



The Community Public Charter School:

Program Evaluation Report

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Program Evaluation

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THE COMMUNITY PUBLIC CHARTER SCHOOL: PROGRAM EVALUATION

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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Purpose

The Community Public Charter School (CPCS) operates as a chartered middle school within Albemarle County Public Schools. The school opened in the fall of 2008 and is located on the lower level of Jackson P. Burley Middle School, a traditional middle school within Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS). Since it opened, a number of leadership changes have occurred at both the Board and School Division levels. During the 2014-15 school year, this team is reviewing both a renewal application for the charter of CPCS and School Board Policy LC (concerning the operation of charter schools within ACPS). In order to better inform these processes, a comprehensive program evaluation of the CPCS was conducted. The evaluation focused on providing insight into the program methodologies, operating dynamics, and measurable outcomes.

Findings

- CPS seeks to serve students who are significantly struggling in late elementary grades and are deemed at-risk of falling behind their peers, during middle school years.
- If student applications exceed enrollment target of 45 students, a lottery drawing is conducted to fill available seats; a waiting list is established, using the same lottery drawing practice.
- The school is administered by its principal, Ashby Kindler; the Co-Founders, Roberta Snow and Sandra Richardson; and a six member School Management Team, comprised of three teachers and three parents.
- Currently, 50 percent of the student population is disabled, 34.1 percent are economically disadvantaged, about 9 percent have limited proficiency in English, and about 2 percent are gifted.
- CPCS utilizes choice theory to establish a positive community of productive learners, who make positive and productive choices for themselves and for the community.

- A mastery learning model is in place at CPCS, providing students with opportunities to engage in differentiated learning activities that meet their individual needs in particular subjects.
- Project-based learning, which is infused with elements from various forms of art comprise the centerpiece of instruction at CPCS.
- CPCS currently receives approximately \$330,000 per year from ACPS which represents 70-75 percent of its total funding. The remainder is funded through private donations.
- The school is currently fully accredited by the Virginia Department of Education, based on Standards of Learning test scores achieved during the 2013-14 school year.
- Parent feedback regarding student experiences at the school is positive.
- Goals have evolved over time, and current goals are not directly grounded in quantifiable measures.
- Challenges regarding the facility, transportation, staffing, recruiting, and accountability are inherent in the small school (housed within a school) model.

Recommendations

All recommendations hinge upon the assumption that the School Board and senior leadership of ACPS continue to see value in the outcomes presented by the CPCS and choose to prioritize the continued funding and support of this program in its current form. Building upon that assumption, the following recommendations are made:

General Recommendation: It is recommended that the program continue with modifications.

Strategic Planning Recommendation: Establish goals and benchmarks that clearly articulate the efficacy of programs offered at CPCS; identify longitudinal measures that demonstrate that this middle school program is more effective for its target demographic than experiences at traditional middle schools.

Challenging Dynamic Recommendations: ¹ Review current space utilization to determine if a cohesive block of classroom space is available; ² Continue to review transportation options that would provide instruction time congruent with other middle schools; ³ Utilize CPCS staff in professional development to cultivate interest for the program among existing Division staff.

Introduction to the Community Public Charter School

The Community Public Charter School (CPCS) was established in 2008 as an alternative instructional environment to the five existing middle schools operated by Albemarle County Public Schools (ACPS). CPCS serves approximately forty-five students in grades six through eight who have been identified as having “difficulty in school, are disengaged, and face increasing challenges as they enter middle school” (“Admissions and Application,” n.d.). Specific goals of the CPCS will be discussed, but the overarching goal of the CPCS is to provide a flexible framework for learning that meets the needs of students who have been identified as having individualized needs, based on the criteria noted above. The Fact Sheet for the CPCS states that “no student is allowed to fail at CPCS” (“Fact Sheet,” n.d.). Co-Founders Roberta (Bobbi) Snow and Sandra (Sandy) Richardson indicate that this reflects the different approach taken to learning at CPCS, whereby student instruction is geared toward individual student strengths, whereas traditional schools identify deficits and focus on correcting those deficits (“Fact Sheet,” n.d.). As a chartered institution, the CPCS has greater flexibility to change its course of actions quickly, in order to ensure that student needs are being met in such a way that each student is able to demonstrate mastery learning of instructional concepts.

Background Concerning the Founding of the CPCS

In 1998, the Virginia General Assembly and Governor Jim Gilmore successfully passed legislation allowing the formation of charter schools within the Commonwealth of Virginia. The passage of this legislation came after several failed attempts in previous sessions of the General Assembly to enact charter school legislation. During the same time period, legislators at the federal level were also grappling with school reform measures, which ultimately led to the passage of Educate America programs and, ultimately, the No Child Left Behind legislation.

The Code of Virginia (§22.1-212.6) provides requirements for approval and oversight of charter schools by local school boards. This contrasts with legislation in some of the 42 other states that allow the formation of charter schools. The National Alliance for Public Charter Schools reports that approximately 725 students were served by public charter schools in Virginia, during the 2013-14 academic term, at six charter schools located across the Commonwealth (n.d.). In order to put this statistic into the overall perspective of charter schools in the United States, out of the forty-three states that permit charter school formation, the National Center for Education Statistics reported that in 2010-11 (the most recent year for which complete statistics are available), 5,274 charter schools served over 1.6 million students (2012). Two of the six charter schools in operation in Virginia are located in Albemarle County. Murray High School was established in 1988 as an alternative high school and was converted to charter status in 2001.

Prior to beginning their work with ACPS, Bobbi Snow and Sandy Richardson initially approached Charlottesville City Public Schools (CCPS) regarding the possibility of opening a charter school. The plan was similar—establishing an alternative middle school, with an arts-infused curriculum, that would serve at-risk middle school students. Snow and Richardson hoped to house the program at the Frank Ix building, a former silk mill complex, which was once the City of Charlottesville’s largest employer. In addition to planning for instruction and for a physical home for a charter school, Snow and Richardson also succeeded in gaining a grant of \$450,000 from the federal government in 2005 to assist with funding the proposed charter school. Despite these plans, a variety of issues occurring concurrently within CCPS, including transition of board members and the hiring of a new superintendent for the Division, prevented the proposal from being accepted by CCPS and its School Board (personal communication, October 6, 2014). This was the third such proposal to be rejected by CCPS.

After the unsuccessful attempt to establish a charter school within the City of Charlottesville, Snow and Richardson began discussions with officials from ACPS, including Superintendent Dr. Pamela Moran, then Assistant Superintendent Dr. Bruce Benson, and then School Board Chair Brian Wheeler. With a similar charter school model already in place at Murray High School, ACPS accepted the charter application for CPCS in July of 2007 to serve middle school students. The first group of students entered in the fall of 2008. The CPCS was provided instructional space on the lower level of Jackson P. Burley Middle School (Burley), and no capital projects were required to either create or convert the existing space. In the fall of 2008, only sixth grade students entered the CPCS, and the school grew to include seventh and eighth grade students in the two subsequent years.

As a chartered school, CPCS has a responsibility to meet the legal requirements for student instruction prescribed by law; however, CPCS leadership has more flexibility to change course and meet the needs of students than leaders at a traditional school. Aside from the leadership of Principal Ashby Kindler and the co-founders, the school is run by a six-member School Management Team (SMT) comprised of three teachers and three parents. This group meets regularly to discuss the business of running the school, and it has the ability to implement changes that will benefit students immediately, without a need to interface with other levels of administration, pursuant to the terms of the charter document.

Student Admissions Practices and Current Demographics

In order to define a target market for the educational services that the CPCS will provide, six key indicators that students are either underperforming or being underserved in their previous school settings were identified in the application for charter school status. These indicators are:

- one or more years behind in reading and/or math
- poor grades in two or more subjects
- lack of motivation to do well in school (guidance counselor/teacher reports)
- lack of social connection and confidence with peers (parent/teacher/counselor reports)
- lack of organizational skills (report card/teacher reports)

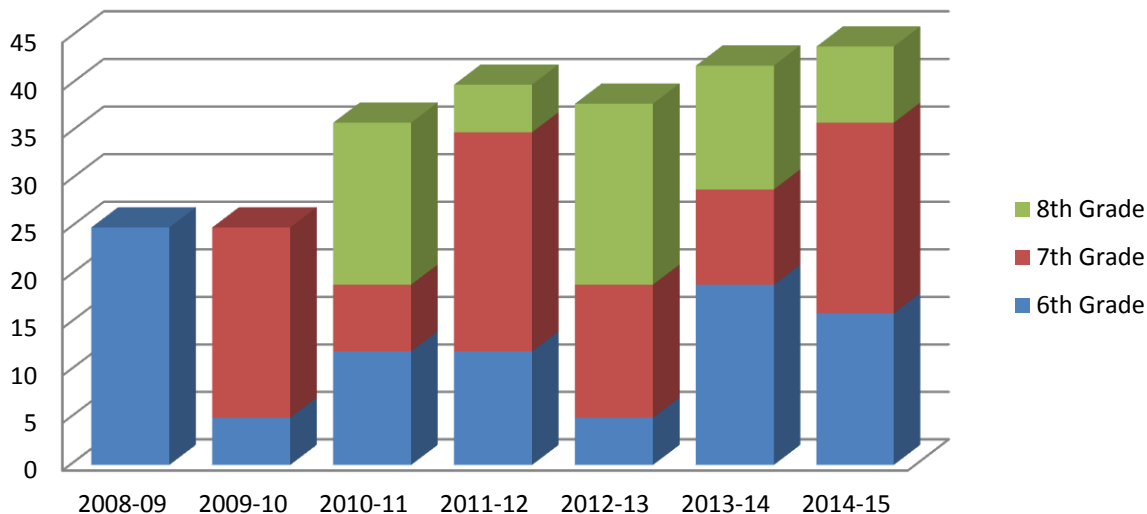
Given the criteria listed above, students having a wide range of instructional needs that differ from those met through standard curricula and instructional techniques could be identified as potential applicants.

Logically, the assimilation of this wide variety of student learning needs into a small class setting can be challenging for instructional staff members who must attempt to meet each student's individual needs, while also maintaining a cohesive learning environment. Bobbi Snow indicates that initial applicant referrals to the CPCS came primarily from counselors, family support workers, and special education staff members, who primarily brought forward students with specific needs that have been previously identified (personal communication, October 6, 2014). Snow and Richardson note the importance of networking with fifth grade teachers, who are better equipped to suggest students who do not have identified special needs but do exhibit some of the criteria outlined above. These students may be the victims of bullying, frequently visit the school nurse, call home often, have emotional outbursts at home that are related to school, display tendencies of resistant learners, or have high anxiety levels that affect performance on tests and other assignments (personal communication, October 6, 2014). The demands that are inherent to attempting to satisfy such a wide spectrum of student needs creates its own set of unique challenges for staff recruiting, which will be described later in this document.

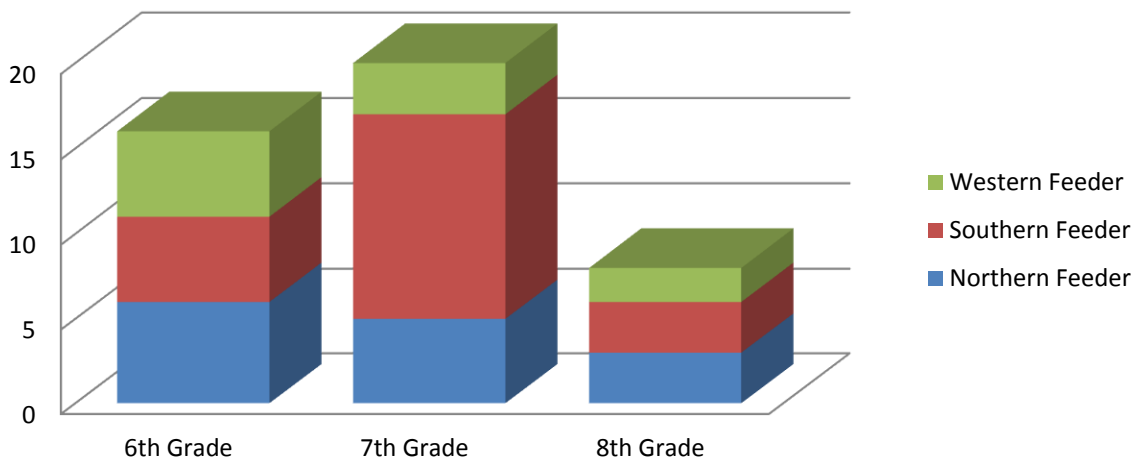
Both the Code of Virginia (§22.1-212.8) and ACPS School Board Policy LC (currently undergoing revision) require that charter school applicants describe “the lottery process to be used to determine enrollment” and make provisions for a waiting list to be incorporated into the admissions process. The current enrollment goal for CPCS is forty-five students. The CPCS has an open enrollment period, during which time applications are collected. If the level of applicants is below the goal of forty-five students, all applicants are admitted. If the level of applicants is above the goal of forty-five students, all applicants are entered into a lottery, and enrollees are randomly selected for admission. Once the forty-five student goal is met, a waiting list is established, using the random lottery drawings to establish an order for the list (“Admissions and Application,” n.d.). Lottery drawings are witnessed by a staff member from the CPCS, along with a parent, and the official records of the lottery drawings are maintained at the school (“Admissions and Application,” n.d.). Subsequent to the lottery, applications are either admitted or placed onto the waiting list as the applications are received.

The CPCS accepts students in both sixth and seventh grades; eighth graders are not admitted, as there is a strong feeling that a single year's exposure to the principles of choice theory at work within the school is insufficient to achieve the desired outcomes of the model. Despite extended bus rides, which will be discussed separately, students from each feeder pattern (Northern, Southern, Western) apply for admission to and attend the CPCS, as illustrated in the graphs that follow.

CPCS Student Population by Grade

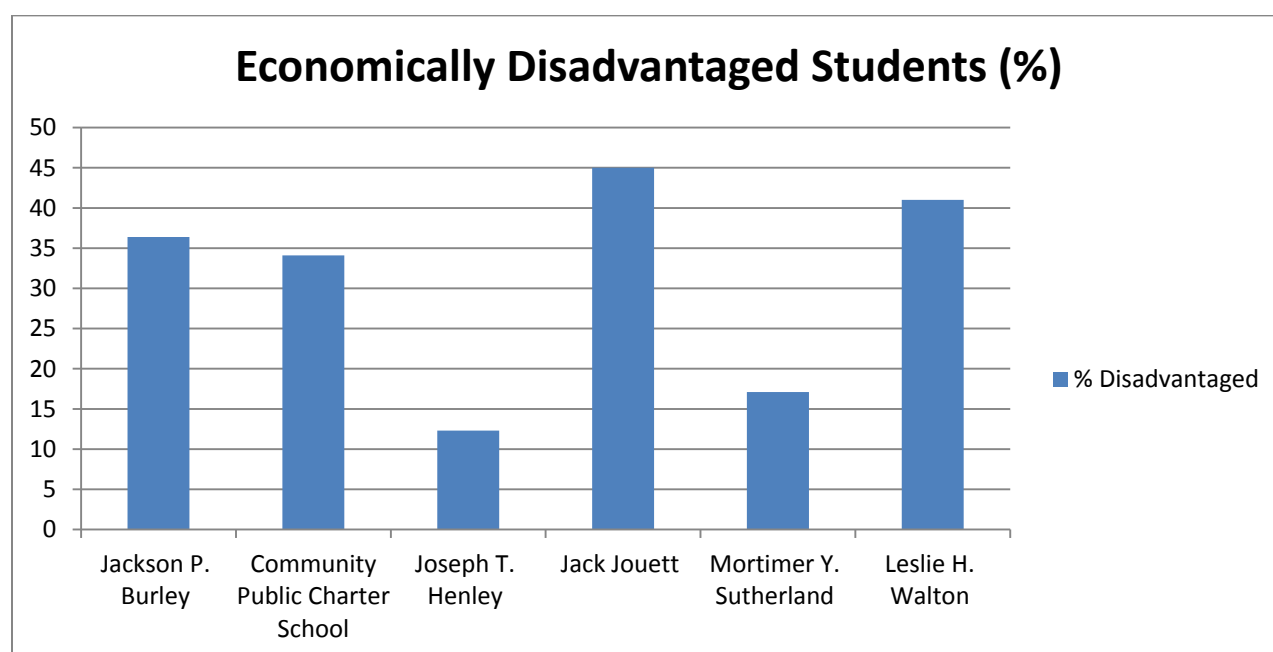
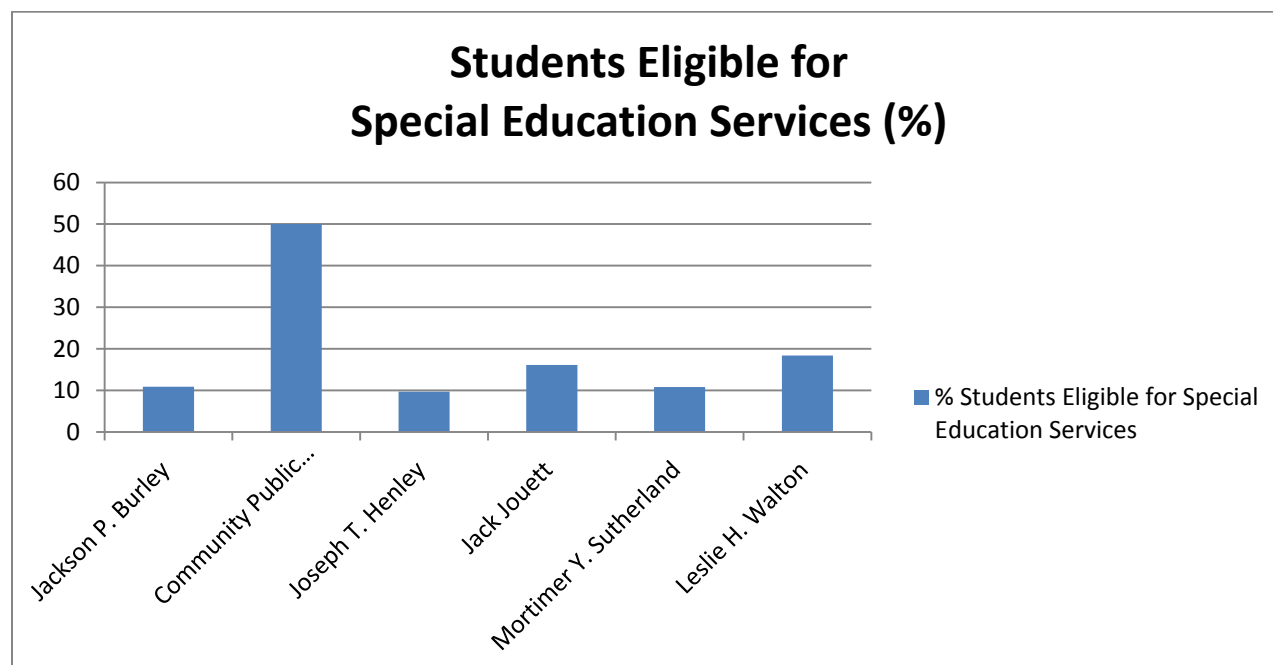


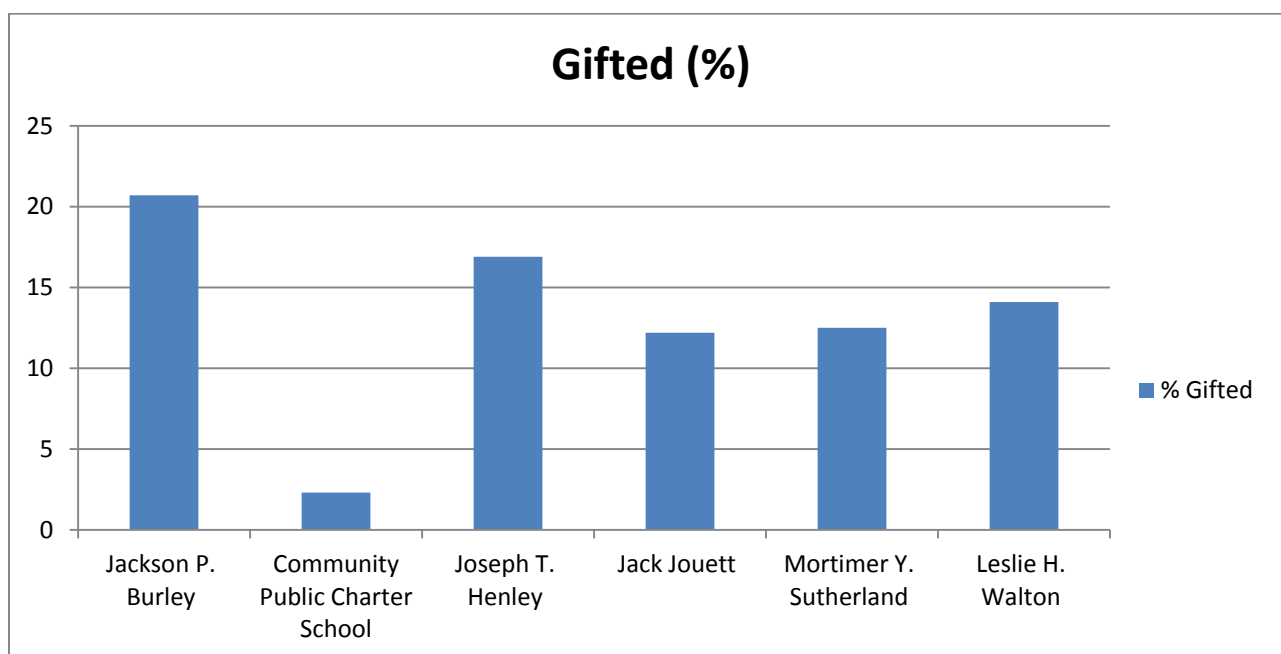
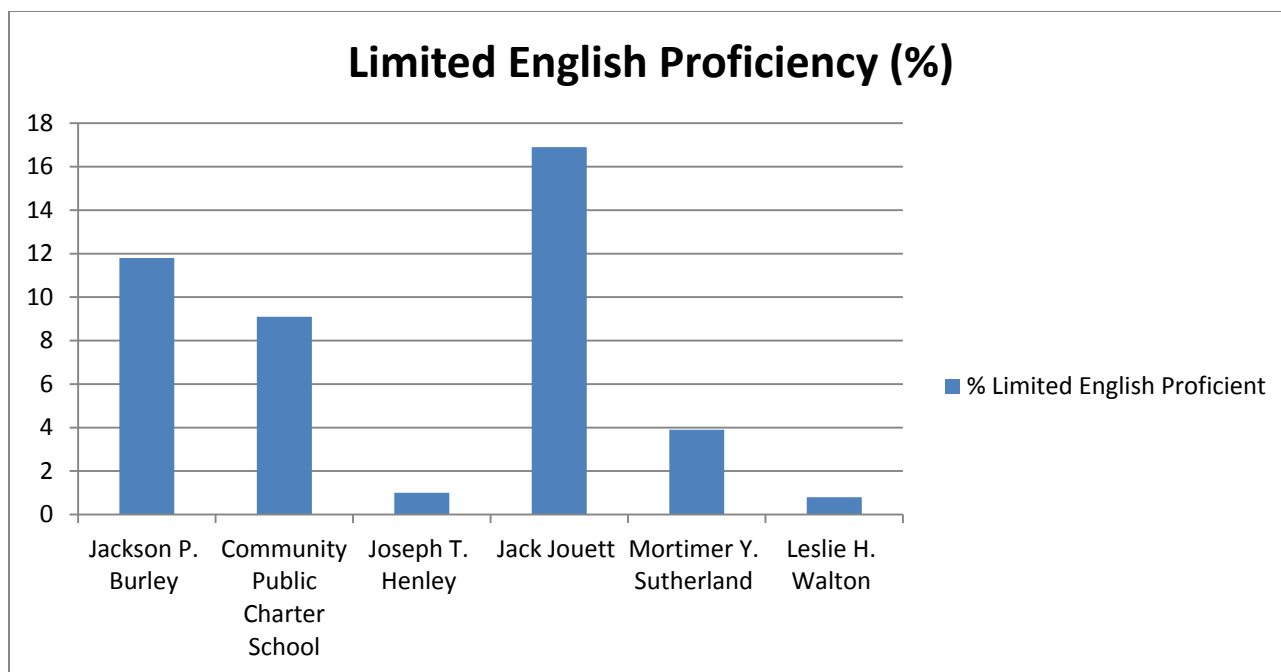
CPCS Student Population by Residence Area (Current Students)



As noted previously, many students who are referred to the CPCS are already receiving additional services to address unique learning needs. Recent student demographic information indicates that 50.0 percent of the student population at the CPCS is identified as having a disability—meaning that they have been “identified for special education services” (“Fact Sheet,” n.d.). This is between 2.5 and 5.0 times more students with disabilities than are served in other middle schools within ACPS. Additionally, 34.1 percent of the school population is identified as economically disadvantaged, which indicates that the “students are those who receive free and reduced priced meals” (“Fact Sheet,” n.d.). This population is on par with

Burley, Walton, and Jouett Middle Schools and roughly twice the percentage of disadvantaged students at Henley and Sutherland Middle Schools. Just over nine percent of students at CPCS have limited proficiency in English, and about two percent of students are identified as gifted. The percentage of students having limited English proficiency is on par with Burley, about half that of Jouett, and two to ten times higher than Sutherland, Walton, and Henley Middle Schools. CPCS' percentage of students identified as gifted is less than one-sixth that of any other middle school in ACPS.





Educational Philosophy of the CPCS

The CPCS seeks to provide an opportunity for middle school students who would benefit from a close-knit school community that provides a smaller learning environment than a traditional middle school. The CPCS seeks to utilize tactile, project-based learning opportunities, in an arts-infused curriculum, to promote mastery learning of concepts. Additionally, the CPCS employs William Glasser's Choice Theory to promote the development of healthy and productive decision-making skills that will benefit the student holistically, rather

than solely from an academic perspective. This overall approach to instruction is reflected in the mission statement that the CPCS adopted:

The mission of The Community Public Charter School is to provide an alternative and innovative learning environment for children in grades six through eight. The program emphasizes education in and through the arts, to stimulate intellectual, emotional, physical and social development. The program balances the arts-infused curriculum with strategies for teaching literacy that help the students achieve their potential (“Mission and Goals,” n.d.).

Bobbi Snow notes that the standard format for instruction tends to address the masses and work with student achievement deficits, by exception; whereas the CPCS strives to focus on student strengths as a catalyst to increase student engagement with the instructional process (personal communication, October 6, 2014). The mission statement quoted above speaks to the aspirations of the CPS profoundly, as it emphasizes a unique style of instruction, rather than emphasizing the uniqueness of students who might attend the program.

Choice Theory Explained

William Glasser published *Choice Theory in the Classroom* in 1986, as an alternative to traditional control-based paradigms in education and in response to criticisms of public education in America during the mid-1980s—most notably a report to President Reagan from the National Commission on Excellence in Education entitled *A Nation at Risk*. Glasser (1986) notes that one of the most difficult missions of the public school system is finding ways to motivate those students who show little interest and engagement in the instruction that they are receiving (p.5). Improvements are sometimes noted when unmotivated students are placed into smaller, remedial classrooms, in which more personal attention is provided to the students, but the benefits of having been in this environment tend to erode once the student is returned to the traditional classroom setting (Glasser, 1986, p. 5). Choice theory posits that this traditional, one-size-fits-all model (which includes its attempts at remediation) is a function of the prevailing external control theory that dominates the field of education.

External control theory assumes that individual responses to stimuli can become programmed, or controlled, reactions. From Glasser’s (1986) perspective, external control theory would assume that people are conditioned to answer the phone when it rings, such that individual actions (answering the phone) can be controlled by external stimuli (the ringing of the phone) (p. 18). Contrary to external control theory’s explanation, choice theory postulates that each action that an individual takes requires a choice; choices become standardized and are arrived at quickly once repeated choices in response to re-occurring stimuli prove effective (Glasser, 1986, p. 19). A more famous example is Pavlov’s dog and the animal’s salivation upon hearing a bell that was associated with feeding time. External control theory would say that the dog’s salivation became an innate response, whereas choice theory indicates that each instance was a unique and expedient choice, based on previous experiences and limited alternatives (Glasser, 1986, p. 20). To translate this into educational terms, external control theory asserts that students are learning because teachers are effective in conveying their knowledge to them; conversely, choice theory contends that students learn because they choose to do so, in order to meet their current needs.

The concept of needs fulfillment as a motivational tool is central to choice theory. The central premise is that if educational offerings are not meeting one of five core needs—survival and reproduction, love and belonging, acquiring power, obtaining freedom, and having fun, the student will not find the experience valuable and will not be fully engaged in their work (Glasser, 1986, p. 21-5). The needs that are most readily met within the school setting are fostering a sense of belonging, providing the student power (and freedom) over choices related to their studies, and the attainment of fun and enjoyment through academic pursuits. Glasser (1986) notes that needs may often come into conflict, depending on the expediency of obtaining results (p. 42). Therefore, students who are struggling with educational pursuits may gain power more easily through creating disruptions than through engaging in academic work. Teachers must then create opportunities to redirect this disruptive energy toward components of academic work that are fulfilling to the student.

Within the framework of Choice Theory, a significant paradigm shift occurs regarding the role of the teacher. Whereas teachers in a traditional classroom setting may be viewed as employees of the school division, whose role is to impart knowledge to students, choice theory views teachers as having a managerial role (Glasser, 1986, p. 88). In this scenario, students are the “workers” and teachers are managing the learning environment, “structuring and re-structuring the workplace for students”, such that the students are able to effectively work toward creating their own education as a finished product (Glasser, 1986, p. 88-92). Along the same lines, other outcomes of student work, such as athletic events, band concerts, and choral performances can be viewed as services to the local community. Schools are typically regarded as a service that is provided by a locality or an organization to a particular community. In the choice theory model, schools use the funding provided by their governing bodies to produce both goods and services to the community, such that students who are educated and prepared to either pursue an academic discipline or a vocation are the finished products of the educational process. Teachers, who hold all of the power in the classroom under traditional models of control theory, share power with students, to shape the direction of their learning and produce these outcomes.

After outlining revised roles for teachers and students, Glasser makes several statements that bear further discussion regarding the impact that these revised roles have on the educational process and its outcomes. The first two statements are Glasser’s reasoning as to why choice theory ought to be implemented. Glasser (1986) writes that “there is no financial risk” associated with the implementation of choice theory, as there are no inherent costs associated with using this model, rather than using various other forms of control theory (p. 102). Additionally, Glasser (1986) notes that unlike other philosophies of management and production, there is no need to engage in large-scale implementation; rather, choice theory could be implemented slowly, to allow for proper vetting and measurement of results (p. 102). Ultimately, Glasser feels that changes to student instruction are needed, and through these statements, he builds his contention that there is no reason not to try choice theory. As a further means of connecting the educational process with the career fields that await students, Glasser (1986) maintains that “modern management was developed because in our technical society, jobs are complex and interdependent, and if our learning does not keep pace, students have little preparation for work or life”(p. 102). This statement is a summation of Glasser’s assumptions that no single component of the educational process, such as testing, should be viewed as an indicator of success. Rather, each component should be seen as just that—a component in the process of producing students who are educated and prepared for their future endeavors.

Choice Theory at Work in the CPCS

At the CPCS, Glasser's model of choice theory is employed "as a basis for creating a community of respect," in which students have a high degree of accountability for choices that are made regarding relationships with peers, as well as choices that are made regarding academic work ("Mission Statement," n.d.). The choices that are afforded to students within the CPCS allow each student to individually select their path toward success in assignments and in overall learning progress. Combined with the arts-infused curriculum, students are provided opportunities to express themselves and to demonstrate their achievement of mastery learning in ways that are individually meaningful. To address this from the outset, given the ability to make a high degree of choices, students do occasionally make decisions that are ineffective or even disruptive. "When a student's behavior interferes with the learning environment for other students, or is unwilling to attend to the assigned work, he or she is asked to go to "Choices" where the Choices teacher helps the student find a better way to be successful at school" ("Mission Statement," n.d.). Therefore, students are provided timely and relevant feedback regarding the implications of making poor choices, and guidance is given regarding how more effective solutions can be pursued in future situations. Additionally, students are encouraged to participate in democratic school governance, such that their voice is heard during the process of making decisions that affect their lives at school. This is another means of increasing student engagement and excitement about learning, as well as providing an opportunity for students to meet the needs articulated by Glasser of attaining some degree of power, as well as a sense of belonging.

This need for a sense of belonging is one that should not be understated in a discussion regarding the workings of choice theory at the CPCS. Given the disproportionately high percentage of students who are either academically at-risk, financially disadvantaged, or have a special need, it is important for students to feel that their opinions matter and that their learning progress is equally important to that of their peers who may not fall into one of these categories. In this way, providing students the opportunities to make independent choices allows the student to develop a voice for themselves, to vocalize their needs to adults, and to feel confident in their abilities to do so in a manner that is both acceptable and accepted. Providing this environment in which students are able to develop their voice and to express themselves effectively may not be tied directly to an academic measurement, yet it is an important life skill, as well as a skill that can be utilized when dialoguing with teachers and administrators about future academic opportunities.

The concept of providing choices regarding academic pursuits is central to the instructional process at the CPCS. This is evidenced through direct observation of classroom environments that tend to find students engaged in various different learning activities that are all connected to a core theme. For instance, students are currently engaged in a year-long project to study the world's ecosystems. Each student was provided the opportunity to select an ecosystem that would be his or her focus of study throughout the academic term. Students recently selected an animal from the ecosystem for further study. Utilizing art as a medium for exploratory learning about the selected animal, students were tasked to use batik art to create a visual representation of the animal—thus providing an opportunity to learn about and to create art, while learning about the selected animal. Students were also tasked to draw a pixelated rendering of their chosen animal on graph paper, at which point they were able to calculate the

area of their drawing. In this way, students are able to combine concepts from science, math, and art into a multi-disciplinary, project-based learning opportunity that fuels depth of content knowledge and the attainment of mastery learning, while at the same time having the ability to make very individualized choices about their learning experience.

In order for the concept of choice theory to serve as an effective model for school community building, expectations for teaching staff must evolve in synchronization with expectations for students. Sandy Richardson notes that the flexibility provided to teachers, as well as the expectation that teachers would also afford flexibility and choices to students differs from the traditional classroom setting, in that there is not a codified curriculum with guideposts that are set in stone (personal communication, October 6, 2014). This is different from the approach that experienced teachers are typically accustomed to and that new teachers are expecting, making the task of staffing the CPCS more challenging than it might be otherwise. As noted previously, even with the small class sizes at the CPCS, students in a given classroom may be working on a number of different tasks simultaneously. When students are working on different tasks and moving about the classroom independently to conduct their work, teachers may feel that the order that they are used to feeling in a classroom setting has been lost, and as students develop the voice that the CPCS seeks to cultivate, some teachers may feel that the conditioned cooperation that they are accustomed to receiving from students has eroded (personal communication, October 6, 2014). In tandem with the unique demographics of the school community noted previously, it is readily apparent that teaching in the CPCS is far different from teaching in a classroom at a traditional middle school.

The Mastery Learning Model at the CPCS

Choice theory provides the framework for the school community at the CPCS, as well as providing guidance for how coursework should be approached, whereas mastery learning theory provides much of the substance of the instructional model for the school. Mastery learning models stem from the work of Benjamin Bloom, who opined that nearly all students have the ability to succeed, if educators are able to “provide the necessary time and appropriate learning conditions” (Guskey, 2010). Bloom indicated that achieving mastery learning would require teachers to utilize techniques that are effective in remediation during the initial instructional process; such techniques include providing immediate opportunities to demonstrate comprehension through assignments and assessments and utilizing an individualized approach for each student (Guskey, 2010). The mastery learning model requires the teacher to assess learning progress more frequently and to provide differentiated instruction, based on the levels of progress shown by students. Therefore, one group of students who demonstrate a higher degree of comprehension earlier in the instructional process may be assigned tasks to enrich the depth of their knowledge in a content area, while other students may be assigned tasks to reinforce fundamental concepts of a particular subject. In this way, the model requires content delivery, assessment, enrichment, and remediation to co-exist in the same class setting, to ensure that each student has ample opportunity to achieve mastery learning.

In the context of the CPCS, mastery learning is best summed up by the statement published on the school’s online fact sheet that “no student is allowed to fail at CPCS” (“Fact Sheet,” n.d.). Just as student choices regarding their instructional coursework may differentiate the tasks that are occurring in an individual classroom, varying student comprehension and achievement levels may also necessitate additional differentiation. CPCS Principal Ashby

Kindler notes that each project and interim assessment employed at the CPCS contains a self-evaluative piece, whereby students are permitted to provide their own input regarding their learning process, and teachers are able to use this feedback as either a means of tailoring additional instruction regarding a particular topic or as a guidepost for future projects (personal communication, October 6, 2014). Students are encouraged to be inquisitive and explorative, while teachers are expected to provide hands-on learning activities to stimulate inquiry and engagement from students, thus permitting each learner to accept instruction and demonstrate mastery uniquely. The size and nature of the charter school allows teaching staff and the SMT to make expedient decisions regarding needs to change course regarding curriculum administration, thus empowering teachers to make the changes to the learning environment suggested by Glasser to promote mastery learning. Put simply, Bobbi Snow indicates that the mastery learning model at the CPCS requires teachers to keep approaching instructional concepts until the students fully grasp them. Obviously, this expectation places another layer of complexity onto the teacher's role at the CPCS, in addition to the expectations related to the student demographics and choice theory applications discussed previously.

Arts-Infused, Project-Based Learning at CPCS

The CPCS utilizes the arts as a unifying dimension to approach student learning, in much the same way as a number of private schools in Central Virginia. In fact, it was working in a small, arts-focused, student-centered private school environment that inspired Bobbi Snow and Sandy Richardson to consider how a similar model could be adopted by a chartered public school. When mentioning the arts in the context of the CPCS, it is important to note that this does not refer to one particular form of art; rather, students are exposed to elements of decorative arts (painting, drawing), plastic arts (sculpture, modeling), and performing arts (drama, music), from a variety of styles and cultures. The arts are used at the CPCS as a means of investigating “how disciplines meet, overlap, and inform each other” in order “to bring wholeness to students’ study” (personal communication, October 6, 2014). Additionally, using the arts as a vehicle for project-based learning provides with the ability to apply their need for tactile stimulation to their coursework. Students are able to channel their compulsions to move and be active into projects that apply the concepts that are being taught to them and to demonstrate their mastery of the concepts. Use of the arts as a centerpiece for instruction also provides students with unique opportunities for both individual expression and social collaboration, while honing skills of creativity, problem solving, and organization, which will serve the student beyond the school setting.

Numerous examples could be cited regarding the use of arts-infused projects as vehicles for instruction at the CPCS, but three recent examples will be utilized to demonstrate the cross-discipline approach to teaching that is currently underway in classrooms. The batik art that was referenced earlier is a wax-resistant process of fabric dyeing that is common in Indonesia. Thus, the use of this medium crosses the disciplines of art, civics, science, and math. Students learned about the art-form, the chemical properties of wax-resistant materials, applied the concepts of wax resistance to drawing a chosen animal from an ecosystem, and studied surface area of art renderings. A second example of an art-infused project being used as a conduit for student instruction is that of a large mobile created by students to demonstrate their mastery of concepts related to the Civil War Amendments to the United States Constitution. Students created visual depictions that demonstrate the importance of abolition, citizenship, and due process. A third

project example is that of storybooks created by CPCS students to teach younger students about the Presidents of the United States. Creating the storybooks combined elements of art, civics, and language arts. After creating the storybooks, students visited classrooms of younger elementary students and read the books to those students, thus engaging the students in community service, as well.



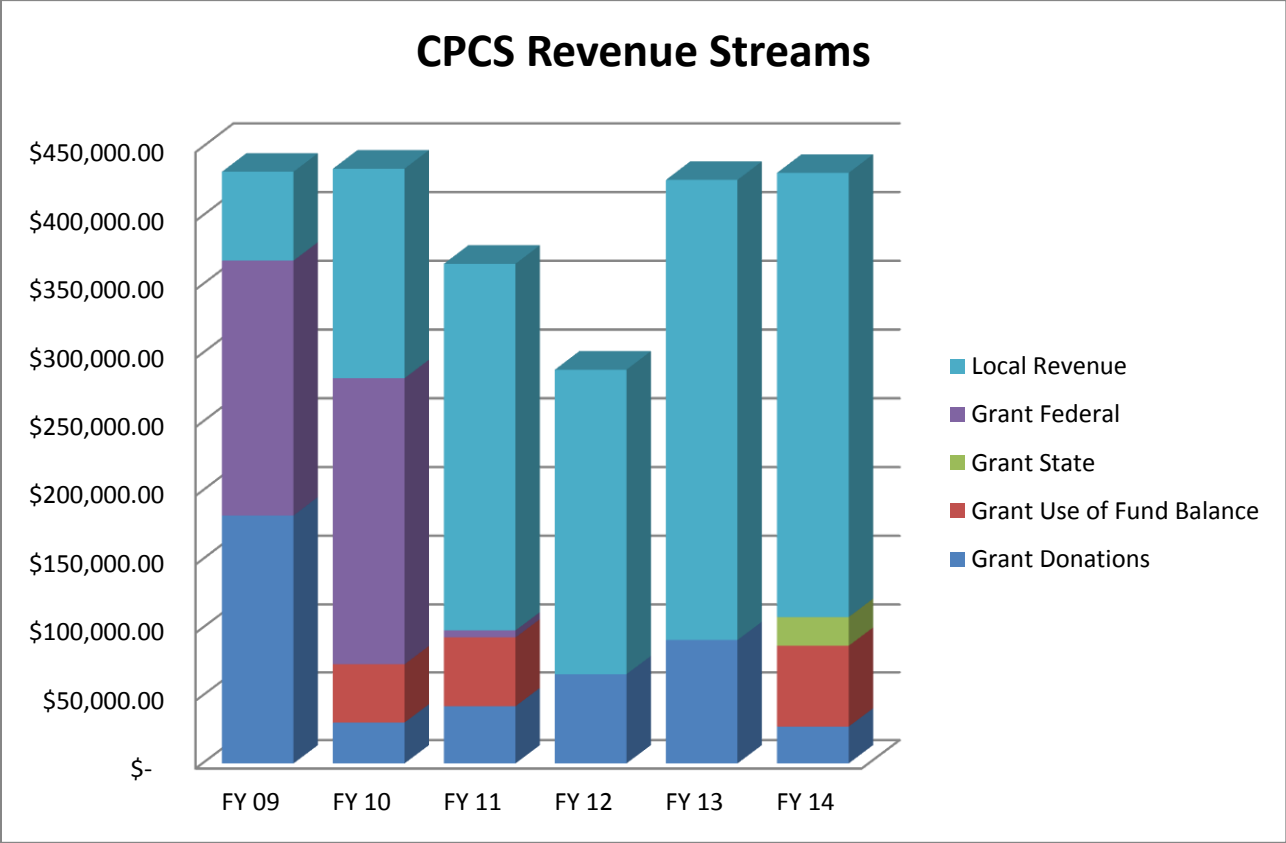
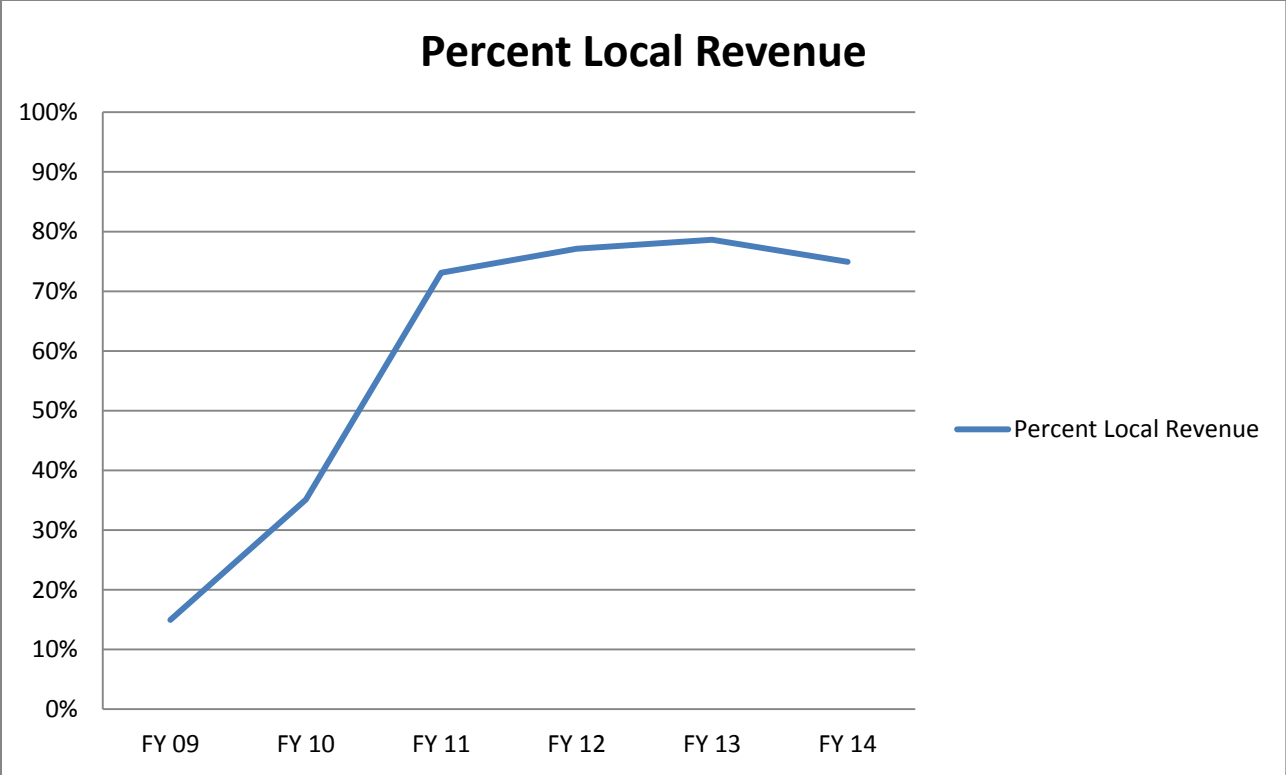
Summary of Teaching Pedagogy

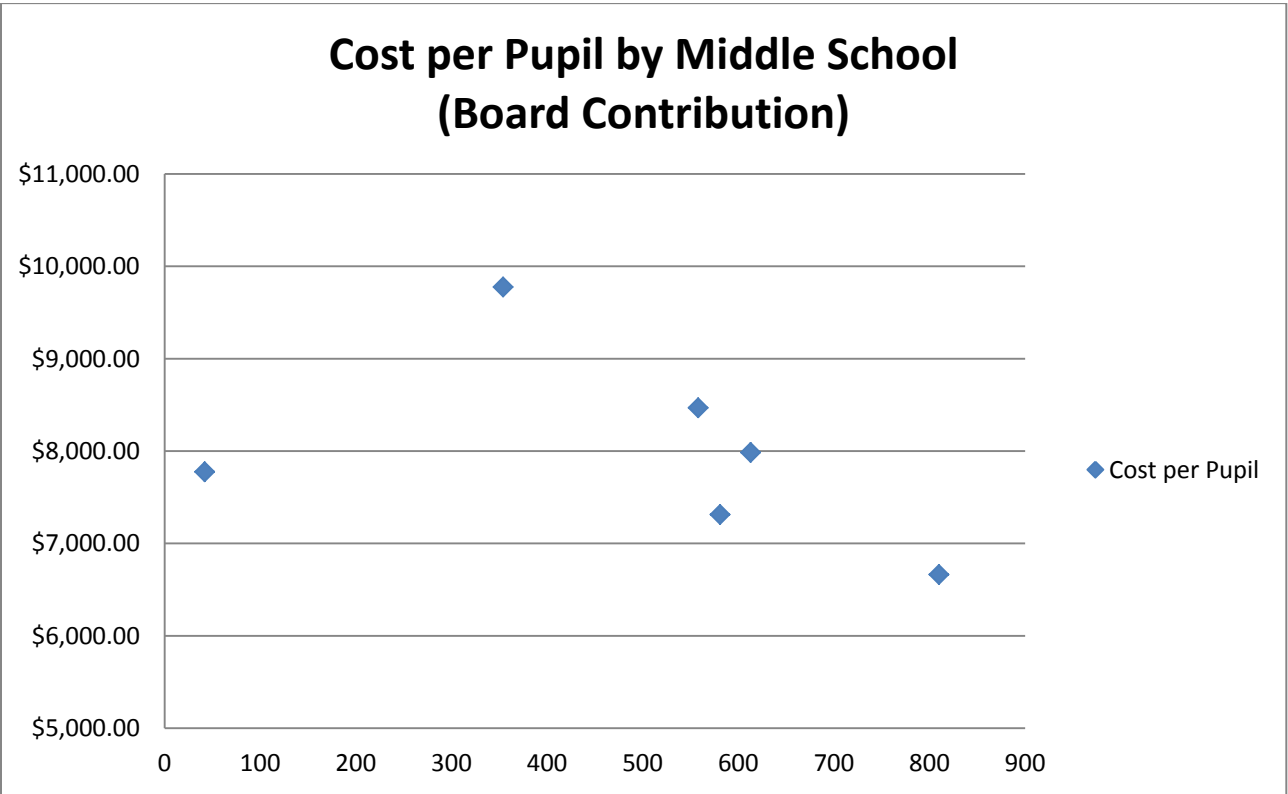
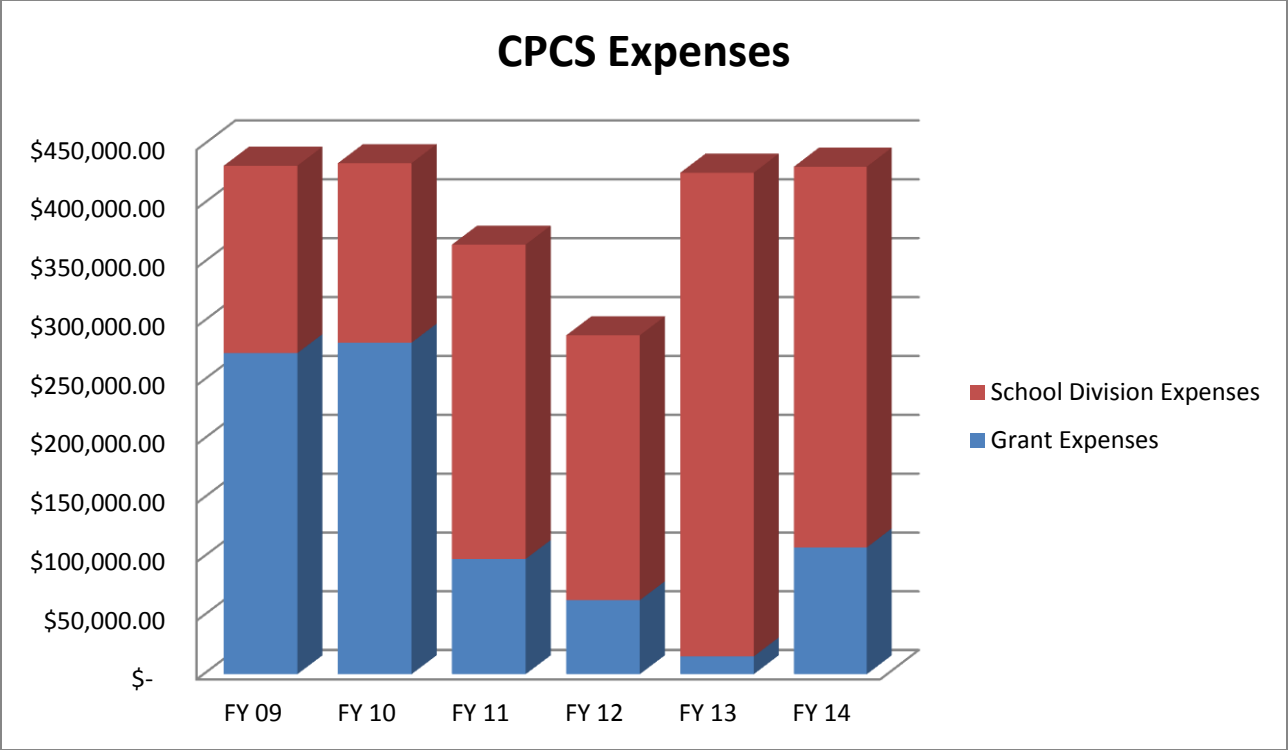
The CPCS' desire to serve different kinds of learners in ways that are meaningful to each student reflects the overall mission of ACPS, which seeks to “establish a community of learners and learning” by focusing on “one student at a time” (“Visitation, Mission,” n.d.). The CPCS endeavors to promote student-directed learning, teaching each student methods of learning and providing opportunities for application, rather than utilizing a didactic approach to transferring knowledge from teacher to student. This methodology promotes engagement and allows students the opportunities to truly utilize the voice and decision-making skills promoted by choice theory; it also allows students the opportunity to truly demonstrate their mastery of content knowledge, as they are not confined by pre-defined expected outcomes. Through arts-infused, project-based learning, students are free to explore their individual interests in a subject area and to articulate their comprehension by creating physical or visual representations of key aspects of that subject matter.

Financial Analysis of the CPCS

As noted previously, Co-Founders Bobbi Snow and Sandy Richardson were successful in obtaining a \$450,000 grant from the federal government to offset costs associated with starting up and operating the CPCS. Since the school opened, the SMT has been continued to raise external funding for the CPCS, along with securing individuals who are willing to donate their time and talents to enrich opportunities that are available to students. The chart below shows a summary of revenues and expenses for the CPCS from Fiscal Year (FY) 2009 (July 1, 2008 through June 30, 2009) through Fiscal Year 2014 (July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2014). The decreases shown in FY 2011 and FY 2012 are the result of personnel changes (lapse) and some reductions in operating expenses that were associated with opening the school and were funded through the federal grant money that was available. Current revenues and expenses are on par with initial revenues and expenses for the school, in aggregate. Since the exhaustion of the federal grant funding, local revenues from ACPS have accounted for about 75 percent of total revenues for the CPCS, or about \$330,000 per year, in each of the last two fiscal years. With this funding, ACPS is supporting about six and one quarter positions, with the expectation that the CPCS will secure funding for any additional personnel and services deemed necessary, which exceeds that revenue stream.

Between July 1, 2013 and June 30, 2014 (fiscal year 2014), ACPS expended approximately \$23.2 million associated with instructional costs to educate 2,958 middle school students (based on September 30, 2013 student population). This figure excludes division-level personnel costs, and costs encompassed within the operating budgets of departments, such as Building Services and Pupil Transportation. For each of the 42 students enrolled at CPCS, approximately \$10,368.60 was expended last fiscal year. Of this, ACPS contributed about \$7,775.81. The average cost per student expended for the middle school student population (excluding CPCS students) was approximately \$7,794.33. The total per-student expenditure for CPCS is the highest among middle schools in ACPS; the next highest was \$9,776.44 (smallest traditional middle school), while the lowest was \$6,664.31 (largest traditional middle school). The discrepancy in cost per student based on school population is logical, as there are economies of scale that develop as student enrollment increases. It is important to remember that the CPCS is intended to function as an intervention for at-risk students. Financial data indicate that this intervention is occurring without added cost to ACPS, under the current funding model.





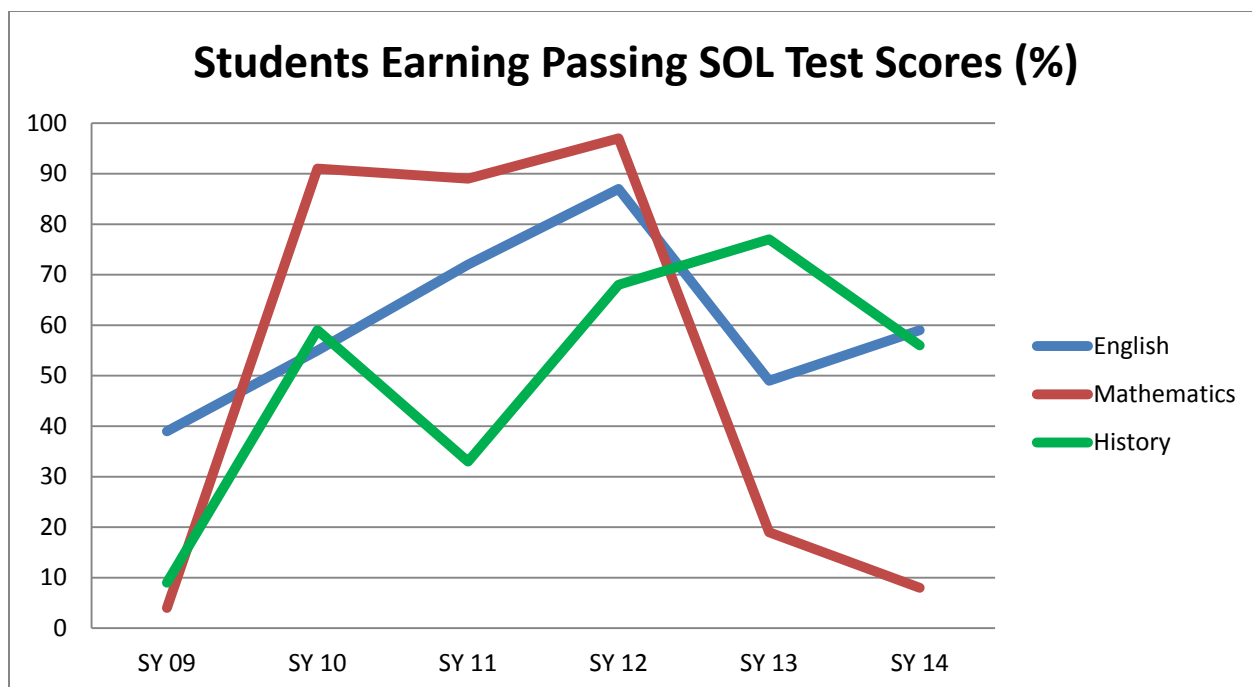
Student Achievement at CPCS

Learning outcomes for students are monitored through utilizing a variety of both qualitative and quantitative measurement tools. These measurement tools include Virginia Standards of Learning (SOL) tests, Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) tests in both reading and mathematics, surveys of both students and parents, along with the less quantifiable, but noteworthy elements of student progress. It is important to bear in mind that the current population of students at the CPCS totals forty-four—half of whom are identified as having a disability. Even if the percentage of students having disabilities were lower, the small student population affords a slim margin of error for the purposes of aggregate test score success rates. The CPCS aspires to instill positive intellectual, social, and emotional habits in each student served by the school, and unfortunately, there is not objective data to demonstrate individualized student progress in each of these areas.

SOL Score Analysis

Though controversial at times, standardized test scores are afforded a high degree of importance as an overall indicator of performance at the levels of student, teacher, school, and school division. The Virginia Department of Education uses aggregate scores in English, mathematics, science and social sciences to establish benchmarks for student achievement and to establish school accreditation ratings. The current accreditation standards, for which results were published in early November, 2014, require middle schools to meet benchmarks passing rates of 75 percent in English, 70 percent in mathematics, 70 percent in science, and 70 percent in social sciences, in order to be considered fully accredited (“School Accreditation Ratings,” November 4, 2014). Accreditation standards for the current school year are based on SOL passing rates for the previous school year.

Also noteworthy is that among middle school students, only students in the eighth grade are tested in science. Thus, the aggregate SOL score for science for the CPCS is comprised of a diminished subset of a small school population. This poses additional difficulties in terms of reporting and analysis, as state and federal guidelines prohibit the reporting of data that could individually identify students. The science SOL test scores for the CPCS fall within these guidelines for several of the years that the school has been in operation; much of the discussion that follows will focus on English, mathematics, and history scores.



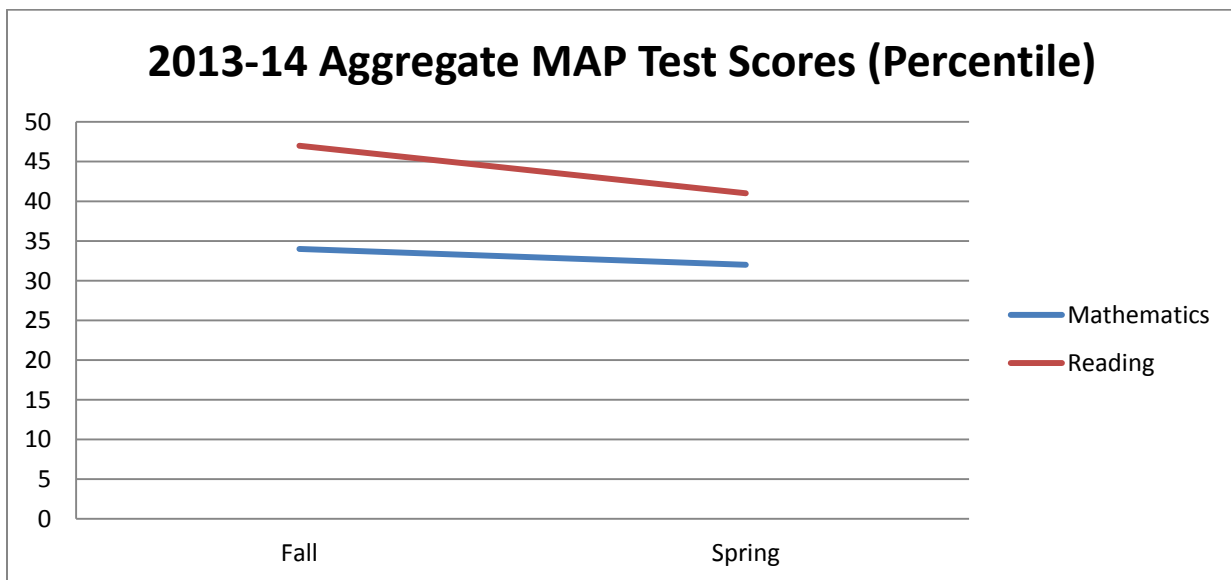
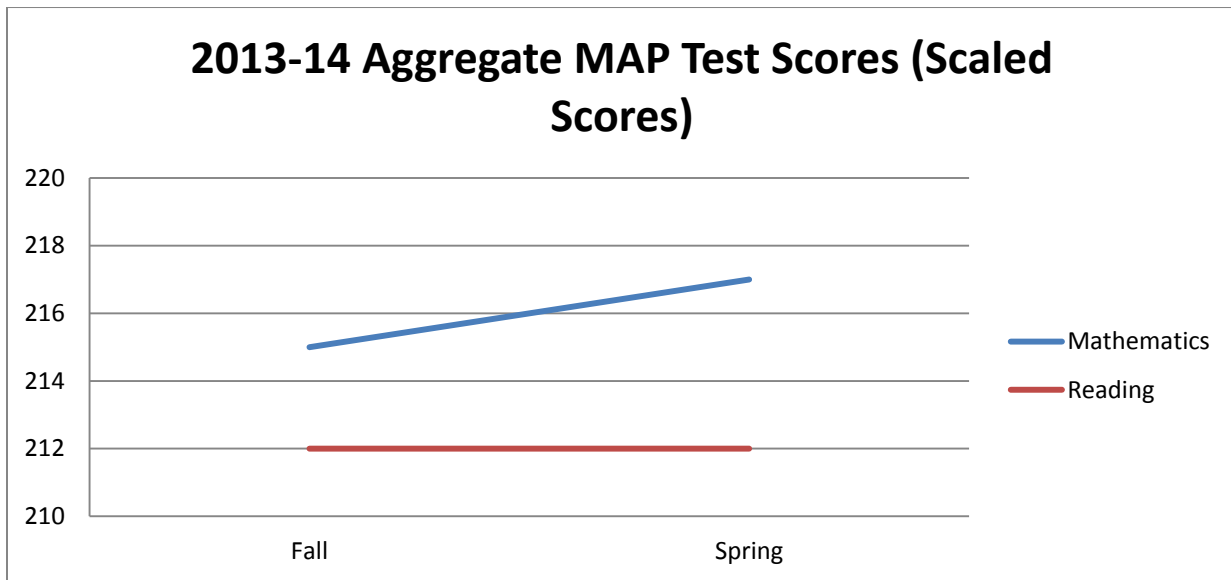
As expected, based on the sample size and the demographic factors mentioned previously, aggregate SOL scores at the CPCS have witnessed fluctuations. All scores are above the levels that were received during the first session of the CPCS' existence, despite marked decreases in mathematics and English during the 2013 school year and a sharp decrease in history in 2011. Based on the scores noted above, the CPCS was accredited with warning during the 2009-10 and 2010-11; the CPCS was fully accredited during the 2011-12, 2012-13, and 2013-14 school years, and the current year (2014-15). The CPCS was designated as conditionally accredited during the 2008-09 school year, as this was the first year of operation, and no SOL test scores were recorded.

<u>Academic Year</u>	<u>Accreditation Status</u>
2014-15	Fully Accredited
2013-14	Fully Accredited
2012-13	Fully Accredited
2011-12	Fully Accredited
2010-11	Accredited with Warning
2009-10	Accredited with Warning
2008-09	Provisionally Accredited

MAP Test Scores

In addition to the SOL tests that are administered at the conclusion of a course, the CPCS has utilized Measures of Academic Process (MAP) testing. The MAP tests are administered in

the fall and the spring, in order to set a baseline for student content knowledge and then to track progress, prior to the administration of the SOL tests. Additionally, the MAP tests provide data points to inform content delivery and differentiation. Students who score higher on the MAP tests can be offered opportunities for enrichment, and those who achieve lower scores can be offered personalized opportunities for directed instruction. Finally, MAP scores can provide staff with an early predictor of how SOL testing will bear out for a particular group of students. If fall scores are very low, it could indicate to staff that it will be very difficult to achieve desired benchmarks in future SOL testing.



To illustrate the overview of MAP test scores above, two sets of MAP scores (fall and spring) are depicted above, both in numeric and percentile scores. The percentile scores for 2013-14 are relatively low; however, it is important to remember that the CPCS seeks to serve those students who are struggling and falling behind their peers in the areas of English literacy and mathematics. A review of the fall MAP scores and percentiles from the 2013-14 school year

are indicative that collectively, the group of students who were then assembled at the CPCS were truly struggling in these two areas. These data may also have informed staff that achieving benchmark scores of SOL tests would be difficult for that particular year. Despite the overall flat trend in 2013-14, there were several students who made significant gains of more than 20 points on individual test scores in the spring, versus the fall. Due to overall cohort trends in scoring, students with significant score achievements moved very slightly in overall percentile measures, whereas other students with modest improvements in MAP test scores may have moved into much higher percentiles.

Student Progress beyond CPCS

Given that CPCS seeks to attract students who are one or more years behind expected benchmarks for core academic content areas, another measure of the efficacy of the school is the on-time graduation rates for students who study at CPCS. Of 52 former students, records are available to determine the progress of 49 students. Excluding 12 students who are currently enrolled in their first semester of ninth grade, 29 of 37 former students are on track to graduate either on time or early—about 78 percent. The remaining students are less than one year behind in attaining high school credits, on average, with a median of being half a year behind. This is based on requiring students to achieve 6 high school credits per year to establish grade level status (i.e. a student has standing as a 10th grader after achieving 6 high school credits).

Parent Testimonies Regarding Student Achievements

As noted previously, the CPCS places a premium on parent involvement, and it provides a variety of avenues for this to occur. While a limited number of parents are able to participate each year via membership on the School Management Team, all parents are provided the opportunity to express their opinions through a parent satisfaction survey. Results from the most recent survey are included below, along with several free-form comments that parents included on the survey and excerpts from several letters of support for the CPCS that were sent to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors in the spring of 2013 in support of ACPS' funding request and for the CPCS, specifically. Overall, the parent survey results indicate that parents are well satisfied with their student's experiences at the CPCS, with highest marks being displayed in the responses to questions regarding perceptions that teachers care about students, feelings that joining CPCS was a good decision, and that the academic program at CPCS meets student needs. Although the numbers of responses indicating disagreement with the question being posed is small, there is some significance relative to the size of the total survey population. For instance four parents indicated disagreement with the statement that there is good communication between school and home, and two parents directly mentioned infrequent communication from their student's teacher. Three parents noted disagreement with the statement that their child is happy at school. It is noteworthy that many students who attend the CPCS struggle with overall happiness and self-image, as evidenced by student survey data; reforming this image is a component of the holistic approach embraced by the CPCS, and several parents have noted improvement in this area, for their students.

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree
The teachers at CPCS care about my child.	36	12	
My child is happy at school.	24	21	3
I feel welcome at CPCS.	30	15	
I know how to get my concerns addressed at CPCS.	31	2	2
I made a good choice joining CPCS.	35	12	1
The academic program meets my child's needs.	35	8	1
The arts infused curriculum enriches the school's program.	33	12	
The school is project based.	31	13	1
There is good communication between home and school.	33	10	4
There are many opportunities for my child to show what he knows beyond traditional means.	33	13	2

Comments from Parent Satisfaction Survey. The following comments are excerpted from the most recent Parent Satisfaction Survey conducted at the CPCS, in the fall of 2014:

- CPCS turned my daughter's life around! A million thank yous to the school's co-founders, teachers and staff for their creativity and caring.

- We are very pleased with how school is progressing for our son thus far. He has trouble with completion of assignments and has some NYM grades, but he is doing much better in the CPCS environment than during his previous 5th grade achievements.
- **[Redacted]**'s experience at Charter has been better than our wildest dreams. We moved to Virginia specifically to find a school that could cater to her unique learning needs, and the program and staff at Charter have done so perfectly. Kudos to you all!
- I would like to get to know the teachers better. It seems like I only know Ms.Fox. And I would like to see more extracurricular opportunities such as P.E. and Music.
- There is good communication between Carol Fox and home. There is very little direct communication between teachers and home.

Comments to the Board of Supervisors related to the CPCS. The following comments are excerpted from letters of support that were provided to the Albemarle County Board of Supervisors during the budget adoption process for the 2013-14 school year:

- The 3rd child has learning difficulties. There were some delays and barriers in elementary school and she did not receive an IEP until late in 4th grade. She received many services in 5th grade but experienced poor performance in every subject and failed every SOL in 4th grade; most of the SOLs in 5th. She went to the nurse every day to get out of class. She cried every night and told teachers she was "not very smart". We expected she would go to Henley Middle School and had her spend a day there. She was overwhelmed and terrified. We then heard about the Community Public Charter School... Her academic experience at the Charter School is rich and rewarding.
- Charter offers a bold and innovative approach to education, respect students, give them choice, and they will meet you with enthusiasm and cooperation. I have watched under achieving students transformed into confident, engaged learners in my three-year association with the school. This is a result of the care and attention teachers bring to each student and the creation of a unique learning environment. The class size and freedom of choice are essential to this population of students who achieve academic success and confidence they had not experienced in larger mainstream schools.
- I'm writing today, because of the difference Community Public Charter School (CPCS) has made in our lives, not just my son's, but our entire family. I say 'our entire family', because his positive attitude has had a ripple effect within our home. He has gone from a young man who was sad and difficult to interact with, to a happy, engaged, and helpful young man who acts as though a weight has lifted off of his shoulders.

Goal Attainment at the CPCS

The stated goals of programs within school divisions tend to evolve over time, and absent a program for regular analysis of these goals and their resulting outcomes, the tendency is for goals to shift away from overtly quantifiable metrics toward experiential components of student instruction and services. That said, the evolution of the goals of the CPCS has followed a similar path, and a chronological listing of the goals for CPCS is included below. The evolution away from quantifiable measures described above complicates a reviewer's ability to assess fidelity to the goals and efficacy of outcomes. The other complicating factor is that cohesive statistics have not been maintained longitudinally to support conclusions regarding strategic goals for the program. Therefore, data which are collected to assess performance related to some goals may involve using the data for a purpose other than that for which they were originally intended and compiled.

This is not to say that quantifiable goals and measurements are not employed by the CPCS; rather, these measurements tend to be more tactical and temporal, rather than strategic and enduring. For example, the School Improvement Plan submitted by the CPCS during the 2013-14 school year included a goal of decreasing incidents of bullying reported by students on the annual School Climate Survey. Given the small size of the school population, any incidents of bullying that occur are likely to have a greater impact on the collective experience of the students at CPCS, more so than at larger middle schools. For instance, two students (nearly five percent of the total student population at CPCS) who are engaging in bullying behavior could have a profoundly negative impact on School Climate Survey results, if the behavior is not identified and addressed expeditiously.

Initial Goals of the CPCS Stated in Charter Application

The following goals and objectives were presented for approval by ACPS and its School Board as a component of the application process for chartered school status:

Goal 1 (Academic Performance): Students will demonstrate academic progress in attaining standards-based knowledge and skills in all core subject areas through an arts-infused curriculum.

Objective 1: Students will demonstrate increased academic achievement in accordance with their Individual Plans as measured by an increase of at least 12 months progress in reading and math.

Objective 2: Students will pass all SOLs in eighth grade. Students who come into the CPCS who have not passed the SOLs in reading and math and take the SOLs in earlier grades, will improve their scores by 10% each year.

Goal 2 (Non-Academic Performance): All Community Public Charter Students will demonstrate progress in attaining non-academic skills and abilities that include self-discipline, self-respect, and respect for the beliefs and rights of others. CPCS clients and stakeholders will value and support the arts-infused educational program.

Objective 1: Students will demonstrate school commitment measured by a 95% school wide attendance rate.

Objective 2: An awareness of the arts will be measured by two performances/public displays a year, with the number increasing in subsequent years. There will be 100% individual participation in arts performances/displays.

Goal 3 (Arts-integrated Curriculum and Learning Environment Impact): CPCS' arts-infused curriculum, learning environment, and professional development for teachers, will positively and significantly affect student academic and non-academic achievement.

Objective: The three-year project in concert with the University of Virginia's School of Education will be implemented in CPCS' second year of operation and will include audits (e.g. checklists and charts completed by teachers, parents, students; interviews; and other techniques) that document and analyze the content, level of effort, and effectiveness of arts-based teaching and learning activities.

Goal 4 (Student Content and Performance Standards): The CPCS instructional program will be aligned with the Albemarle content standards to develop a comprehensive teaching and learning curriculum for the students attending fifth through eighth grades.

Objective: By August of 2008, the entire curriculum will be mapped (using the Heidi Jacob's model) detailing all projects that align to the Standards of Learning.

Goal 5 (Parent/Guardian Involvement): Parents and guardians of the CPCS students will be directly and actively involved in the decisions and activities that positively affect the academic and non-academic achievement of students, and the organization and management of the school.

Objective 1: Parent satisfaction and engagement will be measured by parent participation in 80% of their child's academic meetings, which will be held every other month.

Objective 2: Three parents will be members of the six person School Management Team

Objective 3: CPCS staff will develop and maintain a close relationship with mentors, parents and guardians that includes frequent communications, meetings and events designed to share information and ideas, and monthly teacher-parent education opportunities that address child-rearing challenges and issues.

Goal 6 (The Community of the School): The school will be a safe campus both physically and emotionally.

Objective: There will be a 50% decrease in discipline referrals to the principal after six months of school, the development of a high-functioning student standards committee to deal with student discipline and issues, and a 50% decrease in the involvement of parents in student behavioral issues.

Goals of the CPCS Articulated in 2011-12 Report to ACPS School Board

The following goals and attainment measures were presented to the ACPS School Board as a component of the annual report issued by the CPCS:

Goal 1: The CPCS will improve the academic performance of all students.

Objective 1: To develop and provide arts-infused learning activities that result in engaged learning and deep understanding of concepts.

Objective 2: To improve student achievement in gaining the skills and knowledge defined by the Virginia Standards of Learning so that at least 70% of students pass the SOL tests.

Objective 3: To improve student homework completion by offering afternoon homework sessions resulting in 100% completion of homework.

Objective 4: To develop an awareness of the arts in the school community which can be measured by two performances/public displays a year.

Goal 2: The CPCS will create and sustain a school environment that invites personal commitment, responsibility and learning for all.

Objective 1: To increase the awareness of student empowerment through choice and through personal commitment to the school community.

Objective 2: To develop and celebrate individual, group and community contributions to the school and larger community.

Stated Strategic Goals

The following goals are the strategic goals for the overall work of the CPCS. These goals are published publicly on the school's website, and they provide insight into the fundamental principles that guide the decision-making process at CPCS, though operational objectives and measures for attaining these goals are not directly stated.

- 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;
- Help students learn self-responsibility, self-discipline, self-direction and self-nurturing;
- Create possibilities where all students are an important part of something larger than themselves: family, school, community, and world;
- Design extensive process-oriented activities that result in a balance of process and product;
- 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; and,

- Teach students to think like artists.

Challenges Inherent to the CPCS Dynamics

As noted in previous sections, there are a number of challenges that are inherent to operating a small school environment, as the performance of even a single student or staff member can have a significant impact on the overall performance of the school. In addition to the potential impact of challenges related to individuals, systemic challenges have the ability to impact the effectiveness of a small, specialized school environment, such as CPCS, also. Such systemic challenges could include facility limitations, availability of transportation, and the combined scheduling impacts of the two previous items. Each of these challenges will be described briefly, in the section that follows.

Facility Dynamics

The location of the CPCS within Burley Middle School presents a set of challenges that is unique to this school, although CPCS leaders are grateful for the space in which to operate their program. The school within a school concept requires CPCS staff to make concerted efforts to avoid comingling of CPCS students with Burley students, although both groups utilize core services such as the library and the school nurse. Given other operating constraints, along with a desire to maintain separation between the student bodies, the daily schedule of CPCS diverges from that of Burley; yet, CPCS students cannot be insulated from disruptions posed by movements of Burley students in common areas and the audible disruption of the bell system that is programmed for Burley's purposes. Additionally, the space that is allocated for the CPCS exists on three different hallways within Burley, thus spatially separating students from their peers, at times. Finally, the CPCS has maintained a desire to grow beyond its current size, but the lack of available space to maintain its desired small class sizes has generated reluctance to press for any large scale increases in student population.

Transportation Dynamics

The location of the CPCS on the Burley campus provides a central location that is accessible through the existing transportation services provided by ACPS. CPCS students utilize a system of shuttles that transport students to and from centralized collection points at Albemarle High School, Monticello High School, and Western Albemarle High School. The same shuttles are utilized to transport students to Murray High School and to The Enterprise Center. This dynamic is unique for this group of students. ACPS guidelines permit secondary school students to have bus ride times of up to ninety minutes for both the home to school and school to home commutes. Due to the use of the shuttle system of transportation, CPCS students could be on the school bus for as much as 120 minutes per commute. Additionally, these students may interface with students from up to five schools, including CPCS, ranging in age from sixth grade through twelfth grade. For students who may already be introverted or self-conscious, this could be a dysregulating experience to begin and end each school day.

Staffing Dynamics

Staffing has provided a unique set of challenges for the CPCS, from the outset. An ideal staffing candidate for the CPCS is well-versed in and bought into the application of choice theory, has an appreciation and understanding for the arts, and is prepared to facilitate

differentiated learning in a small class, with one-half of its membership comprised of students with identified disabilities. Bobbi Snow advises that the first group of teachers was not prepared to handle these dynamics, which emerged during the formation of the initial class at CPCS, and about half of the initial staff group left to pursue other opportunities (personal communication, October 6, 2014). The enrollment demographics of the school are subject to change annually, which presents school leaders with the challenge of establishing a stable group of staff members that is committed to the school and its educational model and who are flexible and able to adapt to the changing student body.

Student Recruitment Dynamics

Each of the factors listed above provides unique challenges for the CPCS, in terms of attracting students to its program, as opposed to the programs that are available within the middle school environment that is available within the student's residential area. At the same time, the CPCS is seeking a particular subset of at-risk students, which attends sixteen elementary schools that are spread across the 726 square miles that Albemarle County encompasses. Aside from the daily duties associated with administering a school, the small staff at CPCS must also actively engage in marketing their services to teachers, counselors, administrators, case-workers, and others, at each of these schools, in order to attract applications from rising sixth grade students and their parents. Additionally, the prospect of sending rising sixth grade students, who are struggling in school, outside of their residential area, amongst much older students, into a classroom setting that is physically located in the largest middle school in the school division may also erect barriers to application to the CPCS for some families.

Accountability Dynamics

As a small school that seeks out at-risk students for individualized intervention, the potential exists for students who are falling behind to receive services at CPCS that would be unavailable, in kind, in a traditional middle school. At the same time, the possibility exists for a group of students to be assembled who struggle in core areas and struggle in test-taking. The Virginia Department of Education will only permit schools to be accredited with warning for three consecutive years; a fourth year that would have resulted in a warning will yield denial of accreditation. Therefore, staff at CPCS may find themselves forced to afford success on standardized tests a place of prominence among the school's priorities that they were not intended to have and that could be damaging to other aspects of the school's intended instructional model.

An additional area of accountability that bears consideration is that of services that are available to students served under Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs). Given that students are in transit to the CPCS, from the three high schools for an extra twenty to thirty minutes each morning, and the reverse each afternoon, the school day for students at CPCS is nearly an hour shorter than that of students at the five traditional middle schools. Therefore, students have less time available for instruction and IEP-related services to be provided to the students. The compressed school day also affords fewer opportunities for either enrichment or remediation activities to occur.

Conclusions and Recommendations

In light of the facts and data presented, it is recommended that the CPCS, as both a charter school and an academic program supported by ACPS, be allowed to continue with modifications. Recommendations for potential modifications are provided for the areas of operationalizing strategic planning goals into quantifiable metrics, such that longitudinal data collection may occur to support such goals, and a recommendation to seek resolution to some of the challenging dynamics that are presented within this report. It is recommended that this occur within the context of revising the current charter, slated for renewal prior to July, 2015. Further, interim evaluations should occur after the first year of operation during the new charter term, with an additional review occurring prior to future renewals.

Alternatives Explored

In order to establish the recommendation that the CPCS should continue with modifications, two main alternatives were examined. These alternatives were to discontinue the program and to continue the program as is. The alternative to discontinue the program was not recommended, as it would leave students with a demonstrated need for the type of interventions that are offered at CPCS without an avenue to receive needed interventions in small group settings that are available at CPCS. Additionally, the percentage of students who are on track to graduate on time, and the lack of additional cost per pupil do not support a conclusion of discontinuing the program. The alternative to continue the program as is was not recommended, due to the identified need to re-establish metrics that describe the efficacy of the program, as well as the need to review and address several operating challenges that are unique to CPCS.

Recommendations

As noted earlier in this report, it is incumbent upon the Division and its program managers to ensure that the strategic goals and objectives of a program are articulated in such a way that efficacy of both implementation and outcomes can be measured. Along these lines, it is recommended that program managers establish longitudinal measurements of student progress at CPCS. Items for potential consideration include grades from upper elementary years through high school, test scores, disciplinary referrals, and IEP components. This information could demonstrate efficacy of the CPCS in increasing student achievements and inclusion with peer groups in later grades, for students served under IEPs. Producing this data will allow future program evaluations to more adequately compare the efficacy of the services provided in the CPCS setting, as compared to services offered at traditional middle schools within ACPS. Additionally, it is recommended that as a component of strategic planning firm targets be established and adhered to regarding student enrollments and funding,. Analysis regarding the level of demand for the unique services provided by CPCS, what size is sustainable for this school, and what funding level is reasonable as an ongoing expectation might be considered for inclusion in this component of strategic planning.

A variety of factors previously expounded upon present a unique set of operating challenges for CPCS. For this reason, it is recommended that positive steps occur to mitigate the effects of these challenges. In order to address facility challenges, it is recommended that a review of current classroom utilization occur to determine if there exists an ability to group classrooms more cohesively, to avoid having the small group of CPCS students dispersed in

three different areas of Burley, assuming this continues to be the space that houses the CPCS. Future comprehensive redistricting efforts could yield space availability in other locations. Transportation dynamics are challenging for CPCS program managers to address; however, it is recommended that the needs of CPCS be considered, as the current arrangement does not allow for the same instructional time that students in traditional middle schools receive. In terms of staffing, it is recommended that CPCS staff utilize available opportunities for professional development to present case studies on choice theory, mastery learning, and the infusion of arts into project-based learning as a means of engaging with existing Division staff and cultivating interest in the CPCS, such that openings that occur at CPCS may be filled with personnel who are aware of the program and its objectives. To improve recruitment of students, it is recommended that CPCS program managers continue to network with school personnel who interact with fifth grade students consider expanding that networking to include sixth school personnel who interact with sixth grade students. This could potentially add middle school students with demonstrated needs into the applicant pool.

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