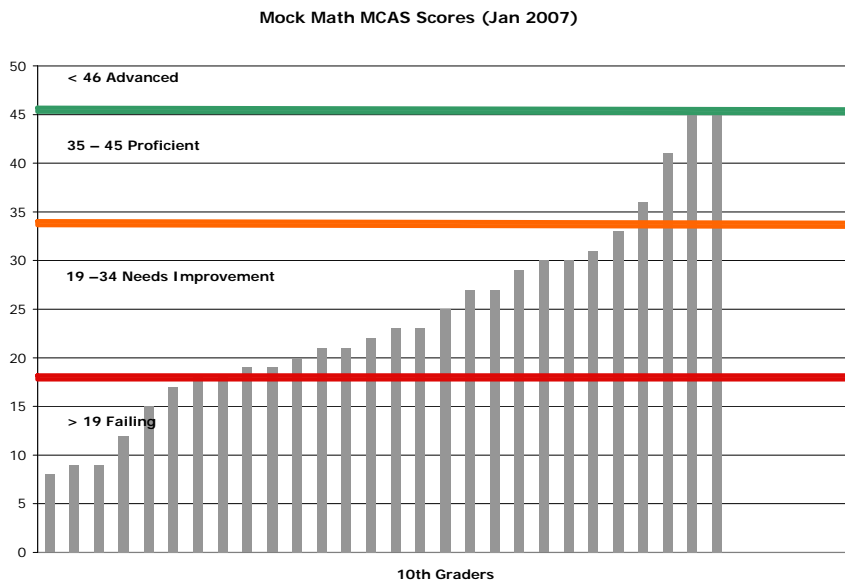
- Restructuring the DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) program to include formal book reviews and a required list of reading choices.
- Increasing the amount of reading assigned and discussed in humanities classes.

- Increasing the number of essays assigned per humanities classes.
- Offering individual or small-group tutoring to students who are struggling.
- Enrolling all 10<sup>th</sup> graders in a weekly ELA-specific MCAS prep course.

## Mock MCAS Exams

To address the high-stakes nature of the grade 10 MCAS exams, CCSC provided a series of data-driven, structured MCAS preparation programs. To guide the preparation for the grade 10 math MCAS, a mock exam was given to all 10<sup>th</sup> graders. The mock exam was an actual exam from a previous year and was given in a testing environment similar to that of the actual MCAS. The results, while not surprising, were not favorable. The chart below shows the majority of 10<sup>th</sup> graders performing at the “Needs Improvement” and “Warning/Failing” levels. As a direct result of this assessment the following was implemented:

- 2-3 hours (minimum) of individual or small group tutoring in math for *all* 10<sup>th</sup> graders. This tutoring began in February and continued until the date of the math MCAS.
- Weekly math MCAS class for every student *in addition* to regular math class.
- Specific MCAS focus in both 10<sup>th</sup> grade math classes on the Open-Response question format.
- Each student was given his/her mock exam and the specific areas of weakness were addressed during tutoring.



**Chart 4 Mock math MCAS performance of 10<sup>th</sup> graders in February 2007**

The preliminary multiple-choice scores for the actual 2007 MCAS indicate a dramatic improvement for the lowest achieving students.

**Goal: Students will make yearly academic improvement as measured by a nationally-normed exam.**

### Terra Nova Baseline Results

Students in grades 7, 8, and 9 took the CTBS Terra Nova exam in Mathematics, Reading, and Language for the first time in May and June 2007. The results will serve as baseline data for the school. The charts below show student scores using the National Stanine scale which divides the scores of the norm population into nine groups. A National Stanine score of 4, 5, or 6 is considered “average” performance with respect to the national norm group. Students scoring below 4 have “below average” performance, and those scoring above 6 have “above average” performance.

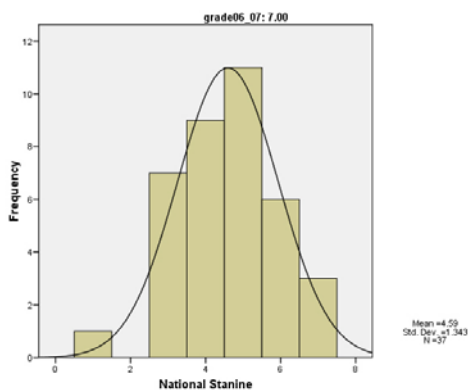
There is no data yet to indicate improvement, as this is the first year these exams were administered. In terms of performance on mathematics, the data indicate that, as a cohort, 9<sup>th</sup> graders demonstrated the strongest performance, with only 14% of students performing “below average.” The graphs illustrate the distribution of stanine scores for each grade. A future goal is to increase the number of students performing in the top 3 stanines.

### Terra Nova Mathematics – May/June 2007

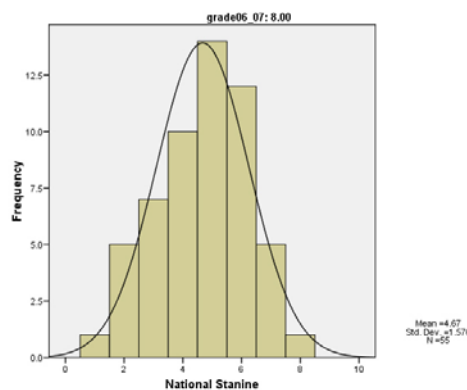
Grade	% of Students Scoring...		
	“Below Average” (<3)	“Average” (4–6)	“Above Average” (>6)
7	21.6	70.3	8.1
8	23.6	74.6	1.8
9	14	81.3	4.7

**Table 8 National Stanine scores for Terra Nova exam in mathematics**

#### Terra Nova Results: Grade 7 – Math

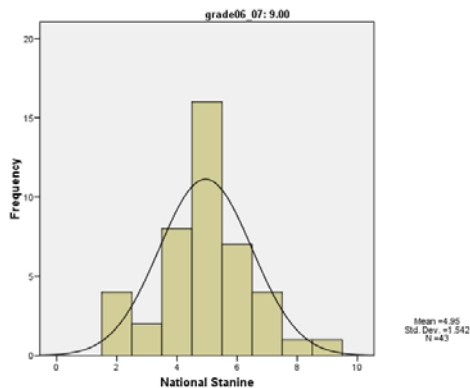


#### Terra Nova Results: Grade 8 – Math



**Chart 5 Grades 7 & 8 Terra Nova Math National Stanine distribution**

### Terra Nova Results: Grade 9 – Math



**Chart 6 Grade 9 Terra Nova Math National Stanine distribution**

The baseline data represented in the tables below indicate that greater than 70% of CCSC 7<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, and 9<sup>th</sup> graders are performing at an “average” level or above in Reading and Language, as measured by the Terra Nova exam. Each grade of students will be given this exam next year and data from a matched cohort analysis (comparing matched sets of students) will be available. CCSC’s significant focus in humanities classes on reading and writing, and the renewed focus on basic skills and problem-solving in math classes are most likely the reason for the “average” initial performance on these exams, as compared to the poor performance on MCAS. A future objective is to increase the percentage of students performing at the “above average” level on reading and language.

#### Terra Nova Results: Reading

Grade	% of Students Scoring...		
	“Below Average” (<3)	“Average” (4-6)	“Above Average” (>6)
7	17	74.3	8.6
8	22.2	72.2	5.6
9	11.6	83.7	4.7

**Table 9 National Stanine scores for Terra Nova exam in reading**

#### Terra Nova Results: Language

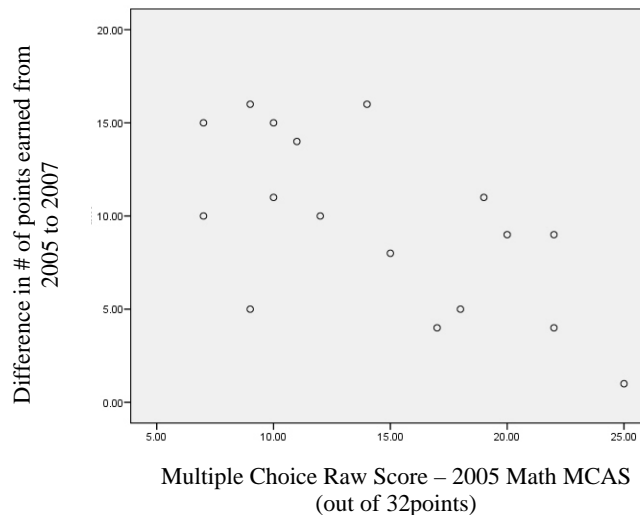
Grade	% of Students Scoring...		
	“Below Average” (<3)	“Average” (4-6)	“Above Average” (>6)
7	14.3	82.8	2.9
8	24.1	70.3	5.6
9	14.0	76.7	9.3

**Table 10 National Stanine scores for Terra Nova exam in language**

**Goal: Show improvement over time on external standardized tests**

**Improvement on Math MCAS**

Many students arrived at CCSC having demonstrated poor performance on prior MCAS tests. The graph below illustrates the improvement made on the MCAS by a cohort of 10<sup>th</sup> grade students. Each marker on the graph below represents one 10<sup>th</sup> grade student. Some 10<sup>th</sup> graders are not represented as their 2005 MCAS data were either non-existent or not readily accessible. The further to the left the marker is, the lower a score that particular student earned on the multiple-choice section of the 2005 math MCAS, the most recent historical MCAS data available for this particular cohort. The height of the marker, with respect to the y-axis, represents the difference or improvement in the MCAS multiple-choice math score, where the difference is calculated by (2007 multiple-choice score) – (2005 multiple-choice score). The data clearly indicate that students who had the lowest scores on the multiple-choice section of the 2005 Math MCAS (markers closest to the left) made the greatest improvement (markers closest to the top) as compared to their peers who had initially scored in the mid to high point range. This is excellent news and clearly signals improvement in academic performance. This trend also indicates that the small group instruction and individual tutoring as well as the extra “MCAS prep” courses likely had a significant impact on the success of the lowest achieving students.



**Chart 7 Improvement in MCAS math multiple-choice scores between 2005 (grade 8) and 2007 (grade 10) for a single cohort of students**

**Goal: Achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP)**

CCSC did not achieve Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) based on the initial poor performance of 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> graders on the 2006 math and ELA MCAS exams. The preliminary 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS data show positive performance trends as do the baseline Terra Nova data for reading, language, and math. The significant efforts in providing a rigorous curriculum as well as bolstering

foundational skills in math and ELA will hopefully lead to a quantifiable improvement in student performance.

**Goal: Students meet internal school standards for academic performance**

A parent of a new ninth grade student said she chose to send her son to CCSC because she heard it was “hard.” This is good news for us. It means that the high academic and social standards we hold for students are becoming transparent to the community. The school continuously stresses to families and students alike that our focus is first and foremost on academics. CCSC strives to provide rich, rigorous curriculum to all students in each grade. To guide the faculty in the creation and on-going development of this curriculum, frequent reflection is needed. The faculty reflects on student achievement and performance in the form of letter grades and performance on a variety of exams, projects, and portfolios.

**Student Grades**

All teachers at CCSC use the following standards-based scale (see below) to assess students. Teachers are encouraged to develop grading rubrics for projects and assignments to help students and families understand expectations in each subject area. CCSC intentionally does not use the letter grade D to ensure that it is clear when students have or have not met the expectations for passing a course. Consequently, there are many students who earn grades of F and faculty have met on many occasions to address the issue of students who are struggling academically and to develop interventions for students who are neither approaching or meeting the high academic expectations. These interventions typically involve assigning students to individual or small-group tutoring as well as possible modifications within the classroom.

The following table outlines the CCSC Performance Standards and serves as a guide for teachers.

<b>CCSC Performance Standards</b>		
<b>Performance Standard</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Letter Grade Equivalency</b>
Exceeds	Student exceeds expectations in the skill/ subject area.	A+
Meets	Student meets expectations in the skill/ subject area.	A
Approaches	Student is approaching expectations in the skill/ subject area.	B
Just Beginning	Student is beginning to meet expectations in the skill/ subject area.	C
Failure	Student has not met expectations in the skill/ subject area.	F

**Table 11 CCSC Performance Standards and letter grade equivalency**

The following tables show the grade distributions for Humanities and Math classes for the first and second semesters.

Core Academic Class	% of Students Earning...			
	A+ or A	B	C	F
Humanities Semester 1	32.9	35.9	19.8	11.4
Humanities Semester 2	29.2	36.8	22.2	11.7
Math Semester 1	25.8	39.7	21.9	12.6
Math Semester 2	31.4	27.8	28.4	12.4

**Table 12 Semester 1 and 2 Grade distribution for humanities and math courses**

Below is a summary of some of the ways we address the needs of students who are not meeting expectations:

- A faculty advisor calls the parents for each failing student. This phone call occurs before the end of each quarter so that there is time to help boost the student’s performance.
- A full faculty meeting is spent addressing the issue of specific failing students. Who is failing? Why? What can be done? The faculty is divided by grade level and people are assigned specific responsibilities including:
  - Calling parents
  - Scheduling individual parent conferences
  - Referring students to tutoring
  - Referring students to counseling

**Roundtables (End of Year Comprehensive Portfolio-Based Assessments)**

While standardized assessments are critical for providing benchmarks for our students’ progress in comparison with students across the state and the nation, they do not tell the complete story of a CCSC students’ rich academic work and progress. At the end of this year, all students were required to publicly display and reflect on a portfolio of academic work. The portfolio must contain at least eight pieces of work drawn from the core subjects, four written reflections on four pieces of work, an introductory Roundtable letter, and an annotated bibliography of all books read during the past year. All reflections are scaffolded and students present multiple drafts to their advisors prior to the Roundtable. The purpose of the Roundtables is to enable students to reflect on their learning and growth as students. The Roundtables also allow students to provide evidence that they have met the expectations required to be promoted to the next grade level.

The baseline data for the first CCSC Roundtables follow.

<b>% of Students Passing on the First Attempt</b>	<b># of Students Required to Present Roundtables during the Summer</b>
94.7	9

A total of 9 students out of 169 are required to present their Roundtables over the summer. If a student does not successfully fulfill the requirements for passing the Roundtable, he or she will not be promoted to the next grade.

## **Organizational Viability**

### **Goal: Maintain organizational viability**

*Measure:* The Head of School will be rated positively by the faculty.

Faculty indicated a positive performance rating for the Head of School on a questionnaire given by the Chair of the Board. In addition to the questionnaire, the Board Chair interviewed each administrator as well as a sample of teachers. It was noted that the Head of School could improve by increasing delegation to administrative team members in order to spend additional time with the faculty and on fundraising.

*Measure:* CCSC will demonstrate fiscal stability and health by maintaining both a balanced budget and contingency fund, as well as meet fund development goals.

CCSC is in sound financial health as illustrated in the financial profile below. In addition to maintaining a balanced budget, CCSC has planned for a 2% contingency fund. During the past fiscal year, CCSC raised approximately \$150,000. To meet fundraising goals, a part-time development director has been hired to begin in September 2007.

## **Staff Profile**

### **The Leadership Team**

Paula Evans, Head of School

Karsten Cash, Associate Principal for Students & Community

Patricia Corley, Associate Principal for Curriculum & Program

Juma Crawford, Associate Principal

Dan Saltzman, Director of Information Technology & Facilities

*There is no attrition among the administrative team.*

## **Non-Teaching Staff**

Phebe Kiryk, School Nurse  
Beth Perrin, Receptionist  
Joseph Reilly, Business Manager  
Monica Tecca, Assistant to the Head of School/ Office Manager

## **Teaching Staff**

### ***Humanities***

Katia Arida  
Hannah Blackwill  
Anna Dornbusch  
Caleb Hurst-Hiller  
Colin Tracy

### ***Math & Science***

Becki Norris  
Marc Parris  
Maggie Ruddy  
Laura Sheppard-Brick  
Aaron Stone

### ***Special Education***

Day Farenga  
Kerryann Freeman  
Ryan King (Teacher's Aide)  
Mary Lynn McCauley-Hoyt

### ***Spanish***

Maria Austin Ripley  
Aleida Sanabria

### ***Wellness & Movement***

Oliver Eslinger

## **Teacher Qualifications, Retention, and Attrition**

There were 16 full-time teachers and 1 teacher's aide during the 2006-2007 school year. The average years of teaching experiences of classroom teachers is 5.5 years. The average years of service at the school is 0.5, given that the school has only completed its second year of operation. The average class size at the school is 16 students. 100% of the faculty were designated "Highly Qualified" according to NCLB. CCSC has a 75% teacher retention rate with 4 teachers and 1 teacher's aide leaving at the end of the year. Two of these teachers as well as the teacher's aide will be going to graduate school; one of these graduate students will work in a part-time capacity at CCSC next year. One teacher left for maternity leave for three months during the 2006-2007 school year, but has returned and will continue teaching next year.

## Governance Profile

### Members of the Board of Trustees

Position	Name	Term Begins	Term Expires	Term	Committee Memberships	Outside Affiliation / Expertise
Chair	Eloise Lawrence	May-07	May-09	2 years	Governance (Chair) Development	<i>Staff Attorney, Conservation Law Foundation</i>
Vice-Chair	Denise Jillson	May-07	May-08	1 year	Development (Chair)	Executive Director, Harvard Square Business Association
Trustee	Robert Mann	May-07	May-09	2 years	Finance	Managing Director, Deutsche Bank Securities Inc.
Secretary	Stephanie Engel	May-07	May-08	1 year	Outreach (Chair)	Mental Health Clinician, Harvard University Health Services Private practice, Cambridge MA
Trustee	Patricia Craig	May-07	May-08	1 year	Accountability (Chair)	Executive Director Minda de Gunzburg Center for European Studies
Trustee	Colm Prendergast	May-07	May-09	2 years	Accountability/ Governance	Design Group Leader / Principal Engineer Analog Devices
Treasurer	David Boit	May-07	May-09	2 years	Finance	Loring, Wolcott & Coolidge Fiduciary Services
Trustee	Alan Price	May-07	May-10	3 years	Accountability/ Governance	
Trustee	Allen Nunnally	May-07	May-10	3 years	Development	Associate Wilmer Cutler Pickering Hale and Dorr LLP
Trustee (non-voting)	Paula Evans			<i>Ex-officio</i>	Development	Head of School, CCSC

**Table 13 Members of the CCSC Board of Trustees**

### Major Policy Decisions

- The Board of Trustees approved the lease for a second building at 247R Bent Street. This building has been renovated during the summer months and will be used for the upper school in 2007-2008.

- The following trustees were appointed to the board: David Boit, Alan Price, Allen Nunnally.
- The Board hired Executive Service Corps to assist with Board Development and Fundraising, and help the transition from a founding board to a managing board.
- The Board approved a loan with Raza Development Fund for \$750,000.

### **Approved Charter Amendments**

No charter amendments were submitted to the Board of Education.

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

No official complaints were received by the Board of Trustees.

## Financial Profile

### Financial Overview

#### 2006-2007 Operating Results (Unaudited)

Although the school's FY07 financial statements have not been reviewed by an auditor, the preliminary figures indicate that the school ended the year with a healthy operating surplus and a solid balance sheet.

The school's sound financial condition is illustrated by the June 30, 2007 balance sheet. Approximately 40% of the school's assets are held in cash and 52% in leasehold improvements, equipment, and computer hardware. The remainder represents a small amount of other short-term assets and a security deposit for our facilities lease. The school owns no real estate and rents its facilities. The school's current liabilities consist of routine short-term obligations such as accounts payable and payroll accruals (4% of assets.) Long-term liabilities consist of a facility fit up loan representing 22% of assets. The school's excellent financial performance allowed it to increase its reserves with this year's surplus.

Per-pupil funding from the Commonwealth represented just over 86% of overall funding with the balance consisting of Federal and State grants and private grants and contributions. Continuing what the school believes to be a sound strategy based on its mission, CCSC continued to shift its spending patterns to reflect new and improved priorities.

While the exact amount of the surplus may change slightly with year-end adjustments recommended by the CCSC auditor, the school should show a healthy surplus this year. The school was able to achieve this goal by tightly controlling operating costs while growing our student base and increasing our investment in technology.

#### FY08 Budget

The school's budget is approved annually by the Board of Trustees. The Board ensures that the budget anticipates all reasonable expenses and reflects the school's academic priorities. For the coming year, the school expects that its overall level of funding will be based on a conservative enrollment forecast, although significant declines in per-pupil funding would require the school to seek other sources of revenue or modest cuts in spending.

The school expects to increase the current level of academic, administrative, and facility spending. This is driven by the addition of a new class of students and an increase of classroom space. Personnel costs are expected to continue their increase as the school makes staffing changes to facilitate continued curriculum improvement and growing enrollment.

	Jul '06 - Jun '07 (unaudited)	2007-2008 Budget
Tuition	2,804,822	3,412,500
Grants & Contributions	365,202	319,105
School lunch	51,567	62,048
Other	17,285	9,000
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$3,238,876</b>	<b>\$3,802,653</b>

**Table 14 Unaudited Operating Results 2006-2007**

<b>Personnel, Benefits and payroll taxes</b>	<b>1,534,128</b>	<b>2,186,662</b>
Education	99,184	109,080
Rent, facilities maintenance, and utilities	597,512	772,155
Depreciation	111,381	238,620
Food Services	73,149	90,000
Insurance, interest, and legal	83,852	140,240
Technology	22,439	36,670
Administrative supplies and expenses	18,218	18,070
Activities, connections and other expenses	57,342	141,880
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$2,597,214</b>	<b>\$3,733,377</b>
<b>Surplus (Deficit)</b>	<b>\$641,662</b>	<b>\$69,276</b>

**Table 15 2007-2008 Budget (Board approved)**

Assets		Liabilities & Equity	
Checking/Savings *	772,281	Accounts payable	7,672
Accounts Receivable	2,701	Other current liabilities	<u>76,166</u>
Other Current Assets	6,809		
<b>Total Current Assets</b>	<b>\$ 781,791</b>	<b>Total Current Liabilities</b>	<b>\$83,838</b>
Fixed	1,022,680	Long-term Liabilities	436,769
Other Assets	163,914	Equity	1,447,779
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>\$1,968, 385</b>	<b>Total Liabilities and Equity</b>	<b>\$1,968, 385</b>

**Table 16 Balance Sheet for Year Ended June 30, 2006 (Unaudited)**

\* Dedicated funds to cover expenses through September 30, 2007

The independent external audit for the year ending June 30, 2007 is in process and is scheduled for completion in September 2007.

## Dissemination

In its second year, CCSC faculty has worked closely with Harvard University's Undergraduate Teacher Education Program (UTEP) to undertake several substantive initiatives. Administered by the Harvard Graduate School of Education, UTEP offers a state-approved teacher preparation program to Harvard College students who wish to pursue a teaching credential concurrently with their undergraduate education. The program, which combines coursework in education with yearlong student teaching internships, supports licensure in middle/high school mathematics, the sciences, history and English. Although the number of students who complete licensure through UTEP is rather small—fewer than 10 per year—the program is also deeply involved with other initiatives that link the talents and interests of Harvard undergraduates with the needs of local public schools. CCSC has become UTEP's most important partner site for student teaching internships, as well as other projects that are of mutual benefit to our missions. Several of these activities are described below.

### Student Teaching Placements

One UTEP student, a candidate for licensure in middle school mathematics, completed her internship this year at CCSC. An additional three students—two in the humanities, one in middle school math—completed the “pre-practicum” term of their internship in the spring semester and plan to return in the fall for a full-time practicum. Next year, UTEP intends to place five new students at the school for fall-to-spring internships—three candidates in the humanities, one in physics, and one in general/physical science (middle school).

### Mentors for CCSC Students: ‘Cambridge 1-2-1’

Offered through Harvard's most prominent community service organization, the Phillips Brooks House Association, Cambridge 1-2-1 provides targeted 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> grade students at CCSC with an undergraduate mentor. With support and assistance from UTEP, 1-2-1 was launched in December 2006 with an application process for both the CCSC students and Harvard mentors. There are currently 10 students involved in the program, each paired with a mentor who was selected based on compatible interests and goals for/with their mentee. The program leaders have organized group events, including a well-attended dinner with CCSC parents and faculty, and are helping individual mentors cultivate relationships that involve academic tutoring, social outings, and will ultimately assist students with the college application process. UTEP will continue to help recruit mentors for the program by publicizing this opportunity among underclassmen who express interest in pursuing licensure in their senior year.

### Humanities Curriculum Development Project

In collaboration with a faculty member from Harvard's program in History & Literature, UTEP launched an independent study course this spring that pairs undergraduate Hist. & Lit. concentrators with CCSC humanities teachers for a semester of interdisciplinary curriculum design work. Each student is essentially serving as a research assistant for their cooperating teacher, helping to accumulate primary and secondary source material, as well as complementary literature, for history units that will be taught in CCSC's humanities classrooms. The

undergraduates are receiving course credit for their efforts, as this project entails extensive research, written synthesis and analysis of the sources collected, group meetings and sessions on curriculum design, and visits to observe classrooms and plan with their cooperating teachers. The six students who are currently working with CCSC teachers are developing units on the Civil War & Reconstruction; U.S. Westward Expansion; Caribbean History & Literature; African Kingdoms & Mythology; the Middle Ages; and Celtic History and Mythology. At the conclusion of the project, teachers received a resource packet, annotated bibliography and an analysis of the unit with ideas for essential questions and themes that can be drawn out from the collection of sources. UTEP and the History & Literature program hope to continue offering this opportunity in the future, with CCSC as the primary partner site.

### **Elective Course Involvement**

Students from Harvard's Spoken Word Society, along with a CCSC humanities teacher, co-taught a second quarter elective on the genre of spoken word poetry. UTEP helped support this project by facilitating weekly curriculum design and reflection meetings with the participating undergraduate students. CCSC's elective course structure is ideal for involving undergraduate groups such as this one that seek venues in which to offer young people opportunities to explore the arts, theatre and activities like Model UN or Mock Trial. UTEP will continue to work with CCSC to develop an application process for undergraduate groups that wish to offer elective classes at the school in collaboration with a CCSC faculty member.

### **National School Reform Faculty (NSRF)**

As part of the NSRF, CCSC is committed to encouraging reflective practice among its staff and developing collegial relationships that support this work, with the overall goal of increasing student achievement. One of the ways for teachers to reflect on their practice is through the use of **Critical Friends Groups (CFGs)**. CCSC sent one teacher to become a trained facilitator and the school is sending another teacher this summer for the same training. Additionally, we work with an outside facilitator and run CFGs which meet monthly. The CFGs review student work, read relevant articles, and present pieces of curriculum for review and critique.

### **Conventions/Conferences**

Faculty have attended and/or presented at the following conventions and conferences this academic year.

- Two teachers attended the *National Coalition of Essential Schools Fall Forum*
- Two teachers presented at the *No Teacher Left Behind: A Practitioner's Conference*. Co-hosted by the ArtsLiteracy Project and the Brown University Teacher Education Program.
- One teacher and one administrator attended the *Massachusetts Charter School Association Convention*:
- One administrator presented at the American Education Research Association (AERA)

Attachment A: [2005-2006 NCLB Report Card](#)