

THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

School Board Update

Executive Summary

July 9, 2009

Mission

The mission of The Community Public Charter School is to provide an alternative and innovative learning environment, using the arts, to help children in grades six through eight learn in ways that match their learning styles; developing the whole child intellectually, emotionally, physically, and socially. Seeking to serve students who have not succeeded in school, the program will close their achievement gap by offering a balance of literacy tutorials and the arts-infused curriculum.

Goals

- Expand opportunities for students who have not been successful in school, using the arts as a means of increasing literacy skills, and as a means of expression, discovery, invention and reflection;
- Create an intimate educational setting designed to engage and empower each student to think critically, creatively and reflectively;
- Provide opportunities for students to achieve in literary, performing, and visual arts;
- Design extensive process-oriented activities that result in a balance of process and product;
- Integrate educational experiences within the community and solicit active involvement from parents and others;
- Provide quality instruction by engaging and retaining a team of dedicated teachers and professional artists;
- Give students the skills to pursue their own goals and evaluate their own performance;
- Encourage family involvement as a contributor to success;
- Improve student achievement in gaining the skills and knowledge defined by the Virginia Standards of Learning so that 100% of students pass the SOL tests by 2011;
- Teach students to think like artists.

Students

The school opened on August 20th anticipating enrollment to be 30 students. Prior to opening, two students choose to attend other local private schools and one student moved to another district. Thus, we opened with 27 students and maintained that through the ten day enrollment mark. Enrollment adjustments were made through the first semester with 5 students transferring back to their home schools and one new student added at the end of the first nine weeks. Second semester enrollment remained constant at 23 students through the end of the year. Projected enrollment for 2009 – 2010 is 36 students.

Burley	3
Jouett	7
Henley	5
Sutherland	3
Walton	7

Male	Female
16	9

The Community Public Charter School Program is designed for struggling learners.

CHARTER SCHOOL OF ALBEMARLE COUNTY

The Community Public Charter School provides an alternative and innovative program for students in grades 6-8.

434-972-1607

The Community Public Charter School used the following characteristics when considering applications. Students who might:

- be one or more years behind in reading and/or math
- learn differently from how school is traditionally taught
- lack motivation to do well in school
- experience difficulties with peers
- have poor organizational skills
- show an interest in learning through the arts
- thrive in a smaller middle school environment
- perform better with more active, experiential, hands-on-learning

Relationships

The school provided introductory training in Choice Theory and Choices systems at CPCS to teachers hired during the 2nd semester.

Class sizes remained at 12 students or below, with 2-3 adults per classroom in the morning and 1-2 in the afternoons.

In the last 9 Weeks, CPCS established a school-wide goal to end the year with positive relationships with all community members and provided direction and professional development to novice teachers in strategies like differentiation by content and the 2 x 10 – a strategy through which a teacher makes it a point to improve a relationship with a struggling learner by talking with him or her outside of class for 2 minutes a day for 10 straight school days.

The school's small size (class size of 12) and community building programs are designed to support the development of solid and meaningful relationships between students, teachers, parents, and other stakeholders. The school incorporates activities to build a strong school identity and promote a sense of belonging. Students are well known by their teachers and are held responsible for the choices they make. The philosophy and operating principles of The Community Public Charter School are guided by William Glasser's "Choice Theory." As an alternative school of choice, the school community must share the belief that all students can learn and succeed when provided with a caring, supportive learning environment that meets their needs and interest.

The complete report is contained in attachment #2 – CPCS Board Report July 2009

The following sections can be located as follows:

Curriculum and Instruction

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The CPCS curriculum offers a balanced approach to literacy and arts-infused education. The tutorial nature of the reading, writing and math program emphasizes direct instruction; the arts-infused nature of the program offers teachers and students an alternative and engaging methodology for teaching and learning the established content material in each subject area. The “arts-infused” curriculum connects to the Virginia Standards of Learning, integrates the arts, and is inter-disciplinary

Assessment Data

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Language Arts / Reading

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Literacy assessment data has been collected using DSA, Word Recognition, QRI IV and Fountas & Pinnell Benchmarks.

In Language Arts, in the Fall of 2008, students’ independent reading levels varied from on grade level (6th) to pre – 1st. By the end of the year, students’ reading levels varied from high school to 4th grade.

Mid Year Review

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On February 19th, the school held an internal mid-year review. A brief summary of available data and the next step decisions made from it follows each content area.

Students who did not master content during the first round of instruction were re-taught in the classroom and re-tested therein, as well. Additionally, special education collaborators and assistants, as well as volunteers worked with struggling students in class to provide 1:1 support on projects and accommodations and clarification of directions on assessments. Multiple processes allowed students to show knowledge outside of traditional assessments – illustrations of concept and interviews were used to capture student knowledge after unsuccessful assessments to determine if students were thrown by the assessment design or needed more practice with skills and content.

As a result of this data collection, students began regular practice with SOL-like items and released SOL tests. Classroom instruction in Language Arts focused on making inferences and drawing connections from context clues for the remainder of the year. In mathematics, classroom instruction focused on an individualized differentiated approach implemented

with focus on basic skills in numeracy, fractions and decimals. Students were assigned individualized work through protaportal to address SOL preparation and skill deficiencies.

QRI Results

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The QRI is an individually administered reading assessment that measures students fluency rate and comprehension of what's read. The QRI is a trusted measure of reading in widespread use throughout the division and country.

Students were assessed in February and June by a literacy specialist who joined the school in the second semester. The results show a significant amount of growth in literacy for nearly all students. All but three students, who tested as on- or above-grade-level in February and June, experienced at least a year of growth in reading. While some students still experience difficulty with decoding – physically reading the words – students' comprehension skills, on the whole, rose dramatically, with the most struggling readers often experiencing the most growth

The expertise of the literacy specialist, the parallel practice students had in fluency and comprehension, and the interdependent, supportive relationship between the literacy specialist and language arts teacher made such growth possible and helped the school take a larger first step in meeting its mission to address the needs of struggling readers.

As many students only recently achieved at the 6th grade level for comprehension, with continued literacy work next year – modeled after this year's success – the school anticipates a significant improvement in students' reading levels and test scores as students' capabilities better align with the standards they are expected to meet.

We will continue close support of students' literacy in 2009-2010 using the individual and small-group tutorial model employed this year with great success.

Additionally, under the direction of Mr. Sansing, the language arts program will use much more formative assessment and responsive teaching to develop the skills, academic vocabulary, and test-taking stamina and strategies to increase student achievement in language arts across types of assessment.

SOL Test Results

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Pass Rates:

Language Arts Reading	39%
Math	4%
History	9%

Although students clearly grew as readers and learners this year, students were not adequately prepared to attend with the focus and stamina necessary to pass the SOL. Despite PLC meetings sharing test-prep strategies and some kind of SOL review in each core content area, administrators and teachers did not prepare students to work through the tests using test-taking strategies. This led students to rush or shut down in nearly every case.

High staff turnover also made it difficult for 2nd semester teachers to know what had been adequately covered during the 1st semester, and what needed review. Teachers chose to address obvious areas of need, such as making inferences in language arts, while moving on with the rest of each content area's curriculum in order to cover all class material before the tests. More thorough and differentiated, formative assessment and review in January of what had been taught before would have served students better.

A core of teachers experienced with our students and capable of managing positive relationships with them will provide the needed consistency of expectation, instruction, and assessment to eliminate the curricular gaps and improve students' attention to assessment.

As a school we were shocked by our SOL results, but we acted quickly to address instructional needs this year, especially in math, for which we got our earliest results. We own these scores and own the responsibility for bringing them in line with students' learning and capabilities. The scores do not wholly reflect students' learning, so we will ensure the rigor and consistency necessary to have them do so in the 2009-2010 school year.

Grades

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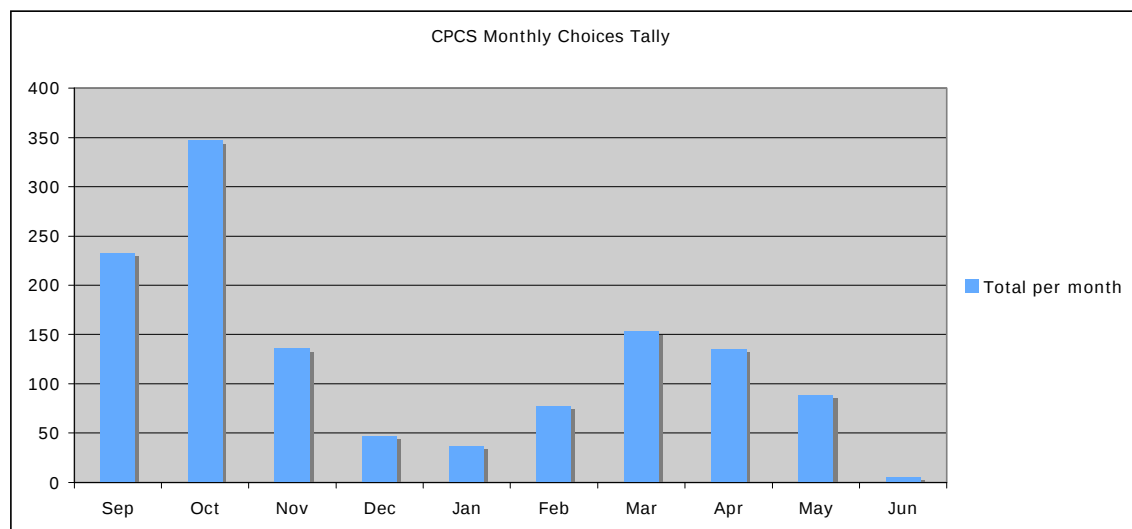
Final Grades utilizing mastery learning are:

Content Area	Letter Grade A	Letter Grade B	CNYM (content not yet mastered)
Language Arts	4	15	4
Mathematics	7	10	5
Science	10	13	0
Social Studies	10	13	0
Art	23	0	0

Attendance

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Aggregate attendance for the year was at 94.54%.

Student Discipline / Choices:

As students and staff were trained and began to understand the concept of “Choice Theory”, the predictable spike early in the school year declined until spring but continued on a downward trend through the close of the school year.

Discipline Summary DIS04 for Grade 06

From : 07/01/08 To : 06/30/09

Offense	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	Total
Class Disruption		4	11	6	6	2	5	9	5	8	1	57
Min. Physical Altercation			1				1		2			4
Other	1											1
Total	1	4	12	6	6	2	6	9	7	8	1	62

Outside of our “Choice Theory” approach, students exhibiting behaviors that resulted in an office discipline referral are listed in the table above. Analysis confirms a predictable early spike followed by a downward trend until spring with an overall downward trend. Our students who have historically not experienced school success typically become deregulated and non-compliant. As relationships were built throughout the school year behavior improved.

Parents:

We believe in a family oriented, cooperative approach to education that encourages parental involvement and community relationships to nurture responsive citizenship. A major focus of the CPCS mission is to provide opportunities for engagement for both parents and students.

CPCS leaders also conducted exit interviews in person or by phone with the parents of students returning to their base middle schools for 2009-2010. Feedback from those interviews contributed to the school's goal to increase its academic rigor and its amount of arts-infusion in 2009-2010.

Most importantly, parents frequently served as partners in sharing common expectations with the school and developing plans for students to return to class after significant disruptions or patterns of disruption. Parent-student-administrator meetings were employed throughout the year to acknowledge students' progress in attending to school while establishing for students simultaneously behavioral norms for school that were reinforced at home.

Next year we hope to increase opportunities for parent involvement and education at the school. In addition to parental involvement on the school management team, we plan to hold more parent meetings showcasing student work and providing parent education on our engagement and behavior management strategies.

Transportation:

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We have worked closely with the department of transportation, as well as with high school administrators, to provide safe transportation to and from school for our students. There were no significant delays in the expected arrival and dismissal times with the existing shuttle system to the feeder high schools working smoothly.

Relationship with Burley as a School within a School:

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The CPCS administration met regularly with the Burley administration.

While logistic obstacles and philosophical differences between schools have appeared, the schools worked to accommodate one another's needs. The relationship between the schools' administrations is particularly strong and cooperative. Both schools are committed to improving their relationship and to understanding one another's differences. Both schools are aware of issues from the 2008-09 school year and are addressing them together.

Staff:

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CPCS staff worked hard to meet their learners' diverse needs. However, the school has experienced significant turnover as teachers found that they fit the school well or not. All teachers committed themselves to their students needs to the best of their abilities while working at CPCS, regardless of their decisions to stay or go.

A consistent administrative team and special education department provided a core of dependable student-teacher relationships as the school found teachers to match its needs in the spring semester.

Summary:

Given the challenges facing the CPCS as a start-up school and the additional challenges in staffing it faced throughout the year, the school's students demonstrated remarkable growth in pro-social, pro-academic behavior, as well as in literacy, one of the focus areas of the school's mission.

Clearly, during the 2009-2010 school year the school's goal will be to increase rigor and engagement through the arts so that students' gains in behavior, literacy, and other academic areas will be unequivocally recognizable across multiple assessments including grades, attendance and discipline data, standardized testing such as the SOL and MAP assessment, and literacy measures such as the QRI.

Standardized testing data from The 2008-2009 school year reflects the school's difficulty in maintaining its staffing and individual approaches to instruction and test-preparation; hence it does not completely or accurately represent students' learning. We will aggressively address staffing and instruction throughout the 2009-2010 school year so that testing results better demonstrate student learning.

The mission of the school remains to empower CPCS students to achieve at high levels of academic success despite personal challenges. We expect our students to be prepared fully for high school at the end of their time with us, and we're committed to ensuring their success. This is the outcome we confidently and clearly envision for our students given their growth in pro-academic behavior and literacy this year.