

Boston Collegiate Charter School: Five Keys to Creating a Successful College-Prep Program

By Eileen Callahan, Dean of Curriculum and Assessment,
Kim Everett, History Teacher, Department Chair, and Advisory Coordinator,
Susan Fortin, Co-Founder and Trustee,
and Kathleen Sullivan, Executive Director

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Boston Collegiate Charter School (BCCS), in Dorchester, Massachusetts, offers a rigorous, college preparatory program to students in grades 5-12. Our success in preparing students for college and meeting high academic standards is evidenced by strong performance on standardized and internal assessments; high levels of student, parent, and teacher satisfaction; and strong demand for our program. Our school has achieved a one hundred percent college acceptance rate, and it is the only public school in Boston where one hundred percent of the tenth grade students have passed the English and mathematics Massachusetts Curriculum Assessment System (MCAS) exams for four consecutive years (Annual Reports, 1998 – 2006).

There are five keys to the success of our program at Boston Collegiate:

- Maintaining a community where students are known as individuals
- Balancing strict structures with positive reinforcement
- Hiring smart, outstanding people and encouraging them to stay and grow at BCCS
- Using data to reflect on and drive improvement in and out of the classroom
- Teaching college readiness skills explicitly.

This paper details the methods by which we implement these keys to success, which include a strong advisory program, a consistently enforced behavioral code, teacher support and professional growth, data driven curricula and support programs, and college readiness initiatives. We have identified key challenges and developed strategic plans to improve facilities to accommodate growth and programmatic needs, enhance teacher sustainability, improve college readiness, and ensure high achievement for every student.