



Annual Report

August 1, 2007

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
248 Colrain Road
Greenfield, MA 01301
413-775-4577**

www.FourRiversCharter.org



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--pervade teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, fruitful 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.

Introductory Description of the School

Four Rivers Charter Public School was awarded a charter by the Department of Education in 2002 to serve 192 students in grades 7-12. It opened in September, 2003 with 64 students in 7th and 8th, added 9th in 2004, 10th in 2005, and 11th in 2007, bringing the 2006-07 enrollment to 160. With the addition of 12th grade this September, the school will reach full enrollment of 192. As a regional Commonwealth charter school, Four Rivers draws primarily from the six secondary school districts of Franklin County: Frontier Regional, Gill-Montague Regional, Greenfield, Mohawk Trail Regional, Pioneer Regional, and Ralph C. Mahar Regional. The school is located at 248 Colrain Road, Greenfield, adjacent to Greenfield Community College. Edward Blatchford is Executive Director and Co-Founder. Peter Garbus is newly-appointed Principal. Susan Durkee is Assistant Principal and Co-Founder. Harlan Smith is Director of Operations. They may be reached at 413-775-4577.

Four Rivers Charter Public School does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, creed, gender, ethnicity, sexual orientation, mental or physical disability, age, ancestry, athletic performance, special need, proficiency in English language or a foreign language, or prior academic achievement.

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I. Introduction

Letter from Board of Trustee's Chair

David Driscoll, Commissioner of Education
Massachusetts Department of Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148-5023

Dear Commissioner Driscoll:

I am pleased to report that the conclusion of our fourth year of operation has seen continued growth and development of Four Rivers Charter Public School. A strong, vibrant curriculum remains in place with clear standards that are guided by the Massachusetts Frameworks, Expeditionary Learning methods and the school's themes of nature, technology and community.

The past school year also saw the addition of another grade to our school. With a total of five grades - all fully enrolled - in the school, our teaching staff has also grown to include two additional core teachers and several part-time support staff. We are now poised to enter the final year of our grade-level growth as we prepare to add our first 12th grade class.

The Board of Trustees is an active part of the school's growth and development. We continue to meet monthly, and have been involved in all aspects of the school's governance. While I have remained Chair of the Board, we have since had a new Treasurer elected. We have also been joined by a new Trustee, and several board members have renewed their tenure with the board. I believe this mix of continuity and new leadership reflects both our longevity and ability to provide the school with dynamic and continually strong oversight and guidance.

Our faculty remains deeply committed to the students and our school community. Through their efforts, Four Rivers Charter Public School has gained a reputation of high standards, quality education and an exceptional student body.

The school continues to grow partnerships in the community--most notably our continued relationship with Greenfield Community College. GCC has welcomed dual enrollment of Four Rivers 11th graders (and next year, 12th graders), expanding richly the courses available to our older students. We are proud of our standing in the community, and look forward to more partnerships with and service to individuals and organizations in Franklin County.

Respectfully submitted,

Benjamin S. Murray, Chair

Executive Summary

“I wanted to thank you for the spectacular opportunity to work with the students and faculty in the educational community at Four Rivers this year. The school has truly succeeded in providing an environment that fosters learning, understanding, and personal growth not only for your students but for your faculty. I gained a tremendous amount of understanding about teaching by simply watching your faculty interact with their students. As an aspiring teacher, I cannot tell you how refreshing as well as inspiring it is to view teachers who truly have passion for their subjects as well as devotion to their students. Overall, I finished this school year feeling more confident about my own abilities, inspired by the educators around me, and ultimately motivated to pursue a career in education. I have your faculty and of course your students to thank for all this!”

-- An email from a young man who substituted regularly at Four Rivers this winter and spring.

These words of appreciation could well stand for the fourth year of Four Rivers, in which a dynamic and cohesive faculty and staff have continued to build the school program and foster learning in inspiring ways.

Much of the year’s accomplishments built directly on the successes of our first three years:

- Interest in the school keeps growing. We had 122 applicants for 50 spaces for 2006-07, and interest in the coming year has been even stronger. Retention remains high.
- We are attracting and retaining a faculty of exceptional dedication and quality. All but two of the full-time faculty members are returning next year. All of next year’s core teachers are highly qualified in the areas they are teaching. They are working effectively as teams and on various committees, and they remain the heart of our program.
- Our student body continues to grow—161 this year in grades 7-11, and we expect to be fully enrolled with 192 students in 7-12 this September.
- The parents and guardians of our students take a strong interest in the school. Many work closely with the faculty to support their children and various class activities. The Family Council is active in building our school community in many ways.
- Our board of trustees is comprised of hard-working volunteers who are devoted to the school and understand well the board’s crucial role in setting policy, holding the charter, and monitoring accountability for charter renewal.
- Our affiliation with Expeditionary Learning continues to be nourishing of our mission and educational goals. Four of our veteran faculty presented at the EL National Conference in Portland, ME, and almost all full-time faculty members attended.
- Close fiscal management resulted in another year of a balanced budget, and our Annual Fund reached its goal.

And there were important new steps taken as the school approaches full enrollment:

- The faculty, guided by a Curriculum Steering Committee, documented our curriculum in all the major academic areas with course standards aligned to disciplinary goals and the state frameworks.

- The faculty also implemented a fuller and more explicit system of standards-based assessment, which had the effect of making expectations both more clear and more rigorous.
- New parts of the Division III (11th and 12th grades) program took dramatic shape. Over 25% of our 11th graders elected to take courses for credit at Greenfield Community College. Others did independent study. All 11th graders took part in week-long internships with individuals or organizations in the community from whom they wanted to learn about their work.
- Our College Counseling program got off to a strong start, with mini-courses offered to 11th graders on the college application process, helpful activities for students and their parents to assist in planning for their education after Four Rivers, and many visits from college representatives.
- After a Board task force reviewed our administrative needs and made a recommendation, the school created the new position of Principal, to serve as the instructional leader of our growing school. A wide search was conducted, and a candidate with substantial experience in innovative high schools and in charters was selected and began this July.

Now we look forward to the full implementation of our charter, with 192 students in grades 7-12, and our first graduation. And, of course, we look forward to the charter renewal process and the opportunity to carry forward the mission of Four Rivers for another five years!

With thanks to all who have made Four Rivers the school it is today,

Edward Blatchford
Director

II. Accountability

Summary of School Performance in Relation to Accountability Plan

Accountability Plan: 2004-2008

Submitted: August 1, 2004

FOUR RIVERS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL 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--pervade teaching and learning at the school, engaging students and teachers in a fundamental question of our times: how do we find the healthy, fruitful 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.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

GOAL 1: English Language Arts -- Writing

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to communicate clearly in writing for different purposes and audiences.

Indicators

- MCAS: 70% of students who have attended Four Rivers Charter Public School (FRCPS) for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.

Progress toward goal: This indicator has been met, based on the results of the Spring 2006 MCAS taken by our first 10th grade. The Spring 2007 results are not yet available. In the 10th grade last year, 31 of 34 students tested had attended Four Rivers for at least two years. Of that cohort, 84% attained Proficiency and 100% passed.

- MCAS: Students in grade 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score on the 10th grade ELA MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn. (Note: The average scores of the sending schools will be calculated as a weighted mean.)

Progress toward goal: Indicator met. Based on the Spring 2006 ELA MCAS Four Rivers 10th graders attained Proficiency at a rate 18% higher than the weighted average

of their sending districts.

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Language on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

Progress toward goal: *This indicator has not been met. Scores from the Spring 2007 Terra Nova, when compared with the previous administrations of Form C (and tracked as a cohort over 2 or 3 years), show decreases from 7th to 8th and increases ranging from + 0.3 to +4.4 from 8th to 9th. The school will do further study into the reasons for the decline in some scores and the variability of the Terra Nova results over time.*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements in the Writing component of Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: *Indicator was met this year. In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio in June, 90% of the students successfully met the requirements in the Writing component. In the 10th grade Passage Portfolio process this June, 93% met.*

- Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Writing at the end of the year.
- **Progress toward goal:** *This indicator has been met at 90%, when all grades are averaged and allowance is made for summer work just completed. (This year, as we became more explicitly standards-based in our assessment, we adjusted the indicator to match our revised reporting criteria: students needed to pass all the Writing standards, not simply show improvement. Because this was a more rigorous measure than we held previously, we adjusted the percentage needed to meet the indicator from 95% to 90%. This has made the indicator more concrete, meaningful, and motivating. The same adjustment to the Indicator was made in other Progress Report areas to follow: Reading, Math, Science and Social Studies.)*

GOAL 2: English Language Arts -- Reading

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to effectively comprehend, analyze and interpret literature and non-fiction texts.

Indicators

- MCAS: 70% of students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 10th grade, and at least 90% will pass in 10th grade.

Progress toward goal: *This indicator was met, with the same data from the Spring ELA MCAS as shared above in "Writing" goal: 84% attained Proficiency, 100% passed. Spring 2007 MCAS scores are not yet available.*

- MCAS: Students in grade 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will

achieve an average score on the 10th grade ELA MCAS at or above the average scores of the Franklin County schools from which these students were drawn.

Progress toward goal: *Indicator met, as reported above: Four Rivers 10th graders attained Proficiency in ELA MCAS at a rate 18% above the average scores of their sending districts.*

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Reading on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

Progress toward goal: *This indicator has been partially met, with increases in the average annual NCE points in Reading in the last two Terra Nova administrations of +3.3 (7th to 8th, Class of 2010), +6 (8th to 9th, Class of 2010) and +5.7 (7th to 8th, Class of 2010). Earlier administrations to Classes of 2008 and 2009 did not result in increases.*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Reading component of the Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: *Indicator was met this year. In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio, 90% of students successfully met the Reading requirement, while in 10th grade 93% met.*

- Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Reading at the end of the year.

Progress toward goal: *Indicator met, with an overall average of 90% of students passing all standards in Reading at the end of the year.*

GOAL 3: Math

Students at Four Rivers Charter Public School will be able to apply mathematical knowledge and skills to solve problems.

Indicators

- MCAS: 60% 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.

Progress toward goal: *This indicator has been met, based on the results of the Spring 2006 Math MCAS taken by our first 10th grade. Spring 2007 results are not yet available. In Spring 2006, 31 of 34 students tested had attended FRCPS for at least two years, and of that cohort 64.5% attained proficiency and 96.8% passed. The one student who failed in Spring 2006 passed on his first re-take in November, 2006.*

- MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score 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.

Progress toward goal: The goal of scoring at the average scores of sending districts was met in 10th (Four Rivers Proficiency rates matched the average of scores from sending districts) and was just below in 8th (-1). In 7th the score was decidedly above.

- Terra Nova: Students in grades 7, 8 and 9 will have an average improvement annually of 4 Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) points in Math on the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments.

Progress toward goal: Scores from the Spring 2007 Terra Nova and three previous years show that this indicator as been approached but not yet met fully. Increases in scores are as follows:

Class of 2008: + 4 (8th to 9th)

Class of 2009: + 1 (7th to 8th), +2.2 (8th to 9th)

Class of 2010: + 4.2 (7th to 8th), +2.6 (8th to 9th)

Class of 2011: + 2.6 (7th to 8th)

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Math component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process this year, 87% of students successfully met the Math component; in the 10th grade Passage Portfolio process, 93% of students met. Thus an overall average of 90% successfully met the indicator.

- Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Math at the end of the year.

Progress toward goal: This indicator was not met, resulting in significant amounts of summer standards makeup work being done in Math. At 7th grade, 86% met this goal; at 8th, 68% met; at 9th, 72% met; at 10th, 83% met; and at 11th 53%. Thus, an overall average of 72 % of students passed all standards as of June, but that percentage should increase to close to 90% when summer work has been completed.

GOAL 4: 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.

Indicators

- MCAS: Students in grades 8 and 10 who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score 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.

Progress toward goal: Scores from the 10th grade Science (Biology) MCAS taken this spring are not yet available. Last year, in Spring 2006, on the 8th grade Science and Technology/Engineering MCAS, 41% of Four Rivers students achieved Proficiency, which was a rate of Proficiency 14% above the weighted average of the sending districts in Franklin County. Thus the indicator met for available data.

- Research: 95% of students will complete a Science research project related to the school themes and of portfolio quality annually.

***Progress toward goal:** In 7th grade, 92% of students completed a Science research project related to the school themes that met this goal. In 8th, 94% of students met this goal; in 9th, 94% met; in 10th 75% met; and in 11th 61% met. Thus an overall average of 83% of the students completed a research project related to the school themes of nature, technology and community which met the standard for portfolios. Indicator not met.*

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Science component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

***Progress toward goal:** Indicator was met. In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process, 87% of students successfully met the Science component, and in 10th, 97% met the requirements of the science component of their Passage Portfolios.*

- Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Science at the end of the year.

***Progress toward goal:** At 7th grade, 81% of the students met this goal; at 8th, 77% met; at 9th, 81%; at 10th, 81%; and at 11th, 55%. While summer standards makeup work will improve the scores, this indicator has not been met. The faculty expects that this will improve in the coming year, as students learn that the school will in fact demand summer work if all standards have not been passed in a course.*

GOAL 5: Social Studies/History

Students will be able to apply historical insights and research skills to better understand United States and world history.

Indicators

- MCAS: Students who have attended FRCPS for at least two years will achieve an average score 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.

***Progress toward goal:** There is no information to report on this goal; our students took the US History MCAS in 11th grade for the first time this Spring and results have not been released.*

- Research: 95% of students will complete a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes and of portfolio quality annually.

***Progress toward goal:** In 7th grade, 97% of students completed a research project related to the school themes that met this goal; in 8th, 97% met; in 9th, 90% met; in 10th, 80% met; and in 11th 80% met the goal. Thus, an overall average of 89% of students*

completed a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes of nature, technology and community which met the standard for portfolios.

- Passage Portfolio: 90% of students will successfully meet the requirements for the Social Studies/History component in Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades.

Progress toward goal: *In the 8th grade Passage Portfolio process, 90% of the students met the Social Studies/History research project component; in 10th, 87% met. Thus, the overall average was 88.5%, not quite meeting the indicator.*

- Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Social Studies/History at the end of the year.
- ***Progress toward goal:*** *At 7th grade, 94.5% met this goal; at 8th, 97% met; at 9th, 78% met; at 10th, 87% met; and at 11th, 87%, for an overall average of 89% of the students passing all standards in Social Studies/History. With summer work, the indicator will surely be met.*

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

GOAL 6: Enrollment

Four Rivers Charter Public School will be fully enrolled each year.

Indicators

- The school will reach its goal of growth by 32 students/year to full enrollment in 2007-08.

Progress toward goal: *The school met this goal again this year with an average of 161 students in grades 7-11. Enrollment is projected at 192 students with our first 12th grade in 2007-08.*

- 90% percent of the students eligible and able to return to Four Rivers Charter Public School will reenroll for the following school year.

Progress toward goal: *With 91.4% reenrollment of students eligible and able to reenroll, this goal was met.*

- Applications each year will exceed the number of places available by 25%.

Progress toward goal: *Total applications for 2006-07 exceeded places available by 162%.*

GOAL 7: Faculty

Four Rivers Charter Public School will retain qualified, committed and effective full-time teachers.

Indicators

- The school will retain annually 75% of the full-time teachers who have received good or outstanding evaluations and who are able to continue teaching at Four Rivers Charter Public School.

Progress toward goal: The school has retained 88% of the full-time teachers this year.

- 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.

Progress toward goal: In our Parent Survey this June, the following results speak to this goal:

94% of the parents responding indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child's school program."

89% indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child."

81% indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate," and

92% agree or strongly agree with the statement: "Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate."

GOAL 8: 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.

Indicators

- The Board will meet monthly and maintain membership consistent with the by-laws.

Progress toward goal: Indicator met. The Board met every month of the year except August, and it maintained at least the minimum number of 10 members consistent with by-laws, except for a brief period in the Fall of 2006 when membership was 9.

- The Board will set goals annually with the school director and will evaluate the director based on those goals.

Progress toward goal: Annual goals were set with the Director and a comprehensive evaluation was completed in the summer of 2007, led by the Committee on Trustees chair. Indicator met.

- The Board will oversee the Accountability Plan through semi-annual reports from the director.

Progress toward goal: The Board reviews the Annual Report each summer and in that way sees an update on the Accountability Plan progress. The Director reports regularly on certain part of the plan as relevant information or need for decisions arise. For instance, the October meeting included a full discussion of the school's first 10th grade MCAS scores, and the May meeting included a review of the school's preparations for its application for charter renewal, in which was embedded numerous accountability plan goals. Finally, a task force of the Board, with prior board approval, advised the Director on revisions to the Accountability Plan to be included with the charter renewal application. Indicator met.

- The Board will develop, implement and assess a Board Action Plan annually.

Progress toward goal: The Board revised its on-going Board Action Plan in late summer and fall of 2006, aligning Action Plan items with board committee goals, and monitored it during the year. It was reviewed in preparation for a Board retreat in June, 2007, and the Action Plan will be updated for 2007-08, in order for it to remain a guiding document of the Board and its committee work. Indicator met.

GOAL 9: Finances

Four Rivers Charter Public School will be a fiscally sound and solvent organization.

Indicators

- Annual expenditures, excluding depreciation, will not exceed annual revenues.

Progress toward goal: The annual expenditures in 2006-07 have not exceeded revenues. For details of meeting this goal, see the financial records in Financial Profile section.

- The school will attain a cash reserve equivalent to three months' operating expenses by the end of the 5th year.

Progress toward goal: See financials. Progress toward this goal, as stated, has been challenging, but the Finance Committee and the Director of Operations have managed the available funds this year so that minimal borrowing was necessary to cover end-of-quarter expenses prior to receipt of quarterly tuition payments, which is one of the anticipated needs behind this goal. The total cost for short-term borrowing, near the close of each quarter, was only \$521.

- The school will meet the annual fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees in the annual approved operating budget.

Progress toward goal: The Annual Fund exceeded its \$34,000 goal this year. See financials for more details.

- The annual independent audit for Four Rivers Charter Public School will report no major findings.

Progress toward goal: An independent audit for fiscal year 2006 reported no major findings. The audit for fiscal year 2007 has not yet been done.

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

GOAL 10: Themes: Nature, Technology, Community

Four Rivers Charter Public School will use the themes of nature, technology, and community to engage and advance student learning.

Indicators

- Once per year, all students will complete individual or small group projects that address the essential question in the school's mission: *How do we find the healthy, fruitful 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 and visitors to the school.

Progress toward goal: The school's themes of nature, technology and community provide a stimulus for engaging investigations in many projects over the course of a year, from science to social studies and English. While we see much more that can be done with our themes as the school matures, we are making progress in this goal, and 80% of the students completed projects addressing the school themes. They were judged by faculty and some experts, but not consistently as the indicator describes.

Examples of themes projects from this year include:

- *"What is Waste?" learning expedition analyzing school's waste stream (7th)*
- *Solar cooker design challenge (8th)*
- *Research projects on alternative-fuel vehicles (9th)*
- *Research projects on how chemicals in environment affect health (10th)*
- *Project in which students wrote a paper lobbying a senator about an energy policy (11th)*

GOAL 11: Character & Community

Four Rivers Charter Public School will engage students in character growth and service to the school and the community.

Indicators

- Students will engage in effective goal-setting for personal and academic growth, as

documented in advisory records and student-led conferences.

Progress toward goal: *As reported by the three advisors at each grade, 80% of the 7th graders were able to engage in effective goal-setting; 100% of 8th met the goal; 97% of the 9th graders; 75% of 10th graders; and 70% of 11th met the goal. Thus, averaging the five grades, 84% of Four Rivers students demonstrated effective goal setting for personal and academic growth, as documented in advisory records and student-led conferences.*

- The school will maintain a positive school culture, as reflected in an annual survey of parents and students, student and faculty retention, and observations by visiting educators.

Progress toward goal:

a) In the school's Parent Survey this June the following elements of a positive school culture were addressed:

96% of the parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment."

96% of parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop his or her strengths of character."

98% of parents responding agreed or strongly agreed with the statement: "I believe that at least one of my child's teachers knows and understands him or her well."

While the results of the Parent Survey continued to be very encouraging, the school intends to review the survey methods next year to capture a higher response rate. The Student Survey was neglected this Spring, in the rush of testing and end of year activities, and it will surely be done again next year.

b) Strong faculty retention (88% of full-time faculty) and student retention (91.4%) also speak to this goal.

c) Observations by visiting educators are consistently positive but still anecdotal and not recorded systematically. Here is an unscientific sample-- an email sent to the Director in May by one visitor, a health educator who observed the school on two days: "I have had the opportunity to visit your school twice now and on both occasions have been deeply impressed. Today I was particularly struck by the learning community created in the school and evidenced in deep classroom discussion, relationships among the staff, and the relationships between the students and the staff.... As an educator, I find the application of knowledge into students' lives inspiring, and I appreciate the ability of your school to make that reality evident to an outsider. Thank you for the hard work of so many in bringing an idea into reality."

- Students will participate in service activities within the school and in the Franklin County community, as documented by advisory records and portfolios.

Progress toward goal: *As reported by the advisors and documented in students' portfolios, a full 96% of all students participated in service actions. Here are examples from this year:*

- ~Clean-up Day in a local park, initiated by students after seeing trash there (7th)
- ~Walk for Juvenile Diabetes; fundraising for local Food Bank (8th)
- ~Service work at a community farm in Holyoke run by Nuestras Raices (9th)
- ~Gathering used books for those in prisons; garden work at a local park (10th)
- ~Individual service projects for 11th graders ranged from being a fire department volunteer to substance abuse prevention work to being an assistant coach to Four Rivers athletic teams.

GOAL 12: Expeditionary Learning

The school will implement and disseminate Expeditionary Learning Core Practices.

Indicators

- The school will continue to improve its implementation of Expeditionary Learning Core Practices, as evidenced on the annual implementation review scoring by Expeditionary Learning consultants.

Progress toward goal: *In its fourth Implementation Review of Four Rivers conducted by Expeditionary Learning, the results continue to be positive and affirming of our faculty's efforts.*

On a scale of 0-4, with 0 indicating no implementation and 4 indicating full and exemplary implementation, the school earned an average rating of 2.4 for the Core Practices of Learning Expeditions, Active Pedagogy, School Culture and Character, Leadership and School Improvement, and Structures. The implementation rate was higher among faculty with more experience at Four Rivers, not a surprising fact when one considers fully implementing EL methods takes considerable training and practice, and two of the core teachers in the high school and one in the middle school were new to Four Rivers and Expeditionary Learning this year. Here are some comments written by Steven Levy, our EL consultant, earlier in the year about the quality of EL teaching at Four Rivers:

"I work with schools across the country to develop projects that engage students, promote understanding, and serve community needs. I have used products from Four Rivers to model what excellence looks like, and they have inspired project ideas for teachers around the country, and raised their expectations for what it is possible for students to achieve."

- The school will disseminate practices and products expressive of high quality Expeditionary Learning Core Practices to other schools and communities annually.
- ***Progress toward goal:*** *The faculty of Four Rivers continues to disseminate Expeditionary Learning practices and products to other schools and communities. For instance, dissemination activities this year have included:*

1) Matt Leaf (English and Social Studies) and Mandy Locke (Math and Science), our veteran 7th grade teachers, presented a master class to educators from across the country attending the Expeditionary Learning National Conference in March. Leif Riddington, high school English teacher, and Susan Durkee, high school coordinator and art teacher, also presented a master class at the EL National Conference this year. Both sets of presenters received very high ratings from those attending.

2) Laura Stamas, Science teacher in the high school, presented a workshop based on an investigation into alternative-fueled vehicles to the Massachusetts Charter School Association's Annual Best Practices Showcase in March, 2007.

3) Under Mr. Riddington's guidance, students from Four Rivers collaborated with a local organization to put forward a "Road to Freedom" photo-text exhibit that is on tour nationally in universities and museums.

4) Ms Locke also completed a interdisciplinary learning expedition called "Watershed Wildlife," which was an illustrated investigation of species found in the Connecticut Rivers watershed. The final product of the expedition is a CD which is being distributed to a local environmental center, area schools and libraries as a resource for students and a vivid representation of EL practices.

III. School Profile

Summary of Educational Philosophy

To fulfill its mission, the school is guided by four basic commitments we have articulated to students, parents and the community, and by our powerful affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Schools.

1. *Expecting the best.* Four Rivers expects high levels of achievement in academic learning, effort, and teamwork. We challenge students to dig deeper and work harder than most have done before. With talented and enthusiastic teachers, our program seeks to prepare every student for college. The curriculum grows from the Massachusetts curriculum frameworks, with an emphasis on excellence in reading, writing and math, ensuring readiness for the MCAS. Its real energy comes from teachers working with small classes to develop challenging projects, through which students learn essential knowledge, skills, and values. They teach with clear standards for top quality work, respect for individual differences, and the conviction that every student can and wants to strive for the best.

2. *Learning by doing.* At Four Rivers, learning is active, not passive. Meaningful, engaging projects are central to our curriculum. Several times a year classes go on “learning expeditions”: in-depth investigations of a theme or topic, guided by questions, which may extend from four to six or more weeks. Students do original research and fieldwork, often involving experts in the community. Expeditions promote responsibility and collaboration; they speak to diverse learning styles, reveal new strengths, and deepen understanding. Typically, learning expeditions end with the students producing work—a report, a publication, a performance—that has a real purpose and a real audience.

3. *Exploring big questions.* The school’s themes of nature, technology and community engage teachers and students in basic questions that promote active learning and bring them in touch with our area and our times. What does the natural world have to teach us? What does technology, and the creative power of invention behind it, offer us? How do they work together for the good of all? There is endless learning to be explored -- and a cause to be served -- in our themes. Our answers can shape the future, here in Franklin County and in the world beyond.

4. *Building character and community.* At Four Rivers, the development of character and community are as important as academic achievement. Our school is small, with a place for everyone. Every student is known by all; each is valued as bringing a unique gift to the school. All of us are called on to think and act for the common good. Through our advisory program and our curriculum, we guide each student’s quest for the strength of character and insight to make healthy choices and set positive goals. We encourage student leadership and initiative in helping one another, strengthening our school, and serving the community beyond. We emphasize six character virtues, and we also have a clear code of conduct, with no tolerance for behavior that is unsafe or hurtful to an individual or the community.

Expeditionary Learning Schools: The methods for our mission. Since its founding, Four Rivers has drawn strength from its affiliation with Expeditionary Learning Schools (EL), a national non-profit model for comprehensive school reform. Expeditionary Learning is rooted in

a rich tradition of innovative approaches to active learning, academic rigor, and character growth, and it is a vital resource to help Four Rivers realize our unique mission and our charter. The Expeditionary Learning model is based on ten “Design Principles” and five “Core Practices”.

The Design Principles, providing the original philosophical underpinning of Expeditionary Learning, are listed here in their short form: *The Primacy of Self-Discovery, The Having of Wonderful Ideas, Responsibility for Learning, Empathy and Caring, Success and Failure, Collaboration and Competition, Diversity and Inclusion, The Natural World, Solitude and Reflection, and Service and Compassion.*

The Core Practices describe Expeditionary Learning in action. EL has articulated an extensive set of benchmarks for each Core Practice, providing clear guidance to full implementation of the model. Here are the five Core Practices, with highlights from the benchmarks:

1. *Learning Expeditions:* Learning expeditions are long-term, in-depth investigations of a topic that engage students through authentic projects, advancing skills and content understanding aligned with state standards. The benchmarks give detailed indicators on implementing learning expeditions across the school; designing compelling topics and guiding questions; designing products and linked projects; incorporating fieldwork, local expertise, and service learning; and producing and presenting high quality student work.

2. *Active Pedagogy:* The model is not just about learning expeditions; more basically, it calls for using active and engaging instructional practices school-wide, as much as possible. Benchmarks include teaching reading and writing across the disciplines; teaching math, science and social studies through inquiry; valuing the arts as a vehicle for learning; and using effective assessment practices.

3. *Culture and Character:* Benchmarks in this crucial area promote building a positive school culture and fostering character; ensuring equity and high expectations; fostering a safe, respectful and orderly community; promoting adventure and fitness; developing a professional community; and engaging families in the life of the school.

4. *Leadership and School Improvement:* Leaders in Expeditionary Learning schools provide leadership in curriculum, instruction and school culture. Benchmarks also call for sharing leadership and building community partnerships, using multiple sources of data to improve student achievement; and assessing school progress and planning for improvement continually.

5. *Structures:* Expeditionary Learning benchmarks in this area focus on ensuring that schedules accommodate project work and flexible grouping, as well as time for planning and professional development for faculty. Still more importantly, they call for ways for all students to be known well and supported by caring adults.

Expert Expeditionary Learning consultants provide our staff with support in implementing the Core Practices, regular coaching matched to our students and curriculum, a variety of workshops at Expeditionary Learning sites during the school year and the summer, and a national network of other Expeditionary Learning schools from which to learn and grow.

Summary of external standardized test results

The MCAS and the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments provide external standardized test data for the school.

Terra Nova. Four Rivers administers the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments (Form C) in Reading, Language and Math for incoming 7th graders in the Fall of each year, to establish a baseline. In the fall of 2003, our first year, we also administered the test to our incoming class of 8th graders, for the same purpose. We administered what we were told (by those at the testing company CTP McGraw-Hill) was a comparable form of the test (Form A) in the Spring of 2004, both to indicate progress for the year and, more importantly, to establish a Spring baseline with which to gauge yearly progress. We have continued to use the comparable Form A of the Terra Nova for Spring testing in 7th grade. As we have studied the scores from Form A, however, we question exactly how comparable Form A and C really are, and we have begun making comparative judgments for purposes of tracking our Accountability Plan goals only on successive administrations of Form C. Here are highlights of the testing over four years, reported in mean normal curve equivalents (NCE). We have done an initial study of the progress of cohorts (that is, a group of the same students continuing from 7th through 9th) toward meeting our Accountability Plan goals, and they are reported above. Meanwhile, we use group and individual data from Terra Nova testing to extend our understanding of student needs and strengths as learners. In the Fall of 2007 we will be reviewing the value of our Terra Nova when compared to a more explicitly diagnostic test that might be given to 7th – 9th in the Fall, and in light of the increased administrations of MCAS each Spring

Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments 2003-2007 Baseline Data and Yearly Spring Testing by Classes			
<i>Class by Year of FRCPS Graduation</i>	<i>No. of Students (No. w/accommodations)</i>	<i>Mean Normal Curve Equivalent Fall, only in entry year</i>	<i>Mean Normal Curve Equivalent, Spring</i>
		<i>Fall 2003 c*</i>	<i>Spring 2004 a*</i>
<i>Class of 2008</i>			
8 th Reading	32 (6)	66.8	64.3
8 th Language	32 (6)	61.4	67.4
8 th Mathematics	32 (7)	61.4	60.6
			<i>Spring 2005 c</i>
9 th Reading	34 (8)		67.0
9 th Language	34 (8)		65.9
9 th Mathematics	34 (8)		65.0
<i>Class of 2009</i>		<i>Fall 2003 c</i>	<i>Spring 2004 a</i>
7 th Reading	32 (7)	66.0	65.7
7 th Language	32 (7)	65.2	63.9
7 th Mathematics	32 (7)	62.5	62.1
			<i>Spring 2005 c</i>
8 th Reading	33 (10)		65.9
8 th Language	33 (10)		62.2
8 th Mathematics	33 (10)		63.6
			<i>Spring 2006 c</i>
9 th Reading	32 (12)		66.6

9 th Language	32 (12)		64.2
9 th Mathematics	32 (12)		61.7
<i>Class of 2010</i>		<i>Fall 2004 c</i>	<i>Spring 2005 a</i>
7 th Reading	33 (7)	60.2	70.1
7 th Language	33 (7)	64.9	65.7
7 th Mathematics	33 (7)	61.8	67.8
			<i>Spring 2006 c</i>
8 th Reading	29 (8)		62.9
8 th Language	29 (8)		56.2
8 th Mathematics	28 (7)		66.0
			<i>Spring 2007 c</i>
9 th Reading	30 (6)		67.7
9 th Language	30 (6)		62.3
9 th Mathematics	30 (6)		66.4
<i>Class of 2011</i>		<i>Fall 2005 c</i>	<i>Spring 2006 a</i>
7 th Reading	36	68.9	78.3
7 th Language	36	69.6	72.2
7 th Mathematics	36	67.8	69.8
			<i>Spring 2007 c</i>
8 th Reading	31		68.9
8 th Language	31		64.6
8 th Mathematics	31		63.5
<i>Class of 2012</i>		<i>Fall 2006 a</i>	<i>Spring 2007 c</i>
7 th Reading	37	72.4	68.4
7 th Language	37	66.3	66.5
7 th Mathematics	37	70.8	67.8
* Note: c = Terra Nova Form C a = Terra Nova Form A			

MCAS. The table below tracks the performance of Four Rivers students on the MCAS in the Spring of 2004, 2005, and 2006. The results from the Spring 2007 administration have not been received. There is much for us to study in this table, and in the data that informed it. We are very pleased with the success of the 10th grade in 2006, with high Proficiency rates in both ELA and Math, and will 100% passing ELA and all but one student passing Math (and that student passed on the first re-take). We want to continue the strong work in English, and will be doing a review of the Math scores and our math program this Fall and determining steps to bolster Math performance.

Four Rivers MCAS Results by Performance Category Spring 2004, 2005, 2006					
Year	Students tested	% Advanced	% Proficient	% Needs Improvement	% Warning/ Failing
Grade 7 English Language Arts					
2004 <i>Class of 2009</i>	32	3	69	25	3
2005 <i>Class of 2010</i>	33	9	79	12	0
2006 <i>Class of 2011</i>	35	3	71	23	3
Grade 7 Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2011</i>	35	14	34	43	9
Grade 8 English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	34	15	73	9	3
Grade 8 Mathematics					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	28	56	6
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	0	Grade 8 Science & Technology/Engineering	59	15
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	28	48	19
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	3	44	47	6
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	32	3	38	41	19
Grade 10 English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	12	74	15	0
Grade 10 Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	41	26	29	3

Other external school measures

Adequate Yearly Progress. As a school only in its fourth year, Four Rivers is still in the early stage of being measured for Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) by the DOE. The table below presents the school’s history of AYP. The school does not yet have statistically meaningful subgroups for accountability purposes and does not have an ‘accountability status,’ meaning that the school is not currently subject to any consequences as part of the Massachusetts accountability system.

		Adequate Yearly Progress History								Account-ability Status
		1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	
ELA	Aggregate	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	Yes	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	
MATH	Aggregate	-	-	-	-	-	Yes	No	Yes	No Status
	All Subgroups	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	

Summary of internal assessment methods and results

The internal assessment system at Four Rivers has several components, and the results are reported in different ways.

1) **On-going assessment for learning** is conducted in the classrooms almost daily. The faculty develops rubrics for most projects and major assignments, often with input from the students. The rubrics provide clear descriptors for each component of the assignment, with gradations indicating the characteristics of work done to the *Beginning, Approaching, Meeting, and Exceeding* levels. Clear models of high quality work are often critiqued and emulated. In these ways, most students are able to understand and even assess their own progress. As well, effective use of rubrics and models gives the teacher the clear means of assessing work to promote further learning, and the results are shared directly. All this serves our goal at Four Rivers of setting high expectations for high quality work from every student.

2) **Progress Reports** are issued at the end of each trimester. Brief interim reports are issued in the middle of each trimester for student-led conferences among the advisor, the parents, and the student. Progress Reports include a course description, a set of course standards to which the grades *Beginning, Approaching, Meeting* and *Exceeding* are applied, and a narrative comment. The faculty has made a concerted effort this year to formulate concise course standards, often supported in class with learning targets in “kid-friendly language” or other means of describing exactly what a student needs to know and do in order to pass each course standard. A major change this year has been the requirement that all course standards be passed (minimum passing level at *Approaching* +) for a student to be given credit for the course. This rigorous level of performance in all aspects of a course has meant that many students needed extensive revision to bring their work on each course standard up to passing or above. For weaker students, time was made at the end of the first and second trimesters, and after school, to provide support. Still, a significant number of students needed summer make-up work on their deficient course standards,

especially in the high school. The faculty believes that next year more students, realizing that summer work is the alternative, will push to pass all course standards on their Progress Reports by the end of each trimester.

3) **Portfolios** continue to grow as a vital part of the Four Rivers internal assessment system. Students at each grade are required to assemble a portfolio, including their best work in all the specified areas, from core academics to service and character. In contrast to timed, standardized tests, portfolios allow for time, revision, and multiple ways to show learning. Students at 7th and 9th prepared portfolios of the current year’s best work. Students at 8th and 10th had the additional challenge of preparing “Passage Portfolios” which included work from two years and involved a presentation to a panel of faculty, parents and peers. At the Passage Portfolio presentations, each lasting 20-30 minutes, the student described areas of strength and needed improvement in key areas, with samples from his or her portfolio, and thoughtful sharing of interests and goals for the future. Successful completion of Passage Portfolios at 8th and 10th grades are a requirement for advancing to the next grade, and for this reason, among others, most students put extraordinary effort into the Passage Portfolio. As data reported in the Accountability Plan section shows, over 90% of the students met the portfolio standards, and those who didn’t are making up the incomplete work over the summer.

4) **Survey.** The school administered a Parent Survey in June to gauge satisfaction and assemble data for planning and accountability. Responses to the survey came from 53 families, representing 56 of our 161 students, or 35%. This was a lower rate of return than last year’s survey, but the results were similarly positive. Here are the survey statements on topics relevant for this report, with the percentage of parents responding who indicated they “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” with the statement.

Four Rivers Parent Survey June 2007	Percent who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”
I generally understand the educational approach used at Four Rivers	100
Academic expectations at the school are clear	87
I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child’s school program	94
The progress reports help me understand my child’s school experiences and achievement	85
I am satisfied with the amount of homework assigned to my child	77
I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child	89
My child is held to higher expectations of academic performance than at previous school	75
The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment	96
Behavioral expectations at school are clear	91
The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop strengths of character	96
I believe at least one of my child’s teachers knows and understands him or her well	98
The newsletters and mailings create a good communication system within the school	92
Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate	81
Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate	92
The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families	96
FRCPS has supported and/or positively impacted my parenting and involvement with my child’s education	89

Number of instructional days

Four Rivers completed 180 instructional days in the past school year, starting August 30, 2006 and ending June 13, 2007. School began at 8:00 am; dismissal was at 3:05 pm.

IV. Governance Profile

Board of Trustees, 2006-07

Chairman, Benjamin Murray, Buckland, MA. Director, Red Gate Farm Educational Center, Appointed 2002. Committee on Trustees and Personnel Policies

Vice-Chair, Marie Bartlett, Leyden, MA. Parent, Community Volunteer. Appointed 2003. Committees on Trustees and Personnel Policies.

Treasurer, Deborah T. Volland, Greenfield, MA. Community volunteer with technology background. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2004. Finance and Facilities Committee.

Secretary, David Roulston, Greenfield, MA. Attorney-at-Law, Greenfield. Appointed 2003. Development Committee.

Edward Blatchford, Shelburne, MA. Director, Four Rivers Charter Public School, *ex-officio*.

Pamela Brown, Leyden, MA. Former co-director of the New England Center for Women in Transition (NELCWIT), currently director of social services for town of Enfield, CT. Appointed 2004.. Development Committee.

Linda Cavanaugh, Buckland, MA. Professor of Mathematics, Greenfield Community College. Appointed 2002. Finance and Facilities Committee.

Timothy Flynn, Greenfield, MA. Attorney in Franklin Country, with legal experience in the military and abroad. Appointed 2006. Finance and Facilities Committee.

Alan Fraker, Greenfield, MA. College Counselor, Assistant Headmaster, Montclair-Kimberly Academy; former director of accountability for the KIPP Foundation. Appointed 2003. Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Daniel F. LaRose, Shelburne, MA. Professor of Psychology and Human Ecology, Interim Assistant Dean, Greenfield Community College. Appointed 2002. Facilities and Finance Committee, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Board of Trustees Meetings

All trustee meetings in the school year 2006-07 were held at the school, 7:00-9:00 p.m., on the second Monday of each month. An all-day trustee retreat was held June 9, 2007.

Major Policy Decisions of the Board of Trustees 2006-2007

- Voted to modify Health Leave and Vacation Leave policies.

- Voted to establish a Task Force on Organizational Structure to develop a long term organizational plan for school administration and to make recommendation to the Board by June 2007.
- Voted to merge Committee on Trustees and Committee on Personnel Policies into Committee on Trustees and Personnel Policies.
- Voted to amend the FY2007 Operating Budget.
- Voted to reestablish the Task Force on Accountability and Program Planning as the Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.
- Voted to authorize Board Chair to review the FY 2006 audit and reject or accept it (the audit was accepted).
- Voted to approve the recommendations of the Task Force on Organizational Structure, to hire a school principal and, for two years, to fund the position of an Executive Director.
- Voted to alter the School Bylaws to read "...Board Trustees may serve for three consecutive terms..." (Changed from two consecutive terms.)
- Voted to approve the Fiscal Year 2008 Operating Budget.

Summary of Official Complaints

Two official complaints were received by the Board of Trustees in FY 2007. One was a continuation of a complaint received by a student's parents regarding the quality of their child's education at the school. The complaint was reviewed by the Board of Trustees and found to be without merit on all counts.

The second complaint was made by a parent regarding the disciplinary action taken against her child for violations of school policy. The complaint was reviewed by the Board of Trustees and found to be without merit.

No further action was taken by either party.

V. Student Profile

Four Rivers Charter School ~ Student Profile 2006-07

Total Enrollment~161

As of June 13, 2007

Student Demographics

Enrollment by Grade:	7 th – 37
	8 th – 31
	9 th – 32
	10 th – 30
	<u>11th – 31</u>
	161

Gender:	Male	Female
7 th	24 (65%)	13 (35%)
8 th	16 (52%)	15 (48%)
9 th	20 (62%)	12 (38%)
10 th	18 (60%)	12 (40%)
11 th	<u>18 (58%)</u>	<u>13 (42%)</u>
Total	96 (60%)	65 (40%)

Race/Ethnicity:

1 Hispanic	1%
1 Asian	1%
3 Black/Mixed race	2%
2 Native American	1%
154 White	95%

Free and Reduced Lunch:

38 Qualified	24%
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Enrolled in Special Education:

30 Enrolled	24%
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Limited English Proficient: 0%

Linguistic Minorities: 0%

Attendance Rate

Average Daily Attendance for the Year = 94.8 %
(figure taken from EOY SIMS report June 2007)

Student Turnover/Attrition Data 2006-07

(# students on opening day 2006 = 160; # students on June 13, 2007 = 161)

Students who withdrew during the 2006-07 school year = 6

- 2 *Returned to home district during first month of school year – missed friends*
- 1 *Transferred to home district for more sports opportunities*
- 1 *Left school to work toward GED at the local Community College*
- 1 *Returned to home schooling*
- 1 *Expelled ~ later enrolled in another Massachusetts district*

Students who enrolled during the 2006-07 school year = 7

- 3 *entered Grade 7 from wait list*
- 2 *entered Grade 9, had siblings already enrolled*
- 2 *entered Grade 10 from lottery held November 27, 2006*

Students who finished the school year but are not returning in Fall 2007 = 14 (as of 7/20/07)

- 3 *Transferring to county vocational/technical high school*
- 1 *Transferring to performing arts charter school to join a sibling*
- 1 *Transferring to private school to join a sibling*
- 3 *Transferring to larger schools seeking more choices in sports and academics*
- 3 *Transferring to home districts for more specialized programs*
- 2 *Transferring to home district to avoid repeating a year at Four Rivers*
- 1 *Transferring to home district ~ parents unhappy with our program*

Expulsions – Suspensions 06-07

Number of Students Expelled **1** (*possession of controlled substance ~ Marijuana*)

Number of In-School Suspensions **3 incidents (3 students)**

Summary of Reasons:

<i>Disruptive/Disrespectful</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Vandalism of student property</i>	<i>2</i>

Number of Out-Of-School Suspensions **27 incidents (17 Students)**

Summary of reasons:

<i>Leaving class or school w/out permission</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Disruptive/Disrespectful/Rude/Defiant</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Lying/Dishonesty to Staff</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Plagiarism</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Unsafe behavior</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Theft</i>	<i>2</i>
<i>Property Damage</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Fighting</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Smoking</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>Possession of controlled substance</i>	<i>1</i>
<i>(marijuana)</i>	

Student Applications Received for 2006 - 2007

Total Applications = 122

Grade 7:

84 Applications for 34 Spaces

Grade 8:

13 Applications for 1 Space

Grade 9:

15 Applications for 8 Spaces

Grade 10:

10 Applications for 2 Spaces

Demand ratio 122 / 45 (2.71)

Total Number of Student Applications Received for 06-07 by Town				
Town	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10
Ashfield	4	0	3	0
Bernardston	1	0	0	0
Buckland	1	0	0	1
Charlemont	1	0	0	0
Colrain	3	0	0	0
Conway	4	0	0	0
Deerfield	3	1	1	0
Erving	3	0	0	0
Foxboro	0	1	0	0
Gill	5	0	1	0
Greenfield	28	5	6	1
Leyden	0	2	1	0
Montague	7	2	2	0
Northfield	6	1	0	2
Orange	0	2	0	0
Petersham	1	0	0	1
Shelburne	10	0	0	0
Sunderland	3	0	0	0
Warwick	2	0	0	1
Whately	2	0	1	0
TOTAL	84	13	15	10

VI. Staff Profile

Faculty and Staff Biographies Academic Year 2006 - 07

Suzanne Anderson, Choral Music (Part Time)

Ms. Anderson has had a career as a solo and stage production vocal soloist throughout Western Massachusetts and has been a pianist. She joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Edward Blatchford, Director and Co-founder

B.A. American Studies, Yale University; M.A. English and American Literature, Columbia University; M.S. Special Education, Adelphi University. Mr. Blatchford is an experienced teacher and school leader. He was head of an independent school in Connecticut for 10 years, founded an alternative middle school, and earlier taught and served as an administrator at two independent middle and high schools. Prior to founding Four Rivers, he taught composition at Greenfield Community College. He joined Four Rivers in 2002.

Michael Bukowick, 8th Grade English and Social Studies

B.A. Sociology, Univ. of Virginia; MA Landscape Architecture, Univ. of Massachusetts; MA, Education, Univ. of Massachusetts. Mr. Bukowick has been a high school vocational teacher in the Peace Corps, a clinical/student high school teacher in Springfield, and has taught high school history and been an advisor to club activities at Northampton High School. He joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Ellen Clegg, Music (Part Time)

B.A., Psychology, Oberlin College; M.S., Education. Ms. Clegg is a percussion teacher at Greenfield Community College and Valley Community Music School, and a frequent percussion performer in Western Massachusetts and further afield. She also has her own business, *Found Sounds: Community Through Rhythm*, offering classes, workshops and community events. She joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Kate Conant, Learning Specialist

B.A., English and Community Service, Univ. of Massachusetts; M. Ed. In Special Education, Univ. of Massachusetts. Mrs. Conant's experience includes fourteen years special learning needs experience at Great Falls Middle School in the Gill-Montague District and five years at the Guilford, VT. Central Middle School. She joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Susan Durkee, Assistant Director, High School Coordinator, Co-founder and Art Teacher

B.F.A. in Sculpture; M.F.A. in English, University of Massachusetts/Amherst. Ms. Durkee has experience teaching Art in grades K-6 and teaching writing at the college level, and was a member of the Friends and Faculty Network at UMass, an organization

to which one is nominated for outstanding service to students with learning disabilities. She joined Four Rivers in 2002.

Jessica Farwell, High School Mathematics

B.A., Psychology, Bard College; M.Ed. with Science concentration, Univ. of Massachusetts. Ms. Farwell has taught middle school science in Newton, MA and Orange, MA. She joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Dr. William Fogel, School Psychologist and Counselor (Part Time)

Ph.D., Child Clinical Psychology, St. John's University; B.A., Psychology and Education, Hampshire College. Certified as school psychologist. Dr. Fogel has worked in clinical and school settings for 10 years and most recently served as school psychologist in the Greenfield Public Schools. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Deb Gerry, Consulting Special Education Administrator (Part Time)

B.S., Education, Fitchburg State College; M.A., Educational Administration, Vermont College; Wilson Language Training, Level One Certification. Ms. Gerry has twenty-four years of experience in the field of Special Education, working as a teacher and an administrator. She joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Nikole Gilbert, 8th grade Mathematics and Science

B.S. Biology, University of Kentucky; M.S. Environmental Studies, Antioch New England Graduate School; Graduate Certificate of Environmental Education, University of Minnesota-Duluth. Ms. Gilbert has done research and taught environmental science and ecology in many settings around the United States with students from middle school through college ages. She joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Amanda Griffith, Health and Physical Education

B.A. Sociology and Anthropology, Wells College; M.A Social Work, Smith College. Ms. Griffith has had dual interests and experience in counseling adolescents at the Academy at Swift River, and an early college major in Physical Education, including as co-captain of her Wells College soccer team. She joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Anne Larsen, Teacher Assistant

B.F.A., Education, Univ. of Massachusetts. Mrs. Larsen has 25 years of teaching and fine arts experience with stints with the Muppets, the Anglo-American School in Moscow and, since 1985, as an art teacher with Franklin County-based public school districts. She joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Matthew Leaf, 7th grade English and Social Studies

B.A. Anthropology with a minor in Religion, Kenyon College. Mr. Leaf has 8 years of middle school classroom experience, and is also trained to teach Nature Studies and Outdoor Education. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Daniel Lederer, Technology (Part Time)

Mr. Lederer attended New Hampshire Vocational Technical College, Berklee College of Music (Boston), and City College of San Francisco and has had complex web design and systems administration positions in private industry. He has had technology and

teaching roles at area schools, including five years at Hilltown Cooperative Charter School in Haydenville to which he has added Four Rivers in a dual position, supported at Four Rivers by Technology Assistants. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Eliot Levine, 11th Grade Math and Physics

B.S Psychology and Electrical Engineering, Mass. Institute of Technology; M.A. Clinical and Community Psychology, Univ. of Maryland; Ph.D. Clinical and Community Psychology, Univ. of Maryland. Mr. Levine is the author of *One Kid at a Time: Big Lessons from a Small School* about his experience with the Met School in Providence, R.I. where he also taught for 4 years. He joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Amanda Locke, 7th grade Science and Math

B.A. Communication Studies with a minor in Environmental Studies, Hamilton College; M.S. Environmental Education with Middle School General Science Certification, Antioch New England Graduate School. She has experience as an Outdoor Educator and as a Life Skills teacher in youth groups, and completed a year-long internship teaching high school Science prior to joining Four Rivers in 2003.

Patricia Marks-Sund, Spanish Teacher (Part Time)

B.S. Elementary Education and Bilingual Education, Univ. of Texas – Brownsville. Ms. Marks-Sund has had public and private school teaching and tutoring experience in Spanish, ESL and other subjects. She joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Melinda McCall, Teacher Assistant

B.S Environmental Design, Univ. of Massachusetts; M.S. Forestry, Univ. of Massachusetts. Ms. McCall has experience in all aspects of forestry, recycling programs, and as a child care provider. She joined Four Rivers in 2004.

Craig McDonnell, Spanish Teacher

B.A., Spanish, Hamilton College; M.A. Hispanic Literature, Univ. of Massachusetts. Mr. McDonnell has overseas teaching and volunteer experience in the Dominican Republic and Spain, and has taught Middle and Upper School Spanish at the Williston-Northampton School for four years. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Caitlin McKenna, College Counselor (Part Time)

B. A., Women’s Studies, Univ. of Massachusetts; M.Ed. in Psychology, Springfield College. Ms. McKenna’s experience includes counseling roles, pre-school education, and college counseling. She joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Raymond Neal, 9th Grade Social Studies and English

B.A., History, Johns Hopkins University; M.A., Teaching, Towson University. Mr. Neal has recent teaching experience in high school history in the Howard County (MD) Public Schools, and earlier professional experience as a music educator and performer. He joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Lily Newman, High School English

B.A. English, Colorado College. Ms. Newman has 5 years of experience teaching English and writing, and has had additional training in Differentiated Instruction. She

has taught in Mexico and is fluent in Spanish. She joined Four Rivers in 2004 and went on an extended maternity leave in November, 2006.

Terry Plotkin, Physical Education (Part Time)

B.A. Economics, University of Massachusetts/Amherst. Mr. Plotkin has worked for several years as a coach of Ultimate Frisbee, and has also run after school programs in Greenfield schools. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Leif Riddington, 10th and 11th Grade English

B.A. English Literature, University of Massachusetts/Amherst; M.Ed. Mr. Riddington has nine years of middle school classroom experience and is an executive board member of the National Writing Project Western Massachusetts site at UMass/Amherst. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Harlan Smith, Director of Operations

B.A. Sociology, Tufts University; Master of Hospital Administration, University of Minnesota/Minneapolis. Mr. Smith has over 30 years of experience in financial management, including 13 years as President and CEO of Franklin Medical Center in Greenfield. He has also served on the Board of Trustees of Greenfield Community College and on the Board of Directors of the Franklin County Chamber of Commerce. He joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Laura Stamas, 9th Grade Environmental Science and 10th Grade Biology

B. A Biology, Bard College; M.A. Environmental Studies and Teaching High School Biology, Antioch New England Graduate School. Ms. Stamas has been a Science and Math Teacher at Eagle Mountain School, and a High School Biology Student Teacher at Northampton High School. She joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Andrew Stempel, Nature Instructor (Part Time)

B.S. Environmental Studies, Skidmore College; M.S. Conservation Biology, Antioch New England Graduate School. Mr. Stempel has ten years experience in a variety of outdoor camps, learning centers, work as a Conservation Biologist, Watershed Director, and teaching middle school, high school and adults in animal and plant biology, field ecology and outdoor challenge programs. He joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Andrew Stenson, High School Learning Specialist

B.A. Leeds University; Post Graduate Certificate in Education, Bristol Polytechnic, England; M.A., Education, Smith College. Mr. Stenson has extensive teaching experience in technology and special education, and he has also worked as an Outward Bound instructor. He joined Four Rivers in 2004.

Leslie Taylor, School Secretary

B.A. American Studies and English, Colby College. Ms. Taylor has worked as an administrative assistant for 20 years in business and educational settings, and most recently worked as Executive Assistant at a regional history museum. She joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Anne Tumblin-Haxo, Learning Specialist (Part Time)

B.A. Education/Special Needs, Elms College. Ms. Haxo has three years experience in Special Education at the elementary and middle school levels prior to joining the Four Rivers faculty in 2003. She is certified in Special Needs (K-9). She joined Four Rivers in 2003.

Jane Vail, Teacher Assistant

B.A., Windham College. Ms. Vail is an experience middle school teacher with certification in English. She has also worked as a paraprofessional at middle and high school levels. She joined Four Rivers in 2004.

Heather Viens, Teacher Assistant

B.A., Business Studies and Finance, Anglia University, Cambridge, England. In addition to parenting and a diversified background in sales and marketing, Mrs. Viens has been a substitute teacher in Franklin County and serves on public and private education boards and councils. She joined Four Rivers in 2006.

Andrew Wallace, 10th and 11th Grade Social Studies

B.A. English, State Univ. of New York at Geneseo; M.A in Education, Tufts University; Mr. Wallace completed Naturalist Training at Wolf Ridge Environmental Learning Center and earned a Certificate in Environmental Education at the Univ. of Minnesota- Duluth. He has eight years of teaching experience, including 6 years of 7th and 8th grade Humanities at The Gordon School, East Providence, R. I. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Faculty & Staff Summary

15 Full-time Classroom Teachers

11 Highly Qualified; 3 are Highly Qualified in one of the two subjects they teach; 1 has waiver; 13 have masters degrees
6.6 average years of experience teaching

4 Full-time Teacher Assistants

5 Part-time Teachers

Average Class size: 16 to 17

Teacher Turnover

12 of the full-time teachers are returning; one left for child-care and two left to pursue other teaching opportunities (20% turnover)

6 of 9 part-time teachers are returning (33% turnover, representing .80 FTE).

One teacher left for extended maternity leave in November

No administrative attrition

VII. Financial Profile

SCHOOL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION (Un-audited) Year Ended June 30, 2007

The following financial statements and information have been prepared by the management of the school and are un-audited.

Financial Highlights

Four Rivers Charter Public School had revenues of \$1,912,893 for the year ended June 30, 2007, of which 95% were operating revenues and 5% were non-operating revenues (private grants, contributions, etc.) The school had net income (change in net assets) of \$9,167 for the year, which was comprised of an operating loss of \$73,322 and non-operating revenue of \$82,489.

Results of Operations

Positive variances from the adopted revised budget were related to greater enrollment and per-pupil tuition rates than anticipated and less staff selecting health insurance coverage. Supplies and materials were significantly below budget due to intentionally tight management of expenditures and consumption. No funds were spent from the Contingency account.

Negative variances were Utilities exceeding budget due to an unanticipated electricity rate increase and contracted costs for SPED testing and evaluations exceeding expectations.

Other variances were due to grant timing between fiscal years.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2007, Four Rivers Charter Public School had 161 students and received \$1,714,118 in per pupil tuition, which represents 90% of the school's revenue. In addition, Four Rivers Charter School received various federal and private grants, which totaled \$99,701 and \$54,000 respectively.

Budget for Fiscal Year 2008

The budget presented for the 2007-2008 school year reflects an enrollment of 190 students. The budget also reflects an expansion to the school's first 12th grade and the acquisition of furnishings, instructional equipment and technology to support the school's curriculum. Capital expenditures are reflected within the full operating budget.

FOUR RIVERS CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
BALANCE SHEET
JUNE 30, 2007
(Preliminary and Un-audited)

	Jun 30, 07
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000 · GSB Green Action	338,950
1170 · Petty Cash	123
Total Checking/Savings	339,073
Accounts Receivable	
1100 · Accounts Receivable	4,701
Total Accounts Receivable	4,701
Other Current Assets	
Jury Duty Income due	400
1400 · Payroll Asset	400
1300 · Prepaid Expenditures	240
Total Other Current Assets	1,040
Total Current Assets	344,814
Non-current Assets	
1500 · Buildings/leasehold improvement	42,989
1600 · Equipment/hardware	10,773
1610 · Library & Media	1,121
1700 · Vehicles	20,871
Total Non-current Assets	75,754
TOTAL ASSETS	420,568
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	
Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000 · Accounts Payable	13,056
Total Accounts Payable	13,056
Other Current Liabilities	
Section 125 Flex Savings Held	-134
2050 · Accrued Payroll	95,067
2060 · Accrued unused vacation salary	11,622
2200 · Deferred Grant Revenue	23,678
2150 · Held Health Insurance	0
2140 · Mass Teachers R. B.	8,784
2100 · Payroll Liabilities	6,458
Total Other Current Liabilities	145,475
Total Liabilities	158,531
Total Net Assets	262,036
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	420,567

Four Rivers Charter Public School
Statement of Revenues, Expenses and Changes in Net
Assets

For the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2007
Preliminary and Un-audited

Ordinary Income/Expense	
Income	
Tuition	\$ 1,714,118
Grants - State	1,700
Grants - Federal	99,701
Program Fees	1,682
Medicaid Reimbursement	3,211
Rental Income	3,200
Total Income	\$ 1,823,612
Expense	
Health Services	\$ 1,275
Advertising/Recruitment	6,877
Athletic Services	21,401
Food Services	831
Testing & Assessment	2,820
Short Term Interest	454
Contracted services	57,066
Fees, Licenses, Dues, Memberships	3,406
Fringe Benefits	86,096
Fundraising and governance	391
Insurance	30,163
Maintenance and repairs	75,321
Contingency	0
Occupancy	305,303
Payroll Taxes	35,932
Postage and Shipping	6,591
Salaries and Wages	1,069,454
Prof. Development	33,671
Supplies and materials	58,691
Technology	46,348
Travel Exp. - staff/Board	8,387
Utilities	46,455
Total Expense	\$ 1,896,933
Total Operating Income	\$ (73,322)
Other Income	
6100 - Revenue from Private Sources	\$ 89,281
Non-operating Income	\$ 89,281
6600 - Depreciation expense	\$ 6,792
Depreciation Expense	\$ 6,792
Net Non-operating Income	\$ 82,489
Change in Net Assets	\$ 9,167
Change in Net Assets excluding depreciation	\$ 15,960

**Four Rivers Charter Public
School
BUDGET**
Fiscal Year Ending June 30, 2008

REVENUES	
Revenue from State Sources	\$ 2,054,773
Revenue from Fed. Sources	\$ 94,464
Private Grants, Gifts & Annual Appeal	\$ 70,000
Other revenues	\$ 7,900
TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,227,137
EXPENDITURES	
Salaries and Wages	\$ 1,290,864
Payroll Taxes	\$ 50,932
Fringe Benefits	\$ 127,407
Occupancy	\$ 308,777
Contracted services	\$ 52,300
Utilities	\$ 48,383
Food service program	\$ 581
Staff development	\$ 23,500
Supplies and materials	\$ 110,368
Technology Applications	\$ 22,235
Postage and Shipping	\$ 8,770
Maintenance and repairs	\$ 80,298
Insurance	\$ 35,485
Contingency	\$ 11,136
Travel	\$ 7,200
Field Work, transportation, honoraria	\$ 8,881
Fees, Licenses, Dues, Memberships	\$ 4,641
Miscellaneous	\$ 4,878
TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$ 2,208,299
Operating Income (loss)	\$ 18,839
Depreciation expense	\$ 12,608
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	\$ 6,231

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
Schedule of State and Federal Grants Received
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2007
(un-audited)**

FEDERAL GRANTS:

Title I & II	\$ 20,402
SPED (240/274)	\$ 35,442
REAP	\$ 48,837
TOTAL FEDERAL GRANTS:	<u>104,681</u>

STATE GRANTS:

SPED Improvement	<u>1,700</u>
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VIII. Dissemination

Four Rivers has made efforts to disseminate models for replication and best practices to the public, and these have been described in previous Annual Reports and are briefly summarized below.

Presentations to teachers

- Four Rivers teachers Matt Leaf, Amanda Locke, Leif Riddington and Assistant Director Susan Durkee presented “master class” workshops at the Expeditionary Learning National Conference, Portland, Maine, March 2007
- Amanda Locke also presented a master class workshop at the 2006 Expeditionary Learning National Conference, Oakland, California, March 2006
- Laura Stamas, 9th & 10th grade science teacher, presented an environmental science workshop at the Massachusetts Charter School Association Annual Best Practices Showcase, March 2007
- Leif Riddington has presented multiple workshops over the past three years to teachers in Western Massachusetts through his affiliation with the Western Massachusetts Writing Project, based on projects and publications he has developed at Four Rivers
- Susan Durkee, with assistance from two Four Rivers students, presented to Amherst Middle School teachers about our methods of standard-based assessment and use of portfolios
- Ed Blatchford, Director, has met three times with graduate education classes from Antioch New England Graduate School to describe programs and practices at Four Rivers
- Harlan Smith, Director of Operations, has coached numerous schools on the practices developed at Four Rivers for facilities development and other business needs

Dissemination to the local community and nationally

- Publications, CDs, and other products created by Four Rivers students as part of learning expeditions and investigations have reached a wide audience in Franklin County and nationally, exemplifying Four Rivers best practices. This has come through the outreach of our faculty, but it has extended still further through the national Expeditionary Learning network and other associations. Steven Levy, an EL consultant working with Four Rivers recently wrote about one example: “I used several examples of portfolios from students at Four Rivers as models for the Wood Hill Middle School in Andover, MA. I had been working with the Wood Hill staff for over a year on setting up portfolio processes... and

they tried to create them with their 6th grade students, but the quality and usefulness was questionable. However, when they examined these models from Four Rivers, it entirely changed their vision of what portfolios could be, and inspired deep implementation of portfolio structures this year. Both their attitudes and their practice were greatly enhanced by analyzing work samples from Four Rivers.”

- Over the past five years, over 1200 individuals from Franklin County – among them many educators – have attended admissions open houses at which the Four Rivers faculty described exemplary practices and high-quality student work. Numerous teachers and education students have also observed the school in action.

Dissemination plans

We recognize that our dissemination activities do not yet represent a systematic plan, and we know that more needs to be done in our next term, including formal efforts to share our best practices with the district in which we are located and those from which we draw. We will continue to disseminate through the growing Expeditionary Learning network, and we have made an initial request to host a “site seminar” at Four Rivers in the Spring of 2009, targeting the northeast region of Expeditionary Learning schools and educators in Franklin County and Western Massachusetts. The purpose of a site seminar is to share the best practices developed by the host EL school and observe the school over two days. Anyone is welcome to attend. Topics could include EL and Four Rivers practices such as: exemplary learning expeditions; standards-based assessment and effective portfolios; writing across the curriculum and the power of publications; advisory program, including student led-conferences; internships and senior projects/expeditions; and others. The school will also develop plans to offer workshops, materials and/or dialogues with local educators on these and other strong practices.