



HILLTOWN
COOPERATIVE
CHARTER
PUBLIC
SCHOOL

ANNUAL REPORT 2009-2010

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Dear Commissioner and Charter School Staff,

July 25, 2010

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School 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 has most every school, with budget concerns and efforts to minimize our expenses while still providing an exceptional program to our children. Our students' academic progress, community surveys and teacher feedback show that we are meeting this challenge.

The Board of Trustees continues to work on its strategic plan, which was developed in 2003. This year we devoted much time and resources exploring a potential new site for our school, with more space for our growing population and better facilities. Though we were not successful in this endeavor, we have hired a Development Associate who is actively working towards creating a philanthropic community that extends beyond our intimate school community. We had our first ever Grandparents Day, which was extremely successful and fun. It is our hope that by laying this foundation of financial support, we will be better able to afford a larger facility. In addition, the architect, whom we hired last year, has completed a detailed feasibility study outlining the specific program needs and space requirements of our school. With this information, we are now better prepared to find a facility that will meet our current needs as well as our future needs.

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School has weathered a very difficult financial year. With sacrifices from every budget area imaginable, we have had a wonderfully successful year, providing our students with an excellent education and amazing program opportunities. All of this was done even with salaries frozen, across the board furloughs and hours cut for some staff. The school's staff is an exceptional group of educators with a tremendous amount of pride and dedication to their children and community. We are very fortunate to have such a devoted group of people working with our students.

Our community continues to remain strong with over 95% parent/guardian participation. The school community grows stronger with each new family, with each new staff person, with each new community member on our Board of Trustees. Our 15th birthday celebration was joyfully attended by new and original families and alums.

Many of the successes of the school are in part because of 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 the decisions they make and in their actions. By having three people at the helm 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.

It has been a pleasure to serve as the Board of Trustees President this year, and I look forward to continuing my board work as chair of the Site Committee in the coming year.

Sincerely,

Kay Brooke-Willbanks, President, Board of Trustees

INTRODUCTION

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School opened its doors in 1995 with 40 students, grades kindergarten to 3rd grade. Beginning our sixteenth year we are a school of 165 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 238 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.

- The purpose of this goal is to emphasize the process of learning for our students and broader community. We use a template for electronically documenting student learning, and were able to document projects in every classroom. Among the projects we documented this year were:
- A Family Study by Kindergarten and First Graders.
- A study of Weather and the Water Cycle by Second and Third Graders.
- A "Green" school project by Fourth and Fifth graders.
- A study of Ancient Greece 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 Physics of Rock Climbing
- The Story of Service Dogs in WWII
- Foster Care in Massachusetts
- Cartography Applied to Character Analysis in Literature
- American Political Artist: Shepard Fairey
- Nutrition and Fast Foods
- Manga and Ancient Japanese Storytelling
- American Playwrights in 20th Century
- The Importance of Folk Music of the Sixties
- The Physics of a Tornado
- A Comparison of Modern Environmental Poets
- Malnutrition in Mali and How It's Being Decreased
- The Labor Movement in 20th Century U.S.
- The Story of the Development of Rock and Roll

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.

Over the last 15 years Hilltown has developed a shared language - from the songs that we sing, to our mission statement, to the student-generated "code of cooperation" – which gives both students and their families a powerful sense of belonging. Major traditions at the school - including All School, an assembly of sharing that happens every Friday morning, Il Teatro, a talent show that takes place four times a year, a Martin Luther King Celebration where each class has a voice, a winter solstice celebration right before the break in December, a mid-winter all- school sleepover, a Spring Music Festival, a summer celebration with our Community Service Learning partners at the Overlook at Northampton nursing home and a very personal graduation ceremony – all reinforce the collaborative identity of our school.

The consistent pursuit of multi-age learning experiences and the inclusion of parents in all aspects of the school are ways 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.

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 The Overlook at Northampton, 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 Overlook in a wide variety of endeavors, many of which are connected to the curriculum.

This year students explored reading, science, writing, art, music, gardening, 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 Overlook.

Special family or all-adult social events are also 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 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.

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. This year 92.9% of respondents to our School Satisfaction Survey 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, once again, 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 included family events like movie night or an all-school sleepover, cooperative meetings with topics like cyber-bullying, educational forums around our curriculum, adult social events/fundraisers, and a variety of school-wide celebrations.

This year our community activities included a very special 15th birthday party, to celebrate our charter renewal. The event was attended by many current families and staff as well as by alumni students and families from the very first years of the school.

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

In 2009-10, we published a weekly newsletter for parents and staff which was distributed primarily through email but was also available on paper for those families who requested it. Family mailboxes remain a useful means of communication at Hilltown and parents are asked to check them twice a week, but more and more electronic mail is the preferred method of communication.

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.

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. 98% of families volunteered actively in the school during the course of this year, 47 of them put in 40 hours of time or more and an additional 8 of them served over 80 hours during the school year.

On a classroom level, parents teach mini-courses, lead Project Choice activities, give special presentations on areas of knowledge, assist teachers with classroom activities and documentation and coordinate field trips. Parents participate in staff hiring, write articles for our 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

This year parents rallied to very successfully re-structure the Friends of Hilltown, a non-profit with the mission of raising funds for the school. This active and enthusiastic parent group has been very successful, doubling the annual fund income from last year with the support of the school's new Development Associate.

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 in Co-op meetings and special forums. Parents are asked to complete evaluation forms on teachers and staff, a school satisfaction survey and parent meetings are also held each year to give input on budget priorities.

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 either class meetings, family conferences or both.

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

This year every family completed a Community Compact (*see Attachments*), 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.

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. (*3 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, daily multi-age student activities, the many 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

Hilltown uses a variety of assessment tools to ascertain the academic progress of our students. In addition to the internal Hilltown developmental, performance-based assessment tools, we use results from the Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS) and the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) to further understand student progress and inform curriculum design.

Hilltown continues to demonstrate academic success through this variety of measures. We met Adequate Yearly Progress again this year; our students performed at a high level on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills; and students made annual progress as measured by our internal assessments.

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 of 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.

The ITBS results support the findings of our other assessments. Our strengths are evident in all areas of reading, in math concepts and problem solving and in language usage/expression. Our students are performing well above grade level in these subject areas. The following are our December 2009 ITBS results.

Table 1: Iowa Test of Basic Skills, December 2009

<p>Grade 3</p> <p>Number of students: 19</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 86%</p> <p>Language Total 78%</p> <p>Math Total 78%</p> <p>Core Total 84%</p>	<p>Grade 4</p> <p>Number of students: 19</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 87%</p> <p>Language Total 79%</p> <p>Math Total 82%</p> <p>Core Total 84%</p>	<p>Grade 5</p> <p>Number of students: 19</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 86%</p> <p>Language Total 74%</p> <p>Math Total 80%</p> <p>Core Total 80%</p>
<p>Grade 6</p> <p>Number of students: 20</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 85%</p> <p>Language Total 73%</p> <p>Math Total 71%</p> <p>Core Total 78%</p>	<p>Grade 7</p> <p>Number of students: 15</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 92%</p> <p>Language Total 82%</p> <p>Math Total 77%</p> <p>Core Total 86%</p>	<p>Grade 8</p> <p>Number of students: 15</p> <p>National Percentile Rank of Average Standard Scores:</p> <p>Reading Total 93%</p> <p>Language Total 76%</p> <p>Math Total 79%</p> <p>Core Total 85%</p>

Table 2: Iowa Test of Basic Skills – Cumulative Class Progress

Class of 2010

Grade 3 Administered 12/04 Number of students: 18 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 98% Language Total 58% Math Total 97% Core Total 94%	Grade 4 Administered 12/05 Number of students: 18 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 99% Language Total 49% Math Total 83% Core Total 86%	Grade5 Administered 12/06 Number of students: 19 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 93% Language Total 76% Math Total 80% Core Total 85%	Grade6 Administered 12/07 Number of students: 17 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 93% Language Total 79% Math Total 76% Core Total 85%
Grade 7 Administered 12/08 Number of students: 13 Average scores: National Percentiles Reading Total 97% Language Total 82% Math Total 75% Core Total 88%	Grade8 Administered 12/09 Number of students: 15 Average scores: <u>National Percentiles</u> Reading Total 93% Language Total 76% Math Total 79% Core Total 85%		

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 MCAS results (listed in the table below) show that we continue to exceed state averages in many areas.

Table 3: MCAS Results, Spring 2009

GR and Subject	Advanced/ Above Proficient		Proficient		Needs Improvement		Warning/ Failing		Students Included
	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	SCHOOL	STATE	
GR 03 - READING	22	12	50	45	28	33	0	10	18
GR 03 - MATHEMATICS	11	20	56	40	33	25	0	15	18
GR 04 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	5	11	53	42	42	35	0	11	19
GR 04 - MATHEMATICS	0	16	42	32	58	41	0	11	19
GR 05 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	6	15	78	48	17	29	0	8	18
GR 05 - MATHEMATICS	12	22	24	32	65	29	0	18	17
GR 05 - SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	6	17	41	32	47	39	6	12	17
GR 06 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	16	16	79	50	5	24	0	9	19
GR 06 - MATHEMATICS	53	24	32	33	11	27	5	16	19
GR 07 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	15	14	85	56	0	23	0	7	13
GR 07 - MATHEMATICS	8	16	77	33	15	30	0	21	13
GR 08 - ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	36	15	64	63	0	15	0	6	14
GR 08 - MATHEMATICS	14	20	64	28	21	28	0	23	14
GR 08 - SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY	0	4	71	35	29	40	0	21	14

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. We nearly met this goal; 89.47% 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.*

Table 4: Hilltown Reading Assessment Results, K-3rd Fall 2009-Spring 2010

Level (1 level = 1 Grade Level)	Percentage of Students
Less than 1 Level	9%
1 Level progress	39%
2 Levels progress	26%
3 Levels. progress	26%

Table 5: Hilltown Writing Assessment Results, K-3rd Fall 2009-Spring 2010

Level (1 Level = 1 DWA Level)	Percentage of Students
Lost One or More Levels	4%
No Gain	11%
One Level Gain	48%
More than One Level Gain	37%

Table 6: Hilltown Mathematics Assessment Results, K-3 Fall 2009-Spring 2010

Level (1 Level = 20 percentage points)	Percentage of Students
Less than 1 Level	2%
1 Level progress	63%
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.*

Table 7: Hilltown Mathematics Assessment Results, 4th -8th Spring 2010

Level (Proficient =70%)	Percentage of Students
0-59%	17%
60-69%	8%
70-85%	50%
86-100%	25%

Table 8: Hilltown Writing Assessment Results, 4th-8th Spring 2010

MCAS Writing Rubric (Proficient = 7 or higher)	Percentage of Students
0-5	13%
6	30%
7-8	44%
9-10	13%

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 5-6
- Connected Mathematics: Grade 7-8
- Explode the Code: Grades K-3
- Primary Phonics: Grades K-2
- *Megawords*: Grades 4-5
- *Wordly Wise*: Grades 4-6
- D'Nealian Handwriting: Grades K-5

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 De-escalation Training in August and in a Community Resources for People with Autism training in November.

This year, we began a three-year commitment to work with the Center for Collaborative Education to both refine our own internal assessment systems, and to develop performance assessments in English Language Arts that can be used throughout the Commonwealth. Several sessions of professional development were devoted to performance assessment, and as a direct result, we will be using a new system to assess student writing next year. Additionally, staff went to many conferences outside of school on a wide range of topics including the following:

- Supporting English language learners.
- Lindamood Bell Reading and Math
- Autism Spectrum Disorders
- Regional Community Service Learning Conference
- Literacy for All
- Reading Recovery Institute
- Reading Recovery Clinical Course
- 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. We approached budgeting very conservatively this past year, freezing wages and instituting an across the board staff furlough. Mid-year, as finances improved, we were able to give a significant bonus to all staff. We have ended this year with an unaudited surplus of roughly \$23,000. 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.*

Our admissions lottery, held in February 2010, garnered 270 applicants for 22 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 during the year. At the first meeting, the discussion was around fundraising and possibilities for finding or creating a new site for the school. Reports were presented and opinions collected. The second meeting of the Coop attended by both parents and staff was a discussion about internet safety and bullying, including a review of the school's internet policies.

The Personnel Committee of the BoT conducted a staff satisfaction survey this year and proposed several policy and practice changes based on the results. There were presented to the faculty and discussed before any final decisions were made BoT.

The Management Team, with representative members from all constituencies, was very involved in the decision to begin to charge for after-school enrichment programs to recoup the costs incurred.

Friends of Hilltown, a parent-led 501c3 organization, was intimately involved in the decision to eliminate the BoT Development Committee. That group then assumed the major fundraising responsibility for the school.

As usual, we conducted a parent satisfaction survey which will have an impact on Board and management discussions and decisions in the coming year.

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 2010 are:

- Complete a staff satisfaction survey in order to assess and address issues that staff identify;
- Begin developing more authentic measures of student academic progress through work with the Center for Collaborative Education
- Implement key structural changes that resulted from last year's evaluation of class configurations. The most significant was moving to teaching math by grade level throughout the school rather than in two grade spread.
- Continue work with our architect and the design feasibility report in our ongoing efforts for a new space.
- Continue work with the Finance and Site Committees to determine true development costs for a new building project and fiscal viability of such a project.
- With the guidance of our development associate and Friends of Hilltown Inc., adopt a fundraising plan for the year.

Common School Performance Criteria

Policy decisions:

The Board of Trustees (BOT) was quite productive in FY 2010. Their major decisions fall into 2 major areas.

Financial- Approved: \$50,000 for the renovation of additional space for a new 7/8th grade language arts/math classroom and technology lab; \$28,000 for mid-year across- the- board staff bonuses; \$1,200 for consulting accountant to reconcile bank statements at recommendation of our auditor; additional funding for architectural consultation for possible new site; passage of FY 2011 budget; adoption of new salary scale for teaching assistants for FY 2011.

Policy- Approved: a revised Accountability Plan that was submitted with our charter renewal application; charter renewal application approved; reaffirmed existing Contingency Policy and Health Diversion Policy; adoption of new benefit- reimbursement for graduate level course work; slight wording changes to Board bylaw clarifying role of president and vice-president.

Amendments to the charter:

We requested no amendments this year.

Complaints:

No official complaints were received in FY 2010.

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 2009-2010 year, planning for a new site continued to be a major Board focus. We continued extensive work with our architect on what appeared to be a great potential site. Unfortunately, as the year ended this option became unavailable to us.

Our first year with our new development associate saw significant improvement in our annual fund drive, and the strengthening of our affiliated fundraising group, Friends of Hilltown, Inc. We look forward to even greater growth in the year to come.

Family satisfaction survey results:

This year we again distributed our school satisfaction survey both electronically and on paper. There was a clear preference for the electronic version. We received 83 responses, representing about 60% of our families - a good return but fewer than last year which a little was disappointing. 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: 4.32
2. The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment for students. Rating Average: 4.68
3. Behavioral expectations at the school are clear. Rating Average: 4.44
4. I am satisfied with the level of my child's Community Service Learning experience. Rating Average 4.29
5. The current format of the HCCPS progress reports helps me understand my child's school experiences and his/her achievement. Rating Average 4.15
6. My child experiences an adequate amount of academic challenge. Rating Average 4.04
7. My child experiences an adequate amount of arts and curriculum integration. Rating Average 4.09
8. HCCPS places the correct amount of time and attention on the teaching of basic skills. Rating Average 4.59
9. I am satisfied with the amount and quality of cross-age experiences throughout the school. Rating Average 4.63
10. The school's educational philosophy is visibly evident in the common spaces and classrooms. Rating Average 4.05
11. I feel that the school is a physically safe place for my child. Rating Average 4.35
12. The newsletter, e-mail notices and the mailboxes create a good communication system within the school. Rating Average 4.47
13. Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate. Rating Average 4.50
14. Communication from and with administration staff is easy and adequate. Rating Average 4.39
15. The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families. Rating Average 4.61
16. I am satisfied that the interior space at HCCPS meets the educational needs of students. Rating Average 3.18
17. The school uses its financial resources wisely. Rating Average 4.03
18. Overall, I am satisfied with the level of communication regarding the school's budget and finances. Rating Average 3.93
19. Would you recommend this school to others? Yes: 92.1%, It Depends: 7.9%, No: 0%

The only response that averaged below a "4" (agree) was the one related to the building, and that is no surprise and we have been looking for a new site for a number of years.

In the open-ended questions parents saw our space and our limited budget as the primary challenges for the school. In listing strengths, an overwhelming majority listed the sense of community and collaboration in the school among students, teachers, administrators and staff, along with small class size, the quality of the teachers and administration, an appreciation of the integrated curriculum and the school's emphasis on the arts. A large majority reported that not only would they recommend the school to others, but that they had already done so many times.

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 members are often 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 are 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 determines 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

This year, we began a three-year commitment to work with the Center for Collaborative Education to develop performance assessments in English Language Arts that can be used throughout the Commonwealth. This project includes working with ten other public schools from throughout the state. All of our classroom teachers in Grades 4-8 participated in the training and development of these assessments. We presented our Grade 8 culminating project to the group for feedback and development. Our goal as a school is to develop authentic performance assessments in all areas which accurately and reliably evaluate and document student learning.

This year, one of our teachers was awarded a grant to help students explore energy consumption. She used funds in teaching two mini-courses that resulted in some changes in our school. In May, she took fifth grade students to the Green School Student Summit at the University of New Hampshire to present the work that was done during the year.

In addition, we have had a large number of visiting professionals from local districts, other districts in Massachusetts and from other states. We hosted the faculty from a young charter school in New Hampshire.

Finally, we support a regular flow of student teachers from several local universities and colleges. This year we had 4 practicum students from the University of Massachusetts and from Antioch University.

FINANCIAL REPORTS

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

Unaudited Income & Expenses

July 2009 through June 2010

Ordinary Income/Expense

Income

State Sources	1,746,752
State Grants-DOE Administered	44,882
Friends of HCCS Grant	14,986
Private Grants	12,719
Fundraising Income	21,768
Other sources	33,505
After-School Income	37,723
Homework Club	7,917
Student Activity Fees	6,600
Miscellaneous Income	158

Total Income 1,927,010

Expense

Personnel Costs	1,414,126
Consultant & Other Svcs-Fixed	67,439
Consultant & Other Svcs	58,592
Occupancy	270,096
Supplies	32,846
Equipment	12,695
Grant-funded expenses	12,587
After-School	1,887
Student Activity Expenses	4,125
Depreciation Expense	18,245
Fees and Licenses	248
Interest Expense	980
Other expenses	6,698
Coordinator Discretionary Fund	1,767
Salaries and Wages - Special	20

Total Expense 1,902,351

Net Ordinary Income 24,659

Other Income/Expense

Other Income

Board Designated Income 65,948

Total Other Income 65,948

Other Expense

Board Designated Expenditures 65,948

Total Other Expense 65,948

Net Other Income 0

Net Income 24,659

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School
Unaudited FY 2010 Balance Sheet
as of June 30, 2010

ASSETS

Current Assets

Checking/Savings	
Easthampton Savings	664,413
Florence Savings	<u>3,618</u>
Total Checking/Savings	<u>668,031</u>

Other Current Assets

FSA Pre-Payment	4,391
Due from others	125
Prepaid Expenses	32,647
Security Deposit	<u>16,646</u>
Total Other Current Assets	<u>53,809</u>

Total Current Assets 721,840

Fixed Assets

Property and Equipment	34,349
Leasehold Improvements	348,330
Accumulated Depreciation	<u>(316,060)</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>66,619</u>

TOTAL ASSETS 788,459

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Liabilities

Current Liabilities

Accounts Payable	
Accounts Payable	<u>26,820</u>
Total Accounts Payable	26,820

Credit Cards

VISA	<u>1,236</u>
Total Credit Cards	1,236

Other Current Liabilities

Deferred Fundraising Revenue	243
Accrued Payroll	122,508
Copier Lease - Current	1,976
Deferred Revenue - Grants	275
Payroll Liabilities	<u>15,033</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>140,035</u>

Total Current Liabilities 168,091

Long Term Liabilities	
Capitalized Lease Obligation	5,389
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>5,389</u>
Total Liabilities	173,480
Equity	
Donor Restricted Music Fund	981
Contingency Fund	278,341
Investments in Fixed Assets	59,255
Reserved for Development Associate	25,000
Reserved for Building Fund	1,350
Reserved for Major Equipment	1,200
Undesignated Fund Balance	224,193
Net Income	<u>24,659</u>
Total Equity	614,979
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>788,459</u></u>

Hilltown Cooperative Charter Public School

FY 2011 Budget

Approved by Board of Trustees: June 16, 2010

INCOME	
State Per Pupil Tuition	1,820,944
All Other Income	251,740
Total Income	2,072,684
EXPENSES	
Teachers	712,938
Teaching Assistants	208,130
Substitutes	9,500
All other salaries	328,911
Longevity Pay	8,000
Health Insurance	208,188
Benefits and Taxes	58,487
Total Payroll	1,544,054
Consultants	154,914
Occupancy	282,241
Ed Supplies	21,897
All Other Supplies	29,384
Total Supplies	51,281
Miscellaneous	40,196
Total Expenses	2,072,684
Over/(Under)	0

DATA SECTION

Instructional Time:	
Total number of instructional days for the 2009-10 school year	180
First and last day of the 2009-10 school year	09/02/09 - 06/22/10
Length of school day (please note if schedule varies throughout the week or the year)	8:30-3, M-F 6-8 th GR. 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 2008-09 school year but did not reenroll for the 2009-10 school year (excluding graduates)	10
Total number of students enrolled as of October 1, 2009	162
Total number of students who enrolled during the 2009-10 school year after October 1, 2009	0
Total number of students who left during the 2009-10 school year after October 1, 2009	0
Total number of students enrolled as of the June 30, 2010 SIMS submission	162
Number of students who graduated at the end of the 2009-10 school year	15
Number of students on the waitlist as of June 30, 2010	242

Reason for Departure	Number of Students
NA	0

Student Demographic and Subgroup Information

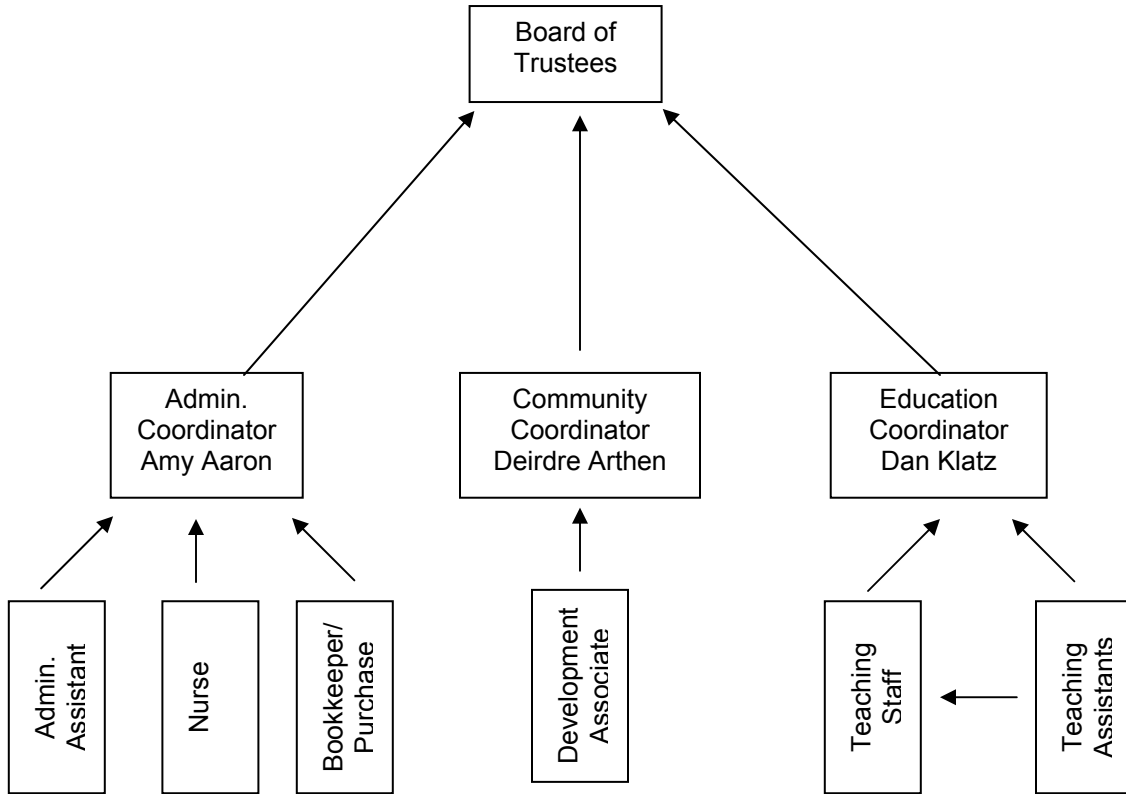
(for students enrolled as of the June 2010 SIMS submission)

Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	2	1.2%
Asian	4	2.4%
Hispanic	5	3.1%
Native American	2	1.2%
White	141	87.0%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0%
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	8	4.9%
Special education	34	21.0%
Limited English proficient	1	0.6%
Low income	74	18.5%

Administrative Roster for the 2009-2010 School Year

Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Amy Aaron	Administrative Coordinator	8/1996	NA
Dan Klatz	Education Coordinator	7/2001	NA
Deirdre Arthen	Community Coordinator	4/2000	NA

HCCPS Organizational Chart



Teacher and Staff Attrition for the 2009-2010 School Year			
	Number as of the last day of the 2009-10 school year	Departures during the 2009-2010 school year	Departures at the end of the school year
Teachers	17	0	0
Other Staff	19	0	3 (nurse left for health reasons; 2 teaching assistants left to relocate out of state)

Board Members for the 2009-2010 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	Domain Council	Parent	2 terms; 7/06-6/09 and 7/09-6/12
Susannah Howe	Vice President	Domain Council	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		Liaison to Friends of Hilltown	Parent	1 term; 7/07-6/10
James Burke	Treasurer	Finance Committee, Chair	Parent	1 term; 7/07-6/10
Dawn Geller			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
Kipp Armstrong		Liaison to Friends of Hilltown, Inc	Parent	1 term; 9/09-6/12

ATTACHMENTS

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

No 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.