



HILLTOWN
COOPERATIVE
CHARTER
PUBLIC
SCHOOL

Annual Report 2008-2009

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION & EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY	1
PERFORMANCE AND PLANS	2
FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER	2
ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS	5
Iowa Test of Basic Skills.....	6
MCAS Results.....	7
ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY	12
DISSEMINATION.....	15
FINANCIAL REPORTS	17
INCOME & EXPENSES.....	17
BALANCE SHEET	18
FY 2010 BUDGET	20
DATA SECTION	21
INSTRUCTIONAL TIME	21
STUDENT ENROLLMENT INFORMATION.....	21
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION.....	22
ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR.....	22
ORGANIZATIONAL CHART FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR.....	23
TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR.....	23
BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR.....	24
ATTACHMENTS	25
COMMUNITY COMPACT OF UNDERSTANDING.....	26
CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF CLASSROOM PRACTICE	28
HCCPS TEACHER JOB RESPONSIBILITIES AND STANDARDS	29



Dear Commissioner Chester,

July 25, 2009

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School (HCCPS) continues to strive for excellence in education and the personal development of each child we serve. Through this past year, the school has been challenged, as almost every school, with budget concerns and finding ways to minimize our expenses while still providing an exceptional program to our children. Our test scores, community surveys and teacher feedback show that we are meeting this challenge.

The Board of Trustees continues to work on its strategic plan, developed in 2003, with this year proving to be pivotal in regards to addressing our space issues at our current site. The Board of Trustees hired development consultants to determine fundraising capacity for a new building. This report provided us with the guidance that will help us plan significant fundraising, beginning with hiring our first development associate. In addition, we have hired an architect to begin the programmatic aspect of a site plan that will tell us the specific requirements of our new space with preliminary cost estimates. All of this supports our continued efforts to find a suitable location for our school.

The Board of Trustees has had to make difficult decisions this year in regards to the operating budget. Though the process was arduous and painful at times, we have completed a budget for next year that is within our anticipated income. All salaries have been frozen, days and hours working for all staff have been reduced and the administrative staff is taking a week furlough. These cuts in personnel along with trimming of other areas have resulted in a balanced budget for next year, without job loss or impact on the students.

Our community continues to remain strong with over 95% parent/guardian participation. Our events are consistently well attended and supported by our families. The school community grows stronger with each new family, with each new staff person, with each new community member on our Board of Trustees. Though much has been done to better our school, our work is never done. We will continue to strive for higher achievements in every area, to be better members of our broader community and to continue teaching our children the promise of a better tomorrow while living in the now.

All of the successes of HCCPS are in part, due to our three Coordinators, who serve as the leadership for the school. Their commitment to our mission, the children and the community at large is seen everyday in their decisions and actions. By having three people as the guiding lights of our school, representing the Education Domain, the Administrative Domain and the Community Domain, the mission of the school and the implementation of the Board's policies is done in a thoughtful and resourceful manner. We are fortunate beyond words to have these three individuals at our helm.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the Board of Trustees President this year, and I look forward to serving in this same role next year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Kay Brooke Willbanks".

Kay Brooke-Willbanks, President, Board of Trustees

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INTRODUCTION

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School opened its doors in 1995 with 40 students, grades kindergarten to 3rd grade. Beginning our fifteenth year we are a school of 162 students, kindergarten to 8th grade, with a maximum enrollment of 180. We are in our original leased building, a turn of the century Brassworks factory in the village of Haydenville. Our waiting list currently has 172 students. Our students come from the districts of Hampshire County (Amherst-Pelham, Belchertown, Central Berkshire Regional, Easthampton, Gateway Regional, Granby, Hadley, Hampshire Regional, Hatfield, Mohawk Regional, Northampton, South Hadley and Ware) and Franklin County (Erving, Frontier Regional, Gill/Montague Regional, Greenfield, Hawlemont Regional, Leverett, Mohawk Regional, New Salem-Wendell, Orange (Mahar Regional) and Pioneer Valley Regional).

MISSION

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School was founded in 1995 as a Massachusetts Public Charter School. Our mission is:

- *To engage students in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts and interdisciplinary studies to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.*
- *To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members, which guides and supports the school and its educational program.*
- *To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community and the world around us.*

EDUCATIONAL PHILOSOPHY

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School was founded in 1995 as Massachusetts Public Charter School. Inspired by the pre-schools of Reggio Emilia in Italy, our educational approach is grounded in knowledge of children's development and in a commitment to teaching creative, critical thinking skills, and strong basic skills.

At HCCS, we believe that children construct their understanding of the world through direct experience, with teachers serving as guides and resources. We create an engaging and joyful learning environment using an interdisciplinary, project-based curriculum. Emphasis is placed on asking children and adults to reflect on and document the learning process. The expressive arts play a critical role in the academic and social curriculum, and create a common language that brings our community together in meaningful ways.

HCCS welcomes and relies on family involvement. Children, families, staff and community form an integrated, interdependent system whose governance structures guide and support the school and its educational program. Beyond academic curriculum, children learn essential life skills through participation in an intimate, whole school cooperative. Involvement in the local environment and its communities inspires learning and encourages social and civic responsibility as well as stewardship for the earth.

Parents and teachers help children to care for and respect themselves and each other. We strongly believe that cultivation of each individual voice within a community leads to inclusion of and respect for differences and multiple perspectives.

PERFORMANCE AND PLANS

FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER

Goal 1: All Hilltown Students will demonstrate academic progress in stated competencies through interdisciplinary studies and accompanying projects in Social Studies, Science, and the Expressive Arts.

A critical part of the design of our school has been the integration of the expressive arts (visual arts, music and movement) into a thematic academic curriculum, and the documentation of student learning.

Grade 8 students have been designing and presenting independent projects for many years. This year, there was a diverse and robust set of culminating projects, showcasing the ideas, personalities, and the skills of our 8th graders.

Measure A: each classroom will produce two documentation projects annually detailing the purpose, scope, and implementation of integrated projects. These documentations will be on display at school, produced for the school's web site, and digitally archived.

This was the second year of this new goal. The purpose is to emphasize the process of learning for our students and broader community. This year we developed a template for electronically documenting student learning. We had some real success, and were able to document at least one project in every classroom. Among the projects we documented this year were:

- A Community Study with a focus on different vocations by Kindergarten and First Graders
- The hatching of chickens by Second and Third graders.
- A study of hunger and associated community service projects by Fourth and Fifth Graders.
- A study of the Mill River Ecosystem by Seventh and Eighth graders.

Measure B: Each Grade 8 student will design, develop, and present an independent culminating project which will demonstrate what s/he has gained from the Hilltown experience. 100% of these students will achieve a passing score on the Grade 8 culminating project rubric.

Each eighth grader is required to create an independent project, using the skills they developed at Hilltown. This year's projects represented an incredible array of diversity. Students completed projects that used art, music, video, writing, science, and social studies as major learning modalities. All students achieved a passing score on the Culminating Project Rubric. The following is a sample of this year's projects:

- The Influence of Ancient Greece Fashion Through the Ages
- The Interrelationship of Music and Art Movements
- Designing and Building with Green Materials
- A Scientific Study of Water Quality's Effect on Plant Growth
- The Art of Illumination
- Graffiti in Ancient Greece, Rome, and NYC
- Dance and Hinduism
- History of Ballet: Focus on America in 1800s
- Mathematics in Origami
- Ancient Greek Pottery Making
- Herbal Medicine
- The ancient art of Aikido
- Designing with Rube Goldberg
- A Study and Mural of Prominent Women in the American Movement for Equal Rights.

Goal 2: HCCS will develop a cooperative, intimate community of students, families and staff guided by the principles of respect, inclusion and good communication. This community will sustain itself through a variety of tools, traditions, celebrations and learning experiences.

Attending a Friday morning “All School” assembly is a good way to get a sense of the community at Hilltown. Each Friday at 8:45, 154 K-8 students, their teachers, the administrative staff and a varying number of parents gather together, mostly sitting on the floor, to share with each other. Everyone sits together as student announcers invite classes to share their studies and projects through demonstrations or skits. We celebrate weekly birthdays, make announcements and sing together. Sometimes there is a special guest or a performance, but mostly this is a time to be together and get to know us as a community.

Other major traditions at the school include Il Teatro, a talent show that takes place four times a year, a Martin Luther King Celebration which we share with the MLK Charter School of Excellence in Springfield, a winter solstice celebration right before the break in December and several end of the year traditions including a Music Festival, a summer celebration with our CSL partners at the Hampshire Care nursing home and a very personal graduation ceremony.

The consistent pursuit of multi-age learning experiences and the inclusion of parents in all aspects of the school is a way that Hilltown builds this community beyond the boundaries of each classroom. Parents are welcome in any class at almost any time and they are regularly present there. Younger and older students meet each other in mini-courses, at lunch, on the playground, as “Buddies” and by doing special projects together, as well as during their time at All-School Assembly.

Special family or all-adult social events are held on a regular basis to provide a way for parents to connect with one another and with the teachers and staff in an out-of-school environment. Assigned “Link Families” and regular school-sponsored social gatherings during the summer offer incoming families a connection with returning families so that no one enters the school without knowing at least one other person here.

Part of sustaining an intimate community for us here at school includes reaching out and sharing ourselves with others. Hilltown has developed a strong ongoing Community Service Learning relationship with Hampshire Care, a nearby nursing home, which involves every student in the school every year. Classes rotate weekly visits on a monthly basis engaging with the residents at Hampshire Care in a wide variety of endeavors, many of which are connected to the curriculum.

This year students explored writing, art, music, gardening, reading, and physical education with the residents, as well as entertaining them with performances. At the end of each year we have a culminating Summer Celebration including all of our school community and many of the residents and staff at Hampshire Care.

Measure A: 90% of families who respond to the annual satisfaction survey will report that there exists a strong sense of community among students, staff, and families.

We have consistently met this goal. In this year's School Satisfaction Survey, 92% of respondents surveyed either agreed or strongly agreed that Hilltown "has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families."

Measure B: The school, via its volunteers, will sponsor monthly events- social, cultural, and educational in nature.

We successfully met this goal. A community event was held each month from August to July, beginning with a social picnic in August prior to be the beginning of the year. The events this year included educational forums on early literacy and an introduction to our middle-school curriculum, cooperative meetings to discuss issues regarding our class configuration and this year's budget challenges, adult social

events, a variety of school-wide celebrations and a number of family events including the coffeehouse presented by our 7th and 8th graders, a craft-making fair and an all-school sleepover.

Measure C: The school will maintain family mailboxes and a regularly published parent newsletter.

Parent mailboxes serve as a key means of communication at Hilltown and parents are asked to check them at least twice a week. In 2008-9 we published a weekly newsletter for parents and staff which was distributed either through the mailboxes or by e-mail depending on the preference of individual families.

Goal 3: The community will guide and support the school.

Measure A: 100% of families will be actively involved in the school through membership in its consensus based governing structures, participation in community meetings, and/or participation in the activities in its classrooms.

We have successfully met this goal. There is not a family currently in the school who has not been involved actively in one of these areas. Parents volunteer because they believe in the mission and goals of Hilltown and they are drawn to a school that is truly a community. 98% of families volunteered actively in the school during the course of this year, 30 of them put in 40 hours of time or more and an additional 12 of them served over 80 hours during the school year.

We ask our families to be very involved at Hilltown, requesting 4 hours a month of volunteer time for each household. While we understand that every family cannot offer that much, we do our best to find ways for each one to be involved as much as they are able in whatever capacity works for them. Our Community Coordinator, Deirdre Arthen, acts as a resource to both parents and teachers and continually networks with Board, staff, teachers and parents to match volunteer skills with school needs in a cohesive fashion.

On a governance level, parents serve on the Board of Trustees, as members of various Board committees (Finance, Personnel, Site and Development) and on the Management Team, a group with representation from all school constituencies. Two Parent representatives on the Management Team attend biweekly meetings and also hold occasional drop-in hours for parents to raise issues or concerns. The Education Coordinator attends these drop-in meetings on an as-needed basis to discuss curriculum issues.

Parents who do not directly serve in governance positions have ample opportunity to give input. Parents are asked to complete evaluation forms on teachers and staff and parent meetings are also held each year to give input on budget priorities.

On a classroom level, parents teach minicourses, lead Project Choice activities, give special presentations on areas of knowledge, assist teachers with classroom activities and documentation and coordinate field trips. Parents also fundraise through our associate non-profit organization, Friends of Hilltown, Incorporated. They participate in staff hiring, write and edit a weekly newsletter and help with physical plant management and site renovations. Parents also organize the annual Winter Fair and Art Spark, which are keystones of our yearly fundraising

Measure B: Class meeting and family conferences will be attended by 95% of school families.

Class meetings and family conferences are essential to building strong partnerships between parents and teachers. This year 100% of families attended at least one meeting with their child's teacher, 96% attended at least two such meetings and 90% attended more than that.

Measure C: Community compacts will be signed by 90% of families

The Hilltown Community Compact (*see Attachments*) is a signed statement of agreement among all of the constituents in the school —parents, teachers, administration and students —outlining our intention to work together to create a supportive learning environment. This year every family returned a compact signed by both parent and student.

Common School Performance Criteria

Implementation of Mission, Vision, and Educational Philosophy

When the school set out on a long range planning process in 2002, one of the first tasks was to revise the mission statement. Following adoption of the new mission and accompanying educational philosophy, a document was created and called Critical Elements of Classroom Practice. The Critical Elements covers the following areas: Learning Environment; Curriculum; and Relationships. It provides a guide to the type of academic and social program envisioned in the Mission. That document in turn was used to create the HCCPS Job Responsibilities and Standards, ensuring that teachers' job descriptions are mission based. (*4 documents attached*)

Many of the goals and measures found elsewhere in this report point to the multitude of ways in which the school is faithful to what is described in our charter application – the Community Compact, the multi-age student activities, the community-wide events which take place each year, our Community Service Learning program, the culmination projects in eighth grade, the curriculum as described below and our inclusive governance structure are all measures of our emphasis on community, respect, experiential learning and the cultivation of the individual voices of our students.

ACADEMIC PROGRAM SUCCESS

Goal 1: All Hilltown students will demonstrate competency as indicated by external measures in the curricular areas of Math, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology.

Measure A: Each grade, 3-8 will score in the top quartile (76-99 National Percentiles) annually in the tested curricular areas of Reading, Language, Math, and Core Total on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills. Students in third through eighth grade age take the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) in reading, language and math. We view our ITBS results as helpful because of the long history of validity and reliability of the ITBS and because of its broad, national student base. Our ITBS scores continue to be strong in all areas of the test.

We met our goal in 20/24 sub categories this year. In the four instances where we fell short of our goal, scores were still high (65th-74th percentile). The following are our December 2008 scores.

Iowa Test of Basic Skills, December 2008

<p>Grade 3 Number of students: 18 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 83% Language Total 65% Math Total 86% Core Total 82%</p>	<p>Grade 4 Number of students: 19 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 82% Language Total 71% Math Total 65% Core Total 74%</p>	<p>Grade 5 Number of students: 18 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 82% Language Total 67% Math Total 80% Core Total 77%</p>
<p>Grade 6 Number of students: 17 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 91% Language Total 85% Math Total 82% Core Total 88%</p>	<p>Grade 7 Number of students: 13 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 97% Language Total 82% Math Total 75% Core Total 88%</p>	<p>Grade 8 Number of students: 15 National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores: Reading Total 85% Language Total 86% Math Total 74% Core Total 84%</p>

Iowa Test of Basic Skills – Cumulative Class Progress

Class of 2008

<p>Grade 3 Administered 12/04 Number of students: 19 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 99% Language Total 73% Math Total 97% Core Total 98%</p>	<p>Grade 5 Administered 12/05 Number of students: 19 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 98% Language Total 94% Math Total 97% Core Total 96%</p>	<p>Grade 6 Administered 12/06 Number of students: 19 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 90% Language Total 82% Math Total 80% Core Total 86%</p>	<p>Grade 7 Administered 12/07 Number of students: 18 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 91% Language Total 89% Math Total 81% Core Total 89%</p>
<p>Grade 8 Administered 12/08 Number of students: 15 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 85% Language Total 86% Math Total 74% Core Total 84%</p>			

Measure B: Grades 3-8 will meet Adequate Yearly Progress in Math, Reading, English Language Arts, and Science and Technology on the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System.

Hilltown again met Adequate Yearly Progress goals for this year. The results show that we continue to exceed state averages in many areas.

MCAS Results, Spring 2008

Grade and Subject	Advanced/ Above Proficient		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Warning/ Failing		Students Included
	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	
GRADE 03 - READING	11	15	44	41	44	33	0	11	18
GRADE 03 - MATHEMATICS	17	25	33	36	33	25	17	14	18
GRADE 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	0	8	32	41	63	39	5	13	19
GRADE 04 - MATHEMATICS	11	20	32	29	53	38	5	13	19
GRADE 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	6	13	76	48	18	30	0	8	17
GRADE 05 - MATHEMATICS	39	22	44	30	17	30	0	17	18
GRADE 05 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	22	17	61	33	17	38	0	12	18
GRADE 06 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	18	15	76	52	6	24	0	8	17
GRADE 06 - MATHEMATICS	47	23	35	33	12	26	6	18	17
GRADE 07 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	6	12	83	57	11	23	0	8	18
GRADE 07 - MATHEMATICS	17	15	67	32	11	29	6	24	18
GRADE 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	29	12	64	63	7	18	0	7	14
GRADE 08 - MATHEMATICS	7	19	60	30	13	27	20	24	15
GRADE 08 - SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY	0	3	60	36	40	39	0	22	15

Measure C: *Ninety percent of all Fourth graders will test annually at or above grade level in the area of Reading as measured by the Iowa Test of Basic Skills during the Fall evaluation session.*

This goal is aimed at ensuring that our early literacy programs help students both make annual progress, and finish their primary years ready for the challenges of the upper elementary and middle school years. This year we met our this goal; 94.73% of our students are reading at or above grade level as measured by the Iowa Test.

Goal 2: All Hilltown students will demonstrate competency as indicated by internal measures in the curricular areas of Math and English Language Arts.

Teachers document student progress through observation, individual interviews, student presentations and a variety of written formats. The ability to think critically and solve problems is a key part of our assessment process, and is applied in areas as diverse as mathematics, music and physical education.

Teachers write Progress Reports in the following areas in November, February and June: reading, writing, math, science, social studies, work habits, Hilltown community values, atelier (art) and music/movement. Progress Reports use a four level frequency rubric. In addition to the ratings there is space for teacher comments in each category of the progress report. These ratings provide a degree of structure and consistency as they describe individual progress throughout the year. Note that all Hilltown assessments are designed to be in alignment with our developmental competencies and the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

This year we met or exceeded our goals in every area with the exception of writing for grades 4-8. Writing has been an ongoing area of work for our teachers. We see significant improvements in the writing scores of students in grades K-3. And in the older grades, we see a significant number (21%) within one point of the proficiency rating of 7. We feel that instructionally we are moving in the right direction, and that with continued efforts, we will meet our goal for all grades in the coming years. It should also be noted that the MCAS composition scores for our 4th and 7th grade students are consistently higher than the scores we give these students on our internal assessment. We see this as further confirmation that we are moving in the right direction.

Measure A: Eighty percent of all students in grades K-3 will gain at least one previously defined level annually on the Hilltown reading, writing, and math assessments.

Hilltown Reading Assessment Results, K-3rd Fall 2005-Spring 2009

Level (1 level = 1 Grade Level)	Percentage of Students
Less than 1 Level	9%
1 Level progress	38%
2 Levels progress	35%
3 Levels. progress	18%

Hilltown Writing Assessment Results, K-3rd Fall 2005-Spring 2009

Level (1 Level = 1 DWA Level)	Percentage of Students
Lost One or More Levels	6%
No Gain	14%
One Level Gain	51%
More than One Level Gain	29%

Hilltown Mathematics Assessment Results, K-3 Fall 2005-Spring 2009

Level (1 Level = 20 percentage points)	Percentage of Students
Less than 1 Level	14%
1 Level progress	51%
2 Levels progress	35%

Measure B: Eighty percent of all students in grades 4-8 will score at the predetermined proficient level on the spring Hilltown math and writing assessments.

Hilltown Mathematics Assessment Results, 4th -8th Spring 2009

Level (Proficient =70%)	Percentage of Students
0-59%	14%
60-69%	23%
70-85%	47%
86-100%	16%

Hilltown Writing Assessment Results, 4th-8th Spring 2009

MCAS Writing Rubric (Proficient = 7 or higher)	Percentage of Students
0-5	25%
6	16%
7-8	34%
9-10	9%

Common School Performance Criteria

Curriculum and Instruction:

Curriculum at HCCPS contains both open-ended and established components. We work to help children develop their basic skills in reading, writing, and mathematics. Often, this instruction occurs in the context of teaching a larger theme or concept. Other times, skills are taught directly, and practiced regularly through a variety of curricular projects. We used some published materials in the reading, writing, mathematics and spelling. These are supplemented by a variety of teacher generated materials. We look at students as individuals, and work to meet their needs through a variety of instructional strategies.

Topics from the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks are used to identify themes of study and determine content areas. Over the course of the past four years, we have worked with the Frameworks to define the course of studies in our mixed age classrooms. As the frameworks have changed, particularly in Social Studies and Science, we have modified the program. Grade level competencies have been developed using the Frameworks as a basis, and form a core scope and sequence. They provide a guide

toward the skills we want students to develop each year. Not every child will master every competency; but these serve as a reference point for each child's developing skills.

At the same time, we value giving students the opportunity to steer the direction of the curriculum in any given year. Based on a given topic, teachers pose an initial, open-ended question. Exploration (research, study, experiments, and other activities that come out of this inquiry: typically what the children want to know more about), happens next. This exploration naturally leads to more opportunities for further questioning. Throughout this process, teachers look to integrate the arts—visual art and music, into the integrated study.

As indicated by both internal and external assessments, the curriculum is addressing essential skills and concepts. Over the last four years, student achievement has been consistently high. In areas where there are minor concerns based on internal or external data, such as written responses to open response questions, teachers have focus on these areas in greater depth.

Texts that are used in the school are as follows:

Heads Up Math: Grades 1-4

Math's Mate: Grades 5-8

Investigations in Number, Data, and Space, 1st Edition: Grades K-5

Math In My World: Grade 6

Connected Mathematics: Grade 7-8

Explode the Code: Grades K-5

Primary Phonics: Grades K-2

Wordly Wise: Grades 4-6

Program evaluation:

Data from both internal and external assessments is reviewed annually. Teachers and the Education Coordinator discuss the data, and when necessary, plan for curricular changes. In addition, teams of teachers meet several times a month to plan the implementation of the program. Through this process, they can review the effectiveness of a particular part of the curriculum as it is being implemented and make changes if necessary. Professional development time is used at the beginning and the end of each year to reflect on both quantitative and qualitative data. Based on that data, the Educational Coordinator, in collaboration with teachers can make alterations.

School culture:

At the beginning of the first year of the school (1995), the students developed a four-point "Code of Cooperation". This has evolved into our Community Compact, an agreement which is now signed by students, parents, teachers and administrators at the beginning of each school year. During the first weeks of school, all classes review and re-commit to this code, discussing strategies for inclusion, respect and conflict resolution. Throughout the year students are encouraged to engage directly with their peers to resolve conflict and, when necessary, to use the

assistance of an adult mediator. Because of the schools' emphasis on these values, we see very little bullying or seriously aggressive behavior during the year.

There are many formal structures in place to ensure that classrooms support student learning. Behavioral expectations are written and reviewed by all staff members at the beginning of the year. Weekly teacher meetings, as well as monthly professional development sessions focus on maintaining high quality experiences in the classroom. The scope and sequence that has been developed over the past five years is critical in maintaining focus on the skills students need to learning. Regular meetings of curriculum integration teams ensure that the interdisciplinary aspect of our mission is fulfilled. And a weekly Community Time ensures that all school community experiences are active in every child's life. The

teacher job description is based on Critical Elements of Classroom Practice (see Attachments), which is based on the Mission Statement and Educational Philosophy Statement.

Diverse learners:

The curriculum is designed to meet the needs of many types of learners. The hands-on experiential nature of the program emphasizes discovery through a variety of modalities. The integration of the music and visual art expands opportunities for students to practice skills and concepts from many different perspectives. That being said, it is essential to have other systems in place to ensure that all students' needs are met. The district accommodation plan (DCAP) was developed to provide strategies for teachers to use when students struggle. (See Appendix B) It outlines possible interventions for teachers depending on the presenting issues. A child study process has been in place for many years which allows any teacher or parent to refer a child to the team which consists of the education coordinator, the consulting psychologist, the school counselor, and other staff members as needed. The team recommends interventions and tracks progress. The child study process is often successful at addressing the need of different kinds of learners, and identifies both strategies and supports within the regular education program that are able to meet a student's needs. Sometimes, the child study process becomes the referral for eligibility for Special Education.

Supervision and evaluation of teachers:

Annual evaluation includes:

- ◆ Observation reports provided by the Education Coordinator.
- ◆ Summaries of parent feedback.
- ◆ Annual self-evaluation report completed by teacher.
- ◆ Annual evaluation report from Education Coordinator addressing all five major areas of HCCPS Job Responsibilities and Standards.

When the school set out on a long range planning process in 2002, one of the first tasks was to revise the mission statement. Following adoption of the new mission and accompanying educational philosophy, a document was created and called Critical Elements of Classroom Practice. That document in turn was used to create the HCCPS Job Responsibilities and Standards (see Attachments) and to ensure that teachers' job descriptions are mission based. The Critical Elements covers the following areas: Learning Environment; Curriculum; and Relationships.

Professional development:

Hilltown is committed to ensuring that teachers stay current in their fields, continue to be stimulated and supported and grow in new skill areas every year. This year, our staff participated in ten full professional development days, ten half days, as well as weekly meetings regarding curriculum integration and peer mentoring. A significant amount of time was dedicated to reviewing the system of multi-aged classrooms and making recommendations for improvement. All staff participated in the Anti-Defamation League's World of Difference training in November. Follow-up work was done by teachers through examining curricular materials used in classrooms from a multicultural perspective. Additionally, staff went to many conferences outside of school on a wide range of topics including the following:

- Supporting English language learners.
- Design and Documentation
- Community Resources for People with Autism,
- Songs from South Africa, Corsica, Appalachia, Sacred Harp, secular songs from the Italian Renaissance, songs from the Balkans, and from the Republic of Georgia.
- Statewide Community Service Learning Conference

- Literacy for All
- Reading Recovery Institute
- Reading Recovery Clinical Course
- Teaching middle school algebra via the Internet
- KIDS CONSORTIUM Community Service Learning Conference

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

Goal 1: HCCPS will maintain strong organizational viability

Measure A: Annual balance sheets will show that the school maintains 15% of its total operating budget as cash reserves.

Hilltown remains fiscally strong. However, we have ended fiscal year 2009 with a deficit of over \$14,333 (un-audited). This was due to mid-year cuts to state grants and the loss of a few students mid-year whose slots we did not fill. As you can see on the attached Balance Sheet we have been able to maintain a Contingency Fund of 15% of our operating budget as a hedge against unplanned emergencies.

Measure B: The ratio of student applications to available openings will average at least 3:1 annually.

For FY 2010 we had 244 applicants for 35 openings, well exceeding our goal.

Goal 2: Board of Trustees will continue to develop policies and procedures using the inclusive governance structure that is in place.

Measure A: BOT decisions will be made by consensus at least 90% of the time as indicated in BOT minutes.

100% of the decisions of the Board of Trustees were made by consensus process during the 2008-9 school year.

Measure B: Community input will be sought, via meeting, surveys or focus groups prior to all major policy changes as indicated in BOT minutes.

This year we held two meetings of the Cooperative to discuss the significant issues of our mixed age class configuration and the challenges of having a reduced budget for the coming year. We also created a new series of all-staff meetings this year to allow for the full staff and not just teachers to participate in significant discussion around the topics of budget and class configuration. In addition, we held a large focus group and several smaller meetings about fundraising in anticipation of significantly increasing this activity in the service of finding a new home for the school. Our School Satisfaction Survey also informed Board decision making.

Goal 3: HCCS will continue to implement the strategic plan adopted by the BOT in 2003.

Measures A: Annually the Board will select the top priority for each domain from the strategic plan to review and implement.

The top priorities from the strategic plan that were addressed in FY 2009 are:

Evaluation of the system of multi-age, sequential classes for effectiveness and made programmatic recommendations

- Hiring of an architect to write complete design feasibility for a new space.
- Hiring of a development associate to coordinate and manage fundraising efforts.
- Clarification the roles and responsibilities of the Development Committee of the Board of Trustees, and the Friends of Hilltown 501c3

Common School Performance Criteria

Policy decisions:

The Board of Trustees (BOT) was quite productive in FY 2009. Their major decisions fall into 2 major areas.

Financial- Approved: additional \$1000 funding for the development consultant who is doing the pre-feasibility of a capital campaign; new formula for setting salaries for Education Coordinator and Administrative Coordinator; staff compensation for extra work days due to summer flood; FY 2009 Budget revisions; transfer of \$45,000 from undesignated fund balance to BOT designated building fund for building renovations and the hiring of an architect to perform a design feasibility study; transfer of \$45,000.00 from the undesignated fund balance to operating budget for FY 2010/2011 salary for the new development associate; passage of FY 2010 budget.

Policy- Approved: increase of student enrollment cap to 180; pro-rated sick leave for less than .5 fte; transfer of fundraising responsibilities to the Friends of Hilltown, Inc and dissolving the BOT development committee; elimination of domestic partner health benefit for FY 2010; revisions to school grievance policies; Community Coordinator 4 month leave of absence in FY 2010; revisions to health diversion policy

Amendments to the charter:

HCCPS requested and received an increase to our enrollment cap from 154-180. We will incrementally add students over the next few years with an expected enrollment of 162 for FY 2010.

Complaints:

No official complaints were received in FY 2009.

Oversight:

The Board of Trustees oversees and evaluates the three Coordinators to ensure that the mission of the school is at the core of all decision-making, that policies set forth by the Board are being implemented and that the three Coordinators are performing their respective responsibilities as required. A Supervisory Committee, comprised of BOT members, works with the Coordinators through the school year, meeting with each Coordinator individually, agreeing on goals for the year which relate to institutional goals, offering suggestions for problems and reporting to the BOT when necessary. Full annual evaluations of the Coordinators, reflecting the success or failure in meeting goals for the year and proposing new goals for the coming year, are written by this team. The evaluation process includes a self-reflection submitted by each Coordinator, feedback from board members and other staff members and input from parents via the annual school satisfaction survey. This data, along with the results of the ongoing meetings, testing scores, annual audits, and direct observation, are compiled and reviewed by the committee prior to writing the formal evaluation for each Coordinator.

In addition, as you will see below under “Family Satisfaction” we had great success with an online School Satisfaction survey this year. Ours is a school with high transparency and open doors, with an active grapevine and many avenues for communication. If someone, student, parent or staff, is unhappy or questioning, the administration will hear about it quickly.

Board planning:

Our current long range strategic plan covers 2003-2013. The compilation of that plan, our first, was the result of an exhaustive, inclusive 18 month process. We have used this as a guiding document in most critical areas of decision making since its creation. During the 2008-2009 year, planning for a new site

continued to be a major Board focus. To that end, the Board approved funding for a development consultant and subsequently hired a part time development professional. The Board also authorized a design feasibility study and hired an architect. These are major steps toward finding a new facility.

Family satisfaction:

This year we distributed our school satisfaction survey both electronically and on paper. There was a clear preference for the electronic version and our response rate increased significantly over past years. Over 2/3 of our families responded to the survey this year in 107 survey responses. We used a scale of 1-5 where 5 was "strongly agree" and 1 was "strongly disagree".

The questions and average rating results of the survey were as follows:

1. I generally understand the educational approach used at HCCPS. Rating Average: 4.22
2. The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment for students. Rating Average: 4.52
3. Behavioral expectations at the school are clear. Rating Average: 4.14
4. I am satisfied with the level of my child's Community Service Learning experience. Rating Average 4.28
5. The current format of the HCCPS progress reports helps me understand my child's school experiences and his/her achievement. Rating Average 4.1
6. My child experiences an adequate amount of academic challenge. Rating Average 3.94
7. My child experiences an adequate amount of arts and curriculum integration. Rating Average 4.44
8. HCCPS places the correct amount of time and attention on the teaching of basic skills. Rating Average 4.05
9. I am satisfied with the amount and quality of cross-age experiences throughout the school. Rating Average 4.47
10. The school's educational philosophy is visibly evident in the common spaces and classrooms. Rating Average 4.22
11. I feel that the school is a physically safe place for my child. Rating Average 4.01
12. The newsletter, e-mail notices and the mailboxes create a good communication system within the school. Rating Average 4.25
13. Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate. Rating Average 4.32
14. Communication from and with administration staff is easy and adequate. Rating Average 4.19
15. The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families. Rating Average 4.3
16. I am satisfied that the interior space at HCCPS meets the educational needs of students. Rating Average 3.11
17. I am satisfied that the outdoor space at HCCPS meets the needs of students. Rating Average 1.97
18. The school uses its financial resources wisely. Rating Average 3.97

19. Overall, I am satisfied with the level of communication regarding the school's budget and finances. Rating Average 3.91

20. Would you recommend this school to others? Yes: 88%, It Depends: 11%, No:1%

We were not surprised to find that questions about our space produced the lowest level responses. We are actively engaged in looking for a new location.

Financial oversight:

The HCCPS budget process begins in January/February depending on the state's fiscal situation. It is an incremental process where input from the community is solicited and incorporated along the way. In some years several of these steps are repeated. It is a transparent process that any and everyone may join. Domain Council is responsible for proposing the budget and the Board of Trustees approves the final version by June 30.

Step 1. Domain Council (composed of the 3 coordinators and the president of the Board of Trustees) begins identifying known changes to expense/ revenue for the next year and listing possible new expenses.

Step 2. Administrative Coordinator brings initial draft budget based on known uncontrollable increases (rent, health insurance, etc) to Domain Council, using a conservative revenue projection

Step 3. Board of Trustees (BOT) is informed as to whether we anticipate the need for budget cuts or level funding. This may happen multiple times depending on the nature of the fiscal situation. The Board may be asked by Domain Council to make specific line item decisions in advance of the full budget proposal.

Step 4. Staff meet to discuss budget priorities/ realities and give input to Domain Council. Staff are also asked to complete written surveys that help prioritize needs.

Step 5. Personnel Committee makes recommendation to Domain Council re salary/wage raises for the coming year.

Step 6. Meetings held for parent discussion, priorities and input. Parents are also asked to complete written surveys that help prioritize needs.

Step 7. Domain Council synthesizes input from Personnel, staff and parents and considers how to incorporate highest priorities.

Step 8. Finance Committee vets Domain Council's proposed budget before it goes to the Board.

Step 9. Domain Council proposes annual budget to the Board with sufficient time to allow approval by June 30.

DISSEMINATION

The staff at Hilltown regularly offers presentations and workshops to both district and state wide audiences featuring best practices in the areas of curriculum development, parent involvement, community service learning and arts integration. In addition, we have had a large number of visiting professionals from local districts, other districts in Massachusetts and from as far away as New York and Arizona who have come to learn about what we do here. We also support a regular flow of student teachers from several local universities and colleges. We regularly post best practices on the DESE website for Community Service Learning and have several articles available on the Mass. Charter School website. In this charter cycle we also produced and distributed a manual for the replication of our community service learning program with a nursing home partner. Some specific examples of dissemination endeavors this year include:

Fifth grade students presented their Community Service Learning work on hunger at the 2008 Massachusetts Annual Statewide Community-Service Learning Conference in Worcester and managed the service project at that event.

We presented an art exhibition in the Cummington Community House, Cummington, MA (within our region) where the public could view and read about the work the children in our school produced. These exhibits included a description of what the viewer was seeing in terms of skills and tools the children learned about and used and the artwork's connection to the academic curriculum.

One of our long term 2/3 grade classroom teachers presented 3 workshops to teachers at the Gerena Montessori Public School in Springfield, MA. on aspects of running a writer's workshop in one's classroom:

- *What are the components of a writer's workshop?
- *Next steps for teachers already implementing a writer's workshop
- *How can we support students as independent writer's to use their time wisely?

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Hilltown Co-op Charter Public School Unaudited Income & Expenses July 2008 through June 2009

	<u>Jul '08 - Jun 09</u>
INCOME	
State Sources	1,656,743
State Grants-DOE Administered	69,951
Community Foundation Grants	4,100
Friends of HCCS Grant	7,505
Fundraising Income	23,473
Other sources	12,831
Afterschool Income	40,222
Miscellaneous Income	<u>5,816</u>
Total Income	<u>1,820,641</u>
EXPENSE	
Personnel Costs	1,385,737
Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed	72,294
Consultant & Other Svcs-Flex	39,707
Occupancy	242,250
Supplies	32,774
Equipment	10,244
Grant-funded expenses	16,030
Afterschool	2,076
Depreciation Expense	17,106
Dues and Subscriptions	150
Fundraising Projects	1,873
Interest Expense	864
Other expenses	11,611
Coordinator Discretionary Fund	<u>1,590</u>
Total Expense	<u>1,834,305</u>
Net Ordinary Income	(13,664)
Other Income	
Board Designated Income	<u>17,865</u>
Total Other Income	17,865
Other Expense	
Loss on Surrender of leased equipmt	669
Board Designated Expenditures	<u>17,865</u>
Total Other Expense	18,534
Net Other Income	(669)
Net Income	<u><u>(14,333)</u></u>

Hilltown Co-op Charter Public School
Unaudited Balance Sheet
As of June 30, 2009

	Jun 30, 09
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
Easthampton Savings	696,874
Florence Savings	3,717
Total Checking/Savings	700,591
Accounts Receivable	
Revenue Receivable(Prepaymt)	114
Total Accounts Receivable	114
Other Current Assets	
FSA Pre-Payment	5,454
Prepaid Expenses	33,229
Security Deposit	16,646
Total Other Current Assets	55,328
Total Current Assets	756,033
Fixed Assets	
Property and Equipment	34,349
Leasehold Improvements	339,465
Accumulated Depreciation	(297,667)
Total Fixed Assets	76,147
TOTAL ASSETS	832,180
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	15,279
Total Accounts Payable	15,279
Credit Cards	
VISA	588
Total Credit Cards	588
Other Current Liabilities	
Deferred Fundraising Revenue	2,857
Accrued Expenses	1,897
Accrued Payroll	122,065
Copier Lease - Current	2,071
Deferred Revenue - Grants	2,000
Payroll Liabilities	11,192
Total Other Current Liabilities	142,082

Total Current Liabilities	<u>157,949</u>
	<u>Jun 30, 09</u>
Long Term Liabilities	
Capitalized Lease Obligation	7,051
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>7,051</u>
Total Liabilities	165,000
Equity	
Donor Restricted Music Fund	962
Contingency Fund	261,341
Investments in Fixed Assets	67,025
Resv'd for Development Assoc.	45,000
Reserved for Building Fund	41,135
Reserved for Major Equip	1,200
Undesignated Fund Balance	264,850
Net Income	<u>(14,333)</u>
Total Equity	<u>667,180</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>832,180</u>

HCCPS FY 2010 Budget

Approved by Board of Trustees: June 10, 2009

Revised and Approved by Board of Trustees: July 15, 2009

INCOME

1	State Per Pupil PPE	1,689,854
2	All Other Income	186,114
3	Total Income	1,875,968

EXPENSES

4	Teachers	662,733
5	Teaching Assistants	169,647
6	Substitutes	9,500
7	All other salaries	337,092
8	Longevity Pay	5,975
9	Health Insurance	176,534
10	Benefits and Taxes	50,620
11	Total Payroll	1,412,101
12	Consultants	78,400
13	Occupancy	279,955
14	Ed Supplies	22,397
15	All Other Supplies	17,471
16	Total Supplies	39,868
17	Miscellaneous	40,645
18	Total Expenses	1,850,969
19	Over/(Under)	25,000

DATA SECTION

INSTRUCTIONAL TIME:	
Total number of instructional days for the 2008-09 school year:	180
First and last day of the 2008-09 school year:	9/2/08-6/24/09
Length of school day (please note if schedule varies throughout the week or the year):	8:30-3, M-F 6-8 th grd. 8:30-3, M,T,Th,Fr for K-5 th . 8:30-12:30 Wed for K-5 th .

STUDENT ENROLLMENT INFORMATION	
Number of students who completed the 2007-08 school year but did not reenroll for the 2008-09 school year (excluding graduates):	10
Total number of students enrolled as of October 1, 2008:	154
Total number of students who enrolled during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	0
Total number of students who left during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	5
Total number of students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission:	149
Number of students who graduated at the end of the 2008-09 school year:	14

Three students left during the school year to begin home schooling. Another family with two children relocated to Germany. At the end of the year area charter schools took 7 of our students because the entry grade for those students is only 7th grade. Two others enrolled in their local schools for personal reasons and one went to an independent school.

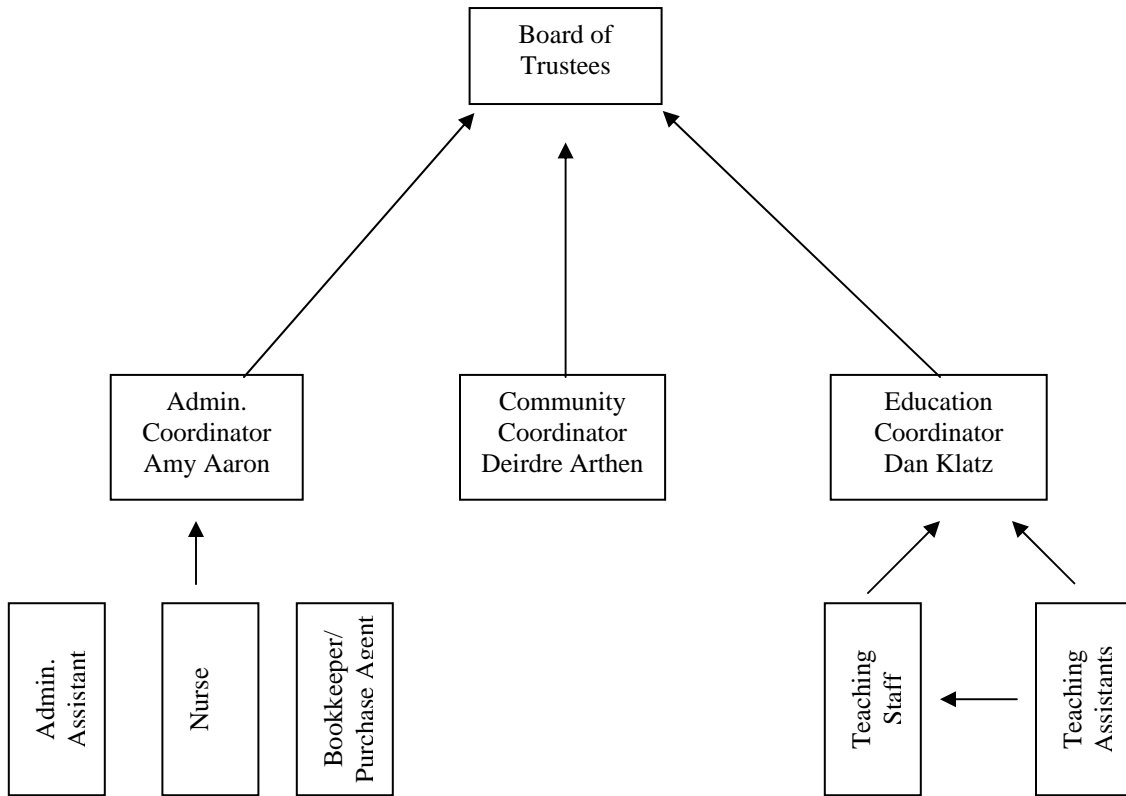
STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION
(for students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission)

Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	2	1.3
Asian	4	2.7
Hispanic	3	1.3
Native American	2	1.3
White	130	87.2
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	8	5.4
Special Education	27	18.1
Limited English Proficient	1	0.7
Low Income	20	13.4

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR

Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Administrative Coordinator	Oversee finances, admissions, facilities, regulatory compliance, safety/health	8/1996	NA
Education Coordinator	Oversees teachers, support staff, curriculum and student evaluation	7/2001	NA
Community Coordinator	Coordinates volunteers, community service, community events, parent reps	4/2000	NA

HCCPS Organizational Chart



TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR			
	Number as of the last day of the 2008-09 school year	Departures during the 2008-09 school year	Departures at the end of the school year
Teachers	18	0	0
Other Staff	15	1 (nurse left for a fulltime, higher pay job)	0

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR				
Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Area of expertise, and/or additional role at school (parent, staff member etc.)	- Number of terms served; - Length of each term, including date of election and expiration
Kay Brooke-Willbanks	President		Parent	2 terms; 7/06-6/09 and 7/09-6/12
Susannah Howe	Treasurer	Finance Committee Chair	Parent	1 term; 7/07-6/10
Anne Griffin	Clerk		Parent	1 term; 7/08-6/11
Peter Feitner		Site Committee Chair	Parent	2 terms; 7/05-6/08 and 7/08-6/11
Mike Paulsen		Development Committee Chair	Parent	1 term; 7/07-6/10
James Burke		Supervisory Team	Parent	1 term; 7/07-6/10
Dawn Geller		Management Team Representative	Parent	1 term; 7/08-6/11
David McGrath		Supervisor Committee	Parent	1 term; 7/08-6/11
Lee MacKinnon		Personnel Committee Chair	Community Member	1 term; 7/07-6/10
Larry Hunt		Supervisory Committee	Community Member	1 term; 7/08-6/11

ATTACHMENTS

The Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Community Compact of Understanding

At the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School we believe that education works best as a cooperative process among teachers, staff, parents, students and the community at large. Parents' involvement in their children's education contributes greatly toward their success and this school relies on its cooperative structure to create the innovative and alternative educational environment that is at the core of its mission. This compact of understanding is a way of clearly stating our common commitment to collaboration in creating a learning community that nourishes and supports all of its members. If a situation ever arises in which the spirit or words of the compact is consistently not being met, all involved parties gather for a Compact Meeting to discuss and plan solutions. It is through this level of commitment and cooperation that we are able to successfully fulfill the school's mission.

The Student pledges to:

- do my best to learn while in classes and when doing the home-study I am assigned.
- show respect, through my words and my actions, for myself, my school, my teachers, other people, and materials.
- be inclusive of others and resolve conflicts in a positive, non-violent manner.
- take responsibility for my actions and my safety.

- believe that I am a person who can learn in many different ways.

I _____, Student, will do my best to keep this agreement. **Date:** _____

The Parents pledge to:

- read the school handbook and abide by the policies and guidelines set out in it.
- to the very best of my ability, give 4 hours of volunteer service per month, or 40 hours per year, that will benefit the school and help my child and others learn.
- ensure that my child arrives at school on time (8:15 am), rested and ready to learn.
- ensure that my child comes to school dressed appropriately for the weather and with a nutritious lunch and snack.
- help my child take responsibility for completing home-study assignments in a timely manner.
- keep myself informed and up to date about events and issues at school by reading the notices in my mailbox, newsletters, e-mails and posted announcements.
- attend *at least* two individual parent/teacher conferences and one classroom meeting per year.
- help strengthen the school community by participating in events and discussions whenever possible.
- show respect and support, through my words and actions, for my child, other students, the staff and the school.

I, _____ (and) _____, Parent(s)/ guardian(s), agree to do my best to follow through with the responsibilities listed above. **Date:** _____

The Administration and Staff of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter School pledge to:

- provide a safe, cooperative and respectful environment for learning.
- believe that all students can succeed and learn.
- nurture each child's innate creativity and encourage his/her self-expression using many modalities.
- communicate and work with each family to support their child's learning.
- have challenging expectations for students and staff.
- seek out and value parent participation and input in all areas of the school community.
- respect and honor the cultural differences of students and their families.

- seek to improve our program through an ongoing cycle of planning, evaluation and refinement.

We, _____,
Teachers
and _____, Coordinator

Pledge the school staff's commitment to the above stated responsibilities and ideals. Date: _____

What the Compact means for students:

The Student pledges to:

- **do my best to learn while in classes and when doing the home-study I am assigned.**

This means:

No disruptive behavior in class: Interrupting, side conversations or physically distracting others

No refusing assignments in or out of class

- **show respect, through my words and my actions, for myself, my school, my teachers, other people, and materials.**

To show respect for:

The authority of adults – respond to adult direction

Each other– no teasing or put-downs

Equipment – no stealing, throwing or damaging objects

Our community – no vulgar language

- **be inclusive of others and resolve conflicts in a positive, non-violent manner.**

This means:

No threats or intimidation No exclusion

No hurting others – hitting, kicking, biting

- **take responsibility for my actions and my safety.**

This means:

No lying

No running indoors

No leaving supervised areas

No wrestling or inappropriate rough play

- **believe that I am a person who can learn in many different ways.**

We want everyone to try – just give it a shot, even if it's new.

CRITICAL ELEMENTS OF CLASSROOM PRACTICE

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS CREATE A SAFE, NUTURING CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

- Being a part of this community is necessary for the academic success of all students.

TEACHERS ARE FLEXIBLE IN THEIR USE OF TIME.

- Schedule changes are required for in-depth studies.
- Flexibility is necessary based on the needs of different groups.

STUDENTS HAVE CROSS AGE EXPERIENCES.

- Multi-age classrooms foster these experiences.
- Mixed-aged opportunities throughout the school foster these experiences.

TEACHERS UNDERSTAND AND UTILIZE DIFFERENT LEARNING STYLES.

- Teaching practice is adapted to meet various ways of learning.
- All classrooms have a materials rich environment.
- Teachers use a variety of assessment tools to evaluate student academic and social progress.

CURRICULUM

STUDENTS' IDEAS, QUESTIONS AND INTERESTS ARE PART OF THE CURRICULUM AND THE CLASSROOM COMMUNITY

- The spark of interest in study comes from students in the context of the classroom community.
- Students' shared experience fires the imagination and builds the community.
- Students share expertise and inquiry.
- Students' authentic questions allow learning to grow from their perspective.
- Students have choices and options in learning.

STUDENTS BUILD BASIC AND LIFE SKILLS

- Students develop basic skills as a means of communicating ideas, opinions, and knowledge.
- Some students require skills as a means of participating.

TEACHERS DEVELOP AN INTERDISCIPLINARY, PROJECT BASED CURRICULUM

- Students understand the interconnected nature of what they learn.
- Hands-on projects facilitate learning.
- The arts are a valued means of expression.
- Technology is used as one of a variety of educational tools and as a means of expression.

RELATIONSHIPS

TEACHERS ENGAGE IN SUBSTANTIAL COLLABORATION WITH ONE ANOTHER.

- Teachers work in small groups and teams.
- Teachers and staff work together.
- Teachers and staff use and model the process of consensus.

STUDENTS ENGAGE IN SUBSTANTIAL COLLABORATION WITH TEACHERS AND OTHER STUDENTS.

- STUDENTS LEARN AND PRACTICE THE PROCESS OF CONSENSUS.
- Teachers and students work as partners and in small groups in the classroom and throughout the school.

TEACHERS AND STUDENTS USE OUR COMMUNITY RESOURCES

- Parents are used as classroom volunteers and resources.
- Children are connected with local community members and have opportunities to explore and appreciate our local environment.

HCCPS Teacher Job Responsibilities and Standards

Overview: The mission of the Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School is:

- To engage young people in a school which uses experiential, hands-on activities, the arts, and interdisciplinary studies, to foster critical thinking skills and a joy of learning.
- To sustain a cooperative, intimate community of students, staff, families and local community members which guides and supports the school and its educational program.
- To cultivate children's individual voices and a shared respect for each other, our community, and the world around us.

In the cooperative and collaborative spirit of this mission, the following description of expectations for teachers has been developed.

1. Facilitate the creation of a respectful, safe, and nurturing classroom environment.

- a) Establish, model, and maintain high standards of classroom behavior, and engage students in the process of developing social skills.
- b) Provide opportunities to include all students in the full range of classroom activities
- c) Demonstrate knowledge of and sensitivity to differences in abilities and learning styles.
- d) Develop and implement strategies for meeting the social and emotional needs of all students in the classroom.
- e) Create and maintain a safe physical space for learning that is aesthetically pleasing and educationally engaging.

2. Actively work as part of a teaching team.

- a) Develop and effectively implement an arts-integrated curriculum with appropriate colleagues
- b) Work effectively with colleagues in developing and assessing curriculum, student assessments, and classroom and school management systems.
- c) Attend Staff Meetings, All-School Meetings when appropriate, participate in Committees when necessary, and attend appropriate special education meetings.
- d) Contribute to the Management Team through direct participation or via representation.
- e) Participate in rotating lunch and recess supervision as needed.
- f) Participate actively in the school's staff development program.
- g) Supervise, together with Education Coordinator, classes Teaching Assistant.

3. Establish a learning environment which utilizes the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and the HCCS Competencies, and that is responsive to and supportive of the needs and interests of the whole class and of individual students.

- a) Ensure that a range of appropriate educational materials and equipment is available in the classroom.
- b) Ensure that students' ideas, questions and interests are a part of curriculum and classroom community.
- c) Provide opportunities for students to engage in substantial collaboration with other students.
- d) Ensure that students develop age appropriate basic skills utilizing the HCCPS competencies as reference.

- e) Create a class schedule and effectively manage and be flexible in using time to meet the needs of the group.
- f) Create meaningful experiences in the classroom, and with others classes that mix students of different ages and abilities.
- g) Create projects and organize curricular experiences that effectively develop students' understanding the interconnected nature of what they learn.
- h) Adapt and effectively implement daily teaching practices to support all modes of student learning.

4. Create, administer, and maintain appropriate student records.

- a) Organize and maintain work sampling for students in the classroom.
- b) Document student performance, ensuring progress towards individualized educational goals.
- c) Organize and implement performance based assessments.
- d) Administer standardized tests as needed.
- e) Complete semi-annual progress reports on each student and meet with families for discussion.

5. Work With Parents:

- a) Organize and conduct two annual parent conferences in the fall and spring plus additional conferences as needed.
- b) Develop and maintain good working relationships with families of classroom students.
- c) Effectively utilize community resources (parents, local community, environment, etc)
- d) Effectively utilize parents as classroom volunteers/resources
- e) Hold two parent classroom evenings annually.