THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL

School Board Update **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 be 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.

Curriculum and Instruction

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. During the 2nd semester, based upon the mid-year review and collected assessment data, SOL review and instruction specific to assessed needs took up an increasing share of class time.

However, arts-infused projects and our music program did continue. For example:

- In language arts, students created autobiographical comics using ComicLife.
- In science, students practiced industrial design in building and testing windmill blades and wind-resistant structures.
- In social studies students made stop-motion animations of Westward Expansion using iMovie and comics featuring students' predictions about alternate American histories using ComicLife.
- Students participated in an expanded music program that offered music-production exercises on the computer, dance class, and individualized lessons on guitar, piano, percussion, and songwriting.
- The music program also ran a field trip to 2nd Street Gallery to see an installation by artist Steven Keene. Students made photo-records of their trip and used computers to set the images to music students created to match the mood and tone of Keene's work.

Art allowed students the choice of working to grow as an artist through student-selected media or participating in a survival skills course outside that taught students to minimize their impact on the land even while food and shelter from it. Language arts instruction focused on making inferences and drawing conclusions from context clues, as well as on paragraph construction. Math focused on fractions, decimals, and percents, as well as on SOL-preparation. Science focused on experimental design and weather, plant growth, and genetics. Science also shared time with improvisational theater exercises - led by an artist-in-residence - that fostered trust and teamwork among CPCS students. Social Studies moved from the American Revolution through Reconstruction, with an emphasis on writing as a measure and model of student thinking about the causes of the Civil War and societal after effects of the war that remain with us today.

PE renewed its focus on team-based games that encouraged participation and cooperation from all students in helping them develop life-long habits of healthy physical activity. During the second semester, students could also opt in to a Tai Chi program during PE time.

The sixth grade curriculum includes:

- The school provided on-going, differentiated math and reading instruction for students one or more years behind in reading or math. In small tutorial groups students used a synthesis of current reading-support programs and assessment as part of a highly-structured, research-based intervention for students who are reading below grade-level. Students worked on specific information text skills like questioning the media with leveled texts. The course offered an accelerated, sequential approach to literacy while addressing the components of a balanced literacy diet. It offered students who have experienced difficulty with reading skills opportunities to break apart the structures of language to gain deep understanding of how words, sentences, and paragraphs work and how authors use structures to create meaning. Students read and wrote extensively in nonfiction forms; other genres were experienced through read-alouds, literature circles, and independent reading. Based on extensive pre-assessments, students were placed in like ability groups to accelerate mastery of specific skills. During part of the year, students on or above grade level were placed in independent reading programs according to need.

- The sixth grade mathematics curriculum comprises five strands of instruction: numeracy, geometry, measurement, algebra and patterns, and probability and statistics. The course employed real-life applications, student-centered inquiry, calculators, and computers whenever appropriate. The math text was supplemented by various application projects , higher order thinking skill development materials, and integrated technology.

- U. S. history and language arts instruction was based on an interdisciplinary, arts-infused approach. Students studied the geography of North American to connect First Americans' cultures with their surroundings. Students read personal narratives, primary and secondary historical documents and a variety of informational texts to continue learning about topics through 1877. Writing assignments, on-line research, and other projects were designed to encourage students to draw connections and see patterns between the literature and the historical eras being studied and the present. The goal of the curriculum is for students to become life-long learners in history by understanding the connections between past and present. To accomplish this, assignments focused on mastery of content as well as on mastery of the necessary reading, writing, study, and critical thinking skills. Historical content focused on "The American Landscape: United States History to 1877". Students used the skills of historical and geographical analysis to explore the early history of the United States from pre-Columbian times until 1877, to understand the ideas and events that have shaped our nation. Connections between geography and history helped students understand how patterns emerge over time and place. A major focus was on the "philosophical and cultural" landscapes that are foundational to the growth of our American democracy. The visual and performing arts were infused in this coursework.

- Science classes emphasized skill development in four general areas: 1) observing and hypothesizing explanations for observed phenomena; 2) measuring, including a basic understanding of the metric system and the concepts of mass, volume, and density; 3) designing controlled experiments, and 4) writing in scientific format, listing Materials, Procedure, Results, and Discussion. Through hands-on demonstrations and discussions, and through both short and long-term projects, students have explored various topics in science: phases of matter, concepts of energy, and theory of plate tectonics and land formation that is enhanced by field explorations. Emphasis in the sixth grade was on initial development of science skills and on the fun of performing experiments specifically directed toward student questions.

- Fine and performing arts were taught both in distinct blocks of time and infused into the academic curriculum. The standards of the visual arts curriculum emphasized exploration of art history and media. Using the elements of art and the principles of design as a framework, students investigated a variety of experiences and concepts, including using natural materials to create art. The students explored various two-dimensional and three-dimensional art media using a variety of expressive and technical approaches. Students were brought to understand their strengths and interests as artists, and the possibilities for creating art out of man-made and natural found materials.

- The drama curriculum allowed students to re-examine past behaviors through Play-back Theater, to find alternatives to behaviors that didn't work for them, and to come together as a team while cultivating a positive attitude towards art and performance.

- The music and dance curriculum developed as part of collaborative partnership with the Music Resource Center. Students visited the Music Resource Center every week to work with Outreach Coordinator Damani Harrison on music theory and production during the first semester, and to explore instruments and music production in the second semster. Students have used hands-on experiments with bottles, water, and metal pipes to explore the connection between how an instrument is shaped and its pitch. Students have also produced music using Apple's Garage Band application, which is also installed on the school's MacBooks.

- The health curriculum concentrated on the questions adolescents have about the physical changes they're experiencing, their identities, their relations with peers and adult authority figures, and their prospects. Moreover, their questions about themselves were often personal versions of a larger-world question, concerning, for example, the connections between conflict with adults and peers and conflict on a global scale. Our integrative curriculum and counseling-based discipline program offered powerful opportunities to teach crucial life themes. The physical education program was designed to meet the diverse needs of all learners and began developing physically educated individuals who were introduced to the knowledge, skills, and confidence to enjoy a lifetime of physical activity

and wellness. We believe physical activity is critical to the development and maintenance of good health and improved academic performance. In PE class, students were able to join a dance team, a Tai Chi group, or participate in a traditional PE program.

- Leadership Training took place all year and was a central part of the early development of the school community. Students attended leadership workshops to help them understand the principles of the Glasser Choice Theory, the Quality School Model and their role in creating a responsible, happy, productive environment for themselves and for everyone involved in the school. Students and teachers also continued to work on Choice Theory together at Galleywinter Farm. Murray High School and CPCS counselor Ellen Luksch coordinated this work with teachers. Students cared for horses and used improvisational theater exercises to reenact stressful situations at school and imagine new outcomes for those situations using connecting, community-building behaviors.

- During the first semester, Murray's Leadership Class joined students at the CPCS each Wednesday afternoon for an hour of mentoring about the ideas behind Choice Theory, including the Quality World concept. During the first semester, Murray principal Vicki Crews Miller and Choices teacher Charlotte Wellen visited the CPCS on a semi-weekly basis to debrief with administrators and teachers and offered advice in response to school needs.

Assessment Data:

Language Arts/Reading

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

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

Independent Reading Level	**HS**	**UMS**	**6^{th}**	**5^{th}**	**4^{th}**	**3^{rd}**	**2^{nd}**	**1^{st}**	**Pre 1^{st}**
# of students - September	0	0	5	5	5	5	1	3	1
# of students February	0	3	2	5	8	4	1	0	0
# of students - June	2	3	9	8	2	0	0	0	0

Mid Year Review:

On February 19th, the school held an internal mid-year review facilitated by Don Vale. A brief summary of available data and the decisions made from it follows.

CPCS Reading Mid-Year Review Data Analysis

Students Participating

- 14 out of 23 students finished the mid-year as of 2/23/09.
- 8 out of 14 met the benchmark of 42% (19 out of 45).

Standards

- **6.3** – Word study
- **6.4** – Narrative and poetry
- **6.5** - Informational

Results by Question

Standard	Descriptor	% Correct	# Items
6.3.b	Identify analogies and figurative language	25%	2
6.3.c	Use context to determine meanings	39%	4
6.3.d	Use word reference materials	71%	1
6.4.d	Describe how word choice and imagery contribute to meaning	39%	2
6.4.e	Describe cause-effect relationships and impact on plot	43%	1
6.4.f	Draw conclusions and make inferences in narrative	40%	6
6.4.h	Paraphrase and summarize main points in a text	57%	3
6.5.a	Identify questions to be answered	33%	3
6.5.c	Use context to determine meaning in an informational text	55%	3
6.5.d	Draw conclusions and make inferences in informational	59%	13
6.5.e	Organize the main idea and details for a summary	50%	3
6.5.g	Select informational sources appropriate for a given purpose	45%	2

Comments

In general, this test was either more rigorous than the SOL or not aligned with it as a 42% (19/45) on this test has been associated with a passing SOL score (66%, or 400/600).

In test analysis by question, 70% or higher is generally accepted as an indicator that the content was mostly taught and learned as intended in the course of regular instruction. Scores lower than that suggest that either instruction hasn't been effective or hasn't happened yet.

The results for 6.3.b are surprising given the time spent on analogies and figurative language. However, all 4 answers to the question were items we covered, and students could have circled the first familiar term, letter a. There were only 2 questions in this strand. Neither dealt with analogies.The relatively small number of items per standard suggests that ongoing assessment and practice are needed.

The large number of items for 6.5.d comes from recall/knowledge questions that the test-writers included. Many of these questions didn't connect to any standard, per se, but relied on students finding explicit details, which fit best with the explicit information piece of 6.5.d.

Next Steps:

As a result of this data collection, students began regular practice with SOL-like items and released SOL tests. Classroom instruction focused on making inferences and drawing connections from context clues for the remainder of the year.

Also, 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.

CPCS Math Mid-Year Review Data Analysis

Student	5TH Grade Math SOL	1st Qtr 1st Sem Grade	2nd Qtr 1st Sem Grade	Interventions
1	435	A	A	
2	400	B	B	
3		B	B	IEP
4		B	A	IEP
5	340	N/A	N/A	IEP
6	501	A	A	IEP
7	348	B	B	
8		B	A	IEP
9	501	A	B	IEP
10	445	B	B	IEP
11	455	A	B	IEP
12		B	N/A	
13	400	A	B	
14	384	B	A	
15	444	B	A	IEP
16		B	A	
17	444	N/A	A	
18	348	B	N/A	
19	418	B	B	IEP
20		A	A	
21		A	B	IEP
22	435	A	A	IEP
23	522	A	A	IEP

Next Steps:

At mid-year a staff change in mathematics occurred. The divisions mid-year math assessment was administered and upon analysis was determined to not be valid data as student stamina did not allow them to complete the assessment. An individualized differentiated approach was 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.

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.

CPCS Science Mid-Year Review Data Analysis

Assessment	5th SOL	1st 9 wk Grade	2nd 9 wk Grade	Interventions
1	471	B	A	Alternative assignments
2	406	B	B	1:1 literacy coaching
3	339	B	B	IEP; VGLA; 1:1 literacy coaching
4	383	B	B	IEP; Alternative assignments; individual work space
5	350	CNYM	CNYM	IEP; ESS
6	426	B	B	IEP; 1:1 literacy coaching
7	372	B	A	Alternative assignments; individual work space
8	458	A	A	IEP; resource
9	412	B	CNYM	IEP; ESS; 1:1 literacy coaching; mentoring; individual work space;
10	460	B	A	IEP; ESS; resource; 1:1 literacy coaching
11	372	B	B	IEP; ESS
12	NA	B	CNYM	
16	406	B	B	Individual work space
14	383	B	B	1:1 literacy coaching
15	471	B	B	IEP; resource; autism consultant
16	NA	B	B	
17	471	CNYM	A	Mentoring
18	400	B	A	ESOL monitor; 1:1 literacy coaching
19	426	B	B	IEP; ESS
20	NA	A	A	
21	426	B	A	IEP
22	450	B	A	IEP
23	441	B	A	IEP; resource
Benchmark	**400**	**B**	**B**	**All students are in small groups / flexible time.**

Next Steps:

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.

CPCS History Mid-Year Review Data Analysis

Student	5th SOL	1st 9 Grade	2nd 9 Grade	Interventions
1	500	B	A	Alternative assignments
2	500	B	A	1:1 literacy coaching
3	339	B	A	IEP; VGLA; 1:1 literacy coaching
4	383	B	B	IEP; Alternative assignments; individual work spac
5	350	CNYM	A	IEP; ESS
6	426	B	A	IEP; 1:1 literacy coaching
7	372	B	A	Alternative assignments; individual work space
8	458	B	A	IEP; resource
9	412	A	A	IEP; ESS; 1:1 literacy coaching; mentoring; individual work space;
10	460	A	A	IEP; ESS; resource; 1:1 literacy coaching
11	372	B	A	IEP; ESS
12	NA	B	CNYM	
13	406	A	A	Individual work space
14	383	A	A	1:1 literacy coaching
15	471	B	A	IEP; resource; autism consultant
16		B	A	
17	471	B	A	Mentoring
18	400	B	A	ESOL monitor; 1:1 literacy coaching
19	426	B	B	IEP; ESS
20	NA	B	A	
21	426	B	A	IEP
22	450	A	A	IEP
23	441	B	A	IEP; resource
Benchmark	**400**	**B**	**B**	**All students are in small groups / flexible tim**
# at Benchmark	**14**	**22**	**22**	

Next Steps:

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.

QRI Results:

Student	Feb. QRI	Feb. WPM	Feb. Comprehension	June QRI	June WPM	June Comprehension
1	UMS	152	87%	UMS	136	80%
2	6	109	75%	UMS	106	80%
3	4	110	87%	5 and 6	91/92	87%/75%
4	4	83	62%	6/UMS	96/74	100%/80%
5	3+	108	100%	5	81	75%
6	2	71	87%	5	59*	87%
7	5	86	65%	6	116	75%
8	UMS	109*	80%	HS	63*	80%
9	4	55*	100%	5	72	75%
10	3*	72	100%	5 and 6	72/64	100%/100%
11	4	109	87%	5 and 6	108/118	75%/75%
12	5	80	75%	6	102	75%
13	5	76	87%	6	80	75%
14	3	93	87%	5 and 6	86/97	87%/75%
15	6	190*	52%	6	150	100%
16	5	81	87%	HS	91*	90%
17	4	88	87%	6	94	87%
18	3	62	75%	4	70	87%
19	4	141	75%	6	105	87%
20	UMS	172	100%	UMS	157	100%
21	4	98	62%	5	85	87%
22	5	89	87%	6	118	100%
23	4	69	75%	6	95	100%

Key

UMS=Upper Middle School
F= Fluency
C=comprehension
QRI=Quantitative Reading Inventory/
QRI score is a grade equivalent

Analysis:

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 (e.g. student 6).

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 meetings 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:

Student	5th Read	6th Read	5th Math	6th Math	5th Va. Studies	6th History	5th Writing
1	467	497	435	354	500	424	447
2	379	382	400	259	500	377	340
3	NA	VGLA Pass	NA	VGLA Fail	399	301	345
4	457	356	VGLA	VGLA Fail	293	307	377
5	343	312	340	251	354	277	362
6	397	376	501	267	354	320	427
7	385	356	348	259	324	286	447
8	457	471	VGLA	VGLA Fail	457	432	427
9	493	448	501	430	435	333	436
10	493	409	445	245	435	335	362
11	385	332	455	290	324	286	393
12	NA	298	NA	177	NA	328	NA
13	385	350	400	290	416	322	401
14	361	350	384	275	324	309	362
15	457	369	444	290	425	357	401
16	NA	460	NA	326	NA	383	NA
17	457	432	444	275	376	328	370
18	349	325	348	233	346	286	325
19	373	312	418	259	445	335	378
20	NA	562	NA	361	NA	389	NA
21	425	332	NA	202	376	314	436
22	479	471	435	347	483	357	401
23	439	350	522	305	416	347	447

Pass Rates:

Language Arts Reading: 39%

Math 4%

History 9%

Analysis:

In analyzing the SOL results of CPCS students, there are four key factors to keep in mind:

1. the realities of implementing educational change,
2. the nature of cognitive development and learning, with a specific focus on early adolescence,
3. how these individual students compare to their peers throughout the school district.
4. and the SOL assessments as compared to diagnostic reading assessments used at the school,

Each of these four factors are considered individually before reaching conclusions.

Implementation

To begin with, this is the inaugural year of CPCS. All stakeholders- teachers, administrators, parents, and students- were engaged in developing a new educational environment and program. The "implementation dip" is the period during significant organizational change between when stakeholders discard their old ways and master new ones. This dip has been well documented over the years in both education and other complex environments (Busick, 1994; Fullan, 2001; McRel, 2000; Schwartzbeck, 2002). The research on organizational change demonstrates that it takes, on minimum, three to five years for reform/significant change to take root. Leadership is critical for maintaining the vision for change, particularly through the repeatedly documented implementation dip.

Cognitive Development & Learning

While there are mountains of research documenting human cognitive development and learning, we are still on the frontier of truly understanding how the human brain learns. Since the 1980s, Kurt W. Fischer from Harvard University Graduate School of Education, has been working on the development of dynamic skill theory. Simply put, this highly researched and proven theory illustrates that when we consider *individual* people and their growth, learning does not happen in a neat and tidy ladder. Learning is actually more like a roller coaster, with dips and rises. Interestingly, the developing neuroscience research about how the human brain physically develops supports Fischer's work (Fischer, 2008). Without getting into an inordinate amount of detail, what this means for us is that we should expect *individual* students to dip down as they are developing new skills, move up in performance as they are supported in their learning and have many opportunities to engage in practice of a skill, then dip again each time we increase the complexity of what we are asking them to do. This is to say that it is normal and developmentally appropriate for *individual* students to sometimes improve when taking standardized assessments and sometimes decline.

Comparing CPCS Students with the District

Through NCLB and the goal of meeting AYP, schools look at students in total. Because CPCS serves a small group of students, we have the luxury and the compulsion to closely consider the progress of each individual student, as well as the group as a whole. Assessment and the evaluation of the causes for any given performance, are by their very nature speculative; we are not inside the heads of our students while they are testing, and we are not allowed to interview them in-depth after testing to understand their thinking, so we are left with bringing to our bear collective experience, professional judgment, and knowledge of middle schoolers in general, and these students in particular, to make sense of the data provided by the SOL. The next session will address the nature of the SOL reading assessment in particular as compared to the diagnostic reading assessments used by CPCS throughout the year to guide instruction and evaluate progress. This section is focused on consideration of individual student performances across the district. In addition to our 23 students, we evaluated matched scores (the same student in 5th grade and in 6th grade) across the district.

Assessments Themselves

The SOLs are a standardized, summative assessment given to students at the end of the year in an effort to evaluate their growth relative to the state's standards. These assessments are given in a standardized way, in a group setting, and are high stakes tests. Their high stakes nature has a significant impact on all stakeholders.

By contrast, the QRI-4 is an informal reading assessment that was given at several times throughout the year as a diagnostic measure to inform instruction as well as a means to evaluate progress. Informal reading inventories are given in a one-on-one setting with a Reading Specialist and one student. The very nature of this structure makes it a more relaxed assessment environment for the learner. As a recent review of eight current informal reading inventories explains, "While IRIs serve a variety of purposes, perhaps their greatest value is linked to the important role they play in helping educators to diagnose the gaps in the abilities of readers who struggle the most" (Nilsson, 2008, p. 1). Classroom experience shows consistently that students tend to have a stronger performance on an IRI prior to showing that same growth on a standardized test like the SOL. This is not surprising when one pauses to reflect one's own experiences with standardized assessment. Interestingly, the latest neuroscientific educational research supports the strong emotional base to learning, making it all fit together: when I am nervous in a learning environment, I am not feeling "safe" enough to perform at my optimal level- my brain and body are more concerned with self-preservation (Immordino-Yang, 2007).

Consistent with past experience comparing IRI results and standardized test results, our students' scores on the QRI-4 were significantly better than on the SOLs, with most students performing at or above grade level, and making gains of two or more grades. Specifically, the following table shows that 52% of our students showed more than one grade level of growth, 44% showed two or

more grade levels of growth, and 09% showed 3 or more grade levels of growth. Encouragingly, The three students showing no grade level improvement were assessed at or above grade level.

Grade Levels of Improvement from 2/09 to 6/09*	**Number of Students**
1 year	11
2 years	6
3 years	3
None	3

* When students achieve Upper Middle School (grades 7-8), their scores are provided in a range, rather than a single grade level

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 difficulty 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.

Math Assessment 4th Quarter:

Student	Assessment 1 decimals	Assessment 2 decimals	Assessment 3 Fractions
1	75	82	77
2	65	70	60
3	70	60	62
4	55	70	25
5	75	70	55
6	95	92	65
7	110	110	90
8	80	73	85
9	100	DNC	DNC
10	75	80	65
11	100	80	75
12	65	70	55
13	75	80	60
14	92	95	67
15	60	DNC	DNC
16	90	100	85
17	80	82	60
18	62	65	60
19	75	70	72
20	95	90	75
21	70	DNC	60
22	100	80	72
23	100	80	82

Analysis:

The results above better demonstrate CPCS students' capabilities in math than do this year's SOL results. These results came from a unit developed under the administration's direction that incorporated frequent assessment and teaching responsive to the assessment data.

Using a familiar 70% rate that's a few points higher than a 66% (400/600) on the SOL, 18 out of 23 (78%) students passed the first assessment, 18 (78%) passed the second, and 9 (39%) passed the third.

With this type of teaching, which is our expectation, we will positively impact students' math scores next year so that the scores accurately reflect students' learning in math. In retrospect, CPCS employed too much general SOL review leading up to this year's test.

More frequent monitoring and adjustment of instruction based on assessment results will help us address and show more specifically students' capabilities, difficulties, and achievement next year. To wit, the school is in discussion with Chris Gilman to implement MAP testing – a diagnostic tool used to monitor student progress throughout the year – for the 2009-2010 school year.

Grades:

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

Analysis:

Students achieved to high levels of performance across content areas throughout the year. Arts projects and more traditional assessments provided information about which students needed help in completing each course to mastery level.

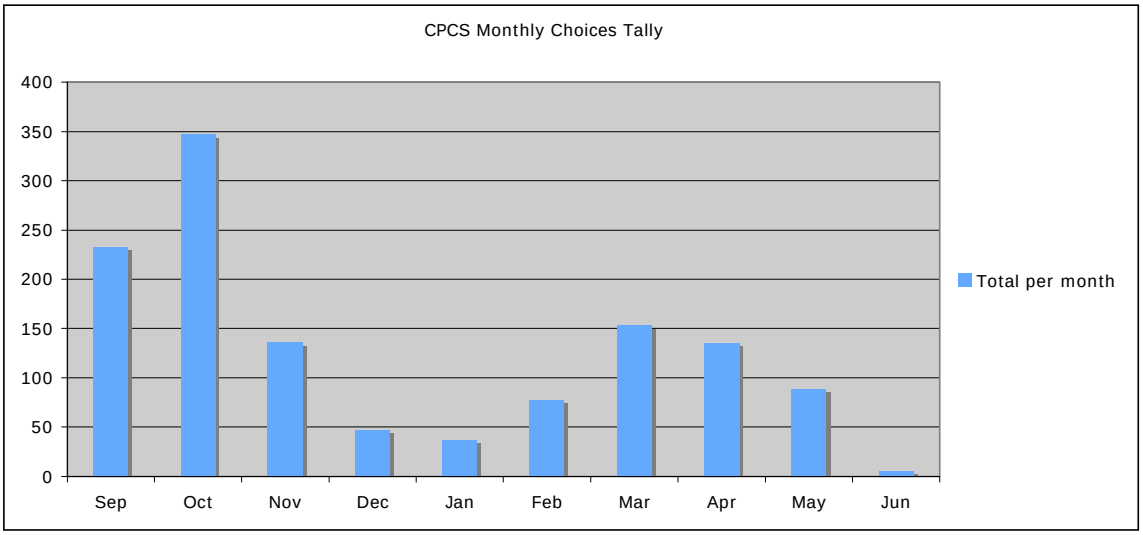
Staffing turnover led to difficulties in maintaining internal consistency in teachers' approaches to translate these successes into passing performances on standardized tests.

Next year a core of teachers experienced with our students and successful in meeting their needs will collaborate on assessment and instruction design to ensure inter-reliability between grades and student performance on other measures like the SOL, MAP testing, and QRI reading assessment.

Attendance:

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. Students

who have parents who actively participate in and identify with their school are more motivated to stay in school and more likely to graduate than those who are not involved with their school. Parental involvement is a key to a student's success in school.

Parents and students attended an orientation picnic on July 31st and an open house on August 14th. Back to School Night was on September 9th. The first set of parent conference meetings were held on September 17th and 23rd. A parent education night on teen brain chemistry and nutrition's role in teen's brain development was held on February 18th.

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:

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 have been no significant delays in the expected arrival and dismissal times with the existing shuttle system to the feeder high schools working smoothly.

We have also begun dialog with Josh Davis, Director of Transportation, to examine alternative ways to transport students to the CPCS looking at the big picture of Albemarle County's expanding specialty centers.

Relationship with Burley as a School within a School:

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:

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. Faculty brought on board during the second semester faced beginning in the middle of the year at a start-up school with non-traditional behavior management and grading systems under the expectation that they would provide arts –infused instruction in support of SOL standards. This was an extraordinary task, and teachers met it with varying degrees of success. However, all faculty strove to keep teaching and learning happening to a high standard of achievement and all faculty accepted and amended instruction as a result of mentoring and/or direction.

To improve student achievement and reach the school's vision in 2009-2010, the school will employ a small group of teachers retained from 2008-2009 who demonstrated success in building-relationships with students, managing student behavior, and attending to assessment throughout the year to monitor student progress. This team will mentor any new hires.

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.