



Annual Report

August 1, 2009

**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--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.

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, and added 9th, 10th, 11th and 12th in successive years, attaining full enrollment of 192 in September, 2007. The school's charter was renewed in 2008. 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. Peter Garbus is Principal and Head of School; Susan Durkee is Assistant Principal and Co-Founder. Harlan Smith is Director of Operations. They may be reached at 413-775-4577. Four Rivers is affiliated with Expeditionary Learning Schools, a national, non-profit school reform model that links academic learning, service, and character development.

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

Mitchell D. Chester, Ed.D.
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
75 Pleasant Street
Malden, MA 02148-4906

Dear Commissioner Chester:

I am pleased to report that the conclusion of our sixth 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 model and the school's themes of nature, technology and community.

This past school year was our second year of full enrollment. Our second graduation was a particularly rewarding achievement because the graduates were the first students to have entered as seventh graders and moved through each successive year at our growing school. Our Principal and Executive Director worked well together in preparing themselves and the school community for the leadership transition that takes place in the coming school year of 2009-2010. At that time administrative duties will be redistributed such that the major tasks of Principal and Executive Director will be consolidated into one position of Principal/Head of School.

The Board of Trustees continues to play an active role in the school's growth and development. We meet monthly and have been involved in all aspects of the school's governance, including the recent leadership transition. After six years on the Board, I have assumed the position of Chair, and the Vice Chair and Treasurer positions also have new but well established Trustees. Our retired Executive Director and another Trustee have renewed their tenure with the Board, and we have been joined by two new Trustees. This mix of continuity and new membership provides the school with dynamic, diverse and strong governance.

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

The school continues to develop and deepen partnerships in the community, most notably our relationship with Greenfield Community College. Many 11th and 12th graders appreciate being able to take courses there. Four Rivers continues to seek out and develop more opportunities for our students to provide meaningful contributions to our broader community of Franklin County. We are grateful for our place in this community and look forward to educating more of our area's young people.

Respectfully submitted,

Marie Betts Bartlett, Chair

Executive Summary

At the end of this sixth year, Four Rivers took on one of the most challenging tasks a young charter school has to go through – the school’s co-founder and Executive Director retired. With every challenge comes opportunity and the way this school managed the task illustrates why it has been so successful and why it will continue to be such.

The administrative team began preparing for this transition early in the year. The Executive Director, Director of Operations, Assistant Principal, and Dean of Students have all been part of Four Rivers from the beginning. I joined this team last year having spent the previous six years as the founder and Executive Director of the North Central Charter Essential School in Fitchburg. The five of us went through a process of mapping what’s referred to as motivated abilities, which involved reflecting on and analyzing what kinds of work motivates us, all to the purpose of determining how we should transition from the Executive Director’s departure. From that process, we determined a new administrative structure, we revised job descriptions for next year, and we began preparing ourselves and our stakeholders for these changes. From start to finish, our process has been thoughtful, deliberate, and calm, building on the strengths of the organization and the people it has assembled. We move forward to next year feeling strengthened and energized, even while recognizing the great contributions Ed has made to our community.

Students and staff accomplished a great deal this year:

- Interest in the school keeps growing, with the number of applications received exceeding all previous years. We had 150 applicants for 55 spaces for 2008-09, including 74 applicants for 36 openings in 7th grade. Retention remains high.
- We successfully applied for and were granted permission to increase the school’s enrollment to 212, which would allow full classes of 36 students to proceed through the school to graduation.
- Close monitoring of our budget resulted in another year of sound finances for the school.
- Our faculty worked hard this year to increase the number and quality of learning expeditions. Teachers created many opportunities for authentic, active learning experiences, such as playwriting, a voter drive, positive psychology fair, the Four Rivers Environmental Extravaganza, exploring local food and farming, the *I Believe* books, singing Spanish children’s songs in Holyoke, Night of the Shorts – a presentation of student-written one act plays, 7th grade Cookbooks, Social Change Archive fieldwork, Kitestock, and much more.
- Faculty also initiated a revised portfolio process, creating new documents and processes for reflection and synthesis.
- Other successful initiatives this year include a new Clubs program, refocused Intensives, and more after school opportunities.
- A review of whether students and parents feel that there is enough challenge at the school revealed overwhelming majorities responding “yes.”
- Through midyear and end of the year surveys, students and families and staff gave ideas to continue improving the school, on top of strong satisfaction with much of the program.

We ended the year seeing our second graduating class go off into the world and with proper celebrations and recognition of Ed Blatchford’s contributions. While all of us carry the mission and vision for this school, none of it would have been possible without Ed’s hard work and spirit. With deep gratitude, and with a sharp sense of responsibility for continuing the school’s excellent work,

Peter Garbus
Principal and Head of School

Four Rivers Charter Public School **Accountability Plan**

2008-2013

Draft submitted: August 1, 2007

Revised draft approved by Board of Trustees 9/8/08, further revised 9/17/08

Approved by DESE Charter Office 9/19/08

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 college preparatory 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.

FAITHFULNESS TO CHARTER

Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

OBJECTIVE 1: Themes: Nature, Technology, Community

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

Measures

- 1a** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was mostly met. 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 to English. This year 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. They were judged by faculty and some experts but not consistently as the indicator describes.*

Examples of projects from this year include:

- *How does food fuel us Cookbook Project; Permaculture Garden (grade 7)*
- *Four Rivers Environmental Extravaganza Projects; Wind v. Coal research (grade 8)*
- *Interviewing Local Farmers (grade 9)*
- *English unit on Transcendentalists (grade 10)*

- *Government Class: writing and simulating debate and passage of different CO2 bills such as a Carbon Tax (11th and 12th)*
- *Several senior expeditions such as: Gardening in Small Spaces; Living in the Wild; Shoemaking; and the Gas Tax*

1b 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met in all grades except in 7th. In grade 7, new style portfolios took a great deal of effort and left no time for reflection in the portfolio on the school's themes. The teachers will work on this goal next year. All other grades made this a required element in the portfolio, and students in 8th and 10th included these reflections in their passage presentations given before peers, parents and school faculty and staff.*

OBJECTIVE 2: Character & Community

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

Measures

2a 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. As reported by the three advisors in each of the six grades, 91% of students engaged in effective goal setting. Goal setting was part of crew and advisor time and the advisors who reported 100% success among their crew were also those that included discussion or revision of goals in weekly check-ins between advisor and student.*

2b 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. Of those responding to the parent survey sent in June 2009, 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."*

2c 90% of students will meet their requirements for service to the school and the community, as documented in advisory records and portfolio reflections.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. As reported by the Advisors and as documented in student portfolios, almost 100% of students in grades 7 through 10 met their service requirement to the school and community. These students often did service as a grade or in small advisory groups. Juniors and Seniors are expected to do service on an individual basis and were less successful in fulfilling this commitment. Only about 73% of 11th and 12th graders completed their service requirement. Thus, school wide, 91% of students met this goal.*

Some examples of successful group service projects include:

- *Raising over \$700 for the Food Bank of Western Massachusetts through the sale of their Cookbook "35 Ways to Feed Them All" (7th grade)*
- *Green River Cleanup (7th grade)*
- *Campus and Activity Bus Cleanup (8th grade)*
- *Highland Park and Poet's Seat Cleanup (8th grade)*

- 3 days at Red Gate Farm: dismantled a sugar shack, fed and moved chickens, worked in the vegetable gardens (9th and 10th)
 - Cleaned windows of campus buildings (10th)
- Some examples of successful individual service in 11th and 12th grades include:
- Weekly volunteer work at Franklin Medical Center
 - English language and computer tutoring at the Center for New Americans
 - Clearing trails for the Metacomet-Monadnock Trail organization
 - Admission videos for school use. Tutoring faculty and students in film and video creation and editing.

OBJECTIVE 3: 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.

Measures

3a All 12th grade students will develop a post-secondary plan that includes career and education goals.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. All 12th grade students are oriented to the various post-secondary education and training options that can fulfill their career interests or potential career interests. Throughout the course of the students' junior and senior years, conferences take place between the college counselor and/or advisors regarding post-secondary plans. All students participate in a questionnaire centered on interests, aptitudes, and preferences, which creates a baseline of information to personalize the coaching experience. Students are instructed in the use of online tools through the College Board and ConnectEdu to explore career and college possibilities. Students are provided an individualized planning experience to suit their learning needs, academic profile, and personal styles as they journey through their career and education goals.*

3b The school will guide all 12th grade students in applying to at least one college.

Progress toward the goal: *For the class of 2009, 86% of the graduating class applied to at least one college. The four students who chose not to apply to a college listed their reasons as needing to acquire the required experience to enter culinary school, taking a gap year prior to entering college, and starting to work full-time.*

3c 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. Of 28 graduates this year, 24 plan to attend college in the fall and 2 more are planning to take a travel or gap year and then enter college, totaling 26 out of 28 graduates, or 93%, planning to attend college or other post secondary institution within 15 months after graduation.*

3d 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was mostly met. In a survey of graduates enrolled in college for at least a year, 100% of those responding 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 by their Four Rivers math education.*

OBJECTIVE 4: Expeditionary Learning

Four Rivers Charter Public School will implement Expeditionary Learning Core Practices to further its mission.

Measures

- 4a** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. The primary EL consultant to Four Rivers, Steven Levy, completed a review of the school’s implementation. His key findings are below, with a brief narrative summary of his observations from this past year:*

“Even though interdisciplinary Learning Expeditions were not conducted in every division, teachers engaged students with compelling topics and designed many challenging projects. Scores increased on those benchmarks from 2s last year to 3s. The quality of student work is not consistent for all projects at all grade levels, but teachers hold high expectations and the general level of student work is strong. Excellent student work is displayed in halls and on classroom walls. Division I continues to produce outstanding products that serve as models in the EL network across the country.”

DATA SUMMARY FROM THE IR WITH SOME INTERPRETATION

(Note: Parentheses indicate score on that item on last year’s IR)

Learning Expeditions	Score	Active Pedagogy	Score	Culture and Character	Score
1. Compelling Topic	3 (2)	5. Lesson design	3	11. C&C in classrooms	3
2. Linked projects & products	3 (2)	6. Effective instructional practices	3	12. C&C school-side	3
3. Fieldwork, service & experts	2	7. Teach reading across disciplines	2	13. Professional Learning Ct.	3
4. High quality student work	3 (2)	8. Teach writing across disciplines	3	14. Leadership and SI	2 (3)
<i>Scores are 1-4 with 4 = high level of implementation</i>		9. Inquiry-based math	3	15. School structures	2 (3)
		10. Effective assessment practices	3	16. Grading & Reporting	3

- 4b** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *The school set out to strengthen its learning expeditions this past year. Specific measures were not set, though the intent was to increase the number of expeditions and to strengthen their quality. Both general goals were met, as the faculty spent 1-2 Wednesday afternoons a month for planning and feedback related to expeditions. The school’s EL consultants also spent significant time with the full faculty and with individuals to advance this practice.*

OBJECTIVE 5: 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.

Measures

- 5a** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. Four faculty members presented Master Classes at the National Expeditionary Learning Conference in Baltimore in March 2009. Seventh grade science teacher, Mandy Locke, talked on Planning an Expedition Using the Model “Guide to the Rock Park”. Division III Advisors Susan Durkee and Andy Stenson presented on “Junior Internships and Senior Expeditions”, and our Principal, Peter Garbus, presented on “Building a Community of Practice.” The school also hosted visits throughout the year by groups of students (Antioch New England graduate school, Bennington College, and New England College), observers from other Expeditionary Learning Schools (Renaissance School in Springfield), and educators from local public schools. Finally, a “Vernal Pool Project” authored and carried out in 2007-08 school year has been recognized by Expeditionary Learning Schools as one of 10 “Exemplary Projects” to be featured in national publications.*

- 5b** The school will, within its second term, offer models for replication and best practices to other public schools in Franklin County.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was partly met. The Superintendent of the local district has visited twice to observe Four Rivers’ Advisor/Crew system. As a result a similar program is being implemented this coming year in her district. The chairman of a group exploring Inter-district possibilities and cooperation sent their consultant to visit the school. This group would like to see Four Rivers play an active role in the dialog. Finally, the school has aligned its calendar for next year to include an In-service day coinciding with a County-wide day. The school also intends to reapply for a dissemination grant through the Charter School Office next year with a more focused proposal.*

Common School Performance Criteria – Faithfulness to Charter

Implementation of Mission, Vision, and Educational Philosophy

Describe and provide evidence of how the school is faithful to the mission, vision and educational philosophy defined in the charter application and any subsequent approved amendments.

The commitment and dedication to the school’s mission, vision, and educational philosophy remains as strong as it was when this school was envisioned. Families, faculty, and Trustees continue to be inspired by the outcomes defined and by the methods identified for reaching them. Indeed, as the practices spread and solidify, our commitment grows. The faculty continued to work on implementing Expeditionary Learning practices, including learning expeditions, active pedagogy, and efforts to build a strong school culture. The direction set out by the charter application remains strong and true.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS

Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

OBJECTIVE 6: 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.

Measures

- 6a** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *The indicator was again met, based on results of the Spring 2008 MCAS taken by the 10th grade. The Spring 2009 results are not yet available. Last year, 100% of all 10th graders,*

who had been at the school for at least 2 years, performed at proficient level or above. All 10th graders passed.

- 6b** MCAS: 65% of students will attain Proficiency on the ELA MCAS in the 8th grade, and at least 90% will pass.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met with 95% of 8th graders performing at the proficient level or above and 100% passing the Spring 2008 ELA MCAS.*

- 6c** 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.)

Progress toward the goal: *The indicator was met. Four Rivers 10th grade students attained proficiency in ELA MCAS at a rate 26% above the average scored by their sending districts. Students in 8th taking the ELA MCAS attained proficiency 32% above the average scored by their sending districts.*

- 6d** Adequate Yearly Progress: The school will meet its annual targets in English Language Arts in aggregate and in sub groups.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met.*

- 6e** Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in English at the end of the year.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met, with some students needing to make up standards or credits during the summer in order to pass all standards. An overall average of 91% passed all the standards as of July 27th, but that percentage should reach 94.5% when summer work has been completed in early August.*

OBJECTIVE 7: Math

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

Measures

- 7a** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. Of 10th graders who had attended the school for at least two years, 82% performed at proficient or above on the Spring 2008 Math MCAS and 93% passed.*

- 7b** MCAS: 60% of students will attain Proficiency on the Math MCAS in the 8th grade, and at least 90% will pass.

Progress toward the goal: *The goal was not met; 51% of 8th graders performed at proficient or above in the 2008 Math MCAS, and 76% passed.*

- 7c** 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.

Progress toward the goal: *The indicator was met. Four Rivers 8th grade students attained proficiency in the Spring 2008 Math MCAS at a rate 12% above the average scored by their sending districts. Students*

in 10th taking the Spring 2008 Math MCAS attained proficiency at a rate 8% above the average scored by their sending districts.

7d Adequate Yearly Progress: The school will meet its annual targets in Math in aggregate and in ub groups.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met.*

7e Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Math at the end of the year.

Progress toward the goal: *The indicator was met, with some students needing to make up standards or credits during the summer in order to pass all standards. An overall average of 93% passed all the standards as of July 27.*

OBJECTIVE 8: 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.

Measures

8a 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.

Progress toward the goal: *The indicator was met. Four Rivers 8th grade students attained proficiency in the Spring 2008 Science MCAS at a rate 31% above the average scored by their sending districts. Students in 10th taking the Spring 2008 Biology MCAS attained proficiency 23% above the average scored by their sending districts.*

8b Research: 95% of students will successfully complete a Science research project related to the school themes annually.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. 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.*

8c Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Science at the end of the year.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met, with some students needing to make up standards or credits during the summer in order to pass all standards. An overall average of 93% passed all the standards as of July 27.*

OBJECTIVE 9: 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.

Measures

9a 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.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator could not be met as the Social Studies/MCAS was discontinued by the Commonwealth due to budget constraints.*

- 9b** Research: 95% of students will successfully complete a Social Studies/History research project related to the school themes annually.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met. In 7th grade, all students did an expedition on “Food: Are We Really What We Eat?” 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.*

- 9c** Progress Reports: 90% of all students will pass all standards in Social Studies/History at the end of the year.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met, with some students needing to make up standards or credits during the summer in order to pass all standards. An overall average of 92% passed all the standards as of July 27.*

Common School Performance Criteria – Academic Program Success

Curriculum

Describe the school’s curriculum, as documented and implemented during the 2008-09 school year, including a description of all curricular elements. Identify and briefly describe any major curriculum changes made by the school during the 2008-09 school year.

The school’s curriculum is organized by subject area, with course standards established in every subject every year. Teachers work through their grade level or division teams to coordinate curriculum for each group of students, while subject area teams have continued building coherent scope and sequence. Subject area teams began drafting program statements to describe and define broad learning targets students will aim towards in each program, work which will continue over this next school year. In addition, we identified school wide learning targets to guide our overall program. These outcomes are the categories for our end of year portfolio reflections. Taken together, course standards, subject area targets, and school wide targets define the knowledge and skill we expect students to develop through their learning at Four Rivers. Course overviews and developing program statements give a more specific picture of the curriculum. There were not major curriculum changes last school year.

Instruction

Describe the school-wide instructional practice implemented during the 2008-09 school year, how it aligned with the school design and student learning objectives, how it was delivered, and how expectations were conveyed to teachers and student.

The school continued to work on two key areas of instructional practice – learning expeditions and active pedagogy. Through our contract with Expeditionary Learning, teachers engaged in monthly workshops, offsite trainings, and ongoing conversation and feedback around these practices. Part of that work involves learning better what these practices look like. The other part is the planning and implementation. The learning expedition work involves designing long term projects that engage students’ literacy, numeracy, and thinking skills, that call on them to develop content understanding, and that ask them to produce real products for real audiences whenever possible. To do that takes an enormous amount of planning from teachers. The active pedagogy work is about learning day to day practices that engage students and put them in the role of actively constructing their understanding and developing skills. Expectations for instruction are conveyed to teachers by the staff Field Guide and school documents, by the Principal, and by the school’s Expeditionary Learning consultants. For students, they come to understand the aims of our instruction through their day to day experience. We continually

tell them how we are approaching their learning and they come to do a great deal of thinking about how our school does things.

Program Evaluation

Describe and provide evidence of the systems and structures that were in place during the 2008-09 school year to review the academic program for quality and effectiveness. Describe any modifications made to programs to ensure improvement. Describe how qualitative and quantitative evidence was used by teachers and school leaders to inform and guide instructional planning and practice.

The school does several things to gather information – both qualitative and quantitative – on the success of our academic program.

- 1. The Leadership Team meets every two weeks to discuss and process any questions and concerns that come up in the day to day life of the school. This group makes continuous assessments of and adjustments to teaching and learning in the school.*
- 2. At the midyear and the end of the year, surveys were distributed to all families, students, and staff. The results of these surveys get summarized and categorized by how able we might be to turn results into actions.*
- 3. In the fall, subject area teams reviewed MCAS results from the previous spring. Item analysis told us which standards we covered well and which might need more attention.*
- 4. For students entering 7th grade, diagnostic assessments were administered in reading and math to identify students that might need extra support through Title I services.*
- 5. At the end of each term, students and families receive clear information about where they succeeded or struggled in their learning. Grading and report cards are standards-based, along with narrative comments that describe the big picture of how a student is doing. By knowing our students well and by clearly defining the learning targets we're aiming for, we have a great deal of information about student learning in the school.*
- 6. Students complete portfolios each year, reflecting on what they've learned and how they've learned. In passage years (8th, 10th, and 12th), students have to prove their readiness to move on to the next level. This process shows us a great deal about what students are learning well.*
- 7. In general, our assessment practices through Expeditionary Learning are formative. We use these "assessment for learning" practices on a day to day basis to set clear learning targets, assess what students are learning, and then give feedback and adjust instruction to help them learn what they need to learn.*
- 8. For this next school year, we hope to use the new Data Warehouse to better track longitudinal progress of the students who stay in our school. We are also trying to find better diagnostic data on incoming students. Lastly, more teachers are trying to use pre-assessments and differentiated instruction to get specific data on what students understand in order to better target the instruction different students need to move forward.*

School Culture

Describe the policies and structures that were in place during the 2008-09 school year to create a school culture, support student learning, and further the implementation of the school's mission. This section of the report may include a discussion of any school-wide behavior management systems or structures, and may also include a summary describing the general reasons for disciplinary actions (in-school suspensions, out-of-school suspensions, and expulsions).

The most significant structure put in place last school year was a new full time Dean of Students role. In the past, responsibility for discipline was shared by two different people who also had teaching responsibilities. The new role unified responsibility with one person. In addition, the Dean of Students role had responsibility for the positive side of school culture in our school, which we work on through our Crew Program, student leadership, community meetings, and community wide events. The person hired for the job had been a teacher in the school from the start. He came in already well respected by students, staff, and parents, so this was a very strong move

for the school in many respects. We worked on more consistent interpretation, enforcement, and follow through on school rules and policies. With some success, we came into this past year even more determined to figure out what behavioral expectations we really wanted to enforce. We also began thinking of discipline in the school differently, which we are continuing into this year. Rather than try to have a rule for every possible infraction, we are trying to establish clear principles and expectations that our students learn and understand. We want them to understand what these principles are, so they know as well as we do why their action or behavior may have been a problem. In summer 2009, we completed significant revisions of both the Student and Family Handbook as well as the Staff Handbook with the aim of simplifying and clarifying the principles, practices, and policies that we think will make our school culture even stronger. In terms of disciplinary actions last year, we increased our use of in-school-suspensions, which became more possible with the new Dean of Students role. We had several significant out-of-school suspensions for students found on campus or at a school activity who were under the influence of controlled substances. There were no expulsions last year.

Diverse Learners

Describe and provide evidence of how the school established and implemented accommodations that address the needs of diverse learners, including those with special education and English language learner needs.

Four Rivers has strong Academic Support Services for the diverse learners that come to our school. Last year, we worked with 36 students on Individualized Education Plans and 11 students on Section 504 Plans. In addition, approximately 12-15 students had Student Success Plans overseen by their advisor and teachers and approximately 20 students out of 36 who were eligible took advantage of Title I after school and summer tutoring. With each of these students, we follow state and federal regulations regarding evaluations, meetings to develop plans, implementation of accommodations, and the monitoring and adjustment of those accommodations. The Executive Director, with the support of a consulting special education administrator and our School Psychologist, led the team of 3 Learning Specialists and 4 Teacher Assistants in providing these services. Regular education teachers and the special education teachers met weekly to review all students on plans to discuss each student's progress and to clarify or adjust classroom accommodations. The Learning Specialists provide in class support, direct specialized instruction, and Learning Center support depending on each student's IEP. Overall, there is the sense that our academic support services have been delivered with professionalism and great care.

Two significant new steps should be mentioned in this area. With the leadership transition at the end of the 2008-09 year, the school hired the consulting special education administrator on as a more permanent part-time Special Education Director and she is now overseeing the program. We also began the 2009-10 school year with a 3-day workshop on Differentiated Instruction, which taught us strategies and tools from Expeditionary Learning to help us make accommodations with all of our students. This is a significant focus for our professional development work the 2009-10 school year.

The school currently does not serve any English language learners.

Supervision and Evaluation of Teachers

Describe the process(es) by which school leaders provide teachers with feedback and guidance, including the process for formal evaluation of teachers, the standards that were used for evaluation purposes, and how the school made use of the evaluation results.

With the addition of the Principal position two years ago, the school took a significant step to strengthen the supervision and evaluation of teachers. The Principal had responsibility for both coaching and evaluating all teachers except for the Learning Specialists who were supervised by the Executive Director. The established process included the following: goal setting meetings in September, periodic walkthroughs and informal observations throughout the year, formal observations for all teachers within their first 3 years at the school and optional formal observations for the rest, midyear letters for all teachers with specific requirements for any teachers for whom there were areas of concern, and finally formal evaluation reports for all teachers. The standards we use are called the Key Qualities for Effective Teachers, which were developed by the faculty several

years ago. They combine particular requirements for teaching in an Expeditionary Learning School and more general characteristics of good teaching described by Charlotte Danielson and others. These evaluations led to renewal offers to all but two of our teachers. In some ways, last year was the first year of a full evaluation process for all teachers. Some steps of the process needed improvement and those improvements have been made over the summer and being implemented for the 2009-10 school year.

Professional Development

Describe the major professional development activities undertaken by the school in the 2008-09 school year, why those activities were chosen, any outcomes from the professional development activities and how the effectiveness of these activities is evaluated.

Almost all of our professional development activities happen under our contract with Expeditionary Learning. That contract provided 13 on site consultant days which included classroom observations, one on one coaching, and whole school workshops. The contract also provided over 30 days of off site training on specific EL principles and practices. At the end of the year, the EL consultants who worked with us conducted surveys and a full Implementation Review to describe our progress and possible next steps for our further development. As mentioned in other parts of this report, we continued to focus last year on developing learning expeditions and strengthening active pedagogy in our classrooms. Four teachers went to a workshop on Differentiated Instruction that led directly to this next year's whole school focus. Our overall approach to professional development is to focus on a few practices that we want to learn together, to get trained in those practices, and then to work together throughout the year to implement them. According to our latest review, the school is at strong levels of implementation with many EL core practices. Our school improvement plan for 2009-10 identified what we would like to strengthen next and our current work plan is the strongest yet in reflecting how we and our teachers want to get that professional development accomplished.

ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

OBJECTIVE 10: Enrollment

Four Rivers Charter Public School will maintain full or nearly full enrollment.

Measures

10a The school will maintain enrollment at or above 97% of its enrollment cap each year.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. We started the school year with full enrollment of 198 and ended the year with 190, an average of 195 students for the year. We had budgeted for 192.

10b 90% of the students eligible and able to return to Four Rivers Charter Public School will reenroll for the following year.

Progress toward the goal: The goal has been met with 92.5% of eligible students returning in the fall.

10c Applications each year will exceed the number of places available by at least 25%.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. Total applications for 2008-09 exceeded places available by 150%.

OBJECTIVE 11: Faculty

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

Measures

11a 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.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. The school has retained 83% of full time teachers this year who were eligible to return.

11b 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 the goal: This indicator was met. In our Parent Survey this June, the following results speak to this goal.

95% of parents responding indicated they agree or strongly agree with the statement: "I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child's program."

90% 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."

79% of respondents agree or strongly agree with the statement: "communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate," and

88% indicated they agree with the statement: "communication with and from the administration is easy and adequate."

OBJECTIVE 12: 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.

Measures

- 12a** The Board will hold at least 11 monthly meetings each year and maintain membership consistent with the by-laws.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. The Board of Trustees met every month of the year except August and met twice in June. In addition, a half-day retreat was held on June 8th; trustees were given an overview of Expeditionary Learning presented by Stephen Levy, and saw examples of student expedition work.

- 12b** 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.

Progress toward the goal: Because of the Executive Director's impending retirement, the Board did not comprehensively evaluate him as it had in past years and instead approved a plan for transition in school leadership. The Executive Director successfully led the school through the transition to his retirement, his successor's new role and additional administrative support. Other approved goals were also accomplished. The Board appointed a new school leader.

- 12c** 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.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. Key elements of the current 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.

- 12d** The Board will develop, implement, and assess a Board Action Plan annually.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. The Board revised its on-going Board Action Plan in the fall of 2008, aligning Action Plan items with board committee goals, and monitored the plan during the year. The Action Plan will be updated for 2009-10, in order for it to remain a guiding document of the Board and its committee work.

OBJECTIVE 13: Finance

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

Measures

- 13a** Annual expenditures, excluding depreciation, will not exceed annual revenues.

Progress toward the goal: This indicator was met. The annual expenditures in 2008-09 have not exceeded revenues. For details in meeting this goal, see the financial reports in the Financial Profile section.

- 13b** The school will attain a cash reserve equivalent to three months' operating expenses by the end of its second charter term.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was met.*

- 13c** The school will meet the annual fundraising goals established by the Board of Trustees in the annual approved operating budget.

Progress toward the goal: *This indicator was not met. The Board of Trustees raised 60% of the fundraising goal this year due to a difficult economy.*

- 13d** The annual independent audit for Four Rivers Charter Public School will report no significant deficiencies or material weaknesses.

Progress toward the goal: *An independent audit for fiscal year 2008 reported no major findings. The audit for fiscal year 2009 has not been done yet.*

Common School Performance Criteria – Organizational Viability

Policy Decisions

Describe any major policy decisions made by the school's board of trustees during the 2008-09 school year, including a description of the systems and structures for decision-making and communication that have been established by the school.

The key policy decision of 2008-09 was to adjust the administrative structure with the retirement of the school's founding Executive Director. That involved combining the Principal and Head of School roles, establishing a new Administrative Coordinator and a new part-time Special Education Director to support the head of school. Beyond that, there was significant discussion in the spring of last year between the faculty and the administration that has led to four major initiatives over the summer for implementation in 2009-10, only one of which involved Board level policies. A new Work Life Committee has been established by the Board to discuss and develop agreements about work life within the school. The other areas discussed – communications, expectations for student behavior, and peer coaching teams for teacher professional development – all led to initiatives within the school that did not need Board decisions to happen. Our systems for decision-making and communication within the school were significantly strengthened format the end of 2008-09; we are implementing those improvements in 2009-10.

Amendments to the Charter

Describe any major or minor amendments to the charter proposed by the board of trustees and approved by the Commissioner or Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

Our enrollment cap was increased from 192 to 212 by approval of the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. No other amendments were sought.

Complaints

Describe any official complaints received by the board of trustees in writing pursuant to the state's charter school regulations, 603 CMR 1.10. This summary should describe each complaint in general terms, without mentioning specific names or information that may be deemed confidential, and should describe how each complaint has been resolved. Complaints received by telephone or in person are not considered official complaints.

The school received no official complaints last year.

Oversight

Describe how the board of trustees assessed the performance of the school and the school leader(s) during the 2008-09 school year. Include information about which constituent groups in the school were involved in the evaluation process.

The Board of Trustees has monitored the school's achievement and progress from the beginning mostly through enrollment figures, the finances, the school's test results, and the anecdotal evidence of stories and observations from the day to day life of the school. Much of the Board's official assessment has been tied to the formal evaluation process of the head of school. That evaluation was completed thoroughly each year from the beginning, except for this past year when the head of school was retiring. A new process is under way with the new head of school, previously the school's Principal. As Principal, he has formal evaluations from the past two years, which were completed by the Executive Director. The full faculty and staff have been invited to offer feedback on both positions. Students and parents have been surveyed regularly for feedback on the overall school performance. One change at the Board level was to add an Accountability Committee with the job of monitoring the school's performance results and making any recommendations about program changes needed to strengthen those results.

Board Planning

Describe any relevant planning efforts undertaken by the board of trustees, the results of those efforts, and the current status of any initiative launched as a result of this planning. Describe any relevant goals established by the board of trustees during the 2008-09 school year outside of the school's accountability plan. Describe the tools for measuring progress towards meeting those goals, and how progress is reported to the board of trustees.

The Board did not write its own improvement plan for last year. It had overseen a strategic planning process the previous year, with some of the action steps from that plan still in process. There was ongoing reporting and discussion about the school management's improvement plan, with focus on learning, school culture, and operations. The Executive Director's monthly reports to the Board kept it informed of progress.

Family Satisfaction

Describe how the school measured whether families were satisfied with the school's program. Include the results of any student, staff, and/or family surveys conducted during the 2008-09 school year.

We conducted a midyear survey of all families and staff and an end of year survey with all families, staff, and students. These results gave us great deal of information about where people are satisfied and where they'd like to see improvements. Specific results from these surveys are presented throughout this annual report.

FRCPS Annual Parent Survey

Please rate the following aspects of our EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM.

Answer Options	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Not sure
A. I generally understand the educational approach at Four Rivers.	28	64	1	2	1
B. Academic expectations are clear.	29	53	10	2	2
C. I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child's program.	24	67	3	2	0
D. The progress reports help me understand my child's achievement.	31	51	12	1	1
E. I am satisfied with the amount of homework assigned to my child.	14	64	9	3	6
F. I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child.	34	52	5	1	4
G. My child is held to higher academic expectations than at his or her previous	31	47	8	2	6

school.

H. The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment.	40	43	7	2	2
I. Behavioral expectations are clear.	34	49	7	2	3
J. The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop his or her strengths of character.	49	38	1	1	7
K. I believe that at least one of my child's teachers knows and understands him or her well.	45	38	7	1	5

Overall, how do you rate the quality of Communication, Activities and Administration?

Answer Options	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Not sure
A. The newsletter and mailings provide good communication with the school.	26	65	4	1	0
B. Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate.	23	53	13	2	5
C. Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate.	30	54	6	3	3
D. The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families.	26	53	5	2	9
E. Four Rivers has had a positive impact on my involvement with my child's education.	25	54	10	1	5
F. I support the school through Family Council participation or other volunteer activities.	9	52	22	1	10
G. I am satisfied with the current after-school offerings.	9	52	20	7	8
H. My child would join in more after school activities if a greater variety were offered.	13	35	25	2	20

Highlights from 2009 Annual Student Survey

- Roughly 140 responses were received with the largest portion from the 8th grade (26%); followed by 19% in each of the 12th and 7th grades
- Most respondents have been at FR for two years or less (58%)
- 49% were female; 51% were male

Percent who “agree” and “strongly agree”

- general understanding of the educational approach is up 14 points to 92%
- clarity of behavioral expectations is up 16 points to 90%
- clarity of academic expectations at the school is up 15 points to 87%
- ease of communication with teachers is up 11 points to 86%
- satisfaction with amount of academic challenge is up 6 points to 83%
- belief that the school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families is up 6 points to 81%
- belief that at least one teachers knows and understands the student is up 4 points to 81%
- ease of communication with administration is up 10 points to 73%
- students would join in more after school activities if a greater variety were offered is 68%
- newsletter and mailings good for communication is up 8 points to 62%
- satisfaction with the amount of homework is up 8 points to 58%
- satisfaction with the current after-school offerings is 44%

Short answer questions

- 96% have made at least one product or piece of work this year that he/she is proud of
- 90% indicated they were frequently or sometimes asked to apply their learning in some way that makes a difference in their community
- 88% indicated they participated in learning expeditions this year
- 88% indicated they were frequently or sometimes expected to present their work in some way or to share it with people outside of their classroom
- 84% indicated up to 2 hours a night of homework
- 73% indicated they did field work more than 3 times this year.
- 73% felt that teacher were always/frequently trying to make learning as active as possible
- 63% indicated they are always expected to do high quality work
- 59% indicated their teachers sometimes have them work with experts
- 56% indicated they feel proud of the work or products they created to demonstrate their learning.
- 52% felt that they frequently given more than one opportunity to succeed on course standards

- 51% indicated that frequently they do original research like real scientists, historians, writers or mathematicians
- 51% indicated that teachers frequently provide models of high quality work for students to critique
- 49% felt that their homework frequently supported and connected with their learning
- 49% were somewhat satisfied with the number of learning expeditions
- 48% indicated they frequently feel they can be themselves in school
- 48% indicated that frequently teachers post learning targets that help them to understand the purpose of the studies or activities.
- 48% said they cared about what they were learning; 46% indicated they somewhat cared
- 44% felt that sometimes teacher talk less and students talk more so that student are encouraged to do the thinking and the work; an equal number felt always (11%) and frequently (35%)
- 44% felt that they frequently did all their homework and with good faith effort
- 42% indicated expeditions or investigations start off with a kick-off that got them interested in the topic

Financial Oversight

Describe how the school developed a budget for fiscal year 2010. Include information on the budget planning process and the process for making decisions and setting priorities.

Guided by the school's Director of Operations, the administrative team began budget planning last winter. Following past practices, year-to-date expenditures and program priorities and projected changes were modeled. The Finance Committee of the Board received updates monthly and provided feedback as the process took place. The DESE recommendations regarding potential revenue shortfalls were included in three scenarios ranging from a 5% lower tuition rate to a 10% lower tuition rate for FT2010. Historical benchmarking of Four Rivers' salary structures against those of the sending districts were updated. Core full time faculty's annual longevity steps were included in each of three scenarios, but no across-the-board increases for faculty or other staff were built into the adopted budget. The inclusion of such increases was announced as a high priority if enrollment and/or tuition rates exceed budget by the end of the third quarter. Reductions occurred in all major categories of staff and non-salary expenses. Expected attrition in 11th and 12th grade enrollment necessitated a lower than desired enrollment of 190, with program and recruitment plans developed to fill a portion of the student spaces and improve future retention.

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 presentation—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; 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 Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) provides the primary source of external standardized test data for the school. During its first four years, the school administered the Terra Nova Basic Multiple Assessments to grades 7, 8, and 9 each spring. The school discontinued the Terra Nova last year, however, as the MCAS assumed a still-larger role in our mandated testing and provided full data in ELA and Math in 7th, 8th, and 10th, as well as increasing testing in Social Studies and Science. The school is exploring the adoption of a standardized test in ELA and Math to be used for diagnostic purposes in the fall of 7th and 9th grades only.

MCAS. The tables below track the performance of Four Rivers students on the MCAS in the spring of 2004 through 2008. (The results from the spring 2009 administration have not been received.) We are pleased with the success of the 10th grade again in 2008, with high Proficiency rates in both ELA and Math, and with 100% passing ELA (tying for first in the Commonwealth) and all but one student passing Math (and that student passed on the first re-take). We also note the increase in our Proficiency rates in Math in 10th grade, and distinct improvement in Proficiency Rates in Math in 7th and 8th. We will review the effectiveness of our program and make recommendations.

Four Rivers MCAS Results by Performance Category
Spring 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008

Rev. 7/20/09

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
2007 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	0	78	19	3
2008 <i>Class of 2013</i>	35	17	49	34	0
Grade 7					
Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2011</i>	35	14	34	43	9
2007 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	24	32	30	14
2008 <i>Class of 2013</i>	36	19	36	31	14
Grade 8					
English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	34	15	73	9	3
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	6	77	16	0
2008 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	14	81	5	0
Grade 8					
Mathematics					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	28	56	6
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	0	26	59	15
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	32	6	28	47	19
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	13	35	26	26
2008 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	24	27	38	11
Grade 8					
Science & Technology/Engineering					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	9	34	38	19
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	3	44	47	6
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	32	3	38	41	19
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	6	32	45	16
2008	37	0	57	38	5

<i>Class of 20112</i>					
Grade 10 English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	12	74	15	0
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	20	63	17	0
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	26	31	69	0	0
Grade 10 Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	41	26	29	3
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	60	23	13	3
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	28	46	36	11	7
Grade 10 Science : Biology					
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	7	53	33	6
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	25	24	60	16	0

**Four Rivers MCAS Results Compared to State Results
For Proficiency and Passing
Spring 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008**

Revised 7/20/2009

Proficiency = *Advanced + Proficient* Passing = *Advanced + Proficient + Needs Improvement*

Year	# FR Students	FRCPS % Proficiency	State % Proficiency	FRCPS % Passing	State % Passing
Grade 7 English Languge Arts					
2004 <i>Class of 2009</i>	32	72	68	97	93
2005 <i>Class of 2010</i>	33	88	66	100	92
2006 <i>Class of 2011</i>	35	74	65	97	91
2007 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	78	69	97	92
2008 <i>Class of 2013</i>	35	66	69	100	92
Grade 7 Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2011</i>	35	48	40	91	72
2007 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	56	46	86	76
2008 <i>Class of 2013</i>	36	55	47	86	76

Grade 8					
English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	34	88	74	97	93
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	83	75	100	94
2008 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	95	75	100	93
Grade 8					
Mathematics					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	37	39	94	71
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	26	39	85	69
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	32	34	40	81	71
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	48	45	74	75
2008 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	51	49	89	76
Grade 8					
Science & Technology/Engineering					
2004 <i>Class of 2008</i>	32	43	33	81	69
2005 <i>Class of 2009</i>	34	47	33	94	74
2006 <i>Class of 2010</i>	32	41	32	81	75
2007 <i>Class of 2011</i>	31	38	33	83	76
2008 <i>Class of 2012</i>	37	57	39	95	78
Grade 10					
English Language Arts					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	86	69	100	93
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	83	71	100	94
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	26	100	74	100	96
Grade 10					
Mathematics					
2006 <i>Class of 2008</i>	34	67	67	97	88
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	83	69	97	91
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	28	82	72	93	91
Grade 10					
Biology					
2007 <i>Class of 2009</i>	30	60	42	93	76
2008 <i>Class of 2010</i>	25	84	57	100	88

Other external school measures

The school's results on the No Child Left Behind measures of Adequate Yearly Progress in ELA and Math continue to be positive, as summarized in the table below. For more details, see the full NCLB 2008-2009 Report Card at the end of our Annual Report.

2008 Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) Data

	<u>NCLB Accountability Status</u>	<u>Performance Rating</u>	<u>Improvement Rating</u>
ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS	No Status	Very High	On Target
MATHEMATICS	No Status	High	No Change

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. Selected results on Progress Report and Portfolio measures are reported in the Accountability Plan section of this report.

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 formulates 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. All course standards must 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 some students needed extensive revision to bring their work on each course standard up to passing or above. A number of students needed summer make-up work on their deficient course standards or credits, but that number has decreased from the year before because of our firm expectations and clear policies around timely revision of work.

3) **Portfolios** continue to grow as a vital part of the Four Rivers internal assessment system. Students at each grade level are required to assemble a portfolio, including examples of their best work. 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 significant effort into the Passage Portfolio. As data reported in the Accountability Plan section shows, over 90% of the students met the portfolio standards.

4) **Survey.** The school administered a Parent Survey in June to gauge satisfaction and assemble data for planning and accountability, as we have done each year. We also surveyed students with similar measures. Responses came from 96 parents. Below 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 last year and this year. Another section of the survey invited comments and suggestions, and those are being tabulated and responded to in a form that will go to parents and students in the Fall.

Four Rivers Survey June 2009	Percent who “Agree” or “Strongly Agree”		
	Parents 06-07	Parents 07-08	Parents 08-09
I generally understand the educational approach used at Four Rivers	100	93	96
Academic expectations at the school are clear	87	85	85
I am satisfied with the amount of academic challenge in my child’s school program	94	92	95
The progress reports help me understand my child’s school experiences and achievement	85	84	85
I am satisfied with the amount of homework assigned to my child	77	78	81
I am satisfied with the amount of academic support and extra help available to my child	89	93	90
My child is held to higher expectations of academic performance than at previous school	75	78	83
The school succeeds in creating a positive social and emotional environment	96	95	88
Behavioral expectations at school are clear	91	86	87
The school is helping my child grow as a person and develop strengths of character	96	96	91
I believe at least one of my child’s teachers knows and understands him or her well	98	93	86
The newsletters and mailings create a good communication system within the school	92	93	95
Communication from and with teachers is easy and adequate	81	87	79
Communication from and with the school administration is easy and adequate	92	94	88
The school has built a strong sense of community among students, staff and families	96	90	83
FRCPS has supported and/or positively impacted my parenting and involvement with my child’s education	89	84	83

Number of instructional days

Four Rivers completed 180 instructional days in the past school year, starting September 2, 2008 and ending June 19, 2009. School began at 8:00 am Monday through Friday; dismissal was at 3:05 pm on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday, and at 1:30 pm on Wednesdays.

IV. Governance Profile

Four Rivers Charter Public School Board of Trustees 2008-09

Chair, Marie Bartlett, Leyden, MA. Community Educator. Appointed 2002, term ending September 2010. Committee on Trustees and Personnel Policies, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Vice-Chair, Linda Cavanaugh, Professor of Mathematics, Greenfield Community College. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2002; term ending September 2010. Facilities and Finance Committee, Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Treasurer, Edwin A. Murray, Buckland, MA. Professor Emeritus of Strategy and Planning, Boston University. Appointed 2008; term ending September 2011. Facilities and Finance Committee.

Secretary, David Roulston, Greenfield, MA. Attorney-at-Law, Greenfield, MA. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2003, term ending September 2009. Development Committee.

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

Alan Fraker, Greenfield, MA. College Counselor, Montclair-Kimberly Academy; former director of accountability for the KIPP Foundation. Appointed 2003; term ending September 2010. Committee on Accountability and Program Planning.

Ian Fraser, Northampton, MA. Chairman of the Board, Aztec Cattle and Land Co., Ltd. Appointed 2009; term ending September 2012. Facilities and Finance Committee.

Jonathon Lowe, Deerfield, MA. Domestic and International Business Consultant. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2007; term ending September 2010. Development Committee.

Deborah T. Volland, Greenfield, MA. Community volunteer with technology background. Parent of FRCPS student. Appointed 2004, term ending September 2011. Committee on Trustees and Personnel Policies, Facilities and Finance Committee.

Board of Trustees Meetings

All trustee meetings in the school year 2008-09 were held at the school, 7:00-9:00 p.m., on the second Monday of each month, except August.

Major Policy Decisions of the Board of Trustees 2008-2009

- Voted to revised the Mission Statement of the School
- Voted to revise Leave Time policy and adopted new policy on Nepotism
- Voted to revise Enrollment policy
- Voted to revise graduation requirements and adopt an Early Graduation Approval Process
- Voted to adopt Policy for Approval of Major Student Trips
- Voted to promote Peter Garbus to Principal and Head of School for 2009-2010 school year upon retirement of Edward Blatchford, Executive Director
- Voted to adopt Strategic Plan
- Voted to re-elect Board members, elect new board members and re-elect Board officers.
- Voted to approve the annual goals for the Executive Director (CHECK)

- Voted to accept the school audit and to approve the Management Letter responses from Management

Summary of Official Complaints

No official complaints were received by the Board of Trustees in FY 2009.

V. Student Profile

Four Rivers Charter School ~ Student Profile 2008-09

Total Enrollment~190

As of June 19, 2009 (last day of school)

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION (for students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission)		
Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	2	1%
Asian	2	1%
Hispanic	4	2%
Native American	2	1%
White	177	93%
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	0	0
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	3	2%
Special Education	33	17%
Limited English Proficient	0	0
Low Income	42	22%

Enrollment by Grade:	by Gender:	Male	Female
7 th – 35	7 th	18 (51%)	17 (49%)
8 th – 36	8 th	19 (53%)	17 (47%)
9 th – 35	9 th	20 (57%)	15 (43%)
10 th – 33	10 th	16 (48%)	17 (52%)
11 th – 23	11 th	14 (61%)	9 (39%)
12 th – 28	12 th	16 (57%)	12 (43%)
TOTAL 190	Total	103 (54%)	87 (46%)

STUDENT Enrollment Information:	
Number of students who completed the 2007-08 school year but did not reenroll for the 2008-09 school year (excluding graduates):	13
Total number of students enrolled as of October 1, 2008:	198
Total number of students who enrolled during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	0
Total number of students who left during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	9
Total number of students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission:	190
Number of students who graduated at the end of the 2008-09 school year:	28

Student Turnover/Attrition Data 2008-09

Students who withdrew during the 2008-09 school year = 8

- 1 *Moved out of area*
- 1 *Earned GED*
- 2 *Enrolled in alternative therapeutic programs*
- 1 *Home school*
- 1 *Travel distance too great – returned to home district*
- 2 *Social and/or Academic – returned to home district*

Students who finished the school year but are not returning in Fall 2008 = 19 (as of 7/17/09)

- 4 *Transferring to county vocational/technical high school*
- 3 *Transferring to therapeutic programs*
- 1 *Transferring to more appropriate program – Life Skills*
- 6 *Social/Academic - returning to home district*
- 1 *Seeking more diversity*
- 1 *Seeking more sports programming*
- 1 *Seeking more academic choices at a larger school*
- 1 *Seeking shorter commute – returning to home district*
- 1 *Dropping out to earn GED*

Attendance Rate Average Daily Attendance for the 2008 09 Year = 92.6 %

Expulsions – Suspensions 08-09

Number of Students Expelled	0
Number of In-School Suspensions	27 incidents (16 students)
<i>Summary of Reasons:</i>	
<i>Plagiarism</i>	1
<i>Rude / Disrespectful to Teacher</i>	8
<i>Pushed/Poked Classmate/Horseplay</i>	2
<i>Disruptive/Talking in Class</i>	1
<i>Physical Assault</i>	1
<i>Other</i>	14

Number of Out-Of-School Suspensions 24 incidents (14 Students)

<i>Summary of reasons:</i>	
<i>Disruptive/Disrespectful to Teacher</i>	2
<i>Possession/Use of Controlled Substance (marijuana)</i>	7
<i>Physical Fight / Assault</i>	7
<i>Threat of Physical Assault</i>	1
<i>Theft</i>	2
<i>Possession of Dangerous Weapon (knife)</i>	1
<i>Pushed/Poked Classmate</i>	1
<i>Other</i>	3

Total Number of Student Applications Received for 08-09 by Town

Town	Grade 7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11
Amherst	2	0	1	1	0
Ashfield	5	1	1	0	0
Athol	0	0	1	0	0
Buckland	2	0	0	0	0
Charlemont	1	0	0	0	0
Colrain	2	0	2	0	0
Conway	1	0	0	2	0
Deerfield	4	3	3	0	0
Erving	9	0	1	0	0
Gill	1	0	1	0	0
Greenfield	24	6	18	5	1
Hawley	0	0	1	0	0
Heath	1	0	0	0	0
Leverett	1	1	1	0	0
Leyden	1	0	0	0	1
Montague	10	2	3	2	1
New Salem	2	1	0	0	0
Northampton	1	0	0	0	0
Northfield	2	0	1	0	0
Orange	1	1	2	0	0
Plainfield	0	0	1	0	0
Shelburne	2	1	2	0	0
Shutesbury	0	0	2	0	0
Sunderland	1	0	1	1	0
Warwick	0	1	1	0	0
Whately	1	0	1	0	0
Williamsburg	0	1	0	0	0
TOTAL	74	18	44	11	3

Grade 7: 74 Applications for 36 Spaces (includes 1 late application)
 Grade 8: 18 Applications for 6 Spaces
 Grade 9: 44 Applications for 8 Spaces (includes 2 late applications)
 Grade 10: 11 Applications for 3 Spaces (includes 3 applicants for lottery 07/25/08)
 Grade 11: 3 Applications for 2 Spaces (for a late lottery July 25, 2008)

Demand Ratio 150 /55 (2.7%)

VI. Staff Profile

Faculty and Staff Biographies 2008-09

Maura Ambuter, 9th and 10th Grade English. B.A. American Studies, Smith College; M.Ed., Social Justice Education, University of Massachusetts. Ms. Ambuter taught at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School and at a charter school in New Hampshire. She joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Corey Ames, Technology Assistant. Mr. Ames has several years experience at neighboring Greenfield Community College in computers, technology and security. He joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Edward Blatchford, Executive 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.

Neill Bovaird, Nature (Part Time). B.S., Natural Resource Studies, University of Massachusetts. Mr. Bovaird has completed several years as a teaching naturalist at a highly-regarded environmental center in Connecticut. He joined Four Rivers in 2007, having assisted in our Nature classes in our early years.

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.

Donna Carpenter, Art. B.A. in Fine Arts, Westfield State College; M.Ed. University of Massachusetts. Ms. Carpenter is an Academic Program Manager at UMass overseeing The Lively Arts general education courses and has eleven years' experience teaching art and horticulture at both the elementary and secondary levels at the Chicopee Public Schools, creating and supporting new and innovative programs. She joined Four Rivers in 2008.

Christine Childress, College Counselor (Part Time). B.A. English, University of California Santa Barbara. Ms. Childress also holds a Certificate in College Counseling from the University of California and is doing graduate work related to college counseling the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. She joined Four Rivers in 2007.

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.

Steven D'Agostino, Music (Part Time). B.A. Hampshire College, Music, Community and Education. Recipient of Hampshire College's Ingenuity Award for his work building the college's musical culture, Mr. D'Agostino is also a private music instructor. He joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Elaine DeLorme, Special Education Secretary. Ms. DeLorme worked as an executive Secretary for the Town of Shelburne, in human resources at an extended care facility, and owned and operated her own business for 19 years. She joined Four Rivers in 2008.

Susan Durkee, Assistant Principal and Co-founder, Skills 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.

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.

Peter Garbus, Principal. B.A. in History/Writing/Education, Brown University; M.Ed. in Teaching, Harvard University. Peter was the founder and director of the North Central Charter Essential School in Fitchburg, a grade 7 – 12 school somewhat larger than Four Rivers. He is certified as a principal in Massachusetts. He previously taught for many years at the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School in Devens, MA and was part of the inaugural faculty of an innovative public high school in Arizona. He joined Four Rivers in 2007.

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, Wellness. 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.

Cheryl Howard, 9th and 10th Grade Math. B.A. Mathematics, University of Massachusetts; M.A. in Education, Antioch New England Graduate School. Ms. Howard has worked at the Hampshire Educational Collaborative and earlier taught math at Turners Falls High School and the Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School. She joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Matthew Leaf, Dean of Students. 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 eight 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 and 12th Grade Math. 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.

Michael Lindenberg, 11th and 12th Grade Physics and Environmental Science. B.S. in Chemistry, Carnegie Mellon University ; M.A. in Teaching, University of Pittsburgh . Mr. Lindenberg is licensed in Chemistry and Mathematics and has taught in public schools and at a community college in Virginia. He joined Four Rivers in 2008.

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.

Alex Loud, Assistant Teacher. B.A. German Language and Culture, Bowdoin College; M.A. History, Smith College; Mr. Loud has taught in the Northfield Mount Hermon School summer school and was Assistant Director of the NMH Farm Program for many years. He joined Four Rivers in 2007.

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 taught Middle and Upper School Spanish at the Williston-Northampton School for four years. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Jeanne Milton, Nurse (Part Time). RN, St. Joseph's Hospital School of Nursing, Providence, RI. Mrs. Milton is experienced in all aspects of nursing and knows the local community health resources well. Her 27 years of practice in the local community includes 12 years as an emergency room and ICU nurse. She joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Raymond Neal, 11th and 12th Grade History. 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.

Leah Plath, 11th and 12th Grade English. B.A. English, University of Massachusetts. Ms. Plath has teaching experience at New Leadership Charter School in Springfield and is College Board trained in Advanced Placement Instruction for English. She joined Four Rivers in 2007.

Terry Plotkin, Athletic Director (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.

Lisa Ritchie, 7th Grade English and Social Studies. B.A. Comparative Literature, Brown University; M.Ed. in English Education, Georgia State University. Ms. Ritchie has taught middle- and high-school English in the Atlanta area and has also been an Outward Bound Middle School Transitions Project instructor and an Intermountain Americorps alternative high school instructor. She joined Four Rivers in 2008.

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 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. B.A. Education/Special Needs, Elms College. Ms. Haxo had 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 experienced 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, 9th and 10th Grade History and 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, RI. He joined Four Rivers in 2005.

Robert Williams, 9th and 10th Grade History and Social Studies. B.A., History/Education, American International College; MA (undergrad) Medieval History and Graduate Studies, Dark Age of Scotland, St. Andrews University; Mr. Williams has teaching experience at Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School and Hopkinton High School, adjunct professorship at American International College and Baypath College, and has done curriculum development for the Massachusetts Historical Society. He joined Four Rivers in 2008.

Summary Data on Faculty and Staff

Instructional Time:	
Total number of instructional days for the 2008-09 school year:	180
First and last day of the 2008-09 school year:	09/02/2008 06/19/2009
Length of school day (please note if schedule varies throughout the week or the year):	M,T,Th,F = 425 minutes/day W = 300 minutes 2000 minutes/wk

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR			
Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Executive Director	Accountability & Renewal, Development, Admissions, Enrollment, Organizational Mgt	2002	June 30, 2009
Principal	Academic Prog., Curriculum Development, Instructional Practices, Faculty Supervision	August 2007	
Assistant Principal	Scheduling, Community Resources Instructional Support, Senior & Junior Seminar	2002	
Director of Operations	Financial Management, Human Resources, Technology, Facilities Management	2003	
Dean of Students	School-wide Discipline, School Culture, Crew Program, Community Events, Extracurriculars	2003	

TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR			
	Number as of the last day of the 2008-09 school year	Departures during the 2008-09 school year	Departures at the end of the school year
Teachers	Full time = 17	1	4
	Full time Asst = 4	0	1
	Part time = 6	0	2
Other Staff	Full time = 1	0	0
	Part time = 5	0	1

Teachers' reasons for leaving:

- | | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 1 Full Time Teacher | Contract not renewed |
| 1 Full Time Teacher | Temporary Hire - Not renewed |
| 2 Full Time | Seeking change of profession |
| 1 Full Time Assistant | Found lead teacher position |
| 1 Part Time | Contract not renewed |
| 1 Part Time | Enrolling in graduate school out of state |

Highly Qualified Status: All full-time classroom teachers and assistant teachers were "Highly Qualified" in the subjects they teach.

Average class size: 15.42 for 2008-09; student / teacher ratio 10 to 1.

Administrative attrition: Our Executive Director (also a Founder) retired at the end of the school year. A plan for the transition of leadership was implemented in November 2008.

Executive Director

Edward Blatchford, Office in Farmhouse

Mission, Board Relations, Accountability & Renewal, Development,
Admissions & Enrollment, External Relations, Financial & Strategic Planning,
Organizational Management, Staff Hiring & Retention
Oversight of Special Education & College Counseling

Principal

Peter Garbus, Office in High School

Instructional Leader, grades 7-12
Academic Program
Curriculum Development
Instructional Practices (including EL)
Faculty Supervision
Assessment (including MCAS)
Scheduling
School Themes
Advisory Program
504 Coordination
Title I program
Athletics & After-School Programs
Summer programs

Director of Operations

Harlan Smith, Office in front of Farmhouse

Financial Management:
Budget, Accounting
Purchasing
Human Resources
Technology

Facilities Management
Transportation
Lunch Program
Health & Safety
Entitlement Grants
Title I grant management

Four Rivers Board of Trustees support
Development Committee support
Special Projects

**Assistant
Principal**

*Susan Durkee
Office in High School (2nd
floor)*

Scheduling
Community Resources
Expedition and
Instructional Support
Senior & Junior Seminar
(includes
*Jr Internship &
Sr. Expedition*)
Div. III Special Prog.
HS Building Care & Use
Gen'l Administrative
Support

(Ms. Durkee also teaches
in Div III)

Dean of Students

*Matthew Leaf
Office in Farmhouse
(2nd floor)*

School-wide
Discipline
School Culture
Crew Program
School-wide
Community Events
Extracurricular
Activities (non-
athletics)
Expedition and
Instructional Support
Gen'l Administrative
Support
Admissions Support
After-School
Programs
Coord. student
activities & service

School Secretary

*Leslie Taylor,
School Office in Farmhouse*

Student Records
Attendance
State Reporting
Monthly Newsletter
School Lunches

Administrative and Secretarial
support for Exec. Director, Principal, and
Dir. Of Operations as well as for
College Counselor and Athletic Director

VII. Financial Profile

SCHOOL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION (Un-audited) Year Ended June 30, 2009

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 \$2,528,416 for the year ended June 30, 2009. The school had net income (change in net assets) of \$79,850 for the year, which was comprised of an operating gain of \$96,221 and non-operating loss of \$16,371.

Results of Operations

Positive variances from the adopted budget were related to greater enrollment and per-pupil tuition rates than anticipated, less staff selecting health insurance coverage, and reduction in heating fuels consumed per degree day. 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 unanticipated increases in the cost of petroleum based fuels and to contracted costs for SPED contracted therapies exceeding expectations.

Other variances were due to grant timing between fiscal years.

During the fiscal year ended June 30, 2009, Four Rivers Charter Public School had 195 students and received \$2,399,904 in per pupil tuition, which represents 95% of the school's revenue. In addition, Four Rivers Charter School received various federal and state grants, which totaled \$87,888 and \$2,625 respectively.

Budget for Fiscal Year 2010

The budget presented for the 2009-2010 school year reflects an enrollment of 190 students. The budget also reflects an assumption of an approximately 9% decrease in per-pupil tuition rates due to the economic uncertainty of state and local budgets. Capital expenditures are reflected within the full operating budget.

Four Rivers Charter Public School Schedule of State and Federal Grants Received Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009 (un-audited)

Grants - State	200
SPED	
274	2425
Total Grants - State	2625
Grants - Federal	
Rural Education Assistance Prog	24899
SPED	
240	32583
Title 1	26528
Title II	3879
	87888

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
STATEMENT OF REVENUES, EXPENSES
AND CHANGES IN NET ASSETS**

Fiscal Year 2009

Preliminary and Un-audited

ASSETS		
Current Assets		
Checking/Savings	619,318	
Petty Cash	123	
Total Checking/Savings	<u>619,441</u>	
Accounts Receivable		
Grants Receivable - Federal	4,024	
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>4,024</u>	
Other Current Assets		
Prepaid Expenditures	1,628	
Total Other Current Assets	<u>1,628</u>	
Total Current Assets	625,093	
Fixed Assets		
Buildings/leasehold improvement	37,392	
Equipment/hardware	24,972	
Vehicles	36,736	
Total Fixed Assets	<u>99,100</u>	
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>724,193</u></u>	
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
Liabilities		
Current Liabilities		
Accounts Payable		
Accounts Payable	23,464	
Total Accounts Payable	23,464	
Other Current Liabilities		
Short term - Capital lease 450	4,252	
Short term - Capital Lease 550	2,032	
Section 125 Flex Savings Held	1,863	
Accrued expense	27,277	
Accrued Payroll	144,195	
Deferred Grant Revenue	18,678	
Payroll Liabilities	10,720	
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>209,018</u>	
Total Current Liabilities	232,482	
Long Term Liabilities		
Capital Lease 550	6,778	
Capital Lease 450	18,622	
Total Long Term Liabilities	<u>25,400</u>	
Total Liabilities	257,882	
Total Net Assets	<u>466,311</u>	
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	<u><u>724,193</u></u>	

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
INCOME STATEMENT**

Fiscal Year 2009

Preliminary and Un-audited

Operating Income/Expense	
Income	
Tuition	2,399,904
Grants - State	200
Grants - Federal	90,313
Program Fees	2,151
Medicaid Reimbursement	8,154
Rental Income	6,458
Other Income	<u>21,235</u>
Total Income	2,528,416
Expense	
Reconciliation Discrepancies	348
Health Services	1,131
Advertising/Recruitment	7,467
Athletic Services	15,142
Food Services	(1,668)
Testing & Assessment	77
Short Term Interest	1,761
Contracted services	60,782
Fees, Licenses, Dues, Membershi	5,629
Fringe Benefits	134,574
Insurance	34,884
Maintenance and repairs	99,264
Miscellaneous	1,344
Occupancy	309,933
Payroll Taxes	47,147
Postage and Shipping	9,074
Salaries and Wages	1,504,487
Prof. Development	38,669
Supplies and materials	74,823
Technology	43,561
Utilities	<u>43,765</u>
Total Expense	<u>2,432,195</u>
Net Operating Income	96,221
Non-operating Income/Expense	
Other Income	
Revenue from Private Sources	<u>5,496</u>
Total Other Income	5,496
Other Expense	
Depreciation expense	<u>21,866</u>
Total Other Expense	<u>21,866</u>
Net Non-operating Income	<u>(16,371)</u>
Increase in Net Assets	<u><u>79,850</u></u>

**Four Rivers Charter Public School
ADOPTED BUDGET FY 2010**

Major Assumptions	Enrollment	
		190
	Per Pupil Tuition	11,421
Revenues		
revenue from state sources		
Per pupil tuition		2,169,976
Mass Health SPED reimbursement		2,000
revenue from Federal Sources		
Title I grant		25,000
ARRA SPED Funds		3,745
REAP grant		30,077
Mass. SPED Grants (240, 252, 274, other))		32,583
Title II Part A Teacher Quality		2,239
revenue from local sources		
Hilltown's Lease of Tech Coord.		35,316
Sustainability Fund		15,000
Bank Interest		6,000
Rental Income net of expense		6,000
TOTAL REVENUE		2,327,936
Expenditures		
Salaries		
Salaries - Administrative		284,798
Salaries - Secretarial		77,885
Salaries - Teachers		883,022
Salaries - Other (Professional)		138,568
Salaries - Paraprofessionals		56,538
Salaries - Custodial		16,798
Staff Stipends over Base Salary		23,760
		-
<u>Subtotal-Salaries</u>		1,481,369
Fringe Benefits and Taxes		
Health Insurance		119,955
Section 125 Flexible Spending Acct Fees		1,700
FICA Tax		23,993
Life Ins. & LTD		9,450
Medicare Tax		21,480
MA SUI, Workforce Training, Health taxes		2,390
<u>Subtotal- Fringe Benefits and Taxes</u>		178,968
Instructional		
Professional Development & ELOB		32,000
SPED Admin.		0
SPED Outside Contractual Services		20,000
College counseling		250

In-house evaluation materials	500
Contracted course offerings	2,550
Contract Labor- Non-Instructional	2,000
Testing & Assessment	750
Consultants: Professional and Academic	1,000
SPED Instructional Equip. & Supplies	500
Intensives (not budgeted in FY08)	2,000
Expeditions	9,000
Supplies/Materials- Instructional	16,000
Technology	14,910
Library Expense and Reference Books	1,500
Textbooks	10,000
<u>Subtotal- Instructional</u>	112,960
-	
<i>Business Services</i>	
Advertising	5,000
Insurance- Student, Property, Casualty & Prof. Liability	24,734
Workers Compensation Insurance	5,858
Legal, Technical, Consult. Services	4,000
Office Expenses	2,000
Copying Equipment & Expense	17,272
Fees, Licensing, Dues and Memberships	5,000
Meeting, Catering, Rentals	150
Graduation	3,300
Payroll Service	4,000
Postage and Shipping	6,000
Printing - Outside	2,000
Travel	1,000
<u>Subtotal- Business Services</u>	80,314
-	
<i>Operations and Maintenance</i>	
Custodial Supplies	7,000
Floor refinishing & carpeting (twice/yr.)	6,200
Grounds-snow, grass, cleanups	30,000
Fertilization	1,600
Trash Removal	2,600
Pest Control	900
Elevator, HVAC Maint.& Contracts	9,500
Vehicle Maint and Repairs	3,500
Property Repair & Improvements	4,000
Maintenance and Supplies	4,500
<u>Subtotal- Operations and Maintenance</u>	69,800
-	
<i>Physical Plant</i>	
Furniture and Instruct. Equipment	3,000
Rent	296,808
Electricity	20,000
Telephones/Cell phone	3,200
Heating Oil	5,000
Propane	14,000
Water/Sewer	600

<u>Subtotal- Physical Plant</u>	342,608
-	
Student Services	
Health	1,250
Food (incl. school lunch)	700
Sports and PE Expenses	0
PE Transportation- contracted	9,000
Fuel and Supplies for Activity Bus	3,600
PE Indoor Action rental	3,670
Rec. equip., refs, supplies, coaches, field & gyms (net of Fees)	500
<u>Subtotal- Student Services</u>	18,720
-	
Board of Trustees	
Audit, Consulting Fees	13,000
Workshops and Conferences	1,000
Interest Expense on Copier leases	3,728
Interest Expense on Bus purchase	1,700
Contingency	0
<u>Subtotal- Board of Trustees</u>	19,428
-	
TOTAL REVENUE	2,327,936
TOTAL ROUTINE OPERATING EXPENDITURES	2,304,167
	-
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS (before deprec.)	23,769
DEPRECIATION	21,867
INCREASE IN NET ASSETS (after depreciation)	1,902
OPERATING MARGIN	0.1%

VIII. Dissemination

Four Rivers continued this year its efforts to disseminate models for replication and best practices to educators from Franklin County and beyond. Below are some highlights:

1. Numerous informal visits by educators and applying families provided opportunities to demonstrate EL pedagogy in action. Listed below is a sample of visitors hosted by the school from September through May:
 - Matthew Morrissey, Antioch student, observing Ms. Locke’s science class
 - Education class from Bennington College
 - Mike Phillips, founder of Change Greenfield
 - Teacher & students from Renaissance EL school in Springfield observing Crew
 - Sue Gentile & students in Education for Sustainability, Antioch observing Ms. Stamas in Science
 - Barb Lockhart & Megan Altscheder, teachers from Greenfield Center School, a nearby private day school
 - Ed Rhomberg, Director, Compass School, Westminster, VT observing classes
 - Susan Hollins, Superintendent, Greenfield Public Schools
 - Rhonda Brooks, Hampshire Educational Collaborative
 - Students from the Clarke School for the Deaf visiting in 8th grade
 - Professor Jimmy Karlin, Antioch observing
 - Blake Wilson, Math teacher from the Bement School observing Div I project-based Math
 - Amir Fleisher & Julia Taylor, The Compass School, Westminster, VT
 - Richie Davis, Recorder
 - Education class from New England College observing
 - Visitors from Springfield Renaissance School to learn about Senior Expeditions
 - Kelly McDonald, University of Massachusetts
2. Visit from a local education activist who is trying to create a dialogue for change in local districts, directed to us by local educational leaders. He is interested in ideas that could influence teaching in other districts.
3. Kevin Courtney asked to visit the school in his role as a consultant to the Inter-district dialog taking place under the chairmanship of Robert Pura, President of GCC. He is interested in seeing Four Rivers play an active role in discussions around sharing with other districts for potential county-wide group purchasing, professional development, and other forms of cooperation.
4. Executive Director Ed Blatchford met regularly with Franklin County superintendents and Principal Peter Garbus met regularly with Franklin County principals. Such participation has begun to build relationships that will lead to future collaboration. Principals at Pioneer Regional School and Greenfield High School both wrote letters of support for a dissemination grant proposal that will be further strengthened and resubmitted next year.
5. Four staff members presented master classes at the National Expedition Learning Conference in Baltimore:
 - A. Mandy Locke – Planning an Expedition using the model “Guide to the Rock Park”
 - B. Susan Durkee and Andy Stenson – Junior Internships & Senior Expeditions
 - C. Peter Garbus – Building a Community of Practice
6. *The Vernal Pool Project* authored and carried out by Mandy Locke and Matt Leaf was recognized by Expeditionary Learning Schools as one of 10 “Exemplary Projects” to be featured in national publications.
7. Classes in the Antioch New England Graduate School masters programs in science education

and sustainability education came to visit, with their professor, three times over the past year. They met with teachers and the Executive Director and (except during a summer visit) visited classes—all with the purpose of learning from our EL practices and school mission. Several individual students from Antioch also came to observe our science classes (three of our four science teachers are Antioch graduates).