

April 15, 2010
Greenfield, MA

School Profile

<i>Four Rivers Charter Public School (FRCPS)</i>			
Type of Charter	Commonwealth	Location	Greenfield
Regional/Non-Regional	Regional	Districts in Region	Six ¹
Year Opened	2003	Current Enrollment	189
Maximum Enrollment	212	Students on Waitlist	72
Chartered Grade Span	07-12	Current Grade Span	07-12

Mission

Four Rivers Charter Public School is dedicated to educating young people for lives of learning and service. The school offers a rigorous academic program aligned with the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks and an emphasis on character development for moral and social responsibility. Three central themes--nature, technology and community--guide teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, sustainable interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? The school works closely with parents and seeks both to serve and to learn from the many resources of Franklin County.

Demographics

The school reports that the racial and ethnic composition and percentages of selected populations of the student body as of the date of the site visit are as follows:

Racial and Ethnic Composition and Selected Populations

	Number of Students	Percentage of Student Body
African American	2	1%
Asian	1	½%
Hispanic	4	2%
Native American	2	1%
White	178	94.5 %
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	N/A	0
Multi-race, non-Hispanic	2	1%
Special education	22	12%
Limited English proficient	0	0
Low income	48	25%

The following participants conducted the site visit on April 15, 2010:

¹ Frontier, Gill-Montague, Greenfield, Mohawk Trail, Pioneer Valley, Ralph C. Mahar

- Tony Ashton, Charter School Office (CSO), Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (ESE),
- Laura Davis, Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School
- Emily Lichtenstein, CSO, ESE
- Benjamin Klompus, Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School
- Matthew Nixon, Office of School Improvement Grant Programs, ESE

Before the visit, the site visit team reviewed the school's 2008-09 annual report, the 2008 Summary of Review, the school's accountability plan, board materials, and recent internal and external assessment data. On site, the team reviewed curricular documents and other information provided by the school. The team conducted approximately 22 classroom observations and interviewed trustees (3), administrators (3), teachers (6), family members (4), and students (8).

The purpose of this visit was to corroborate and augment the information contained in the school's annual report, to investigate the school's progress relative to its accountability plan goals, and to collect information that will help the Commissioner and Board of Elementary and Secondary Education make a renewal recommendation for the school's charter. The focus of the visit was on three central areas of inquiry:

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

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

I. Faithfulness to the Terms of the Charter

Are the school's mission, vision, educational philosophy, and pedagogical approach, as articulated in the charter application and subsequent amendments, implemented in the day-to-day operations of the school?

Finding: Stakeholders reported that the school's mission is to educate students for lives of learning and service with an emphasis on technology, nature, and the community.

When asked to describe the school's mission, school administrators and board members identified the goal of preparing students for success in college. Administrators reported that they see lifelong learning and preparation for college as being one and the same. Teachers stated that they strive to teach students content and skills that will be useful to them after they graduate. The school has established several supports for students to plan their future after they graduate. Students in eleventh and twelfth grade meet with their advisor and the school's college counselor to develop a post-secondary plan. Students complete a questionnaire that assesses their interests and preferences, which is used to help students as they prepare to leave the school. The school reports that in 2009 all seniors developed a post-secondary plan with the support of their advisor and college counselor. Eighty-six percent of graduating students applied to at least one college and 93 percent of students planned to attend college within 15 months of graduating.

Several stakeholders also noted that the school's mission places an emphasis on technology and nature. Each year students are expected to complete a project that addresses the school's essential question: how do we find the healthy, sustainable interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? Teachers reported that they strive to

integrate the use of technology in their instruction. Site visitors observed some examples of teachers and students using technology to understand various concepts and practice skills. The use of PowerPoint presentations by teachers to deliver content was the most frequently observed use of technology. Teachers and students also reported that the incorporation of nature is a regular practice. For example, teachers stated that students studied technology and its environmental impacts on farming.

Students reported that the school places great emphasis on developing a supportive school community. The school has developed six character virtues that include integrity, respect, perseverance, responsibility, courage, and compassion. All stakeholders reported that the school has established an environment in which each student is well known. All students are assigned to an advisor who is responsible for supporting the student and helping them set goals. Each division (division one is grades seven and eight; division two is grades nine and ten, and division three is grades eleven and twelve) has a weekly meeting in which they meet together to discuss school issues and celebrate students that have embodied the school's virtues.

Finding: Expeditionary learning is the school's guiding pedagogical model.

Since its founding the school's academic program has been based on the Expeditionary Learning program (EL). The school has designed an EL academic program aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF). The EL design is based on five core practices and related benchmarks. Administrators reported that the school's focus on community, technology, and nature blend well with the EL model. All stakeholders reported the school's approach to instruction emphasizes the idea that students must experience what they are learning.

Administrators reported that students should learn in an active way in the context of a larger purpose. Students reported that they engage in hands on learning that encourages exploring things deeply in the context of big ideas. Stakeholders provided several examples of learning expeditions that included creating a geology guide to a nearby rock climbing park and going on a bicycle ride to learn about geography. Although site visitors were told about various learning expeditions and reviewed several examples they did not observe learning expeditions during observations.

Through its affiliation with EL the school is assigned a consultant who meets with faculty once a month to help them to design and implement the model at the school. The school also receives an annual review of its EL implementation by consultants from the organization. Data provided in the school's 2008-09 annual report shows that the school was evaluated on a variety of benchmarks in the areas of learning expeditions, active pedagogy, and culture and character. Compared with the review from the previous year, scores for learning expeditions increased, culture and character decreased, and active pedagogy remained the same.

Is the school's governance/leadership structure implemented as articulated in the charter application and subsequent amendments?

Finding: The school has undergone a transition in leadership and a reorganization of its administrative structure. Stakeholders report that the transition has been smooth and the process was guided by an analysis of the skills of administrators.

At the end of the 2008-09 school year the school's founding executive director retired. Board members and administrators reported that they were given notice of the retirement and began the process of planning for a replacement in fall 2008. At that time the school's administrative team included the executive director, principal, director of operations, assistant principal, and dean of students. Administrators went through a process in which they analyzed their needs and talents.

Based upon this information the board decided to combine the principal and executive director position and add support positions to the administrative team. These positions included a special education director and administrative coordinator. Board members reported that the school then hired an outside consultant to conduct an intensive review of the leadership team's structure.

Board members, administrators, and teachers reported that the transition of the executive director and changes to the administrative team have gone smoothly. Teachers and administrators reported that the transition has clarified the roles and responsibilities of administrators. All teachers reported that there is a clear understanding of who they should go to for support on different issues as well as how decisions are made at the school.

Has the school met or is it making progress toward meeting the faithfulness to charter objectives set out in its accountability plan?

Finding: The school has met most of the faithfulness to charter measures contained in its accountability plan.

FRCPS has reported against an accountability plan that was approved in May 2009. The plan contains five measures related to faithfulness to charter, each with several measures. The first objective relates to the school's themes of nature, technology, and community and contains two measures, neither of which was met in 2008-09. The second objective addresses students' character growth and service to the school community. The objective contains three measures, all of which were met in 2008-09. The third objective relates to college and post-secondary planning and contains four measures. In 2008-09 two of these measures were met and two were not met. The fourth objective is associated with the school's EL practices and contains two measures, one of which was met and the other for which performance cannot be determined. The last objective relates to the school's dissemination practices and contains two measures, one of which was met and the other which was partially met. More information about the school's success in meeting the objectives and measures contained in its accountability plan can be found in Section VI, Accountability Plan Performance, of this report.

II. Academic Program Success

A. Curriculum

What is included in the documentation of the curriculum and what form does it take?

Finding: Teachers are responsible for developing course standards and learning targets for their classes that are aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF).

Curriculum at FRCPS is based largely based on teacher-developed curriculum documents. Learning standards have been established for the school and each department. Teachers reported that each course is expected to have specific learning standards that align with the MCF. Additionally, teachers are expected to have learning expeditions and product descriptions that outline the work students must do to meet course standards. Each year teachers are expected to develop or refine existing course standards to ensure they align with the MCF, learning expeditions, as well as department and schoolwide standards. Teachers create course overviews that are provided to students at the beginning of class each semester. The outlines provide a plan of the course. Outlines reviewed by the site visit team contained a range of details with some providing a general plan of the course and others specific information about learning expeditions and product descriptions.

How is the curriculum reviewed and revised to ensure quality and effectiveness?

Finding: The curriculum is reviewed continually and informally to ensure quality and effectiveness.

Teachers and administrators described several informal systems by which the school's curriculum is reviewed and revised. Each year teachers submit their course outlines and product descriptions to the principal for review. Teachers reported that the feedback they receive on these documents is very helpful. Administrators reported that the school has worked to implement changes in the school's curriculum to address the range of skill levels that students have when they enter the school in seventh grade. This challenge was identified by the school's analysis of MCAS data which identified gaps in student performance for seventh and eighth grade. To address this the school has created a 30-minute guided reading and mathletics classes in the seventh and eighth grade in which students are grouped homogeneously and teachers work with them to develop mathematics and literacy skills. The placement of students in literacy skills is determined by results from the Gates McGinty assessment that is given to all incoming seventh grade students. For mathletics, the school uses an internally developed mathematics assessment that is also administered to students entering in the seventh grade. Administrators also noted that the school is considering the idea of changing its mathematics curriculum but that a decision has not yet been made.

B. Instruction and Learning

Is the observed instructional practice consistent with what the school describes, either verbally or in writing?

Finding: Classrooms demonstrated consistent implementation of the instructional practices described by school leaders.

Administrators provided an overview of the school's expectations for instruction verbally and in writing. These expectations included engaged learning, clear learning targets, differentiated instruction, assessment for learning, and active pedagogy. A description of the school's expectations and site visitor's observations is provided below.

Engaged Learning

The school reported that site visitors should expect to see high levels of engagement in classrooms. The school provided a list of examples of student engagement site visitors might see as evidence of student participation. Site visitors observed consistent evidence of students engaged in learning in nearly all classrooms. Students were observed taking notes, participating in classroom discussions, working in small groups to solve a problem or ask questions, and several other examples.

Clear Learning Targets

The school stated that both broad academic standards and daily objectives should be clearly stated by the teacher at the beginning of class and posted in the classroom. The school also reported that students should know what skills or knowledge they are learning. Site visitors observed that all classes had learning targets posted on the board and teachers introduced the learning target at the beginning of classes. Site visitors also observed instances in which the teacher referenced the broad academic standard or essential question their work addressed. Site visitors also noted that the student who greeted them upon entering the classroom explained the learning objectives and skills they were learning.

Differentiated Instruction

Administrators and teachers reported that differentiated instruction has been an area of focus this year. Differentiated instruction was reported to include three steps: teachers are clear about the essential facts, concepts, principles, and skills that frame their subject; teachers seek information to help them understand each student's point of entry and progress in learning; teachers attempt to match curriculum and instruction to the learner's readiness, interest, or learning profile. Site visitors observed several examples of lessons that were differentiated to meet the needs of different students. Teachers were observed to provide clear information to students and provide students and seek information to understand students' prior knowledge. Site visitors observed some classes where students were given choice in the activities they completed along with clear expectations through instructions and/or rubrics. Students were also observed in several classes to work on material at their own pace and self-assess their progress with evaluation instruments or materials provided by the teacher.

Assessment for Learning

The use of formative assessments to help students know their strengths and focus on what they need to learn was reported to be an expected instructional practice. Site visitors observed teachers gauging student understanding using formal and informal assessment strategies in nearly three-quarters of classrooms. In several classrooms site visitors also observed evidence of students tracking, reflecting on, and sharing their progress.

Active Pedagogy

The school reported that lessons should be structured so that teachers talk less and students talk more and do the thinking and work. Site visitors observed that most lessons were structured for independent and or group work with teachers acting as guides and coaches to student learning. Nearly all contained whole class and small group work in which students asked and answered questions and worked cooperatively to address the learning objective.

Is the classroom and school environment orderly, and does it support student learning?

Finding: Classrooms were observed to provide an orderly and comfortable learning environment. Site visitors noted that all classrooms appeared to have the resources necessary to support student learning.

All classrooms were observed to provide an orderly environment with respectful tones and behaviors. Students were observed to interact comfortably with adults and their peers. Site visitors observed only minor instances of disruptive behavior that were appropriately addressed by the teacher. Nearly all classes were observed to maximize time for learning. Site visitors also noted that classrooms appeared to be well supplied with the necessary resources, such as books and computers, needed to support student learning.

Is instruction effectively delivered and are students engaged in meaningful learning?

Finding: Site visitors observed clear instruction in most classrooms. Instruction was predominantly observed to consist of teachers working with small groups of students. Nearly two-thirds of classrooms were observed to provide clear instruction. In these classrooms teachers communicated clear instructions and/or concepts and discussions reflected a deepening understanding of the learning objective. As noted earlier, nearly all classes were observed to incorporate whole and small group work as a component of the lesson. Site visitors observed evidence of students being asked to use higher order thinking skills in nearly all classrooms. This was often observed to be a component of small group work where students were asked to analyze

or evaluate information. Site visitors also observed instances in which students were asked to form an opinion on a topic and support that opinion with evidence.

How and from whom do teachers receive feedback, guidance, supervision, and evaluation to improve instructional practice and student achievement?

Finding: The school has identified the goal of providing more differentiated instruction.

Professional development on differentiation occurred at the beginning and throughout the school year.

As noted earlier, the school identified differentiation as a focus for professional development this year. Teachers reported that this focus was identified as part of the school's work with EL and that this was the first year the school had identified one area of focus for professional development. Teachers reported satisfaction with the more focused approach to professional development. All teachers received three days of training on differentiated instruction in August, prior to the start of the school year. The school has also established peer coaching groups of five to six teachers that meet once a month. The groups have focused on providing support to teachers specifically on the implementation of differentiated instruction. Administrators reported that teachers within these groups conduct peer observations and share lesson plans with the goal of improving practice.

Finding: The school has created several structures to provide more guidance and support to teachers. Teachers report high levels of satisfaction with the feedback and evaluations they receive.

In addition to the peer support groups noted above the principal, assistant principal and dean of students also serve as instructional guides that provide support to teachers. Teachers reported that the instructional guides provide support in a range of areas and that each has specific areas of strength. For example, the principal was reported to be very helpful in the development of rubrics, the assistant principal was reported to be helpful in planning expeditions, and the dean of students was reported to be helpful in issues relating to classroom management and advisories.

Administrators reported that they have worked to develop clearer processes and guidelines for teacher evaluation. The principal is responsible for evaluating all teachers each year. Staff members are responsible for setting two to four professional goals each year that are approved by the principal at the beginning of the school year. Throughout the year the principal conducts short informal observations throughout the year that range in frequency depending on the number of years the teacher has been at the school. The principal reported that he provides written feedback and discusses the observations with teachers. Formal observations are also conducted each year for all teachers that have been at the school less than three years and every two years for other teachers. These observations include a pre- and post-observation meeting with written feedback.

Administrators and board members reported that the structures and systems used have been developed over the last five years. Board members stated that clarification of the teacher evaluation system was in-part due to the non-renewal of two teachers at the end of the 2008-09 school year that was reported to be a challenge. Teachers reported high levels of satisfaction with the feedback and evaluations they receive from the principal.

How is qualitative and quantitative data used to inform planning and improve student achievement?

Finding: The school has identified the goal of using assessment data to inform instruction.

Teachers and administrators reported that the school uses data from the MCAS to identify areas for improvement. As noted above, the school has used this data to create support programs from ELA and mathematics in seventh and eighth grade. The school currently uses data from the Gates McGinty reading assessment and an internal mathematics assessment to identify students for support. Teachers reported that they are primarily responsible for analyzing assessment data to improve student achievement. Administrators reported that they have established a goal for next year to train teachers in the use of formative assessment to inform planning. The use of benchmark assessments, specifically in writing was noted by administrators to be an area for further development.

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

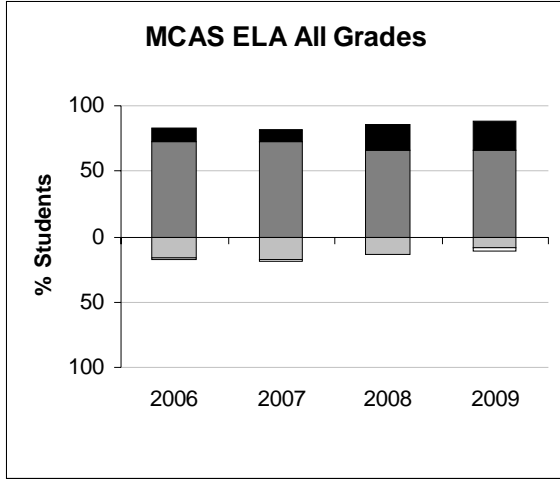
Finding: English language arts and mathematics MCAS scores for FRCPS students have been relatively stable over the past four years.

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

English Language Arts MCAS Scores

Key: N = # of students tested; CPI = Composite Performance Index

Warning/Failing %
 Needs Improvement %
 Proficient %
 Advanced/Above Prof. %



Student performance in the ELA MCAS has been consistent over the past four years. In 2009, 88 percent of students scored in the proficient or advanced categories. Grade eight showed the largest change with a decrease in the percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	10	8	19	22
% Proficient	73	73	66	66
% Needs Improvement	16	18	14	9
% Failing	2	1	0	3
N	102	97	98	103
CPI	93.1	93.6	95.4	94.9

ELA Performance by Grade Level

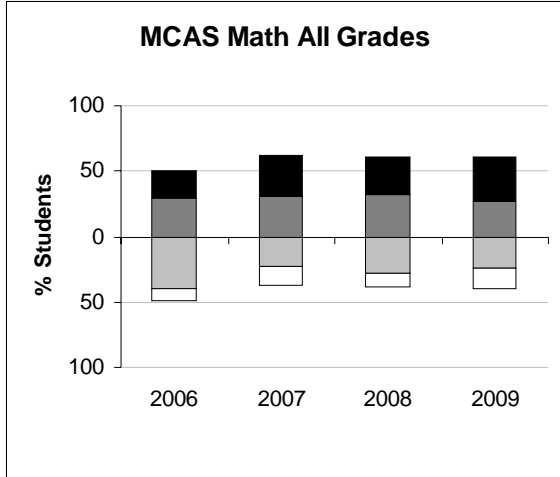
Grade 7	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	3	0	17	9
% Proficient	71	78	49	74
% Needs Improvement	23	19	34	12
% Warning	3	3	0	6
N	35	36	35	34
CPI	90.7	91.7	89.3	92.6
Grade 10	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	12	20	31	47
% Proficient	74	63	69	50
% Needs Improvement	15	17	0	3
% Warning	0	0	0	0
N	34	30	26	34
CPI	95.6	95.0	100.0	99.3

Grade 8	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	15	6	14	11
% Proficient	73	77	81	74
% Needs Improvement	9	16	5	11
% Warning	3	0	0	3
N	33	31	37	35
CPI	93.2	94.4	98.0	92.9

Mathematics MCAS Scores

Key: N = # of students tested; CPI = Composite Performance Index

Warning/Failing %
 Needs Improvement %
 Proficient %
 Advanced/Above Prof. %



Student performance in the mathematics has been relatively stable over the past four years. In 2009, the overall percentage of students scoring proficient or advanced decreased slightly. Similar to ELA, grade eight showed the largest difference with a decrease in students scoring in the advanced category.

	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	21	32	29	34
% Proficient	30	31	33	26
% Needs Improvement	40	23	28	24
% Failing	10	14	11	16
N	101	98	101	103
CPI	78.0	81.6	81.2	79.1

Math Performance by Grade Level

	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	14	24	19	18
% Proficient	34	32	36	29
% Needs Improvement	43	30	31	38
% Warning	9	14	14	15
N	35	37	36	34
CPI	78.6	80.4	77.8	75.0
	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	41	60	46	67
% Proficient	26	23	36	21
% Needs Improvement	29	13	11	6
% Failing	3	3	7	6
N	34	30	28	33
CPI	87.5	93.3	92.0	92.4

	2006	2007	2008	2009
% Advanced	6	13	24	19
% Proficient	28	35	27	28
% Needs Improvement	47	26	38	28
% Warning	19	26	11	25
N	32	31	37	36
CPI	67.2	71.8	76.4	70.8

Science MCAS Scores

Science	Students Included	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improv.	% Warning/Failed	CPI
Grade 8						
2006	32	3	38	41	19	71.9
2007	31	6	32	45	16	70.2
2008	37	0	57	38	5	83.1
2009	36	0	36	50	14	68.8
Grade 10						
2008	25	24	60	16	0	93.0
2009	29	28	59	14	0	95.7

Performance on the 2009 science MCAS improved in grade ten. In grade eight performance declined with a increase in the percentage of students scoring in the Needs Improvement and Warning/Failed categories.

Is the school making Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) in the aggregate and in all statistically significant subgroups?

Finding: FRCPS achieved AYP in ELA in the aggregate and subgroups but not in mathematics in 2009.

The aggregate composite performance index (CPI) in ELA at declined from 95.4 to 94.9 in 2009. The school’s CPI in mathematics decreased from 81.2 to 79.1 in 2009. The school did not meet AYP in mathematics for the White subgroup, which was its only statistically significant subgroup. A summary of the school’s 2009 AYP performance is below as well as the school’s AYP history. Detailed data can also be found in section IV of this report.

Adequate Yearly Progress Summary

	NCLB Accountability Status	Performance Rating	Improvement Rating
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	No Status	Very High	No Change
MATHEMATICS	No Status	Moderate	No Change

Adequate Yearly Progress History

Adequate Yearly Progress History											NCLB Accountability Status
	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009		
ELA	Aggregate	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	
MATH	Aggregate	-	-	-	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	No	

Has the school met or is it making progress toward meeting the academic success objectives set out in its accountability plan?

Finding: The school has met most of the academic success measures contained in its accountability plan.

The school’s accountability plan contains four objectives related to academic success. The first objective relates to performance in ELA and contains five measures. The school met all of the measures in 2009. The second objective deals with performance in mathematics and contains five measures. In 2009 the school met three measures but did not meet two measures for this objective. The third objective relates to performance in science and contains three measures, all of which were met in 2009. The last objective concerns student performance in social studies and

contains three measures. Performance cannot be determined for one measure and the school met two other measures in 2009. More information about the school's success in meeting the objectives and measures contained in its accountability plan can be found in Section VI, Accountability Plan Performance, of this report.

III. Organizational Viability

Does the school have systems and structures in place to review the effectiveness of the academic program and guide its improvement?

Finding: The school's recent reorganization was reported to provide clarity about the responsibilities of administrators and guide continual improvement.

All stakeholders reported that the recent transition of the executive director and reorganization of administrators has gone smoothly. As noted earlier, teachers reported that the transition has provided more clarity regarding the role of administrators. Board members and administrators reported that the school is now focused on further refining practices. The former executive director, who now serves as a board member, was reported to serve as an advisor to the principal while also allowing for him to be independent. Board members reported that the new leadership has placed an emphasis on using and presenting data in new ways to board members. Board members stated that at a recent retreat a significant amount of time was spent looking at assessment results and working to develop a "dashboard" that they can use to track the school's progress over several years.

Finding: The school develops an annual school improvement plan that provides focus for changes in the academic program.

FRCPS develops an annual school improvement plan that is intended to set priorities and guide the work of the school. Board members reported that they work to develop an annual plan with the guidance of staff and track implementation of the plan throughout the school year. Board members, administrators, and teachers reported that this year the school has focused on a limited number of initiatives that can be accomplished and will have an impact on the school. Teachers reported that this level of focus is an improvement from years past when it felt as though the school tried to work on too many different areas at once. The plan is built around a few general theses: to focus, clarify, simplify initiatives; and define the core principals and practices and trust the school's professionals to implement them. The plan is organized into three areas: learning, school culture, and operations. Each area has two or three goals and specific objectives for these goals. In the area of learning, for example, the school has established the goal to implement strong learning expeditions. This goal has three objectives, one of which is to establish expectations, training, planning time, support, and opportunities for sharing and feedback for expeditions.

How does the board of trustees provide oversight and leadership in key areas of the school, including academic achievement and fiscal planning?

Finding: The board reported that its responsibilities are to manage the school's finances and approve changes to school policies. The board receives regular updates about the performance of the school that include qualitative and quantitative data.

Board members reported their role is to oversee the implementation of policy and ensure that the school has the resources needed to carry out its mission. Board members receive a detailed report from the principal that provides information including notes from classroom walkthroughs, updates on student enrollment, and other business. Board members reported that they use this

information to stay up to date about the school’s operations. Board members stated that they restrain themselves from micromanagement and do not become overly involved in the daily operations of the school.

Is the school environment physically safe and free from harassment and discrimination?

Finding: Strengthening school culture was reported to be an emphasis this year. Stakeholders report that the school provides a physically and emotionally safe environment.

Teachers reported that strengthening school culture was an area of focus for the current school year. This issue was reportedly identified by parents through surveys that they completed. The school worked on establishing clear principles and expectations that students could learn and understand. Work was reportedly done to emphasize the school’s six character virtues in classrooms and the advisory program. All stakeholders interviewed by the site visit team reported that the school provides a physically and emotionally safe environment. Students reported that the school has a family-like environment in which students get along and feel comfortable approaching teachers if they need support. Parents also reported that the school provides a safe environment that is supported by its small size.

Are the physical facilities adequate for the program of the school?

Finding: The school’s facilities are more than adequate for its program.

Site visitors observed that the school’s facilities support the school’s mission and provide an appropriate learning environment for teachers and students. The school’s facility occupies a renovated dairy farm and classrooms are housed in three separate facilities. In addition the school has large fields used for physical education and sports programs.

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

Finding: Most teachers have between six to ten years teaching experience and have been at the school for three to five years.

The table below provides a summary of the number of years of teaching experience for core subject area teachers. Most teachers have been at the school for three to five years and also have six to ten years of teaching experience. This year, 54 percent of teachers are licensed in their teaching assignment and 87.9 percent of classes were taught by teachers who were highly qualified.

Years of Teaching Experience for Lead/Core Subject Teachers 2009-2010

	1-2 Years	3-5 Years	6-10 Years	11-20 Years	20+ Years
Teachers with this number of years teaching	0%	17%	58%	25%	0%
Teachers with this number of years teaching at FRCPS	33%	58%	8%	NA	NA

N= 13

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

Finding: Stakeholders report high levels of satisfaction with the school and its performance.

All stakeholders reported high levels of satisfaction with the performance of the school. Parents and students reported satisfaction with the school's unique educational program and the supportive culture it provides. Students reported that the school motivates them to do their best work and places a clear emphasis on going to college. Teachers reported that the school provides an environment where they are supported to continually improve their practice and that the school prepares students to be successful.

Has the school met or is it making progress toward meeting the organizational viability objectives set out in its accountability plan?

Finding: The school met nearly all of the organizational viability measures contained in its accountability plan.

The school's accountability plan contains four objectives related to organizational viability. The first objective relates to enrollment and contains three measures, all of which were met in 2009. The second objective deals with the school's faculty and contains two measures, both of which were met in 2009. The third objective relates to the school's board of trustees and contains four measures. In 2009 the school met three of the measures and performance for one measure could not be determined. The last objective concerns the school's finances and contains four measures. The school met three measures and did not meet one measure in 2009. More information about the school's success in meeting the objectives and measures contained in its accountability plan can be found in Section VI, Accountability Plan Performance, of this report.

IV. Conclusion

Operating in the seventh year of the school's charter, FRCPS has established an academic program and school culture that supports the development of students for lives of learning and service with an emphasis on technology, nature, and the community. All of the school's graduates develop a plan for life after graduation and nearly all of them attend college or another post secondary institution within 15 months after graduation. The school continues to implement an academic program that is based on EL practices. Stakeholders report and site visitors observed that the school has established a supportive community that engages students in learning. The school has successfully transitioned this year to a new leadership model and now has a new principal. Stakeholders report satisfaction with the new model and report an increased clarity regarding the roles of administrators.

The school continues to work on developing its program. As the school continues to mature and plan for its growth it has become increasingly able to focus on specific areas for improvement. Teachers and administrators report that the school plans to develop more systems and structures for using data to drive instruction. Board members also report a desire to identify data they can use to accurately measure the school's performance and guide its growth. Differentiated instruction was also reported to be an area of continued focus for teachers and administrators. As the school works to refine its programs, all stakeholders express a deep commitment to the school's model.

V. 2009 Adequate Yearly Progress Data

English Language Arts															
Student Group	(A) Participation				(B) Performance			(C) Improvement				(D) Grad Rate			AYP 2009
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target (95%)	N	2009 CPI	Met Target (90.2)	2008 CPI Baseline	Gain Target	On Target Range	Met Target	%	Change	Met Target	
Aggregate	105	103	98	Yes	103	94.9	Yes	95.4	0.8	95.4-98.7	Yes/SH	89.7	.0	Yes	Yes
Lim. English Prof.		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Education	15	14	-	-	14	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Low Income	21	21	-	-	21	89.3	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hispanic	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Native American		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	96	95	99	Yes	95	95.5	Yes	95.9	0.7	95.9-99.5	Yes/SH	89.3	.0	Yes	Yes
Mathematics															
Student Group	(A) Participation				(B) Performance			(C) Improvement				(D) Grad Rate			AYP 2009
	Enrolled	Assessed	%	Met Target (95%)	N	2009 CPI	Met Target (84.3)	2008 CPI Baseline	Gain Target	On Target Range	Met Target	%	Change	Met Target	
Aggregate	104	103	99	Yes	103	79.1	No	81.2	3.1	81.8-86.8	No	89.7	.0	Yes	No
Lim. English Prof.		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Special Education	15	15	-	-	15	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Low Income	21	21	-	-	21	67.9	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Afr. Amer./Black	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Asian or Pacif. Isl.	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Hispanic	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Native American		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
White	95	94	99	Yes	94	79.5	No	81.1	3.2	81.1-88.8	No	89.3	.0	Yes	No

VI. Accountability Plan Performance

<u>A. Faithfulness to Charter</u>	2008-09 Performance	Notes
Objective: Themes: Nature, Technology, Community Four Rivers Charter Public School will use the themes of nature, technology, and community to engage and advance student learning.		
Measure: All students will complete, at least once each year, individual or group projects that address the essential question in the school’s mission: How do we find the healthy, sustainable interrelationship of the natural world, technology in its many forms, and the human community? 90% of these projects will be of Meeting quality, as judged by the evaluations of experts, visitors to the school, and/or faculty members who do not teach the students whose projects are being evaluated.	Not Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 all students in grades 7 through 10 and 90% of students in grades 11 and 12 completed group or individual projects addressing the school’s themes. ▪ Projects were reportedly judged by faculty and some experts but not consistently.
Measure: All students, as part of their annual portfolio, will reflect on their engagement with the school themes and the essential question in the mission. 90% of the students will meet this criterion in the assessment of their portfolio.	Not Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 this measure was met in all grades except for grade 7. This was due to a redesign of the portfolio system in that grade that did not allow time for reflection.
Objective: Character & Community Four Rivers Charter Public School will engage students in character growth and service to the school and the community.		
Measure: 90% of students will engage in effective goal-setting for personal and academic growth, as documented in advisory records, student-led conferences and portfolio reflections.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 91% of students engaged in effective goal setting in 2008-09.
Measure: An annual survey of parents and students will document that at least 75% of respondents believe the school helps students to grow personally and develop strength of character.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 91% agree or strongly agree with the statement: “The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop his or her strengths of character.” ▪ The school did not provide a response rate for the survey.
Measure: 90% of students will meet their requirements for service to the school and the community, as documented in advisory records and portfolio reflections	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 91% of students met this goal. ▪ Nearly 100% of students in grades 7-10 and approximately 73% of 11-12th graders met their service requirement.

<p>Objective: College and Post-Secondary Planning Four Rivers Charter Public School will support students in applying to and entering college or preparing for other post-secondary opportunities for learning or service.</p>		
<p>Measure: All 12th grade students will develop a post-secondary plan that includes career and education goals.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In 2008-09 the school reported that all 12th grade students developed a post-secondary plan that included career and education goals.
<p>Measure: The school will guide all 12th grade students in applying to at least one college.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that for the class of 2009, 86% of the graduating class applied to at least one college.
<p>Measure: At least 80% of graduating seniors will matriculate to a college or other post-secondary educational setting of their choice within 15 months after graduation from Four Rivers.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 26 out of 28 graduates, or 93%, planned to attend college or another post secondary institution within 15 months after graduation.
<p>Measure: In a survey of graduates enrolled in college, at least 80% of those responding will report that they felt well prepared by their education at Four Rivers.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 100% of graduates enrolled in college for a year indicated that they agree or strongly agree that they were well prepared in writing, reading comprehension, science understanding and social studies understanding. ▪ In Math, 50% agreed and 50% disagreed that they were well prepared. ▪ The school did not provide a response rate for the survey.
<p>Objective: Expeditionary Learning Four Rivers Charter Public School will implement Expeditionary Learning Core Practices to further its mission.</p>		
<p>Measure: The school will continue to deepen its implementation of Expeditionary Learning Core Practices, as evidenced on the annual implementation review scoring by Expeditionary Learning consultants.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ According to data provided by the school, its 2008-09 annual review by an EL consultant indicated greater implementation of practices.
<p>Measure: For Core Practices identified by the school as high priority in its annual professional development work plan, the school will meet 90% of its designated measures of success.</p>	<p>Performance Cannot Be Determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 it set general goals to increase the number of expeditions and strengthen their quality. Specific measures were not set.

<p>Objective: Dissemination Four Rivers Charter Public School will identify and disseminate best practices of its faculty and staff, including those representative of exemplary Expeditionary Learning Core Practices.</p>		
<p>Measure: The school will identify and disseminate practices and products expressive of high quality Expeditionary Learning Core Practices and other exemplary Four Rivers practices to other schools and communities annually.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2008-09 staff presented at the national EL conference and copies of EL projects from the school were featured in several publications. ▪ The school also reported that students and staff from other schools visited FRCPS.
<p>Measure: The school will, within its second term, offer models for replication and best practices to other public schools in Franklin County.</p>	<p>Partially Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that during the 2008-09 school year the superintendent of the local district has visited twice to observe the school’s Advisor system and that a similar program is being implemented during the 2009-10 school year in the district. ▪ The school reports that it is working to develop relationships with a group exploring inter-district possibilities and cooperation.
<p><u>B. Academic Program</u></p>	<p>2008-09 Performance</p>	<p>Notes</p>
<p>Objective: English Language Arts Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to read with strong comprehension, analysis and interpretation, and write with clarity and skill for different purposes and audiences.</p>		
<p>Measure: MCAS: 75% of students who have attended Four Rivers Charter Public School (FRCPS) for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the English Language Arts MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2009 97% of all 10th graders, who had been at the school for at least 2 years, performed at Proficient level or above. ▪ All 10th grade students passed the 2009 ELA MCAS.

<p>Measure: MCAS: 65% of students will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 8th grade, and at least 90% will pass.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 85% of 8th grade students scored Proficient or Advanced in 2009. ▪ 97% of 8th grade students scored Needs Improvement or better on the 2009 ELA MCAS.
<p>Measure: MCAS: Students in grade 8 and 10 will achieve results on the 8th and 10th grade ELA MCAS at or above the average of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn. (Note: average scores of the sending schools will be calculated as weighted mean.)</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 10th grade students attained proficiency in ELA MCAS at a rate 21% above the average scored by their sending districts. ▪ The school reported that 8th grade students attained proficiency 9% above the average scored by their sending districts.
<p>Measure: .Adequate Yearly Progress: The school will meet its annual targets in English Language Arts in aggregate and in sub groups.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school achieved AYP in ELA in 2009.
<p>Measure: .Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in English at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 91% of students passed all the standards as of July 27, 2009.
<p>Objective: Math Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.</p>		
<p>Measure: MCAS: 65% of students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the Math MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2009 86% of all 10th graders, who had been at the school for at least 2 years, performed at Proficient level or above. ▪ 94% of 10th grade students passed the mathematics MCAS in 2009.
<p>Measure: MCAS: 60% of students will attain Proficiency on the Math MCAS in the 8th grade, and at least 90% will pass.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 47% of 8th grade students scored Proficient or Advanced on the 2009 mathematics MCAS. ▪ 75% of students scored Needs Improvement or better.

<p>Measure: . MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 will achieve results on the 8th and 10th grade Math MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reports that 8th grade students attained proficiency on the 2009 mathematics MCAS at a rate 6% above the average scored by their sending districts. ▪ The school reported that 10th grade students taking the Spring 2009 mathematics MCAS attained proficiency at a rate 17% above the average scored by their sending districts.
<p>Measure: Adequate Yearly Progress: The school will meet its annual targets in Math in aggregate and in sub groups</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ FRCPS did not achieve AYP in mathematics in the aggregate or statistically significant subgroups.
<p>Measure: Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Math at the end of the year.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 93% of students passed all the standards as of July 27, 2009.
<p>Objective: Science Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply scientific knowledge and methods to solve problems and conduct experiments and research.</p>		
<p>Measure: MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 will achieve results on the 8 and 10th grade Science MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 2009 8th grade students attained proficiency at a rate 10% above the average scored by their sending districts on the science MCAS. ▪ 10th grade students attained proficiency 23% above the average scored by their sending districts on the 2009 biology MCAS
<p>Measure: Research: 95% of students will successfully complete a Science research project related to the school themes annually.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that in 7th grade 100% of students completed research projects but the connection with school themes of nature, community and technology was not as strong as in past years. In 8th, 100% of students

		completed a research project for the first Four Rivers Environmental Extravaganza; in 9th and 10th, 100% completed; and in 11th and 12th, 95% completed a science research project related to the school's themes.
Measure: Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Science at the end of the year.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reported that 93% of students passed all the standards as of July 27, 2009.
Objective: Social Studies/History Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply historical insights and research skills to better understand United States and world history.		
Measure: MCAS: Students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve results on the 10th or 11th grade Social Studies/History MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.	Performance Cannot Be Determined	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The social studies MCAS was not administered in 2009.
Measure: Research: 95% of students will successfully complete a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes annually.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reported that all 7th grade students completed an expedition which incorporated nature, technology and community, though not explicitly, as in previous years. In 8th grade, 100% completed research projects; in 9th and 10th, 95% completed; and in 11th and 12th, 95% met the goal.
Measure: Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Social Studies/History at the end of the year.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reported 92% of students passed all the standards as of July 27, 2009.
<u>C. Organizational Viability</u>	2008-09 Performance	Notes
Objective: Enrollment Four Rivers Charter Public School will maintain full or nearly full enrollment.		
Measure: The school will maintain enrollment at or above 97% of its enrollment cap each year.	Met	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The school reported that it had an average enrollment that exceeded number of students that had been budgeted for in 2009.

<p>Measure: 90% of the students eligible and able to return to Four Rivers Charter Public School will reenroll for the following year.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 92.5% of eligible students returned in 2009.
<p>Measure: Applications each year will exceed the number of places available by at least 25%.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that applications for 2008-09 exceeded spaces available by 150%.
<p>Objective: Faculty Four Rivers Charter Public School will retain highly qualified, committed and effective full-time teachers.</p>		
<p>Measure: The school will retain annually 75% of the full-time teachers who have received good or outstanding evaluations and whose circumstances allow them to continue teaching at Four Rivers Charter Public School.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that 83% of eligible fulltime teachers returned in 2009.
<p>Measure: In an annual survey, at least 75% of the parents responding will report satisfaction with the effectiveness of the faculty in areas of academic challenge, support, and communication.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported results from its June 2009 parent survey that 79% or more of parents agreed or strongly agreed with statements related to the effectiveness of the faculty in areas of academic challenge, support, and communication. ▪ The school did not provide a response rate for the survey.
<p>Objective: Board The Board of Trustees, as the governing body of Four Rivers Charter Public School, will fulfill its responsibilities to set policies, monitor progress, and plan effectively for the needs of the school.</p>		
<p>Measure: The Board will hold at least 11 monthly meetings each year and maintain membership consistent with the by-laws.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that the board of trustees met every month of 2009 except August and met twice in June.
<p>Measure: In an annual evaluation of the school leader conducted by the designated committee of the Board, at least 80% of the approved annual goals for the school leader will be met.</p>	<p>Performance Cannot Be Determined</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school’s board did not conduct an evaluation of the executive director because of his retirement.
<p>Measure: The Board will monitor progress in meeting the objectives and measures in the school’s Accountability Plan through semi-annual reports from the school leader and will, as needed, call for and track an action plan to improve performance in deficient areas.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that key elements of the school’s accountability plan were discussed at various Board meetings during the year, such as MCAS goals in October, enrollment goals in March and June, and academic success measures at several other meetings.

<p>Measure: The Board will develop, implement, and assess a Board Action Plan annually.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that the board revised its Board Action Plan in the fall of 2008, aligning Action Plan items with board committee goals, and monitored the plan during the year.
<p>Objective: Finance Four Rivers Charter Public School will be a fiscally sound and solvent organization.</p>		
<p>Measure: Annual expenditures, excluding depreciation, will not exceed annual revenues.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Annual expenditures in 2008-09 did not exceeded revenues.
<p>Measure: The school will attain a cash reserve equivalent to three months' operating expenses by the end of its second charter term.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that it has a cash reserve that is equivalent to three months' operating expenses.
<p>Measure: The school will meet the annual fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees in the annual approved operating budget.</p>	<p>Not Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school reported that the board of trustees raised 60% of the fundraising goal for 2009.
<p>Measure: The annual independent audit for Four Rivers Charter Public School will report no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses.</p>	<p>Met</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The school's FY09 audit did not contain significant deficiencies or material weaknesses.