

# The Galloway Community Charter School Annual Report

2008-09

*Web Summary*

*In accordance with the **Charter School Program Act of 1995** (N.J.S.A. 18A:36A-16(b)) and the **Administrative Code for Charter Schools** (N.A.C. 6A:1102.2), the Board of Trustees of each charter school is required to submit an annual report to the Commissioner of Education, regional office of assistant commissioner, county superintendent, and local board of education summarizing its progress in meeting the goals of the its charter by August 1.*

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## **GALLOWAY COMMUNITY CHARTER SCHOOL DESCRIPTION 2008-2009**

**School Name:** Galloway Community Charter School (GCCS)

**Startup and Current Year.** The GCCS commenced implementation in the 2000-2001 school year and completed its 11<sup>th</sup> year of operation in June 2009. In February 2009, the charter was granted a 5 year renewal.

**Address.** The school is located at 112 South New York Road, Galloway, NJ 08205.

**Facility.** The school-owned facility is a recently constructed, specifically designed 24,000 square foot facility on a 4.5 acre lot with age-appropriate recreation areas.

**Number of Students, Grades and Classes.** The school's charter authorized a maximum enrollment of 465 students in 2008-09 in grades K through 8. The enrollment at the beginning of the school year was 284 students and 280 students in June. There were 3 classes in Kindergarten and grade 1 and 2 classes per grade in grades 2-8.

**Class Size.** The maximum number of students per class is 15.

**School Day:** The student day begins at 8:45 and ends at 3:30. The employee day begins at 8:30 and ends at 3:45.

**School Year:** 180 days for students and 187.5 days for teachers.

**Student/Teacher Ratio:** 28.6

**Planned Expansion.** The school reached its projected grade span in September 2005.

**District(s) of Residence.** The school draws its students from the following districts: 44% Galloway Township, 2.5 % Absecon, 11% Atlantic City, 2% Egg Harbor City, 6% Egg Harbor Township, .3% Hamilton Township, 32.5% Pleasantville, .3 % Ventnor, 1% Vineland, and .3% Wading River.

**Employees.** The school employs 2 administrators, 1 pupil services supervisor, 1 nurse, 1 speech/language specialist, 3 special education teachers, 5 specialists, 2 basic skills teachers, and 20 generalists.

**Lead Person.** The school's lead person is Ms. Deborah Nataloni (Tel. 609-652-7118 #110), (Fax. 609-652-3640), (email: MSDNAT@gccscharterschool.org).

**Defining Attributes.** The defining attributes of the school are its curricular themes (International Studies, Arts & Humanities, Technology, and Environmental Studies) and small class size.

**Community/Organizational Affiliation.** The school has no affiliations at this time.

# **1. REVIEW OF STATE AND LOCAL ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES AND STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT RESULTS IN THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL GOALS AND REQUIRED NCLB ADEQUATE YEARLY PROGRESS**

## **Academic Goals and Objectives: Assessment Results**

The academic goal for the charter school was student achievement. The strategies for accomplishing this goal included: maintaining small class size; developing individualized learning plans; compiling authentic assessments; and employing differentiated instruction.

While comparisons were made of charter school students' achievement on state tests to those of their peers in the state, the focus was on the student in competition with him or herself. In order to acquire a true portrait of our students' academic strengths and weaknesses, we balance traditional assessment procedures and those alternative means of evaluation considered to be authentic. This requires administering pre-tests to develop and post-tests to assess Individualized Learning Plans. In addition to the diagnostic and prescriptive testing, students were required to complete performance assessments for each curriculum theme.

Individualized Learning Plans were housed on the school's server and portfolios were maintained in the classrooms. ILP Pre-and Post Testing data, and NJ ASK data was stored in a student database. The Director reviewed student data semi-annually. Analysis about student progress took place during conferences between the Director and the teachers. Collaboratively, teachers and administration planned interventions for students who demonstrated a lack of progress. These included Basic Skills, PIRS, and CST referrals for students who demonstrated a significant lack of progress; peer tutoring, additional homework and classroom interventions for students who appeared to be making slight progress. For those students who were showing significant gains, cycling to a higher grade, designing enrichment activities, and Gifted and Talented Program recommendations were suggested. In addition to conferences with classroom teachers, the Director met with pupil services support staff to discuss student progress.

The DIBELS (kindergarten) and DRA (grades 1-8) were the primary reading assessments that were used to track student progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the ILP. The checklist (kindergarten) and math inventory (grades 1-8) were the primary math assessments that were used to track student progress in meeting the goals and objectives of the ILP. During the 2008-09 school year, the following assessment results were noted:

- In kindergarten, 44 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 91% of the students demonstrated an increase in the DRA post assessment. Sixteen percent demonstrated an increase in the DIBELS post assessment and 61% remained the same. In Math, 75% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 23% remained the same.
- In grade one, 44 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 100% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment. In Math, 98% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 2% remained the same.

- In grade two, 30 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 100% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment. In Math, 87% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 3% remained the same.
- In grade three, 29 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 100% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment. In Math, 97% demonstrated an increase in the post math assessment.
- In grade four, 30 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 93% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 7% remained the same. In Math, 93% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 7% remained the same.
- In grade five, 29 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 97% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 7% remained the same. In Math, 90% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 7% remained the same.
- In grade six, 30 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 87% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post reading assessment and 13% remained the same. In Math, 100% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment.
- In grade seven, 22 students were tested in reading and math. In Reading, 82% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 14% remained the same. In Math, 100% of the students demonstrated an increase in the post assessment.
- In grade eight, 23 students were tested in Reading and Math. In reading, 41% demonstrated an increase in the post assessment and 59% remained the same. In Math, 95% demonstrated an increase in the post assessment.

Students in grades K-8 were eligible for in-class support and pull-out support services in Language Arts and Math. Seventy-five or (32%) of our students received services. Our NCLB subgroup focus included Elementary and Middle Black Males. Nineteen of the elementary black males who received services in Language Arts showed an increase between pre and post testing; 2 of the black males did not demonstrate an increase or decrease between pre and post testing; the other student showed a decrease between pre and post testing. Three out of three African American Middle males who received services in Math showed an increase in scores between pre and post testing.

Generalist and Specialist teachers maintained portfolios for 100% of the students in grades K-8. Administrators reviewed portfolio during teacher evaluations.

### **State Assessment Results**

The June 2009 NJ ASK scores are not available at this time. The 2008-09 district goals included a 10% increase in NJASK Spring 2009 Math scores for our elementary group and a 10% increase in NJASK Spring 2009 Language Arts scores for our middle group.

In March 2008, we administered the NJ ASK in grades 3-8. The total population included White, African American, Hispanic, and Asian students. Adequate Yearly Progress was calculated using the White and African American subgroups; the number of students tested in other subgroups was less than the number required for validity.

- The state benchmark for the Elementary population (grades 3, 4, and 5) was 82% in Language Arts and 73% in Mathematics. Our elementary population missed the Language Arts benchmark by 25.4% and the Mathematics benchmark by 20.4%.
- The state benchmark for the Middle population (grades 6, 7, and 8) was 76% in Language Arts and 62% in Mathematics. Our middle population missed the Language Arts benchmark by 14.1% and the Mathematics benchmark by 15.3%.

Statewide, 19.5% of the Elementary students performed higher than our students in Language Arts and 30% of the students performed higher our students in Mathematics.

- Statewide, 76.1% of the Elementary students were proficient or advanced proficient in Language Arts. At GCCS, 56.6% of the students in grades 3, 4, and 5 were proficient or advanced proficient in Language Arts.
- Statewide, 82.6% of the Elementary students were proficient or advanced proficient in Mathematics. At GCCS, 52.6% of the students were proficient or advanced proficient in Mathematics.

Statewide, 7.6% of the Middle students performed higher than our students in Language Arts and 21.2% of the students performed higher than our students in Mathematics.

- Statewide, 69.5% of the Middle students were proficient or advanced proficient in Language Arts. At GCCS, 61.9% of the Middle students were proficient or advanced proficient in Language Arts.
- Statewide, 67.9% of the Middle students were proficient or advanced proficient in Mathematics. At the GCCS, 46.7% of the Middle students were proficient or advanced proficient in Mathematics.

Between 2006 and 2007, our Middle students met AYP conditions in Language Arts and Mathematics; our Elementary students did not meet AYP conditions. The aggregated results stress school-wide continuance of extra effort in the Language Arts and Mathematics for our Elementary population and in Mathematics for our African American and Economically Disadvantaged middle population.

The number of students in our cohort group is insignificant to conduct a cohort analysis.

### **Discussion of Progress**

The results of the state assessment were used to make the following instructional decisions:

- Reduce class size in 7<sup>th</sup> grade from 15 to 8 students
- Provide in-class Language Arts support for grades 4, 5, and 6
- Provide in-class Mathematics support for grades 4, 5, and 6
- Hire Reading Specialist

The charter school administered the *SAT 9 Open Ended Performance Assessment (Ninth Edition, Version 2)* that is published by Harcourt Assessment, Inc. in Language Arts and Math in May 2009 to seventy-three 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> grade students. The Director and the classroom teachers use the data obtained from this assessment to develop the goals and objectives of the individualized learning plans. The areas assessed with the *SAT9 Open Ended Performance Assessment Language Arts* included: character, setting and plot, and theme/writer’s craft; the process clusters include: get the big picture, take a closer look, and be a critic. The areas assessed with the *SAT9 Open Ended Performance Assessment Mathematics* included: number concepts, concepts of shape and space, and patterns & relationships; the process clusters include: problem solving, reasoning, and communication.

The pre-and post assessments that were used to develop Individualized Learning Plans were:

<u>Assessment</u>	<u>Date of Administration</u>	<u>Proctor</u>
DIBELS (K)	Sept., Dec., June	Grade Teacher
DRA2 (K)	Jan.	Grade Teacher
DRA2 (1-8)	Sept., June	Grade Teacher
LA/M Checklist (K)	Ongoing	Grade Teacher
Math Inventory (1-8)	Sept., May	Grade Teacher
Behavior Rating Scale	Oct., June	Grade Teacher
Writing Sample (K-8)	Sept./May	Grade Teacher
NJ ASK	Previous Spring	Grade Teacher

In addition to pre- and post-testing, performance based projects were used to measure critical thinking and problem solving skills. Relevant student data was also derived from observations, anecdotal notes, student conferences, student self-assessments, teacher checklists, and textbook mastery tests.

Formal feedback was provided to parents twice. The first conference was held in December to review the goals and objectives of the Individual Learning Plan; the second conference was held in March to review the report card. Report cards and summative individual learning plan progress were issued in June.

The Director was responsible for data collection and reporting. The Director holds a NJ State CSA certificate and a Masters Degree in Education from Temple University and a Masters Degree in Education Administration from Arizona State University.

### **Non-Academic Goals and Objectives: Assessment Results**

#### **Assessment Results and Discussion of Progress**

GCCS believes that the social and emotional well being of students is important for academic success. Our priority non-academic goal is to develop self-respect and group belonging in our students. We adopted the *Caring Schools Community* program to assure that we accomplish this

goal. The Director was responsible for tracking the school's progress in meeting its non-academic goals primarily through the review of weekly lesson plans and informal classroom observations.

The Director monitored monthly suspension data and met with pupil services staff to address student concerns. The Director and the Pupil Services Supervisor met with parents during the summer to develop interventions prior to the student returning to school in September.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 1 incident occurred at the charter school that qualified for Electronic Violence and Vandalism Reporting that resulted in 2 short-term suspensions. The offender and victim were regular education students; the incident occurred in the classroom and did not involve a cost to the charter school.

GCCS believes that in order for students to succeed academically and socially, attendance at school must be a priority. The Attendance Coordinator was responsible for compiling monthly attendance reports which the Director monitored. The average daily attendance was 93.6%. Three percent of our students had perfect attendance and 7% of our students had outstanding attendance. The criterion for outstanding attendance was 3 or fewer absences for the year. The criterion for perfect attendance was no absences for the year.

## **2. REVIEW OF PROGRESS: INCORPORATING THE NJCCS, DELIVERING AN EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM LEADING TO HIGH ACHIEVEMENT FOR ALL STUDENTS**

### **Incorporation of New Jersey Core Curriculum Content Standards (NJCCCS)**

#### **Summary of Curriculum Development Progress**

The GCCS Atlas Curriculum Development Project is a five-year plan (July 2008 to June 2013) to align curriculum content, skills, best practices, assessments, and resources to the NJCCCS.

The GCCS curriculum is organized by interdisciplinary **themes**: International Studies, Arts & Humanities, Environmental Studies, and Technology. Each theme spans a ten week period and allows for vertical articulation across grades. Our **specials** (*Computer Literacy, Creative Art, Physical Education*), Major Courses (*Arts & Humanities I and II, International Studies I and II, Environmental Studies I and II, Technology I and II, Genocide Studies I and II*), and **support** (*Basic Skills, Gifted/Talented Primary, Gifted/Talented Middle*) are designed to complement the themes.

During Year I (Phase I) seven generalists and 2 specialists developed 4 themes (International Studies, Arts & Humanities, Environmental Studies, and Technology) and 2 specials (Physical Education and Visual Arts). Eight members of the team will continue to work in Year II (Phase II) and 7 members will be added.

As a result, the following was achieved:

- Revisions to themes in grades K, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7
- Revisions to physical education, creative and performing arts in grades K-8

Phase II plans include:

- Incorporation of computer literacy and Spanish to themes in grades K-8
- Revisions to theme assessments to address Universal Design for Learning and Project-Based Learning
- Revisions to themes in grades 4 and 8
- Revisions to basic skills

Our instructional program included a Majors Program. This has proven to be inspirational to students and teachers in that it provided reality-based experiences. Students in grades 5-8 were assigned to heterogeneous, grade level homerooms and cycled four days per week for forty minutes for the majors program. Students were assigned 2 majors per year over the course of 4 years and complete 2 Modern Genocide over the four year period.

The Modern Genocide major is based upon the NJCCCS in Social Studies. The purpose of the Modern Genocide Studies major is to provide students with the knowledge about the Holocaust, Rwanda (1994) and Sudan (Darfur).

Our International Studies major courses were based on the NJCCCS in Social Studies. The purpose of the International Studies major was to provide students with the knowledge, skills, and attitudes they need to be active, informed, responsible citizens and contributing members of their communities. The International Studies major draws upon the four disciplines of history, geography, civics and economics.

Our Arts & Humanities major courses were based on the NJCCCS in Social Studies. Students drew upon the basic concepts such as time, location, distance, and relationships and applied these concepts to the study of people, places, events and issues. This course focused on the importance of historical research, the need to distinguish fact from fiction, and the understanding of cause and effect.

Our Technology major courses were based on the NJCCCS in Science and Technology Literacy. This course encouraged students to learn about the people and events that shaped or revolutionized scientific theories and concepts. The course focused on developing students' understanding of the interrelationship between science and technology and expanded their understanding of the nature of technology. It developed students' abilities with technological design including experiences in predicting, decision making, critical thinking, and problem solving.

Our Environmental major courses were based on the NJCCCS in Science. Creating an awareness of the need to protect, conserve, and preserve natural resources was a goal of the environmental major. This program called for students to develop knowledge of environmental issues, including management of natural resources, production and use of energy, waste management, and interdependence of ecosystems. This major included a study of the earth and its relationship to the rest of the universe. The students learned about the composition of the earth and the forces that shape it. The study included the diversity, complexity, and interdependence of life on earth and how organisms evolve, reproduce, and adapt to their environments.

Our instructional program also included a Gifted and Talented Program. The students who participated in the Gifted and Talented Program met established criteria. Parents were notified of student eligibility and were required to consent to program participation. This program was organized as an enrichment pull-out model that included: mentoring, workshops, small group seminars, independent studies and academic competitions. The content and instruction of the Creative Arts Gifted and Talented Program included creativity, independent research, fine arts and technology. Eight percent of our students participated in the Creative Arts Gifted and Talented Program.

Our mid-year assessment of our students enabled us to identify several students who were demonstrating academic advanced proficiency. In order to address the motivation, interest, and high ability of these students, we provided a technology enrichment opportunity that focused on application, higher order thinking, trans-disciplinary study, and real-world investigations.

The goal of this initiative was for students to complete an independent study across disciplines utilizing technology. The course was designed to provide students an opportunity to pursue an independent study under the direction of an advisor, our Computer Literacy Teacher. Students were multi-age grouped as primary, intermediate, and middle. Students met once a week for forty minutes in an advisory setting and once a week in a research setting. The advisory setting included small groups (10 students) and the research setting include full groups (16 students). The course enabled students to present their projects in a dissertation approach before an academic panel. The academic panel included administrators and pupil support teachers.

The Director was responsible for the monitoring of curriculum. This was achieved by the following methods:

- Conducting informal classroom observations
- Completing formal teacher evaluations
- Facilitating formal and informal teacher conferences
- Maintaining/Collecting data
- Reviewing weekly lesson plans
- Editing curriculum documents

The Director made frequent informal classroom observations. During these visits, she noted information about lessons, observed student progress, and reviewed student individualized learning plans and portfolios. In addition, evaluations were conducted which included formal reviews of curriculum, instruction, and assessment practices. All tenured and non-tenured teachers were evaluated and rated. The average rating for tenure grade teachers was 77 and 78 for non-tenured grade teachers (highest possible score 80).

The Director compiled data from monthly logs, weekly grade team meetings and lesson plans. Grade team leaders maintained minutes from weekly meetings that outlined theme progress and lesson plans were submitted to the Director weekly.

The Director determined that curriculum needs included the adoption of a school-wide rating scale for student portfolio assessments and benchmarking report card standards. Criteria for

student ratings ranged from scales of 1-3 in some grades, 1-4 in other grades, and 1-5 in another grade. Discussions regarding the establishment of a rating scale for use across grades occurred throughout the year for development during the summer for implementation in September.

## **Delivery of an Educational Program Leading to High Achievement for all Students**

### **Delivery of Services to At-Risk Students**

Lynne Hallanan, Pupil Services Supervisor was responsible for services for At-Risk Students. These included: Child Study Team, Special Education, Basic Skills, PIRS, Remedial Reading, Speech, School Nurse, and Related Services. Ms. Hallanan also consulted teachers and parents education and social and emotional development issues.

In Special Education, we employed 3 full-time special education teachers, and 1 full-time Speech and Language Specialist. We contracted with Cape May County Special Services School District for a School Psychologist, Learning Disabilities Teacher Consultant, and Social Worker and for neurological, psychiatric, and physical therapy evaluations. We contracted with Salem County Special Services School District for an Occupational Therapist.

Programs for Special Education students included: Resource Program (in-class support and pull-out support or replacement), Speech and Language, Counseling, and Occupational Therapy.

The Child Study Team received 18 new initial referrals, from which 5 new classifications were determined. The CST also completed 2 Reevaluations, 13 Annual Reviews, (3) 30-Day Reviews (2 for transfer-in students, and one for out-of-district placement).

All disabled pupils were educated in regular education classes with required support services including direct special education instruction, curricular modifications, and classroom accommodations whenever possible. One student was placed in Atlantic County Special Services District as an out of district placement.

As of June 30, 2009, there were 23 students classified as eligible to receive Special Education and Related Services. Seven received pull-out support services, 2 received in-class support services, 12 received pull-out and in-class services, 1 received self-contained out of district instruction, and 1 program is being decided. Additional services included speech for 5 of the students, counseling for 5 of them, and Occupational Therapy for 3 of them. Finally, there were 11 students who received “speech only” services.

Programs for non-classified students included: Intervention and Referral Services (PIRS), 504 Plans (10 students), Counseling, Occupational Therapy (8 students), a Basic Skills Program (75 students), and Remedial Reading.

The PIRS team included teachers and administrators who met with classroom teachers and parents to decide on a plan of action to improve academic and/or behavioral difficulties. The Basic Skills Program included two teachers and a Reading Specialist who provided remedial instruction in grades K-8 in the areas of language arts and math. Student selection for Basic Skills instruction was based on test scores from NJASK, DIBELS, DRA2, and Math Inventories.

During the 2008-2009 school year, GCCS did not have any LEP students or students who qualified for bilingual services. GCCS had plans in anticipation of need. The goals for the program were adopted from the TESOL ESL Standards:

- \*Goal 1: To use English to communicate in social settings.
- \*Goal 2: To use English to achieve academically in all content areas.
- \*Goal 3: To use English in socially and culturally appropriate ways.

### **Innovative/Exemplary Programs and Practices**

The GCCS synthesizes interdisciplinary thematic instruction, differentiated instructional practices and *Caring Schools Community* principles to establish innovation. Small class size, individualized learning plans and a portfolio assessment system support our mission. Each student had an individual learning plan that included long and short-term annual goals and an assessment portfolio.

GCCS adopted the *Caring Schools Community*, a character education program formally known as the Child Development Project. The components of this program include: Class Meetings, Homeside Activities, School Wide Activities and Buddies.

Homeside activities are activities that foster communication between teachers and parents and parents and students. These activities enabled parents to contribute a home-side to their children's school-side learning and encouraged personal time with child and parent/adult caregiver. These activities delivered a message of respect for the diversity among family and community.

The Buddy program gave students the opportunity to develop caring, trusting friendships through shared learning experiences that were engaging for older and younger students. Teachers were assigned buddies. When students saw their teacher's buddy, the concept of community was experienced, not just idealized.

Class meetings were times to talk; forums for students and teachers to gather to reflect, discuss issues or make decisions about the ways they want their class to be. The teacher's role was to create an environment in which students saw that their learning, their opinions and their concerns were taken seriously. The students participated as valuable contributors to the classroom community. The meetings promoted classroom management in a way that helped students actively contribute to their academic and social learning.

Whole school activities were celebrations of student learning. There were exhibits for parents, caregivers, family, friends and community to celebrate the achievements of the students. Four school wide events at the end of each theme were planned.

### 3. REVIEW OF SCHOOL GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

#### Board of Trustees

At the regularly scheduled board meetings, fiscal activities included approving the bill list, certifying the budget, and approving line item transfers. The board implemented a corrective action plan as a result of the FY 08 annual financial audit findings.

The board hired 1 Reading Specialist, 3 Generalists, 3 Special Education Teachers, 1 Nurse, and 2 Custodians. The board hired a Spanish Teacher and recruited a replacement upon her resignation. The board contracted a Public Relations Consultant to provide relative, timely information to our community about GCCS with an intended outcome of maximizing enrollment for sustainability.

Since its inception, the Board of Trustees has been a member of the New Jersey School Boards Association and adopted the NJSBA Critical Policy Manual.

During the 2008-2009 school year, 5 policies and all of the Special Education Policy & Procedures under IDEA, Part B were revised. The reasons for the revisions were modifications to meet school needs, state law/code mandates, and to address emergent situations. The revised policies were: #5131 (Student Conduct), 5111.2 (Initial Enrollment Assessment), 5132 (Student Dress Code), 4212.8 (Nepotism), and 4112.8 (Nepotism).

Our charter outlines a Board of Trustees that is comprised of 7 voting members (4 parents and 3 community members) and 4 *ex-officio members* (1 treasurer, 2 teachers and 1 administrator). All board member terms are for 1 year with the exception of Treasurer, a 3 year term. There are no restrictions on the number of terms members may serve. Last year, the Reorganization Meeting was held in August. At that meeting, the board addressed the following policies requiring annual attention.

- 3570 List of Mandated Reports/Records
- 5125 Report of Authorized Pupil Records
- 5120 Review of Student Assessment Procedures
- 6140 Adopt Curriculum
- 6147 Report on Pupil Proficiency
- 6171.1 Review of Remediation Program
- 6171.4 Review of Sp Ed Plan, Identification, Procedures and IEP Implementation
- 6300 Report on Effectiveness of Inst Program
- 7113 Review of Facilities
- 9250 Set BOT Reimbursement Allowance

Last year, reappointments took place at the August Reorganization meeting. At that meeting, Ron Bramble was appointed President, Don Kreutzer was appointed Vice-President, and Heather Butler accepted the nomination for Secretary.

In the event of a board vacancy, the board sends a letter to parents and places a notice in the community news section of the local newspapers. Interested parties submit a letter of interest and a resume to the board. Applicants are interviewed and appointed by the board. Board members are required to submit annual personal and financial disclosure forms and have completed NJSBA training as required. Last year, the board was completely populated.

The board and administration continue to monitor grades 7 & 8 due to the low rate of enrollment by Galloway Twp, students. Feedback from parents indicates the Galloway Twp. Middle School offers additional academic and extracurricular programs, such as interscholastic sports, that GCCS does not offer, deciding factors for parents. The future of the GCCS 7th & 8th grade program will continue to be part of the 2009-2010 strategic planning process.

The board has undertaken facilities improvement projects that include upgrading the security monitoring system, purchasing smart boards, and upgrading technology.

The board continues to explore ways to maintain competitive employee benefits to attract and retain experienced teachers. Alternative benefits such as an employee cooperative daycare are offered. GCCS joined the state health insurance plan in response to a significant increase in employee health insurance rates.

Student performance on state testing and meeting the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* are continually monitored by the board.

### **School Administrators**

The administrative staff includes Deborah Nataloni, Director, Jessica Fisher, Assistant Director, Arthur Motz, Per Diem Administrator, Lynne Hallanan, Pupil Services Supervisor, and School Business Administrator Henry Bermann.

The Director is responsible for management, supervision and evaluation of professional employees, educational program monitoring, research and development, and overseeing school operations and security. This is a twelve-month, full-time position. Deborah Nataloni, the School Director completed the Leaders in Education Entrepreneur program at Arizona State University West and holds Masters Degrees in Education Administration and Education. She holds a CSA certificate.

The Assistant Director is responsible for professional development, testing, arrival and dismissal, parent involvement, and community outreach. Jessica Fisher, the Assistant Director earned a Masters Degree in Educational Leadership from Walden University. She holds a standard CSA certificate.

The Per Diem Administrator is responsible for attending county and state meetings and for covering in the event of the Director or Assistant Director's absence. Mr. Motz is a retired Superintendent from the Wildwood School District.

The School Business Administrator is responsible for fiscal operations and financial planning. Mr. Bermann served a number of school districts in neighboring counties and provides a consortium of experts that are available to the school.

The Pupil Services Supervisor is responsible for supervision of the Child Study Team and No Child Left Behind program. Lynne Hallanan holds a Supervisor certificate.

#### **4. DESCRIPTION OF ACTIVITIES TO INVOLVE PARENTS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS AND PUBLIC RELATIONS AND OUTREACH ACTIVITIES**

##### **Parent and Community Involvement Activities and Outcomes**

Teachers and administrators were responsible for eliciting parental involvement. In August, the Director facilitated a parent orientation meeting to inform new parents about policies, procedures, instruction, curriculum, assessment, and organizational structure. Eighteen percent of the parents participated attended the meeting. In August, teachers conducted home visits to meet their students within the comfort and safety of the home environment. Ninety-four percent of our families participated in home visits. In August, the Assistant Director hosted an Open House for parents and students to meet. Twenty-six percent of our parents attended. In September, the Assistant Director coordinated Back to School Night for teachers to present the instructional plan to the parents. Fifty-three percent of our parents attended the event.

The Director coordinated parent-teacher reporting conferences. Ninety-eight percent of parents attended the December conferences and 99% attended the March conferences. The Assistant Director planned school-wide showcases for each curriculum theme. Fifty-four percent of our parents attended the International Theme Celebration, 43% attended the Technology Theme Celebration, and 8% participated in the Environmental Theme Celebration. The Arts & Humanities Theme Celebration, our annual Spring Show involved the rental of a public school auditorium to accommodate the large number of families in attendance.

Teacher-initiated activities included inviting parents to volunteer in classrooms, preparing weekly newsletters, planning special events, conducting phone conferences, and scheduling formal and informal meetings. Teachers were required to maintain monthly logs that documented parent involvement. The average number of teacher-parent meetings per month was 11. The average number of teacher-parent phone calls per month was 49. The average number of parent volunteers per month was 20. The Director compiled all data from teacher logs in an effort to monitor parent/teacher communications.

The Parent Teacher Organization (PTO) is an organization that is affiliated with the charter school. The organization has an Executive Board and by-laws independent of the GCCS Board of Trustees. The PTO held general meetings once a month at the school. The PTO activities focused on fundraising activities to support curriculum activities. Attendance at PTO meetings included parents and teachers.

## **Public Relations and Outreach Activities and Outcomes**

### **Public Relations/Engagement and Partnerships**

The 2008-09 Public Relations plan was designed to communicate to internal audiences (students, staff and parents) and external audiences (the community, area businesses and potential students/families). The PR program was executed by PR Consultant Felicia Lowenstein Niven. Meetings were held throughout the year to generate ideas and to evaluate success.

The printed GCCS brochure was mailed to approximately 6,000 households in Galloway and the vicinity (postal codes of 08201, 08205, and 08215) in August. These areas were selected because of their proximity to the school, and included families of current and potential students. The brochure was available at the school office and distributed to visitors who were considering GCCS for their children. The brochure effectively put a professional “face” on the school and communicated the key messages: small class sizes, individualized instruction, and curriculum focuses.

We surveyed parents on the days/nights/times that were most convenient for them to visit the school and the types of events that would bring them here. An open-ended question allowed parents to volunteer a skill or service to share with the students. The survey resulted in useful feedback. Due to widely varying work schedules, parents did not identify a time of day for events. They did express interest in attending presentations that showcased their children. Numerous parents volunteered to chaperone field trips. One parent volunteered to teach music to the kindergarten classes, and that work was featured during this year’s kindergarten graduation.

The PR Consultant presented the program to the teachers at the October faculty meeting. She discussed the type of activities that might make good news stories, and invited teachers to contact her with information on what they’re doing in the classroom. She also circulated an email list where teachers could sign up for periodic reminders about “what’s going on in your classroom?”

In reviewing the calendar, we identified the opportunities for media coverage. These included the celebrations for the four curricula focuses, awards ceremonies, graduations, Spring Show and other events. We ensured that all students had photo permission slips to appear in media coverage. We developed and distributed press releases and media advisories on each of these events. We took photographs at each celebration to send to the media to encourage coverage. This was a successful strategy, as the photos were often printed with extended captions, while reporters/photographers were not able to attend every event.

We also had great success with *The Press of Atlantic City*, the region’s only daily newspaper. Our initial pitch to education writer Diane D’Amico of *The Press* generated a major feature on the front page of the Region section on teacher home visits. Diane followed a teacher on her visits and wrote about it. This contact helped to establish GCCS as a resource to Diane D’Amico, who throughout the year contacted us regarding educational issues. She wrote a positive article about GCCS, as a fiscally-responsible charter school that appeared on the front page of the paper above the fold. In addition to *The Press of Atlantic City*, GCCS received coverage in 2008-09 in

*The Current of Galloway, the Egg Harbor Galloway Township News, the Vineland Journal* and on the local TV station, WMGM Channel 40, an NBC affiliate.

Throughout the year, we sought opportunities for media coverage. When the eighth grade Holocaust Genocide class collected crayons to commemorate the million children who perished, we set up an official presentation of the crayons to the representatives from the center in north Jersey collecting them. We also generated some coverage by sending out a press release requesting crayon donations from the community.

In an effort to get students excited about mathematics, the Director issued a math birthday challenge. Students had to provide a fictitious student's age in hours. Those who did so successfully were treated to a math birthday celebration, which we publicized to the media. The video appeared on the school website and was sent to the website for *The Press of Atlantic City*. To further strengthen the community partnership angle, the Director approached Friendly's, which donated the ice cream cake for the celebration.

In September, we wrote and distributed the first school newsletter. The newsletter was distributed monthly via an email newsblast. It was designed as a communications tool to keep parents apprised of news and pertinent information, and also to provide background on the highly qualified and enthusiastic GCCS staff. Each newsletter included short features on three or more teachers. It also showcased the students' recent activities from artwork submitted on Artsonia to a Safety Patrol contest and graduation. As of June, 2009 the newsletter was being sent to 180 email addresses, 146 were provided by the school and 34 were from readers that subscribed from the website.

Our website was the place to get information 24/7 about GCCS. The URL address appeared at the end of every press release. The website also featured news coverage so that parents and interested parties could see a story that appeared on TV 40, for example, if they missed it when it was broadcast live. Past newsletters and an archive of PR stories can be found on the website.

In an effort to make the website more interactive, we invited students, parents and teachers to vote on the school mascot. The idea was generated from the Upper Grades Gifted & Talented Class that pointed out that the current mascot, the dolphin, may not be an exact match for GCCS's wooded location. Student letters were posted on the site. The phone mail system was used to invite people to vote. The process proved successful, and other votes/surveys will be incorporated in the future.

We established the GCCS Facebook page to allow the school to have a presence on one of the fastest-growing and most popular social media networks. The Facebook page was set up to be carefully controlled and "fans" (e.g. members) must be invited. Students are not allowed to join; however, their parents are welcome to do so.

Recruiting students is a continual focus at GCCS, and to further that effort, the Board of Trustees voted to initiate radio and television ads. Beginning in May and concluding in August, the advertisements were scheduled to run regularly on Atlantic Broadcasting (stations WOND, Kool 98.3 and The Shark) and on Comcast (on the local stations broadcasting Animal Planet, the

Discovery Network, Disney and the Weather Crawl). We carefully scripted the spots to communicate the main messages at GCCS and noted that parents had “a choice” about where to send their children. Actual classrooms, teachers and students were featured in the television spot. Both spots will be posted on the GCCS website for additional exposure.

In November we began plans to bring “Kids in the Kitchen”, our second annual fundraiser to the next level. We set up committees, developed timelines, and met monthly to review progress. We solicited corporate sponsorships and news media coverage leading up to the event. The Ram’s Head Inn, a local restaurant partnered with GCCS to provide speakers for the after-school program that prepared the students for “working in the restaurant’s kitchen” to prepare dinner for their families. Several area businesses also supported GCCS in providing corporate sponsorships. Others chose to advertise in the event program. This and That Uniforms donated the chef coats. We were successful in placing stories about the fundraiser, photos of the children preparing for Kids in the Kitchen, as well as coverage of the actual event. Several representatives from the media were in attendance; news media coverage was very successful.

During the 2009-10 school year, we will continue our PR effort. Specifically, we will:

- Identify opportunities for news media coverage, invite media and send out pre-event and follow-up photos and releases
- Continue to report on news and information in the monthly newsletter
- Update the website admissions page to make it a more user-friendly interface for parents
- Replace Kids in the Kitchen with Kids in the Community, a program that will allow students to explore various careers
- Increase student and parent involvement outside of classroom hours via online quizzes, blogs and other interactive activities
- Update the brochure to meet new standards, reprint and distribute during recruitment period in January 2010

The Assistant Director was responsible for the placement of Stockton Service Learning students in our classrooms. Six Stockton students were able to perform their service learning duties in grades K-8 and with our Student Services Department.

The police and fire department continue to work with the charter school on safety planning. The Galloway Township Police Department scheduled an officer to visit our school once a month to facilitate the COPS5 program.

Finally, our Office Manager and Coordinator conducted tours of the school for parents who were interested in enrolling their children.

## **5. DESCRIPTION OF STUDENT AND STAFF RECRUITMENT ACTIVITIES**

### **Admission Policies**

### **Admissions Timelines and Recruitment Activities**

We revised the registration periods in our Application, Registration and Enrollment Count Procedure and coordinated registration with the Galloway Township School District.

In December 2007, the Office Manager sent letters to parents of enrolled students to confirm their attendance for 2008-2009. Seven students were not returning. Advertisements were placed in the local newspaper, *The Current* during the recruitment periods. One lottery was held on July 21, 2008.

### **Admissions Results**

The October 15, 2008 count was 284 which included 216 returning students, 18 siblings, and 50 new students. Our retention rate for the 2008-09 year was 76%. Between October 15, 2008 and June 17, 2009 there were 12 students who dropped and 8 students who enrolled. The June 2009 count was 280.

The school draws its students from the following districts: 44% Galloway Township, 2.5 % Absecon, 11% Atlantic City, 2% Egg Harbor City, 6% Egg Harbor Township, .3% Hamilton Township, 32.5% Pleasantville, .3 % Ventnor, 1% Vineland, and .3% Wading River. This constitutes an area with great diversity, ranging from Abbott-district urban to suburban to rural habitats for our students. Thus our school is a true microcosm of New Jersey students.

### **Student Withdrawals and Exit Interviews**

In June 2009, twenty-two students (7%) indicated that they would not return in 2009-10 projecting a 93% retention rate for FY10. Forty-one percent dropped to attend a public school, 27% moved, 18% lacked transportation, 4% enrolled in private school, 4% home schooled, and 4% declined to provide a reason. Fifty-four percent were district and 45% were non-district students. Fifty-nine percent were primary (K-5) and 41% were middle (5-8) students.

Twenty-three 8<sup>th</sup> grade students graduated. Seventy-eight percent were non-district and 21% were district students. Thirty-nine percent planned to attend Charter Tech, 17% Absegami, 13% Atlantic County Institute of Technology, 4% Mainland, 4% Atlantic City High School, 4% Pilgrim Academy, and 17% were undecided.

### **Staff Recruitment**

Our staff recruitment activities involved placing 11 ads in *The Press of Atlantic City*, posting 11 in-house opportunities, posting vacancies on the Atlantic County Department of Education's Website and the GCCS Website, and participating in the Stockton teacher job fair. The Assistant Board Secretary and the Assistant Director screen the resumes. The Director conducts the cold call interview. The Director and Assistant Director conduct the interviews.

In addition to recruiting new employees for vacancies, the charter school recruited teachers from within the organization for duties beyond the contracted hours. Appointments for these postings were made by the Director and included: Curriculum Development Teachers, Before and After School Program Teachers, Parent Orientation Teachers, NJ CAP Parent Meeting Teachers,

Odyssey of the Mind Coaches/Judges, and Student Recruitment Teachers. The teachers who served in these positions received stipends for their services or were paid hourly rates.

### **Recruitment Results**

We received 192 resumes for certificated positions, interviewed 21 certificated candidates, and hired 9 certificated employees which included generalist, specialists, and special education teachers. The charter school has not experienced any difficulty in recruiting teachers. All of the applicants lived within thirty miles of the charter school.

### **Exit Interview Procedures and Data**

When an employee is terminated or resigns, the Assistant Director completes a separation of employment interview. The data collected is forwarded to the Director and the personnel file is classified inactive and maintained for 6 years. The employee returns school property (keys, FAB, parking pass, and instructional resources).

Employees were notified of contract renewal by May 15, 2009. Renewals were offered to 95% of the certificated employees; 100% of them accepted the offer. Renewals were offered to 90% of the non-certificated employees; 100% of them accepted the offer. One specialist resigned mid-year due to illness and was replaced.

## **6. REVIEW OF THE SCHOOL'S SELF-EVALUATION AND ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN**

### **Self-Evaluation and Accountability Plan**

#### **Description of Major Areas of Self-Evaluation**

The GCCS Self-Evaluation and Accountability Plan is organized by student achievement, administration/governance, curriculum development/revision/implementation, professional development, school climate, staff/student/parental involvement/satisfaction, fiscal efficiency, enrollment trends and post charter outcomes. The charter school balances traditional and progressive practices with formal and informal practices to provide various opportunities to draw upon for reflection, decision making and planning.

The methods of tracking student achievement are:

- *Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA2)*: Administered in grades 1-8 for determining students' independent reading levels and guiding reading instruction
- *Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS)*: Administered in kindergarten for determining early literacy development
- *SAT 9 Open Ended Assessment in Reading and Math*: Administered in grades 1-2 to establish ILP goals
- *NJ ASK*: Administered in grades 3-8 in the spring to obtain a state proficiency level.

- Theme Projects: Administered in grades 1-8 four times annually to determine curriculum theme proficiency level
- Scott Foresman-Addison Wesley Math Inventory (2008): Administered in grades 1-5 in the fall and spring by grade teachers to establish and assess ILP goals.
- Prentice Hall Mathematics (2008) Inventory: Administered in grades 6-8 in the fall and spring to establish and assess ILP goals.
- Behavior Checklist: Administered in grades K-8 in the fall and spring to track social and emotional development
- Writing Sample: Collected in grades K-8 in the fall and spring to establish and assess ILP goals

The instruments that are used to assessment governance and administration are:

- New Jersey School Boards Association Self-Assessment: Conducted in the spring to measure goals and to establish a corrective action plan.
- Director Annual Review: Conducted annually by the Board of Trustees to evaluate the CSA.

The methods of tracking curriculum development/revision/implementation include:

- Lesson Plans: Completed in K-8 weekly grade team meetings by the teachers to outline curriculum content, skills, resources, and best practices
- Student Interest Survey: Administered in grades 4-8 the spring to obtain theme interest information.
- SIP Needs Assessment: Conducted in the spring to identify program strengths and weaknesses
- Teacher Evaluations: Conducted three times annually for non-tenured teachers and one time annually for tenured teachers in K-8 to assess performance
- Teacher/Parent Surveys: Conducted in the fall to determine satisfaction level.

The methods of tracking professional development include:

- In-Service Feedback: Conducted at the end of each activity to assess quality of professional development.
- Needs Assessment: Conducted annually to develop professional development plan

The methods of tracking school climate include:

- Suspension Reports: Compiled monthly and evaluated annually to identify trends and develop interventions
- Electronic Violence and Vandalism Report System (EVVRS): Reported annually to the DOE and BOT to identify trends and develop interventions

The methods of tracking Staff/Student/Parent Involvement/Satisfaction include:

- Sign-In Sheets: Compiled for events to determine participation rates
- Surveys: Administered 1-4 times annually to measure satisfaction

- Focus Group: Conducted annually to acquire data

The methods of tracking Fiscal Efficiency include:

- Annual Financial Audit: Conducted annually to obtain fiscal information.
- Monthly Reports: Prepared monthly to monitor finances

Methods of tracking Enrollment Trends include:

- DOE net: Reported twice a year to certify enrollment
- Enrollment Reports: Submitted monthly to monitor districts and grade levels
- Exit Interviews: Conducted during transfer to monitor drops

Methods of tracking Post Charter Outcomes include:

- Exit Interviews: Conducted during transfer to obtain high school plans

### **Current/Proposed Changes to the SEAP**

The Director and Assistant Director revised the SEAP on September 23, 2009 to include additional assessments that were used to track student achievement. They reviewed the SEAP in June 2009 and determined that no changes were necessary.

### **Summary of Progress in Achieving Strategic Improvement Plans and Milestone Goals**

Regarding our established goals we were successful in the areas of public relations, community outreach, school security, and professional development. Over the years, other issues were prioritized causing public relations and community outreach efforts to rank second. Last year, we focused on developing these areas which resulted in noteworthy accomplishments. We also prioritized facilities improvements to enhance security and met the objectives of our school improvement plan by June 2009. Finally, the recruitment, training, evaluation, and retention of Highly Qualified Teachers objectives were met.

In March 2009, the charter school was defined as “high need” based on its at-risk percentage 50% from the October 2007 Fall Survey and state assessment results. The 2009-10 school year will be a planning year for developing a strategic improvement plan to address this determination.