

DELAWARE CHARTER SCHOOL ANNUAL REPORT

CHARTER SCHOOL INFORMATION

Charter School Name:

Campus Community School

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Catherine M. Balsley, Ed.D.

December 1, 2015

Head of School

Date

Harry Papaleo

December 1, 2015

Board President

Date

I. Charter School Program

Narrative:

Provide a Synopsis of the School's Mission and Educational Program, including Key Components of the Educational Model and Any Unique or Innovative Features of the School

Brief History

Campus Community School (CCS) founded by a group of local parents, in collaboration with the education faculty at Wesley College, opened CCS on the campus of Wesley College, September 9, 1998. At that time Wesley College provided a free multiple classroom facility (Bradford Street) and access to a gymnasium, cafeteria, library and additional office space. The school served 300 students in grade 1-8.

In 2002, a second facility was purchased at 350 Pear St. With an approved charter modification, a small comprehensive high school was added enrolling up to 300 additional students. Students in grades 8-12 were located here.

In 2009, Wesley College unveiled a "Campus Master Plan". CCS was given notice to vacate the Bradford Street building in June 2012.

With the loss of the Wesley College facility in 2012 the board of directors sought approval to amend the charter to close the high school program located at 350 Pear Street, renovate this building to accommodate the relocation of the elementary & middle grades program, and add two kindergarten classes. The Board of Directors also initiated a process to bring changes to the administrative leadership including the hiring of a new Head of School and principal.

In the spring of 2013 the final class of seniors graduated. In 2014-15 school year, CCS served 410 students in a K-8 school program located at 350 Pear St.

Campus Community School has a diverse population. In the 2014-2015 school year CCS enrolled 410 students, a majority of whom live in Dover and its surrounding communities. Our students are represented by 35.6% white, 46.1% African American 8.8% Hispanic/Latino, 6.8% multi-racial, 2.2% Asian and less than 1% each American Indian and Hawaiian.

Approximately 63% of our students are from low income families as measured by eligibility to participate in the free and reduced school lunch program.

CCS Mission

Since the development and approval of its founding charter CCS has maintained a steadfast commitment to its **mission**:

To create and maintain an environment for learning that allows each student to maximize his or her potential in developing habits of mind, acquiring knowledge and skills, and demonstrating individual and social responsibility.

CCS Educational Program

The original CCS charter was written with specific philosophic assumptions in which to design the **educational program**. They included (1) a belief in a constructivist approach to teaching and learning; (2) Choice Theory as a theory of motivation for learning; (3) strong school community/ parental involvement; (4) site-based management/shared decision-making; and (5) a university-based collaborative support/partnership with Wesley College.

Influential author Peter Senge, in his seminal work *A Fifth Discipline Schools That Learn* (2000, 2012 revised), wrote about the assumptions listed above as he described and gave a name to these characteristics as the disciplines of a learning organization. In those early years, the CCS founders were pioneers in recognizing the importance of these assumptions and then adopting this “yet to be” named model of a school as a learning organization.

Developing an educational program designed to create a culture of a learning organization as a school, has been both challenging and rewarding. Over the years, CCS has experimented with a variety of strategies activities and practices. The forces of social, economic, political and technological change have had an impactful influence over these choices, the most pronounced of which is for CCS to become a more focused data driven results oriented organization embracing the rigor and expectations of Common Core academic standards and standards based assessments and grading.

Key components of the educational model include a school that is organized as a collaborative community of learners committed to the success of all students; an inquiry-

based approach to learning; an emphasis on students taking personal responsibility for their education and behavior; a focus on project-based, hands-on learning, creating a highly positive learning environment where students are expected to work toward their potential; embedded on-going staff development; community service learning; and parent/community involvement. The ultimate goal is to provide all students with the foundational knowledge and skills they need to achieve their dreams.

Creating a culture of learning within the CCS school community naturally lends itself to **innovation and unique features**. Foremost, there is an overall raising expectation that everyone and everything is constantly evolving, growing with infinite capacity, where all students can be successful. Second, relationship building between and among teachers, students, families, and the larger community is essential to understanding the interconnectivity and interdependence of all learning. Fourth, a deepening appreciation, respect and understanding of the influences of poverty, race, ethnicity, culture on learning. Finally, to develop in students the capacity to nurture passion creativity and intrinsic motivation to learn.

The school environment itself has become learner-centered for both children and adults. Staff are organized into professional learning communities that meet regularly to reflect and improve upon the results of data analysis and classroom practice, with the goal of continuous improvement. Staff also meet regularly in workgroups to discuss academic programs, assessment initiatives and climate and culture issues that impact the whole school. Daily academic expectations include collaborative team planning, use of differentiated instruction and moving students forward to become independent learners. Administrators and teachers leverage tools such as routine practices, supportive and

consistent messaging and modeling to develop and maintain a positive culture for critique and continuous improvement among peers and their students.

Student-led conferences

Another innovative practice at CCS is our student-led conference. A student-led conference is a meeting with the student and his or her family and the teacher to discuss school progress. The student has the leadership role in informing parents of their progress by sharing evidence of their learning in meeting state standards. Student-led conferences help students develop ownership and accountability for their learning.

After School and Summer Enrichment Program

Campus Community School's 21st Century Community Learning Center offers an intensive summer and after-school enrichment program to students in grades k-8 focused on increasing access to high quality Science, Technology, Engineering, Art and Math instruction. "S.T.E.A.M. into Learning: Explore, Discover, and Create" features standards-based, supplemental instruction along with integrated enrichment projects.

Collaboration with multiple community based organizations offers the opportunity for children to engage in high interest extensions of the curriculum in addition to supporting their social and emotional growth.

Academic Enrichment

All K-8 students participate everyday in Academic Enrichment, as part of Campus Community's day. The purpose of Academic Enrichment is to provide students with additional time to enhance their academic skills in the core content areas, especially reading, writing and math. Some students may need more support, while others may

need more of a challenge. Whole class and individual needs were considered when designing this time. Additional time for students on RTI tier 2 and 3 was met through Academic Enrichment. Every educator in our building is assigned to a group of students to help support their needs.

Mentoring

Partnering with Communities in Schools, Campus Community School implements a mentoring program for at risk students. Students are identified by their teachers based on academic and behavioral concerns. Mentors are recruited from the community (Wesley College, local businesses, school board members, Delaware State University, seniors at Campus Community, etc.) and receive extensive training from our Site Coordinator. Mentors meet with their assigned mentees at least once a week to build relationships, provide a positive role model, and provide tutoring. Having this one-on-one relationship with a caring adult is critical to our students' success.

Discuss Key Accomplishments of the Charter School Program over the 2014-2015 School Year

Overall, CCS has met the Delaware Department of Education Charter School Performance Agreement- Renewing Charter School dated September 4th, 2013, as we prepared for another five year charter renewal.

Academic Achievement

Campus Community School received an overall rating of “Meets Standard” in the 2013-2014 school year for Academic Performance Financial Performance and Organizational Performance.

During the 2014-2015 school year, CCS received an overall rating of “Meets Standard” for Financial Performance and Organizational Performance. A rating was not available for the Academic Framework for this year, as the Delaware System of Student Assessment transitions Smarter ELA/Literacy and Smarter Mathematics tests. However, draft results published in the fall 2015 indicated that CCS students performed equal to or better than local and state peers in both ELA/Literacy and mathematics

Thirty seven percent (37%) of CCS students scored proficient in Math compared to the state average of 39% and the Capital School District score of 39%

Sixty two percent (62%) of CCS student scores proficient in ELA/Literacy compared to the state average of 52% and the Capital School District score of 39%

Academic Program

- Implemented a stronger coherent standards-based curriculum based on Common Core; developing embedded classroom assessments;
- Participated in a district-wide cohort to explore the development of a standards based- assessment system;
- Selected newly aligned instruction curricula and provided staff development;
- Provided professional development with on-going dialogue relative to issues of children living in poverty, race, ethnicity and learning to develop greater cultural competence;

- Provided intensive professional development to special education staff;
- Revised the middle school schedule to allow students greater course selections and increased time for enrichment;
- Professional development with Responsive Classroom approach to teaching learning- institutionalized the practice of morning meeting;
- Established a school library.

Tier 1 Narrative:

What are the Successful Academic Practices at your Charter School that other Schools Can Replicate?

Cycles of Inquiry through Data PLCs – Core teachers, special ed teachers, and administrators engage in focused 8 week cycles of inquiry in reading and math to monitor student progress and plan for differentiated instruction that targets students’ areas of need. Data analysis and planning for differentiation/intervention is monitored through weekly data PLCs. All cycles of inquiry are documented in writing by the teachers. All data collected through formal and informal progress monitoring is documented and kept by the teachers. As part of this focus on data and student growth, students are involved in knowing and understanding their own data. Each grade level decides how to best involve students in this process, but all students use data to reflect on their own growth. Cycles of inquiry that use data are a best practice because they help teachers, students and administrators make decisions based on evidence rather than assumptions.

Professional Development PLCs – In addition to our weekly data PLCs, each year for the last three years, we have identified a professional development need, tied to

academics, as the basis of a PLC that involves all teachers, including Special Services and Related Arts. We began three years ago with Math PLC, then moved to Literacy PLC last year, and are currently engaged in Assessment PLC. This type of PLC meets every other week for 70 minutes after school. It is facilitated by our Director of Curriculum and one teacher leader. The ultimate goal is to establish a vision for where we're headed within the focus area (math, literacy, assessment, etc.) by developing a common understanding and sense of urgency around "best practices". Teachers are expected to be active participants in the PLC, to be reflective of their current practices, and to show evidence of implementation. Professional Development PLCs are a best practice because they are specific to the needs of the school and because they are driven by goals and actions. Developing the teachers in the school is an essential step in improving learning.

Student Led Conferences - Student-led conferences take place twice a year, at the end of the first and third marking periods. This is a requirement for all students and families. Students create portfolios to showcase their work from the marking period, reflect on strengths/weakness, and create goals for the new marking period. The conference itself is really important because it is the student who is doing most of the talking and explaining of their accomplishments, work habits, and goals. Student-led conferences are a best practice because they engage students in reflection and analysis about their learning and dispositions.

Writers Workshop –Students need ample opportunities to write authentic pieces about meaningful topics. They need time for explicit instruction, chances to see and dissect strong models, and time to delve into the writing process. Students spend a lot of time pre-writing, drafting and revising. Teachers act as a coach, providing students with different tools to use and providing students with opportunities to make purposeful

decisions about their writing. We draw heavily on the work of Nancy Atwell and Lucy Calkins when setting up workshop. Students engage in Writer's Workshop every day. Within their units of study, students explore questions like *what techniques do writers use to develop powerful stories. What makes an essay compelling to read? What strategies do writers use for planning and revising their pieces?* Writer's Workshop is a best practice because it is process-based, not task-based. It helps students become invested in writing and provides students with skills and strategies that are transferable. It's about developing the writer, not the piece.

Enrichment – All 4th – 8th graders participate in Enrichment every day. Because we run on an A/B day schedule, students are scheduled for two enrichment classes each marking period. Each class meets an hour every other day. Enrichment serves two purposes, to provide extra math, reading and writing support to those who need it, and to provide enriching opportunities to those who are already performing well academically. Extra support is determined based on test scores and classroom performance. Elective classes are chosen and prioritized by students each marking period. Electives include both traditional opportunities like Yearbook, BPA and Band and unique opportunities like Sign Language, G.I.R.L Talk, Robotics, and MARTH. Enrichment is a best practice because it is differentiated to students' needs and interests.

Book Challenge – The 40-Book Challenge is a requirement for all 6th - 8th graders. Over the course of the school year, students are challenged to read a minimum of 40 books. While there are a few requirements about pages and genres, the books are completely chosen by the students. When they finish a book, students record the book and rate it. The 40-Book Challenge is a best practice because it promotes habitual reading, an essential part of becoming a better reader.

What are the Successful Organizational Practices at your Charter School that other Schools Can Replicate?

- CCS complies with all applicable state and federal requirements in a timely and thorough way including ensuring all board agenda, minutes and financial reports are placed on our web page;
- Our governing board is compliant with all laws, rules and regulations, attends required trainings and participates in board development by having a close and on-going relationship with the Head of School and administrative team;
- The administrative team holds weekly meetings to review all monitored activities to ensure compliance with areas such as health and safety requirements, discipline and student behavior, special education concerns etc. We prioritize our findings (developed by data analysis) and proceed to develop weekly targets for our work as an adm. Team.

What are the Successful Financial Management & Stewardship Practices at your Charter School that other Schools Can Replicate?

Campus Community School (CCS) prides itself on successful financial management. As per the State of Delaware regulations, CCS is audited by an outside firm on an annual basis. Due to the level of our Federal grant funding, our audits have included a single audit. We have never had a finding noted in any of our audits and according to our current accounting firm "The finance department at Campus Community Charter School is a good example of successful financial management and stewardship practices". A few of the attributes that enable us to be effective financially are as follows:

- **Great attention to detail and recordkeeping.** It is important to CCS to employ individuals who have strong attention to detail and understand the importance of detailed

recordkeeping. In addition, checks and balances are put into place to verify the accuracy of the functions being performed. I.e., reviewing the voucher register daily, to ensure that all vouchers have processed successfully and accurately.

- **Timely reconciliations of the accounting records.** Reconciliations are performed within a timely manner in addition to always keeping in mind funding restrictions and deadlines. It is imperative that all functions are performed in a timely manner. In addition, processes are in place to reconcile work load to ensure the accuracy. I.e., invoices are processed within one week of being received. A detailed monthly finance report is created within days of information becoming available via Document Direct reports. All grants are reviewed on a monthly basis to ensure deadlines are met.
- **Monitoring the budget and expenditures on a monthly basis and making continuous adjustments as needed.** We look for effective cost saving measures so that we can provide the maximum benefit for each child. In addition, constant monitoring allows us to be aware and react to any changes in our expenses or revenue in a proactive manner.
- **The highest standards for record keeping in regards to federal compliance and all other financial activities.** The staff is highly trained in the areas of State and Federal rules and regulations. It is of the upmost importance to abide by all requirements. Staff members are aware of the department's expectations.
- **Cross trained staff members who work well as a team.** A major part of Campus Community's success depends on having the right people, with the correct skill set in the right positions. Campus is always monitoring the job roles and responsibilities to ensure that the right people are working in the department, for which their skill set will excel. The finance employees work well as a team and have a vast amount to knowledge to share within the department. In addition, team members are cross trained. This practice allows all employees to have a better understanding of the department as a whole, in addition to having back up support.

- **Segregation of duties.** With a small staff it can be hard to ensure that we have segregation of duties. Campus has processes in place that ensure segregation of duties, along with checks and balances, which are part of all the accounting functions. I.e., one person processes payroll, while another person reviews the entries and ensures that the correct funding has been utilized. One person processes orders and verifies that we have been invoiced correctly, a different staff member enters the voucher in First State Financials and yet another staff member, puts the final approve on the voucher prior to payment.
- **A strong Citizens Budget Oversight Committee.** We have a well-rounded committee with varying areas of expertise. Our Board president, who owns an accounting firm, and has over 30 years of accounting experience is a member of the committee. Other members include people with a back ground in the nonprofit world, the education world and parents.

These are a few strengths that have made us successful as we manage a limited budget with increasing demands.