

Community Charter School School Improvement Plan

Approved: September 2009
Principal: Kristi Dahlstrom
Team Chairs: Anissa Miller and Jennifer Bourne

**Community Charter School
510 South Torrence Street
Charlotte, NC 28204**

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Members of the School Improvement Team

We, the undersigned, having been constituted as the School Improvement Team for Community Charter School for 2009-20010, hereby submit this School Improvement Plan.

Name	Position or Role	Signature
Kristi Dahlstrom	Principal	
Anissa Miller	3-4-5 Lead Teacher	
Jennifer Bourne	3-4-5 Teacher	
Kristi Lanning	Title I Teacher	
Susan Long	EC Teacher	
Maureen Roberts	Assistant Administrator	
Aaron Pomis	Board Chair	
Gilbert Bailey	Board Member/Parent	
Mike Bernstein	Board Member/Parent	
Deborah Hopkins	Parent	
Kathy Greene	Parent	
Charles Thomas	Parent	
Mikaila Milburn	Parent	
Erin Bailey	Parent	
Missy Zimmerman	Parent	
Alex Marinack	2-3 Teacher	
Donah Ollila	Board Member	
Carolyn Bumgardner	Parent	

Mission and Educational Philosophies

MISSION STATEMENT

Community Charter School is a non traditional arts integrated school whose classroom is the community. We are a committed partnership of families, teachers, and community resources who work together to develop independent learners and thinkers. At Community Charter School every child's individuality is respected and nurtured."

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHIES

At Community Charter School, we view students as individuals. We do not believe in a "one size fits all" approach to learning. Because of this belief, we utilize various instructional methods in order to expose them to all the multiple intelligences in hopes of instilling a passion for learning. Below are the various methods we incorporate each day into the instruction.

Multi-grade Open Classrooms

Multi-grade classrooms support the social and emotional development of students. Behavior problems are minimized because older children know the rules and can model for younger children. Children learn to get along with others of various ages.

Research shows that multi-grade classrooms also support children's academic development. The wide range of skills and abilities in a multi-grade classroom necessitates a more individualized approach to education. The curriculum is open-ended and adaptable. Children develop skills according to their own pace and timing. Each child learns without comparing themselves to other students of their own age. Students can also tutor each other and thus reinforce the skills they have learned building better competence and demonstrate leadership.

Reading may be taught in different groups. Writing is usually taught to the whole class at once, with different expectations for different ages. For instance, everyone may write on the same topic, with 1st graders writing a few words or sentences and drawing a picture, while 3rd graders write a paragraph or two.

Math is the only class taught by grade level at CCS because skills must be taught more sequentially than other subjects. Teachers choose programs that can work for a variety of skill levels.

Our classrooms have planned settings where children come in contact with things, books, and one another at interest centers and learned at their own pace with the help of the teacher. Teachers structured the classroom and activities for individual students and small work groups. They helped students negotiate each of the reading, math, science, art, and other interest centers on the principle that children learn best when they are interested and see the importance of what they are doing. Children move in and

about the classroom constantly with teachers acting more as coaches in helping students than as bosses directing children in every activity.

Arts Integration

According to Arts Integration Assessor, Elda Franklin, “Authentic arts integration occurs when there is a natural connection between an arts area and another discipline, either through common concepts, processes or principals, or through large over arching ideas or themes. For example, the organizing principal of *repetition and contrast* is found in all arts areas as well as in poetry; *conflict and resolution* is an organizing principal of literature that might be compared to tension and release in music and/or dance. Some big ideas that could encompass several disciplines include *balance, communication, community, diversity, nature, and transformation.*”

Community Charter School utilizes an arts integration model. At Community Charter School we believe that incorporating arts is crucial to developing a well rounded student. Because of this, we have a full time music teacher and a full time art/drama teacher. These teachers spend half of their time working in the classrooms co-teaching and implementing true arts integration activities. An example of this is when teachers trained with Opera Carolina. They learned how to create and produce an opera as a class. The teachers then worked in collaboration with the music and art/drama teacher co-teaching the students. Students wrote, composed music, did the set production, and all the other elements of an opera. By doing this, they were able to incorporate various standards from the standard course of study into their instruction.

Interdisciplinary

In line with the arts integration model, Community Charter School utilizes an interdisciplinary approach. Interdisciplinary learning emphasizes and allows students to seek and discover existing connections between and among academic disciplines. Teachers utilize curriculum mapping at each trimester which focuses on a central theme, essential questions, and incorporates objectives in all academic disciplines. Teachers utilize the arts integration model in their curriculum mapping and the music and art/drama teacher assist the teacher teams in implementing arts integration activities that go along with their central theme.

Emergent Learning

At CCS, we believe that learning happens through a process. We pose questions to students and they work through it. Teachers and students are co-learners. The approach is cooperative, where students and teachers shape the classroom. Teachers pursue a set of curricular ideas and questions with students by engaging in conversation and negotiation. An example of this would be students expressing an interest in pirates. The teacher then incorporates the theme of pirates into the instruction and ties it to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. Teachers and students together shape the classroom environment. Teachers must balance

students' interests and purposes with curriculum requirements set by DPI through the standard course of study.

Learning Centers/Learning Stations/Think Shop

A learning center is a place or an activity in the classroom where the students explore the skills and content identified by both teachers and students. Teachers have at least one hour of center time per day with at least four centers at one time. Teachers incorporate the multiple intelligences into the centers. Centers allow for exploration and higher level thinking skills, versus sit and fill worksheets.

Community Based Learning

At CCS the Community is our classroom and as such the children at CCS travel by public bus (our children really enjoy this) to various different activities around Charlotte. Some of these are scheduled on a weekly or bi-weekly basis; but, often we are presented with opportunities to attend productions on a last minute notice.

CCS does not have a library on site; but, we use fortunate enough to be able to let our imaginations take us away at the library facilities at Imaginon on a bi-weekly schedule.

CCS began an edible garden, "The Friendship Garden," in 2008. The project is inspired by the "Edible Garden" project in California. Students dug plots, planted throughout the school year, utilized their plants to make various dishes, studied science, held farmers markets at the school, and more. This project allows our teachers unlimited opportunities to teach our children about plant growth, the environment, nutrition, patience, team work, topics are limitless.

Our many residencies, conducted throughout the school year, allow our children to engage artist's in their medium. The scope of these residencies is vast. They include, but are not limited to: music, drama, art, and dance.

We also utilize the community as a resource at least twice monthly. Classrooms have at least one community service project per year.

**Community Charter School
School Improvement Plan
2009-2010**

<i>Goals & Benchmarks for improving student achievement at Community Charter School</i>	<i>Strategies / Steps to Achieve Goals and Benchmarks</i>	<i>Resources Needed</i>	<i>Evidence of Completion</i>	<i>Completion Date</i>
<i>Goal: North Carolina Schools will be led by 21st century professionals.</i>				
Benchmark 1: Teachers at Community Charter School will increase team teaching and collaboration with other teachers to improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will work in their grade alike teams to develop curriculum maps that are tied to the standard course of study. Curriculum maps will contain essential questions, standard course of study objectives being taught, and which teachers are covering the various content. • Teachers will complete trimester peer observations. • Teachers will meet bi-weekly in their grade alike teams to plan. • Teachers will meet in their grade alike team with the arts teaching staff and collaborate on arts integration and curriculum maps. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on curriculum mapping and integrating arts within curriculum map. • Time allotted in schedule for various collaboration meetings. • Agenda template for collaboration meetings. • Peer observation form. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps • Peer observations forms. • PLC meeting notes. • School schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps due at each trimester. • Peer observations to be completed at each trimester • PLC meeting notes due monthly. • Overall completion date of June 15, 2010.
Benchmark 2: Teachers will utilize assessment data to guide instruction and improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will meet in their professional learning communities and develop common assessments for the various content areas at each trimester. • Assessment data will be utilized for intervention. • EOG scores will be reviewed to determine effectiveness of assessment and intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on assessments. • Staff to conduct intervention. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers to turn in assessments and assessment data as evidence. • Intervention schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 15, 2010 • Results from EOG to demonstrate effectiveness. • Yearly teacher survey.

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<i>Goal: North Carolina Public Schools will produce globally competitive students.</i>				
Benchmark 1: Teachers will differentiate student lessons to improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will target student abilities within the classroom in order to challenge students to their grade level. • Intervention will be provided to students that have not attained the skills necessary based on assessment data. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on differentiating instruction. • Intervention teacher 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation forms that checks for differentiation within the classroom. • Intervention schedule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teacher observation forms due at each trimester. • Overall completion date of June 15, 2010.
Benchmark 2: Teachers will utilize arts integration that is tied to the standard course of study to improve student learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will utilize arts integration within their curriculum map. • Community Charter School will partner with various artists in the community to assist with arts integration lessons. • Curriculum maps will demonstrate arts integration activities that are tied to the North Carolina Standard Course of Study. • Teachers will collaborate with the arts teachers and co-teacher arts integration activities at least once weekly. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on arts integration and curriculum mapping to include arts integration. • Grants to partner with various artists • Collaboration time • Arts integration assessment from outside assessor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps demonstrate arts integration that is tied to the content areas. • Evidence of artists partnering with the school. • Arts integration assessment from outside assessor. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Curriculum maps due at each trimester. • Teacher survey on effectiveness of partnerships and arts integration. • Overall completion date on June 15, 2010

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<i>Goal: North Carolina Public Schools will be healthy and responsible.</i>				
Benchmark 1: Student discipline referrals will decrease by 20%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teachers will incorporate positive discipline model in their classrooms. • Teachers will incorporate classroom meetings daily in their classrooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Training on positive discipline • Positive discipline trainer to observe classrooms. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data from discipline referrals. • Teacher surveys on effectiveness. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall completion date of June 15, 2010.

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<i>Goal: Leadership will guide innovation in North Carolina Public Schools.</i>				
Benchmark 1: Parent involvement will increase by 20%.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New model will allow parents to volunteer on various committees that address specific school needs (Community Wheel). • Communication about various volunteer opportunities will be communicated through multiple mediums (website, newsletters, classroom newsletters, etc.) • Family nights to speak with parents and organize into committees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Volunteers to help organize the various committees, get needs assessments from parents, and seek input about the committees needed. • Staff assigned to communicate information through the website and newsletter. • Allotment of two family nights to address committees and organize. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parent volunteer binder in front lobby. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall completion date of June 15, 2010.

