

# Renewal Inspection Report

HILLTOWN COOPERATIVE  
CHARTER SCHOOL  
HAYDENVILLE, MA



November 1-2, 2004

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Executive Summary ..... i

About the Renewal Process and Site Visit Report ..... 1

Renewal Inspection Team ..... 3

Setting ..... 5

Findings ..... 9

    Renewal Question 1: Is the Academic Program a Success? ..... 9

    Renewal Question 2: Is the School a Viable Organization? ..... 25

    Renewal Question 3: Is the School Faithful to the Terms of its charter? ..... 29

    Renewal Question 4: If the School’s Charter is Renewed, What are its  
    Plans for the Next Five Years? ..... 32

APPENDIX A: Schedule of the Renewal Inspection Visit ..... 35

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (Hilltown) is located in the village of Haydenville, approximately eight miles north of Northampton in the scenic Pioneer Valley. When it was first founded in 1995, Hilltown adopted an educational approach based on student interests and inspired by the preschools of Reggio Emilia in Italy. Over the past five years, Hilltown's educational approach has evolved in response to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The school has developed a teaching model called Conversation Guided Curriculum that utilizes student ideas in the context of the Frameworks and reflects the school's commitment to balancing the Frameworks with an emergent curriculum. The school's approach emphasizes the integration of expressive arts into the curriculum to foster creativity and critical thinking while building strong basic skills.

The Commonwealth renewed the school's charter in 1999. Hilltown recently submitted an Application for Renewal of its charter for a second five-year term as well as a proposed Accountability Plan.

Over the past five years, Hilltown has added seventh grade and eighth grade programs and grown by almost 50 percent. Hilltown currently serves 146 students in kindergarten through eighth grade.

Hilltown is structured as a volunteer cooperative and governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees. Parents, staff, and community members who invest an average of at least four hours of volunteer work per month to benefit the school as a whole become members of the cooperative, eligible to vote at the cooperative's annual meeting and to elect the Board of Trustees. The Board has organized the school into four domains: the Board of Trustees, the Education Domain, the Administrative Domain, and the Community Domain. The Domain Council, which is comprised of the President of the Board of Trustees and three domain coordinators, is responsible for drafting the annual budget, developing major school policies, and overseeing cross-domain issues. The Domain Council brings the budget and policy recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

In June 2003, Hilltown's Board adopted a new, ten-year Strategic Plan developed by a diverse committee over an 18-month period. The Strategic Plan focuses on areas identified by the Board's Long-Range Planning Committee as needing improvement or clarification and prioritizes a series of actions goals aimed at achieving the school's vision over the next decade.

Hilltown has occupied a turn-of-the-century brassworks factory since it was chartered in 1995. An amendment signed by the Board in September 2004 extended Hilltown's lease of 13,500 square feet until June 30, 2006.

The Renewal Inspection Team (Team) spent two days on site at Hilltown on November 1 and 2, 2004. The Team also obtained and reviewed Hilltown data and documents prior to the renewal site visit, on site, and after the site visit.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Renewal Question 1:  
Is the Academic Program a Success?**

**MCAS Results**

The Team examined the scores attained by Hilltown students on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) exams for the period of 2000 to 2004. These scores were compared to the MCAS scores attained by students in the Northampton school district, which is the “comparison district” that provides most of the students that attend the school, and to the MCAS scores attained by Massachusetts school students statewide.

In considering the performance of Hilltown students on the MCAS exams, it should be recognized that the numbers of students taking the MCAS exams have been low during the period under review: 18 or fewer. With the exception of one student who did not take the fifth grade Science and Technology/Engineering exam in 2003, all eligible Hilltown students have taken the exams each year. Because the numbers of Hilltown students taking the exams each year have been so low, the scores of a very few students may have had a disproportionate impact on the school’s MCAS results. Also because of the small number of students taking the MCAS exams each year, subpopulation analyses could not be performed.

1. Hilltown has met its Adequate Yearly Progress requirements.
2. Over the past four years, Hilltown’s MCAS results in the Grade 3 Reading and Grades 4 and 7 English Language Arts exams have varied from year to year with no clear improvement trend. However, the scores of students taking the English Language Arts exam in the fourth grade and then in the seventh grade have improved considerably. Moreover, the school’s MCAS results compare favorably to those of the comparison school district (Northampton) and the state.
3. Hilltown’s results on the MCAS Mathematics exam have varied from year to year with no clear improvement trend. Similarly, the scores of students that move through grades at the school show no clear improvement trend. In most instances, Hilltown’s results have compared favorably with those of Northampton and the state.
4. Hilltown students have exhibited strong performance in the two years that Grade 5 students have taken the MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering exam, outperforming their counterparts in Northampton and statewide by substantial margins.
5. The school has not prepared individual student success plans for students who have scored in the Warning/Failing category of the MCAS exams.

**Other Assessments**

6. Hilltown administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills annually to students in the third grade and in the fifth through eighth grades. With the exception of the Grade 3 language test, students

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

generally attain high scores on the tests. Student scores increase as they move through grades at the school.

7. A large majority of Hilltown students tested annually have shown gains in their reading and writing assessment scores, some by considerable amounts. Hilltown has consistently met its Accountability Plan objective for reading improvement, but met its objective for writing improvement in only the first of the five years reviewed.
8. A majority of Hilltown students have shown gains in their mathematics scores, based on an internal assessment tool developed by the school.

### **Curriculum and Classroom Observations**

9. Hilltown's curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and competencies have been defined for each grade. There is a scope and sequence for Mathematics as well as for Social Studies. The Science scope and sequence is almost complete, and the school will next prepare a scope and sequence for English Language Arts. For the most part, the Team observed effective instructional methods and adequate resources in use at the school.

### **Renewal Question 2: Is the School a Viable Organization?**

1. Hilltown's Board of Trustees is actively engaged in school governance, encouraging broad participation by other members of the school community and using a collaborative process to reach decisions by consensus. Documentation of Board discussions and decisions is detailed, informative, and extensive. Board minutes do not indicate whether Board members who have had a financial interest in matters before the Board have recused themselves from discussions of such matters, as required by the state conflict of interest law and the school's by-laws. In one instance, the Board's reason for convening an executive session is unclear.
2. Hilltown provides a safe, supportive learning environment for students. The school climate is characterized by a strong sense of community, an equally strong culture of respect, and considerable shared commitment to the school.
3. Hilltown's audited financial statements show that the school's financial condition is sound. The school's net assets equal approximately one-third of the school's annual operating expenses, although the school's net asset balance is at its lowest point in five years.

### **Renewal Question 3: Is the School Faithful to the Terms of its Charter?**

1. Hilltown actively pursues its three-part mission statement adopted in 2003.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

2. Hilltown has generally performed well on the student performance objectives stated in its Accountability Plan, but it has not tracked results on two of the stated objectives.
3. Hilltown has actively pursued the other goals and objectives stated in its Accountability Plan with reasonable success.
4. Hilltown has engaged in numerous activities to disseminate information about its best practices.

**Renewal Question 4:  
If the School's Charter is Renewed,  
What are its Plans for the Next Five Years?**

1. The Accountability Plan proposed by Hilltown establishes clear and appropriate goals, each of which is supported by multiple, outcome-focused measures.
2. Hilltown is pursuing relocation of the school.
3. Hilltown's Strategic Plan will provide valuable guidance to the Board of Trustees and other members of the Hilltown community over the coming years.

## **ABOUT THE RENEWAL PROCESS AND SITE VISIT REPORT**

Beginning in the spring of the third year of its charter (and ending August 1<sup>st</sup> following its fourth year), a school may apply for renewal of its charter for another five-year term. Following guidelines set forth in the *Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter*, an application for renewal should be an articulate, affirmative response, based on clear, credible evidence, to the questions that guide charter school accountability. It must also offer compelling answers to questions about the school's plans for the future. The application should be a sound, well-supported explanation of why the Board of Education should renew a school's charter.

Once this application has met a minimal review of its clarity and coherence, the Department of Education will appoint an evaluation team to conduct a 3-4 day visit of the school to corroborate and augment the school's application for renewal. This report is the result of one such evaluation.

The renewal site visit process and report provide a detailed and current portrait of a public charter school at the time of its application for renewal. While the renewal site visit report itself is a vital source of information within the renewal process, it is most effective when used in conjunction with the longitudinal school performance data available to the Department of Education. The combination of more general long-term data with the detailed information gathered by the renewal visit constitutes an evidence base rigorous enough to inform decisions about the future of public charter schools responsible for the education of students in the Commonwealth. In keeping with Massachusetts Board of Education's commitment to a public charter school accountability system that is based in robust and diverse performance data, the renewal site visit report does not make recommendations about whether or not a school should be renewed. It presents a detailed picture of the present state of the school as one of several key sources of information to be considered by the Board of Education in its renewal decision.

### **How to read this report**

The first section of this report describes the school's setting. Included in this section are information on the origin and history of the charter, student demographics, staffing and the school's educational program. This is also an opportunity to include any organizational history, such as changes in the board and leadership or challenges the school has faced, and its response to those challenges.

The core of the report is the Renewal Inspection Team's findings. Findings are the Team's assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement that, in their judgment, have the greatest bearing on the school's achievement of its defined goals. Findings are organized under each of the renewal questions: *Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?* The Team's comments on the fourth question, *If the school is renewed, what are its plans for the next five years?*, reflect their judgment of the quality of the school's proposed new goals and their assessment of the school's capacity to fulfill those goals. Each finding is a bolded statement followed by explanatory paragraphs reporting the evidence supporting the Team's judgments. Finally, **Appendix A** illustrates the Team's schedule during the renewal visit.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

## RENEWAL INSPECTION TEAM

**F. Daniel Ahern, Jr.**, is President of Clarus Group, a consulting firm dedicated to helping governments and nonprofit organizations meet high standards of performance and integrity. Prior to co-founding Clarus Group, he served for ten years as the First Assistant Inspector General for Management in the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General. He has also been a performance auditor for the Virginia General Assembly, an independent consultant to state agencies in Massachusetts and Virginia, and an adjunct professor teaching graduate courses in public administration and nonprofit management at Northeastern University and Clark University.

**Pamela Bloomfield**, Vice President of Clarus Group, previously worked for the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General where she served in several positions, including ten years as Deputy Inspector General for Management. She has also worked as the Assistant Director of Finance and Administration for an Oregon county; a management consultant assisting federal, state, and local government agencies; and a course assistant teaching written and oral communications at the Harvard Business School.

**Peter Davies**, *team supervisor and report editor*, is a former British School Inspector who has worked in school and district accountability for more than ten years in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and the Middle East. He was formerly an administrator with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and a visiting professor to the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies. He is currently on the adjunct faculty of Northeastern University. He has worked within school and social services departments and was principal of one of the largest inner-urban comprehensive schools in London.

**Dr. Wayne LaGue**, *coordinator of on-site inspection*, has been an educator for 35 years and recently retired as Superintendent of Schools in Wareham. In addition to having served as a school superintendent in both urban and rural communities, he has taught in Massachusetts public schools at the elementary, middle, and high school levels and has served as director of curriculum and instruction. He holds a doctorate in educational leadership from Boston University and an advanced graduate degree in the philosophy of curriculum from Oxford University.

**Douglas Renick** is an independent consultant who works with school districts to develop strategic plans. He has recently been a change coach in the Boston Public Schools, working with principals and teachers to implement and sustain improvements that increased student performance. Prior to establishing his consulting practice, he managed Harvard University's Center for Training and Organization Development for many years.

**W. C. Wolf, Jr.** has been an active educator for the past 50 years. He taught grades K-6 in three states, served in academic administration and professorial positions at four higher education institutions, administered a US Office of Education research contracts program, and directed and evaluated various C. F. Kettering Foundation undertakings. He has published extensively. Research Methodology, Organizational Leadership, and Elementary School Curriculum/Instruction are specialties.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Dan Ahern and Pamela Bloomfield are principals of Clarus Group working under contract to Class Measures Ltd for the purpose of this contract.

Peter Davies, Wayne LaGue, and Douglas Renick are members of Class Measures Ltd.

W. C. Wolfe, Jr., is an independent contractor working for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

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Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

## SETTING

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (Hilltown) is located in the village of Haydenville, approximately eight miles north of Northampton in the scenic Pioneer Valley. Haydenville is part of the town of Williamsburg, a community of 2,515 residents.

The school's stated mission is:

- To engage young people in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies, to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.
- To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families, and local community members which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

When it was first founded in 1995, Hilltown adopted an educational approach based on student interests and inspired by the preschools of Reggio Emilia in Italy. Over the past five years, Hilltown's educational approach has evolved in response to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The school has developed a teaching model called Conversation Guided Curriculum that utilizes student ideas in the context of the Frameworks and reflects the school's commitment to balancing the Frameworks with an emergent curriculum. The school's approach emphasizes the integration of expressive arts into the curriculum to foster creativity and critical thinking while building strong basic skills.

Over the past five years, Hilltown has added seventh grade and eighth grade programs and grown by almost 50 percent. Hilltown currently serves 146 students in kindergarten through eighth grade; although Hilltown was approved for 154 students in the 2004-2005 school year, the legislative moratorium precluded further expansion of the school's enrollment. There are no eligibility requirements for enrollment. Admission to Hilltown is decided by lottery, although siblings of existing students and residents of Hampshire and Franklin Counties receive priority for admissions. The school reported receiving 170 applications for the 2003-2004 school year; 40 applicants were offered slots at the start of the school year, and two more applicants were later admitted from the waiting list to replace students who had left during the year. At the end of the year, 82 applicants remained on Hilltown's waiting list.

Department of Education (DOE) pre-enrollment data for the 2004-2005 school year show that more than 50 percent of Hilltown's students reside in the city of Northampton. DOE enrollment data for 2003-2004 show that 95.2 percent of Hilltown students are White, 2.1 percent are Hispanic, 1.4 percent are African American, 0.7 percent are Asian, and 0.7 percent are Native American. By contrast, 80 percent of students in the Northampton school district are White, 11.5 percent are Hispanic, 3.6 percent are African American, 4.5 percent are Asian, and 0.5 percent are Native American. DOE data also show that 20.5 percent of Hilltown's students are low-income, and there are no students categorized as First Language Not English or Limited English Proficient. The school reported that 10.4 percent of its students are Special Education students

## Hilltown Cooperative Charter School Renewal Inspection Report

and that 14 students have Individualized Education Programs. In the Northampton school district, 23.3 percent of students are low-income, 16.7 percent are Special Education students, 8.4 percent are categorized as First Language Not English, and 2.1 percent are categorized as Limited English Proficient. Hilltown's attendance rate is 94.8 percent, its in-school suspension rate is 2.9 percent, and its out-of-school suspension rate is 1.4 percent. Hilltown's student attendance rate is slightly lower than Northampton's attendance rate of 95.2 percent, and Hilltown's suspension rates are well below Northampton's in-school suspension rate of 7.6 percent and out-of-school suspension rate of 8.0 percent.

Hilltown's 2003-2004 Annual Report listed 28 staff members. These included three administrators and 13 teachers: nine classroom teachers, one atelierista (studio art teacher), one music and movement teacher, one special education teacher, and one Title I reading teacher. Hilltown staff also included seven part-time classroom teaching assistants, one full-time special education assistant, two part-time special education assistants, one part-time atelierista assistant, and three administrative support staff (filling two full-time equivalent positions). According to DOE teacher data for 2003-2004, 79.2 percent of Hilltown's teachers were licensed in their teaching assignments, and 60.2 percent of core academic teachers were identified as highly qualified. The comparable statewide statistics were 93.9 percent and 93.9 percent.

Hilltown is structured as a volunteer cooperative and governed by a 15-member Board of Trustees. Parents, staff, and community members who invest an average of at least four hours of volunteer work per month to benefit the school as a whole become members of the cooperative, eligible to vote at the cooperative's annual meeting and to elect the Board of Trustees. The Board has a number of subcommittees, including a Personnel Committee, a Finance Committee, and an Admissions Committee.

In response to recommendations from a governance consultant hired in 1999, the Board has organized the school into four domains: the Board of Trustees (all of whom are community members and/or parents), the Education Domain (comprised of the school's Education Coordinator, all teachers, and all teaching assistants), the Administrative Domain (comprised of the Administrative Coordinator and administrative staff), and the Community Domain (comprised of the school's Community Coordinator, two parent representatives, families, and all members of the governing cooperative). The Domain Council, which is comprised of the President of the Board of Trustees and three domain coordinators, is responsible for drafting the annual budget, developing major school policies, and overseeing cross-domain issues. The Domain Council brings the budget and policy recommendations to the Board of Trustees.

Hilltown takes pride in its innovative governance and decision-making structures, which operate on a consensus model. In contrast to a standard voting process, the consensus model requires all parties involved to reach a mutually satisfactory level of agreement. Even one participant's strong objections can block the adoption of a proposal. The consensus model is intended to create an incentive for the majority to respect and integrate minority views and to encourage students and teachers to use creativity and cooperation as the basis for decision-making. According to Hilltown's Application for Renewal, the Board has only resorted to voting four times over the past nine years. Hilltown's minutes of Board of Trustees meetings show that the

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Board has succeeded in using the consensus model to foster thoughtful dialogue and to reach agreement on issues affecting all aspects of school operations.

In June 2003, Hilltown's Board adopted a new, ten-year Strategic Plan developed by a diverse committee over an 18-month period. The Strategic Plan focuses on areas identified by the Board's Long-Range Planning Committee as needing improvement or clarification and prioritizes a series of actions goals aimed at achieving the school's vision over the next decade.

Hilltown has occupied a turn-of-the-century brassworks factory since it was chartered in 1995. An amendment signed by the Board in September 2004 extended Hilltown's lease of 13,500 square feet until June 30, 2006. Although the building has many desirable features, it also has significant drawbacks, the biggest of which is the lack of adequate outdoor play space. Accordingly, the Board has initiated a competitive request for proposals process to acquire a new facility for the school.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

## **FINDINGS**

The Renewal Inspection Team (Team) spent two days on site at the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School (Hilltown) on November 1 and 2, 2004. The Team conducted separate focus group interviews with the Board of Trustees (Board), teachers and domain leaders, students, and parents. The Team observed all teachers during classroom instruction with the exception of the Special Education teacher.

The Team obtained and reviewed Hilltown data and documents prior to the renewal site visit, on site, and after the site visit. The information reviewed included five years of Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) data; school results on the Iowa Test of Basic Skills; reading assessment scores; the school's internal assessment rubrics; the school's current Accountability Plan; the school's Application for Renewal, including the 2003 Strategic Plan and proposed Accountability Plan; annual reports; the school's by-laws; minutes of Board meetings held between June 13, 2001 and September 8, 2004; annual budgets; audited financial statements for the three years ending June 30, 2001 through June 30, 2003; policies and procedures; handbooks and other information provided to staff, students, and parents; curriculum guides; staff evaluation and professional development plan documents; information on teacher qualifications and experience; student work; lease information; previous site visit reports; and the previous renewal inspection report prepared in 1999.

### **RENEWAL QUESTION 1: IS THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM A SUCCESS?**

#### **MCAS RESULTS**

The Team examined the scores attained by Hilltown students on the MCAS exams for the period of 2000 to 2004. These scores were compared to the MCAS scores attained by students in the Northampton school district, which is the "comparison district" that provides most of the students that attend the school, and to the MCAS scores attained by Massachusetts school students statewide.

In considering the performance of Hilltown students on the MCAS exams, it should be recognized that the numbers of students taking the MCAS exams have been low during the period under review: 18 or fewer. With the exception of one student who did not take the fifth grade Science and Technology/Engineering exam in 2003, all eligible Hilltown students have taken the exams each year. Because the numbers of Hilltown students taking the exams each year have been so low, the scores of a very few students may have had a disproportionate impact on the school's MCAS results. Also because of the small number of students taking the MCAS exams each year, subpopulation analyses could not be performed.

#### **1. Hilltown has met its Adequate Yearly Progress requirements.**

The Department of Education has determined that Hilltown met Adequate Yearly Progress in 2003 and 2004. In English Language Arts, the school's Cycle III performance rating is "very

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

high” and its improvement rating is “on target.” In Mathematics, its Cycle III performance rating is “high” and its improvement rating is “no change.”

2. **Over the past four years, Hilltown’s MCAS results in the Grade 3 Reading and Grades 4 and 7 English Language Arts exams have varied from year to year with no clear improvement trend. However, the scores of students taking the English Language Arts exam in the fourth grade and then in the seventh grade have improved considerably. Moreover, the school’s MCAS results compare favorably to those of the comparison school district (Northampton) and the state.**

As Table 1 shows, the scores of Hilltown students on the MCAS Reading exam have been strong overall, although inconsistent from year to year. The best results were achieved in 2001 when all students scored in the Proficient category. In 2002, 29 percent scored in the Needs Improvement category. Scores then improved over the next two years. In 2004, 94 percent of students achieved Proficient scores, and no students scored in the Needs Improvement category; for the first time one Hilltown student (6 percent) scored in the Warning/Failing category.

**Table 1. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 3 MCAS Reading Results  
2001-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2001	16	0	100	0	0	N/A
2002	17	0	71	29	0	
2003	18	0	83	17	0	95.8
2004	18	0	94	0	6	95.8

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 2 shows Hilltown’s five-year results on the Grade 4 MCAS English Language Arts exam. Scores improved after the first two years, but they varied thereafter. In 2002, 69 percent scored in the Proficient category, and 31 percent scored in the Needs Improvement category. In 2003, 71 percent scored in the Proficient (65 percent) or Advanced (6 percent) category, but 30 percent scored in the Needs Improvement (24 percent) or Warning/Failing (6 percent) category. In 2004, 59 percent (the lowest percentage in three years) scored in the Proficient category, while 41 percent scored in the Needs Improvement category.

**Table 2. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 4 MCAS English Language Arts Results  
2000-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2000	15	0	13	87	0	N/A
2001	18	0	33	67	0	
2002	16	0	69	31	0	
2003	17	6	65	24	6	89.7
2004	17	0	59	41	0	88.2

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Table 3 shows the performance of Hilltown students on the Grade 7 MCAS English Language Arts exam. Again, the year-to-year scores were inconsistent. The best scores were attained in 2002 when 100 percent of HCCS students scored in the Proficient (65 percent) or Advanced (35 percent) categories. The poorest overall scores were attained the following year, 2003, when 80 percent of Hilltown students scored in the Proficient (73 percent) or Advanced (7 percent) categories, but 20 percent scored in the Needs Improvement category.

**Table 3. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 7 MCAS English Language Arts Results  
2001-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index
2001	12	25	58	17	0	N/A
2002	17	35	65	0	0	
2003	15	7	73	20	0	95.0
2004	18	22	72	6	0	98.6

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Hilltown's scores on the MCAS Mathematics exam have improved as students have moved from the fourth grade to the seventh grade. Table 4 compares the performance of fourth grade students in 2000 and 2001 with that of seventh grade students three years later in 2003 and 2004, respectively. In both instances, the percentage of students in the Proficient or Advanced categories increased substantially, and the percentage of students in the Needs Improvement category declined substantially.

**Table 4. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 4 to Grade 7 Changes in  
MCAS English Language Arts Results  
2000-2003 and 2001-2004**

	2000 Grade 4	2003 Grade 7	2001 Grade 4	2004 Grade 7
Advanced	0	7	0	22
Proficient	13	73	33	72
Needs Improvement	87	20	67	6

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Every year since 2001, Hilltown students have performed better on the Grade 3 MCAS Reading test than students in Northampton and statewide have performed. Table 5 shows that Hilltown students outperformed the other students by large margins each year with the exception of 2002, when 29 percent of Hilltown students scored in the Needs Improvement category. The strong performance of Hilltown students is reflected in the 10-point difference between Hilltown's Proficiency Index, which was 95.8 in both 2003 and 2004, and the Proficiency Index results reported for Northampton and the state.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Table 5. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 3 MCAS Reading Results  
2001-2004**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index
2001	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	N/A
	Northampton	202	0	64	31	4	
	State	75,803	0	62	31	7	
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>0</b>	
	Northampton	240	0	69	23	8	
	State	74,230	0	67	27	6	
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>95.8</b>
	Northampton	188	0	62	32	6	84.2
	State	73,972	0	63	30	7	85.2
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>95.8</b>
	Northampton	224	0	62	32	5	84.5
	State	73,106	0	63	30	6	85.5

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 6 shows the superior performance of Hilltown students relative to Northampton and statewide students on the Grade 3 MCAS Reading exam over the past four years. In 2004, the percentage of Hilltown students scoring in the Needs Improvement category or better was similar to the percentages of Northampton and statewide students scoring in the Needs Improvement category or better. With the exception of 2002, however, the percentage of Hilltown students scoring in the Proficient category or better has exceeded the comparable percentages of Northampton and statewide students by a wide margin each year: 36 percentage points in 2001, 21 percentage points in 2003, and 32 percentage points in 2004.

**Table 6. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 3 MCAS Reading Results  
Percent Needs Improvement or Better  
and Percent Proficient or Better  
2001-2004**

Year	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
2001	<b>100</b>	95	93	<b>100</b>	64	62
2002	<b>100</b>	92	94	<b>71</b>	69	67
2003	<b>100</b>	94	93	<b>83</b>	62	63
2004	<b>94</b>	94	93	<b>94</b>	62	63

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 7 presents Grade 4 and Grade 7 results on the MCAS English Language Arts exam for Hilltown, Northampton, and the state. For the most part, Hilltown fourth graders have attained higher scores than their counterparts in Northampton and statewide, although the percentage of Northampton and statewide students scoring in the Advanced category has consistently exceeded the Hilltown percentage. Hilltown seventh graders have consistently performed better on the

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

English Language Arts exam than their counterparts in Northampton and statewide. These results are reflected in Hilltown's higher Proficiency Index results for 2003 and 2004.

**Table 7. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 4 and Grade 7 MCAS English Language Arts Results  
2000-2004**

Year	Grade 4	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index	
2000	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>0</b>	N/A	
	Northampton	194	1	14	76	10		
	State	76,311	1	19	67	12		
2001	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>67</b>	<b>0</b>		
	Northampton	223	5	48	36	12		
	State	75,665	7	44	38	11		
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>0</b>		
	Northampton	217	6	41	41	12		
	State	75,094	8	46	37	10		
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>89.7</b>	
	Northampton	239	10	47	31	12	79.1	
	State	74,895	10	45	34	10	80.2	
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>59</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>88.2</b>	
	Northampton	198	11	42	39	8	81.1	
	State	72,898	11	45	35	9	81.0	
Year	Grade 7	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index	
2001	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>0</b>	N/A	
	Northampton	256	10	53	28	9		
	State	73,358	6	49	32	12		
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>		
	Northampton	278	17	59	19	4		
	State	76,913	9	55	28	8		
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>73</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>95.0</b>
	Northampton	238	11	62	21	5		89.4
	State	79,192	8	57	28	7		85.2
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98.6</b>	
	Northampton	265	10	68	19	3	91.4	
	State	77,138	9	59	25	7	86.4	

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 8 aggregates the same results for Grades 4 and 7 to show the percentages of students each year who scored in the Needs Improvement category or better and who scored in the Proficient category or better. In 2000 and 2001, the percentages of Hilltown students in the Proficient category or better were lower than those of Northampton and statewide students. Over the past three years, however, Hilltown students in the fourth and seventh grades have consistently outperformed their counterparts in Northampton and statewide.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Table 8. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 4 and 7 MCAS English Language Arts Results  
Percent Needs Improvement or Better and Percent Proficient or Better  
2000-2004**

Grade 4	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
Year						
2000	100	91	87	13	15	20
2001	100	89	89	33	53	51
2002	100	88	91	69	47	54
2003	95	88	89	71	57	55
2004	100	92	91	59	53	56

  

Grade 7	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
Year						
2001	100	91	87	83	63	55
2002	100	95	92	100	76	64
2003	100	94	93	80	73	65
2004	100	97	93	94	78	68

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

3. Hilltown’s results on the MCAS Mathematics exam have varied from year to year with no clear improvement trend. Similarly, the scores of students that move through grades at the school show no clear improvement trend. In most instances, Hilltown’s results have compared favorably with those of Northampton and the state.

The performance of fourth grade Hilltown students taking the MCAS Mathematics exam has varied from year to year. Their best performance was in 2002 when 38 percent scored in the Advanced category, 38 percent scored in the Proficient category, 25 percent scored in the Needs Improvement category, and no students scored in the Warning/Failing category. Students’ scores declined in 2003, with 18 percent (three students) scoring in the Warning/Failing category, and then improved again in 2004 with no students scoring in the Warning/Failing category and twelve percent (two students) scoring in the Advanced category. Reflecting these changes, the school’s Proficiency Index jumped from 73.5 in 2003 to 88.2 in 2004.

**Table 9. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 4 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2000-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2000	15	13	33	53	0	N/A
2001	18	6	28	56	11	
2002	16	38	38	25	0	
2003	17	6	35	41	18	73.5
2004	17	12	41	47	0	88.2

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Similarly, the performance of Hilltown’s sixth graders on the MCAS Mathematics exam has varied greatly. Scores were highest on the 2001 exam: 50 percent scored in the Proficient category and 38 percent scored in the Advanced category; no student scored in the Needs Improvement category, but 13 percent (2 students) scored in the Warning/Failing category. In subsequent years, the percentage of Hilltown students scoring in the Needs Improvement grew from 25 percent in 2002 to 33 percent in 2004; the percentage of Hilltown students scoring in the Warning/Failing category increased from six percent to 21 percent and then declined to six percent again in 2004. In 2003, Hilltown’s scores on the MCAS Mathematics exam reached their lowest point, with only 50 percent of sixth graders scoring in the Proficient category or above, 29 percent scoring in the Needs Improvement category, and 21 percent scoring in the Warning/Failing category. Hilltown’s Proficiency Index increased from 75 in 2003 to 84.7 in 2004.

**Table 10. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 6 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2001-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2001	16	38	50	0	13	N/A
2002	16	13	56	25	6	
2003	14	7	43	29	21	75.0
2004	18	28	33	33	6	84.7
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>						

Table 11 shows that Hilltown’s Grade 8 results on the MCAS Mathematics exam have also varied over the past three years, with the strongest performance in 2003 and the weakest in 2004. Accordingly, the school’s Proficiency Index declined from 92.2 in 2003 to 83.9 in 2004.

**Table 11. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 8 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2002-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2002	10	30	40	30	0	N/A
2003	16	31	56	6	6	92.2
2004	14	21	43	29	7	83.9
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>						

The MCAS Mathematics exam scores of Hilltown students do not show a clear improvement trend as the students move through grades at the school. Table 12 shows that in each set of comparisons, the percentage of students scoring in the Warning/Failing category has increased (although the increase from six percent to seven percent from the 2002 Grade 6 exam to the 2004 Grade 8 exam does not represent an increase in the number of students). Overall performance improved between the 2001 Grade 4 exam and the 2003 Grade 6 exam, but the percentage of students scoring in the Warning/Failing category also increased from 11 percent to 21 percent. Overall performance declined between the 2002 Grade 4 exams and the 2004 Grade 6 exams.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Overall performance improved for Hilltown students taking the Grade 4 exam in 2000, the Grade 6 exam in 2002, and the Grade 8 exam in 2004.

**Table 12. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Changes in MCAS Mathematics Results  
Grades 4–6-8  
2001-2004**

	2001 Grade 4	2003 Grade 6	2002 Grade 4	2004 Grade 6	2000 Grade 4	2002 Grade 6	2004 Grade 8
Advanced	6	7	38	28	13	13	21
Proficient	28	43	38	33	33	56	43
Needs Improvement	56	29	25	33	53	25	29
Warning/Failing	11	21	0	6	0	6	7

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 13 compares the MCAS Mathematics exam scores of Hilltown’s fourth grade students to those of their counterparts in Northampton and statewide. Overall, Hilltown students performed well in comparison with the others with the exception of their 2000 scores, which lagged behind those attained by Northampton fourth grader students. In 2001 and 2003, the percentages of Northampton and statewide students scoring in the Advanced category were higher than the percentage of Hilltown students scoring in the Advanced category. Nevertheless, Hilltown’s Proficiency Index results for 2003 and 2004 (73.5 and 88.2, respectively) were higher than those for Northampton and statewide students. Moreover, Hilltown’s Proficiency Index increased substantially from one year to the next, while Northampton’s Proficiency Index decreased from 70 to 69.1 and the state’s Proficiency Index increased from 72 to 74.

**Table 13. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 4 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2000-2004**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index
2000	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>0</b>	N/A
	Northampton	199	14	41	36	9	
	State	77,592	12	28	42	18	
2001	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>11</b>	
	Northampton	227	9	27	44	19	
	State	76,770	10	24	46	19	
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>0</b>	
	Northampton	219	12	32	38	18	
	State	75,855	12	27	42	19	
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>73.5</b>
	Northampton	239	18	24	36	22	70.0
	State	75,229	12	28	43	16	72.0
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>88.2</b>
	Northampton	197	11	23	48	19	69.1
	State	73,118	14	28	44	14	74.0

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

As shown in Table 14, which compares the percentages of students who passed the Grade 4 MCAS Mathematics exam with a score in the Needs Improvement category or better, Hilltown students surpassed Northampton and statewide students every year except 2003, when the statewide results essentially matched the school's results. However, when the percentages of fourth grade students attaining scores of Proficient or better are compared, Northampton students outperformed Hilltown students in three of the five years (2000, 2001, and 2003), whereas Hilltown students outperformed statewide students in four of the five years (2000, 2002, 2003, and 2004).

**Table 14. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, District, and State Grade 4 MCAS Mathematics Results Percent Needs Improvement or Better and Percent Proficient or Better 2000-2004**

Year	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
2000	99	91	82	46	55	40
2001	90	80	80	34	36	34
2002	100	82	81	76	44	39
2003	82	78	83	41	42	40
2004	100	82	86	53	34	42

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 15 shows the Hilltown's Grade 6 results on the MCAS Mathematics exam. Hilltown's sixth grade students consistently outperformed their counterparts in Northampton and statewide during the period under review. Again, Hilltown's Proficiency Index increased significantly from 2003 to 2004 (from 75 to 84.7), whereas Northampton's Proficiency Index declined (from 63.4 to 59.3) and the state's Proficiency Index increased slightly (from 68 to 68.4) during the same period.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Table 15. Comparison of Hilltown Charter School, State, and District  
Grade 6 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2001-2004**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index
2001	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13</b>	N/A
	Northampton	260	12	30	35	23	
	State	77,682	13	23	30	33	
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>6</b>	
	Northampton	227	7	35	33	25	
	State	78,767	13	28	29	30	
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>75.0</b>
	Northampton	248	6	23	42	29	63.4
	State	77,899	16	26	32	26	68.0
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>84.7</b>
	Northampton	228	6	24	37	33	59.3
	State	76,435	17	26	32	25	68.4

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

The school's strong performance on the Grade 6 MCAS Mathematics exams relative to Northampton and the state is confirmed by the results shown in Table 16. Although Hilltown's results varied considerably during the four-year period, Hilltown students consistently outperformed Northampton and statewide students with respect to the percentage of sixth grade students scoring in the Needs Improvement category or better and the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient category or better.

**Table 16. Comparison of Hilltown Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 6 MCAS Mathematics Results  
Percent Needs Improvement or Better  
and Percent Proficient or Better  
2001-2004**

Year	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
2001	<b>88</b>	77	66	<b>88</b>	42	36
2002	<b>94</b>	75	70	<b>69</b>	42	41
2003	<b>79</b>	71	74	<b>50</b>	29	48
2004	<b>94</b>	67	75	<b>61</b>	30	43

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Finally, as shown in Table 17, Hilltown students have outperformed their counterparts in Northampton and statewide on the Grade 8 MCAS Mathematics exam by substantial margins over the past three years. Although Hilltown's Proficiency Index did decline by approximately eight points from 2003 to 2004 (92.2 to 83.9), its 2004 Proficiency Index remains more than 10 points higher than Northampton's (72.4) and almost 18 points higher than the state's (65).

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Table 17. Comparison of Hilltown Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 8 MCAS Mathematics Results  
2002-2004**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficiency Index
2002	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>0</b>	N/A
	Northampton	266	9	33	30	28	
	State	75,362	11	23	33	33	
2003	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>92.2</b>
	Northampton	284	11	36	30	24	71.2
	State	78,456	12	25	30	33	63.2
2004	<b>Hilltown</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>83.9</b>
	Northampton	237	14	33	35	18	72.4
	State	78,691	13	26	32	29	65.0

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 18 shows that even though the performance of Hilltown students on the MCAS Mathematics exam has varied, Hilltown students have consistently outperformed Northampton and statewide students with respect to the percentage of students scoring in the Needs Improvement category or better and the percentage of students scoring in the Proficient category or better on this exam.

**Table 18. Comparison of Hilltown Charter School, District, and State  
Grade 8 MCAS Mathematics Results  
Percent Needs Improvement or Better  
and Percent Proficient or Better  
2002-2004**

Year	Needs Improvement or Better			Proficient or Better		
	Hilltown	Northampton	State	Hilltown	Northampton	State
2002	<b>100</b>	72	67	<b>70</b>	42	34
2003	<b>93</b>	77	67	<b>87</b>	47	37
2004	<b>93</b>	82	71	<b>64</b>	57	39

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

- Hilltown students have exhibited strong performance in the two years that Grade 5 students have taken the MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering exam, outperforming their counterparts in Northampton and statewide by substantial margins.**

As Table 19 shows, Hilltown students have performed very well on the Grade 5 MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering exam for the two years the exam has been administered. The six percent listed in the Warning/Failing category represents one student with an unexcused absence for the exam. The school's Proficiency Index increased from 91.2 in 2003 to 95.8 in 2004.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Table 19. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Grade 5 MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering Results  
2003-2004**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2003	17	41	41	12	6	91.2
2004	18	28	61	11	0	95.8

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

Table 20 shows that Hilltown students have outperformed both Northampton students and statewide students each year on the exam by substantial margins.

**Table 20. Comparison of Hilltown Cooperative Charter School, State, and District  
Grade 5 MCAS Science and Technology/Engineering Results  
2003-2004**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/Failing	Proficiency Index
2003	Hilltown	17	41	41	12	6	91.2
	Northampton	220	23	28	39	10	77.8
	State	76,903	18	33	34	15	76.7
2004	Hilltown	18	28	61	11	0	95.8
	Northampton	240	21	37	33	9	81.4
	State	74,605	20	35	33	12	78.7

Note: The six percent of Hilltown students in the Warning/Failing column in 2003 represents one unexcused absence. Unexcused absences accounted for one percent of the nine percent of Northampton students in the Warning/Failing column in 2004.

*Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data*

**5. The school has not prepared individual student success plans for students who have scored in the Warning/Failing category of the MCAS exams.**

Although the Team found that Hilltown analyzes MCAS results and seeks to address the needs of students and any weaknesses in its curriculum, the Team learned that Hilltown does not prepare individual student success plans (ISSPs) for students who have scored in the Warning/Failing category of the MCAS exams. The school's Education Coordinator reported that the school does plan to develop ISSPs for such students.

**OTHER ASSESSMENTS**

**6. Hilltown administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills annually to students in the third grade and in the fifth through eighth grades. With the exception of the Grade 3 language test, students generally attain high scores on the tests. Student scores increase as they move through grades at the school.**

Hilltown administers the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) each year to students in Grades 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8. As shown in Table 21, students generally score comparatively high, as indicated by the percentile rank of average standard scores, which are national school norms. The consistent exception has been Hilltown's Grade 3 language scores. As was true for Hilltown's MCAS

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

scores, the low number of students tested in each grade each year (ranging from 10 to 18) can have a disproportionate impact on Hilltown’s ITBS percentile ranks.

**Table 21. Iowa Test of Basic Skills Results  
Percentile Rank of Average Standard Score  
National School Norms  
Grades 3, 5 – 8  
2000 - 2004**

Academic Year					
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
<b>Grade 3</b>					
Reading Total	93	95	93	98	96
Language Total	48	71	67	42	59
Math Total	98	95	78	88	63
Core Total	89	91	85	83	81
<b>Grade 5</b>					
Reading Total	93	98	97	99	91
Language Total	79	78	84	94	83
Math Total	90	77	94	99	82
Core Total	92	88	92	98	86
<b>Grade 6</b>					
Reading Total	99	99	92	96	99
Language Total	99	99	94	89	99
Math Total	97	86	64	95	99
Core Total	99	97	87	94	99
<b>Grade 7</b>					
Reading Total	N/A	99	99	99	99
Language Total		99	96	97	94
Math Total		95	92	90	99
Core Total		99	96	95	98
<b>Grade 8</b>					
Reading Total	N/A	99	99	99	99
Language Total		97	95	99	99
Math Total		99	98	97	97
Core Total		99	98	99	99
<i>Data Source: Hilltown Charter Renewal Application</i>					

Tracking classes of students over time as they progress through Hilltown reveals an improvement trend. For the classes that graduated in the years 2003 through 2005, the ITBS percentile rank of graduating students averaged 97 percent or better in all areas tested.

- A large majority of Hilltown students tested annually have shown gains in their reading and writing assessment scores, some by considerable amounts. Hilltown has consistently met its Accountability Plan objective for reading improvement, but met its objective for writing improvement in only the first of the five years reviewed.**

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Hilltown uses a variety of student achievement measures. For reading, the school used the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA or Steiglitz) for three school years (1999-2000 through 2001-2002) and the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test for the last two years. Table 22 shows the percentage of students in each category of results measured on these tests. Most students showed improvement during the course of the year, and some of the gains were considerable.

**Table 22. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Reading Assessment Scores in Percent  
2000 - 2004**

Academic Year					
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
<b>Developmental Reading Assessment</b>					
Exceeded Top Level	6	14	13	N/A	
> 1 Level Gain	44	44	51		
1 Level Gain	40	27	29		
No Gain	10	15	7		
<b>Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test</b>					
Post High School	N/A			N/A	29
> 3 Years Progress				30	25
2-3 Years Progress				25	22
1-2 Years Progress				30	11
0-1 Year Progress				10	11
Lost Progress				4	2
<i>Data Source: Hilltown Charter Renewal Application</i>					

Hilltown uses an internal writing assessment process following written guidelines for administration and scoring student papers. The papers do not identify the authors and are scored by teams of two teachers following scoring rubrics. The results of the assessments over the past five years, presented in Table 23, show that most students have gained at least one level, based on their writing assessment scores. In 1999-2000, the largest percentage of Hilltown students gained one level or more (82 percent); the lowest percentage gaining one level or more (63 percent) was in 2003-2004.

**Table 23. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Writing Assessment Scores in Percent  
2000 - 2004**

Academic Year					
	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
> 1 Level Gain	41	70	59	49	40
1 Level Gain	41	3	16	26	23
No Gain	9	9	7	12	17
1 Level Loss	9	18	18	13	20
<i>Data Source: Hilltown Charter Renewal Application</i>					

Hilltown's current Accountability Plan contains the following objective:

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

- “Eighty percent of students will show improvement in reading and writing by increasing at least one level on the appropriate assessment tool.”

The data in the previous Table 22 show that the school has met its objective for reading improvement in each of the past five years. The percentage of students demonstrating reading improvement by at least one level has ranged from a low of 85 percent in 2000-2001 to a high of 93 percent in 2001-2002.

However, the previous Table 23 shows that the school met its objective for writing only in 1999-2000. Since then, between 25 and 37 percent of students have shown no reading improvement or have declined by one level, with the lowest achievement in reading reported in 2003-2004.

**8. A majority of Hilltown students have shown gains in their mathematics scores, based on an internal assessment tool developed by the school.**

Hilltown’s current Accountability Plan contains the following objective:

- “Eighty percent of students will show improvement in math computation and problem solving by increasing their score on the developmentally appropriate assessment tool.”

In 2000, Hilltown developed a math assessment tool that identifies improvement levels in terms of percentage gains. Results reported by the school for each year since the math assessment tool was implemented, presented in Table 24, show that most students make gains in mathematics each year as measured by Hilltown’s assessment tool.

**Table 24. Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Percent of Students Demonstrating Level Gains  
In Mathematics Assessment Scores  
2002 - 2004**

Level	Academic Year		
	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04
0 – 10% Gain	7	10	12
10 – 20% Gain	11	13	24
20 – 30% Gain	24	15	27
30% or more Gain	57	62	37

*Data Source: Hilltown Charter Renewal Application*

Hilltown has recently revised its mathematics developmental competencies and is revising its assessment tools and plans to set goals for the level of student achievement beyond simple improvement.

**CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

**9. Hilltown’s curriculum is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and competencies have been defined for each grade. There is a scope and sequence for**

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**Mathematics as well as for Social Studies. The Science scope and sequence is almost complete, and the school will next prepare a scope and sequence for English Language Arts. For the most part, the Team observed effective instructional methods and adequate resources in use at the school.**

Hilltown has worked over the years to develop a curriculum that is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and yet allows teachers to use the emergent curriculum approach on which the school was founded. The school has adopted the frameworks around which it structures daily lessons; it has also developed competencies in the subject areas. Hilltown is still in the process of formalizing a scope and sequence in each subject areas to ensure that students master material as they move through grades at the school.

The Team observed every classroom during its visit. Classes ranged in size from eight to 19 students, and most classes were staffed by one or two paraprofessionals in addition to the teacher. The school uses multi-grade classrooms with exception of the sixth grade. In the cases of the English Language Arts and Mathematics classes observed, instruction was split so that instruction was provided to one grade level at a time; in other academic areas, students from the two grade levels were presented the same material. To prevent repetition of lessons, the curriculum for these areas was organized in a two-year cycle. It was evident to the Team that the arts are integrated into many areas of the curriculum, consistent with Hilltown's mission.

Each teacher provided the Team with a lesson plan for the day; each lesson plan contained specific objectives and was clear, comprehensive, and related to the state frameworks. The Team observed that each class was well organized and began with the teacher presenting the concept or skill through a lecture/demonstration format, followed in most instances by independent or small group work. Teachers elicited student feedback to ensure that expectations were understood and directed questions to keep all students involved. Students listened respectfully, and most were observed to be on task during class.

Instruction was not differentiated; expectations were the same for all students. Teachers and paraprofessionals did move around the room as students performed individual and group work, checking for understanding and providing remediation and encouragement as necessary. Most classes closed with group summaries or reflections. In a math class, one student was observed working alone doing self-paced algebra work.

The whole-class instruction approach is in keeping with the school's strong sense of community, its culture of respect and its nurturing environment. However, the lack of differentiation may mean that some students are not appropriately challenged.

Classrooms were observed to be orderly and well managed by teachers. The teachers uniformly displayed non-coercive techniques to manage student behavior. Students understood behavioral expectations. Respect and kindness were displayed between teachers and students and among students. Classrooms were physically organized to facilitate the school's approach of providing large group instruction followed by individual or small group work. In most classes students moved efficiently from one activity to another, indicating their understanding of school routines.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

All classrooms contained the materials necessary to support the lesson, and the atelier (art studio) was especially well supplied. Students knew where resources were and efficiently worked at their assignments. There were few textbooks or other commercially prepared materials in evidence; teachers primarily presented lessons on a white board, and students worked on worksheets and wrote in journals. This absence of textbooks is consistent with the school's emergent curriculum approach.

There were a few computers in each classroom, but none were observed to be in use or even turned on. Teachers reported that these computers were outdated. The school has a computer lab, and the Team observed that a math class for seventh and eighth graders made effective use of a projection from a graphing calculator. A videotape was shown in a world language class. Otherwise, use of technology was not apparent to the Team.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 2:  
IS THE SCHOOL A VIABLE ORGANIZATION?**

- 1. Hilltown's Board of Trustees is actively engaged in school governance, encouraging broad participation by other members of the school community and using a collaborative process to reach decisions by consensus. Documentation of Board discussions and decisions is detailed, informative, and extensive. Board minutes do not indicate whether Board members who have had a financial interest in matters before the Board have recused themselves from discussions of such matters, as required by the state conflict of interest law and the school's by-laws. In one instance, the Board's reason for convening an executive session is unclear.**

The Board of Trustees is actively engaged in governance of the school. Minutes of the Board's meetings, which are held regularly throughout the school year, show that Board members are well informed and that they devote substantial time and care to matters involving school policy, finance, education, and management. As discussed in the "Setting" section of this report, Hilltown is organized into four domains: the Board of Trustees (all of whom are community members and/or parents), the Education Domain (comprised of the school's Education Coordinator, all teachers, and all teaching assistants), the Administrative Domain (comprised of the Administrative Coordinator and administrative staff), and the Community Domain (comprised of the school's Community Coordinator, two parent representatives, families, and all members of the governing cooperative). A Domain Council, comprised of the President of the Board of Trustees and three domain coordinators, drafts the annual budget, develops major school policies, and oversees cross-domain issues. The three Domain Coordinators report directly to the Board, which evaluates their performance. The Board's Finance Committee meets monthly, the entire Board receives quarterly reports comparing budgeted to actual expenses, and the entire Board receives and reviews the independent auditors' report on the school's financial statements each year. Other Board committees include Board Development, Personnel, Admissions, and Site. The Board receives information and recommendations from Domain Coordinators and the Domain Council.

Board members are committed to the school's consensus model for decision-making and articulated the advantages of this approach to Team. The Board takes pride in the fact that it has

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

only had to resort to voting four times in the nine-year history of the school. Training is provided each year to new Board members and other interested persons in the community. Such training enables these individuals to become familiar and comfortable with the consensus process. Consistent with the school's commitment to broad participation and collaborative decision-making, important issues are taken to the entire school community, sometimes through surveys.

The Board maintains extensive documentation of its work in the form of detailed meeting minutes, memoranda to the Board, memoranda produced by Board committees, e-mails, and other communications among Board and staff members. The documentation creates a public record of the Board's discussions and decisions, thereby promoting transparency and accountability.

Notes to Hilltown's audited financial statements disclosed the following related-party transactions with Board members:

- In fiscal year 2001, the school paid \$5,658 to Board members for instructional and physical plant services.
- In fiscal year 2002, the school paid \$11,242 to Board members for instructional and physical plant services.
- In fiscal year 2003, the school paid one Board member's relative \$18,468; the school paid another Board member \$11,960 for teaching services; and the school paid two board members \$3,215 in per diem wages for instructional services.

The Board's by-laws prohibit Board members from participating in any discussions of matters that may result in their financial gain. The by-laws state:

Trustees will not participate in any decision which may result in their financial gain. They must recuse themselves from discussions about such decisions, save to provide factual information about the issue. Any Trustee who gains financially from the school shall disclose this to the Board, in accordance with State law.

Board meeting minutes reviewed by the Team documented a 2002 meeting at which the Administrative Coordinator reminded Board members that any members with a conflict of interest were required to recuse themselves. As noted previously, the Board makes most decisions by consensus rather than by vote, so the minutes do not record which Board members participated in discussions and decisions in most instances, nor do the minutes record any Board members' recusals.

The school's by-laws prohibit permanent Hilltown employees from serving on the Board. Recently, the Board considered a proposal to allow school staff to serve on the Board of Directors; however, school officials reported to the Team that this proposal was tabled. If such a proposal were approved, the inclusion of staff members on the Board could undermine independent, effective governance.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

The school provided minutes of executive sessions held by the Board in 2003 and 2004. In one instance, an executive session held on October 8, 2003, the justification for convening a closed executive session is unclear. Based on the executive session minutes, the topics discussed and materials reviewed by the Board at that meeting did not appear to meet the requirements of the state's open meeting law for convening an executive session.

**2. Hilltown provides a safe, supportive learning environment for students. The school climate is characterized by a strong sense of community, an equally strong culture of respect, and considerable shared commitment to the school.**

Focus groups interviewed by the Team confirmed that Hilltown is a caring and supportive community of learners. The small size of the school enables students to know one another by name and enables all teachers to know all students. Students routinely receive lots of positive feedback. The school teaches them to negotiate rather than confront, and they are welcomed within and across age groups. The Special Education students are also welcomed into the school community, just as the other students are. One parent reported her child had needed an individualized education program (IEP) in his previous school but that he had not needed an IEP in the Hilltown environment.

Board members, administrators, teachers, parents, and students all expressed a commitment to Hilltown and its philosophy. Hilltown's open access policy encourages parents to visit and volunteer in their children's classes; as a result, teachers know the parents. In its Application for Renewal, the school reported a 95 percent volunteer rate. The school also reported that 87 percent of parents who responded to a satisfaction survey in the spring of 2004 agreed that there is a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families at Hilltown.

The Team observed that interactions at the school are respectful, while behavior problems are minimal. The school undertakes many community-building activities and structures, including, for example, weekly whole school assemblies, four-week mini-courses (open to all students), *Il Teatro* (a multi-age talent show), multi-grade classes, and an eighth grade final project event to which all are invited.

Hilltown teachers told the Team that they share the school's philosophy and support its culture. The school hires new teachers through a rigorous process that helps ensure an appropriate fit with the school. Each prospective teacher is either observed teaching in his or her current school or asked to develop and deliver a sample lesson plan at Hilltown. Parents, administrators, and teachers are all involved in the selection decision. Hilltown's teachers work closely together during times set aside for professional development – five days at the beginning of the year, three days during the year, once a month on a Wednesday afternoon, and five days at the end of the year. Teachers reported that they find the Hilltown community supportive and that they appreciate parents' involvement in the school.

Hilltown's Education Coordinator works closely with the teachers, who told the Team that the Education Coordinator had facilitated a brainstorming and prioritizing process to help the

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

teachers set professional development goals. Parents, students, and school administrators participate in teacher evaluations.

Teachers and teaching assistants are well educated, and most are certified and experienced. Ten of the 13 teachers hold graduate degrees, ten teachers are certified in Massachusetts, and nine teachers have more than 10 years teaching experience. (Four of these have more than 25 years experience.) According to DOE teacher data for 2003-2004, 79.2 percent of Hilltown's teachers were licensed in their teaching assignments, and 60.2 percent of core academic teachers were identified as highly qualified. All teaching assistants have at least a bachelor's degree.

There is little teacher turnover despite a pay scale that is below area averages. The average teacher tenure at the school is five years. Three teachers have been at the school for nine or more years; three have been there for two or fewer years.

Students reported feeling safe and secure at the school, and parents expressed the same sentiments about their children's safety. One safety issue noted by the Team concerned access to the school by outsiders. The school shares space in the building with several businesses, and there are several unmonitored access points into the school, all of which were open during the Team's visit.

Hilltown was confronted with a significant air quality issue during the 2002-2003 school year, when testing revealed the presence of metals in dust within the building. The school investigated the problem in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Labor, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and private consultants. The school's landlord hired a metals remediation and abatement company to clean the school, after which the school hired an environmental consultant to test the air quality. Tests performed in August 2003 and January 2004 found metal levels to be undetectable or well below acceptable limits.

**3. Hilltown's audited financial statements show that the school's financial condition is sound. The school's net assets equal approximately one-third of the school's annual operating expenses, although the school's net asset balance is at its lowest point in five years.**

The Team reviewed Hilltown's audited financial statements for fiscal years 2001, 2002, and 2003. The school has used the same audit firm since the school was first chartered in 1995. The auditors' reports accompanying the audited financial statements for 2002 and 2003 included unqualified opinions about the financial statements. The 2001 report was qualified, but the qualification was limited to a concern about the omission of certain statements using the forms prescribed by the State Auditor.

The most recent audited financial statements show that the school has a substantial net asset balance; as of June 30, 2003, the school's net assets totaled \$411,809, which is roughly equal to one-third of the school's annual operating expense. According to the reports, the school experienced losses in two of the past five years: \$57,013 in 2003 and \$4,999 in 2001. Hilltown's current net asset balance is lower than it has been in the previous four years.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

Hilltown provided the Team with copies of four reports to management received from the auditors in 1999, 2001, 2002 and 2003. The reports for 2001, 2002, and 2003 indicated that all prior-year comments were resolved within one year except for one 2001 comment that was resolved in 2003.

One issue that could have significant financial implications for the school and will require careful planning concerns the school's long-term facility requirements. The school's Application for Renewal notes that the current facility lacks play space, is co-located with numerous businesses, and is administered by an absentee landlord. The Board is addressing this issue. It has extended the school's lease for two years, through June 30, 2006, with an option to renew for an additional five years. As noted in the "Setting" section of this report, the school has recently issued a request for proposals for a new facility.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 3:  
IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF ITS CHARTER?**

**1. Hilltown actively pursues its three-part mission statement adopted in 2003.**

In May 2003, half-way through the five-year charter period, the Board of Trustees approved a new Strategic Plan for the school. The Strategic Plan included a new mission statement with three components:

- To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking and a joy of learning.
- To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- To cultivate children's individual voices and shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

The Team found that Hilltown community members – including the Board, staff, students, and parents – are committed to the school's mission and are actively engaged in activities that serve the school's mission.

For example, the Team observed hands-on activities in the classrooms, such as sorting materials collected from a fieldtrip to learn about Native Americans, making a battery and testing it out, learning to physically move "sharply" and "smoothly," and painting landscapes with watercolor techniques the students had learned. Students in one class were clearly excited about beginning a unit on world religions. Students and teachers described interdisciplinary studies, especially arts integration in the curriculum; students discussed the importance of the arts at school. Parents reported that their children were eager to return to Hilltown each fall.

Hilltown's strong sense of community was apparent throughout the school and in the focus group interviews conducted by the Team. Moreover, the school environment clearly valued individual

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

voice and shared respect: parents reported their delight in seeing their students “perform” in front of groups with no fear and their children’s ability to talk easily with adults and students in other grades. The Team found students in the student focus group to be very articulate and thoughtful in their responses to questions. Respectful interactions were observed throughout the two-day visit.

**2. Hilltown has generally performed well on the student performance objectives stated in its Accountability Plan, but it has not tracked results on two of the stated objectives.**

Hilltown’s current Accountability Plan lists eight goals, each of which is accompanied by a set of specific objectives as well as a list of activities to be undertaken in the pursuit of each objective. The first goal is “[t]o show evidence of student academic progress,” and there are seven objectives listed under this goal, four of which relate directly to student performance. The four objectives related to student performance are as follows:

1. Eighty percent of students will gain at least one level holistically on each of the academic rubrics (reading, writing, math, science, and social studies).
2. Eighty percent of students will show improvement in reading and writing by increasing at least one level on the appropriate assessment tool.
3. Eighty percent of students will show improvement in math computation and problem solving by increasing their score on the developmentally appropriate assessment tool.
4. Eighty percent of students will gain at least one level holistically on each of the creative competency rubrics (atelier, music/movement, HCCS Community Values, social skills, work habits).

As reported above under Renewal Question 2, Hilltown has met the second and third of the above-listed objectives. However, the school has not reported on its progress in meeting the first and fourth of the above-listed objective in its Application for Renewal or in its annual reports. When asked about this omission, the school’s Education Coordinator confirmed that the school has not tracked its success on these objectives. In a written response provided to the Team, he stated the following with respect to Objectives 1 and 4:

The rubrics are used on report cards and were never designed to be used as a measure of group success, but rather to communicate descriptive information to parents regarding student performance at school. Many children make progress without gaining levels on these rubrics. Therefore we have never reported data on this goal in the academic section of our annual report.

If the rubrics were never designed to be used as a measure of group success, it is unclear why they were included as performance objectives in Hilltown’s Accountability Plan.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

The other three student performance objectives listed under the first goal of the Accountability Plan focus on assisting Grade 8 students with development of a portfolio and culminating project designed to demonstrate mastery of identified competencies, regularly informing parents of student progress, and having students participate in state-mandated assessment programs. The school has met these three performance objectives.

**3. Hilltown has actively pursued the other goals and objectives stated in its Accountability Plan with reasonable success.**

Listed below are the other goals and objectives included in Hilltown's Accountability Plan.

- Shared Student and School Performance Objectives
  - Goal 1: All members of HCCS will develop cooperative social relationships.
  - Goal 2: To incorporate multi-age learning experiences throughout our academic and social curriculum.
  - Goal 3: To be actively engaged in our local community.
  
- School Performance Objectives
  - Goal 1: To maintain a working balance between an emergent curriculum and the MA curriculum frameworks.
  - Goal 2: To ensure that Expressive Arts integration continues as a focus of the school philosophy and curriculum design.
  - Goal 3: To provide opportunity for parent involvement in all aspects of the school community.
  - Goal 4: To further develop and refine our commitment to inclusion and consensus as the basis for our governance.

As the previous sections of this report make clear, Hilltown has actively pursued each of the above-listed goals with reasonable success.

**4. Hilltown has engaged in numerous activities to disseminate information about its best practices.**

Each year, Hilltown has taken steps to disseminate information about models for replication and best practices. These efforts have contributed to the professional development of Hilltown staff. Some examples of these dissemination efforts include the following:

- In 2000-2001, the school received a Massachusetts Charter School dissemination grant to develop a training videotape on Hilltown's Conversation Guided Curriculum. The videotape was used in workshops for educators.
  
- In 2002, the Prisms class (grades seven and eight) was selected by the Annenberg Foundation for Public Broadcasting as one of ten schools in the country to be a demonstration class for a teacher training video on arts integration in middle schools. The film is scheduled for release in 2005.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

- In the summer of 2004, one Hilltown teacher was selected by the DOE as the sole public school teacher in the state to participate as a mentor teacher in a curriculum development project funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.
- Hilltown staff have presented workshops each year at the Massachusetts Charter School Association's annual conferences and have posted papers on the Association's website.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 4:  
IF THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER IS RENEWED,  
WHAT ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?**

**1. The Accountability Plan proposed by Hilltown establishes clear and appropriate goals, each of which is supported by multiple, outcome-focused measures.**

Hilltown's proposed Accountability Plan for 2004-2009 is more concise than its current Accountability Plan: rather than listing numerous objectives and activities under each goal, the proposed Accountability Plan lists two or three measures by which progress toward each goal will be assessed. The goals, which are clearly stated and appropriate to the school's mission, are organized into three sections: academic success, organizational viability, and faithfulness to charter. The measures supporting each goal are specific and quantifiable, and they focus on expected outcomes rather than measuring inputs or outputs. For example, Goal 1 relating to academic success is as follows: "All HCCS [Hilltown Cooperative Charter School] students will demonstrate competency as indicated by external measures in the curricular areas of Math, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology." Three quantifiable measures supporting the goal are listed:

- a. Each grade, 3-8 will score in the top quartile (76-99 National Percentiles) annually in the tested curricular areas of Reading, Language, Math, and Core Total on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills.
- b. Grades 3-8 will meet Adequate Yearly Progress in Math, Reading, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.
- c. Ninety percent of all third graders will test annually at or above grade level as measured by the Gates MacGinitie Reading Assessment during the spring evaluation session.

With respect to organizational viability, Hilltown's proposed Accountability Plan contains three goals reflecting the school's commitment to maintaining its financial viability, continuing its consensus-based governance approach, and implementing the strategic plan adopted in 2003. Again, the measure or measures supporting each goal are specific and operational. For example, Goal 2 relating to organizational viability states: "[The] Board of Trustees will continue to develop policies and procedures using the inclusive governance structure that is in place." The two measures supporting this goal are as follows:

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

- a. BOT decisions will be made by consensus at least 90% of the time as indicated in the BOT minutes.
- b. Community input will be sought via meetings, surveys, or focus groups prior to all major policy changes as indicated in BOT minutes.

The goals relating to faithfulness to charter stated in the proposed Accountability Plan are consistent with the school's mission to promote the academic progress of Hilltown students, to create and sustain a cooperative and intimate school community, and to foster the participation of stakeholders in guiding the future of the school. For example, Goal 3 relating to faithfulness to charter states: "The community will guide and support the school." The three measures supporting this goal are as follows:

- a. 100% of families will be actively involved in the school through membership in its consensus based governing structures, participation in community meetings, and/or participation in the activities in its classrooms.
- b. Class meetings and family conferences will be attended by 95% of school families.
- c. Community compacts will be signed by 90% of families.

**2. Hilltown is pursuing relocation of the school.**

As previously noted, Hilltown is currently examining relocation options. The school's Application for Renewal notes that the current facility lacks play space, is co-located with numerous businesses, and is administered by an absentee landlord. The Board has extended its current lease for two years (through June 30, 2006), during which time it hopes to lease a new facility. It has also issued a request for proposals for new space. If the school does not successfully identify an affordable and appropriate alternative to its current location, the Board can extend the current lease under the stated terms for an additional five years, provided that it exercises the extension option by June 30, 2005.

**3. Hilltown's Strategic Plan will provide valuable guidance to the Board of Trustees and other members of the Hilltown community over the coming years.**

The school has invested substantial time and effort in developing a Strategic Plan setting forth the priorities and action goals that will serve as a road map for the school over the next decade. As summarized in Hilltown's Application for Renewal, the Strategic Plan reflects the following school priorities for the next five years:

- Seek alternate physical space to better meet the needs of our program.
- Evaluate our seventh and eighth grade program.
- Create an integrated and coordinated system of fundraising.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

- Review our governance system including consideration of potential student participation.
- Continue to refine and deepen our pedagogical approach.
- Review our Foreign Language and Physical Education programs and make recommendations for improvements and alterations.
- Improve our documentation of various decisions made by all Domains.

Along with the Strategic Plan, the Board approved a statement of the school's pedagogical approach entitled Critical Elements of Classroom Practice. This document establishes a set of guidelines for the school's learning environment, curriculum, and relationships among teachers, staff, students, parents, and local community members. According to the school's Application for Renewal, the Critical Elements of Classroom Practice help to guide the school in fulfilling the action goals delineated in the Strategic Plan.

The Strategic Plan itself is well organized, detailed, and actionable. Hilltown's Board of Trustees, staff, and other members of the school community have reached consensus on the prioritized action goals set forth in the plan. Judging by the school's academic progress, organizational viability, and commitment to the principles expressed in its mission statement, Hilltown has the capacity necessary to implement its Strategic Plan in the coming years.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

**APPENDIX A: SCHEDULE OF THE RENEWAL INSPECTION VISIT**

Time	Monday			Tuesday		
8:00	8:00 Orientation and meeting with School Leaders (Wayne, Doug, Bill)			7:45 Meet with School Leaders 8:15 Meet with Parent Focus Group (Wayne, Doug, Bill)		
9:00	9:15 Blues 1 <sup>st</sup> grade Language Arts Doug/ Balsamo	9:15 Blues Kindergarten Language Arts Wayne/ Farkas	9:00 Purples 6 <sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts Bill/ Kennedy	9:15 Prisms 7 <sup>th</sup> or 8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Doug/ Percival	9:15 Oranges 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Wayne/ Moran	9:15 Blues 1 <sup>st</sup> grade Math Bill/Balsam & Farkas
10:00	10:00 Reds 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Movement or Music Doug/ Schultz	10:00 Meet with SPED Coordinator Wayne/ Figgie	9:45 Oranges 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts Bill/Moran	10:00 Atelier with Oranges Doug/ Loomis	10:15 Prisms 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Wayne/ VanBeckum	10:30 Purples 6 <sup>th</sup> grade Math Bill/ Kennedy
11:00	10:45 Prisms 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> grade Social Studies Doug/ VanBeckum	10:45 Prisms 7 <sup>th</sup> /8 <sup>th</sup> grade Language Arts Wayne/ Percival	10:30 Atelier with Yellows Bill/Loomis	11:00 Reds 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Science Doug/Boyer	11:00 Greens 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Language Arts Wayne/ Zulawski	11:00 Yellows 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> Grade Social Studies Bill/Loomis
12:00	Meeting with School Leaders			Meeting with Charter School Office Leader		
1:00	1:00 Yellows 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Project Time Doug/Yolles	1:00 Greens 2 <sup>nd</sup> /3 <sup>rd</sup> grade Math Bill/ Zulawski	Meet with Business and Finance Wayne/ Aaron	1:00 Reds 4 <sup>th</sup> /5 <sup>th</sup> Grade Math Bill/Boyer	Student Focus Group Doug and Wayne	
2:00	Meet with members of the Board of Trustees			2:15 All School Gathering		
3:15	Meet with teachers					