



Charter and District Collaboration

Massachusetts charter public schools were created in part as laboratories of innovation, where effective new methods of education are developed and best practices identified. Although it doesn't garner a lot of attention, charter public schools across the Commonwealth are collaborating with district school teachers and principals to share best practices.

In 2011, Boston charter public schools and the Boston Public Schools agreed to create a new "Compact" that would pave the way for a new era of cooperation and collaboration between charter public and district public schools for the benefit of all Boston schoolchildren.

The Compact broadens choice for parents, improves collaboration between charter and district schools and facilitates the sharing of innovative practices. The Compact also benefits charter and district teachers, expanding opportunities for sharing best practices, fostering collaborative relationships to explore new models of urban education, and expanding opportunities for shared teacher professional development.

Across the state charters and districts are engaging in many collaborative efforts to improve public education. The Charter School Office of the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education has created a searchable database of best practices created by charter public schools and shared with district schools. Visit <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/bestpractices/> to view available best practice models.

The following is a partial accounting of charter-district collaborations not included in the above database.

Atlantis Charter School (Fall River)

Atlantis collaborated with the Fall River Public Schools on an application for the Reading First Grant as well as on a technology grant. Some school-to-school relationships have been established. ACS teachers worked with a 3rd Grade class at the Silvia School culminating with both classes and teachers participating in a shared field trip.

A slightly modified version of the school's Home and School Involvement Compact is still being used by the Fall River Public Schools and the school's Extended Day Care Program has been replicated in several of the district's schools.

Benjamin Banneker (Cambridge)

Benjamin Banneker has been involved in a number of collaborative projects in recent years:

- Banneker received grants from the Department of Education and hosted two Summer Content Institutes in Math for Massachusetts teachers.

- Banneker created a partnership with Cambridge Public Schools that provided professional development in technology for over 50 CPS teachers and staff. The partnership was funded through a \$100,000 technology grant from the Department of Education.

Benjamin Franklin Classical (Franklin)

In 2003-04, Benjamin Franklin received a DOE grant to compile a book of best teaching activities from each grade to correlate with the state frameworks. The practices are adaptable and adoptable for other schools and districts. The book was designed to show that a projects-based curriculum is consistent with a standards-based curriculum, as judged by external testing. The book, called Ben's Best, is now distributed to legislators, parents and schools.

Berkshire Arts and Technology Charter Public School (North Adams)

BARt is a member of Commonwealth Corporation's Diploma Plus network. Through this network, BARt participates in professional development workshops and shares curriculum development products with the other network schools (public schools in Massachusetts, Rhode Island and New York City).

The integration of arts into the core curriculum is a major focus of the school. BARt has applied for a grant from the US Department of Education to create a model for integrating the arts and then to disseminate the model to all Berkshire County public school districts. Even without the grant, the school has begun to document its efforts in this area and share them with local arts professionals who may have opportunities to work with other schools.

Boston Collegiate Charter School (Dorchester)

In 2003, Boston Collegiate joined the Project for School Innovation (PSI) network, working with other public charter and district public schools to share and disseminate best practices, including Collegiate's comprehensive after school programming and support structures.

The work is highlighted in a book and in a video released by PSI, "Learning After School: A Step-by-Step Guide to Providing an Academic Safety Net and Promoting Student Initiative."

Boston Renaissance Charter Public School

Renaissance students and staff, in partnership with the Wang Center's Arts Can Teach Program, piloted an 8-week lunchtime musical/cultural experience called "Eats and Beats." The program received outstanding reviews, was featured in the Sunday Boston Globe, and is being disseminated to several districts schools.

Renaissance's Enhancing Instruction Through Technology was featured at a Massachusetts Department of Education professional development in technology training workshop.

Cape Cod Lighthouse Charter School (Orleans)

CCLCS has a number of successful collaboration/dissemination programs. These include:

- The Roots & Shoots Club, an affiliate of the Jane Goodall Institute. Students at CCLCS started the first chapter on Cape Cod; there are now 10 Cape chapters.
- Alumni, students and school staff collaborated to form The Cape & Islands Youth Council on Sustainability, a youth-led program for middle and high school students that promotes youth activism.
- CCLCS's resident Japanese intern brought cultural lessons to four local school districts.
- The Write Connection is a newspaper publication that was developed and established by the CCLCS Writer-in-Residence for students throughout Cape Cod. This program brings together students from five districts, and is currently distributed throughout the region.
- CCLCS math department has been working collegially with the local town district to share best practices, develop curriculum links, and strengthen programming across the middle schools in readiness for transition to high school.
- CCLCS science staff wrote and piloted a curriculum on alternative energy through a grant from the Massachusetts Renewable Energy Trust for publication in the region. The grant also funded interactive programming at three area middle schools.

Conservatory Lab Charter School (Brighton)

Two federal department of education grant opportunities provided CLCS with the incentive to forge partnerships with institutions, including the Somerville Public Schools, the Cambridge Public Schools, the Boston Public Schools, the Longy School of Music, the Massachusetts Cultural Council and the MA Department of Education.

Edward W. Brooke Charter School (Roslindale)

The school formed a one-year partnership with the Clarence Edwards Middle School in Charlestown to develop formative math assessments and share best practices in analyzing data from the assessments to target student support.

Four Rivers Charter Public School (Greenfield)

Eighth graders produced a book entitled "Keepers of the Soil: Monologues of Franklin County," which featured monologues by 12 local farmers. The book followed a similar project the previous year. Last year's book, "A Little More than Just People," was widely distributed within the Expeditionary Learning network of schools and has encouraged similar projects.

Foxborough Regional Charter School (Foxborough)

During 2005-2006 school orientation and ongoing development days, representatives from the Foxborough and Stoughton districts attended trainings on Curriculum Mapping. In return, Stoughton invited Foxborough to participate in professional development hosted at their school and a team of faculty attended sessions to continue to learn about data-driven analysis.

Francis W. Parker Essential School (Devens)

The school's Teachers Center is designed to be a regional professional development resource for educators and schools. The center offers a variety of professional development workshops, partnerships and related programs. Educators from Turner's Falls High School; Hampshire Regional School District; Brockton Public Schools; Mendon-Upton School District and the Concord-Carlisle School District, among others have been hosted at the Teachers Center.

Innovation Academy Charter School (Tyngsboro)

In FY 2004, Innovation Academy formally named Murdoch Middle School, received further funding from the DOE to complete the Professional Development Training Interactive DVDs for distribution throughout schools in Massachusetts.

IACS received a two-year funding grant from the Massachusetts Charter Public School Association to pay for the training of two teachers to share the IACS project based teaching style with other public schools. IACS teachers presented at the yearly MCPSA teacher conference and in public schools in Massachusetts.

Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School (West Tisbury)

Martha's Vineyard Charter created a partnership with the Chilmark School in the Up-Island School District to:

- Provide professional development using the Authentic Task Approach
- Develop a simple handbook that offers research-based strategies for differentiation in the classroom
- Identify and put into practice a variety of assistive technology methods as a means to enhance differentiation.

Neighborhood House (Boston) and the Project for School Innovation

The school created the Project for School Innovation (PSI) to cultivate grassroots networks to help educators share their successes and drive school change.

PSI is a teacher-to-teacher network that unites educators from charter public schools and district public schools. Innovative public schools apply to participate in a one-year program to document effective practices through how-to books and videos, teacher-led training and planning tools.

New Leadership Charter Public School (Springfield)

NLCS has been a primary partner with the Urban League of Springfield and the Springfield Public Schools in the Step Up Springfield Campaign for Academic Achievement.

Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter Public School (South Hadley)

Arts in Every School (AES) is a program at Pioneer Valley that shows other schools how to integrate the arts and multiple learning styles into the academic curriculum. Although the program focuses on urban and rural school districts, any school is invited to participate.

Teachers in all subject areas are encouraged to attend AES workshops. After the workshops, PVPA facilitators act as consultants to the teachers, working in and out of participants' classrooms to help them implement new ideas with their students. All AES facilitators have engaged in a rigorous training program on workshop development and meeting the needs of adult learners.

PVPA has also collaborated with the Arts in Education Center to facilitate planning and workshops on arts integration for schools in Holyoke.

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School (Somerville)

Prospect Hill Academy, a public charter school, and the Somerville school system have launched a joint effort aimed at improving teacher leadership skills and boosting student performance under a \$230,000 grant from the state Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (DESE).

The 14-month program brings together educators from Prospect Hill and two of Somerville's K-8 schools.

The grant money will be used by Prospect Hill to lend one of its top teachers as a resident coach to the two district schools – the Healey School and the Winter Hill Community School – allowing her to engage with approximately 30 teacher leaders to develop new sets of skills. Prospect Hill Academy will share the core professional development model it designed to improve the effectiveness of its teachers and, as a result, enhance student test scores.

Prospect Hill Academy Charter School (Somerville)

The school is working with Somerville and Randolph Public Schools to share the success of its Upper School math program. Prospect Hill staff members have developed and published a guidebook and lead a week-long summer institute attended by 23 teachers from Somerville, Randolph, Weston and Prospect Hill.

The Head of School further participates in Project Zero's Education Rounds where he regularly shares the PHA experience with educators from the Boston area and beyond as well as New York University's Leadership Series where he facilitated group discussions that involved dissemination with educators from all over the Northeast.

Charter and District Collaboration Continued

In addition, the school continues to be involved with the New Teachers Collaborative (NTC), a school-based, yearlong teacher preparation program. NTC teachers spend one year at PHA to learn from its practices.

Rising Tide Charter School (Plymouth)

Through the use of funds from a mutual grant, Rising Tide has worked with the Plymouth Public Schools as well as the Brockton Public Schools to bring Virtual High School to Rising Tide and other schools.

Two Rising Tide science teachers worked with the Plymouth Boys and Girls Club and faculty from the Plymouth School District and seven other schools on a grant-funded project entitled "Clear as Mud." Approximately 25 Rising Tide students joined the project. Students and teachers from Rising Tide and seven other area schools went to various beaches to take blood samples from sea animals. The group studied the samples to try to determine the effect of environmental stress on sea life. Staff members from the New England Wildlife Center came to Rising Tide to teach research and data collection skills to students. Rising Tide students and staff worked collaboratively with students and staff from other schools.

River Valley Charter School (Newburyport)

The school has received dissemination grants to offer workshops on Montessori principles to public school educators in Massachusetts.

In a series of meetings and events with the local school district's student government, students worked collaboratively to conduct a community benefit Winter Carnival event. Each group was able to witness how the other operates and perhaps incorporate effective strategies that they observed.

Roxbury Preparatory Charter School

During the 2004-2005 school year, Roxbury Prep's numeracy team updated and completed the Numeracy Notebook and held a number of workshops to help other schools implement the Roxbury Prep numeracy curriculum in their own schools.

Roxbury Prep has built on the success of the Numeracy Notebook Project to develop a similar program for literacy dissemination. The Literacy Networks program provides other educators with access to Roxbury Prep's literacy curriculum and instructional materials and provides training sessions for teachers who wish to improve the curriculum in their school.

Seven Hills Charter Public School (Worcester)

Seven Hills invited district schools to a number of workshops and training programs. Participants included educators from the Shirley and Fitchburg public schools. Seven Hills extended invitations to Worcester educators for reading and Singapore Math training programs.

43 Broad Street, Suite C401, Hudson, MA 01749 | 11 Beacon Street, Suite 340, Boston, MA 02108

| Fax 978-212-5839 | in [o@MassCharterSchools.org](mailto:info@MassCharterSchools.org) | www.MassCharterSchools.org