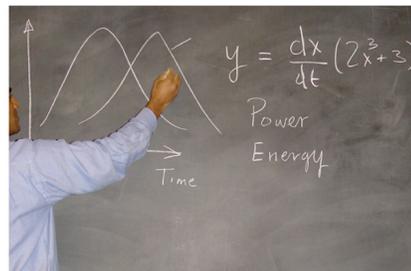


STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE Charter School Program REVIEW



CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY & RECOMMENDATIONS.....	5
THE CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE.....	7
CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES.....	21
CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS.....	53
APPENDICES.....	56

PUBLISHED BY CLASS MEASURES LIMITED, BRYNTEG, LLANFYNYDD, CARMARTHENSIRE,
WALES

WWW.CLASSMEASURES.COM

© NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION:2007

INTRODUCTION

In August and September 2007, Class Measures conducted a review of the New Hampshire charter school program under contract to the New Hampshire Department of Education (NH DOE). The purpose of the review was to evaluate the current charter school program and its implementation in New Hampshire, thereby providing legislators, administrators, parents, and community with a “snapshot” of the history and current status of the charter school program. The information generated by this review is intended to allow the New Hampshire community to make more informed decisions regarding the educational choices provided to New Hampshire students.

Methodology

The original schedule for this review allotted twelve weeks for data collection and reporting; however, because of contracting issues, the schedule was reduced to eight weeks. Within this expedited time frame, the study team reviewed documents on file at the NH DOE; interviewed two NH DOE officials who were responsible for charter school program administration and oversight in recent years; distributed data collection forms to, and conducted on-site interviews, with charter schools that were open and had operated in the 2006-2007 school year; when possible, conducted telephone interviews with representatives of other authorized charter schools, including a closed school, a school that had never opened, and several schools that had recently opened or are scheduled to open in 2008; and reviewed additional documents and questionnaires provided by the schools under review. Class Measures collected data from and conducted on-site and telephone interviews with officials and other stakeholders of the charter schools included in this review. Clarus Group, a sub-consultant to Class Measures, assisted Class Measures with documentation of the charter school program history, charter school governance evaluation, reporting of NH DOE data, and report drafting and preparation.

Study Team

From Class Measures:

Peter Davies is a former British School Inspector who has worked in school and district accountability for more than ten years in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Middle East. He was formerly an administrator with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and a visiting professor to the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies. He currently trains Examiners for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and monitors their work. He holds a Master of Arts degree from Cambridge University

and an advanced graduate degree in educational administration from London University.

Carolyn Harris is a veteran educator with thirty-five years experience as a teacher, Social Studies Department Chairperson, and Director of Curriculum and Integrated Technology for the North Reading School District in North Reading, Massachusetts. She has supervised district initiatives in the area of curriculum alignment, integration of interdisciplinary units and the implementation and evaluation of new K-12 curriculum programs, the development of a standards-based report card, professional development initiatives for teachers and educational technology. Carolyn served as the district coordinator for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Legislation. In addition, she obtained and coordinated all state and federal grants related to curriculum, professional development and technology for the district. Carolyn is active in the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies. She has presented at both state and regional conferences in Social Studies related topics. Carolyn consults for the New England League of Middle Schools in teacher and administrative professional development, and school assessments. She is currently employed as an Instructional and Leadership Consultant for Class Measures.

Josephine Napolitano taught seventh grade and worked on curriculum integration for thirty-six years in the Methuen Public School System. Jo is active in the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies and the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance. She was selected as their 1997 Teacher of the Year. Jo was on staff at National Geographic Society in Washington D. C., training teachers on strategies and techniques in geographic education and has presented at state, regional and national social studies and geography conferences. She is currently a field examiner for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

William Compton has worked with Class Measures as a Leadership Consultant and Assessor to the Superintendentcy Licensure Alternative Assessment program operated on behalf of the Massachusetts Department of Education. Bill holds a Doctorate in education and has a distinguished career as an administrator and superintendent.

Nancy Olsen joined Class Measures from an accounting background. She holds a Master of Arts degree from Michigan State University and a Masters of Business Administration from Villanova University. She now works as a quantitative analyst with our technical team.

From Clarus Group:

F. Daniel Ahern, Jr. is the President of Clarus Group, a consulting firm dedicated to helping governments and nonprofit organizations meet high standards of performance and integrity. Clarus Group has conducted numerous charter school renewal inspections as part of the Class Measures inspection team. Clarus Group also trains Examiners for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and monitors their work. Prior to co-founding Clarus Group, Dan served for ten years as the First Assistant Inspector General for Management in the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General. He has also been a performance auditor for the Virginia General Assembly and an independent consultant to state agencies in Massachusetts and Virginia. He has taught graduate courses in nonprofit management and public administration at Northeastern University and Clark University. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northeastern University.

Pamela Bloomfield is the Vice President of Clarus Group, which has conducted numerous charter school renewal inspections as part of the Class Measures team, trained and monitored the work of Examiners for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, and developed and delivered procurement training for the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official program. Prior to co-founding Clarus Group, she served for ten years as the Deputy Inspector General for Management in the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General, where she led several major reviews of Massachusetts charter schools. She has also been the Assistant Director of Finance and Administration for an Oregon county; a management consultant assisting federal, state, and local government agencies; and a course assistant teaching written and oral communications at the Harvard Business School. She currently serves on the Board of Editors of Public Administration Review and on the Board of Directors of a local nonprofit organization. She holds a Master of Public Administration degree from the Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Smith College.

Abigail Johnson, Clarus Group Associate, provides research and analytical support on Clarus Group projects. She has conducted data analyses for numerous charter school renewal inspections as part of the Class Measures team. Her experience, acquired in government and the private sector, includes budgeting, project planning, financial analysis, research, evaluation, spreadsheet production, report writing, and paralegal work.

Acknowledgments

The study team would like to express its appreciation for the assistance provided during this review by the NH DOE (Roberta Tenney, Kathryn Chateauneuf, and Paige Rogers), current and former officials of the charter schools contacted for this

review, and the other charter school stakeholders, including parents and students who participated in interviews and focus groups conducted during this review.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

1. The New Hampshire charter school law enacted in 1995 encourages the establishment of public charter schools with specific or focused curriculum, instruction, methods, or target pupil groups.
2. Consistent with this purpose, many of the charter schools receiving authorization from the Board of Education were designed to be unique and to fill an identified educational niche in New Hampshire. Seven remain open, five new schools are opening at the time of the review, or scheduled to open, and two that were true to this purpose have closed.
3. The growth of the New Hampshire charter school program since its creation in 1995 has been limited by a number of factors, perhaps most importantly the uncertain and shifting funding environment in which New Hampshire charter schools have been authorized and operated.
4. The charter school law provides that charter schools that are eligible for grants shall match funds provided by the state through private contributions. However, this review has not disclosed evidence of significant private fundraising on the part of charter schools in New Hampshire.
5. State tuition payments for charter schools are widely regarded by charter school administrators as inadequate to serve as the sole source of funding for their schools. The basis on which the charter program was established, that is that philanthropic funding would fill the gap between state charter tuition grants and the amount needed to fund a school, has not proven to be the case.
6. The substantial challenges of planning, opening, and administering a school have been exacerbated by the charter school funding climate in New Hampshire.
7. Recruiting Boards of Trustees strongly committed to the school's mission, with a mix of appropriate skills and time to invest has been more difficult than anticipated for one charter school. In that school, Board development is said to be jeopardized by the uncertain funding climate and perceived lack of sustainability of the school.
8. Almost exclusively charter schools reported good working relationships and referred to continuing professional support over time from the administrators responsible at the New Hampshire Department of Education.

9. The loss of federal funding which would have allowed the Department of Education to develop systems and procedures to regulate charter schools now hampers the building of capacity in the Department of Education. There were no state charter school administrative positions established in the FY07/08 state budget to regulate the charter schools in New Hampshire.
9. Because the charter school accountability process is not fully implemented, accountability for raising student achievement and realizing unique school missions continue to be elusive goals for the New Hampshire charter school program.
10. There are a number of promising charter schools in New Hampshire that are beginning to fulfill the purpose of the New Hampshire charter school law. One or two of these provide ideal examples, by any standards of the particular work undertaken.
11. New Hampshire charter schools that had initial and continued local support at the time of the review—namely: CSI Charter School, Great Bay eLearning Charter School and North Country Charter School—appear to be the more sustainable in the current climate of charter school authorization.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Management

The state should invest urgently in the necessary administrative capacity to provide meaningful oversight of the charter school program and fulfill statutory requirements.

Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment

There should be a full curriculum study to determine the quality of the curricula in use in charter schools and their alignment with New Hampshire State Frameworks before re-authorization.

There should be a school-by-school review of the quality of classroom instruction and the assessments in use, both formative and summative.

Student achievement data from New Hampshire charter schools is limited because of the schools' short history. Longer-term projections could be developed predicated on this early data but based on the operation of altogether similar schools elsewhere in the country. With increased collection of educational information in the state—through the use of Performance Tracker, for example—more robust contrasts and comparisons should be possible.

Accountability

The implementation of a formal accountability process begun last year should be strengthened so as to develop clarity and consensus within and between schools regarding the nature of the required accountability plan. Measurable goals should be developed by the schools and demonstrated in their yearly report.

As schools near the fifth year of authorization and look toward re-authorization, curriculum reviews and team site visit processes should be developed and implemented.

Professional development support should be provided to school leaders in the accountability process in order to provide the clarity and consensus that will make the accountability process stronger and more value to re-authorization.

THE CHARTER SCHOOL PROGRAM IN NEW HAMPSHIRE

The Charter School Law and Approval Process

In 1995, the New Hampshire legislature enacted New Hampshire Revised Statutes Annotated 194-B (RSA 194-B), the Charter Schools and Open Enrollment Act, authorizing the creation of public charter schools in New Hampshire. The stated purposes of the law were to:

- Promote and encourage the establishment and operation of charter and open enrollment schools in New Hampshire.
- Encourage school districts to allow public charter and open enrollment schools.
- Encourage the establishment of public charter schools with specific or focused curriculum, instruction, methods, or target pupil groups.
- Improve pupil learning and increase opportunities for learning.
- Exempt charter schools from state statutes and rules, other than where specified, to provide innovative learning and teaching in a unique environment.
- Enhance professional opportunities for teachers.
- Establish results-driven accountability for public charter schools and require the measurement of learning.
- Make school improvement a focus at the school level.
- Encourage the establishment of public charter schools that meet the needs and interests of pupils, parents, communities, regions, and the state as a whole.

Under the charter school law, all charter schools are open enrollment schools: they may not restrict enrollment to a particular school district or region.

The approval process set forth in the original version of RSA 194-B required the local school district's legislative authority to vote to allow proposals for charter schools to be presented and review charter applications for completeness. The approved charter school applications were then required to be submitted to the State Board of Education, which was charged with reviewing the applications and approving those that met the criteria set forth in RSA 194-B. Approved charter schools were to be granted five-year charters, and each charter required ratification by a vote of the local school district's legislative authority. RSA 194-B was revised in 1997 for the purpose of streamlining the requirements for creating and approving charter schools.

A 2002 study by the New Hampshire Charter School Resource Center at the Josiah Bartlett Center for Public Policy found that the majority of communities in New Hampshire had procedures and timelines for the two required charter school referendum votes that could require eighteen to twenty-four months, or longer if voters were asked to reconsider a negative vote. The study pointed to these elongated approval procedures as a major factor impeding the creation of charter schools in New Hampshire, along with public misperceptions about charter schools and lack of funds for charter school planning and start-up activities. The study reported that between 1995 and 1999, the Board of Education had granted five-year charters to six charter schools: of these, one was approved by the local school district; the others did not receive local approval. The single charter school receiving local school district approval was unable to open because of funding problems, according to the study.¹ As of the fall of 2003, eight years after the passage of RSA 194-B, no charter schools had opened in New Hampshire.²

In 2003, the New Hampshire General Court amended the charter school law to create a ten-year pilot program authorizing the Board of Education to grant up to twenty state charter school applications during the ten-year period. Under the pilot program, applications for proposed charter schools were to be submitted directly to the Board of Education, which was responsible for approving or denying each application "using reasonable discretion in the assessment of the elements set forth in RSA 194-B:3 II, (a)-(bb) and (dd)." The Board of Education's approval of an application constituted the granting of charter status and the right to operate as a public charter school. Local approval was not required for these schools, except that not more than ten percent of the resident pupils in any grade would be eligible to transfer to a charter school in any school year without the approval of the local

¹ Memorandum from Elaine Rapp, New Hampshire Senate Research, to Roberta Tenney, NH DOE, May 21, 2007.

² *Ibid.*

school board.³ On July 1, 2007, the General Court enacted legislation prohibiting the approval of new charter schools by the Board of Education between July 1, 2007 and June 30, 2008. The legislation provided that any charter school application filed prior to July 1, 2007 and scheduled to be acted upon by the Board of Education on or before October 1, 2007 would be exempt from this prohibition.⁴

As of August 2007, fifteen charter schools had been authorized directly by the Board of Education under the pilot program: of these, seven had operated for at least one year and were continuing to operate, three had operated for at least one year and had closed, and five were scheduled to open in the 2007-2008 school year.⁵

Charter School Funding

The 1995 charter school law provided no state funding for charter schools. Instead, RSA 194-B required each charter school pupil's resident school district to pay to the charter school an amount equal to at least 80 percent of that district's average cost per pupil for the prior fiscal year. The current charter school law retains this funding requirement for charter schools approved by the local school district. In addition, the current charter school law provides that charter schools that are eligible for grants "shall match funds provided by the state through private contributions in order to receive funding that exceeds the state's average per pupil cost for the grade level weight of the pupil."⁶

In the December 1997 *Claremont II* ruling, the New Hampshire Supreme Court found that the State has a duty to provide an adequate education to all public school students. In response to this ruling, the General Court enacted the "State Aid for Educational Adequacy" system providing annual grants to cities, towns, and unincorporated places to fund an adequate education for public school students residing in each municipality.⁷ The NH DOE is responsible for determining the annual "adequate education" payments, which are based on a series of calculations that are designed to limit state aid to towns with the greatest need.⁸ Since charter schools are open enrollment schools, the General Court required that a flat tuition amount per pupil, or "adequacy payment," follow each student enrolled in a charter

³ RSA 194-B:3-a.

⁴ HB 2, An Act Relative to State Fees, Funds, Revenues, and Expenditures, Section XLIX(b).

⁵ One of the two schools obtained local approval after being authorized by the Board of Education.

⁶ RSA 194-B:11 X.

⁷ Office of Legislative Budget Assistant, NH DOE, *Adequate Education Grant Data*, December 2004.

There appears to have been serious disagreement amongst charter school founders and the legislature about how much money was intended to be spent on charter schools.

⁸ Division of Program Support, Bureau of Data Management, NH DOE, "FY 08 Adequate Education Aid" at <http://www.ed.state.nh.us/education/data/stateaid.htm>.

school approved by the Board of Education under the pilot program (discussed above).⁹

Since 2004, when the first approved charter school began operations, the per-pupil adequacy payments distributed by charter schools have been as follows:

FY 2005	\$4,200
FY 2006	\$3,300
FY 2007	\$3,598
FY 2008	\$3,707

The adequacy payments for charter school students were initially required to be sent by the state to the local school districts whose resident students were enrolled in charter schools; the school districts were responsible for forwarding the grant funds to the appropriate charter schools. However, the charter school law was amended in 2006 to require the NH DOE to send the adequacy payments directly to the charter schools.^{8a}

In 2003, the NH DOE applied for and received a three-year \$7,170,069 federal grant to assist the Department in achieving the goal of authorizing at least fifteen operational charter schools in New Hampshire by the 2005-2006 school year.¹⁰ The requested grant funds were intended to support regional conferences within the state to disseminate charter school information as well as charter school planning, program design, and initial implementation. It was reported that two large conferences were held followed by workshops on specific topics such as fund development and governance. In 2004, the NH DOE applied for and received an additional federal start-up grant of \$500,000. Under the terms of the grants, a charter school for which federal funds were authorized was required to open within three years of the authorization date, otherwise the federal funds would be withdrawn. As of August 31, 2007, according to the NH DOE, \$293,918 of the original federal grant fund was undistributed, and an additional \$336,418 distributed to New Hampshire charter schools were required to be returned if unspent by September 30, 2007.

The FY 2005 budget enacted by the Legislature included a \$333,000 appropriation for the 2004-2005 fiscal year for charter school matching grants. According to the NH DOE, these funds were divided among the four existing charter schools, based on the student populations of those schools. The FY 2007 budget enacted by the Legislature provided a \$400,000 appropriation for one-time grants to charter

⁹ RSA 194-B:11(a).

¹⁰ New Hampshire Department of Education grant application, undated.

schools of up to \$100,000. These funds were distributed to charter schools that did not receive grants from the \$333,000 appropriation in FY 2005.

As previously discussed, legislation enacted on July 1, 2007 imposed a moratorium on the approval by the Board of Education of new charter schools. A separate provision of the same legislation made the total amount appropriated for charter school supplemental grants for the biennium ending June 30, 2009—which totaled \$400,000 for each budget year—available for distribution in the 2008 fiscal year to the Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy, the Franklin Career Academy, and the Seacoast Charter School.¹¹

In 2007, the NH DOE applied for an additional federal start-up grant of \$5 million; however, the state’s application was unsuccessful. As a result of the NH DOE’s failure to win the additional grant, the three-person staff that had overseen the charter school program in New Hampshire has been reduced to one part-time staff person.

Charter School Accountability and Oversight

Consistent with the charter school law’s stated purposes, one of which is to establish results-driven accountability for public charter schools and require the measurement of learning, the charter school law requires each charter school to evaluate the educational progress of each pupil. The law states: “The annual evaluation must include, but not be limited to, the New Hampshire statewide education improvement and assessment program.”¹² According to the NH DOE, the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP) Grade-Level Expectations are the current standards used to fulfill this evaluation requirement.

The charter school law states: “To ensure compliance with its application and contract and applicable law, a charter school shall be subject to a first year and periodic subsequent program audits by the department of education or its agent.” [RSA 194-B:10 III]. The section of the law requires each charter school to furnish one copy of its annual report to the Board of Education and to its local school board, to obtain at its own expense and provide to the Board of Education and its local school board an annual financial audit and report that complies with any current format and content requirements imposed on a public school and that includes the number of pupils served by the school and their respective tuition rates as well as a discussion of progress made toward the achievement of the school’s mission and other goals set forth in its charter.

In June 2006, the charter school law was amended to institute new reporting requirements for charter schools authorized under the pilot program instituted in

¹¹ HB 2, An Act Relative to State Fees, Funds, Revenues, and Expenditures, Section XLIX(a).

¹² RSA 194-B:8(V).

2003. These requirements were instituted in conjunction with the change to the charter school law, discussed above, allowing the NH DOE to send adequacy payments directly to the charter schools. Beginning in July 2006, the NH DOE required each charter school that had been approved under the pilot program to submit a quarterly report, a required component of which was a quarterly financial statement, to the Board of Education. Charter schools were provided with a sample spreadsheet containing the required categories of information.

The charter school law also established a Joint Legislative Oversight Committee, which is required to jointly meet at least once a year, monitor the effect of the charter school law, make recommendations for any legislative changes to the law, and make recommendations to the General Court for simplifying, reducing, or eliminating regulations and paperwork required for all public education and the state's regulation of public education. The law requires the committee to submit a written report of its findings and recommendations to the President of the Senate, the Speaker of the House, and the chairpersons of the House and Senate Committees on November 1 of each year. According to the NH DOE, the Joint Legislative Oversight Committee has met in recent years but has not issued any written reports of its findings and recommendations.

In January 2006, the NH DOE's Office of School Standards issued a detailed guidance document, prepared by SchoolWorks LLC for the NH DOE, entitled *The New Hampshire Charter School Accountability Process*. The accountability process outlined in the guidance document starts with the statutorily required submission by each charter school, prior to the opening date, of an accountability plan.¹³ The guidance document calls for the NH DOE to review and provide feedback to the charter school on the measurability of the goals contained in the accountability plan. Over the charter period, according to the guidance document, the NH DOE monitors each charter school's performance by reviewing and evaluating the information submitted by each charter school in the quarterly and annual progress reports required by the charter school law.¹⁴ According to the guidance document:

In addition to reporting to the Board of Education, the staff of the Charter School Office will provide ongoing feedback to the charter schools on the quality of their reporting, each school's compliance with accepted practices, adherence to federal and state regulations in relevant areas, and an assessment of each school's overall progress toward its unique school-defined accountability goals.

¹³ RSA 194-B:3(dd).

¹⁴ RSA 194-B:5 IV(a); RSA 194-B:10 I.

The guidance document contains a sample monitoring checklist to be completed by the NH DOE in assessing charter schools' compliance with reporting requirements and in assessing their progress with respect to four key questions:

1. Is the school making progress toward achieving its mission?
2. Is the school responsibly using public funds?
3. Is the school promoting student attainment of expected knowledge and skills?
4. Is the school sustainable?

Until 2004, the NH DOE had no staff dedicated to charter school oversight. In 2004, a full-time charter school staff person was assigned for six months. This individual was then appointed to her current position of Administrator of the Office of School Standards, which has broad responsibility for minimum standards for school approval of home education as well as charter schools. The federal grant funds (discussed earlier) received by the NH DOE in 2004 enabled two full-time staff members to be hired to assist and oversee New Hampshire charter schools. Over the next two years, the charter school administrative capacity within the NH DOE was sufficient to review charter school applications, disburse federal grant funds to charter schools, review reports and other mandatory documentation submitted by charter schools, and provide limited oversight of the progress of charter schools. The Administrator of the Office of School Standards developed a Logic Model for the New Hampshire charter school program defining inputs, activities, near-term outcomes, intermediate-term outcomes, and desired impacts. (Appendix 3 provides copy of artifact) The Administrator also attended legislative meetings, arranged meetings at the DOE and visited each charter school. The federal funding for the two federally financed administrative positions ended in 2007, further limiting the capacity of the state Department of Education to support charter schools. As noted earlier, the NH DOE's 2007 application for a \$5 million federal grant was unsuccessful. Although the positions of the two full-time charter school administrators were funded by the state for eight months of 2007, the two staff members left for other positions within the state when state funding became unavailable. As of September 2007, neither federal nor state funds had been authorized for charter school oversight by the NH DOE. Thus, although twelve charter schools were open or scheduled to open in the 2007-2008 school year, the NH DOE had no funded capacity to fulfill the statutory requirements in RSA 194-B or the oversight functions detailed in *The New Hampshire Charter School Accountability Process*.

Overview of Open Charter Schools

Seven open charter schools were in operation in the State of New Hampshire during the 2006-2007 school year. The schools are small learning communities: according to NH DOE data, the schools served a total of 322 students in October 2006 and ranged in size from 28 to 76 students (Table 1).

Table 1. Charter School Enrollment: October 2006

Charter School	Enrollment October 2006
Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy	53
Franklin Career Charter Academy	31
Great Bay eLearning Charter School	76
New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School	25
North Country Charter School	49
Seacoast Charter Academy	60
Surry Village Charter School	28
Total	322

Source: NH DOE Enrollments in New Hampshire Public Schools as of October 2, 2006. Dated April 27, 2007.

As shown in Table 2, the number of teachers in the schools ranges from as few as 2 (Surry Village Charter School) to as many as 8.6 (Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy).

Table 2. Charter School Teachers and Ratios of Student to Teachers: October 2006

Charter School	Number of Teachers	Ratio of Students to Teachers
Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy	8.6	6.2
Franklin Career Charter Academy	3.1	10
Great Bay eLearning Charter School	5	15.2
New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School	4.1	6.1
North Country Charter School	4	12.3
Seacoast Charter Academy	4.5	13.3
Surry Village Charter School	2	11.5
Statewide	14,947.5	12.8

Source: NH DOE Student to Teacher Ratio in New Hampshire Public Schools as of October 2, 2006, dated April 27, 2007.

The ratio of students to teachers ranges from 6.1 to 1 at New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School to 15.2 to 1 at Great Bay eLearning Charter School; two schools, Great Bay and Seacoast, reported ratios (15.2:1 and 13.3:1, respectively) that exceed the statewide average of 12.8 to 1. In making such comparisons, however, it is important to keep in mind the small numbers of students attending the charter schools.

According to NH DOE data (Table 3), like students statewide, charter school students are almost exclusively white (ranging from 90.6 percent white students at Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy to 100 percent at three charter schools), and few charter school students are reportedly eligible for the free/reduced price lunch program. No charter served Limited English Proficient students in the fall of 2006; statewide, less than one percent of students were Limited English Proficient that year. Again, however, in making such comparisons it is important to keep in mind the small numbers of students at the charter schools.

Table 3. Percent of Students White and Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible October 2006

<i>Charter School</i>	<i>Percent White</i>	<i>Percent Free/Reduced Lunch Eligible</i>
Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy	90.6	9.43
Franklin Career Charter Academy	100	--
Great Bay eLearning Charter School	98.7	9.21
New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School	100	--
North Country Charter School	98	6.38
Seacoast Charter Academy	96.7	1.67
Surry Village Charter School	100	--
<i>Statewide</i>	<i>92.7</i>	<i>18.88</i>

Source: NH DOE Enrollments in New Hampshire Public Schools as of October 2, 2006, dated April 27, 2007 and NH DOE FY 2006-2007 Free/Reduced School Lunch Eligibility by District, dated April 11, 2007.

NH DOE has not published recent attendance rate statistics for schools. What information is available for the 2005-2006 school year indicates that North Country Charter School had lower attendance rates than the state average (90.2 percent for high school compared to 93.2 percent statewide) while Cocheco Arts and

Technology Charter Academy, Great Bay eLearning Charter School, and Seacoast Charter Academy all had attendance rates that were comparable to the statewide rates. It must, of course, be borne in mind that North Country Charter School caters specifically to students who are high school drop outs, or who are at risk of dropping out.

Similarly, the most recent published data for school dropouts is available only for the 2005-2006 school year. That year, Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy reported two dropouts, for an annual percentage rate of 4.2. Both schools exceeded the statewide rate of 3.1 percent.

The only available data on high school completers is for the 2005-2006 school year and was reported by North Country Charter School that has an emphasis on educating students who had dropped out of high school, or were at risk of dropping out: 15.2 percent of students entered four year colleges or universities, 33.3 percent entered less than four year schools, 48.5 percent were employed and three percent served in the Armed Forces. More details are provided in the school profile presented later in this report.

Authorized Charter Schools That Were Unable to Open or Remain Open

One charter school authorized by the Board of Education, Crossroads Charter School, never opened. Two authorized charter schools operated for a period of time and then closed: Laurent Clerc Charter Academy and New Heights Charter Academy. These three schools are briefly discussed below.

Crossroads Community Charter School

Crossroads Community Charter School was organized by three local school districts in Bow, Hopkinton, and Kearsarge as well as NFI North, a human services organization, and authorized by the Board of Education in September 2006, according to the *Concord Monitor*.¹⁵ The organizers reportedly canceled plans to open the school because the federal "vision grant" obtained by the school in 2004 was scheduled to expire in December 2007, and the state adequacy payments would be insufficient to support the school.

Laurent Clerc Academy

Laurent Clerc Academy, located in Concord, was founded to provide a bilingual education program in American Sign Language (ASL) and English print for elementary students who were deaf or hard of hearing as well as those hearing students who would benefit from direct instruction and social interaction in ASL. According to NH DOE documents:

¹⁵ "Districts scuttle charter school plan," *Concord Monitor*, September 7, 2007.

Laurent Clerc Academy seeks to provide one of the highest achieving and well-designed bilingual (ALS-English) education programs in the United State. This unique academy will provide a choice school for New Hampshire students who need a linguistically-accessible environment, often considered the least restrictive environment for deaf students. The academy will create a challenging, safe, and empowering learning environment designed to meet the intellectual and social needs of deaf and hard of hearing students. The school will provide a highly visual environment for students whose learning style is primarily visual.

The school operated in the 2005-2006 school year. At the end of the school year, six students were enrolled in Laurent Clerc, according to NH DOE records. The low enrollment prompted the school's Board of Trustees to suspend school operations in June 2006.

New Heights Charter Academy

New Heights Charter Academy, located in Goffstown, was founded with the following mission, according to NH DOE documents:

The mission of the New Heights Charter Academy is to provide a rigorous career-focused platform for students in grades 11 and 12 to succeed in the world of business and technology through: student-driven personal learning plans, meaningful relationships with a mentor/advisor/coach/sponsor, flexible programming to best accommodate student success, project-based curriculum connecting to real world opportunities and learning experiences and student empowerment through self-governance and decision-making while modeling a set of core values essential in a democratic and civil society.

The school opened in January 2006. During the first six months of operation, the President of the Board of Trustees resigned, and the School Director was replaced, according to NH DOE documents. NH DOE enrollment data show that thirty students were enrolled in New Heights during the 2005-2006 school year and that seven students were enrolled in New Heights during the 2006-2007 school year. An Assessment of Progress conducted by the NH DOE in September 2006 found that students attending New Heights had not withdrawn from the local school district and that New Heights had yet to establish itself as a school rather than a program. New Heights subsequently closed.

According to the school's former Project Coach and Vice Chairman of the Board of Trustees, who was interviewed by telephone for this review, the most significant issue contributing to the closure of New Heights was the lack of funding. He stated that the state adequacy payment per student was insufficient to fund the school opening and that the school encountered difficulty meeting the requirements of the

three-year federal start-up grant received by the school. He also indicated that New Heights received helpful support from EdVisions, a charter school cooperative funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation that helps new charter schools develop project-based learning programs.

Authorized Charter Schools Recently Opened or Scheduled to Open

Five charter schools authorized by the Board of Education opened at the outset of the 2007-2008 school year or were scheduled to open at later dates. These schools are briefly discussed below.

Academy for Science and Design Charter School

The Academy for Science and Design Charter School, located in Merrimack, opened on September 17, 2007, according to the school's website. (Efforts to interview school officials by telephone for this review were unsuccessful.) The school's mission statement is as follows:

The mission of the charter school founders is to create a world class, standards-setting middle/high school that specializes in science, mathematics, engineering, and design. The school will graduate students with in-depth subject mastery; real world laboratory experiences; and local, national, and global understanding and applications. The school will be recognized for its outstanding academic program and for well-rounded students with the capacity for high achievement and leadership in college, career, and society.

According to NH DOE documents, the school serves students in grades seven through twelve. The school's website lists eight members of the Board of Trustees.

CSI Charter School

CSI Charter School, to be located in Penacook, reportedly opened on September 17, 2007. According to NH DOE documents, the CSI (Competencies, Skills, Interests) Charter School will serve students in grades 9 through 12 who are becoming disengaged, or have become disengaged, and would benefit from an individualized program that meets their needs. According to NH DOE documents:

The CSI (Competencies, Skills, Interests) Charter School plans on using current student academic competencies and work-based skills as the entry point for the development of individualized plans that allow students to meet essential academic and work-based competencies. Integrated units will be developed that create student interests, meet high standards of achievement, and provide students authentic opportunities to demonstrate

the competencies. Meeting these high standards will allow students to successfully transition after graduation to a work setting or continue their education at the post-secondary level. This Charter School is characterized by being very small, student interest centered, and supported by project-based learning and technology.

According to the school's Administrator, who was interviewed by telephone for this review, the Merrimack Valley School Board and the Superintendent of SAU 46 organized CSI Charter School because they were interested in creating a nontraditional, competency-based educational program to assist disenfranchised student dropouts who had previously attended Merrimack Valley public schools. The Administrator, who was interviewed before the scheduled school opening date, predicted that twenty-three students would be enrolled as of September 17, 2007. She stated that enrollment has posed a challenge, as have state charter school requirements, staffing, funding, and the need to work through the details of the dropout status of individual students. Federal grant funds in the amount of \$300,000 have enabled the school to hire two outside consultants to assist in developing course competencies and school objectives. In addition, the SAU 46 business office has assisted the Administrator with all aspects of grants management, expenditure accountability, and purchasing. The school reportedly has a seven-member Board of Trustees and 3.5 FTE teachers, all of whom are Highly Qualified.

The Administrator noted that CIS Charter School has a unique, flexible scheduling plan under which school is open three days per week from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. and from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. This schedule allows dropouts to work as well as attend school. Students must commit to attending four to seven hours of class per week and must arrange their class schedules with instructors, who are called "coaches."

Ledyard Charter Academy

Ledyard Charter Academy, to be located in Lebanon, is scheduled to open in August 2008 with an enrollment of fifty students. According to NH DOE documents, the school will serve underperforming and/or disengaged students in grades nine through twelve. NH DOE documents provide the following description of the school's mission and derivation of the school's name:

Ledyard Charter Academy will prepare students for their futures, both academically and socially, in a rigorous academic program that stresses the importance of community and allows students to apply their learning in context. Ledyard will provide opportunities for under-engaged students to re-focus on their strengths and interests and will provide highly motivating and relevant learning opportunities, much of which will be based in service learning in the community, internships, and a strong academic core. The Charter Academy takes its name from John Ledyard, a curious and self-

motivated Dartmouth College student who arrived at Dartmouth College in the Spring of 1772. He spent four summer months living (and learning) among the Iroquois as a college ambassador and became dissatisfied by the constraining academic offerings at Dartmouth upon his return to the college. He built his own canoe and paddled the length of the Connecticut River. He became an acclaimed world traveler, explorer, and a lifelong hands-on learner.

According to the school's Project Director, who was interviewed by telephone for this review, he and the Superintendent of SAU 88 have been the driving forces behind this school. They expect most students to be categorized as grade nine and grade ten students who are underachieving, disengaged, and do not fit well in a traditional high school setting. The school's principal source of funding will be federal grant funds. The Project Director reported that the school's Board of Trustees currently consists of five members but is expected to increase in size to nine to eleven members. He said that the administration of SAU 88 has been very supportive, although the high school union leadership has not. The school was able to hire a consultant to advise on governance and programming, but it still needs additional financial resources, according to the Project Director. Parents and other volunteers have expressed interest in helping the school as it approaches next year's opening date.

Strong Foundations Charter School

Strong Foundations Charter School, located in Pembroke, opened in August 2007 serving fifty-five students, including fifteen students with Individual Education Plans (IEPs), in grades K through four. The school's mission is to:

1. Build early literacy by using an Orton-Gillingham approach and building phonemic awareness so that children are reading at grade level by fourth grade.
2. Create a learning environment wherein 90% of the student population beginning Strong Foundations in Kindergarten or grade one will be proficient or advanced in reading by the end of grade four.
3. Create an elementary school where the entire elementary faculty is trained in and uses the Orton-Gillingham approach so that other schools and districts can make use of the school for training of faculty, i.e. elementary teachers, reading specialists, learning disabilities specialists, tutors, and para-professionals.

As of September 2007, Strong Foundations reported that it had a nine-member Board of Trustees, a principal (who was also a .8 FTE teacher), four full-time teachers, one teaching assistant, two other assistants, and one non-teaching staff member.

According to the Principal of Strong Foundations, the school has confronted a number of challenges in the first year of operation, including the school's lack of a business administrator, lack of cooperation from local school districts with students

on IEPs, refusal of school districts to provide services to the school, the uncertainty of federal funding, and the principal's difficulty of responding to inquiries about the school while also serving as a .8 FTE teacher. The principal expressed confidence that the school will be able to conduct successful fundraising drives, but she also noted the difficulty of obtaining funds from resistant local school districts.

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School

Virtual Learning Academy Charter School is scheduled to open in January 2008, according to documents on file at the NH DOE. (Efforts to reach school representatives by telephone for this review were unsuccessful.) NH DOE documents provide the following description of the school's mission and program:

The Virtual Learning Academy Charter School will use new and emerging distance learning technologies to provide any time any where access to a rigorous "personalized education that helps students learn today, graduate tomorrow, and prepare for the future" (2006, NHDOE). The educational mission of the VLACS integrates the philosophy of the New Hampshire Department of Education's Follow the Child initiative with the power of distance learning technologies. The VLACS will provide all students with the opportunity to personalize their education by combining rigorous academic study with the flexibility that is inherent in the anytime, anyplace, any pace philosophy to be practiced by the school. Ongoing, one-on-one communication between students and teachers will ensure that all students are provided with the supports necessary for success. The VLACS is also committed to collecting meaningful data to measure growth in personal, physical, social, and the academic characteristics of each student. It will be the goal of the VLACS to apply to the Commissioner of Education to become a Follow the Child school. Furthermore, the VLACS will work with teachers to encourage them to become Follow the Child designated teachers.

According to the school's website, the school's administrative offices are located at the Tuck Learning Campus in Exeter. The website indicates that the school will enroll part-time high school students in January 2008 and will offer full-time coursework in the 2008-2009 school year. Adjunct teachers will be hired in the first year of the school's operations; after the first year, all teachers will be provided with a mentor who will provide professional coaching, support, and advice.

CHARTER SCHOOL PROFILES

This section presents profiles of the seven open New Hampshire charter schools that operated in the 2006-2007 school year. These seven schools, listed and

presented in the order in which they were authorized by the NH DOE, are as follows:

- Franklin Career Academy Charter School (authorized August 2003)
- Seacoast Charter School (authorized August 2003)
- North Country Charter School (authorized January 2004)
- Great Bay eLearning Charter School (authorized February 2004)
- Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy (authorized May 2004)
- New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School (authorized September 2005)
- Surry Village Charter School (authorized March 2006)

The information presented in this section was collected by the study team from the schools. In each case, the team sought information on the following topics:

- Mission
- Enrollment
- Governance
- Staffing and professional development
- Curriculum
- Assessments
- Student and Parent Engagement and Support
- Student destination and post-secondary planning
- Finance
- Facilities

Complete information was not available from each school. Consequently, the profiles are not entirely parallel in presentation. Each profile includes concluding observations by the study team.

Franklin Career Academy Charter School

Franklin Career Academy Charter School (FCA), located in Franklin, was chartered by the Board of Education on August 20, 2003. FCA served grades seven through twelve in the 2004-2005 school year, suspended operations for the 2005-2006 school year, and resumed operations for the 2006-2007 school year with fewer grades. The school currently serves students in grades nine through twelve.

Mission

FCA's mission statement is as follows:

The overall goal of the Franklin Career Academy is to create a business-affiliated, innovative choice charter high school for predominately at-risk Franklin and other area students – a school designed to mentor students through completion of the school's high school program requirements. The

school will exist for only one purpose – to increase students’ life options, including college, following a high school graduation.

FCA’s 2003 charter application envisioned that the school would be designed to attract students who were at risk, had dropped out of school, were low-achieving, and/or were low-income. The school would also be open to interested students who were not at risk. FCA proposed to combine a skill-based curriculum with career preparation and apprenticeships for qualifying students. The program, which was to be modeled on the Textron/Chamber of Commerce Providence Public Charter School in Providence, Rhode Island, would be characterized by the following five elements:

- Rigorous academic program with high expectations,
- Career education/career planning,
- Enhancing education through technology,
- Differentiated instruction, and
- Commitment to success/School dropout prevention.

Enrollment

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, FCA had forty-one enrolled students, including three students with IEPs, from three sending districts. The school had no waitlist. FCA reported the following enrollments for the past four school years; no information on average class size was reported.

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Enrollment	40	Closed	35	41
Average class size	10 to 1		10 to 1	10 to 1

FCA reported an attendance rate of 93 percent.

Governance

FCA’s 2003 charter application proposed that FCA would be governed by a Board of Trustees consisting of five to eleven members, including New Hampshire business leaders, parents of enrolled students, professional educators or direct student service providers, and community leaders. As of September 2007, FCA’s Board of Trustees had four members. Since the school’s inception, four Board members have resigned, and two new members have joined the Board. According to the four Board members interviewed for this review, one Board member recently resigned to assume the position of FCA’s current Director of Operations. The Board is currently seeking additional members through an informal recruitment process. Board members serve three-year, staggered terms. The Board meets monthly and holds

emergency meetings as necessary. FCA has formed an informal alliance with Seacoast Academy Charter School and Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy to lobby for state funding.

According to the Board members interviewed for this review, the Board receives a monthly report containing student achievement data from the Director of Operations as well as a school accountability report. A review of Board minutes for the period January through June 2007 indicates that the Board met each month, and twice in May. The minutes indicate that the Board regularly received and considered information about school finances, student assessments, board membership, charter school funding, and other matters. The Board adopted a governance policy manual in August 2004.

Staffing and Professional Development

As of September 2007, FCA had a new Director of Operations who had previously served on the Board of Trustees. According to the new Director of Operations, the former director was not a good fit and was not effectively maintaining discipline in the school. FCA also employed three full-time teachers, one part-time teacher, and a Director of Curriculum. Two teachers were reported to be Highly Qualified, and all but one were reported to be certified in New Hampshire; the fourth teacher is certified in Massachusetts and has applied for New Hampshire certification.¹⁶ Two of the three full-time teachers were newly hired. According to FCA's Director of Operations, professional development at FCA is available if requested. Previous professional development activities offered by FCA have included Northwest Evaluation Association (NWEA) training for the Measures of Academic Progress testing, Read 180 training, and Positive Behavior Intervention and Supports Training. Teaching staff are observed and evaluated by the Director of Operations using Jon Saphier's Skillful Teacher Model.

Curriculum

According to FCA's Director of Operations, FCA's curriculum is aligned with the New Hampshire State Curriculum Frameworks and integrates real-world projects and technology. Curriculum decisions are made collaboratively with teachers. FCA offers a standard high school curriculum as well as courses in life skills, including listening and time management skills, and civic engagement. FCA students are able to participate in internships with local businesses. In addition, students are required to complete thirty-six hours of community service and prepare a portfolio as a requirement of graduation.

¹⁶ This detail conflicts with information received from the Bureau of Credentialing, State of New Hampshire, who stated that the teachers were not certified, nor had applications been received at the time of reporting.

According to the teachers interviewed, students, teachers, and parents create individual development plans to address the individual learning style and needs of each student. IEP meetings are held with the sending district, which provides each student who is on an IEP with a case worker who monitors the student.

Assessments

FCA reported using the following assessments: the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program (NECAP), NWEA Measures of Academic Progress (MAP), Individual Development Plans, portfolio assessments, and Authentic Assessment. FCA's 2006-2007 Accountability Report reported that FCA students were making progress above national averages on the NWEA Measures of Academic Progress.

According to the Director of Operations, FCA analyzes assessment data on a regular basis. Individual development plans for students are reviewed on a consistent basis, and the portfolio formative assessment is part of the school's graduation requirements. Each portfolio contains samples of academic work, career and citizen accomplishments, and letters of recommendation when applicable.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

The three students interviewed for this review stated that they appreciate being able to get help from FCA teachers when they need it. They also commented positively on the small size and safe atmosphere at the school as well as the opportunities for business internships. They expressed concern about continued funding for FCA and the need for newer computers and library books. One student indicated that she would be a school dropout if FCA closed.

FCA requires each parent to provide two hours per month of volunteer time to the school. FCA also has a Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) that meets monthly with an average attendance of seven to fifteen parents. This group provides teachers with volunteers for projects, does fundraising, and engages in legislative lobbying. Among the FCA benefits cited by the three parents interviewed for this review were small class sizes, frequent feedback from the school on student performance, and individual development plans for students.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

According to a July 2007 report submitted by FCA to the NH DOE, seven FCA students graduated in the 2006-2007 school year. One student had dropped out of the local area high school and returned to FCA to receive her diploma; two others had had numerous suspensions and absences at the local high school. Three graduates of FCA had plans to pursue further education.

Finance

According to NH DOE records, in 2003 FCS received \$165,000 in state funds and grants of \$322,000 and \$315,000, respectively. The latter grant expired in

September 2005. NH DOE records show that as of July 15, 2005, more than \$200,000 of the federal grant was unexpended. Although a letter¹⁷ from Assistant Deputy Secretary Nina Rees of the US Department of Education to the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education responding to inquiries from the FCA Board of Trustees had stated that federal funds may be allowable to FCA under the clause “other initial operational costs that cannot be met from State or local sources”¹⁸, the lack of a reliable funding source for the school led to the decision by the FCA Board of Trustees to suspend school operations for the 2005-2006 school year. Moreover, the US Department of Education money could not be expended after September of 2005 when the thirty-six months of eligibility ended.¹⁹ Additionally, according New Hampshire Department of Education personnel, the FCA had received an earlier pre-planning grant directly from the US Department of Education, which caused a significant eligibility problem for the charter school. The New Hampshire Department did not have a record of the earlier payment. In a letter to the Board of Education dated June 16, 2006, the Franklin Superintendent of Schools wrote on behalf of the Franklin School Board to express concerns regarding FCA’s financial stability and fiscal management and its ability to meet the needs of low-achieving, low-income, at-risk students. The letter also suggested that FCA might have breached a commitment made to the Franklin School District that it would not request any adequacy funding (charter tuition payment) from the school district in its first year of operation. During this year of suspended operations for the school, extensive correspondence also ensued between the FCA Board of Trustees and the New Hampshire Commissioner of Education, and between other parties including The Honorable Margaret Spellings, Secretary of Education at the United States Department of Education, with the purpose of resolving the uncertainties of the funding system and to re-open the school.

Because it had been closed, the school did not have a financial audit for the year ending June 30, 2006. Information from Board minutes indicates that the school was actively managing a very tight budget for the 2006-2007 school year. According to the FCA’s unaudited figures for the period ending June 30, 2007, the school had \$21,779 in equity at the close of the year. The table below shows the school’s sources of revenue each year.

¹⁷ Undated, but referring to FCA being in its first year of operation.

¹⁸ Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 Section 5204 (1)(3)(B) reauthorized by the No Child left behind Act 2001

¹⁹ Elementary and Secondary Education Act 1965 Section 5204 (1)(3)(B) reauthorized by the No Child left behind Act 2001

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Federal Start-up Grant	\$ 322,000	Closed	\$315,000
State Equitable Aid	165,000		90,000
Other	Not applicable		Not applicable
Total	\$487,000		\$405,000

Facility

FCA rents space on the second floor of the St. Paul's Roman Catholic Church Activity Center. The school has use of kitchen facilities and a gym. The annual rent is \$35,000. The facility is adequate for the current needs of Franklin Career Academy.

Closing Observations

In a letter to FCA dated February 28, 2007, the NH DOE noted that FCA had submitted a report card to the NH DOE for the 2004-2005 school year and had suspended operations for the 2005-2006 school year; thus, it was difficult for the NH DOE to determine how much student progress was made from the one full year that FCA had operated. The NH DOE acknowledged that FCA had reported strong test results but noted that these were not qualified with reference to the regional context, that the number of students in each grade was small, and that the life skills measured by FCA had not been identified. The NH DOE also noted that four members of the Board had resigned in the first year of operation, that three of the four faculty members from the first year of operation had resigned, and that the existing Board consisted of five members, four of whom were new. Finally, the NH DOE noted that FCA's relationship with the local school district had been strained in the 2004-2005 school year and that the school's report card had provided no information regarding the school's special education program.

On April 20, 2007, and again on July 15, 2007, FCA submitted its own Assessment of Progress to the NH DOE. FCA's self-assessment reported that the school had met or exceeded each indicator of progress in the following areas: achievement of mission, responsible use of public funds, promotion of student attainment of expected knowledge and skills, and school sustainability.

It was reported in the interview that the relationship with the Franklin School District has improved this year. Reference was made to student transportation and collaboration with the SPED Department.

This review disclosed evidence that FCA has adhered to its mission statement and goals: the school provides dropouts and at-risk students with skill-based courses and internship opportunities as well as standard high school courses. Students

receive individualized attention from the school’s advisors and through the preparation of individual development plans.

Seacoast Charter School

Seacoast Charter School, located in Kingston, was chartered by the New Hampshire Board of Education on August 20, 2003. Seacoast has operated continuously since the beginning of the 2004-2005 school year. Seacoast currently serves students in grades one through six.

Mission

Seacoast’s charter application contained the following mission statement:

The mission of Seacoast Charter School is to provide excellence in core academics and the arts while cultivating the individual qualities and strengths of each child.

- Provide a rigorous core academic program with a thematic approach to curriculum
- Cultivate the individual qualities and strengths of each student
- Offer a comprehensive, multidisciplinary arts program that allows students to explore new ways of thinking, behaving, and learning
- Support student achievement by creating an inclusive learning community that actively engages parents
- Promote character development and good citizenship

According to NH DOE records, the Board of Education approved a change to the mission statement on May 11, 2007, adding the following statement:

- The school seeks to integrate an appreciation of other languages and cultures across the curriculum.

Enrollment

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, Seacoast had fifty enrolled students from fifteen sending districts, including four students with IEPs and 504 students. The school had a thirty-student waiting list. The school reported the following enrollments and class sizes for the past four school years:

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Enrollment	8	35	60	50
Average class size	8	17	20	16

Governance

Seacoast's 2003 charter application proposed a nine-member Board of Trustees that would include three parents of enrolled children, three business community members and/or corporate sponsors, three local community members and/or philanthropic sponsors, and one voting or non-voting teacher representative. NH DOE records show that on May 11, 2007, the Board of Education approved Seacoast's request to increase the Board size to twelve members and to increase the number of trustee positions reserved for parents of enrolled students from three to four.

As of September 2007, the Seacoast Board of Trustees had nine members and was in the process of increasing the Board size to twelve, including four parents of enrolled students. Board minutes indicate that the Board has been active in Board development, sorting out roles and recruiting members. According to the four Board members interviewed for this review, Board members are selected by a Nominating Committee; the Board meets monthly and has encountered no difficulty in obtaining the quorum of five trustees required to vote on Board matters; and four members have resigned since 2003: three left at the end of their terms, and one left to take a more active role in the school.

A review of the Board's meeting minutes for the last six months of the 2006-2007 school year indicates that the Board has been actively engaged in school matters. The minutes indicate that the Board regularly receives reports from the Head of School, and Board members interviewed reported the monthly reports include discussion of student achievement. In addition, among the topics considered by the Board in this period were the charter, board development, roles, goals, middle school development, facility needs, budget, fundraising, and advocacy, including legislative outreach. Board members interviewed stated that Seacoast has formed an informal alliance with Franklin Career Academy and Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter Academy to lobby for state funding.

Staffing and Professional Development

The Head of School was new, as were three of the five classroom teachers. (According to interviews with Seacoast representatives, the previous Head of School and three classroom teachers resigned at the end of the previous school year because the school's future was in jeopardy.) Of the three core curriculum teachers (the 4.5 FTE includes a full time art teacher and .5 music teacher), two were reported to be Highly Qualified under the federal NCLB requirements, and two had New Hampshire certification; another teacher's New Hampshire certification status was pending. One teacher worked part-time as a teacher aide; the school also employed a second teacher aide. The school reported a teacher-student ratio of 13.5. Seacoast had provided its faculty with two professional development days before the school year began; this program reportedly focused on integrating the

curriculum and the school's arts program for new teachers. The school had also scheduled three professional development days during the school year.

Curriculum

According to Seacoast administrators, Seacoast's curriculum includes Everyday Math, a science curriculum that is aligned to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks, Pearson Social Studies, John Collins Writing, and Core Knowledge. Consistent with Seacoast's mission, art and music are embedded in the curriculum. Seacoast administrators receive information about students with special education needs from the students' sending districts; Seacoast teachers tailor the students' personal learning plans to their IEPs.

Assessments

According to Seacoast's year two report to the NH DOE, Seacoast students scored above state average scores on all areas of the New England Common Assessment Program (NECAP). The school's year three report stated that Seacoast sixth graders had scored at or near state averages on the NECAP and that average student scores were comparable to or higher than sending district averages. Other assessments in use at Seacoast include the New England Comprehensive Assessment Program, TerraNova, Developmental Reading Assessment, and personal learning plans prepared with special benchmarks for individual students. The Head of School stated that assessment data are analyzed regularly; however, he was unaware of how assessment data had been used in previous years.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

The three students interviewed for this review stated that they loved school, felt that they received attention and assistance from their teachers, and appreciated the lack of bullying, which differed from previous experience at a former school. They discussed "Open Circle," a daily period allotted for students to discuss problems or issues at the school. Students said that they felt engaged in developing school rules.

Seacoast reported using informal methods to gauge parent satisfaction. The school sends letters to parents inviting their feedback on student progress reports and encourages parent attendance at Board meetings. In addition, Seacoast has established a Parent Group that attends and participates in each Board meeting; the Parent Group is comprised of active volunteers who assist with activities such as field trips, decorations, refreshments, fundraising drives, and legislative lobbying. The four parents interviewed during this review expressed positive views of Seacoast and its impact on their children; in particular, they cited the school's personal learning plans, arts offerings, emphasis on the development of critical thinking skills, and focus on community and student responsibility. They all stated that the Seacoast provides a safe environment for their children.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

No information.

Finance

As previously noted, at the end of the 2006-2007 school year the Head of School and three classroom teachers resigned, reportedly due to the school's financial uncertainty. The school's 2006-2007 annual report cited the uncertainty about state funding as the biggest reason for staff losses.

The school's audit report for the year that ended June 30, 2006 showed that the school had unrestricted net assets totaling \$50,812.00. According to the school's unaudited figures, Seacoast had \$54,568.08 in equity at the close of the 2006-2007 school year. The table below shows the school's sources of revenue each year.

	2003-2004	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Fed. Start-up Grant	\$119,100	\$ 67,545	\$152,555	\$296,222
State Equitable Aid	-	83,623	114,650	189,964
Other	-	8,874	32,906	18,413
Total	\$119,100	\$ 160,042	\$ 300,111	\$ 504,599

As can be seen in the table, in 2007 the school derived \$296,222 (60 percent of its total revenue for the year) through its federal grant. The other major source of funding was state equitable aid (also called adequacy payments), which totaled \$189,964. According to the school's data, the school raised \$14,195 through contributions and fundraising. As noted previously, the Board has worked to advocate for state legislative funding.

According to data provided to the school, Seacoast expended \$506,503.01 during the 2006-2007 school year, equal to \$8,442 per student based on 60 students enrolled.

The school obtained an unqualified opinion on its 2005-2006 audit report.

Facility

Seacoast rents space in a former elementary school in Kingston that also houses town offices. The rooms used by Seacoast Charter School appear to be adequate. The school reported that its rent expense is \$35,000.

Closing Observations

An Assessment of Progress conducted by the NH DOE on October 1, 2006 found that Seacoast met or exceeded each indicator of progress in the following areas: achievement of mission, responsible use of public funds, promotion of student

attainment of expected knowledge and skills, and school sustainability. The NH DOE assessment noted that Seacoast had developed an intense fundraising program that could serve as a model for all New Hampshire charter schools.

This review disclosed evidence that Seacoast has adhered to its mission statement and program objectives. The school's curriculum appears rigorous, and its academic program integrates arts and music into the core curriculum for each student. Students are encouraged to be individual learners; as noted above, a personal learning plan is prepared for each student and evaluated during the school year. The "Open Circle" meetings encourage students to air personal concerns, and weekly Town Meeting forums allow students to participate in school decision-making. Parents are actively engaged in the school as volunteers and through representation on the Board of Trustees.

North Country Charter School

North Country Charter School, located in Littleton and in Lancaster, was chartered by the Board of Education on January 2, 2004. North Country has operated continuously beginning with the 2004-2005 school year. The school was established in response to the need identified by school superintendents in ten local districts to address high school dropouts; it serves high school dropouts and students at risk of dropping out between the ages of fourteen and twenty-one, enrolled in grades seven through twelve.

Mission

The school's mission statement, which is unchanged from the mission statement proposed in North Country's charter application, is as follows:

The North Country is a place of learning inhabited by people who treasure our countryside and its beauty and abundant resources, with a commitment to all children and the community. In this special setting we see each individual achieving his/her highest potential in a positive can do, goal-oriented, nurturing, and secure atmosphere.

North Country's charter application cited the following goals for the school:

- To implement an existing alternative school curriculum (the Ombudsman Education Services curriculum) for this Charter School
- To develop collaboratively annual goal(s) to define student, school, and community involvement in the NC Alternative Charter School

- To develop an effective governing board and policies that focus on community stewardship, collaborative and democratic decision-making, fostering the school mission
- To identify and serve recent school dropouts or those who do not learn by “conventional methods” and are at risk of dropping out and provide an alternative for academic success
- To sustain high performance in attendance rate at 95% or above

Enrollment

The school currently enrolls sixty students in grades seven through twelve, currently drawn from ten districts, nine in New Hampshire and one in Vermont. Four students have IEPs.

There is no waiting list. Districts are given a pre-determined, pre-paid number of places (called ‘slots’). Not all slots are taken up by all districts, and the practice of buying and selling slots between districts is commonplace. This practice helps avoid a waiting list.

The school reported the following enrollments and class sizes for the past four school years:

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Enrollment	48	48	53	60
Average class size	15	15	15	15

North Country reported attendance rates of 90 percent for both sites during the 2006-2007 school year. Retention rates for both sites averaged 88 percent. In the 2006-2007 school year, eighty-eight percent of the school’s thirty-three enrolled seniors graduated. Of the remaining four seniors, one moved, two were dismissed due to poor attendance, and one had an incomplete academic record.

Governance

North Country’s 2003 charter application proposed a five- to eleven-member Board of Trustees. By the fourth year, the Board was to consist of seven members: two parents of enrolled students, two professional educators or direct student service providers, and three community leaders. As of September 2007, the Board of Trustees was comprised of nine members, including two parents of enrolled students and two area superintendents. The school reported that all of the seven original Board members continue to serve on the Board. The school’s close tie to the local districts it serves is reflected by the Board’s membership, which includes two superintendents from local sending districts and a member of a local district’s school board.

The Board meets monthly. A review of minutes for meetings conducted during the first six months of 2007 indicates that the number of members in attendance for the meetings has ranged from five to nine, and that the Board has been engaged in school matters including assessment results, enrollment, and budget and finance, including the school's audit results. The ombudsman reportedly provides monthly student achievement reports to the Board that include assessment results and attendance.

Staffing and Professional Development

Since the school's inception, North Country's Board of Trustees has contracted with Ombudsman Education Services, Inc. (Ombudsman) of Libertyville, Illinois to provide the school's curriculum, technology, instructional staff, professional development, and facilities. As of 2007, payments for these services accounted for \$324,000 of the school's \$541,602 budget.

North Country's Principal and administrative staff are paid by the North Country Education Services Agency (NECSA), which bills North Country for these services. The school reported that the four K-12 classroom teachers are state certified with Special Education licenses.

Curriculum

North Country's website describes the school's current program as follows:

Upon acceptance into the Academy students will be given academic assessments to measure math, reading and writing skills. In coordination with sending school districts, an individual learning plan will be established to address credit requirements. Using the nationally recognized and accredited Ombudsman curriculum students will demonstrate competency in 7 major areas:

- Basic Skills
- Life Management
- Citizenship/Social Studies
- Health/Recreation
- Science
- Aesthetics
- Careers/College Preparation

The core of the Ombudsman curriculum is essential skills with heavy emphasis on reading/language arts, mathematics, science and social studies in addition to extended learning in other subjects.

The curriculum is administered through Plato software from Plato Learning Inc., and NovaNet software from Pearson Digital Learning Inc., for computer-based and

online learning. These programs are supplemented by content prepared by Ombudsman, predicated on the requirements of the TerraNova tests. Students are engaged for three hours daily in basic skills, social studies, mathematics and English by means of these programs. The classroom instructors work with individuals on an as-needed basis when intervention is necessary, to review work, or to explain aspects of the computer-based program. The curriculum also requires that students engage in a work study placement that may be paid or voluntary. Teachers interviewed stated that opportunities are also given for role-play, drama and other group learning activities on an *ad hoc* basis. Students interviewed said they found this way of learning agreeable and helpful both in acquiring knowledge and skills and in developing self-esteem.

Assessments

North Country's 2006-2007 End of Year Report indicated that North Country measures students' academic progress using the Basic Achievement Schools Inventory (BASI), a norm-referenced test administered by Ombudsman Educational Services. According to North Country administrators, North Country also administers the NECAP, Pearson Assessments, Analytic Survey Basic Math, and Vocal Achievement Guide, as well as the TerraNova tests. Assessment data are reportedly used daily by the students and teachers in a formative way to assess student progress and reviewed weekly against school objectives.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

The fifteen students interviewed for this review spoke positively about North Country's safe and quiet environment, positive peer support, caring staff, computer-based learning with embedded feedback, confidence-building culture, and impact on their self-esteem.

According to North Country administrators, students attend classes for three hours each morning or afternoon and spend an additional eleven hours in paid work study or volunteer activities in the community. The school reported that all but two of the sixty students enrolled in North Country in the 2006-2007 school year earned three or more credits, and half earned three times the number of credits they had earned in their previous high school careers.

North Country reported that all parents participate in an intake interview and meetings throughout the year as necessary, in fundraising and community service, and with students in graduation planning meetings. The four parents interviewed all stated that their children, former drop-outs, were attending school again because of North Country.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

Parents, teachers, Board members and administrators provided anecdotal evidence of students progressing onto continuing education. One parent referred to her two

children, one of whom had proceeded on to a university and another of whom attended a music conservatory in Boston.

Finance

North Country received a three-year federal start-up grant in 2004; the grant funds expired in March 2007. North Country's current funding sources include the adequacy grant payments from the State and per student contributions from the ten school districts that send students to North Country. Unfilled slots are sold to other jurisdictions, including the State of Vermont. The table below shows the sources of revenue each year, as reported by the school.

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Federal Start-up Grant	\$299,999	\$ 300,000	\$399,029	0
State Equitable Aid	-	-	144,627	182,705
Other State	60,000	-	-	-
Unitary Charges	162,516	200,097	148,829	232,000
Out of State Students	29,856	34,593	19,156	22,000
Total	\$552,371	\$ 534,691	\$ 711,641	\$ 436,705

As can be seen in the table, in 2007 the school derived \$400,000 (56 percent of its total revenue for the year) through its federal grant. The other major sources of funding were state equitable aid (also called adequacy payments) which totaled \$144,627, and unitary per student charges assessed to sending districts which totaled \$148,829. In addition, the school received \$19,156 for out of state students. In addition to the amounts in the table above, the school reported in its statement of revenues for the quarter ending June 30, 2007 that the school raised \$1,538 in donations.

The school obtained an unqualified opinion on its 2005-2006 audit report. At that time, the school had net assets of \$117,342, of which \$104,729 was available for operations and \$12,613 was invested in property and equipment. According to North Country's unaudited balance sheet for the quarter ending June 30, 2007, the school's fund equity declined from the previous year to \$102,840.

Facilities

As previously noted, North Country operates in two locations: Littleton and Lancaster. Both spaces are leased through Ombudsman. The school reports that the space is adequate to its needs. Parents, teachers and students all referred positively to the environment at both sites. It is modern, clean and in both settings part of a professional building rather than a school. Administrators and superintendents from associated districts said that this helped students put negative experiences of school behind them and start fresh.

Closing Observations

An Assessment of Progress conducted by the NH DOE on October 13, 2006 found that North Country met all but one indicator of progress in the following areas: achievement of mission, responsible use of public funds, promotion of student attainment of expected knowledge and skills, and school sustainability. According to NH DOE records, the single criterion rated "does not meet" related to the school's misunderstanding of the grant periods. In a letter to the school dated February 28, 2007, the NH DOE stated that the school continued to demonstrate adherence to its mission, as evidenced by the enrollment of the school's graduates in a variety of post-secondary schools and by the positive reviews of the school from students and parents. The letter from the NH DOE also noted some concerns regarding the school's long-term sustainability and the need for the school to conduct longer-range planning activities.

The mission is vague, and although North Country is a beautiful landscape, it was hard to get a sense of how the beauty of the area in particular impacted the work of the school. Both sites were providing quiet and guided opportunities for learning on the day of the visit. Students and teachers talked of goal setting and documentary evidence of goals successfully met was reviewed. Attendance at the time of the visit was 100 percent and according to the Director, the school has consistently maintained attendance levels better than the goals of the charter.

Great Bay eLearning Charter School

Great Bay eLearning Charter School, located in Exeter, was chartered by the Board of Education on February 19, 2004. Great Bay has operated continuously since the 2004-2005 school year. Great Bay serves students in four academic divisions corresponding to grades nine through twelve in traditional public schools.

Mission

Great Bay's 2004 charter application contained the following mission statement:

The mission of the Great Bay eLearning Charter School is to address the needs of that middle range of students in the Exeter Region Cooperative School District (ERCSD) whose needs are not adequately met in traditional programs, and to educate those students in such a way that they will graduate as caring, productive and contributing members of society.

The charter application provided the following overview of the program to be offered by Great Bay:

- High academic standards
- Innovative approaches
- Small size
- Special interests curriculum
- Greater flexibility in the educational program
- Parental philosophies that perceive the charter school as a “best fit” for their child
- Flexible hours and an emphasis on community service, project-based learning, and real life experiences provided through practicums, internships, and job shadowing

Enrollment

No data was returned by the school in response to Class Measures’ request for information. The school did not complete the data collection form sent to all schools. According to NH DOE records, the school enrolled seventy-five students in the 2006-2007 school year. The NH DOE reported the following enrollments for the past three school years:

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007
Enrollment	50	100	75

According to Great Bay’s website, the school’s enrollment for the 2007-2008 school year was “just over 100 students.”

Governance

Great Bay’s 2004 charter application proposed a Board of Trustees consisting of five to eleven voting members, with anticipated inclusion of two members of the business community, two parents of enrolled students, one University of New Hampshire (UNH) educator, two other professional educators, and two members from the Exeter Regional Cooperative Board. The application also envisioned the possible addition of two non-voting student representatives and additional *ex officio*, non-voting members.

According to Great Bay’s website, the current Board of Trustees is comprised of sixteen members, including one parent, one UNH professor, two Great Bay administrators, two members of the Exeter Regional Cooperative School District,

and two community members. The website includes a comprehensive set of Board policies. One set of minutes appears on the school's website. Class Measures has not had access to any further Board minutes.

Staffing and Professional Development

According to Great Bay's website, the Superintendent of Schools and the Assistant Superintendent of Schools for SAU 16 serve as Great Bay's Chief Executive Officer and Director of Development, respectively. The website also lists five teachers, including a Special Educator, and six other staff.

Great Bay's website lists a number of professional development topics offered in the summer of 2007, including the following: Writing Across the Curriculum, Interdisciplinary Project Development, Differentiated Instruction, Assessment of Student Learning, Motivating the Reluctant Learner, Student Portfolios, and Data Driven Decision Making.

Curriculum

According to Great Bay's website, the school blends on-line learning and video conferencing technology using a project-based curriculum that is aligned with NECAP Grade-Level Expectations. NH DOE documents note that, according to Great Bay, the school incorporates two forms of distance learning technologies: asynchronous streaming and web-based learning; these allow students to work independently on interactive material delivered to their desktops, thereby participating in a virtual classroom.

Assessments

No information.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

No information.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

No information.

Finance

There is no 2005-2006 audit report for Great Bay eLearning; at that time, the school was not a separate entity but was part of School Administrative Unit 16. NH DOE files contained a copy of the SAU 16 financial audit report; information on Great Bay eLearning was not isolated in the audit.

Facility

No information.

Closing Observations

In a letter to the school dated February 28, 2007, the NH DOE provided the following descriptive evaluation of Great Bay's educational program:

Great Bay eLearning uses an alternative approach aimed at meeting the needs of middle performing students who need a different approach to learning. The eLearning center is a charter school that is technology oriented, and presents methods of engaging students in their own education with the goals of maintaining student interest, increasing academic achievement, and more fully addressing the needs of students who are at risk.

The NH DOE letter also noted: "The school has support from its local district which insures sustainability in the future."

Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy

Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy (CATA), located in Barrington, was chartered by the Board of Education on May 19, 2004. CATA currently serves students in grades nine through twelve.

Mission

CATA's mission statement, unchanged since the school's 2004 charter application was submitted, is as follows:

The mission of the Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy, a Public Charter School (CATA) is to provide excellence in secondary education in fundamental academics and performing arts, fine arts and technology related to the arts. CATA will be dedicated to creating an educational community where each student thrives, exploring personal interests in an atmosphere that encompasses different learning styles, individual learning opportunities, smaller class sizes and multiple methods of learning assessments.

CATA's 2004 charter application cited the following primary goals and strategies for the school:

- To promote excellence in education through innovative, engaging and challenging coursework
- To promote increased skills for future choices such as admittance to arts-based and/or liberal arts colleges using a professional representation of their arts and technology-based skills i.e. portfolio, resume, audition, power-point presentation, etc.
- To encourage and guide students to take responsibility for their education.

- To provide a curriculum that integrates arts and technology into the classroom rather than being a supplement to learning
- To develop methods that identify, sustain and incorporate multiple learning styles and assessment enabling all students to attain their educational goals.
- To nurture creative thinkers, independent learners, and active citizens

Enrollment

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, CATA had sixty-three enrolled students from twenty sending districts and one student from Maine; seven students had IEPs. The school had a forty-two-student waiting list. CATA has had several inquiries from parents who live out of state who wish to send their child to the school. One such inquiry was from California. The parents are willing to move to the area so that their child can attend the school. CATA reported average class sizes of classes in core academic subjects taught by full-time teachers and of other classes taught by part-time teachers. CATA’s reported enrollments for the past three years were as follows:

	2004-2005	2005-2006	2006-2007	2007-2008
Enrollment	19	52	48	63
Average class size Core Teachers	9.5 to 1	13 to 1	12 to 1	16 to 1
Average class size Part Time Teachers	3.8 to 1	10.4 to 1	6.8 to 1	11 to 1

Governance

CATA’s 2004 charter application proposed a Board of Trustees consisting of five to eleven members, with the full membership of all to be achieved by the third year of operations. The Board would consist of two parents of enrolled students; three local, professional artists and performers; two professional educators or direct student service providers; two technology professionals; two community members; and one non-voting student representative.

The current CATA Board of Trustees consists of seven members, including one non-voting student representative. Board members are selected through an informal process and serve staggered terms of two or three years. Since CATA was founded, twelve Board members have resigned; five members of the current Board were added to the Board in the 2006-2007 school year. The Board holds monthly meetings and bi-monthly meetings when necessary: for example, during the past year additional meetings were held due to the fiscal issues facing CATA. According

to Board members interviewed, the Board is in the process of forming a Curriculum Committee, which will include Board members, administrators, teachers, and parents, for the purpose of ensuring that CATA is in compliance with State requirements. In addition, CATA has formed an alliance with Franklin Career Academy and Seacoast Charter School to lobby jointly for state funding. According to Board members interviewed, the Board receives reports of student achievement data from the Principal; the Board also reviews the school's annual Accountability Plan.

Staffing and Professional Development

In addition to the School Director, CATA has hired an Assistant Director for the 2007-2008 school year; CATA also has a part-time Development Director. CATA employs eleven teachers, four of whom are full time and seven of whom are part-time. Three of the core curriculum teachers were reported to be Highly Qualified, and three were reported to be certified in New Hampshire; one teacher's certification is pending. The school reported a teacher-student ratio of eleven to one for all teachers and sixteen to one for classes in core academic subjects taught by full-time teachers. The school reported that teachers are offered professional development: examples include workshops sponsored by the New Hampshire Council for the Arts, a Robert Frost poetry workshop, Grade Quick training, a College Board workshop, a portfolio assessment workshop, a workshop on harassment in schools, and a workshop on yoga for teachers. According to the School Director, the school began conducting formal teacher evaluations last year.

Curriculum

According to CATA administrators, CATA's curriculum is collaboratively planned and adheres to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks. A Personal Education Plan is prepared for each CATA student. In addition to core academic subjects, CATA has offered a range of classes in drama, visual arts, interdisciplinary arts and technology, dance, performance media, and music. CATA also offers an Independent Study program that allows students to earn credit for learning and work performed outside the classroom. We didn't observe classes, but I did see students engaging in discussion about an art project.

Assessments

CATA reports using the following summative and formative assessments: NECAP; Progress Toward Standards; arts assessments embedded in the arts curriculum; portfolio assessments, which are a graduation requirement; and Authentic Assessment. State testing data and measured progress testing data are placed into each student's Personal Education Plan. In addition, CATA conducts formative assessments of student portfolios, which document achievement over four years and are included in CATA's graduation requirements. According to the School Director, assessment data are analyzed on a regular basis, and all staff use

authentic assessment to drive and/or revise curriculum. Homework completion data and other data found in narrative assessments are used to make school decisions. Teachers interviewed for this review stated that they are involved in analyzing assessment data: for example, they use NECAP data to identify possible modifications to curriculum and classroom instructional objectives for teachers and students.

CATA's Annual Report dated July 31, 2007 provided data on school performance on state assessments. According to the report, CATA made Adequate Yearly Progress for both Reading and Mathematics in 2006; 61 percent of CATA tenth-graders scored at the Advanced or Proficient level in Reading, and 33 percent did so in Mathematics. In 2007, CATA students participated in the Progress Toward Standards (PTS) assessment for the second consecutive year: 92 percent of CATA ninth-graders scored at the Proficient or Advanced level in Reading, and 75 percent scored at the Proficient or Advanced level in Mathematics. The report noted: "Due to a Measured Progress error, the incorrect version of the PTS was administered to CATA Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors. No valid PTS results are available for these students this year." According to the report, CATA's internal assessment showed that "100 percent of CATA students met CATA's contract benchmarks for English; 98% for Mathematics; 100% for Science."

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

Student and parent participation at CATA is encouraged by an informal committee with open membership. According to CATA administrators, CATA also surveys students and parents: a teacher satisfaction survey is administered to students, and a "How Are We Doing?" survey is administered to teachers, students, and parents. The teacher satisfaction survey indicated that 77 percent of the students surveyed rated their teachers as above average or excellent. The latter survey has reportedly shown strong parental support for CATA. One parent wrote: "Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy (CATA) meets my daughter's needs by providing a strong preparatory academic program within a caring and nurturing community."

The three students interviewed for this review described CATA as a small, supportive community. They praised the school's teachers, small classes, discussion-based approach to learning, and project-based assessments as well as the friendly, safe school climate. Some said that their self-confidence and self-esteem had increased since enrolling in CATA. Students also expressed concern about CATA's uncertain funding and the stress of not knowing if the school would remain open. Some commented that the school needed more art supplies.

Four parents were interviewed for this review. They stated that most parents volunteer at CATA during the school year, and that the committee of students and parents is very active. They also stated that a nonprofit organization is being created to help meet the school's fundraising needs. They offered positive

comments about the small school environment, individual attention to their children, and innovative instructional approach offered by CATA. They expressed concern about school funding and hope that CATA would be able to continue its good work.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

According to CATA's School Director, 75 percent of CATA's most recent graduating class went on to four-year colleges for the performing arts.

Finance

CATA's audit report for the year ending June 30, 2006 showed that the school had unrestricted net assets totaling \$12,571.00. The school's unaudited figures for June 30, 2007 indicate that its equity had increased to \$46,127 and that during the year the school received a total of 602,853 in revenues: \$365,400 in federal start-up grant monies, \$162,981 in state equitable aid, \$66,666 in a state seed grant, and \$7,806 in unrestricted donations. (Note: Other data provided by the school is not included because it is not comparable to the information provided in other school profiles.)

Facility

CATA is located in the former Barrington Middle School building, which CATA shares with a private Bible school. CATA's annual rent to the Barrington School Department is \$47,000. The current facility is adequate, although parking is limited.

Closing Observations

In a letter to the school dated February 28, 2007, the NH DOE stated:

Cocheco Arts and Technology Charter School met all the assessment criteria in its 2005-2006 evaluation. It has a strong student population with increasing enrollment. Its attractiveness to the students appears to be a result of its unique academic curriculum. Community service, the arts and technology are important to the school. CATA's relationship with its local LEA shows that the school has a strong foundation to grow and succeed.

The letter from the NH DOE noted that the school's Director had resigned in January 2006 but that the school appeared to be "back on track" under the direction of the new Director. The letter predicted that the school would be able to attain financial stability and accommodate its enrollment growth through outside fundraising efforts.

This review found evidence that CATA has adhered to the mission and program goals outlined in its charter application. CATA has made Adequate Yearly Progress, and the four graduating seniors of the class of 2007 have entered four-year colleges for the performing arts. The school has integrated the arts into its

curriculum by offering a number of specialized courses, and teachers are provided with professional development opportunities that comport with the school's arts-related mission. Alternative assessments are embedded in the curriculum: for example, a student may write a poem or compose a song instead of preparing a traditional written report. CATA also uses collaboratively prepared personal education plans to identify individual student needs.

New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School

New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School was chartered by the Board of Education on September 14, 2005. The school opened in September 2006 at a location in Rochester, New Hampshire; as of September 10th, 2007, the school had not yet opened at its new location. The school operates grades nine through twelve.

Mission

The school's mission statement, which is similar to that provided in its 2004 charter application, is as follows:

The mission of The New Hampshire Equestrian Academy Charter School is to create a high standards academy combining college preparatory education with a unique vocational program in equestrian/equine and related studies.

The school's 2004 charter application provided the following program overview:

The program will promote academic achievement, a longer school day and week, an expectation for all to acquire current computer technology skills, private sector involvement for post-graduate scholarships, apprenticeships which bridge education and career, and even courses for dual credit (high school and college). Key features of the academic program will be entrepreneurial business exposure, a strong literacy program, and core courses in equestrian studies.

Enrollment

As of September 2007, the school had twenty four enrolled students, four of whom had IEPs, in grades nine through twelve.

	2006-2007	2007-2008
Enrollment	25	24
Average class size	Not reported	Not reported

Governance

According to the school's 2004 charter application, the school anticipated that the Board of Trustees would be comprised of seven members: two or three members would be school founders and would, over time, represent equestrian teachers or experts; two or three members would represent business and industry, including a veterinarian whose practice specialized in horses; and two or three members would be parents of enrolled students.

As of September 2007, the Board of Trustees of New Hampshire Equestrian Academy had seven members, six of whom were founding Board members. According to the school's Consultant, who referred to herself in interview as the Consultant Superintendent, the Board meets four to six times each year. A review of 2007 Board minutes available on the school's website (January, February, March, and June) indicates that four to five Board members attended the meetings; in two instances one member attended by teleconference. A major issue considered during the meetings was the school's facility needs and options. Other topics in evidence included enrollment, finances, fundraising, academic program, school schedule and board governance issues including its organization, policies, and member terms. There was no explicit information indicating that the Board discussed student academic performance.

Staffing and Professional Development

Two of the school's 2.6 FTE teachers were reported by the school to be Highly Qualified; in addition to the teachers, the school employed a .6 FTE non-teaching administrative and business support staff member. A local veterinary surgeon allows students to attend ward rounds once a week; this time is contributed voluntarily. According to the school's Consultant Superintendent, professional development in the form of coaching and modeling of good instructional practice is provided through the organization with which she is associated, the New Hampshire Center for School Reform.

Curriculum

The charter application anticipated that the school's curriculum would incorporate the following unique features:

- School design (full academic and equestrian career studies program)
- School calendar on a 12-month schedule
- Budget with entrepreneurial revenue streams (funding sources to include equestrian events, riding programs, boarding and care of horses, annual fundraisers, business sponsors)
- World vision
- Unique career education
- Instructional philosophy highly project-based

- Combined college and career plan for every student
- School facility combines school and farm sites

The school's 2004 application anticipated that the school would provide a three-part curriculum consisting of an academic program, an equestrian studies program, and an entrepreneurial business program.

According to the school's Consultant Superintendent, in the first year of operation, 2006–2007, the school provided a twenty-nine credit program, with three distinct elements in keeping with the charter. Students have the opportunity to earn two credits in Equine Studies, three credits in business studies, and the remaining twenty-four credits in the academic program, in which biology and physics are prominent. The curriculum is designed for students with a special interest in equine affairs, (although horseback-riding is not part of the curriculum, and there are no horses on-site). According to the Consultant Superintendent, the broad premise is that graduating students will be able to follow higher education programs related to equine science, equine business, or large mammal veterinary work. It was not possible to access indicators of success of this program overall, though the Consultant Superintendent referred to one of last year's graduates who had proceeded directly to a degree program in equine veterinary studies.

Assessments

Last year (2006-2007), one eleventh grade student took the NECAP test. According to the school's Consultant Superintendent, no further external testing took place in the first year of operation. Again, according to the Consultant Superintendent, during the first year internal assessment based on the school's unique curriculum took place on a regular basis. It was not possible to determine the frequency or results of these internal tests at interview.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

The school was not opened during this review, so parents and students were not interviewed. The school reported that in its first year of operation parents were involved in school projects, and there was regular dialogue between staff and parents. Projects included a fundraising barbeque and other fundraising events. A group of three parents also undertook a survey relating to student needs at the school. The Consultant Superintendent said that parents received minutes of Board meetings and a regular newsletter. A current "Parents News" page exists on the school web site. The school did not conduct satisfaction surveys of students or parents.

Finance

Limited financial information is available on the school. The school's June 30, 2007 financial information (balance sheet, statement of equity, statement of revenues,

and statement of expenditures) was not available for review. Moreover, the school did not have a financial audit for the 2005-2006 school year because the school began operations in 2006-2007.

However, New Hampshire Equestrian Academy did report that during the 2006-2007 school year the school raised a total of \$588,000 in revenue comprised of \$399,000 in federal grant money, \$105,000 from the state, an unspecified \$66,000 grant, and \$18,000 obtained through fundraising.

Facility

As noted above, New Hampshire Equestrian Academy was in the process of relocating during this review. The school reported that, after renting space last year, the school executed a lease for space with a purchase option, and that the school has exercised the option to purchase.

Closing Observations

The information about the school was derived from desk-based research and a single interview with the school Consultant Superintendent. The school was in transition between sites at the time of the review and it was not possible to scrutinize any school documents. The impression gained by the team is that the school has not yet developed data-rich planning instruments for student learning. In terms of the charter, however, it appears that the school is remaining faithful to its mission through the provision of the three-part program and the engagement of students for whom equine interests are strong.

Surry Village Charter School

Surry Village Charter School, located in Surry, was chartered by the New Hampshire Board of Education on March 14, 2006. The school, which opened in September 2006, currently serves students in grades one through six.

Mission

Surry Village's mission statement is as follows:

The mission of Surry Village Charter School is to provide a challenging and rigorous education for children in an environment that emphasizes creativity, collaboration, community, diversity, service, and leadership. Students will be academically and socially prepared to meet the demands of further education while maturing into productive and caring adults with a lifelong passion for learning.

Children will learn the basics of reading, writing and math and experience science and social studies through projects that emphasize everyday skills such as cooking, canning, knitting, gardening, and woodworking. Music and the arts will be integrated into the daily curriculum. The Surry Village Charter School seeks to foster the development of individuals and their connectedness to communities of the school, the region, the world, and the natural environment.

According to Surry Village’s 2006 charter application, the founders’ vision for the school was to:

- Inspire creativity, curiosity, and wonder.
- Foster the development of individuals and their connectedness to communities of the school, the region, the world, and the natural environment.
- Enable life-long learning for students, teachers, and families.
- Emphasize curriculum that integrates humanities, science, and the arts with the mastery of basic literacy and math skills.
- Provide opportunities for students and teachers to explore subjects and content in depth.
- Utilize multiple strategies of assessment, evaluation, and reporting to help students learn, to inform teachers’ understanding of the child, and to include families in the learning process.
- Develop in students the critical skills that guide problem-solving, decision-making, and critical thinking.
- Create a welcoming and nurturing environment for students from a diversity of backgrounds, skills, challenges, and needs.

Enrollment

At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, Surry Village had sixty-two enrolled students, including five students with IEPs. The school’s three sending districts included SAU 38, which previously closed the elementary schools in Surry, Gilsum, and Sullivan. The school had a forty-two-student waiting list. Surry Village reported the following enrollments and class sizes:

	<i>2006-2007</i>	<i>2007-2008</i>
Enrollment	30	62
Average class size	10	15.5

The school reported an attendance rate of 92 percent in the 2006-2007 school year.

Governance

Surry Village's 2006 charter application proposed a seven-member Board consisting of three community representatives, one business representative, two parents of enrolled students, and the school director. As of September 2007, the Surry Village Board of Trustees had six members. The Director had previously served on the Board of Trustees, and Board members interviewed stated that they expected to fill the vacant position shortly. Board members serve staggered two-year terms, up to a maximum of three terms. The Board meets bimonthly. No Board members have resigned since the school was founded. The Board has established governance and school policies. At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, the Board reportedly conducted an informal evaluation of the Director.

A review of the Board's meeting minutes for the four months of January through April 2007 indicates that each meeting was attended by five Board members and the Director. Topics discussed included facilities, fundraising, budget, enrollment, staffing, and policies (including a conflict of interest policy for Board members), among other matters. The minutes did not indicate discussion of student performance and assessment, although the three members of the Board interviewed stated that the Board receives a monthly report on student academic achievement from the Director.

Board members interviewed for this review noted that Surry Village has received overwhelming community support since it began operations. They also noted that the Board has formed a fifteen-member Advisory Board that includes a former state senator. The Advisory Board will meet three or four times each year to discuss financing and lobbying activities.

Staffing and Professional Development

Surry Village employs four teachers, three of whom are reported to be Highly Qualified and all four of whom are reported to have New Hampshire certification. The school reported a teacher-student ratio of nine to one. In total, the school has eighteen paid staff members, including the Director, teachers, three teacher aides, teaching consultants, and two parents and two high school students hired to run a morning care program and an afternoon care program. According to the Director, the school is hoping to hire a Director of Curriculum.

Professional development is offered to teachers: for example, the school has offered workshops in Everyday Math and Connected Math, Responsive Classroom Training, Social Inclusion Training, and a workshop on motivating the unmotivated child. In addition, staff members have participated in the New England Organic Farming Conference Farm to School Program. Teachers reported that the school provides a mentor program to provide specialists when needed and to mentor new teachers at Surry Village.

The Director sets specific performance goals for teachers and conducts periodic teacher observations throughout the year as part of the school's annual staff evaluation process. The school reported having received thirty applications for a single teaching position to be filled for the 2007-2008 school year.

Curriculum

Surry Village's curriculum includes language arts, mathematics, science, social studies, library skills, social skills, physical education, art, music, and information technology. The language arts curriculum includes Four-Blocks; Guided Reading, Phonics for Reading: Road to the Code, Handprints, Working With Words, Writers Express, Spell-It-Right and SpellsWell, and Handwriting Without Tears, among other resources. The social studies curriculum is Early United States (Harcourt Brace).

Teachers receive IEPs from students' sending districts and use them to plan and make accommodations to curricula for the students with IEPs. Each student with an IEP is monitored by a case worker from the student's sending district. Teachers interviewed for this review stated that they plan curricula collaboratively and that all curricula adhere to the New Hampshire Curriculum Frameworks. They described Surry Village as a "teacher-driven school."

Assessments

Surry Village reported using the following assessments: NECAP, the Northwest Evaluation Association Measures of Academic Progress, Diagnostic Reading Assessment, Everyday Math/Connecting Math tests, and personal learning plans written in the fall and reviewed halfway through the year. According to the Director, a portfolio system for formative assessment has been introduced. Teachers interviewed for this review stated that they are all involved in data analysis and that they use assessments to identify areas needing improvement at the class and individual levels.

Student and Parent Engagement and Support

The five Surry Village students interviewed for this review stated that they liked school, felt that the teachers were friendly and helpful, and felt safe and comfortable at the school. One previously home-schooled student stated that he liked being challenged at Surry Village and that he had friends there. Another liked the smaller size of Surry Village in comparison with her previous school. All expressed the hope that Surry Village would continue to stay open.

Surry Village has an informal parent council that raises funds for the school, provides volunteers for various projects, and conducts legislative lobbying, among other activities. In addition, the school requires parents to volunteer their services for twenty hours during the school year. Surry Village administers a parent

satisfaction survey at the end of the first year of operations. Most of the five parents of Surry Village students interviewed for this review expressed satisfaction with the school. They indicated that they liked the school's portfolio assessments and engagement of parents in the development of students' personal learning plans. However, one parent submitted written comments for this review indicating that although her daughter's previous teacher had been strong, her daughter's current teacher was not; she also criticized the school's failure to share information with parents. School funding was a major concern of the parents interviewed.

Student Destination and Post-Secondary Planning

No information.

Finance

According to the school's un-audited figures for the quarter ending June 30, 2007, Surry Village ended its first year of operations with a small negative equity balance (\$2,384). The school earned revenue for the year totaling \$363,032. Of that amount, \$166,569 (46 percent) was from a federal start-up grant, \$79,870 was from state equitable aid, \$66,666 was from seed money, and \$32,303 was from contributions and fundraising.

Facility

Surry Village operates out of two modular classrooms on land rented from the Bethel Bible Church and located behind the church. Surry Village also uses a renovated trailer as administrative office space and a large field with playground equipment, a vegetable garden planted by the students, and a storage shed. The school uses the Surry Town Hall meeting room and kitchen for some classes and group activities. In addition, the school pays the Town Librarian to open the library early two days per week for the school's use.

Closing Observations

This review disclosed evidence that Surry Village has adhered to its mission statement and school vision. Based on the interviews conducted for this review, the school environment emphasizes creativity, collaboration, diversity, and community service. An example of the latter is a Thanksgiving tea held by the students for retired community members. Art and music are reportedly integrated into the curriculum: for example, grades three, four, and five wrote poems, created pictures, and assembled them all into a Haiku poem calendar. In addition, students actively participate in village life by, for example, growing vegetable gardens and making field trips to farms to learn about farming activities such as cider pressing and sheep herding.

CONCLUDING OBSERVATIONS

This report has provided an overview of the status of the fifteen charter schools that have been chartered by the Board of Education since the charter school law was enacted in 1995. One of the stated purposes of the New Hampshire charter school law was to encourage the establishment of public charter schools with specific or focused curriculum, instruction, methods, or target pupil groups.²⁰ Consistent with this purpose, many of the charter schools receiving authorization from the Board of Education were designed to be unique and to fill an identified educational niche in New Hampshire. As discussed in previous sections of this report, some charter schools have targeted high school students who are at-risk or have dropped out of school. Other charter schools offer curricula that integrate academic subjects and the arts. Another charter school was created with the intent to meet the needs of high school students seeking academic preparation for college and training in the equine industry.

As the previous sections of this report have shown, the growth of the New Hampshire charter school program since its creation in 1995 has been limited by a number of factors, including a lack of support for some charter schools from local school districts; the difficulty of attracting students; the obvious challenges associated with planning, opening, and administering a school; and, perhaps most important, the uncertain and shifting funding environment in which New Hampshire charter schools have been authorized and operated. Each of these factors is briefly discussed below.

Tensions between local school districts and charter schools are hardly unique to New Hampshire. Nevertheless, these tensions have had a significant impact on the growth of the charter school program in new Hampshire: as previously discussed, no charter school opened until the charter school law, which requires local school districts to approve charter school proposals and then ratify each charter approved by the Board of Education, was amended to allow a pilot project that allowed charter schools to be authorized by the Board of Education without local approval. While several charter schools do appear to have strong and productive relationships with their sending districts, these appear to be the exception rather than the rule.

Two charter schools that offered unique learning environments have closed, in part because of low enrollments: a school founded to provide a bilingual education program in American Sign Language (ASL) and English print for elementary students who were deaf or hard of hearing as well as those hearing students who would benefit from direct instruction and social interaction in ASL, and a school

²⁰ RSA194-B:1-a(III).

designed to offer students career-focused training in business and technology, personal learning plans, and flexible programming.

Founding a new charter school requires a significant, ongoing investment of time and expertise on the part of organizers and administrators, whose many obligations include preparing a detailed application to the Board of Education, securing and furnishing appropriate facilities, creating an effective governance structure, hiring and training staff, and recruiting students. Several charter school administrators interviewed for this review cited the importance of being able to hire consultants to assist with some of these activities. The substantial challenges of planning, opening, and administering a school have been exacerbated by the charter school funding climate in New Hampshire.

Funding was the top concern expressed by all charter school stakeholders interviewed for this review. State adequacy payments for charter schools are widely regarded by charter school administrators as inadequate to serve as the sole source of funding for their schools. Most charter schools received federal start-up grants; however, these have been time-limited grants intended to fund start-up activities rather than operations. The Legislature has periodically appropriated funds for some charter schools, but charter schools have been unable to predict or rely on such appropriations. As discussed in the introduction to this report, the charter school law provides that charter schools that are eligible for grants “shall match funds provided by the state through private contributions in order to receive funding that exceeds the state’s average per pupil cost for the grade level weight of the pupil.”²¹ However, this review has not disclosed evidence of significant private fundraising on the part of charter schools in New Hampshire.

The inadequate and unpredictable funding for charter schools in New Hampshire has implications that extend beyond the constraints on spending. Effective governance by the Board of Trustees is essential to the success of a charter school. Board members should be strongly committed to the school’s mission, should bring an appropriate mix of skills and experience to the school, and should be willing and able to invest time and effort in strategic planning and school oversight. Recruiting and retaining Board members to fulfill this governance role is often difficult for organizations; when a charter school’s continued existence is jeopardized by an uncertain funding climate, this difficulty is exacerbated.

The funding environment for charter school oversight by the NH DOE has been equally problematic. Federal funds paid the salaries of the two full-time staff members with charter school responsibilities; with the recent loss of federal funds, those staff members are no longer available. Thus, the NH DOE is currently

²¹ RSA 194-B:11 X.

providing no assistance to or oversight of the charter schools that are currently open or those that are scheduled to open.

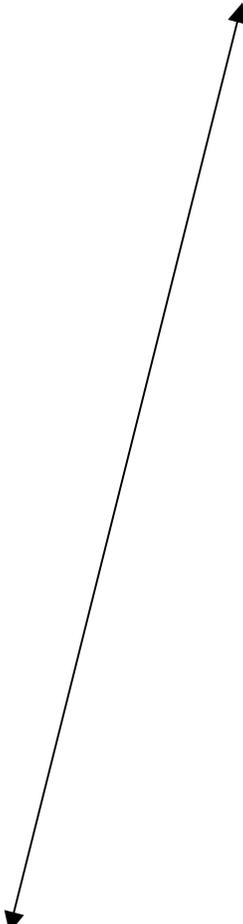
One of the stated purposes of the charter school law is to “[e]stablish results-driven accountability for public charter schools and require the measurement of learning.”²² In the past year, the NH DOE has begun to implement a formal accountability process; however, this implementation has been incomplete. The accountability process requires each charter school to develop an accountability plan, as required by the charter school law, with measurable goals. This review indicated that there is a lack of clarity and consensus regarding the nature of the required accountability plan. Seacoast Charter School adopted an Accountability Plan for the 2006-2007 school year that does fulfill the requirement of listing measurable goals: one such goal is: “Average student NECAP scores will be higher than state averages.” However, this review showed that other charter schools regard their annual reports to the NH DOE as accountability plans. While these annual reports do contain information on school activities during the year, they do not generally report on progress against quantifiable goals. Until the charter school accountability process is fully implemented, results-driven accountability and measurement of learning will continue to be elusive goals of the New Hampshire charter school program.

²² RSA 194-B:1-a(VII).

Appendix 1

FUNDING COMPARISONS, 2007/2008

From unsubstantiated information provided directly by NH Department of Education

SAU	District	Funding per District	State Funding	State funding to Charter Schools
8	Concord	10,479	2,299	3,958 
10	Derry Coop	10,537	4,115	
	Candia	9,321	1,785	
	Hooksett	8,179	1,316	
37	Manchester	8,626	3,295	
39	Amherst	10,899	1,494	
	Mont Vernon	9,979	3,142	
	Souhegan Coop			
41	Brookline	9,254	3,578	
	Hollis	10,271		
	Hollis-Brookline Coop			
45	Moultonborough	13,617	0	
53	Allenstown	10,131	5,387	
	Chichester	10,533	2,024	
	Deerfield	10,806	2,534	
	Epsom	8,716	3,122	
	Pembroke	9,923		
66	Hopkinton	11,516	4,050	
67	Bow	9,847	2,341	
80	Shaker Regional	9,687	10,287	
18	Franklin Hill	7,811		
4	Newfound Area	11,532		
59	Winnisquam	9,164	9,502	
14	Epping	10,574	3,194	
16	Brentwood	9,525	2,190	
	East Kingston	11,046	1,360	
	Exeter	11,458	1,694	
	Exeter Regional Coop			
	Kensington	9,995	1,058	
15	Auburn	8,375		3,958

APPENDIX 2

FACULTY SURVEY

New Hampshire Charter School Faculty Survey Response Key

*Note: respondent's answer may include more than one selection.

1. What is your position on the Charter School faculty?

N/A

2. What textbooks or anchor learning materials do you use in the classroom?*

- 1-Textbooks
- 2-Other books
- 3-Software
- 4-Internet
- 5-Other

3. Do you hold an (please circle): Associate Degree Bachelors Degree Masters Degree Doctorate

- 1-Associate Degree
- 2-Bachelors Degree
- 3-Masters Degree
- 4-Doctorate

4. What professional development opportunities have you participated in during the past year?

- 1-None = did not participate in any formal development
- 2-One = participated in one formal development program
- 3-Two or three = participated in two or three formal development programs
- 4-Four = participated in four formal development programs
- 5-Five or more = participated in five or more formal development programs

5. Do you feel that the academic programs offered in this school are successful? Explain.

- 1-Not successful – student not succeeding in any way
- 2-Somewhat successful – programs seem to attempt to help students, but are lacking
- 3-Successful - students successfully participating, meeting goals, have ownership of work.
- 4-Very successful – fantastic, many opportunities to learn, flexible to meet individual needs, increased scores
- 5-Completely successful – big changes in students' abilities, absolute success

6. How do teachers play a role in designing and implementing new academic programs?

- 1-Research individually – teacher creates program with autonomy and flexibility for class
- 2-Utilize Competencies – using teacher’s individual strengths to create specialized program
- 3-Meet with other staff and come to consensus – group goals and cross reference

7. How are Individual Education Plans (IEPs) used in you curriculum planning? Please explain/give examples.

- 1-Same as traditional schools
- 2-Specific Individual Learning Plans reflect IEP
- 3-Same accommodations used for all students in class

8. Are teachers involved in data analysis of summative testing?

- 1-Yes
- 2-No

If so, how is this data used in the classroom to improve instruction?

- 1-Focusing on weak areas for extra emphasis
- 2-Measuring successful areas to support work being done
- 3-Not applicable to subject area

9. What resources do you have to support your teaching?

- 1-Parents
- 2-Support staff – in school
- 3-Community
- 4-Publications/books/websites
- 5-Funds
- 6-Equipment/technology

New Hampshire Charter School Faculty Survey Responses as Percentage

*Note: respondent’s answer may include more than one selection.

1. What is your position on the Charter School faculty?

See responses.

2. What textbooks or anchor learning materials do you use in the classroom?*

1-Textbooks	36%
2-Other books	20%
3-Software	12%
4-internet	32%
5-Other	0%

3. Do you hold an (please circle): Associate Degree Bachelors Degree Masters Degree Doctorate ?

1-Associate Degree	24%
2-Bachelors Degree	41%
3-Masters Degree	35%
4-Doctorate	0%

4. What professional development opportunities have you participated in during the past year?

1-None	6%
2-One	31%
3-Two or three	31%
4-Four	13%
5-Five or more	19%

5. Do you feel that the academic programs offered in this school are successful? Explain.

1-Not successful	0%
2-Somewhat successful	12%
3-Successful	41%
4-Very successful	41%
5-Completely successful	6%

6. How do teachers play a role in designing and implementing new academic programs?

1-Research individually	38%
2-Utilize Competencies	5%
3-Meet with other staff and come to consensus	57%

7. How are Individual Education Plans (IEPs) used in you curriculum planning? Please explain/give examples.

1-Same as traditional schools	47%
2-Specific ILPs reflect IEP	20%
3-Same accommodations used for all students in class	33%

8. Are teachers involved in data analysis of summative testing?

1-Yes	40%
2-No	60%

If so, how is this data used in the classroom to improve instruction?

1-Focusing on weak areas for extra emphasis	72%
2-Measuring successful areas to support work being done	14%
3-Not applicable to subject area	14%

9. What resources do you have to support your teaching?

1-Parents	21%
2-Support staff – in school	37%
3-Community	17%
4-Publications/books/websites	17%
5-Funds	0%
6-Equipment/technology	8%

New Hampshire Charter School Faculty Survey, narrative answers

(GB) = Great Bay eLearning Charter School

(CA) = Coheco Arts and Technology Academy

1. What is your position on the charter School faculty?

Social Studies Teacher (GB)

Technology Integration (GB)

Admin/Outreach Coordinator (GB)

Physics and Physical Science Teacher (GB)

Freshman math, Biology, Chemistry teacher (GB)

Instructional Aide, Instructor (GB)

English Teacher/Advisor (GB)

Social Studies Teacher (CA)

History, Drama teacher (CA)

English IV Teacher (CA)

Science Teacher (CA)

Math Teacher (CA)

French Teacher (CA)

ASL Teacher (CA)

PT Art Teacher (CA)

Music Teacher (CA)

Guidance Counselor (CA)

2. What textbooks/or anchor learning materials do you use in the classroom?

Moodle Classroom, *Ethical Decisions* (from National WWII Museum), *Unfinished Nation* by Alan Brinkley, *A People's History* by Howard Zinn. (GB)

Use computer software and hardware and internet. (GB)

Bridges.com, Acinet.org, college and career-related sites. (GB)

Hewitt Conceptual Physics, physicsclassroom.com (GB)

Textbooks are only used as resources, as well as internet-based resources. Project-based learning using 7 element assignments and rubrics. Daily assignments to practice skills and vocabulary. (GB)

School projects, technology, (i.e. computers, internet, Moodle). (GB)

The Americans, A People's History of the United States. (CA)

Internet, library, Library of Congress, music and video. (CA)

Various novels, dictionaries, Strunk & White, SAT Prep. (CA)

Glencoe Biology and Earth Science texts. *Exploring the Way Life Works* by Jones and Bartlett Publishing, Glencoe Physical Science, *A Short History of Nearly Everything* by Bill Bryson, *An Instant Guide to Weather* by Grammercy, USA Today Weather page. (CA)

Standard type textbooks at this time. (CA)

Discovering French I CD, Discovering French II CD, Discovering French III, songs posters. (CA)

Master ASL (new book), Vista. (CA)

Music Theory, Practical Music Theory, Arranging for the Rhythm Section. (CA)

In guidance we use SAT Prep books, College Profile books and the internet for college search. We have used a variety of materials for guidance curriculum. (CA)

3. Do you hold an (please circle): Associate Degree Bachelors Degree Masters Degree Doctorate ?

Masters Degree (GB)

Associate Degree (GB)

Associate Degree (GB)

Bachelors Degree in Engineering, Masters Degree in Educational Leadership with principal K-12 Certificate. (GB)

Bachelors Degree in Biochemistry (GB)

Associate Degree (GB)

Masters Degree (GB)

Bachelors Degree (CA)

Bachelors Degree (CA)

Masters Degree (CA)

Masters Degree in Environmental Education (CA)

Bachelors Degree (CA)

Bachelors Degree (CA)

Associate Degree (CA)

Bachelors Degree – Masters degree to be completed in June '08 (CA)

Bachelors Degree (CA)

Masters Degree (CA)

4. What professional development opportunities have you participated in during the past year?

AP 2 day workshop, BER Seminar, E-Portfolio Workshop, Completed Med. Program at Franklin Pierce College. (GB)

Christa McAuliffe Conference and Workshops at SAU16 (GB)

In school teacher workshops and staff meetings. (GB)

10 Days Summer Curriculum Development (GB)

Collins Writing, Differentiated Instruction – general & math specific, 7 Habits of Highly Effective Teachers and Teens, Interdisciplinary, post secondary plans, project based assessment, advisory curriculum. (GB)

BGeC's Professional Development, Collins Writing Program, Differentiation Instruction, Project Planning. (GB)

I took three classes at UNH, attended 8 days of training for GBeCS this past year and had digital portfolio training. (GB)

Various staff development activities, standardized test workshops, E-Governance Seminar, Arts Integration Workshop, graduate classes in portfolios, assessment, action research methods. (CA)

Grade Quick training (CA)

I am currently doing Alt. V Certification, I took the Praxis II in English, I have been researching standards and AP requirements for courses. (CA)

Association for Exponential Education New England/Mid-Atlantic Co-regional Conference, (AEE) International Conference in Little Rock. (CA)

Math-Transition from High School to College, self-teaching on use of graphing calculators.

Training for Sexual Harassment. (CA)

Workshops, Conference-Relate to Deaf. (CA)

I am new to CATA this year, so I have not yet participated in much professional development, but we did have training for the Grade Quick computer program. (CA)

Professional Reading Materials, Workshops related to Music, Music Teaching, and Music Business. (CA)

5. Do you feel that the academic programs offered in this school are successful? Explain

The academic programs will be as successful as the students want them to be. The first year of AP produced three students who earned a score of 3. There were about a dozen who earned a 2 (possibly qualified). (GB)

Yes, I think the flexibility and opportunities for students are fantastic. I wish I'd gone to high school here. (GB)

Yes. The ability of each teacher to reach the students at their personal levels and bring them to the next level is as important and happens as often as breathing does within these walls. (GB)

Yes. Beyond the core courses, students have a broad range of opportunities to pursue individual learning interests. (GB)

Yes. We are reaching students who have been told that they aren't capable of learning by past educational establishments and they enjoy learning now. In addition, they are making progress socially and emotionally. (GB)

Yes, because of the excellent professional staff and its willingness to do what's needed, the students benefit. (GB)

Absolutely! Kids keep coming back for more and often bring siblings. NWEA scores have increased too! (GB)

Yes. Students are active as participants in the creation of assessments. This gives them ownership of their learning and incentive to be active within the community. Additionally, the smaller class sizes enable teachers to have more time with each student. Our curriculum works with our students, not the other way around. (CA)

The academic programs at the school are very successful, students are challenged and they are proud of their school. CATA provides an environment where students are able to use their individual skills to get the most out of their education. (CA)

Yes. Students are able to articulate clearly. They participate in class discussions. They do quality work. They feel empowered in their learning. (CA)

To the best of my knowledge, yes, but I have only been working here for a few short weeks. (CA)

Yes. Look at where last year's graduates have gone compared to the high school I came from. A little more success for my students. (CA)

Yes. Individual assessments. (CA)

Yes – students learning. (CA)

Yes. The small size of school allows students to have more attention from the teachers. Because of this, teachers are able to challenge and explain academics to students in a way that each student understands, which creates students who understand concepts and can discover areas on their own. (CA)

Yes. They allow the students to learn in an atmosphere in which they are comfortable and excel in content knowledge. (CA)

Yes. (CA)

6. How do teachers play a role in designing and implementing new academic programs?

We have meetings and everyone's suggestions are always considered. (GB)

We all meet on a regular basis and decide on the major integrated projects each class level will be responsible for exhibiting. (GB)

Participation in the 10 days summer professional development. We also have autonomy to make curricular decisions. (GB)

Teachers here are where many of the new academic programs start. A teacher has an idea and brings it to the principals, or the staff as a whole, and things get done. Likewise, the principal will have an idea and the whole staff will work to implement it. (GB)

There is a team environment here at GbeCS. Everyone's input is valued, appreciated and implemented. (GB)

We all design our own curricula-we sculpt around competencies. (GB)

Teachers are encouraged to work collaboratively and, provided the state curriculum frameworks are the basis, there is a great deal of autonomy for the individual teacher. Teachers also focus on what works for the particular group of students. Again, students are active participants in the creation process. (CA)

Teachers are very active in designing the academic programs at CATA. With the use of the NH framework, CATA teachers design the majority of the curricula used here. (CA)

The teachers design the curriculum. (CA)

I am designing my own curricula in 4 classes. Also, we meet together often to discuss cross-disciplinary units. (CA)

Collaboration that is going on and expanding. Just starting, will slowly evolve and improve. (CA)

Meetings, research. (CA)

Great. (CA)

As mentioned in the question above, teachers are able to individually challenge and help students in ways that make sense to them. The small staff size allows for flexibility and collaboration, because of this, we are able to act as facilitators for our students learning and development. (CA)

Teachers are given full control of designing courses according to the needs/wants of the school and in keeping with the mission. (CA)

7. How are Individual Education Plans (IEPs) used in you curriculum planning? Please explain/give examples.

With most of the identified students' IEPs, there are many accommodations that are repeated. I work to incorporate those accommodations into the classroom (make them a regular aspect of the class). An example would be how I hand out paper copies of directions because some students need the written directions, so I provide written directions for everyone. (GB)

We try to accommodate kids with IEPs using technology such as festival digital screen reading or audacity voice recorder. (GB)

They're used to help us help the student and to consult with other staff to reach the student's goals. (GB)

I work hard to include accommodation in project/lesson planning. Having fewer students in classes enables more attention for each student. (GB)

IEPs work best with self-motivated students and, although we are always open to a student developing an IEP at any time, the reality is that some have a difficult time following through despite a teacher's best efforts. Projects are always flexible enough to include choice and allow for modifications and instruction is differentiated. (GB)

They are used to determine their needs, weaknesses, and areas that they have expressed interests in, i.e. project management and entrepreneurship are two areas covered by myself, with the intent they understand core disciplines, practices, processes and what is needed to start and run a business. (GB)

We do Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), and they do help us meet IEP needs. However, I use information in IEPs to gear instruction and lessons. (GB)

I view the IEP as a tool to help me to help the child be successful. The IEP identifies strengths and weaknesses for the child and allows me to understand how that child's mind works. I develop strategies within my teaching that incorporate the methods established in the IEP. What's good for the special education student is good for all students. (CA)

Students are often offered a variety of ways to express that they have learned the material. Teachers help students incorporate their IEPs into their assignments and class work. At times, I have given students notes before class time so they can copy down the notes that they are expected to have in their notebooks. (CA)

They are a part of the everyday interactions I have with those students. (CA)

It's almost as if we treat all students like they have an IEP. For instance, assessments are designed to accommodate many learning styles or to be done in different ways depending upon the student. Specific IEPs that I have seen so far just have me checking for understanding on homework assignments and making sure I address behavioral issues one on one. (CA)

I tend to treat all my students as if they have formal IEPs: extended time, fewer problems on a particular assignment, modifications if ill, anything I can do to accommodate, yet keep standard digits. (CA)

Focus on students – individual approach. (CA)

My classes allow for all students to excel on an individual basis. Students are challenged to improve their art skills and complete projects that are challenging to them. There are no required artistic skills for students to live up to but their own. Because of this, IEPs could easily be accommodated in my class. (CA)

Each student develops their Educational Plan for their time at the school. The small class size allows teachers to address individual learning styles and abilities and help them succeed in class. (CA)

8. Are teachers involved in data analysis of summative testing? If so, how is this data used in the classroom to improve instruction?

We are continuing work on integrating the NWEA scores, (specifically the Lexile scores), and using those scores to strengthen the weaknesses of the students. As a staff, we are also working on collecting academic and non-academic data (attendance preparedness, etc.) to report on students' end of the semester reports. (GB)

Yes, students with reading needs receive more time in reading class. (GB)

Yes. We meet to discuss results. The good scores make us feel like we did something right! Otherwise, it helps us to determine where we need to put more emphasis or try something different. (GB)

I have not used it as much in the past because science has never been tested, but I plan to use the math information in my classes once it is available. Problem solving tends to be a big weakness anyway and I focus a lot on it in math and science. (GB)

This is done by George McKenney along with the staff and co-principals. (GB)

George McKenney (Special Education) and I took a look at NWEA scores and implemented a Lit. Lab. We also looked at data to help students select books. (GB)

As a collective, not yet. On an individual basis, definitely I try to understand what the test is evaluating (ex-reasoning skills). When I view the results, I try to consider what in my teaching relates to the skills being tested. I then adapt my teaching to focus/concentrate on areas needing improvement (as defined by test scores). (CA)

Students' needs that are apparent from the data are addressed in the work, hands on and technological opportunities. (CA)

I have not been yet. (CA)

I don't have experience with this yet (only employed for 3 weeks so far). (CA)

Little in my part for standardized testing. I use my own data from my own tests more. (CA)

Yes, but not me. (CA)

Student improve. (CA)

As I am new this year, I am not sure how this works. (CA)

As a part-time faculty, I am not sure about this. (CA)

9. What resources do you have to support your teaching?

I am fortunate to have digital cameras, video cameras and editing equipment, video conference equipment, all kinds of graphic arts and constructive software. I am also thrilled with the flexibility to be able to switch gears when appropriate (i.e. rushing to set up a homemade weather station). (GB)

The staff is amazing. There are probably over 100 years of education and experience that is shared and a community of supportive parents. We also have a network in Exeter that is very supportive of charter schools. (GB)

The staff, professional development, a great community that helps whenever it is asked, helpful parents, educational publications, my educational background and my age/experiences. (GB)

Co-principal, SAU, peer teachers, community volunteers. (GB)

What don't I have? Truthfully!! (GB)

Great colleagues, interested students, supportive families. The prime direction here is to do what works for the students. Each of us brings different skills to the table and we build off each other. The only resource painfully lacking is money. (CA)

Teachers have a variety of electronic devices such as projectors, audio and video machines and the option of student teacher assistants in many classes. (CA)

I am a part of teacher workshops and staff meetings. I have a mentor teacher who sits in on some of my classes and with whom I exchange professional advice. (CA)

A fantastic and supportive teaching staff, a fantastic and supportive administration, an active and involved board, active and involved parents, a beautiful and understanding girlfriend. (CA)

Fellow teachers, administration, students, parents: they all help in many ways. (CA)

Internet, other French teachers, books... (CA)

Internet, books, ASL Club. (CA)

I have the support of CATA, faculty, administration. I also feel like I have the support of the Board and organizations like Friends of CATA. (CA)

I have the professional community, other qualified educators, administration, and any other vast amount of materials and sources available to any education. (CA)

PARENT SURVEY

New Hampshire Charter School Parents Survey Response Percentages

*Note: each question response may apply to multiple key answers

1. How well and in what ways is the charter school meeting the educational needs of your child?
 - 1-Not well 2%
 - 2-Well 69%
 - 3-Very well 29%

2. How does the school communicate with you about your child's progress and school related issues?*

 - 1-E-mail 35%
 - 2-Telephone 17%
 - 3-In person 23%
 - 4-Progress report/report card 25%

3. What support does the school offer your child?*

 - 1-Individual Learning Plans 2%
 - 2-Guidance counselor 11%
 - 3-Specialist/therapy 7%
 - 4-Non-specific 67%
 - 5-N/A 13%

4. What special resources (people, learning equipment, funds) does the school have that help your child to succeed?*

 - 1-Staff members 53%
 - 2-Technology, equipment 19%
 - 3-Special emphasis (music, arts, etc.) 23%
 - 4-Funds 3%
 - 5-Other 2%

5. How do parents support the school?*

 - 1-Financially 17%
 - 2-Volunteering 74%
 - 3-Expertise/specialized instruction 6%
 - 4-Other 3%

6.	Are there Community Partners who support this school?	
	1-Yes	38%
	2-No	0%
	3-Unsure	62%

New Hampshire Charter School Parent/Community Partner Survey, narrative responses

1. How well and in what ways is the charter school meeting the educational needs of your child?

This school meets all the academic standards as the public Exeter High School; however, because of the small size of the school and classes, the discussions that take place during the subject classes delve into the subject matter similar to college level classes. The staff are willing to go as far (high) as the students' interest in the subject areas. (GB)

GBEC has provided my daughter the opportunity to see what her own work looks like at the exemplary levels. She is allowed to address content through modalities that appeal to or interest her. (GB)

My son is a senior at the school. He joined this school when it opened and this is the first educational setting that he has been in where all of his needs are being met. (GB)

My child was reluctant from day one to attend the high school because of the size and bullying/cliquness of the students. She is much happier at the charter and, as a result, is doing well in school. She is currently being treated for social anxiety. That may have been an underlying issue in middle school. (GB)

I'll better be able to answer this question after we get further into the present term. In the whole, I'm happy with my son's progress during the past year. I'm interested to see how the turnover in faculty at the school affects the educational experience. (SC)

The charter school is doing extremely well meeting our child's educational needs. Now starting her third year here, we see evidence of this most graphically in her math progress; she left her former school getting "extra help" in math. This year, she placed a grade level ahead in math. We see a very confident student emerging in her, and attribute this largely to the small environment, inclusive and interconnected school culture and curriculum focusing on art integration and questioning spirit. (SC)

Our family feels that the charter school has offered and provided our child with a rich curriculum. He has been given opportunities that were not available in our local public school. Spanish, lots of writing, science projects and social studies project. They have access to more books on art, social studies and science than other public schools. (SC)

So far, we have only had 6 days of school, so it's hard to assess. The math work seems unchallenging so far, but knowing that we will be worked with on an individual basis is exciting and promising. (SC)

The school has provided a good balance of challenge and nurture. Our son's test scores are better than average, and he is young for his grade. Most importantly, he continues to love learning. (SC)

Offering an individualized approach to arts-based education, children are listened to actively and with enthusiasm, letting my child "bloom where she is planted". (SC)

I will attach a testimonial addressing this particular question. At the traditional public school, they would not be allowed to work at an accelerated level in math, which she is at the SCS. Emma needs to be challenged in order to engage. When underchallenged, she becomes either bored or anxious. (SC)

We are very pleased with our experience with the charter school. Our son is getting more individualized attention, and for the first time, he is being challenged academically. (SC)

My children are both engaged in their learning. Neither child mentions they are bored. They come home talking about the things they are learning with enthusiasm. (SC)

My child is more confident in her academic and social abilities than in her previous public school. She is more comfortable setting forth an effort where the expectation is greater on her. (SC)

We are new to the school and so very, very happy with our decision. Son comes home very happy and sparked with energy. (SC)

Only one week of school so far, but...so far, so good. Individualized attention, support for difficulty transitioning to 1st grade provides academic challenges, love the homework I've seen so far. (SC)

I am happy that Erik likes the school. (SC)

I think there is more of an opportunity for growth, the child can learn at his or her own speed. (SC)

We feel that Seacoast Charter School provides an excellent education for our daughter Hannah. The arts based approach to learning has successfully engaged her and helped her to regain an interest in school work in general. Art and math are Hannah's favorite classes. Hannah is very strong in math and has indicated that she is encouraged to excel as far as her skills can take her.

She has told us that she feels comfortable asking questions of her teacher, and when she does, her teacher will not just give her the answer, but work with her to come up with the right answer. We also feel that the Seacoast Charter School is very effective at providing a "safe" environment for our daughter by dealing effectively with behavioral issues between students. (SC)

Dual classes (1/2) allow my child to work in some of the areas that she excels in. (SC)

Very well! They allow my child to have a PEP (Personal Education Plan) which gives Aim flexibility to learn at his own pace. (SC)

Small class size, curriculum based on what I used in home schooling (Core Knowledge Series), arts based curriculum is a plus, music is a bonus. (SC)

I am thrilled with my happy 3rd grader, happy to go to school again.

I think some communication is needed, but we are happy with the changes. (SC)

CATA is meeting the educational needs of my child exceptionally well. They provide the individualized direct instruction and small class size my son needs, but did not receive in our local public school. (CA)

Flexibility in meeting my child's strengths and weaknesses – For instance: my daughter, as a freshman, was able to attend a class with seniors in a field where she has strong talents, while modifications were made to accommodate difficulties with spelling in another class-school has been VERY responsive. (CA)

The charter school is meeting the education needs of my child very well. It is the perfect environment for her learning style. She is succeeding so much more than she was in the larger Dover High School. The teachers are able to provide more individual attention as well as create lesson plans that can focus on the various needs of the students in order to complete the subject with a superb understanding by the student. (CA)

My child is receiving more of an education than I could ask for. They (CATA) have put their heart and soul into all of the kids' education. (CA)

The Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy has Individualized Personal Education Plans that allow my daughter to select classes that she feels comfortable with. She wishes to pursue an education as a Special Education Teacher, yet she really enjoys drama and would like to pursue school opportunities to be part of their productions. The school has a drama club, and she was an active participant in their spring musical. She does better with a small classroom environment, which the school provides. If she needs extra help in any subject, the teachers make themselves available to the students during school and after school. The school system that our community sends their high school students to is a huge environment, where she would go from being one of 75 graduating 8th graders, to a freshman class of over 400. She appreciates the encouragement she gets in her small school environment, where the students treat each other as equals and there are not so many cliques. The classes for each subject have a maximum of 20 students. As a CATA student, she has to volunteer in the community for so many hours in her high school years and she volunteers for the special Olympics and has at the hospital which she enjoys doing and probably would not have had thought to do if it was not for CATA's encouragement to do volunteering. She establishes more self-confidence and self-esteem in the small classroom settings at the Charter School, than I believe she would in the huge, city school environment. Last quarter of the 06-07 school year, there was a lot of worry about if they would have a school of their choice to attend this year, pending on financing. It was a hands on learning in government for them that the students were very much a part of. Mostly, I applaud the teaching staff and administration of the CATA community for keeping the students focused on learning and maintaining their grades through all the worry. Good job CATA. (CA)

The smaller classes have given her the opportunity for more one on one interaction with the teacher and other students. (CA)

At Spaulding, the peer pressure was for the children to appear not to care too much, not to get involved, not to have any self-respect, etc. I don't mean to imply that the teachers didn't care, but sometimes they seemed more intent on letting children fail than succeed. At CATA, it seems that my child wants to succeed and that peer expectation is success, not failure. (CA)

CATA classrooms are very small and that allows for a lot more one on one communication. To me, this is one of the best ways to learn. The material is taught in a more creative way, which keeps my daughter from being bored. (CA)

My child's needs are met very well, better than the traditional public school she was attending. Her needs are not only met educationally, but emotionally as well. (CA)

CATA is allowing my daughter to be herself and able to grow at the speed and direction she needs for herself. They allow freedom of expression with enough guidance to help them flourish. (CA)

Very well. The courses this year are appropriate for my daughter's needs and interests. The teachers are caring and attentive to her as a whole person. (CA)

Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy (CATA) meets my daughter's needs by providing a strong college preparatory academic program within a caring and nurturing community. My daughter has strong mathematic skills which are recognized and challenged by the mathematics teacher. In subjects that do not come as easily, my daughter receives guidance and support as necessary. I am impressed that each student has a Personal Education Plan, created by the student in concert with staff and parents. (CA)

Smaller class size is wonderful for her. It's great to have more one on one with teachers. It enables them to get to know all the students. She loves school. The only area she's weak in is math. I've been helping her. (CA)

My child is receiving the individual attention from smaller class sizes that she needs and is learning with various methods for non-traditional styles of education. (CA)

CATA has exceeded my expectations in meeting the educational needs for my daughter. She loves school, works hard at her academics and even with a language learning disability, she does the same work as her peers because of her teachers. (CA)

CATA provides a wonderful opportunity to learn academics and to do arts and performing arts where she excels in. Also, the small class size provides opportunity for individual help. If CATA was not here, my oldest daughter may not have continued with high school. A very safe learning environment. (CA)

Emily has progressed very well in her 2 years at CATA. She has come a long way in her math skills and loves the school community feeling. The small classes are a help to her as well as the availability of the teachers when she needs extra help. (CA)

I feel my son's needs are being met. I notice he is getting a reasonable amount of homework (which I feel is good preparation for college) and he has challenging assignments, where he is able to use his creative side. (CA)

The charter school is helping my child with the smaller classroom setting. Also, I feel the teachers are more involved with their education. Also, a child that picks a charter school is more interested in their education. (CA)

Very well. (CA)

Making classes interesting to her with things that interest her. Harder academics for her become understandable. Due to small class, more one on one as well as student help. (CA)

Smaller mixed-age classes, personal connection to teachers and kids helps with motivation to go to school and to do homework. (CA)

My child feels very comfortable at this school due to the small class size, which helps him feel more able to fully participate in the learning process at school. The teachers seem to enjoy their work, which relays a joy of learning to the student! (CA)

It is challenging him to be the best he can be. It is also allowing him to be himself, and to use his talents. It gives him a variety of ways in which to learn. (CA)

CATA meets Katie's needs with small class size, individualized attention and excellent staff. The students are required to take responsibility for their own learning, participate as a group, and follow a stringent educational plan according to NH frameworks. (CA)

Encourages self-discipline – to be the best person/student to their ability. (CA)

This school is meeting my child's needs because they are concerned and flexible. Teachers are available to meet with parents and teachers can give support academically in classes with a small number of students to teachers. (CA)

A great question...wish it was easily answered. I have a son in the second grade and a daughter in kindergarten. After spending a year in the ½ classroom he was no further ahead with his reading than he was when he began first grade. This has been addressed with his teacher and the director of the school to no avail. Towards the end of last spring, my wife and I took it upon ourselves to supplement

our son's education with a reading program at home. Since we have been reading to him since he came home from the hospital (when he was born), this was an easy transition. He is on the cusp of being able to read whole (simple) sentences due to our diligence. His increased abilities have little or no bearing on what is happening in the classroom. Ian (our son) has loved math since he began to have a general idea of numbers and how to manipulate them. The school has increased his love for math in so far as showing him different ways to use math, but he has been mostly self taught in that area.

There is no parent/teacher organization to bring concerns to. The Parent's Council at SVCS may have been initially created to handle such concerns; however, it has never been used as such. If you take your concerns to the director (Matora Fiory) and you are not satisfied with the results or lack thereof, there is no other option. That is a major problem. My wife having been the Secretary for the Parent's Council this past year has stated that at best they were drawing in five or six parents (and this included the officers) to those meetings. The Parent's Council at SVCS is only there to raise funding for the school. Anyone telling you different is spreading misinformation.

Our daughter, Ashton, is only four years old and already in kindergarten. I realize that in this aspect, we are lucky. She is highly advanced for her age. She too is almost reading simple sentences and doing math. If we were in a "standard" school, she would be at home, not at school. Sadly, she is already bored at SVCS. (SV)

2. How does the school communicate with you about your child's progress and school related issues?

Quarterly progress reports prior to report cards. Narratives on the report cards. Emails and school newsletters for school-related events. All staff very accessible by e-mail with prompt response time. (GB)

Communication is excellent. Regular progress reports contain not only proficiency levels, but also narratives that describe progress. Email/phone exchanges occur regularly. (GB)

The communication is constant – email, phone calls, letters, progress reports and report cards. (GB)

The school is wonderful with communication via regular emails and phone calls from teachers for the more immediate issues. Detailed feedback is received for all academic classes. (GB)

Emails arrive regularly and my son also brings home handouts. (SC)

Our communication from the school is predominantly delivered via email, which works well for our family. Ongoing progress is communicated through the progress reports and frequent conversations with the teachers and head of school. (SC)

Email, phone and lots of one on one contact. You are welcomed at anytime in the school. Phone calls, emails are returned quickly. Three times a year, we receive a detailed report on our child's progress. Also, each child has a personal educational plan with parent input. (SC)

So far email has been helpful. That's probably the most convenient channel of communication right now. (SC)

Teachers and head have been clear, specific and responsive to all questions and concerns. (SC)

Easily – at carpool, inside school. Anytime a parent has a question/concern, Seacoast Charter responds very quickly. (SC)

There are educational plan meeting and trimester reports. I have been satisfied with communication as H.O.S. and teachers are responsive and readily available to address any concerns I might mention. (SC)

We are brand new to the school with only 6 days so far under our belt. We haven't had a chance to experience what the communication is going to be like. (SC)

In person, via phone, email and letters. (SC)

This year, the school is excelling in their communication to parents, not only in the classroom, but as a school in general. We are very happy with the increase communication. (SC)

Via email. Parent newsletters and handouts in the folder he brings home everyday. (SC)

School has communicated daily re: adjustment to school issues. Very helpful! (SC)

Email. (SC)

Good so far – the school year is still young. (SC)

Communication with the school happens through several channels. We receive frequent operational distributions by paper that Hannah brings home in her packets. We also receive emails with general information about upcoming school events and requirements. Email is effective for us on a more one on one basis as well. On several occasions we have interacted with Hannah's teachers through email regarding specific issues. We have also received personal phone calls from the Director and other staff on various issues that required more immediate attention.

In addition, we are encouraged to contact teachers directly by phone (at any time), or to come into school whenever we need. Her teacher has also sent home documentation about her approach to homework and a parent survey to capture specific information about our daughter. (SC)

Still a work in progress. (SC)

Very open communication, via personal interaction, phone calls and email. (SC)

Via email, so far. (SC)

Email, phone, notes home, which I sometimes do not get for a few days. (SC)

The school communicates via email and meetings about my child's progress and issues. (CA)

Regular emails/newsletters, narrative assessments, parent/teacher conferences quarterly. (CA)

We have several methods of communication. Several times a year we will get a narrative from the teachers where each teacher will write about the progress of the student, where the strong points are and the areas that need further work. Shortly after receiving these narratives we have mandatory meetings with the teachers to discuss. We also receive report cards several times throughout the year.

I personally have found all of the teachers and administrators open and available either in person, via email or phone to discuss any concerns or suggestions I may have. (CA)

Daily, if I need it. Anytime I have a question, concern or even a good word, I always send an email or call and I always have been responded back to. (CA)

CATA sends out reports to parents quarterly. Email is frequently used for upcoming events. The school's website provides much of the information that we need to know what meetings are coming up. Twice a year, the parents are invited in for conferences with the teachers that our students attend

with us and are a part of so that they may answer any information that both parents and teachers might want to hear. Anytime that there is any problem with my student (illness, missed bus, no lunch money) I am contacted immediately by office personnel. If my daughter is not doing well in a class, I will get an email from that teacher, and have an opportunity to sit down with the teacher and daughter to help correct the problem. (CA)

Yes, they are very informative. We receive emails and have progress meetings with the teachers. (CA)

I don't know as before this survey. I don't know if I have received any communications regarding my son's progress. I am not even sure if there is going to be a parent/faculty night. (CA)

This is my daughter's first year, so I have not had much contact with the teachers yet. The administrative staff has been most helpful to me as a new parent via email, etc. (CA)

Through assessments, emails, notes, telephone calls, meetings, and conferences. There is no problem with communication; I am very well informed of all the goings-on in my daughter's school. (CA)

The CATA staff has been wonderful in meetings our needs. I had a few teacher/parent meetings last year at CATA and all of my encounters through many years at various schools and teachers, CATA was the top of the list with suggestions, being proactive and concerns. (CA)

Progress notes. Narrative assessments. Face to face meetings. Phone calls and mailings for special situations. (CA)

The school communicates formally through report cards and narrative reports. These are individualized communications and speak to my daughter's particular goals. Mandatory parent-teacher-student conferences occur twice a year. However, the teachers are available if issues arise. Teachers will call or email me. Monthly BOT meetings are open to the public. Parents are welcomed to attend and speak at these. Email communication with Board members and CATA staff is encouraged. (CA)

Progress reports, phone calls and meetings with parents and student with teachers if problems arise. (CA)

My child is new to CATA this year. So far, I have received emails and phone calls. (CA)

They have quarterly parent/teacher/student conferences. I think it's great to have the student at the conference so that they too are informed of what they need to improve on and mostly received appraisal for what they have achieved and successful at. (CA)

They use written reports of my child's progress and direct communication with the teachers. School related issues is not communicated as well as could be. But this year so far has seemed to have improved thru emails. (CA)

By the narrative reports and conferences with the teachers. Also, we have been in touch with the guidance counselor when the need arose. (CA)

I have got an email and a phone call before school started along with all the correct paperwork to be filled out. (CA)

We have just started this year, but whenever anything has come up, they are very responsive in communicating with us. (CA)

Email. (CA)

The whole school communicates with me very well and listens, tries hard to make changes for our daughter as well as speaking/listening very well. (CA)

We're new, so not sure yet. Meetings...(CA)

We have had a school meeting with my son's teachers and also communicate via email and homework assignments are posted on the website. Also, due to having to provide our own transportation, we have contact with the school and staff on a daily basis. (CA)

Through mail and email. They are right on top of the situation. If there is anything that needs to be addressed, it is done immediately. (CA)

There are frequent emails, progress reports, and mandatory teacher-parent-student conferences. We also have board and parent meetings. (CA)

Via mail – updated progress every few months. (CA)

Email occurs between teacher to parent, parent to parent and parent to administrator on a regular or as needed basis. They have parent meetings scheduled several times a year, progress reports at mid term, and at the end of the term. You receive a great deal of information concerning progress. Homework is online. (CA)

There is one Parent/Teacher conference each semester. I'm assuming that if your child is falling behind then you would receive a phone call or note from the teacher. We don't really know. (SV)

3. What support does the school offer our child?

Individualized learning plans for special interests of my child. All staff, teachers and administrators know my child's personal interests. My son had a sleep disorder and missed a lot of classes during the year. That following summer, teachers and staff helped him make up his work, came in to teach him, emailed assignments, corrected them, all without pay! (GB)

Academic Support. Career/college/post secondary planning. They know my daughter – are in tune with her needs – academic, social and emotional. (GB)

I have not found one yet! (GB)

It is the individual support and flexibility of the curriculum that allows that allows my child to be successful. I know my daughter's teachers on a personal level and they know my daughter in a way that would not be possible in the larger environment. (GB)

Safety in dropping off and picking up, information about activities available outside of school. (SC)

Our child does not receive any special services in the literal sense, but she does receive the benefit of caring teachers and support staff who have known her for the past two years. In her third year at SCS, she feels like she is an important member of her school community, which is a wonderful gift. (SC)

They offer one on one help. They also have an aid in the room. The children are encouraged to call the school or email with any questions on their homework. They then meet with the child in the morning. The teachers also work with the family to support the child. The school also offers reading and writing mentors. (SC)

Emotional support is what we we're seeking, and we are hopeful that with the current foundations of social/emotional lessons, our child will grow to be strong and healthy emotionally. (SC)

The school does an excellent job of supporting the learning process, including the making of and learning from mistakes. (SC)

A multi-dimensional educational experience that teaches the whole child, not just a "test-now" robotic approach. Listening, hands on, active community. (SC)

Please see testimonial attached. (SC)

Again, we are so new we haven't got the feel yet for the level of support we'll receive for our son. (SC)

Each child has multiple teachers, i.e. their regular daily teacher, music and art teachers and the other staff helpers. (SC)

Not really, or unaware. (SC)

Any we would probably need. I feel they are very attentive - if I email/leave a message, someone gets back to me very quickly. (SC)

Emotional support re: transition. (SC)

FM System. (SC)

It is a caring environment. (SC)

The school allows students to grow at their own pace. For instance, in math, Hannah has indicated how, when she finishes her in-class math work early, she is allowed to pick out any of the "math games" available in the class so that she continues to learn more advanced topics.

Individuality is encouraged and supported with the SCS arts based curriculum. Hannah feels that she has a voice within the way the school operates, both through the town hall meeting as well as through individual interactions with teachers and administrators-so much so, that she feels comfortable running for school vice president while only in second grade. (SC)

Too soon to answer this. (SC)

It tailors its support to the needs of the child, which vary from child to child. (SC)

My child receives tutoring from one of his teachers. (CA)

Guidance counselors are available frequently on an informal (sitting in at lunch, etc.), as well as appointment basis. Teachers are similarly available and offer their time generously. There has been a whole hearted effort to work with my child as a whole person, encompassing emotional needs, outside interests, and her personality, as well as academic needs. (CA)

The administrative department is awesome. The support that they offer not only to my child, but to the rest of school, is unbelievable. The guidance department is great also, making sure my child's needs are met with classes as well as personal level. The teachers are awesome as well. The ratio in the classroom is what helps more intense learning. (CA)

CATA offers two guidance counselors, who are there to guide the students academically. The teachers are all very academically supportive and usually join the students for lunch, where the conversation is light, developing relationships with their students on other levels. Most of the teachers are involved in after school programming - Student Government, Jam Club, Drama Club, Piano Lessons, etc. The school director knows each and every student by first name, and they all feel comfortable enough with her to confide in her, when various situations arise for them. The school has found a way to offer lunch to the students through the Barrington School lunch program. When there is interest in certain

drama, music or art programs, the school tries to find instructors to teach the class. The students have a loud voice at CATA. (CA)

My daughter is supported by the school by way of mentoring her work and progress she is making. An example would be her struggling with one class and the teacher and guidance counselor helped her get into a class that was better for her to be in. (CA)

I don't know. Other than he feels he can be himself and actually enjoys going to CATA. I guess it supports his dream of being a performer and working in the music industry. (CA)

The teachers are available after school for additional help if needed. (CA)

The school offers her whatever support she needs. If she doesn't comprehend the work of if she struggles with a particular problem the teachers are very willing to help her better understand. If she needs extra help, they are willing to stay after school to give her the help. If the work is too easy for her, they are willing to work with her to make it more challenging. The teachers work with the kids to help them to learn at their pace and to build on their personal strengths. (CA)

I think it would be better to ask what support they don't offer.....none, which I have found. (CA)

Teachers seem to be readily available for any extra help needed. Student government and other extracurricular activities stimulate her interests and help develop her skills. (CA)

My daughter receives academic support in mastering core subject areas. She receives teacher support in identifying and enhancing areas of particular interest. The whole person is important at CATA. The fact that my daughter loves drama and ASL is seen as important by the students and the teachers. Encouragement to develop academic and artistic talents comes from students, teachers and administrative staff. Our family recently had a health crisis that was known by the school community. My daughter received emotional support during that difficult period. This made all the difference to her and allowed her to function and participate at CATA. She is not anonymous at CATA. (CA)

Encouraging and a nurturing vibe. She loves her classes and her teachers. Everyone is available to her if she's in need of help. (CA)

With a learning disability, the small classes help my daughter to do very well and achieve her maximum learning potential. (CA)

Individual aid by teachers, after school clubs and guidance counseling provide a safe learning environment. (CA)

Good learning experience through caring and involved teachers. Smaller classes. Good community feeling and respect for all. (CA)

Jesse feels extremely comfortable with the staff and students as well. I feel Jesse has many opportunities to let his passion (music) shine. He is also involved in student government and Jam Club, so the support of extracurricular activities is strong at CATA. (CA)

Smaller classroom, if she has a question, her needs are met. (CA)

Whatever she needs so far this year. (CA)

Support in her individual needs, which is amazing, as long as she talks to someone about her needs. As well as a few teachers find out new needs that she has and have to make it easier for her. (CA)

The school has been very willing to accommodate any concerns we may have about my son – offering teachers available to give students extra help with difficult subjects if requested. The guidance

department has also expressed in the meeting we had that if my son has any concerns, to please speak up. (CA)

Advisory, email, after school, lunch. Keeps him up to date by signing planner. (CA)

The entire faculty has been very supportive of my daughter. She works at her own pace, yet challenged to work beyond her comfort level. (CA)

Supportive teachers for the most part. After school help when needed. Guidance counselor. (CA)

There is academic assistance from teachers and there are counselors available for emotional support or direction. As of next week, my son will have the support of a 504. (CA)

Our son has Sensory Processing Disorder that manifests itself in many (almost) invisible ways. We were very lucky that last year there was a staff member who is an O.T. and picked it up shortly after school began. Unfortunately there have been good intentions on behalf of the staff, but due to lack of follow-through on their behalf there has been little progress outside those strides my wife and I have made on our own. Follow-through seems to be limited or nonexistent in regards to our son and his challenges. (SC)

4. What special resources (people, learning equipment, funds) does the school have that help your child to succeed?

Both my children at GCeCS were "coded" during their entire school years, including their freshman year at charter school. They received special ed support and accommodations at GBeCS from the on site special ed teacher and all staff followed the IEP for accommodations. After their first year at GBeCS, they no longer receive services because the nature of the teacher support for all the students is meeting the needs of my child. (GB)

Amazing technology/multimedia. Along with professional teaching staff, adults with a variety of backgrounds (business/technology/arts) are regularly part of the school community. (GB)

Technology, special educators, professionals from many diverse fields, cameras, computers, labs. (GB)

My daughter has always been an information computer geek, and enjoys the computer mode of learning, as well as the video equipment used to film for projects. She has done an internship with a newspaper writer, and has been allowed to go into the community to gather information for her project needs. (GB)

We are very grateful for the remarkable opportunity our daughter has in her daily art and music instruction to work with authentic art supplies, a range of percussion and string instruments and certainly her excellent teachers and head of school are apparent as our most valuable resource. (SC)

The school aids in all the grade levels. Computers. Reading and writing mentors that meet with the same child every week. (SC)

The people are key. Each adult seems to understand, know and care for our child. (SC)

It is first and foremost the qualified and dedicated staff that set SCS apart from other schools. The resources available to kids in the music program are good – but could always be better. (SC)

Music, cello lessons, individualized art that doesn't condemn or belittle my child (as was seen at previous school – i.e. ripping up less than "perfect" artwork), healthy lunches, active environment, reading corners, teacher's experience in Africa. (SC)

Her relationships with her teachers are the most important "special" resource. Other than this, she is excited about music and art and all the resources available to her at SCS (especially the teachers) in these disciplines. (SC)

I'm very impressed with the staff's background and life experiences. The computer equipment seems adequate for the children's needs. I love the importance placed on arts and music. (SC)

People are the SCS's greatest asset. (SC)

They work very well with the sending school districts to accommodate IEP. (SC)

Great teacher, specialized teachers in art and music. (SC)

Full time aid in classroom is wonderful. Teacher Joycelyn is wonderful as well. (SC)

I think guests/speakers/artists/musicians can enhance the academics. A challenging, stimulating, enriching environment is important to me. (SC)

The art class seems to have made a big impression on Hannah. She has always enjoyed drawing pictures and now feels that she is really learning things about art, in addition to creating and drawing pictures.

Music class tends to be very hands on as well. The school's staff seems quite well rounded in terms of its experience with various art forms. (SC)

Do not know. (SC)

Integration in arts helps my child develop and nurture his creative side. (SC)

Teachers who are qualified and eager to teach. Teachers' aids who are present in class. Music instruments. Art/music teacher is very valuable. Computers are a good resource tool. (SC)

Individual Education Plans. (SC)

The teachers at CATA all love to teach. They care deeply about the success of my child. The school has a music program that keeps any child interested in attending school. (CA)

What they offer at our school versus a public sending school. The arts program and theater. What I appreciate is the technology part. It has really helped my child focus on that during a school day. (CA)

Even though their salaries are well below the NH state average, the teachers that they have hired over the years have been superb! They have been innovative and creative with very little financial resources. The biggest resource that CATA has is their staff. They all genuinely like their jobs and their students. They all believe in CATA's mission. They encourage the students to succeed, everyday. Cocheco has the oldest computers of any public high school in NH, yet they all manage to get their work done on them. The teachers' innovative methods of teaching, on a shoe string, still manage to keep the students interested. Most of their supplies are donated, and the wish list is lengthy, but they still manage to get the job done. CATA has a board of directors to deal with the school issues. An administrative staff that hires the best teachers that are the best in their fields, and many who are good in a few different ones. The school itself is full of different, but like minded students, all interested in learning in a laid back atmosphere. (CA)

Internet access. (CA)

Excellent question. I wish I knew the answer. With turnover caused by the funding issue, it would be nice to have a parent night. (CA)

I think the teachers are the most special resource. (CA)

The school employs certified teachers, but also brings in people from the outside that are able to teach the students things they wouldn't necessarily get at a traditional school. A couple of examples are yoga and ballroom dancing. CATA has mentors from many areas such as artists and technology related people, as well as theater performers. The Bell Center for the Arts is a nice resource available to the students. CATA uses learning equipment, specifically related to the arts, such as costumes and the recording studio, and computer equipment for technology. Unfortunately, because the school is not funded by the federal government and many school districts do not support the school financially they are in need of funds. We, the parents, help with providing things, such as computer paper, tissues, school supplies, etc., but there is just so much we can do. (CA)

The people are key – committed, dedicated to the special focus of the school and to the students all around, more so than I've seen in larger, conventional schools. (CA)

The most valuable of all possible resources (IMHO) are the human beings who form the web of CATA. I believe the school is successful because of the caring with expectations that comes from each adult in the building. Unfortunately, due to woefully inadequate funding from the State of NH, CATA has had to creatively use minimal funds to equip the school. CATA does have a recording studio with specialized software and hardware. Additional funds are needed, but CATA has the most critical resource: intelligent, nurturing adults who like and respect adolescents. (CA)

Computers, fundraising, volunteering by parents in the school, community work by the kids. (CA)

The teachers are all very skilled and experienced in their individual teaching areas. (CA)

The staff of teachers are the largest resource for CATA. Not only do they succeed at teaching my daughter academics, but they care and help her feel good socially and promote self-motivation to achieve goals set. (CA)

CATA offers the best teachers for my daughters – especially math, English and drama. If my daughter wanted to pursue a subject not offered, they would find a person in the community to help with an independent study project. Especially terrific considering this school's funding is not where it should be. (CA)

The school does receive some money per student, but does need more. There are very good teachers that care for the growth of the students. There is a resource person to help find ways to help with the cost of running the school. (CA)

From what my son tells me, the teachers are the key to this school! He is impressed by the respect he is given by the teachers. He is motivated to be independent and responsible and CATA provides him with these skills while at school. So, I believe it is a perfect partnership between home and school because we encourage Jesse in all those ways as well. (CA)

They are always looking for ways to help our children succeed. (CA)

Patience and great teachers. (CA)

They teach hand on method, listen to her issues, figure individual ways that will help her with any learning obstacles – flexibility in teaching. (CA)

Computers are available en every class, which is wonderful. Teachers are more than willing to go the extra mile to help students succeed. All the families of the students pitch in to help the school in any way they can to be even more successful. The building is roomy and very comfortable and clean. (CA)

The teachers and staff are phenomenal. They do what they can with the resources they have. They do field trips, student share resources. (CA)

The number one resource is the staff and faculty. However, we are always in need of funding from the state. The visual and technical equipment available is excellent, but new technology is always welcome. (CA)

The school needs more help with supplies and teachers for the arts (fine art, drama, etc.). (CA)

I believe this school works hard to receive funding. Last year, they had many fundraisers to enable students to go on field trips, etc. Also, this charter school is special – the faculty are theatrical and musical. They offer classes geared for the needs of those students. Their equipment is musical and theatrical. (CA)

The Occupational Therapist is no longer a member of the staff, but is now a consultant to varying degrees. There is Child/Family Therapist who is on staff in a limited capacity. The same hold true for a Psychologist. However, both are parents of other SVCS students. While I am grateful that they are available to the SVCS Community, it makes things a bit uncomfortable. (SV)

5. How do parents support the school? Please explain.

We have an extremely active parent group. As compared with the public schools in this district that also have very good parent support. Parents support dances, yard sales, fundraising booth at the Stratham Fair, volunteer in the school to teach small group activities, knitting, landscaping. Parents lead community service projects, organize school ice cream socials, holiday parties. Parents are made very welcome in the school and are recognized and appreciated by the students and staff for our support. Our support students are very used to working with parents on their activities. (GB)

Parents provide support in a variety of ways. The “typical” – helping with special functions, field trips; but, also willing to participate in public meetings in support of charter schools. The most active parents group I’ve seen at the secondary level. (GB)

Very strong parent group who have activities, do fundraising and volunteer in the school. (GB)

There is a very active parent group that gathers supplies and food for special events. The parents tell us when an important meeting is coming up at the school board regarding charter school, and who is politically supportive of the charter school mode. (GB)

Attending school related events, donating supplies, equipment, volunteering. (SC)

Parents fuel Seacoast Charter School. Just as the school could not exist without our wonderful staff and students, it simply could not operate without parents. Parents offer critical support an input in many areas: classroom help, serving as board members, organizing school wide events, fundraising and lobbying for sustainable funding in Concord, to name a handful. Personally, being a SCS parent has been challenging, rewarding and an avenue for professional growth because of the meaningful volunteer roles I serve. (SC)

The school relies on parent volunteers. We have class mothers. They arrange volunteers in the class for special events, mentoring in the class. We have a parent group that helps with set up before events after school, fundraisers, field trips to educational places, drive students to field trips, donate items needed by the school, welcome new families, legislation outreach, talking to our local elected officials. (SC)

Volunteering, word of mouth, communication. (SC)

Volunteering is classrooms, at events, on field trips, as reading partners, on the board, as resources for new parents, as painters in new classrooms, etc., etc., etc.,.... (SC)

By socializing outside of school, inviting support staff for picnics/events/parties, raising funds for needed supplies, advocacy for alternative approaches to standard public education at State House. (SC)

Parents support the school primarily with their children, positive attitude and cooperation with requests from H.O.S. and faculty/staff. This can be through volunteerism (time and talent), as well as through financial donations which have been necessary for SCS's survival. (SC)

So far I've seen a huge amount of support given to the school by the parents, whether it's concerning a fundraising breakfast or coordinating a school cook-out. I look forward to being a part of it. (SC)

Parents volunteer whenever asked. So much so, there are usually more parents there than needed. (SC)

Through classroom volunteers, mentors, parent groups, donations, annual fund. (SC)

I'm a new parent, so not sure, but I feel very invited to participate. (SC)

Volunteer. (SC)

Get involved with fund raising. (SC)

Very much, the parents are very involved. (SC)

Parents are encouraged to volunteer with school support on several levels including fund raising, chaperoning for outings, classroom participation and community outreach.

Parents are also encouraged to take an active role in their child's school experience by participating during class presentations, town meetings, and even for lunch. (SC)

Parents group is involved, but do not know yet what they support. (SC)

Volunteer opportunities, donating items in class rooms or school. (SC)

Volunteering. (SC)

Parents support the school by attending meetings, participating in fund raising and by attending school events. Parents have many volunteer opportunities. (CA)

With fundraisers, concerts, bake sales, etc. The parents really pull together to help make CATA move forward. The kids' education comes first in a "CATA" world. (CA)

The Parent Volunteer Group at the school is currently involved in many different fund raising/friend raising activities. The parents group oversees special events fund raising – volunteering at yard sales to benefit the school, spaghetti dinners, silent auctions, etc. They also do various office work during the school week, and pick up school lunches from the Barrington Middle School. When the school is having an event like Poetry Out Loud or the Hamlet Soiree, parents are utilizing during the event to run video equipment, provide refreshments, sell tickets, etc. The parents regularly go to their local school board meetings to encourage the tax dollars to follow their students. Parents donate money and supplies. Parents support the teacher's requests by posting the Wish List at their places of employment. Each parent signs a contract at the beginning of every year, agreeing to volunteer a certain percentage of hours at the school. (CA)

Parents support the school by helping with fund raising activities and providing transportation. (CA)

I suspect there are roles for parents to play and I suspect there are opportunities but without some kind of forum to bring this information to light, they may never be recognized. (CA)

Parents volunteer to do many office type duties, or anything asked of them. (CA)

Parents support the school in so many ways, depending on their talents. For example, since I am fluent in Spanish, last year I was able to come in and help some students with a project they were doing for their Spanish class. I also cooked a dish which they shared during their study of Spanish countries. Some parents help with making costumes and crafts or help the kids rehearse for a play. We are the ones who drive our own vehicles to the middle school to pick up lunches for the students so that these kids can have a healthy hot lunch. Parents come in and volunteer to work in the office and help with cleaning the school. They also help with the fundraising efforts which are ongoing throughout the year. The list of what parents do is endless. (CA)

Donations, volunteer work, lots of driving (because of the location, far away from all students' homes). (CA)

Parents support the school in a number of ways. The most important way is in paying attention to what the student is learning and what the academic requirements are. If issues arise, the parents contact CATA staff to problem solve.

Parents support the school by volunteering. You name it, parents will do it. Last year, volunteer parents transported lunches for the students. Parents help with field trips, do office work, paint bulletin boards; inventory costumes; bake food for events; assist with events; send in paper/snacks/whatever is needed. (CA)

Monetary contributions from the parents to CATA support the school. Last year there was a Quarters for CATA drive, a 100% Contribution drive and an auction to which parents donated and bid on items. (CA)

Volunteer work, fund raising, positions on the board of directors. (CA)

Through fundraising, participating in the teaching environment if they have special skills, assisting with P.R. (CA)

Parents help where they can. Some do more than others by volunteering their time and others donate with supplies or monetarily. I myself work two jobs as a single mother and support in small ways where I can. (CA)

Volunteerism, some monetary. (CA)

Some parents volunteer house with the lunch program and other volunteer with various duties at the school. Some help by donating some equipment for the school. (CA)

We are new this year, but I have heard how important parent involvement is. I know of a potluck/talent show fund raiser that is tentatively arranged for this month. That should be a success. (CA)

Volunteer work and fundraising. (CA)

Fundraising, volunteering, etc. (CA)

We are supposed to keep Open Contact with all teachers and staff, volunteer in school, on trips and social events, fund raisers, give money, supplies, our time. Be accountable for our students. (CA)

The parents are required to volunteer. We help with phones, copying, field trips, whatever needs to be done. I know I personally will do whatever I can for the school and I know I am not alone. (CA)

We have an active parent group which works with the school and Board of Directors. We address fundraising, extracurricular events, and the school's progress. (CA)

School volunteers. The school needs more parent involvement and support. The Board needs to let the parents help more with clubs and activities. (CA)

Parents have opportunities to mentor students in a special field of expertise. They also have opportunities to assist as fundraising event of school activities. There are parent groups immersed and interested in keeping CATA running. Parent involvement is necessary and expected. (CA)

Parents support the school in every way possible; financially, volunteerism, working in the school, etc., etc.

Some parents volunteer at the school, others are paid members of the staff. I am the editor of the Magna Charter (the SVCS Newsletter), my wife is heading up the Annual Fund at the request of the Board of Directors. There are a good number of parents who do so much, and then again there are those who do nothing. (SV)

6. Are their Community Partners who support this school? Please explain.

Area businesses have been generous with donations of gift cards, retail items that have been used for school events and fundraisers. Students have also volunteered to help with community service projects, soup kitchens, Red Cross Blood Drives. We are supported by the cooperative school district, meaning GBeLCS gets support from the tax dollars in addition to Adequate Ed. Funds, which pays for teacher salaries and building costs. Cooperative school district voted at the outset to support GBeLCS since the majority of students attending would otherwise be attending the district's H.S. (GB)

Local businesses provide venues for internships and off campus job shadows. The area high school is beginning to really appreciate the alternative offered by GBeCS. (GB)

SAU 16 (GB)

I believe there is a good deal of community involvement. I can't identify who partners with the charter specifically. (GB)

Happily, I can say that our local SAU 16, and more recently SAU 17 superintendents have been outstanding community partners with SCS. We have also attracted community leaders who have supported our school with some financial gifts because they are impressed by our mission and role as a choice public school – a relatively new concept in our area and state. As a board member, I know SCS will continue to build on these kinds of relationships. (SC)

Yes, at our breakfast fundraisers we received lots of donated items for the school fundraisers so that it goes right into the school. We also got a lot of support from the VOC school for our fundraisers. Outside businesses, elected officials, and philanthropies come into the school, are really impressed and then spread the word about our school. (SC)

Unsure. (SC)

I hope so. (SC)

We are musicians and writers and will be able to offer classes, bring our experiences and the experiences/know-how of our art-based community to the school. Recording studio. Writing workshops. Access to UHN writing academy for 5-6 graders. (SC)

I believe the board is developing a relationship with potential community partners. (SC)

Not sure. (SC)

Mostly parents. None that I'm aware of from local business. This is not entirely bad as much of the outreach effort has been with the State of NH. (SC)

Not that I'm aware of. (SC)

Not sure. (SC)

Not sure. (SC)

We know there are groups but we are not familiar with them. (SC)

Yes, we have many. As seen at the fundraising breakfast. (SC)

We believe so, but we're not fully familiar with the external support for the school (SC)

Do not know. (SC)

The school has received support from Barnes and Noble, Flatbread and other small businesses. They have allowed the school to run fundraising events and have made donations. (CA)

The Bell Center in Dover, where our school once shared its hallways with all their music. Also, the Rochester Opera House. (CA)

Because of the difficulty that the State of NH Charter Schools has experienced with their funding, coupled with having to move to a new location in the second full year of operation, there has been difficulty having people/businesses get behind the school since we did not even know if our doors would be open this year. CATA is currently a member of the Dover Chamber of Commerce. We have students from 18-20 different communities, with not a lot of industry/business in the community that the school is located in. Hopefully that with financial sustainability, coming perhaps from having the money follow the student from each community or the state can come up with a solution to finance CATA and other public schools are so CATA will be able to develop a solid financial base, and not have to worry about the costs of day to day operations. Since the other public high schools do not have to worry about business plans and fundraising the way that our public high does. The Town of Barrington does give a discount in the rent they charge CATA and has one of their janitors for the building. Unlike district public schools, charter public schools need to pay for rent, heat, lights, phone bill, internet connection, garbage removal, and janitors along with all the other school costs from teachers to stamps. (CA)

I'm sure there are, but I'm not very familiar with them. (CA)

I suspect there are resources available, although I don't know if any have been tapped. (CA)

Yes, the community in general supports this school. All CATA students, parents, teachers and counselors support this school as well as some of the administrators support CATA as well. The Bell Center for the Arts, and the Rochester Opera House are also supporters. (CA)

I'm not sure what this means. (CA)

In the fall of 2004, the CATA Board of Trustees began a campaign to develop community partners. Individual board members approached community businesses with packets of information. I

personally talked with Rivers Camera and Andy's Pottery. The Board became too involved with the critical issue of funding and this community partner effort was not increased. Right now the Bell Center for Music and the Arts partners with CATA to share performing space and materials/supplies. But you are right, we need to do more in this area. We will be doing Spotlights in which students will perform and specific community representatives will be invited to join us. (CA)

Yes, by volunteer work within the school, time and money. (CA)

Not sure. (CA)

I don't know. (CA)

I'm not sure. (CA)

I am not sure. (CA)

There are people in the community that help out with the students and mentoring them. (CA)

Unsure. (CA)

Being very involved in the school, I know of many different times our outside community has helped. Hannaford in Dover has given CATA money for different activities. Pizza Places donated pizzas for our students during community service our students have done. Spaulding High School gave money to CATA. I am sure there is a lot more with plenty of room for even more. I can't remember them – a "Poetry Out Loud" took place with outside judges and a few spectators – with a nice luncheon for the judges. (CA)

There are board members, but we are not known enough in the community. We are working on that. We just formed a group of parents and friends to help raise money and to work on community outreach. (CA)

We are in need of more active community involvement. (CA)

I don't know. (CA)

Nobody outside the Board of Directors knows the answer to that question. As the Editor of the Magna Charter, I feel it is my duty to find answers to questions that parents are asking. That is a question that has been asked and never answered. (SV)

(GB) = Great Bay eLearning Charter School

(SC) = Seacoast Charter School

(CA) = Cocheco Arts and Technology Academy

(SV) = Surry Village Charter School

New Hampshire Charter School Parents Survey Response Key

*Note: each question response may apply to multiple key answers

7. How well and in what ways is the charter school meeting the educational needs of your child?
 - 1-Not well: not developing, no change in habits or abilities
 - 2-Well: Meets all expectations, standards
 - 3-Very well: Exceeds expectations, dramatic changes

8. How does the school communicate with you about your child's progress and school related issues?*
- 1-E-mail
 - 2-Telephone
 - 3-In person
 - 4-Progress report/report card
 - 5-Other
9. What support does the school offer your child?*
- 1-Individual Learning Plans
 - 2-Guidance counselor
 - 3-Specialist/therapy
 - 4-Other
10. What special resources (people, learning equipment, funds) does the school have that help your child to succeed?*
- 1-Staff members
 - 2-Technology, equipment
 - 3-Software
 - 4-Funds
 - 5-Other
11. How do parents support the school?*
- 1-Financially
 - 2-Volunteering
 - 3-Expertise/specialized instruction
 - 4-Other
12. Are there Community Partners who support this school?
- 1-Yes
 - 2-No

APPENDIX 2 IS BASED ON INFORMATION RECEIVED FROM FOUR OF THE SEVEN SCHOOLS IN THE STUDY

APPENDIX 3

LOGIC MODEL

Inputs	Activities	Near- Term Outcomes	Intermediate-Term Outcomes	Impacts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A resource dedicated or consumed by the program • Money • Staff /Professional time and expertise • Facilities • Equipment and supplies • Technology • Materials • Time • Volunteers /Community mentors • Community/business partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide educational opportunities to youngsters who need a different approach • Provide teaching strategies to teachers, workshops, seminars • Provide curriculum and planning ideas to schools • Provide technical assistance for incorporation of GLE and GSE into curriculum. • Market the option at the state and local level • Cooperate with traditional schools to provide mutual agreements about the best way to serve youngsters • Help people in the state to understand the grade level and grade span expectation in order to better serve youngsters • Align competencies and outcomes with those GLE and GSE • Provide professional development for teachers interested in instituting change • Work to make all Charters "follow the child" schools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20 Charter Schools established statewide • Reporting of results disseminated statewide • 1000 students being served in Charter Schools • Faculty prepared to adapt teaching style to learning style • Increased project-based learning opportunities • Clear understanding of what Charter Schools are • Build capacity for Choice in New Hampshire 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved student achievements: Students achievement levels will be improved, especially for "at-risk" students, by accommodating a broad range of student learning styles and interests. • Effective monitoring and evaluating (M&E): an effective M&E system will be in place to accurately measure and report on student's achievement. • Replicable models of Charter Schools for small rural states: NH will have a broad range of replicable models of Charter Schools that are programmatically and geographically diverse throughout the state and will serve as models for northern New England. • Active community involvements and partnerships: Community members, including parents, business owners, and civic organizations will be aware, actively involved, and strong advocates for effective student learning strategies. • Broad public understanding of Charter Schools: New Hampshire public will have a solid understanding of Charter Schools and their value in serving "at -risk" students and working with a broad range of different student learning styles and interests. • Sustainable Charter Schools: Charter Schools will be financially stable, will be seen as integral components of the public education system, will have sufficient educational capacity, and students will have access to open enrollment. 	<p>In a global knowledge based economy, a skilled labor force an entrepreneurial climate all contributing to a high quality of life</p> <p>All students have the same opportunity to succeed regardless of their socio/ economic starting point</p> <p>Post secondary and/or apprenticeship type experiences leading to opportunity and success</p> <p>Citizens prepared for democratic community involvement</p>