

Year Twelve Site Visit Report

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School
Orleans, Massachusetts

December, 2006

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School (CCLCS), now in its twelfth year of operation, currently serves 204 students in grades 6-8. Although the school holds a charter for grades 6 through 12, with an enrollment cap of 400 students, it has no plans to expand beyond its current middle school program at this time. The school is regional, drawing students from Barnstable County.

The school's mission is to foster intellectual development and academic achievement by providing challenging, interactive interdisciplinary learning experiences that draw upon the unique natural resources of Cape Cod. Essential to the achievement of this mission is the establishment of a community of learning built on shared values of personal responsibility, consideration for others, respect for the environment, academic integrity, and perseverance.

The student body at CCLCS, as of October 1, 2006, is 95% Caucasian; one student (.5%) is black, six students (3%) are Hispanic, three students (1%) are Asian, and one student (.5%) is a Pacific Islander. Seven percent of CCLCS students qualify for free- and reduced-price lunch. Nineteen percent receive special education services. None are limited English proficient.

The following participants conducted the site visit on December 5, 2006:

- Ellen Barol, Class Measures
- Eric Hieser, Sturgis Charter Public School
- Emily Lichtenstein, MA DOE Charter School Office
- Judith Miller, MA DOE Charter School Office
- Peter Sampou, Rising Tide Charter School
- Jessica Spohn, MA DOE Charter School Office

Before the visit, the team reviewed CCLCS's 2005-2006 Annual Report, student assessment data, Accountability Plan, board minutes and materials, and the Summary of Review produced for the school's second charter renewal in 2005. On site, the team reviewed curricular information, a teacher roster, and other documents provided by the school. The team observed classrooms and held group and individual interviews with trustees, administrators, teachers, parents, and students.

The purpose of this visit was to corroborate and augment the information contained in the school's Annual Report, to investigate the school's progress relative to its Accountability Plan goals, and to collect information that will eventually help the Commissioner and Board of Education make a renewal recommendation for the school's charter. The focus of the visit is on three central areas of inquiry:

- Faithfulness to the terms of the school's charter;
- Academic program success;
- Organizational viability.

The team’s findings in each of these areas are presented below.

1. Faithfulness to the Terms of the Charter

Are the school’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy clear and understood by the school community?

Finding: The school community shares a clear and common understanding of Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy.

There was significant congruence among statements made by the Board, the administration, teachers, and students concerning the school’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy. All stakeholders spoke about the importance of building a strong community of learners that cares about academic achievement and takes personal responsibility for their own education. Representatives from all of these groups also spoke about the school’s interdisciplinary and project-based approach to learning, supported by a strong network of local and global partnerships.

Has the school met the faithfulness to charter goals set out in its Accountability Plan?

Finding: Although there are no faithfulness to charter goals in the school’s Accountability Plan, the site visit team found many practices in place that exemplified the school’s mission.

The site visit team observed many examples of teaching, learning, and student work that incorporated interdisciplinary and project-based learning. Teachers and students described many different learning experiences that exemplified the school’s mission. Structures are in place to support this kind of learning. For example, every Tuesday and Thursday afternoon are devoted to “seminars,” which are cross-grade and cross-disciplinary classes offered by teachers, often in collaboration with local resource partners, such as the Cape Cod Museum of Natural History and the Audubon Society. The seminar structure allows CCLCS the flexibility to facilitate school wide interdisciplinary learning experiences. A notable example took place on the day of the site visit. Prior to the that day, the entire school community had read a Native Alaskan folk tale focused on the importance of preserving the wisdom of community elders. As part of this project, students conducted oral history projects with their own grandparents or other older people, and prepared visual displays of their findings. The culminating event, which site visitors witnessed on the afternoon of the visit, was a series of small groups where senior citizens from the local community joined the students to discuss the book.

2. Academic Program Success

Does the school’s instructional program, as documented and implemented in the classroom:

- 1. address the skills and concepts that students must know and be able to do to meet state standards?***
- 2. articulate school developed or identified internal standards for student performance?***
- 3. establish and implement accommodation plans that address the needs of diverse learners?***

Finding: CCLCS has developed a comprehensive middle school academic program that is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and prepares students for an effective transition to high school.

The state frameworks are used as the foundation for curriculum development. The school's mission of creating interdisciplinary, project-based learning is embedded in the curriculum. This year, school administrators have provided opportunities for professional development targeted specifically on the refinement of unit and lesson plans. Teachers use the process of backwards design to create curriculum, beginning with benchmarks derived from the state frameworks that describe what students need to know or do in order to demonstrate mastery, and then articulating the learning experiences that will help the students attain mastery. Teachers collaborate across disciplines to develop units that integrate different subject areas.

Most subject areas do not use a commercial textbook series; rather, teachers draw from multiple resources and use textbooks to ensure that students are familiar with the textbooks format to prepare them for high school. The school seeks and receives yearly input on curricular issues from all of the major feeder high schools, public and independent. The math and world languages curricula are aligned with that of the Nauset school district, which is the district where most CCLCS graduates attend high school.

Benchmarks are being developed for every unit in every area of study. Students must demonstrate mastery of the benchmarks before they can move on to the next unit, but may choose from multiple ways of demonstrating mastery. Recently a curriculum committee headed by the school's Associate Director has been developed and charged with standardizing the benchmarks and also with developing more uniform rubrics for assessment across the grade and content areas. Future site visit teams should look for increasing consistency in benchmarks and in assessment tools.

Finding: The school has a formalized system for developing, documenting, and revising curriculum. Curriculum development is an ongoing process at CCLCS. Teachers create curriculum, with oversight from the school's Associate Director and Director of Professional Development.

Curriculum development and integration is discussed at other regularly scheduled meetings, including twice-weekly school-wide faculty meetings and weekly grade-level team meetings. Every two months, content area teams, comprised of same subject area teachers across the grade levels, meet to discuss curriculum alignment, content, and other academic issues. The Associate Director leads a process of major curriculum revision over the summer.

The school maintains curriculum binders for all grades and subject areas. All of the binders have unit plans for each topic area. The unit plans are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, and with the school's mission. They also serve as a calendar for the presentation of content. The unit plans contain materials, activities, strategies, examples of student work, and a range of assessments including project-based activities, quizzes, rubrics, and benchmarks to measure mastery of the unit skills and content. Teachers use the binders on a daily basis. New material is added to the binders with oversight from the Associate Director and input from other teachers. The school also maintains a paired down,

online bank of the curriculum binders. The online material is primarily used for documentation.

Finding: Administrators and teachers use student achievement data to inform curriculum development and respond to student needs.

The school has a formal process for refining and refocusing curriculum. Teachers go through the results of each MCAS and CAT-5 test (administered to all students every spring, with an additional administration of the CAT-5 to entering sixth grade students in the fall), perform an item analysis, and generate action steps to address areas that were more difficult for CCLCS students. This process allows CCLCS to make modifications to the curriculum based on student's academic needs. For example, this year's data analysis identified the need to place more emphasis on non-fiction reading skills.

Finding: Team members observed a wide variety of successful instructional practices, high levels of student engagement, and many examples of academic rigor and creativity in student work.

The site visit team was able to visit many classrooms throughout the morning of the visit. Although the day of the visit was not a typical school day, in that the afternoon was devoted to a special whole school project, the team was assured by administrators that in the morning we would see "business as usual". Indeed, site visit team members observed high levels of student engagement and a wide variety of effective instructional practices in the classrooms. Visitors observed small group work, whole group lessons, and independent work times. They saw students engaged in lively discussions, and listening attentively to teachers and peers. Student behavior was observed to be respectful and appropriate. No behavior or classroom management issues were noted.

At the student focus group, students from all grade levels eagerly shared school work with the visitors. Students described their assignments articulately and were able to explain how their work was assessed by their teachers, as well as their own process of self-assessment. Additional student work was on display throughout the building. The observed work demonstrated creative interpretation and high level thinking skills.

Finding: CCLCS offers differentiated instruction to meet the needs of diverse learners, including, but not limited to, students with special needs.

CCLCS provides instructional supports and services to students with diverse learning needs. Student data from annual end-of-the-year MCAS and CAT-5 testing is analyzed to determine the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. Beginning in 2005-06, incoming grade 6 students are also given a CAT-5 assessment in the fall, so that areas of weakness and notable strength can be identified early on. Data is incorporated into the goals and learning strategies in students' IEPs, 504 plans, and, for students who do not have special needs, individual Student Success Plans.

Incorporated into the general education environment are numerous types of curriculum accommodations for diverse learners. The school employs three special education teachers and three paraprofessionals, two of whom are one-to-one aides. A low student-teacher ratio strengthens the CCLCS's special education inclusion model. The school's special education program and services are integrated into the school's regular education program by having

special education staff co-teach academic subjects. This co-teaching model provides students with diverse learning needs with a rigorous curriculum and high academic standards. Visitors observed the school’s three special education teachers working in tandem with academic subject teachers to adapt, accommodate or modify lessons as required. Eligible students also receive additional subject area instruction in small groups or one-on-one specialized instruction, as appropriate. Students are also provided with extra assistance during school day tutorial time, and before and after school.

Teachers interviewed by the site visit team reflected a strong commitment to holding all students to high expectations and standards and to ensuring that programs are designed to maximize student performance within the regular classroom. Teachers reported that all students with disabilities have access to the general curriculum and to the school’s activities. Teachers commended the special education staff for the co-teaching model that enables students with disabilities to receive a rigorous curriculum in the least restrictive setting.

Are students reaching Proficiency on state standards, as measured by the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS)?

Finding: English language arts and mathematics MCAS scores for CCLS students have been consistently strong over the past five years.

All MCAS results for English language arts and mathematics that are available from the last five years are presented below in Table I. This Table includes the Composite Performance Index (CPI), which reflects the distribution of student scores over the four MCAS performance categories. The CPI is a 100-point index that measures the extent to which students are progressing towards proficiency.

**Table I: CCLCS MCAS Results by Performance Category
Annual Comparisons 2002-2006**

ELA	Total Number	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improv.	% Warning/Failed	CPI
Grade 6						
2006	68	25	54	19	1	91.9
Grade 7						
2002	59	8	69	22	0	94.1
2003	60	12	77	12	0	96.7
2004	60	7	70	23	0	92.5
2005	60	12	70	17	2	93.8
2006	65	20	60	14	6	91.5
Grade 8						
2006	57	23	72	5	0	98.2

MATH	Total Number	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improv.	% Warning/Failed	CPI
Grade 6						
2002	59	20	41	31	8	80.1
2003	60	5	33	42	20	69.6

2004	60	25	32	30	13	78.8
2005	60	18	45	20	17	80.8
2006	68	37	21	32	10	80.9
Grade 7						
2006	68	13	35	32	19	72.8
Grade 8						
2002	57	16	26	39	19	71.1
2003	59	12	37	42	8	76.7
2004	60	30	40	23	7	85.8
2005	60	17	33	35	15	74.6
2006	60	10	40	32	18	74.2

In English language arts, MCAS scores show strong performance. In Grade 7, which is the only grade for which longitudinal data is available, the CPI has, over time, dropped slightly from a high of 96.7 in 2003, to a current low of 91.5. On the other hand, for the cohort of students that were in Grade 7 in 2004-05 and in Grade 8 in 2005-06, the CPI improved 93.8 in 2004-05 to 98.2 in 2005-06.

In mathematics, overall performance has been less strong than in English language arts. Longitudinal data is available for Grades 6 and 8. In Grade 6, the CPI has remained essentially stable over time, and in Grade 8 it has fluctuated slightly, with a drop in 2006 to 74.2 from a five-year high of 85.8 in 2004.

Table II: 2006 AYP determination for CCLCS

		Adequate Yearly Progress History								Accountability Status
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
ELA	Aggregate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	
MATH	Aggregate	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	

Table II shows the 2006 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) determinations for CCLCS and its statistically significant demographic subgroups. AYP determinations are calculated by the state, in accordance with the standards of the No Child Left Behind Act. A school that makes AYP is considered “on track” to have all students score in the proficient or advanced categories on the MCAS exam by 2014. CCLCS’s data shows that the school has made adequate improvement to achieve AYP in both ELA and math in the aggregate and in all significant subgroups.

Finding: Students at CCLCS perform well above the average for students in the state, but slightly below their peers from the Nauset school district, on English language arts and mathematics MCAS exams.

The report compares CCLCS to the Nauset regional school district because the majority of its students (approximately 65%) come from Nauset. However, it should be noted that CCLCS draws students from many other school districts. Conclusions must be made with caution due to the large geographic size of CCLCS’ sending region. Table III, below, shows that in English language arts and mathematics in all grade levels served, CCLCS’s

CPI is higher than the overall CPI for the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. In all areas except Grade 8 English language arts, the CPI is slightly lower than that of the Nauset school district.

Table III: 2006 Composite Performance Index (CPI) Comparison

	CCLCS	Nauset	State
ELA			
Grade 6	91.9	94.8	84.9
Grade 7	91.5	95.1	84.5
Grade 8	98.2	95.5	88.3
Math			
Grade 6	80.9	90	70.5
Grade 7	72.8	86	66.6
Grade 8	74.2	84.3	66.3

Has student performance been strong, or improved over time on other external assessments?

Finding: CCLCS uses the CAT-5 test to track students' progress over time in reading English language arts and mathematics. According to data provided by the school, students are making a year or more of progress every year.

In its Annual Report, the school provides data on student results on the reading, language arts, and mathematics sections of the CAT-5, analyzed by cohorts over time, beginning with the graduating class of 2003. According to this data, all cohorts have made a year or more of progress each year, as measured by Grade Equivalents and Normal Curve Equivalents.

Table V CAT-5 Cohort Analysis – NCEs over Time

Class of 2003	2001	2002	2003
Reading	53.6	65.2	65.6
Language Arts	64.7	60.7	60.3
Mathematics	55.9	64	62.1
Class of 2004	2002	2003	2004
Reading	65.1	70.3	69.6
Language Arts	66	67.4	66.2
Mathematics	63.4	68.3	70.5
Class of 2005	2003	2004	2005
Reading	59.1	64.8	67.6
Language Arts	60.7	62.5	63.5
Mathematics	60.3	60	64.7
Class of 2006	2004	2005	2006
Reading	59.7	65	67.9
Language Arts	62	60.7	61.9
Mathematics	62.2	61.7	62.8
Class of 2007	2005	2006	
Reading	63.8	64.8	
Language Arts	64.3	60.3	

Mathematics	61.2	59.1	
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Table V shows student progress by cohort for the three years that a cohort is enrolled at CCLCS, beginning with the class of 2003. This data shows that CCLCS students score consistently above the national average on these tests. Changes greater than ± 7 (one third of a standard deviation) are considered significant; therefore, students at CCLCS are maintaining their standing on these tests when compared to national samples.

Has student performance been strong, or improved over time on internal assessments?

Finding: CCLCS uses three measures -- student performance benchmarks, student authentic achievement performance, and high school placement data -- to assess student performance. These measures have demonstrated strong student performance over time. The school is developing internal benchmarks for every unit of every class. Benchmarks are either content or skill based, depending on the unit. Students cannot move on to a new unit until they demonstrate mastery of the required benchmarks. Struggling students are given extra help during tutorial time and before or after school and additional chances to pass the benchmarks. In 2005-06, all students successfully completed their work for the year and advanced to the next grade level.

The school defines authentic achievement as student participation in projects that impact and interface with the larger community. These activities are not measured or quantified in any formal way, but are ways in which the school informally celebrates the achievements of its students. Recent examples include success at the Southeastern Massachusetts Middle School Mock Trial Competition, as well as participation as monitors in numerous local environmental initiatives.

CCLCS also keeps track of the high school placement level of its graduates as a way of tracking the academic success of its students. Close to 100% of the graduating class of 2006 were placed in honors or college preparatory classes in all subject areas.

Have students met the academic performance goals set out in the school’s Accountability Plan?

Finding: Students have met the academic performance goals set out in the school’s Accountability Plan.

The school’s Accountability Plan sets forth Student Performance Objectives in seven different areas that are tied to the school’s areas of study – language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, foreign languages, health and visual arts. Within each of these Objectives are several measures based on internal and external performance standards. As reported above, CCLCS students demonstrated strong performance on MCAS and CAT-5 tests, meeting or almost meeting all of the goals in the school’s Accountability Plan. Student performance also matched or exceeded Objectives measured by internal performance standards.

3. Organizational Viability

Does the school have an effective leadership and governance structure for carrying out the mission, vision, and educational philosophy of the school?

Finding: The Board provides strong and effective governance for the school.

The school's Board includes approximately equal representation of parents and outside community members. Two faculty members and the school's Executive Director also serve on the Board. The Board is well aware of the mission of the school, and spoke eloquently about the use of theme-based integrated curricula, the cultivation of outside partnerships, the emphasis on environmental stewardship and the development of a "community of learners."

The Board has a strong subcommittee structure, including very active Finance, Personnel, Bylaws Review, Site, and Parent Involvement Committees. Committees meet roughly once a month, and the full board also meets monthly (11 times per year). A board member stated that since they "all have the mission within us" they could disagree but still eventually reach consensus.

Last year, the Board's primary focus was on the hiring of a new school Executive Director. The Search Committee established a thorough and very collaborative process, beginning with broad outreach and advertising, and culminating in full day visits with each of the final four candidates, who met with groups of parents, students, faculty and alumni, as well as the full board.

Now that a new school leader has been hired, the board's priority has shifted to locating a new site. Following a similar process to that which was used to find a new leader, the Site Committee has done extensive research into possible building options in the area. They have retained the services of a resource development specialist and obtained legal counsel to advise them on procurement issues. The committee has narrowed its search to a few possibilities, and is hoping to soon purchase property upon which they can construct a new facility.

The board is fully able to articulate the challenges currently facing the school, and is actively developing strategies to address these challenges. For example, because it is exclusively a middle school, CCLCS has been negatively impacted by the new state funding formula. The board is closely monitoring the budget and actively exploring cost-cutting measures. Other challenges for the school are to raise awareness of the school in the larger community, and to maximize effective use of its current space.

Finding: The Board clearly defines and respects the lines of accountability between itself, the school leadership, and staff.

When interviewed by the site visit team, Board members reported that their role in the school was to help build and strengthen organizational structures. The board, administration and faculty all described relationships between these entities as being strong and healthy. The Board described their role as one of supporting the faculty, and faculty members echoed that they feel supported by the board.

There are strong lines of communication between the board and the administration and faculty. The board reported that it receives regular reports on student test results, as well as high school placement data. They also informally track the success of their alumni, through

anecdotal information, as well as through a questionnaire that is completed by all graduates during their ninth grade year. Teachers report to the board on the intervention programs that are developed for at-risk students.

The board has a well-developed process for evaluating the school leadership. The process includes an informal evaluation in the fall and winter, and a more formal evaluation in the spring, which includes the solicitation of feedback from the faculty. The school leader is evaluated against a job description that has been updated, refined and narrowed to a more realistic scope of responsibilities with the advent of the new Executive Director (see next finding below).

Does the school have systems and structures in place to guide improvement?

Finding: There is a well-functioning system in place for guiding instructional practice. All faculty and administrators participate in regular planning meetings. There are weekly meetings of the administrative team, which consists of the Executive Director, the Associate Director, the professional development coordinator, grade level representatives and the special education coordinator. This group addresses urgent issues concerning, staff, students, and curriculum and opportunities for interdisciplinary collaboration, as well as some long range planning. There are also weekly grade-level team meetings.

The school has used the transition to a new Executive Director as an opportunity better delineate the school leader's job description. While remaining fully aware of day-to-day operational issues, the primary role of the new Executive Director is to be the "public face" of the school, focusing on finding a new site, development, outreach, and long-range planning.

Is the school safe and are the physical facilities adequate for the program of the school?

Finding: The facility is adequate to support the academic program. The school has established systems to support student safety.

Both parents and students described feeling safe in the school. There is no question that the close-knit community feeling of the school has created emotional safety for all of the students. Physically, the space is less than ideal, with cramped and noncontiguous classrooms that require students to leave the building and walk across a parking lot to get from room to room. Teachers and administrators take precautions such as locking doors and monitoring movement, to ensure safety.

All stakeholders are aware that there are issues concerning the facility. While efforts have been made to maximize its usefulness, there are obviously problems with crowding, noise and lack of common or outdoor space. The use of technology was not in evidence on the day of the visit, but the school reports that it maintains 40 laptop computers and makes extensive use of technology in its curriculum (see Annual Report 2005-2006, page 25)

Is the school operating in a manner consistent with legal and regulatory requirements?

Finding: The school is operating in a manner consistent with legal and regulator requirements.

CCLCS underwent a Coordinated Program Review (CPR) conducted by the Massachusetts Department of Education's Program Quality Assurance unit in March of 2002. A three-member team visited the school for a week of March 4, 2002 to evaluate implementation of selected criteria in the program areas of Special Education and Civil Rights. The CPR report, which was issued in April 2002, can be viewed at:

<http://www.doe.mass.edu/pqa/review/cpr/reports/2002/0432.pdf>. The school was commended by the Department's onsite team for: (1) the quality of their individual diagnostic evaluations of students suspected of having a learning disability; (2) comprehensive policies and procedures regarding the identification of students suspected of having a learning disability; (3) the coordination among the school psychologist, regular and special education teachers and (4) the development of an educationally rich environment that is inclusive of students with special needs – as well as additional commendations regarding its teacher mentoring practices and Peer Mediation program.

During the site visit, the CCLCS special education coordinator reported that she is able to attend transition meetings held at the sending elementary schools prior to the beginning of the school year for incoming eligible students. This enables CCLCS to become familiar with eligible student's special education services and to foster collaboration with sending school districts.

CCLCS is currently conducting a self-evaluation of its special education program. To date, parents of eligible students have been surveyed on the effectiveness of the communication with their child's special education teacher and the quality of special education services. The school also reviews information from annual IEP reviews, analyzes data from external and internal assessments and seeks input from its regular education teachers to determine the effectiveness of its special education program. Once the surveys are compiled and supporting information is formalized, the program's self-evaluation will be shared with the Board of Directors. Interviews with both regular and special education teachers indicated that parent participation and feedback is always encouraged and is considered an integral part of the school community environment. Documentation reviewed of seventeen eligible students' IEP 2 Forms indicated a consistent well-detailed summary of how each student's disability(ies) affect their progress in the curriculum areas. Additionally, numerous types of general curriculum accommodations, if any, are prescribed for each eligible student as appropriate.

The school's Professional Development Coordinator reported that the school administers a Home Language Survey to all students when they enroll. To date, the school has one former limited English proficient (FLEP) student. Currently, this student receives monitoring and academic supports as needed. The English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator works with a certified ELL instructor from the Nauset district to ensure that the school meets the needs of its ELL students. The school follows the Department's Office of Language Acquisition's recommended Sheltered English Immersion procedures for Low Incidence Districts.

Are professional staff members qualified by training and/or experience in the areas to which they are assigned?

Finding: All of the teachers at CCLCS meet the definition of highly qualified under the No Child Left Behind Act. The teaching staff includes a number of veteran teachers, as well as many who are beginning their teaching careers.

Table VI: Years of Teaching Experience for Faculty 2006-2007

	1-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years
Number of Teachers with this number of years of teaching experience	4	6	5	7	5
Number of Teachers with this number of years teaching at CCLH	11	5	6	5	

Table VI shows the years of teaching experience of the CCLCS teaching staff. As indicated in this Table, there are twelve teachers at the school who have had over ten years of teaching experience, and another five who have had over six years of teaching experience. Only four teachers are in their first or second year of teaching.

Are school community members satisfied with the performance of the school?

Finding: The attrition rate for both students and teachers at CCLCS is very low. The teaching staff at the school is remarkably stable, with the loss of only one full time teacher and two part time art teachers since the last academic year. Student turnover is also very low, with one student leaving during the 2005-06 school year, and a pair of twins leaving last summer between grades 7 and 8.

Finding: All stakeholders interviewed by the site visit team reported a very high level of satisfaction with the school.

During the site visit, team members interviewed groups of parents, students and teachers. All three groups reported being very pleased with the performance of the school.

Students reported that they are receiving a different kind of education than they experienced at their former schools. Instead of working out of textbooks, they are able to be creative and have fun while learning. They reported that the school is helping them to develop good learning habits and figure out how they learn best. They said that they feel that they are part of a small community, that everyone knows and respects each other, so that there are no fights or cliques. They said that the teachers are very caring and supportive, that there is always extra help available, and that although the work could be challenging, the schedule and structure prevents them from feeling overwhelmed. They were particularly enthusiastic

about the Seminars, which have allowed them to choose to participate in activities of particular interest, that are both educational and enjoyable, such as building a half-pipe or participating in a model UN program.

In their focus group, parents expressed appreciation that the school is able to tap into what is best in each student. They echoed the students' comments that the school is a tight-knit community where every individual is valued for their unique qualities. They reported that the academic expectations are very high, and that their children have learned how to think for themselves. Although the practice of collecting parent surveys have been discontinued, all members of the school community interviewed by the site visit team reported surveys were thought to be unnecessary because any issues or concerns would immediately be brought to the attention of administration or the board.

Teachers spoke enthusiastically about working at the school. They reported that the faculty is very energetic, and demonstrates a high level of commitment and a willingness to adapt to circumstances. They said that the school provides them with great professional development opportunities, including approximately \$600/person (or more if needed) to spend on coursework, and extensive in-service opportunities on a variety of topics, including special education issues and curriculum design.

Has the school met the organizational viability goals set out in its Accountability Plan?

Finding: The school has met the organizational viability goals set out in its Accountability Plan.

The school's approved Accountability Plan outlines three Performance Objectives, in the areas of governance, finance, and enrollment. As discussed above, the school's board has implemented responsible decision-making practices, in compliance with the measures found in its Accountability Plan. The school is financially sound and in compliance with the measures of fiscal health found in the Accountability Plan. Finally, the school has met its goals concerning the maintenance of full enrollment, a strong waiting list, and minimal student attrition.

Conclusion

Is the school becoming the school it promised to be in its charter?

CCLCS continues to work towards its mission of fostering intellectual development and academic achievement through interactive and interdisciplinary learning experiences and a strong respect for the unique natural resources of Cape Cod. The school's stable governance structure is making great strides towards realizing this mission. The advent of a new Executive Director brings the promise of even more clearly defined roles and responsibilities for administrators, with the goals of strengthening the school's documentation of curriculum, public profile, and financial sustainability. The board is conducting a serious and methodical search for a new, more sustainable facility. The school has essentially met the goals outlined in its Accountability Plan, and has systems in place to develop new goals. The school moves into its third charter with a demonstrated level of strength and stability, well able to face the challenge of finding and relocating to a new facility.