

ANNUAL REPORT

OF THE

Francis W. Parker

Charter Essential School

2007-2008

49 Antietam Street
Devens, Massachusetts 01434
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www.parker.org

This Annual Report of the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School for 2007-2008 was edited by Nicky Dudensing, with substantial contributions from Teri Schrader, Andy Perkins, Deb Merriam, Michelle McKenna, and others.

This Annual Report is available at the school's website, www.parker.org. Copies are available from the Parker School, 49 Antietam St., Devens, MA 01434. Telephone (978) 772-3293; fax (978) 772-3295.

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Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
& Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center
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www.parker.org

July 2, 2008

In a year of significant new accomplishments such as 2007-08, it would be easy to skip too quickly over the core work of the Parker School—the daily education of each of our 375 students—and so this year’s annual report begins with our students, who continue to demonstrate the highest levels of academic achievement.

With school demographics matching those of our sending districts, Parker students again scored among the top MCAS scores in the state and our juniors and seniors achieved SAT scores well above state averages. Perhaps more importantly, our students continue to meet the school’s considerably more rigorous standards for passage from one academic division to the next and for high school graduation. As in previous years, Parker continues to attract significantly more applicants than it has spaces available.

At the heart of the school’s success is a dedicated and accomplished faculty and staff, and Parker’s commitment to its mission of living out the ten common principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools, which include small class sizes, personalized learning, an emphasis on depth over breadth, and academic rigor for all students.

In addition to our consistent academic strength, Parker was successful this year in achieving a number of significant milestones. Descriptions of each of these follow.

A Permanent Home

For our first twelve years, Parker operated out of leased facilities. At the end of August, we succeeded in purchasing our current school building and 9-acre site and thus achieved our long-held goal of a permanent home. Financing was provided by MassDevelopment and TDBanknorth, to whom we are grateful for both their expertise and hard work. We are delighted to become a permanent member of the Devens community, and to have accomplished this major milestone towards the sustainability of our school and the Sizer Teachers Center.

The Classroom Addition

In April we completed a 26,000 square foot addition which solved our severe overcrowding and enabled the Sizer Teachers Center, squeezed out a number of years ago because of the overcrowding, to move back into the school building. The addition, built at well under half the cost of typical school construction, models a green approach to construction through its reuse of a modular classroom building previously owned by the Wachusett School District. The quality of the space is superior to that of our main school building. The building project ended on budget, and the addition was dedicated “with respect and gratitude to the teachers and staff of the Parker School” at the end of April. We are grateful for the talent and hard work of Parker’s Building Committee, our contractors Triumph Leasing of Littleton, and our architect Jeff Davis, and to the entire Parker community, whose generosity made this project possible.

Fundraising

In April Parker completed the most ambitious fundraising effort in the school’s history, with a community-wide grassroots effort that raised the \$950,000 needed to undertake the building project. Over the course of the year Parker’s Board spent considerable time thinking through how to develop an approach to fundraising that honors Parker’s identity as a public school that values the economic diversity of its families. We are committed to ensuring that this value underlies any future fundraising efforts. In May the Board passed a two-year fundraising plan, which emphasizes the development of strong relationships and good communication as the focus of work over the next two years.

Governor Deval Patrick visits Parker

On June 13, Parker was honored with a visit by Governor Deval Patrick. During a school-wide town meeting, our students asked the governor questions ranging from his views on the tragedy in Darfur to ideas for ensuring that Massachusetts is sustainable both environmentally and economically, and were rewarded with thought-provoking answers that often touched on the governor's personal experience. After the student gathering, the governor also made time to meet with Parker emeritus trustees Nancy and Ted Sizer, Principal Teri Schrader, and myself to learn more about Parker and our successful and innovative approach to secondary school education.

The Sizer Teachers Center

The 2007-08 school year was one of accomplishment for the Sizer Teachers Center as well. Sustained by a \$500,000 grant received in 2007 from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Teachers Center continued our important work of improving the educational opportunities of students beyond those lucky enough to attend Parker. With over 100 visitors, from Massachusetts to Texas to Japan, the Teachers Center was able to support educators as they worked to learn more about such topics as Parker's standards-based system for assessment of student work, its integrated math and science curriculum, our multi-aged middle school classrooms, and the development of a healthy school culture. The Teachers Center also continued to model its school-based teacher training program, with 8 teachers in training in 4 different schools.

Two new initiatives also defined the Teachers Center's work this year. In September we began a two-year pilot of a new leadership model which integrates the Sizer Teachers Center more fully into the Parker School, thus providing Parker's teachers with expanded leadership opportunities and better facilitating the teacher-to-teacher and school leader-to-school leader exchanges that Ted Sizer envisioned. In the spring we established a new mentor school relationship with North Central Charter School in Fitchburg, Massachusetts.

Tribute to founding trustees Kathleen Cushman, Jack Donahue, & Laura Rogers

Finally this year the Board of Trustees completed a transition begun in 2003, when in June the last of its founding trustees ended their terms on Parker's Board. For the past 15 years Kathleen Cushman, Jack Donahue, and Laura Rogers have coupled their compelling vision of what school could really be with the hour upon hour of hard work needed to make that vision a reality. Their legacy is a school whose families are grateful for it every day, and the Teachers Center that supports educators and schools across the country and around the world.

As I begin my fourth year as chair of Parker's Board of Trustees, I know I speak for the entire Board when I say we are both honored and humbled to be entrusted with carrying on the remarkable work of Parker's founders. I am confident that with the strong foundation provided we will continue to thrive long into the future.

Respectfully submitted,

Anne G. Perkins
Chair, Parker Board of Trustees

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School philosophy emphasizes student-centered, inquiry-based learning, close student-teacher relationships, and the mastery of basic intellectual skills by all students. All Parker students must demonstrate their learning and progress toward meeting demanding Division standards each year in each Domain of study: Arts and Humanities (AH); Math, Science, and Technology (MST); Spanish and Wellness. Students demonstrate their learning in individual assignments, projects and exhibitions, portfolios, and Gateway exhibitions. All student work is assessed using Parker's Standards and Rubrics.
- Thirteen years after it opened its doors as a public charter school, the Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School in Devens graduated its eighth class on Wednesday, June 4, 2008. Fifty-eight seniors from nineteen central Massachusetts towns received their diplomas.
- Small classes, taught by one or two teachers, allow the school to achieve its goals of thoughtful inquiry and mastery with close coaching from teacher-mentors.
- The school draws an exceptional faculty from around the nation; the majority of Parker's teachers hold advanced degrees and are designated as Highly Qualified Teachers by the guidelines of the NCLB Act. The New Teachers Collaborative, a teacher-training program based at the Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center, completed its sixth year with nine teacher interns receiving certification. Students, parents, and visitors to the school consistently remark that the teachers are Parker's most remarkable resource.
- This year 376 students were enrolled in grades 7 through 12, drawn from 41 Massachusetts towns. Students ranged in age from 12 to 19 years. Parker received 282 applications for the 2008-2009 school year, during which Parker anticipates enrolling 381 students, including an incoming class of 70.
- Parker students continued to perform well relative to internal and external expectations and measures of accountability.
- Parker School succeeded in purchasing its current school building and 9-acre site and thus achieved the long-held goal of a permanent home.
- In April, Parker completed the most ambitious fundraising effort in the school's history, with a community-wide grassroots effort that raised the \$950,000 needed to undertake the building project. The additional 26,000 square feet of space was officially dedicated on April 17, 2008.
- On June 13, Parker was honored with a visit by Governor Deval Patrick. After a school wide town hall style gathering, the governor met with Parker emeritus trustees Nancy and Ted Sizer, Principal Teri Schrader and Board Chair Andy Perkins.
- The Parker School has established a record of sound fiscal results during its first thirteen years. The school completed its 2007-2008 school year with an increase in Net Assets of \$114,359 resulting in a total Net Assets of \$2,702,522 as of June 30, 2008. The financial position of the school continues to be strong, with no need for borrowings to fund operations.
- Parker's Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center presented workshops and seminars attended by educators from private and public schools all over the country and abroad and beyond. The Teachers Center closed to visitors for five months during the school year, as the Parker School moved into its newly renovated and expanded facility and the Teachers Center moved back into the main building of the school. Parker staff were invited to numerous local and national conferences to present at workshops about their areas of expertise.
- Students in Division 3 contributed 5564 hours in service to the school community this year. Completing 52 hours of service each year of Division 3 is a graduation requirement at Parker.
- The parents and guardians of Parker's students logged 2910 hours in service to the school.

SCHOOL PROFILE

The Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School is a regional high school for students in grades 7-12 located in Devens, Massachusetts. The school's region includes 70 towns drawn from Middlesex, Worcester, and Franklin counties.

THE MISSION

The Parker School's mission is "to move the child to the center of the education process and to interrelate the several subjects of the curriculum in such a way as to enhance their meaning for the child" (Charter, October 1994). As a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, the Parker School will realize this mission through educational practice guided by the Ten Common Principles of Essential Schools:

1. The school should focus on helping adolescents learn to use their minds well. Schools should not attempt to be "comprehensive" if such a claim is made at the expense of the school's central intellectual purpose.
2. The school's goals should be simple: that each student master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. While these skills and areas will, to varying degrees, reflect the traditional academic disciplines, the program's design should be shaped by the intellectual and imaginative powers and competencies that students need, rather than necessarily by "subjects" as conventionally defined. The aphorism "Less Is More" should dominate: curricular decisions should be guided by the aim of thorough student mastery and achievement rather than by an effort merely to cover content.
3. The school's goals should apply to all students, while the means to these goals will vary as those students themselves vary. School practice should be tailor-made to meet the needs of every group or class of adolescents.
4. Teaching and learning should be personalized to the maximum feasible extent. Efforts should be directed toward a goal that no teacher have direct responsibility for more than 80 students. To capitalize on this personalization, decisions about the details of the course of study, the use of students' and teachers' time and the choice of teaching materials and specific pedagogies must be unreservedly placed in the hands of the principal and staff.
5. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker rather than the more familiar metaphor of teacher-as-deliverer-of-instructional-services. Accordingly, a prominent pedagogy will be coaching, to provoke students to learn how to learn and thus to teach themselves.
6. Students entering secondary school studies are those who can show competence in language and elementary mathematics. Students of traditional high school age but not yet at appropriate levels of competence to enter secondary school studies will be provided intensive remedial work to assist them quickly to meet these standards. The diploma should be awarded upon a successful final demonstration of mastery for graduation: an "exhibition." This exhibition by the student of his or her grasp of the central skills and knowledge of the school's program may be jointly administered by the faculty and by higher authorities. As the diploma is awarded when earned, the school's program proceeds with no strict age grading and with no system of "credits earned" by "time spent" in class. The emphasis is on the students' demonstration that they can do important things.
7. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation ("I won't threaten you but I expect much of you"), of trust (until abused) and of decency (the values of fairness, generosity and tolerance). Incentives appropriate to the school's particular students and teachers should be emphasized, and parents should be treated as essential collaborators.

8. The principal and teachers should perceive themselves as generalists first (teachers and scholars in general education) and specialists second (experts in but one particular discipline). Staff should expect multiple obligations (teacher-counselor-manager) and a sense of commitment to the entire school.

9. Ultimate administrative and budget targets should include, in addition to total student loads per teacher of eighty or fewer pupils, substantial time for collective planning by teachers, competitive salaries for staff and an ultimate per pupil cost not to exceed that at traditional schools by more than 10 percent. To accomplish this, administrative plans may have to show the phased reduction or elimination of some services now provided students in many traditional comprehensive secondary schools.

10. The school should demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. It should model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. The school should honor diversity and build on the strengths of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity and discrimination.

Curriculum Design and Teaching

The School's design draws directly from its mission. The academic program, the teaching, and the assessment of student learning are closely interwoven. The School's Criteria for Excellence establish the academic expectations for all students and are used to evaluate student learning. The academic program expresses its mission in the following ways:

- The curriculum is academically challenging, interdisciplinary, and emphasizes student inquiry.
- Teachers work in cross-disciplinary teams with small groups of children in two year curricular cycles in Divisions 1 and 2. Teachers in Division 3 develop seminar and laboratory courses with a discipline-based focus.
- Teachers design instruction to meet the needs of their students and to allow students to demonstrate their understanding and skills through many forms of exhibition
- Students are encouraged and then required to take an active role in their learning.
- Student learning is evaluated using school-wide standards and rubrics drawn from the School's Criteria for Excellence.
- Students are required to reflect on and revise their work incorporating direct teacher feedback to strengthen and deepen their understanding.
- Students must complete the requirements of each division and exhibit their learning before progressing to the next division (level of study).
- The School has a flexible long-block schedule that allows students more time to focus on depth in student learning activities and allows teachers substantial planning time during the school day.
- The Advisory system allows teachers to know students well and to serve as their academic and personal guides.
- The teaching staff is differentiated and senior practitioners mentor and coach junior staff; critical reflection and peer observation are built into teachers' daily schedules.
- The School has a service component in which students learn by contributing to the school and the larger community as volunteers.
- Students and teachers collaborate in school governance and discipline through the Community Congress and Justice Committee.
- The teacher-leader model substantially reduces overhead and places student advising and management decisions in the hands of the teaching staff.

The School organizes its curriculum and teaching into four Domains: Arts and Humanities, Math/Science/Technology, Spanish, and Wellness. Students progress through these domains of

study (Divisions 1, 2, and 3) according to the pace of their accomplishments. The School's curriculum emphasizes practice and progress in the same key skills across all divisions: Reading, writing, oral presentation, listening, research, artistic expression, Spanish language skills (reading, writing, speaking, listening, culture), mathematical problem-solving, mathematical communication, scientific investigation, systems thinking, and technological literacy.

The School's curriculum is modified each year in response to the Essential Question. This year's question was: "What are the Causes? What are the Effects?" Teachers support students in extending their learning beyond the classroom and in integrating learning across classrooms through the Essential Question.

The School provides special education services within the context of a philosophy that emphasizes the importance of personalized education for all students. Teachers become knowledgeable about student strengths and weaknesses, and they learn to support and evaluate student progress toward meeting the school-wide educational standards. All students develop Personal Learning Plans with their advisor and parents; students on Individualized Education Plans also develop specific goals related to their learning disability and learning objectives.

Most students spend the whole day or nearly the whole day in the regular education program. Accommodations and modifications made by the students' teachers in consultation with the special education staff allow most students to be successful within our flexible, inquiry-based program. Students who require specially designed curriculum or specially designed instruction in meeting the School's performance and learning standards receive this instruction in the resource room provided by the special needs staff.

NUMBER OF INSTRUCTION DAYS AND HOURS OF OPERATION

For the 2007–2008 school year, the Parker School scheduled the mandated 185 days of instruction and completed 180 days of school. The student’s school year began on August 30, 2007 and ended on June 20, 2008. Parker has scheduled 185 days of instruction for the 2008–2009 school year.

Faculty Hours:

8:00 a.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Student Hours:

8:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, Friday; 8:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday.

Students may arrive at school from 8:00 a.m. and may remain until 5:00 p.m. if they are attending a supervised activity. After school programs regularly extend the day into the late afternoon and occasionally into the evening.

Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School does not receive Title 1 funds and did not publish a NCLB report card in 2007-2008.

GRADUATION AND PROMOTION REQUIREMENTS

Parker School students progress through three Divisions, the curricular standards of which are comparable to those of seventh and eighth grades (Division 1), foundation-level high school work (Division 2), and advanced work aimed toward the graduation transition (Division 3). Each Division comprises a multi-year curricular cycle, and students of mixed ages are grouped together for the entire cycle. “Promotion” at the Parker School consists of students exhibiting readiness to move from one Division into the next in a particular academic Domain, as follows:

Each year all Parker students assemble a Year-End Portfolio in each Domain, which serves as the basis of their Year-End Assessment report. When that Portfolio shows they are consistently meeting the Standards of the Division in a particular academic Domain (Mathematics, Science, and Technology (MST); Arts and Humanities (AH), and Spanish), as well as making academic progress, students may advance to the next Division via the “Gateway Portfolio Exhibition.”

Gateway Portfolios are quite similar to the Year-End Portfolios, but they are accompanied by a formal exhibition before a mixed audience of students, classroom teacher(s) and the student’s adviser, parents, and community members. Gateway Portfolios include a cover letter in which students sum up and reflect on their progress throughout the Division and their readiness for the next Division’s challenges. (Excerpts of sample Gateway Cover Letters are available on the school’s website.) Students’ abilities to reflect on their work and respond to audience questions are important elements of their demonstrating readiness for promotion.

Students may proceed at different times into the next Division in each Domain; for example, students may be in Division 2 MST and Division 1 Arts and Humanities. Gateway Portfolio Exhibitions took place in January and June of this year. Teachers, advisors and families may consult with each other to decide the best time for each individual student to advance into a new Division.

Division 3 students at Parker culminate their studies with a capstone Senior Project, a topic or project they choose to explore independently with the guidance of an outside mentor, sometimes in a workplace internship. Presented to a public audience as part of a student’s Graduation Exhibition, the Senior Project makes an intellectual and personal bridge between high school and the world beyond.

GRADUATION REQUIREMENTS FOR THE CLASS OF 2008

The Senior Year focuses on investigation and demonstration, as well as critical thinking, in an effort to imbue and foster in our students the qualities of autonomy, interdependence, resourcefulness, compassion, curiosity, perseverance, pride, and respect for themselves and for others. The Senior Year is a full year program defined by the Senior Seminar, Senior Project, Division 3 course work and the Graduation Portfolio, School Service and Wellness requirements. In order to be considered a Senior, students must be in Division 3 for AH and MST. They must complete Division 2 Spanish by the end of their Senior Year.

Graduation Requirements (in addition to meeting the State Board of Education requirements)

- Successful completion of the Senior Project
- Graduation portfolio and cover letter
- Successful completion of the Senior Seminar
- Fulfillment of School Service requirement
- Completion of Division 2 Spanish or its approved equivalent
- Fulfillment of Wellness requirement

Senior Project

During their final year at Parker, students complete a Senior Project in which they must:

1. Generate an “essential question.”
2. Explore this question by:
 - a. Engaging in formal and rigorous academic research.
 - b. Collaborating with people outside the Parker School (e.g. internship, interview series, job-shadowing, field research).
3. Use their findings or work to benefit the larger community.
4. Apply skills and knowledge from several disciplines to complete the project.
5. Present their project to a panel.

Graduation Portfolio

The graduation portfolio contains work from Division 3 courses, which demonstrates the student's accomplishments in at least 9 of the 12 skill areas identified in the Parker School Criteria for Excellence (see appendix for detailed criteria). Only work from satisfactorily completed courses is eligible for the graduation portfolio. Courses of study which are incomplete or for which the student has been assessed "unsatisfactory" are noted on the transcript; work from those courses is not eligible for the graduation portfolio.

Senior Seminar

Senior Seminar is a year-long assessed course dedicated to developing and fostering critical thinking, inquiry, collaboration, and personal achievement. In addition to its curricular function, the Senior Seminar provides structure and continuity for preparation for Life After Parker, as well as the locus for the Senior Project. Seminar teachers act as advisers to seniors for all aspects of their Senior year, including the Senior Project.

School Service

School Service is an ongoing requirement of Division 3. Seniors are expected to satisfactorily complete their School Service requirement during their Division 3 years. The expectation for this program is that students engage in two hours of service to the school each week. Students serve as classroom assistants, tutors, administrative support, research assistants, library helpers, and in a variety of other roles.

SUMMARY OF THE 2007–2008 SCHOOL YEAR CURRICULUM

A summary of the specific school year curriculum in each domain and division is available in the appendix.

ASSESSMENT TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES

Direct Assessment of Student Work

School-wide Criteria for Excellence in every Parker area of learning serve as the basis for assessment of all student work. Working together in Domains and Division-level teams, teachers call on these Criteria when they devise rubrics at the appropriate level for a particular group of students. Criteria for Excellence are reprinted in the appendix to this report.

As well as compiling their Year-End Portfolios (see *Graduation and Promotion Requirements*), Parker students demonstrate their learning through course work, major projects, and public exhibitions. Course work is assessed by both teachers and by the students themselves, using the relevant rubrics as well as narrative evaluations. Projects are presented to peers and teachers in a classroom setting. At the culmination of major projects, parents and the community are invited to public exhibitions in which students demonstrate, display, and answer questions about their work. The Gateway Portfolio Exhibition includes a mixed audience of students, teachers, advisers, parents, and community members. The feedback and oral questioning students receive from each of these audiences is an important element of Parker's assessment process.

The Year-End Assessment

Each student's Year-End Assessment includes a brief description of Parker's curriculum in each domain (Math, Science, and Technology; Arts and Humanities; Spanish; and Wellness), accompanied by a narrative evaluation of the student's progress written by his or her teacher for that domain. For each of the key skills and content areas, the report indicates whether the student is "just beginning," "approaching" standards in the appropriate Division, or "meeting" those standards. And finally, it indicates whether or not the student is "making satisfactory progress" in each area. A blank sample Year-End Assessment template appears in the appendix to this Annual Report. Parker's transcript form presents a student's progress through the curriculum in a compact form, accompanied by a narrative summary, to admissions officers at colleges and universities.

External Assessment

The Parker School administers the Stanford 10 Achievement Tests to all students in grades seven and nine during the spring term. Results are reported in the School Accountability section of this document. Complete results from the 2007-2008 school year MCAS tests are not yet available, but others are reported in the School Accountability section of this document.

The Parker School offers students the opportunity to take the Educational Testing Service's PSATs, SATs, and SAT-IIIs at the appropriate points in their schooling. Parker students who qualify may participate in the Johns Hopkins CTY testing program by taking the SAT tests.

GOVERNANCE PROFILE

BOARD OF TRUSTEE MEMBERS 2007-2008

Founding Trustees

Jack Donahue, J.F.K. School of Government, Harvard University Term Ends 06/08
Kathleen Cushman, What Kids Can Do, Inc.; Coalition of Essential Schools Term Ends 06/08
Laura Rogers, School Psychologist Parker School, Lecturer Department of Education, Tufts University
Term Ends 06/08

Faculty Trustees

Teri Schrader, Principal
Diane Kruse, MST Domain Leader
Deborah Chamberlain, Wellness Teacher

Parent Trustees

Chet Gapinski, Clerk Term Began 09/06 - Term Ends 06/09
Kathy Singh, Treasurer Term Began 09/06 - Term Ends 06/10
Peter MacDonald Term Began 09/05 - Term Ends 06/08
Bill Allen Term Began 09/06 - Term Ends 06/09

Community Members

Anne Perkins, Chair Term Began 06/05 – Term Ends 06/10
Ann Glannon Term Began 09/06 - Term Ends 06/10
Annie Montesano Term Began 10/07 - Term Ends 06/09
Kathleen Bernklow Term Began 10/07 - Term Ends 06/10
Jeff Burnett Term Began 10/07 - Term Ends 06/10

Student Representatives

Lauren Irwin
Daphne Shethar

BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETINGS

All meetings are scheduled at the school and generally begin at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting Dates for the 2007-2008 Academic Year

September 11, 2007
October 16, 2007
November 20, 2007
December 18, 2007
January 15, 2008
February 12, 2008
March 18, 2008
April 15, 2008
May 20, 2008
June 19, 2008

MAJOR POLICY DECISIONS BY THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES IN 2007-2008

- The Board voted to accept a new slate of officers.
- The Trustees approved budget related items, the school curriculum and related curricular issues, school calendar revisions and all staffing decisions presented by the Principal over the course of the year.
- The Board voted to accept the parent nominee, Kathy Singh, faculty nominee Deborah Chamberlain and student nominees Lauren Irwin and Daphne Shethar as members of the Board of Trustees.
- The Board voted to accept two candidates for three year terms as Community Trustees, Kathleen Bernklow and Jeff Burnett and one candidate Anne Montesano for a two year term as a Community Trustee.
- The Board voted to accept the 2007-2008 Principal's Annual Goals.
- The Board voted to accept the 2007-2008 Board of Trustees Annual Goals.
- The Board voted to approve the formation of the following ad hoc committees Building, Facilities, Outreach, and Development with the addition of the composition of the budget Study Committee.
- The Board approved the 2007-2008 Parker school Principal Evaluation Process.
- The Board voted to make public the minutes of all executive sessions from 2005 through the present.
- The Board voted to accept the representations of management and the expression of the opinions made by the school's independent auditors in their report for the year, which ended June 30 2007.
- The Board voted to approve the dedication of the new building addition to the Parker staff and teachers.
- The Board approved a revenue projection method of budgeting for use in preparing the annual budget and to accept the revised Reserve Policy for the school.
- The Board voted to approve modified forms as part of the Principal and Board evaluations process.
- The Board voted to award honorary diplomas to the two project managers for the building addition and the construction manager.
- The Board approved the transfer of \$100,000 currently held by the Sizer Foundation to Parker for contributing to the funding of the Teachers Center activities.
- The Board approved the two year Development Plan for Parker and the Teachers Center.
- The Board approved a one-year contract extension for the Principal.
- The Board voted to authorize a study committee for a sabbatical policy and for the committee to report their findings to the Board

SUMMARY OF OFFICIAL COMPLAINTS

There were no official complaints received by the Board of Trustees in the 2007-2008 school year.

STUDENT PROFILE

Student Demographics

In the 2007-2008 school year as of June 2008, the Parker School enrolled 376 students in grades 7 through 12 (representing ages 12 through 19). The students were residents of 40 towns in the vicinity of Devens, Massachusetts.

Parker Students 2007-2008 by Grade and Gender

	<u>Total Number of Students</u>	<u>Male</u>	<u>Female</u>
Grade 7 – 2013	70	35	35
Grade 8 – 2012	70	37	33
Grade 9 – 2011	66	37	29
Grade 10 – 2010	60	30	30
Grade 11 – 2009	52	36	16
Grade 12 – 2008	58	30	28
		205	171
Total students	376	54.5 % Male	45.5% Female

Enrollment Profile

<u>Race/Ethnicity</u>	<u>Number of Students</u>	<u>Percentage of Students</u>
White	348	92.55%
Black or African-American	1	.26%
Asian	3	.79%
White & Black or African American	5	1.32%
White & Asian	8	2.12%
White & American Indian or Alaska Native	3	.79%
White & Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	1	.26%
White (Hispanic/Latino)	6	1.59%
Black or African American (Hispanic/Latino)	1	.26%

Parker Students 2007-2008 by Other Demographics

Limited English Proficiency/ Linguistic Minority	0	0
Low-income	9	02.39%
Special Education (IEP's)	43	11.43%
Special Education (504's)	40	10.63%
Migrant	0	0

Students at the Parker School in 2007-2008 came from the following towns:

Acton	Devens	Lunenburg	Townsend
Ashburnham	Dunstable	Marlborough	West Townsend
Athol	Fitchburg	Pepperell	West Boylston
Ayer	Groton	Petersham	Tyngsborough
Berlin	Harvard	Phillipston	Westford
Bolton	Hubbardston	Princeton	Westminster
Boxborough	Hudson	Rutland	Worcester
Boylston	Lancaster	Shirley	
Chelmsford	Leominster	Shrewsbury	
Clinton	Littleton	Sterling	
Concord	Lowell	Stow	

Student Attrition

Five students withdrew during the school year. Four returned to district schools and one moved out of the country.

Six students have indicated that they will not return to Parker in September 2008. Three students will be returning to their home districts, two are moving out of the area, and one is enrolling in an early college program.

Suspensions and Expulsions

Six students were placed on suspension during the 2007-2008 school year. All of the suspensions were out-of-school suspensions. One student was expelled.

Enrollment Policy

Eligibility

For the 2007-2008 school year, those students who resided in Massachusetts and who had completed sixth grade or above, or the equivalent, by September 2007 were eligible for admission. This policy remains unchanged for the 2008-2009 school year.

ENROLLMENT POLICY AND PROCEDURES

As public schools, charter schools comply with state and federal regulations on safety and non-discrimination; their admissions are open to all. The school's size is limited by its charter. The Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School serves approximately 375 students in grades 7 through 12 and does not plan to increase its enrollment. For each school year, Parker expects to enroll 65 entering seventh-grade students, as well as to fill whatever openings may arise through attrition in other classes.

Students who are in sixth grade or above during the enrollment period and who reside in one of the 46 school districts in the Parker region may apply. Students who reside in Massachusetts but outside the Parker region may also apply but are placed in a separate lottery pool which is drawn after all the names of students who reside in the region. Parents may be required to provide proof of residency for any applicant. Siblings of current Parker students are given preference, according to state law, and will be offered enrollment in the school ahead of all other students in the lottery. Students who are not enrolled in traditional graded schools must provide documentation of equivalent educational experience. Applications from students who fail to meet these eligibility criteria will be returned to the parent who filed the application, along with an explanation for the return.

Applications will be available on December 1 and must be completed by February 1 for enrollment the following September. In order that students and parents clearly understand what the Parker School offers, as part of the admission process we require that parents and students attend an Information Program prior to the application deadline. These Information Programs are held in January, prior to the application deadline.

If the school receives more applicants than it has openings, we are required to conduct a lottery from the pool of all applications completed by the February deadline. The lottery will be announced on the school's website and at the January Information Sessions. The lottery is open to the public. A person not connected with the school will draw the lottery. All applicants for a given application and enrollment process will be drawn in the lottery and assigned a number. By March 1 we will notify applicants by mail of their enrollment status. Students for whom enrollment in the Parker School would cause their sending district to exceed the 9% tuition cap may not be offered admission except that, if the student is a sibling of a student currently in attendance at the Parker School then the state may pay that child's tuition.

Three waiting lists will be formed if the number of applicants in the application and enrollment process exceeds the number of available spaces—one for siblings of current Parker students, one for residents of the Parker region, and one for non-residents. Students who decline an offer of admission may remain on the waiting list in their present position for a period of 12 months from the date of the original offer of admission. They will be listed as "inactive" on the waiting list and it will be the responsibility of the parent of that student to inform the school, in writing, of their desire to be returned to "active" status on the waiting list. As additional openings arise, enrollment will continue from the active waiting list in the order of applicants' lottery numbers.

At the beginning of the next year's application and enrollment process a letter will be sent to all applicants who are still on the waiting list to see if they would like to remain on the waiting list. All applicants who respond affirmatively to this request will retain their place on the waiting list ahead of any

new applicants. New applicants who are siblings of current students will maintain their sibling preference.

The Parker Charter School's application period is from December 1 until February 1 for the following September. Applications will not be accepted after February 1. If at any point in the year the waiting list is depleted and the school determines that it has enrollment openings, then a new application and enrollment period will be declared. This will be announced in newspapers throughout the Parker School's region and families will have a one month period of time in which to complete the requirements for application to the school. In this case, a new lottery would be conducted one week after the close of the application period.

A student who withdraws from the Parker School at any time during a school year (from the first scheduled day of school to the last) may re-enroll at any time during that school year if there is space available. A student who withdraws from the Parker School at the end of the school year may re-enroll at any time up until February 1 of the subsequent school year if there is space available.

Accepted by the Board of Trustees, January 10, 2005 Approved by DOE, March 23, 2005

Enrollment Data

During the 2007-2008 application process, the Parker School received 282 applications for the upcoming 2008-2009 academic year from students living in 41 Massachusetts towns (including wait-listed students renewing their status). There are approximately four applications received for every opening at the Parker School. The number of students who completed applications, or maintained their wait listed position, are listed by grade and town, appears in the table on the following pages.

To date, 70 seventh graders, 1 additional eighth grader and 4 additional ninth graders are enrolled to enter the school in September 2008. All other students remain on the waiting list according to their lottery number.

Towns in the Parker School Region

Parker School Applications Received in 2007-2008 for enrollment in September 2008							
	2014	2013	2012	2011	2010	2009	Totals
	7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	
Acton	9	3	1				13
Ashburnham	1						1
Ashby	1						1
Ashland		1					1
Athol		2					2
Ayer	8	4	6		1		19
Bolton	3		1				4
Boxborough	6	1	2			1	10
Boylston	1	1					2
Carlisle			2				2
Chelmsford		1		1			2
Clinton		1	1	1			3
Concord	2	1	1				4
Devens	2	1					3
Dunstable	4						4
Fitchburg	3		1				4
Grafton		1					1
Groton	21	7	5	1	1		35
Harvard	5	1	1	1			8
Holden	1						1
Lancaster	1	2					3
Leominster	7	1	3	1			12
Littleton	7	3	2	1			13
Lunenburg	7	4	2	1			14
Maynard	5		2				7
Newton	1						1

Northborough			1	1			2
Paxton	1						1
Pepperell	9	3	3				15
Phillipston		1					1
Princeton		3	1				4
Rutland		1					1
Shirley	18	4	3	2			27
Shrewsbury		2					2
Sterling	8	3	1	1			13
Stow	4	1	2	1			8
Townsend	10	1	5				16
West Boylston		1			1		2
Westford	3	1	1	1			6
Winchendon	2						2
Worcester	6	3	2	1			12
Totals	156	59	49	14	3	1	282

Parker School Waiting List by Grade Level (as of July 2008)

<i>2014</i>	<i>2013</i>	<i>2012</i>	<i>2011</i>	<i>2010</i>	<i>2009</i>	
7th	8th	9th	10th	11th	12th	TOTAL
89	59	48	15	3	1	215

STAFF PROFILE

2007-2008 STAFF SUMMARY

Teri G. Schrader: Principal
Michelle McKenna: Business Manager
Deb Merriam: Academic Dean
Diane Kruse: Math Science and Technology Domain Leader
Ruth Whalen Crockett: Spanish Domain Leader
Terry Weisinger: Special Education Coordinator
Matt Smith: Division 1 Coordinator
Deborah Chamberlain: Division 2 Coordinator
John Bohannon: Division 3 Coordinator

Full-time equivalent (FTE) teachers:

The school employed 44.4 full time equivalent teachers, including three teaching interns, during the 2007-2008 school year.

Arts & Humanities: 16.07 FTE
Math/Science/Technology: 15.7 FTE
Spanish: 6 FTE
Wellness: 3 FTE
Directed Studies/Special Education: 3 FTE
Total: 44.4 FTE

Other Positions in the 2007-2008 school year: 18.85 FTE

Total FTE for the 2007-2008 school year: 63.25 FTE

Average class size is 17 students

The average class size for team-taught (2 teachers) classes is 23

The average class size for solo-taught classes is 16

Student to teacher ratio is 8.46 students per teacher

Teacher Experience:

97.6 percent of the teaching faculty in core academic areas are designated as Highly Qualified. The average number of years of service at Parker is 4.5 years and the average years of teaching experience is 8.1 years.

2007-2008 STAFF ATTRITION

Of the 71 members of staff employed both full and part time during this year, 10 will not be returning next year. All three of the collaborating teacher interns employed at Parker left at the end of their training year to seek employment. Two teachers left to seek advancement. One left for further education, one for a career change and one left to seek more hours. Two teachers/staff members left to spend more time attending to family needs.

PERFORMANCE RELATIVE TO ACCOUNTABILITY PLAN

1. ACADEMIC PROGRAM GOALS

A. Students should learn to use their minds well and master a limited number of essential skills and areas of knowledge. (Common Principles #1 and #2)

Measures:

1. All students will meet the Division learning standards as demonstrated in Gateway Portfolios prior to being promoted ("gatewaying") in each Domain.

Students are eligible to gateway to the next Division in a Domain when they have completed the academic requirements of the current Division. Students complete a portfolio of work demonstrating both progress and the ability to consistently meet the Division learning standards in all skill areas. They are then eligible to present a Gateway Exhibition of their learning to an audience of students, parents, teachers and community members. Students may require one to three years to complete the academic requirements of Divisions 1 and 2, although most students complete these requirements in two years.

Students have the opportunity to gateway in January and June each year. During the 2007-2008 academic year, 60 students gatewayed from Division 1 to Division 2 Arts and Humanities, and 61 students gatewayed from Division 2 to Division 3. Seventy-three students gatewayed from Division 1 to Division 2 Math/Science/Technology, and 52 students gatewayed from Division 2 to Division 3. Sixty-five students gatewayed from Division 1 to Division 2 Spanish, and 50 students completed and gatewayed from Division 2 Spanish. Altogether, 272 students successfully completed one or more Gateway Exhibitions this year, for a total number of gatewayes equaling 361.

2. All students will achieve Proficient or Advanced scores on the Grade 10 MCAS tests in Math and ELA prior to completing grade 11.

All students in the class of 2009 passed the Grade 10 English Language Arts and Math MCAS prior to completing grade 11. The results for the school appear in the table below:

MCAS results for Spring 2007

Grade/Subject	Number of students	% Adv.	% Prof.	% NI	%W/F
7 th /ELA	65	11	74	12	3
7 th /Math	65	11	45	34	11
8 th /ELA	65	14	80	6	0
8 th /Math	65	15	46	30	8
8 th /Sci/Eng	65	2	50	43	5
10 th /ELA	56	39	55	5	0
10 th /Math	55	65	24	11	0
10 th /Biology	49	2	33	51	14

3. Students will maintain their standing on standardized tests of achievement as determined by comparing grade 7 and grade 9 results on a nationally normed test of academic achievement.

Each year the school administers the Stanford Tests of Achievement to students in grades 7 and 9. Students' mean scores for each area are consistently in the upper quartile in grade 7, although specific subtest scores may be somewhat lower. For this reason, we do not expect to see significant gains by grade 9. Instead, we expect that student standing on these tests will not decline significantly. In the table below, we present longitudinal results for the winter-spring tests of 2005/2007 and 2006/2008 (comparisons are made over two years for the classes of 2010 and 2011).

Class of 2010 Stanford 9 Results

	Grade 7 (2005)			Grade 9 (2007)			NCE Change
	Students Tested: 57			Students Tested: 60			
	Mean Scaled Score	Natl. PR	NCE	Mean Scaled Score	Natl. PR	NCE	
TOTAL READING	711	88	73.3	751	95	82.1	8.8
Vocabulary	730	86	71.8	761	88	74.1	2.3
Reading Comp.	703	84	70.2	745	94	80.8	10.6
TOTAL MATH**	707	85	71.4	745	91	77.2	5.8
Problem-solving	716	89	74.5	745	91	77.2	2.7
Procedures	697	75	63.3	(no separate test)			
LANGUAGE	672	84	70.4	694	85	71.3	.9
Prewriting	683	82	68.3	694	77	64.2	-4.1
Composing	677	84	70.0	704	86	71.6	1.6
Editing	663	77	64.7	686	79	66.3	1.6
SPELLING	692	79	66.6	723	85	70.9	4.3
SCIENCE	692	84	70.5	713	86	72.0	1.5
SOCIAL SCIENCE	687	84	69.9	712	87	72.4	2.5

***The grade 9 test does not include subtests; the math test is most closely aligned with the problem-solving portion of the grade 7 test.*

The results for the class of 2010 are consistent with prior class results. On average, students score between the 75th and 89th percentiles overall on Reading, Math, Language, Science and Social Science tests in grade 7. In grade 9, on average, students score between the 77th and 95th percentiles on these same tests. To compare changes in group scores, the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is provided. Changes greater than +/-7 (one-third of a standard deviation) are considered significant. Students maintained their standing on all tests, and are therefore maintaining their standing on these tests when compared to national samples.

Class of 2011 Stanford 10 Results

	Grade 7 (2006)			Grade 9 (2008)			NCE Change
	Students Tested: 62			Students Tested: 65			
	Mean Scaled Score	Natl. PR	NCE	Mean Scaled Score	Natl. PR	NCE	
TOTAL READING	706	83	70.5	732	87	73.6	3.1
Vocabulary	725	83	69.9	743	79	66.9	-3.0
Reading Comp.	697	80	67.7	727	86	73.1	5.4
TOTAL MATH**	691	76	64.7	736	87	73.7	9.0
Problem-solving	708	85	71.8	736	87	73.7	9.0
Procedures	669	54	52.4	(no separate test)			
LANGUAGE	675	85	71.6	686	78	66.5	-5.1
Prewriting	693	86	72.9	690	72	62.6	-10.3
Composing	674	81	68.9	692	77	65.6	-3.3
Editing	666	78	66.1	677	72	62.4	-3.7
SPELLING	690	77	65.6	722	83	70.4	4.8
SCIENCE	693	85	71.6	707	81	68.9	-2.7
SOCIAL SCIENCE	692	86	72.4	706	82	69.4	-3.0

***The grade 9 test does not include subtests; the math test is most closely aligned with the problem-solving portion of the grade 7 test.*

The results for the class of 2011 are consistent with prior class results. On average, students in grade 7 score between the 76th and 86th percentiles overall on Reading, Math, Language, Science and Social Science tests. In grade 9, on average, students score between the 77th and 87th percentiles on these same tests. To compare changes in group scores, the Normal Curve Equivalent (NCE) is provided. Changes of greater than +/-7 (one-third of a standard deviation) are considered significant. Students maintained their standing on all tests, with the exception of the Prewriting subtest (which had a slight dip) and the Mathematics test (which had a slight increase). Therefore, students are maintaining their standing on these tests when compared to national samples, as expected.

Nearly all Parker students take the SAT Reasoning Test. The population of college-bound students taking the SAT Reasoning Test is not equivalent to the population of students used to establish norms on the Stanford Achievement Tests. We would expect Parker students to score, on average, above the national and state 50th percentile (or mean score) on the SAT Reasoning Test, and they do. Average SAT Reasoning Test scores for Parker's graduating classes are presented in the table below. The scores for the Class of 2008 are preliminary and partial, as not all scores are yet available. However, the trend of SAT scores remains consistent across recent classes.

Class	Parker Verbal Mean Score	State Verbal Mean Score	Parker Math Mean Score	State Math Mean Score
2000	624	505	603	514
2001	624	506	605	514
2002	597	504	557	516
2003	579	507	554	519
2004	605	508	577	518
2005	614	520	594	527
2006	619/602*	513/510	585	524
2007	601/575*	513/511	559	522
2008	604/590*	Not yet released	550	Not yet released

*Reading Score/Writing Score

As expected, on average, Parker students score on the SAT Reasoning Test well above the state mean on the SAT Reasoning Test.

B. The governing practical metaphor of the school should be student-as-worker; students will know how to learn and thus teach themselves. (Common Principle #5)

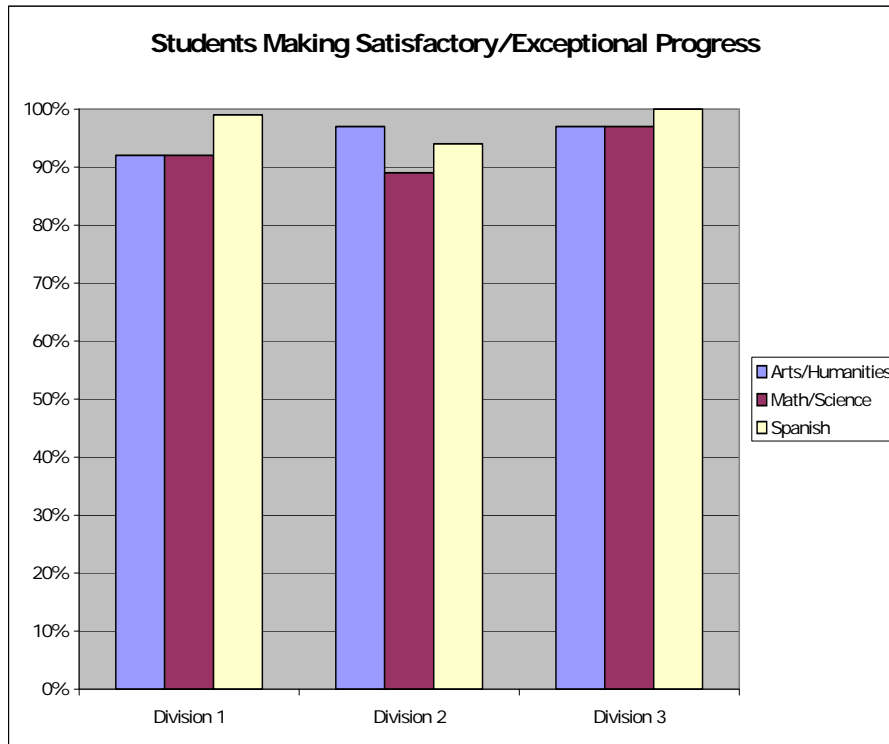
Measures:

1. Ninety percent of students will make satisfactory progress each year in each area of the curriculum, as assessed by teachers and designated on student Year-End Academic Reports.

Annual student progress is evaluated by teachers in all academic Domains. Students are rated as making satisfactory or exceptional progress for the year when they demonstrate progress in the habits of learning, when they tackle assignments with care, when they use teacher feedback to develop or improve their work, and when they make demonstrable progress toward meeting the learning standards of the Domain. Specific learning expectations are established for each student through the Personal Learning Plans. To make Satisfactory or Exceptional progress, students must take initiative in their learning through asking questions, completing complex projects, and revising their work to reflect a deeper understanding of the material and skills of the curriculum.

Students are rated as making Not Satisfactory progress when they do not demonstrate the progress they were expected to make in habits of learning, in academic skills growth, or both.

The chart below summarizes student progress during the academic year 2007-2008 for each Domain, by Division.



Student progress met or exceeded the school’s objective of 90 percent making Satisfactory or Exceptional progress in virtually all areas of the school’s program. The percentage of students making satisfactory progress in Division 2 MST fell slightly below 90%. However, this percentage (89%) represents continuous improvement over the prior three years for Division 2 MST. For the last several years, faculty have been working together to identify and target areas of struggle for students in Division 2 MST in order to continue to raise the percentage of students who satisfactorily complete the year.

2. Student portfolios and student exhibitions will demonstrate student learning and progress across a variety of learning activities as assessed by Division standards derived from the Criteria for Excellence.

The school conducted an external portfolio review in Parker's first years to ensure that the Criteria for Excellence and their use in evaluating student work and student learning would be both reliable and would meet or exceed the learning standards of teachers from communities with similar aspirations. The results of our review were presented in earlier Annual Reports. We are currently developing a plan to conduct internal and external reviews to ensure that student portfolios and judged exhibitions consistently meet the learning standards articulated in the Criteria for Excellence (see Appendix).

3. Students will make a successful transition after graduation from the Parker School as demonstrated by successful completion of a college program of study or successful employment as determined by data collected from bi-annual alumni/ae surveys.

Several years ago, we collected alumni/ae data on Parker's first three graduating classes, the classes of 2000, 2001, and 2002. Of the 122 students who graduated in those years, 114 enrolled in four-year colleges. Of these, 96 (or 85 percent) were known to have completed their course of study within five years of entering college (at the time of the study). The rate of graduation from college of Parker students

is well above the national and state averages¹ (46-60 percent in six years). Of the students not enrolling in four-year colleges, several were still working towards their undergraduate degrees at four-year institutions, several enrolled in two-year colleges and have completed their programs, and others are employed. We have no information about at least five students. A similar survey of alumni/ae is due to be conducted again in the near future.

2. ORGANIZATIONAL VIABILITY

A. The school's Board of Trustees will effectively promote the school's mission.

Measures:

1. The Board will work with the school leader to develop and achieve annual leadership goals that reflect the school's mission.

In the fall of 2007, the Trustees worked with the principal to develop annual leadership goals, which were voted on and approved by the Board of Trustees. Achievements relevant to each goal are noted below.

Goal #1. Facilities

1.1 By November 2007, establish a Facilities Committee charged with planning for the long-term maintenance of Parker's facilities and grounds and recommending to the Board any related policies or budgets.

A committee comprised of six members with expertise in facilities maintenance was established in November 2007. The committee focused its work during this first year on study of the short and long-term maintenance needs of the main school building, half of which dates to the 1950s and the other half to the 1970s. A report from OnSite Insight formed the basis of this study, and given the recommendation that the replacement of the fifty-year-old windows in the 1950s wing of the building was the most critical facilities need, the Board voted at its May meeting to proceed with that work, using funds in its facilities reserve.

1.2 By January 2008, complete the Parker Classroom Addition, on budget.

On Monday, April 14, 2008, Parker's students began attending classes in the new classroom addition following months of anticipation and hard work on the part of the entire school community. The new wing, which added 26,000 square feet of classroom and office space to the school, was formally dedicated "with gratitude and respect to the faculty and staff of the Parker School" on April 17. The project closed right on budget, and provided a solution to the overcrowding, which had plagued the school since its move to the current site in 2000. The addition also allowed the Sizer Teachers Center to move back into the school building, thus enhancing the integration of its work and that of the school.

1.3 By September 2008, assess two or more different alternatives for adding the gym space needed by the school.

In April, the Board of Trustees decided to postpone this goal for a year, given the necessary focus on completing the classroom addition. Parker continues to meet the need for gym space for its Wellness program and basketball teams through its elementary school-size gym and cafetorium, and by leasing gym space from neighboring schools.

Goal #2. Development

2.1 By December 2007, send out a low-key letter soliciting funds and explaining the various donation options (Parker School, Sizer Foundation, PEF) at Parker.

¹ Report to the Massachusetts Board of Higher Education, Task Force on Graduation Rates. June, 2005. *Education Week*, April, 2006. Comparable data from local high schools is unavailable.

In November, the school decided that a letter focused solely on finishing the Classroom Campaign made most sense, and in December sent out a low-key fund solicitation letter with that goal. The community responded with its characteristic generosity.

2.2 By January 2008, reach the \$1 million goal of the Classroom Campaign or come up with an alternative funding plan to complete the classroom addition.

The Parker community donated a remarkable \$950,000 in cash and in-kind contributions to the Classroom Campaign through an unprecedented community-wide grassroots effort involving trustees, parents, students, staff, alumni, alumni parents, alumni staff, and friends of the school. Lower-than-budgeted interest rates on the debt service portion of the project financing enabled the school to meet its funding needs for the classroom addition without any negative impact on operating dollars or operating reserves.

2.3 By June 2008 lay out a two-year plan for increasing fundraising strength at Parker and the Teachers Center.

At its May meeting, the Board of Trustees voted approval of a two-year plan for increasing fundraising strength at Parker and the Teachers Center. The plan, which was vetted with the Board's Development Advisory Group before consideration by the full board, includes nine separate goals in the areas of governance, administration, and operations.

Goal #3. Governance

3.1 Conduct a Board self-evaluation in May 2008.

The Board conducted a self-evaluation in May in tandem with its annual evaluation of the principal. The evaluation collected information about 1) individual board member skills and experience, so as to help the Governance Committee in its work of seeking Community Trustees who bring skills needed by the Board, and 2) trustees' assessment on the strengths and challenges of the Board as a whole. The evaluation and its discussion at the June Trustees meeting showed that trustees assessed the Parker Board as high-functioning, and pointed out some potential areas of improvement as well, most notably a need for increased information to Board members on past accomplishments and policies of the Board, and on the activities of committees whose work does not often make the monthly agendas. The self-evaluation also included a listing of potential goals for next year, which will form the basis of the Board's goal setting for the 2008-09 school year.

3.2 Strengthen board expertise by holding at least two focus meetings on the teachers center, student achievement, and/or other key areas related to the school's success.

Board focus meetings for the 2007-08 school year included the Ten Common Principles of Essential Schools (October), the MCAS (November), and school fundraising policy (December and January.) The Teachers Center was also discussed at the November, March and May meetings.

Goal #4. Finance

4.1 By February 2008, produce an analysis of and recommend possible changes to Parker's budgeting process, with a goal of approving the FY09 budget by April 2008.

At the January trustees meeting, the Budget Study committee presented the trustees with its recommendations for moving the annual budget approval process from June to April. Advancing the timeframe would (1) allow Parker to offer contracts to teachers earlier to participate in peak hiring, (2) give trustees more time to adequately review the budget before approval and (3) meet the reporting schedule required under the TD Banknorth loan agreement. The obstacle to preparing an accurate budget earlier was that reliable revenue figures are not available from the state until June. The Committee proposed the use of a formula approach to predicting revenue, supported by a stabilization *fund*. Shortfalls would be funded by the stabilization fund and surpluses would replenish the fund. The Board

of trustees discussed and subsequently approved the committee recommendations, and the FY09 budget was approved in April 2008.

4.2 By June 2008, complete an analysis of the Parker budget within the context of the Ten Common Principles.

Founding trustee and Kennedy School Professor Jack Donahue completed this analysis for the Board of Trustees, which discussed Jack's report at its June meeting. Among the observations were that:

- Every budget reflects and enacts a set of values and priorities. Because Parker is anchored on a set of explicit principles, it is appropriate to draw explicit links between several of the Common Principles and how Parker has assembled and deployed its financial resources.
- Parker will have a high ratio of teachers to students relative to traditional schools in order to achieve its goal of maximum personalization of teaching and learning.
- In order to fund this high ratio, there will always be physical assets and curricular elements and extracurricular programs and staff capabilities that are present in many or most traditional schools but absent, or mostly absent, at Parker.

4.3 Review FY07 quarterly financial reports at the Board level.

FY07 Q1 was reviewed at the November Trustees meeting; FY07 Q2 at the Trustees March meeting, and FY07 Q3 at the May Trustees meeting. A brief update on Q4 and year-end was given at the June meeting.

Goal #5. Political/Legislative

5.1 By February 2008, establish a Political Outreach Committee charged with strengthening relationships with legislative and other key decision-makers, and educating the Board and Parker Community about legislative issues related to charter schools.

In February 2008, the Board established a Political Outreach Committee composed of three Parker parents and the chair and treasurer of the Board of Trustees. The committee's May meeting included a discussion with Parker's principal and with the former superintendent of a neighboring school district, with the goal of learning about the type of outreach Parker is already accomplishing through its Teachers Center, and how it might better meet the needs of district schools.

Goal #6. School Leadership

6.1 By June 2008, negotiate a contract extension or new contract with Principal Teri Schrader. (Current contract ends June 2009).

On May 20, 2008, the trustees voted to approve a contract extension with Principal Teri Schrader until June 2010; the extension was subsequently signed by the Principal.

Organizational Viability

B. Sound fiscal practices and effective decision-making will sustain the school's program and record of academic achievement.

Measures:

1. The school's independent annual audit will demonstrate sound financial practices through having no major findings and an unqualified report.

The annual audit has never resulted in major findings, and the school has always received an unqualified opinion from the independent auditors. The Finance Committee selected Powers and Sullivan as auditors for the years ended June 30, 2007 and June 30, 2008. It is expected that the results will continue to be an unqualified opinion, as there have been no major changes in the financial policy of the school.

2. The school will maintain an annual balance sheet demonstrating an adequate balance of funds to sustain school operations.

The financial position of the school is strong, and there is not a need for short-term borrowings to fund operations. Since inception, through conservative budget practices and fiscal responsibility, the school has accumulated net assets of \$ 2,702,522 as of June 30, 2008 (unaudited). This provides the school with protection from possible negative impacts of the local and state economic conditions on the major revenue source, tuition, ensuring that a quality program can continue to be delivered in times of economic uncertainty.

3. The Board of Trustees, through the Finance Committee, will develop a plan for effective, long-range fundraising and fiscal policies for the use of accumulated fund balances over the course of this charter period.

In April of 2006, the Board of Trustees voted to accept policies to determine allowable uses of accumulated net assets. This adoption provided guidelines to ensure a working capital reserve, sets aside the right of the Board to restrict excess funds for use toward longer-term objectives such as acquiring a building and gives the Board the right to set a portion of funds aside to stabilize the operations of the school if the budget requires it. This policy was revisited upon the completion of the audit for the year ended June 30, 2006. At that time, knowing the final financial performance of the school through June 30, 2006, the Board of Trustees chose to refrain from setting aside funds for specific purposes in anticipation of a building project. As determined by the Board, these policies were revisited in January 2008, close to completion of the building project. The Board of Trustees voted to accept the Finance Committee's change in the aforementioned policies. The Board created four new categories of uses for accumulated net assets. An emergency reserve was set-up for unforeseen extraordinary needs of an emergency nature. A liquidity reserve was created to prevent short term borrowing needs as the school receives tuition one month in arrears. A revenue stabilization fund was created to ensure that the annual tuition increases do not negatively impact the operations of the school and to allow the school to budget and offer contracts in a timely manner. A facilities reserve fund was setup for capital repairs, renovations and additions to the school's facilities.

The Board of Trustees has spent time reviewing the fundraising policies and practices of the school. The school has also hired an in-house Development Director to coordinate the fundraising and outreach efforts of the school. The school utilized the expertise of consultants in the past for development efforts.

C. The school will consistently attract, enroll, and retain students from its region.

Measures:

1. Ninety percent of students will return each year (excluding students who move out of the region); 75 percent of students who enter the high school program will graduate; the ratio of applications to available openings in the school will be 2:1.

In September of 2007, of the 307 students eligible to re-enroll, 296 re-enrolled (not including three students who relocated out of state). Therefore, ninety-six and a half percent (96.5%) of students returned to the school.

Eighty-six percent (86%) of the class of 2008 who were enrolled at Parker for their ninth grade year (2004-2005) graduated this year. An additional two students (3 percent) from this original cohort graduated or are expected to graduate with other Parker classes.

The school received 156 new applications for the available places in seventh grade (approximately 70 spaces) and an additional 65 new applications for upper grades (8-12) for which there were no available places at the time of the lottery. The ratio of new applications to available openings is over 2:1. Including applicants from prior years who remained on the waitlist, the total number of applicants for all grades was 282, meaning the total rate of applicants to available slots is 4:1.

2. The school receives applications from 40 percent of the towns in its region.

This year, the school attracted applications from residents of 41 towns of the seventy towns in our region, representing 59 percent of the towns.

The school is meeting the three goals established to ensure that it consistently attracts, enrolls, and retains students from its region.

3. FAITHFULNESS TO THE CHARTER

A. The tone of the school should explicitly and self-consciously stress values of unanxious expectation, of trust, and of decency (Common Principle #7).

Measures:

1. Through annual parent and student surveys, the school will determine if we are achieving the following goals: Students are held to high standards; teachers support students in reaching high standards; the school fosters a sense of respect and trust among teachers and students; disciplinary issues are resolved fairly; parents are welcomed into the school.

At year's end, parents and students were asked to respond to a detailed, on-line questionnaire about their academic and personal experiences with the school throughout the year. This annual year-end survey was completed by 299 students and 197 parents/families. The surveys used a ranking scale of 1 (low) to 5 (high) in response to questions.

Students were asked if, overall, they are held to high academic standards at school. Eighty percent indicated that this was "usually" or "always" true (4.22 mean score). Ninety-two percent of students said that their teachers "usually" or "always" support them in reaching high standards (4.4 mean score). (Detailed analyses of parent and student responses to each teacher's ability to communicate, evaluate, and teach were completed but are not reported in full in this report. Those results are used as part of the teacher feedback system.) Ninety-two percent of students indicated that students and teachers usually or always treat each other with respect (4.22 mean score), and Ninety-four percent of students (4.55 mean) said that they usually or always felt safe at school.

Parents were asked if their children were held to high standards; 90 percent agreed or strongly agreed (4.46 mean score). When asked if "the school fosters a sense of respect and trust among its students and teachers," 93 percent agreed or strongly agreed (4.65 mean score). Seventy-eight percent of parents indicated that they felt discipline issues were handled fairly (4.19 mean). Eighty-six percent of parents agreed or strongly agreed that they felt welcome in the school (4.54 mean).

2. Ratings by visitors to the school will confirm that the school's visible culture demonstrates a high level of respect, trust, and engagement.

The Theodore R. Sizer Teachers Center hosted 99 visitors in 2007-2008. (The Teachers Center was closed to visitors for five months during the school year, as the Parker School moved into its newly renovated and expanded facility.) The visitors included educators and school leaders and administrators from all over the country, as well as from abroad. All visitors are asked to provide specific feedback on their experience through a written survey that focuses on their perceptions of the usefulness and applicability of their visit, and their observations of the practices and overall culture observed while at the Parker School. Responses to open-ended questions concerning observations of the school's culture reveal an overwhelming sentiment that students and teachers at the Parker School demonstrate a high level of trust, respect, and engagement: "... listening to the students speak was powerful, as they exhibited confidence, presentation skills, and an awareness of their opportunities", and ..." the respectful contact between teacher and student, the awareness of community by students...", and "...that everyone treats

another with respect- the students are deeply respected...” were cited as direct observation of the school’s culture. One visitor remarked, “ ... [at Parker] education is not a stagnant idea; every member of the school community is valued and has a voice.”

B. The Teachers Center will continue to be a regional professional development center for teachers and schools.

Measures:

1. The Teachers Center is one vehicle the school uses to disseminate best practices. The Teachers Center will offer a variety of professional development workshops, partnerships, and related programs, and will continue to attract teachers from this region to these programs.

The Sizer Teachers Center continues to serve as the primary mechanism for outreach and dissemination of the best practices of the Parker School. In addition to the extensive opportunities that exist for educators from outside the school to visit, observe, and work in-session at the school, Parker educators benefit from the opportunity to plan, design, and facilitate personalized professional development sessions for colleagues from other schools, and to interact directly with visitors from around the region and country. In this way, the Teachers Center serves as a laboratory for educators, a place for ideas, innovation, and collaboration to germinate and develop. The center hosted 99 visitors in its “abbreviated” year (due to construction and moving, the center hosted visits only during the months of September, October, November, December, May, and June). Two types of visits were offered this year: Introductory visits and Custom visits.

Introductory visits provide opportunities for visitors to gain a general sense of the Parker School, and a particular view of the Ten Common Principles of the Coalition of Essential Schools in action. The day begins with an hour-long session in which the underpinnings and philosophical framework of the school is articulated, and the Ten Common Principles explored through discussion. Visitors are oriented to the school’s practices and specific vocabulary, as well as the schedule. Visitors then attend classes, have lunch with teachers and students, and often, examine student work, including portfolios. The day ends with a question and answer period, where Parker faculty and students engage in a final debrief of the visitors’ observations, clarify understanding, and facilitate the discussion of possible next steps.

Introductory Visit

<u>September 17, 2007</u> Hiroshima University, Japan (1) Chuo University, Japan (1)	<u>December 14, 2007</u> Central Academy, Dayton, OH (4) Miami Valley School, Dayton, OH (1)
<u>October 15, 2007</u> Tufts University, Boston, MA (11)	<u>December 17, 2007</u> Tony Wagner (1)
<u>November 6, 2007</u> Teachers Trainers College The Netherlands (12)	<u>February 4, 2008</u> Rising Tide Charter School, Plymouth, MA (1)
	<u>March 14, 2008</u> Harvard Graduate Student, Cambridge, MA (1)
<u>December 5, 2007</u> L. Myatt (1)	<u>May 1, 2008</u> Holliston Middle School, Holliston, MA (9)
<u>December 7, 2007</u> The Met School, Providence, RI (1)	<u>June 11, 2008</u> Arlington High School, Arlington, MA (5)

49 Intro visitors in Total

Custom visits are designed for groups of educators that come with a specific question or purpose in mind. A program is designed around their question or objective, and is tailored specifically to meet the needs and goals they have for visiting the school. Though custom visits take many forms and are highly individualized, classroom observations and meetings with teachers and students are essential components of a visit. The custom visits category was broadly interpreted this year to include the possibility for “custom workshops” to take place on site during the course of the visit itself, as exemplified in the visit to Parker by teachers and leaders representing Clover Park and North Kitsap Schools in Seattle, Washington. Customized workshops designed to provide follow-up to visits the previous year were designed and facilitated by Parker staff. In addition, ten members of the Atlanta Charter Middle School visited in order to directly observe Parker’s structures and practices in anticipation of reform measures to be undertaken in the coming year(s).

In all, eleven introductory and nine custom visits were held in 2007-2008, with myriad requests for visits deferred to 2008-2009 as the school was unable to host visits during certain periods of construction and relocation. Survey results from visitors in both categories demonstrate that educators value the experience of “teacher-to-teacher, leader-to leader” professional development, delivered within the context of a school in session. 85% of visitors strongly agreed /agreed with the question, “the activities we did during this visit fulfilled/ accomplished my goals”, and 90% of visitors strongly agreed or agreed “today’s work expanded my thinking on these topics.”

Custom Visits

<u>October 9, 2007</u> Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, South Hadley, MA (7)	<u>December 14, 2007</u> Beaver Country Day School, Chestnut Hill, MA (2)
<u>October 25, 2007</u> Pioneer Valley Performing Arts Charter School, South Hadley, MA (5)	Facilitator: Tassia Thomas
<u>December 4, 2007</u> Humble High School, Humble, TX (3) Facilitator: Deb Merriam	<u>May 14, 2008</u> Vergennes High School, Vergennes, Vermont (7) Facilitator: Debbie Ososky
<u>December 6 & 7, 2007</u> North Kitsap High School, Poulsbo, WA (5) Clover Park High School, Lakewood, WA (4) Facilitator: Ruth Whalen-Crockett	<u>May 20, 2008</u> Chappaqua Central School District (7) Facilitator: Deb Merriam
<u>December 11, 2007</u> Atlanta Middle Public Charter School, Atlanta, GA (9)	<u>June 12, 2008</u> The Morgan School, Clinton, CT (5)
	44 Custom visitors in Total

SCHOOL FINANCIAL STATEMENTS AND INFORMATION
(Unaudited)
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008 (FY '08)

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

Financial Position:

The school completed its 2007-2008 school year with an increase in its net assets of \$114,359, resulting in total net assets of \$2,702,522 at June 30, 2008. Net assets includes restrictions for capital purchases of \$37,473, Special Purposes (not available for school operating use) of \$44,784, Emergency funds of \$100,000, Liquidity Reserve Funds of \$244,141, Revenue Stabilization Funds of \$300,000, Facilities Reserve Fund of \$460,168, and \$1,302,292 in a Building Rental Fund. Four of the net asset categories were created this year by the board to allocate the use of unrestricted net assets. The emergency reserve was set-up for unforeseen extraordinary needs of an emergency nature. A liquidity reserve was created to prevent short-term borrowing needs as the school receives tuition one month in arrears. A revenue stabilization fund was created to ensure that the annual tuition increases do not negatively impact the operations of the school and to allow the school to budget and offer contracts in a timely manner. A facilities reserve fund was set up to reserve for capital repairs, renovations and additions to the school's facilities. The financial position of the school continues to be strong, with no need for borrowings to fund operations.

Results of Operations:

Total revenues of \$4,288,874 were above budget by \$81,275 for FY '08. Tuition revenues and facilities aid of \$3,800,445 in total exceeded budget by \$117,570. Federal and state grant money was under budget by \$2101 due to the allotment of government funds. Private grants and contributions totaled \$132,593. The school also received \$71,909 of unbudgeted revenues for field trips and extracurricular activities, which is offset by unbudgeted extracurricular activities expenses. Interest income is \$24,621 for FY '08, which is favorable to budget by \$2,379 due to changes in the market's available interest rates.

The school budgeted \$4,198,949 in operating expenses for FY '08. Expenditures of \$4,199,137 were very slightly above budget by \$187. Personnel and related costs of \$3,358,275, including wages, benefits, payroll taxes and staff development, were below budget by \$123,597, due to some vacant positions throughout FY '08, some positions being filled by staff that had salaries under the budgeted amount, and lower health insurance rate increases than budgeted. These savings are not expected to be ongoing and were partially offset by \$81,157 in depreciation expenses and \$27,708 in amortization expenses as well as greater than budgeted instructional consulting costs totaling \$35,216, an unfavorable budget variance of \$8,554 for non-educational consulting costs, and some unexpected furniture and equipment needs totaling \$7,304. The costs for the school lunch program were also unfavorable to budget by \$7,454 due to the rapid increase in food prices in the market for the past year.

The FY'08 budget planned for a net operating gain of \$35,650. Due to the favorable variance in operating revenue for the year, the operating gain for FY'08 totaled \$114,359, which was favorable to budget by \$78,709.

Budget Fiscal 2008:

The budget presented for the 2008-2009 school year reflects a planned enrollment of 381 students. The school management and trustees are committed to continuing the present program without significant cutbacks, and have approved an operating budget with expenditures of \$4,788,769, an increase over the FY08 budget of \$589,820 with much of this increase attributed to salaries, rent expenses, and utilities costs. Revenues have been budgeted at \$4,593,787. The school is projecting an operating loss of \$194,982.

Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Statement of Net Assets (Unaudited)
At June 30, 2008

30-Jun-08

Assets

Current Assets:

Cash and cash equivalents	\$1,229,659
Accounts receivable	6,165
Prepaid expenses	7,214
Total current assets	1,243,038

Cash Held for Student Activity Funds

38,470

Noncurrent Assets:

Capital Assets	760,998
Less - accumulated depreciation	547,334
Net capital assets	213,664

Other Non Current Assets 1,302,292

Total assets \$2,797,464

Liabilities and Net Assets

Current Liabilities:

Accounts payable	\$14,149
Accrued expenses	40,022
Deferred revenues	2,301
Total current liabilities	56,472

Due to Student Activity Funds

38,470

Net Assets:

Invested in capital assets	213,664
Restricted for capital purchases	37,473
Restricted for Special Purposes	44,784
Building Rental Asset	1,302,292
Emergency Reserve	100,000
Liquidity Reserve	244,141
Revenue Stabilization Reserve	300,000
Facilities Reserve Fund	460,168
Total net assets	2,702,522
Total liabilities and net assets	\$2,797,464

**Statement of Revenues, Expenditures and Changes in Net Assets
(Unaudited)
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2008**

REVENUES:

State allocation	\$3,800,445
Federal and State Grants	113,399
Private Grants and Contributions	132,593
Program Fees:	190,804
Miscellaneous income	51,633
TOTAL REVENUES	4,288,874

EXPENSES:

Salaries and wages	2,884,796
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	473,479
Recruiting and staff development	49,281
Accreditation	2,445
Assessment	2,788
Books and curriculum material	21,211
Computer hardware and software	12,948
Computer internet access	7,070
Consultant-instructional	35,216
Contract services	26,224
Depreciation	81,157
Amortization	27,708
Dues and subscriptions	16,223
Food-school lunch program	49,454
Furniture and equipment	15,224
Inspections	3,949
Insurance	32,718
Leasehold Improvements	0
Leases-school building	102,834
Leases-fields and sports arena	20,212
Legal & accounting services	17,788
Maintenance-equipment	6,234
Maintenance-facility	20,795
Other	8,301
Printing, copy, and postage	29,258
Sports equipment	5,357
Student activities and field trips	74,346
Student transportation	26,575
Supplies	26,254
Uniforms-athletics	9,773
Utilities	109,517
Vending	0
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,199,137
OPERATING INCOME	89,738

NON OPERATING REVENUES

Interest Income	24,621
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	114,359
NET ASSETS, JUNE 30, 2007	2,588,162
NET ASSETS, JUNE 30, 2008	\$2,702,522

**Francis W. Parker Charter Essential School
Operating Budget
Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 2009**

REVENUES:	<u>Budget</u>
State allocation - Tuition	\$4,119,945
Federal and State Grants	106,800
Private Grants and Contributions	165,000
Program Fees:	127,600
Miscellaneous income	47,442
TOTAL REVENUES	\$4,566,787
EXPENSES:	
Salaries and wages	\$3,110,289
Payroll taxes and fringe benefits	548,214
Recruiting and staff development	64,525
Accreditation	2,500
Assessment	2,700
Books and curriculum material	34,550
Computer hardware and software	16,800
Computer internet access	10,899
Consultant-instructional	13,900
Contract services	30,898
Depreciation	95,000
Amortization	133,000
Dues and subscriptions	18,103
Food-school lunch program	43,550
Furniture and equipment	6,750
Inspections	3,380
Insurance	42,792
Leasehold Improvements	-
Leases-school building	176,000
Leases-fields and sports arena	19,700
Legal & accounting services	18,750
Maintenance-equipment	35,825
Maintenance-facility	22,445
Other	31,700
Printing, copy, and postage	35,750
Sports equipment	6,240
Student activities and field trips	-
Student transportation	22,076
Supplies	29,183
Uniforms-athletics	3,450
Utilities	207,800
Vending	2,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	4,788,769
OPERATING INCOME	-221,982
NON OPERATING REVENUES	
Interest Income	27,000
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	-194,982
NET ASSETS, JUNE 30, 2008	2,702,522
NET ASSETS, JUNE 30, 2009	\$2,507,540

Curriculum Overviews 2007-2008

What are the Causes? What are the Effects?

Arts and Humanities Division 1 Year Overview 2007-2008

What is the relationship between humans and nature? How do nature and humans affect each other?

How do humans relate to each other and respond to differences?

How can mindfulness of our interactions help us begin to seek positive change?

How can we use art to gain a deeper understanding of the human experience?

What is the importance of place?

This year we plan to explore causes and effects of human interactions. The first step in doing this is to practice becoming more aware of that which we may take for granted. To do so, we will begin by building on the summer reading nature journals in order to think about the relationships between humans and nature, which will be the focus of our first unit. In this unit we will use various forms of art to help us explore our relationships (or lack thereof) with nature. We will read poetry about nature in order to ‘see’ interactions with the natural world through another’s eyes. We will study the work of Andy Goldsworthy, an artist who creates sculptures from natural materials, and we will use his inspiration to create our own sculptures. As a division, we will journey beyond Parker to Walden Pond and the DeCordova museum in order to both spend time in nature and to observe how others interact with nature through art. Finally, we will learn about the relationships between human cultures and their environment, looking at how Native Americans and European colonists adapted differently to their surroundings. You will then research your own Indigenous culture, exploring its history and a current or historical controversy. During this unit we will gain an overview of Native American history, focusing on the experiences of several case studies.

In our second unit on Rights and Government we will move into exploring the relationships between humans and humans, focusing on what causes people to have conflict with one another and what allows us to get along. We will read S.E. Hinton’s *The Outsiders* and think about some of the causes of human conflict and what effect such tension can have on individuals. We will learn about different types of

governmental systems and look at the creation of the United States government focusing on the Constitution, considering who was involved in or left out of this process. Additionally we will spend time learning about the Supreme Court and enact role plays of lawyers and judges in actual cases.

In our final unit we will explore the ways people *respond* to tension and injustice, and how to best affect change. We will continue to use art such as poetry and music as a tool to explore resistance and positive change as we look at the African American civil rights movement in the United States. We will read Harper Lee's novel *To Kill a Mockingbird* in order to consider a personal story of one child's experience with injustice. Each student will then research a group that has responded to injustice or inequality in some way.

Throughout the year, we will return to art as an additional tool for understanding various human interactions. Once a week we will use the art of writing to both fine-tune our writing skills and to express ourselves. We will also learn a variety of singing techniques as we take time to engage in learning through music. Additionally, we will continue to build and draw on our poetry reading and writing skills throughout the year as we work to raise our awareness of not only the interactions, causes and effects of other human relationships but also our own.

Understanding American Identity through Conflict and Compromise

Division II AH 2007-2008

Overview:

This year in AH, we will try to uncover America by asking the questions **who are we?** and **how did we become what we are?** We will explore these questions by focusing on three areas of American history in which a crisis, or series of crises, provoked a lasting change in our national character.

First, we will look at the history of **Colonial and Pre-Revolutionary America** in order to identify the different groups of people who made (or were excluded from) the decision to form a new Nation. We will also look at the Constitution in order to understand the ideas behind the United States of America and how the compromise was reached.

Next, we will explore the United States in the 19th century as various economic, social, and political pressures slowly forced the nation into fighting **the Civil War**. We will focus on

the national debate over slavery, looking at the causes of that conflict along with the consequences of the efforts to end it.

In our third unit, students will look at **America in the 1960s**, focusing on the Vietnam War and the way that war inspired some of the most vigorous grassroots political activity in American History. Through examining the viewpoints of American soldiers, politicians, civil rights activists, and college students, we will attempt to understand the way the war and the reaction to the war changed American society.

Our final unit of the year will be more independent, as students will choose reading or writing projects in small groups in order to improve their academic skills.

Assessments and Resources

Unit I: Colonial and Pre-Revolutionary America

Listening: Current Events and Media Literacy

Oral Presentation: American Colonies 1600 - 1700

Reading: *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller

Artistic Expression: *The Crucible* by Arthur Miller (scenes)

Content: American Revolution and Constitutional Convention (*Choices*)

Unit II: Slavery and the Civil War

Reading: Understanding Primary Sources (various speeches, newspaper articles, slave narratives, and short fiction from 19th century America)

Content: Slavery and the Civil War ICCA

Oral Presentation: American Social Movements in the 19th Century

Research: American Social Movements in the 19th Century

Writing: Historical Fiction

Unit III: Vietnam and the Antiwar Movement

Reading: *The Things They Carried* by Tim O'Brien

Content: Vietnam and the Antiwar Movement

Research: 1960s America

Writing: Original Thesis Paper

Artistic Expression: Documentary Photography and Social Change

Unit IV: Literature Circles and Writing Workshop

Reading: TBD

or

Writing: TBD

MST Division 1: What are the Causes? What are the Effects?

Overview for 2007-2008

Teaching Pairs: Anne Anderson and Judy Gibson
Tanya Bouzy and Nancy Griffin
Mit Wanzer and Molly Stuart

Program Overview:

Division 1 MST is a one- to three- year program (2 years is recommended) that integrates math and science. The curriculum is developed upon the foundation provided by the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. The content is dynamic, investigative and adaptive to the inquiries of middle school students. While sensitive to student interest, the curriculum is simultaneously congruent in all three Division 1 MST classrooms.

Students are expected to communicate the results of their investigations in regular culminating pieces of work while also addressing concrete math and science skills. The pedagogical philosophy is student centered; where the student is seen as investigator and is expected to develop habits of mind that enable growth from novice to experienced learner. Division 1 MST minimizes the student to teacher ratio by pairing a science and math teacher as an integrated teaching dyad. This pairing enables teachers to better know their students while enhancing their assessment of student progress. It also demonstrates a commitment to connections in learning. Assessment in Division 1 is standards-based. Student work is evaluated using the Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Scientific Investigation and Mathematical Problem Solving and Communication. The Parker School Habits of Learning are embedded in classroom and assessment practices. Students compile all work in a personal portfolio, which demonstrates their progress over time in Division 1 MST. Upon meeting the standards once in each unit and then consistently for a full semester, students are eligible to embark upon the Gateway process of promotion to Division 2.

Content Overview:

Year A areas of study (2007-2008)

Geology

Space

Physics: Forces & Motion

Vernal Pools

Year B areas of study (2008-2009)

Decomposition

Boats

Weather and Climate Change

Cells

I. Geology: What is the shape of the land?

Students will build models, read topographic maps, and hike a local mountain, Mt. Watatic, during this eight-week unit. In the classroom we will have labs and activities on minerals, topography, and glaciers. While hiking the mountain in October, students will have the opportunity to apply their learning, generate questions, and make detailed observations. With a focus on glaciation we will ask, 'What are the factors that affect mountain shape?' We'll be looking for evidence that supports truthful answers to these questions. Math concepts included in the unit are: number sense and operations, geometry and measurement, spatial visualization, proportional reasoning, linear function concepts including slope as a rate of change, coordinate graphing, understanding and using variables, and formula development.

II. Space: What's out there?

Students will study a variety of astronomy concepts during our second eight-week unit (mid November-January). A major question to be considered is how does the Earth's movement impact how we see things that are not on Earth? Students will be preparing a constellation project involving detailed observations, research, and three-dimensional modeling, which may be part of an evening exhibition of student work. Math concepts included in the unit are: spatial visualization, building a scale model, scientific notation and understanding large numbers, geometry and measurement focused on angles, circles, and spheres, applying formulas, and using mathematical tools such as a ruler, protractor and compass.

III. Forces and Motion: What does motion look like?

Students will study forces and motion using technology such as stop watches, graphing calculators, and CBRs (motion detectors). An emphasis will be placed on graphical representation and analysis of motion, both constant and inconstant. This unit was originally developed by Parker teachers and sponsored by a GTE grant for innovative curricular ideas integrating mathematics, science, and technology. Math concepts include: graphical analysis, slope on a distance over time graph, rates, linear and nonlinear functions, manipulating and solving equations, and understanding and using rational numbers.

IV. Vernal Pools: What depends on wetland ecosystems?

This unit will center on the ecological importance of vernal pools as a breeding ground for certain species. Students will observe nearby pools and identify organisms found in them and they will distinguish between obligate and facultative species. They will understand that these temporary waters provide a unique habitat for a variety of forest and wetland organisms. Math concepts covered in this unit include: probability, and comparing theoretical and experimental results.

Division II MST Course Description 2007-2008: What are the causes? What are the effects?

This course is part of a two-year course in Math, Science, and Technology. The integrated science curriculum emphasizes biology concepts, with some chemistry included. One physical science/engineering unit is included each year. The integrated math curriculum is multi-stranded, with a heavier emphasis on algebra and geometry, in accordance with MA State Frameworks and NCTM standards.

The first table below outlines the topics for this year's curriculum. The second table outlines the topics that were covered last year. Units are organized thematically around an essential question, which serves to connect the math and science concepts. Math and science are integrated when doing so enhances student understanding. In some cases, math and science are heavily integrated, while in other units the "big ideas" create a more subtle integration. At the end of each year, students explore an area of interest and generate their own essential question with an independent project.

2007-2008						
Theme:	Logic	Analysis	Structures	Electricity	Transformations	Projects
Science Concepts	Biological classification	Evolution, inheritance, and natural selection	Anatomy and Physiology	Electricity and its applications	Chemical reactions and bonding, periodic table	Year-End Projects and Gateway Projects
Math Concepts	Inductive and deductive logic	Euclidean Geometry and Geometric Proof	Function families and Quadratics	Solving algebraic equations	Coordinate geometry	

2006-2007 (Previous Year)						
Theme:	Measurement	Environment	Change	Disease	Engineering	Projects
Science Concepts	Scientific conventions for measurement; using equipment	Ecology, Water Quality, Photosynthesis, and Respiration	Solution chemistry Atomic structure	Imminity with a focus on bacteria and viruses DNA and protein synthesis	Simple machines	Year-End Projects and Gateway Projects
Math Concepts	Calculating Volumes, Number sense	Statistics: Description, visual representations of data, making predictions	Linear systems, inequalities, and correlation	Functions (Non-linear relationships, with a focus on exponential functions)	Right triangle trigonometry and similarity	

Classes are heterogeneously grouped and are team-taught by a math teacher and a science teacher in two-hour blocks. This year's teams are:

Curtis Johnson/Jen Brassard	Roser Gine/Meggie Winchell
John Frothingham/Kris Grabarek	Diane Kruse/Lorin Hill

Students are assessed in a variety of ways, including in-class assessments, labs, projects, presentations, and problems of the week or problem sets. Students should expect approximately one hour of homework each night; homework may be a small daily assignment, a weekly problem set, or part of a long-term project for which they need to responsibly budget their time. As in all Division II courses, one focus of the course is to help students grow as autonomous learners in MST, as they strengthen their skills and understanding in math and science.

SPANISH

Spanish 1 Introduction

Year 1 Spanish meets twice a week in order to introduce students to the discipline and rigor of studying Spanish language and Spanish speaking cultures. Students complete weekly activities and in-class assignments. These assignments, named R.O.S.A.'s, concentrate on the Core Language Proficiencies. These are:

- Vocabulary Use
- Number/Gender agreement, Pronunciation/Phonetics,
- Verb Use
- Subject-Verb Agreement,
- Word Order

Students receive informal assessments which are gauged at the eighth grade standard. It is the expectation that students will work towards Approaching the standards on the Core Language Proficiencies when they finish the course.

Division I Year 2 Spanish 2007 - 2008

The year is made up of approximately four 8-week units with a cultural emphasis broken down into one-week subunits, each with a receptive and expressive skill emphasized (reading/listening and writing/speaking)

Unit 1: La Familia

Unit 2: Chile

Unit 3: Comida

Unit 4: Música

- PODERes (Progreso Oficial De Español Rebueno), activities (about every 5 days) that are assessed based on the following core language proficiencies.
 - Pronunciation/phonetics
 - Vocabulary Use
 - Subject/verb agreement
 - Number/gender agreement
 - Verb Use
 - Word Order
 - There are no “overall assessments,” each skill area is assessed separately.
 - There are no revisions.
- Emphasis on using and teaching students habits needed to learn Spanish well:
 - Parker’s habits of learning
 - Strategies related to all four skill areas:
 - Active reading/listening strategies, message comprehension skills
 - Strategies to convey a message clearly (writing and speaking)
 - Homework completion
 - Effective use of class time/**active use of Spanish**
- Emphasis on using Spanish to communicate ideas about self, making a personal connection with the language
- **In order to progress to year three (final year of Division I Spanish), students must show consistent progress on the 6 core language proficiencies over the year and be able to earn an A/M (without revision) by the final project of the year.**
- In the beginning of the year, we hope students to be around the JBA/A level. From there they should slowly progress – to an A/M by the end of the year.

Unit I: The Family (La familia)

Essential Question: How does family affect an individual’s identity?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will:

1. Understand that family has a significant influence on an individual identity and be able to talk about, in Spanish, what characteristics in themselves were influenced by their families.
2. Understand that the Hispanic/Latino community has a strong sense of family, which includes the extended family

Unit II: The City and the Country (La ciudad y el campo)

Essential Question: How is an individual affected by his/her environment?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will understand:

1. Land has a profound influence on people's lifestyles.
2. There is evidence of Colonial and indigenous cultures in distinct places in different places.
3. The city and the country are two very distinct areas in Latin America with two very distinct ways of life.

Unit III: Food (La comida)

Essential Question: How does food define a culture?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will understand:

1. In Latin America, eating and preparing food is a social activity.
2. Food is geographically diverse in the Latin American world (not everyone eats Tacos)

Unit IV: La Música

Essential Question: How can people express themselves through music?

Enduring Understandings:

Students will:

1. There are many different types of music from the Spanish-speaking world.
2. Modern as well as traditional instruments are used in today's music.

Year-End Project: Scrapbook

Essential Question: What are the causes and what are the effects (of what you've learned in Spanish this year)?

Students will create a scrap book documenting key contents and grammatical concepts they have learned this year and include a reflection addressing the essential question.

Spanish 1.3

Unit 1: Las Islas Galápagos

Unit Overview

"The rich, pristine environment of the Galápagos Islands provides a place for countless numbers of species of both flora and fauna which have remained separate from humans for thousands of years. This was where Charles Darwin studied the environment to form his theory of evolution. And they belong to the Spanish-speaking country of Ecuador."

In this first unit, we will look at the geography, history and fauna of the Galapagos to develop an understanding of the environment and humans' environmental impact on it.

Enduring Understandings:

Students will be able to recognize and talk about the history, geography and animals of the Galapagos.

1. Where are the Galapagos Islands and who do they belong to?
2. What events and people played a significant role in the history of the Galápagos Islands, and when were these events?

3. What animals inhabit the Galapagos, and what are some characteristics of these animals?
4. Why should we care today about the Galápagos?

Grammar Outcomes

- Present Tense Review
- Intro to Regular Preterit Verbs

Unit 2: El mundo hispano en donde vivimos

Unit Overview

"More than one in eight people in the United States are of Hispanic origin". U.S Census Bureau, 2002

The influence of Hispanic/Latino people and culture is increasingly visible and influential in the United States. In this unit we will look around North Central Massachusetts to see what we recognize as Hispanic/Latino, where it comes from and how and why it has come to be a part of the local landscape. Students will meet immigrants and compare and contrast their lives and communities with the students' own. Students will see how a neighborhood or other communal affiliation influences people's lives and how immigrants influence an area.

Enduring Understandings

Students will be able to recognize the Hispanic/Latino cultural elements they see in their daily lives and ask questions about that influence in North Central Massachusetts.

1. What influence do we see in our communities that is Hispanic/Latino? *¿Qué influencia hispana/latina vemos en nuestras comunidades?*
2. What are the countries of origin of the Hispanic/Latino population in this area? *¿Cuáles son los países de origen de la población latina en esta área?*
3. Why do the Hispanics/Latinos we know live here? *¿Por qué viven aquí los hispanos que conocemos?*
5. What aspects of their culture do they maintain with them here? *¿Qué aspectos culturales mantienen aquí en la vida?*
6. How is the Hispanic/Latino community(ies) different from my own? *¿Cuales son las diferencias entre mi comunidad y la comunidad Latina?*
7. How have my ideas and concepts about the Hispanic/Latino immigrants and communities changed after learning about them in this unit? *¿Cómo han cambiado mis ideas de la comunidad Latina?*

Grammar outcomes

- Preterit tense: regular and common irregular verbs (estar, ir and tener)
- Adjectives of nationality
- Haber

Unit 3: LAS LEYENDAS DE LOS QUICHES MAYAS

Unit overview

Throughout this unit, students will explore the cultures of the Quiche Mayan people of Guatemala, specifically their religion, and how their legends might reveal more about their cultural beliefs. Students will explore the legend of the quetzal bird, a culturally important bird of the Quiche Maya people. At the end of the unit, students will create their own legend describing the origin of an animal common in their community or in Guatemala.

Enduring Understandings:

1. What might knowing someone's religion tell you about them? *¿Cómo se puede informar la religión de una persona?*
2. How do a group's legends inform us of something about their cultural beliefs? *¿Como nos informan de la cultura unas leyendas de un grupo?*

Grammar outcomes

- Preterite tense: regular and irregular verbs
- Idioms of *Tener*
- Reflexive (daily patterns)

Unit 4. LOS DEPORTES: EL BEÍSBOL Y EL FÚTBOL

Unit overview

In this unit students will study an example of the integration of Hispanics in American society through two different sports: baseball, a sport that has been "exported" out of the United States, and soccer, a sport that has been "imported" into the country. Students will integrate the previous units of the year to identify the influence of Latino/Hispanics in sports and the culture around them.

Enduring Understandings

Students will be able to ask and answer in Spanish the following questions about baseball:

- How are baseball, in general, and baseball teams affected by Latino/Hispanic players in the U.S league?
- Where do Hispanic players come from? How are their countries influenced by baseball? (Baseball as an "immigrant" in Spanish-speaking countries)
- How does baseball, as a sport, influence society, especially considering the presence of Latino/Hispanic players?

Students will be able to ask and answer in Spanish to the following questions about soccer:

- How did soccer come to the United States?
- How has soccer progressed in the past few years?
- Who plays soccer in the United States?
- How has this "immigrant" sport influenced – and how may it continue to influence – American society? (Soccer as an "immigrant" in the US)

Grammar outcomes

- Ir+a
- Future tense

Spanish Division II

Year Overview 2007-2008

What are the causes and what are the effects?

¿Cuáles son las causas y cuáles los efectos?

Unit One: A World of Music – Un mundo de música

Unit Essential Question: How does music reflect the diversity of the Hispanic world? *¿Cómo refleja la música la diversidad del mundo hispano?*

Overview:

This unit will ask students to explore different kinds of music with Hispanic origins and consider the following questions:

What are the different genres of music in Spanish? What cultures are they linked to? How does the music serve as a record of cultural, social, political and individually significant moments, events and movements?

Together and individually, students will listen to several songs representing different genres of music and distinct cultural origins and they will respond to the music and unit questions through a listening log project. They will choose a song and get it stuck in their heads. Then they will share that song with their classmates and present their understanding of its cultural and linguistic content in an oral presentation in Spanish.

Grammatical understandings:

Imperative - commands

Reflexive Pronouns

Unit Two: The War on Drugs – La Guerra contra las drogas

Unit Essential Question: What are the causes and what are the effects of the War on Drugs on people – locally, nationally and internationally? *¿Cuál es la causa y qué efectos tiene la Guerra contra las drogas en la población local, nacional e internacional?*

Overview:

Since the end of the Cold War, the War on Drugs has guided U.S. policy in Latin America. Here in the U.S., we see the War on Drugs being fought in our cities and towns. In all places the War on Drugs dramatically affects a diverse cross-section of community members: the young and old, rich and poor, and rural and urban dwellers. It affects those who use and abuse drugs and their families, those suffering from chronic diseases, law enforcement officials, people seeking economic opportunity under difficult circumstances, and those caught in the crossfire.

In this unit, students will gain an in-depth understanding of the drug war by learning about two specific controversial topics: Medical Marijuana/Drug decriminalization and Plan Colombia, the US aid package to Colombia. In order to learn about these issues, students will read magazine and newspaper articles from contemporary Spanish sources, attend simulated press conferences, and engage in class discussions and independent and group research. In the culminating culture/writing project of this unit, students will be asked to produce a persuasive essay in Spanish which takes a stand on one of these two issues. Other projects will include an oral defense of their persuasive essay, a reading project that asks students to demonstrate their understanding of a news article, and an optional listening assessment.

Grammatical understandings:

The preterit and imperfect

Unit Three: La cultura del Café – The Culture of Coffee

Unit Essential Question: What is behind your cup of coffee? *¿Qué hay detrás de su taza del café?*

Sub-questions:

Where does coffee come from?

¿De dónde es el café?

How do people from different cultures consume coffee?

¿Cómo se consume el café en distintas culturas?

How does this affect coffee growers?

¿Cómo se afecta los que cultivan el café?

Overview:

Over the last decade the way in which the US consumes coffee has changed dramatically. In this unit students will investigate where coffee comes from and how it is consumed in different cultures. Does everyone “run on Dunkin’”? They will explore the effects of consumers’ coffee preferences on the production, prices and trade of coffee.

They will discern the differences between free trade and fair trade coffee, and consider the debate between those who advocate for one or the other.

Students will view video and read informational texts to understand where coffee comes from. They will engage with native speakers to learn about the customs of coffee consumption in several different Spanish-speaking cultures. Students will demonstrate their understanding through a speaking project. In the second half of the unit students will formalize their understanding of the economic impact of the coffee trade. They will formulate a stance on the issue of fair trade and in a written project, articulate their thinking.

Grammatical understandings:

Present perfect

Conditional and Future tenses

Unit Four: El cuento corto – The Short Story

Unit Essential Question: What caused the author to write this and what is its effect on me? *¿Por qué escribió esto el autor y qué entiendo de esto?*

In this unit students will integrate skills practiced throughout the year to make meaning of a short story in Spanish. At the beginning of the unit students will work together to practice active reading strategies and comprehend and analyze a challenging short story. Students will later work independently or in small groups to make meaning of a text of their choosing, and demonstrate their skills through a reading assessment and either a writing or a speaking project.

Grammatical understandings:

Open for review and gaps as necessary.

WELLNESS CURRICULUM OVERVIEW

2007-2008

Wellness is an integrated curriculum combining aspects of both traditional health classes with physical education, initiative games, fitness skills and other mind-body connection skills. The goals of the Wellness program developed by members of the Parker community are: to develop and nurture resilience; to foster and promote healthy decision-making and action; and to enhance personal and social responsibility among all Parker community members. The Wellness program provides an integrated and experiential curriculum for all Parker students that engages, challenges, and supports students across all divisions (grades 7 – 12).

The Division I and II Wellness curriculum for the 2007-2008 school year at the Parker School will consist of three separate health units exploring disease and injury prevention, emotional health and nutrition. This curriculum will include a minimum of one or two health classes weekly as well physical activity and movement classes throughout the rest of the week. While the curriculum is similar for all students each year, the level of autonomy, initiative, and complexity of student work increases as a student advances from Division I to Division II and then onto Division III.

This program is centered on implementing curriculum that helps students to develop specific skills as defined by National Health Education Standards: accessing information, self-management, internal and external influences, interpersonal communication, decision-making and goal setting, and advocacy (Joint Committee on National Health Education Standards, 1995). These constitute the Wellness Criteria for Excellence, which can be found on the Parker website under the Wellness link.

Throughout each unit, selected physical activity and movement classes are conducted in coordination with the health curriculum being presented on a weekly basis. Other physical activity classes will be comprised of a variety of activities ranging from group problem solving initiatives to team handball, capture the flag, cross-country skiing, sledding, and ping pong. More traditional competitive games such as soccer, basketball, softball, ultimate Frisbee, floor hockey and touch football are also offered. Individual challenges through track and field activities, rock-climbing, yoga, tai chi, power walking, low rope elements and climbing wall activities are also integrated into the Wellness program. A major component of our program this year will focus on the development and maintenance of healthy fitness levels for the individual student. We will utilize the Fitnessgram and are working to have students track their own progress towards healthy zones in flexibility, muscular strength and cardiovascular fitness.

Students are assessed using the Wellness Criteria for Excellence in addition to criteria for satisfactory completion of Wellness. Assessments are generally based on in-class work, including group participation, demonstration of learning in class activities, individual exhibitions of health behaviors and a unit project. Students in Division I and II receive narrative progress reports, mid-year and year-end assessments completed by their Wellness teacher as they do in other areas of learning at the school.

Unit I: Nutrition (October-December)

Skill areas addressed: Accessing Information, Decision Making and Goal Setting

Reference texts:

Eat, Drink and Be Healthy by Walter Willett, *Animal, Vegetable, Miracle* by Barbara Kingsolver,, a variety of cookbooks, nutritional guidelines from the USDA (MyPyramid)

Videos: *Clips from Frontline: Diet Wars and Supersize Me* (Division I); *Diet for a New America* (Division II)

Guest Speakers: Division II—Seeds of Solidarity

Assessment for Division I: Using a recipe template, each student will make food to share with the class. They will be encouraged to use recipes from a list of sources, and will need to list nutritional content, ingredients, as well as answer a series of questions about the dish.

Assessment for Division II: Students will complete a three-day food log, and then track how their diet compares to Walter Willett’s healthy food pyramid, and then reflect upon their nutritional choices.

Unit II: Emotional Health CONFLICT RESOLUTION TECHNIQUES (January – March)

Skill areas addressed: Interpersonal Communication and Self Management

This unit will focus on conflict resolution, stress reduction, and acknowledging signs and symptoms of depression. We use a curriculum from Educators for Social Responsibility (ESR) that is developmentally different for middle and high school students, and also teach two classes about the “Signs of Suicide” or SOS. We will focus on how to acknowledge signs and symptoms of depression and suicide in ourselves or others, how to communicate care, and how to get help.

Assessment for both Divisions: A “Behavior Change” project that asks students to pick a behavior related to their emotional health and set realistic goals to change it over the course of three months. For example, a student could decide to stretch every morning before school, to lessen his/her procrastination, or to eat healthier foods.

Unit III: Disease and Injury Prevention FIRST AID and CPR (April-June)

Skill areas addressed: Health Advocacy

Students will gain the knowledge and skills to administer first aid and carry out emergency procedures. They will avoid, recognize and report verbal, physical and emotional abuse situations, and will assess the factors that contribute to intentional and unintentional injury including motor vehicle accidents, fire safety, and weapons safety.

Content:

Why First Aid?, The Emergency Medical System, Basic Life Support, Choking, Rescue Breathing, Bleeding and Wound Care, Shock, Burns, Bone/Joint/Muscle Injuries, Sudden Illness, Poisoning, Heat and Cold Emergencies, Rescuing and Moving Victims

Assessment for both Divisions: Written and Practical Exam

Division III

Math

Advanced Algebra (Jon and Dawn)

Advanced Algebra focuses on functions and their applications. We will develop a more formal mathematical vocabulary for discussing functions and their behaviors, and we will investigate the properties of several function families in depth. This course will help you to refine your algebraic skills so that you can work more efficiently. When taken with Trigonometry, this course can provide the necessary prerequisite for Calculus. Skills Emphasized: Mathematical Problem-Solving and Mathematical Communication.

Calculus (John and Diane)

This course will be an introduction to the fundamental concepts of Differential and Integral Calculus. The course will be investigative and applications oriented, with students strengthening their understanding by exploring and applying the concepts being covered and carefully explaining the ideas in their own words. The opportunity will exist for interested students to explore more theoretical and abstract concepts of Calculus as appropriate. Skills Emphasized: Mathematical Problem Solving, Mathematical Communication.

Statistics (Jon)

What truths are revealed when we look at situations statistically? How can statistics “lie?” This course focuses on how data can be collected, analyzed, and presented to support an argument or draw conclusions. We will begin by reviewing descriptive statistics and learning some basic data-gathering techniques. We will then explore how we can predict the probability of particular events, and, ultimately, how truthfully we can make inferences about the world around us using statistical methods. Students will then have the opportunity to design statistical studies of their own, and implement them outside of class. This course will build on a student’s algebraic skills and will challenge students to develop a healthy skepticism toward all forms statistical analysis in the future. Skills emphasized: Mathematical Problem Solving, Mathematical Communication.

Science

Chemistry (Dawn)

This semester of Chemistry will begin by focusing on understanding the structure of the periodic table as well as how the geometry of a chemical structure affects the chemical properties. Chemical reactivity and types of reactions will be examined through various lab experiences. In addition, acids, bases, solubility and solutions will be analyzed. This class, along with the second semester of Chemistry, will prepare the student for the SAT2 given in June. This class will use multiple lab experiences as a tool to explore chemical

relationships. This class relies heavily on the use of algebra for problem solving. Skills Emphasized: Scientific Investigation and Systems Thinking.

Animal Biology (Meggie)

This is a semester-long course that investigates animal biology. Topics include evolution, classification, comparative anatomy and physiology, and human biology (e.g., organ systems). There will be multiple animal dissections, at least one of which will be in great detail. Skills Emphasized: Scientific Investigation and Systems Thinking.

Physics (John)

This course will be an investigation of the fundamental rules that govern the physical world around us. It will, as much as possible, be a laboratory-based class, with students exploring and gaining an understanding of the laws of physics by seeing them in action. The primary topic will be mechanics. Concepts of electricity and magnetism, sound and light (waves), heat and thermodynamics, etc. will be covered as time and student interest permit. Skills Emphasized: Mathematical Communication, Mathematical Problem Solving, Scientific Investigation and Systems Thinking.

Arts and Humanities/Spanish

Philosophy, Morality & 'The Good Life' (David)

We will explore the philosophical heritage of moral systems and notions of virtue, good, evil and what makes a life worth living. Where do morals come from? Do universal moral values exist? What constitutes a good life? (How should we live?) What is human nature? What motivates human conduct?

From Aristotle and Confucius, to Nietzsche and some very modern philosophers, we will consider & debate what it means to be “good” and to live well, both in the past and in our own time. Core skills and projects will focus on applying moral principles, philosophical methods and personal beliefs to a contemporary & controversial issue in America (the morality of war, abortion, euthanasia, animal rights, the environment, biotechnology, etc) and interpretation of art works that have a moral dimension (film, literature, music...). Skills emphasized: Oral Presentation, Writing and Research.

Science Fiction, Society and Self (Stacy)

In this literature-based course, students will have the opportunity to explore various pieces of science fiction and science fantasy. Be prepared to discuss the role of sci-fi in 21st century American culture. We will explore science fiction and fantasy through literature, film, television, and radio, all the time asking ourselves the question: What would happen if...? Skills Emphasized: Reading, Oral Presentation, and Listening.

The Art of the Essay (Josie)

(This course is also offered in the spring semester.)

Essay writers point out meaning in things that others either couldn't make sense of or would not have noticed. This workshop is designed to allow you to find deep and original topics for your writing; to recognize the options you have as a writer to adjust your writing style; and produce prose that has sound sentence structure, clear tone, and a recognizable, logical organization. The workshop will introduce you to various essay forms as just one way to be aware of the different choices available in the writing process. Time in class will be dedicated for you to develop strategies for effectively evaluating and revising writing. Once introduced to the types of topics and forms that essay writers use, we will focus our efforts on developing essays for real audiences. Skills Emphasized: Writing.

American Craft (March)

(This course is also offered in the spring semester.)

What is the difference between art and craft? Is there one? What makes a craft American? These are some of the ideas we will be discussing over the course of the semester. We will study and create a variety of crafts including but not limited to: tin work, crochet, tole painting, and chair making. Skills emphasized: Artistic Expression, Research.

Creative Drawing (for those who think they can't) (March)

(This course is also offered in the spring semester.)

Drawing is really nothing more than making a mark on a surface. In this class we will be drawing daily not concerning ourselves with a total representational outcome. We will be using a variety of marking tools: pencils, colored pencils, ink, charcoal, crayons, chalk and anything else students can come up with to create an image. Skills emphasized: Artistic Expression, Reading.

Paper as a Medium (March)

(This course is also offered in the spring semester.)

Students often only think of paper as something to create on. In this class we will be using paper as the medium to create art with. We will be using paper as a two-dimensional medium as well as three-dimensional. We will cut, fold, bend, and twist paper, as well as apply images to it. We will be creating paper from recycled materials as well as decorating store bought paper to change its function. Skills emphasized: Artistic Expression.

US Foreign Policy of the 20th Century and Beyond (Clay)

This history-based course starts out with students learning about the roles government and individual citizens play in formulating foreign policy and exploring how media inform our perceptions of the outside world. The course then provides a general overview of the history of 20th century US foreign policy. Students will come away with a broad understanding of how the US became an imperial and global superpower, and why the US experienced

successes and failures in the foreign policy arena. Specific attention will be focused on why and how the US became embroiled in the affairs of Southeast Asia in the 1950's, 60's and 70's. Finally, students will explore America's relationship with the United Nations as we simulate a model UN, considering contemporary and actual problems confronting the Security Council. Skills emphasized: Listening, Reading, and Writing.

Culture Wars: The History of Red and Blue (Clay)

This history-based course starts out with students exploring the extent to which the contemporary American political system is characterized in terms of the battle between conservative "red" America and progressive "blue" America. Students will examine the fundamental beliefs of conservatives and progressives in George Lakoff's *Moral Politics: How Liberals and Conservatives Think*. Students will also contemplate why some periods in American history experienced the hegemony of one political party over another, and why in the last 55 years, no political party has been dominant. Finally, students will use their historical understanding of the American political system to analyze the 2006 Congressional election results and make predictions about which political party, the Republicans or the Democrats, will win the 2008 presidential contest. Skills emphasized: Listening, Reading, and Research (optional Writing).

Banned Books and Censorship in America (Anthony)

Some of the most legendary works in American literature are well known not solely for their story, style, and characters, but also for the enduring controversies surrounding these texts. This course will examine a number of these books both as literary works and also as fuel for the ongoing debate on what American youth should and should not be allowed to read in public schools and libraries. The core texts in this class will be *The Catcher in the Rye* by J.D. Salinger, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain, and *A Streetcar Named Desire* by Tennessee Williams. The course is not solely a literature course; we'll also look at the history and legality of literary censorship in America, case studies and Supreme Court decisions involving attempts by communities to outlaw books in local schools and libraries, the social contexts of when these texts were written and when they were banned, and the many viewpoints connected with this topic. **Note:** While all of these texts are common in high school English courses, they do feature adult themes and controversial material. Skills emphasized: Reading, Writing, and Listening.

Outsiders in America (Josie)

What can we learn about American society by looking at groups and individuals that are outside of it? How do we "fit in" (or not) in America? Who decides who's in and who's out? These will be some of our guiding questions throughout the course of the semester. This class will touch on the fields of sociology, art history, and mass media. We'll look at Outsider Art and its relationship to the art world establishment, exploring artists such as Henry

Darger and the Gee's Bend quilters. Next we'll investigate groups of outsiders (possibly including Shakers, the Salem witches, Hurricane Katrina survivors, gay rights advocates and punks) through documentary film. The semester will conclude with an opportunity to explore more outsider communities or individuals through an independent research assessment. Skills emphasized: Research, Listening, and Artistic Expression.

American Dream (Stacy)

In this course, students will investigate the idea of the American Dream and its evolution throughout our history. How has the American Dream changed over the 20th Century? How does one establish his or her version of the American Dream? The literature which will fuel our discussions and understanding of the American Dream include: *The Great Gatsby*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, and *Death of a Salesman*. Skills Emphasized: Reading, Listening, and Writing.

Division 3 Spanish: La vida latina (Carrie)

En este curso los estudiantes exploraran la experiencia de vivir en Los Estados Unidos por la perspectiva de gente latina. Consideraran como experimentan hispanohablantes cuestiones de lengua, educacion, politica, y economia. Habra varias oportunidades para discutir y aumentar su conocimiento por conversacion con hablantes nativos en y fuera de la escuela. Todas las destrezas se practicarán.

Division 3 Spanish: The Latin Life

In this course students will explore living in the United States through the lenses of Latinos. Students will consider issues of language, education, politics and economics as experienced by Spanish-speakers. Students will have numerous opportunities to discuss and grow their knowledge and experience with native speakers both in and out of school. All skill areas of Spanish will be developed.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence

DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DIVISIONS

Criteria for Excellence remain the same across Division levels. As students move into a higher Division, however, Parker expects:

Their tasks will be more complex.

- **Reading** tasks will represent a higher difficulty level in comprehension (vocabulary, length, content), and will ask students to use more sophisticated methods of analyzing and interpreting texts.
- **Writing** tasks will attempt more sophisticated levels of narrative, analysis, persuasion, and reflection.
- **Oral presentation** will attempt to convey more complex information or persuasive points, using more highly developed rhetorical techniques or presentation aids.
- **Listening** will involve a higher level of comprehension, critical analysis and response.
- **Artistic expression** will involve comprehending, articulating, and executing more complex artistic concepts, forms, and techniques.
- **Spanish language tasks** will involve participating in conversations and reading texts with more advanced content and grammatical structures, and writing to convey more complicated meanings in more varied ways.
- **Research** tasks will involve a wider range of sources and a higher level of critical evaluation of sources.
- **Mathematical problem-solving** will call on more concepts and techniques from different areas of mathematics to solve problems, and will use mathematical concepts to model more real world situations from other fields.
- **Mathematical communication** will call for a wider range of representation styles (terminology, symbolic notation, graphic conventions, etc.), and for their more systematic, clear, and accurate use in presenting and explaining procedures and results.
- **Scientific investigation** will call on more complex sources of data for analyzing and revising explanations and models.
- **Systems thinking and mathematical modeling** will extend beyond *using* computer simulations to *creating* them when analyzing causal loops and behavior over time.
- **Technology use** will call on more electronic data sources and computer applications, and may ask students to create as well as use technological tools.

Their work will involve more autonomy and initiative.

- **Reading** tasks will ask students to generate more of their own questions about texts, and independently to search out deeper and broader connections in interpreting texts.
- **Writing** tasks will involve more choices in purpose, content, organization, and style, at the same time requiring more independent and rigorous self-assessment, review by others, and revision.
- **Oral presentation** will involve more choices in purpose, content, organization, and style, at the same time requiring more independent and rigorous self-assessment, review by others, and revision.
- **Listening** will involve more independent practice of active listening, and less monitoring by teachers.
- **Artistic expression** will involve more choices in purpose, content, organization, and style, at the same time requiring more independent and rigorous self-assessment, review by others, and revision.

- **Spanish language tasks** will involve speaking, listening, reading, and writing in contexts with less artificial support provided.
- **Research** tasks will involve more independence in locating, contacting, and evaluating sources.
- **Mathematical problem-solving** will involve identifying situations that can be solved using the language of mathematics, and proposing which mathematical concepts and techniques might apply to them.
- **Mathematical communication** will ask students to make more choices among representational styles in presenting and explaining procedures and results.
- **Scientific investigation** will ask students to initiate more hypotheses and investigations from their own observations and experiences, and to carry them out in a more independent manner.
- **Systems thinking and mathematical modeling** will extend beyond *using* computer simulations to *creating* them when analyzing causal loops and behavior over time.
- **Technology use** will ask students to seek out and sometimes to create technological tools that can address their needs.

Their awareness of their own and others' work will increase.

- **Reading** tasks will more often refer to other texts to heighten comprehension, interpretation, and reflective skills and strategies.
- **Writing** tasks will call more on the work of established writers as well as peers to suggest and put in context ideas, approaches, and techniques and to evaluate and reflect on students' own work.
- **Oral presentation** will call more on the examples of accomplished speakers as well as peers to suggest and put in context ideas, approaches, and techniques and to evaluate and reflect on students' own work.
- **Listening** will explore various approaches, styles, or strategies that experts in this field have developed or analyzed.
- **Artistic expression** will call more on the examples of accomplished artists as well as peers to suggest and put in context ideas, approaches, and techniques and to evaluate and reflect on students' own work.
- **Spanish language tasks** will involve more recognition of how different cultural contexts affect language and perceptions.
- **Research** will refer to the research of others on the topic in question and put it into a critical context, and will evaluate the student's own research using similar criteria.
- **Mathematical problem-solving** will ask students to relate a particular solution to other approaches tried in other situations or times, and to reflect on their own approach in that context.
- **Mathematical communication** will ask students to identify the different ways in which others might have presented and explained their procedures and results, and to reflect on the reasons for their own choices.
- **Scientific investigation** will ask students to relate a particular explanation or model to other approaches tried in other situations or times, and to reflect on their own approach in that context.
- **Systems thinking and mathematical modeling** will ask students to recognize where systems problems (involving causal loops and behavior over time) appear in the real world, and to identify other methods used to describe them.
- **Technology use** will ask students to explore how technologies evolved and what their effects have been, and to consider or create alternative technologies and their possible effects.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Reading

Comprehension

- You identify the form and genre of a text.
- You use reading strategies that suit the material (highlighting, underlining, taking notes, reading aloud, visualizing).
- You recognize the organizational elements of a text (table of contents, index; acts, scenes, chapters; etc.).
- You understand the sequence of a text (beginning, middle, end; foreshadowing; flashbacks; etc.)
- You infer meanings of words from their context and look them up as needed.
- You can summarize or restate the main ideas or plot of a text.

Interpretation

- You generate questions about the text.
- You identify the author's purpose and point of view.
- You distinguish fact from opinion.
- You analyze the positions taken in a text and the evidence offered in their support.
- You compare and contrast different texts.
- You make connections within and among texts.
- You make connections between the text and your own experience.
- You identify the historical and social context of a text.
- You evaluate writing strategies and elements of the author's craft.
- You take a point of view about the text and support it with evidence.

Process

- You skim or scan a text to choose your reading strategies.
- You identify and seek help with problems you have in reading.
- You use a reading log or journal to explore ideas.
- You discuss what you read with other readers.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Writing

Purpose

- You write for a specific audience.
- You know your point and make it clear.
- Your form suits your purpose.

Content

- You bring your topic down to a manageable size.
- You choose which ideas to develop and which to leave out.
- You support your ideas with enough details and evidence.
- Your evidence is accurate and you give its source when needed.

Organization

- You put your ideas in a logical order or one that moves the piece forward.
- You capture the reader's interest from the beginning.
- You use transitions to connect ideas.
- You bring the piece to an effective close.

Style

- Your tone suits your purpose.
- Your techniques suit your purpose.
- Your voice sounds natural, honest, and direct.
- Your words call up pictures. You show rather than tell.
- You choose clear and precise words.
- You choose words for sound as well as sense.
- You vary the rhythm and pace of your sentences to suit your purpose.
- You omit needless words.

Conventions

- You use correct spelling, capitalization, and punctuation.
- You use correct grammar and sentence structure.
- If you break conventions you do so with a purpose.

Process

- You use pre-writing to explore ideas.
- You use drafts to discover and shape ideas.
- You get feedback from a variety of readers.
- You revise as many times as necessary to address what doesn't work.
- You reflect on your process and your work.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Listening**

Comprehension

- You identify the form of what you hear.
- You listen in a way that suits the material (taking notes, asking questions, engaging in dialogue).
- You recognize the organizational elements of what you hear.
- You infer meaning from context.
- You can summarize or restate the main ideas of what you hear.

Interpretation

- You generate questions about what you hear.
- You identify the speaker's purpose and point of view.
- You distinguish fact from opinion.
- You analyze the positions taken in what you hear and the evidence offered in their support.
- You compare and contrast different things you hear.
- You make connections within and among things you hear.
- You make connections between what you hear and your own experience.
- You identify the historical and social context of what you hear.
- You evaluate the strategies and elements of the speaker's craft.
- You take a point of view about what you hear and support it with evidence.

Process

- You show attentiveness to the speaker through eye contact and body language.
- You listen without interrupting the speaker or talking to others.
- You identify and seek help with problems you have in listening.
- You discuss what you hear with other listeners.
- You take notes when appropriate.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Oral Presentation**

Content

- You communicate a clear message.
- Your information is substantive and accurate.
- You organize your information in a way that moves the presentation forward.
- Any presentation aids (visual, aural, etc.) are substantive, relevant, and used effectively.
- You effectively employ rhetorical strategies (metaphor, imagery, repetition, etc.).
- You answer questions knowledgeably and accurately.

Performance

- You know your audience and engage it in appropriate ways.
- You capture your audience's attention from the beginning.
- You use appropriate body language and gestures.
- You make eye contact with your audience.
- You speak clearly and audibly and pronounce words correctly.
- You speak at an appropriate pace.
- You vary your voice and language for expressive purposes.
- You avoid "filler" words ("um," "uh," "like," "you know").
- You take turns with other speakers when appropriate.
- You adjust to audience reactions.
- You bring your presentation to an effective close.

Process

- You are well prepared for presentation.
- You reflect on your process and your work.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Research

Preparation

- You brainstorm ideas and organize them visually (in lists, outlines, webs, concept maps).
- You narrow and focus your research question(s) to a manageable size.
- You identify what you already know.
- You decide what you still need to know.
- You list key words and concepts.

Search

- You identify potential search engines (library card catalog and databases; Web browsers; experts; community agencies).
- You use search engines and key words to locate a variety of sources.
- You decide which sources are relevant to your question(s).

Information Gathering

- You skim and scan to identify relevant information.
- You take accurate and sufficient notes, paraphrasing or quoting important facts and details.
- You classify, group, and label the information in your notes.
- You assess the nature and reliability of your sources (primary or secondary; fact or opinion; point of view; timeliness).
- You document your sources and compile a bibliography.

Interpretation

- You connect new information with what you know already.
- You recognize logical errors and omissions, cause and effect, and points of agreement and disagreement.
- You use the information you gathered to answer your research question(s).

Process

- You plan and manage your time effectively.
- You ask for help at appropriate points.
- You revise your question(s) as your research progresses.
- You reflect on your process and your work.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Artistic Expression**

Preparation

- You develop your own message. (Note: The message could be the medium.)
- You use an art form (visual art, music, dance/movement, drama, writing, other) that communicates your message.
- You research your message and art form and apply it to your process.
- You gather the materials you need.
- You plan your process.

Presentation

- Your artwork has an impact on its audience.
- You use the techniques of your art form effectively.
- You can answer questions about your artwork and process.

Process

- You plan and manage your time effectively.
- Your plan is open to inspiration and suggestion.
- You complete your plan.
- You get feedback from others.
- You revise as necessary.
- You reflect on your artwork, process, and presentation.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Scientific Investigation

Framing the Question

- You understand or come up with a question and/or hypothesis to investigate.
- You collect information and ideas about your question.
- You identify the variables or special factors that may affect your investigation.

Approaching the Investigation

Laboratory Investigation:

- You make a plan for testing the hypothesis or question
- You identify and use appropriate scientific equipment.
- You make and record physical observations.

Scientific Research:

- You make a plan for investigating the question or hypothesis.
- You identify, use, and cite appropriate scientific references.
- You gather information that addresses the question or hypothesis.

Analyzing What You Find

- You consider multiple explanations for what you observe or discover.
- You use evidence to draw or support a logical conclusion.
- You identify possible sources of error and bias in the investigation or research.
- You verify the results of the investigation or find corroborating evidence for your research.
- You revise your explanation if necessary.

Synthesizing What You Find

- You answer your question and/or draw conclusions about the validity of your hypothesis.
- You connect your ideas to other ideas you know about, or to a "real world" use.
- You use your data or research to respond to questions or comments from others.

Communicating What You Find

- You explain your ideas and procedures or research to others in an understandable form.
- You use correct mathematical and scientific vocabulary, equations, or notations to explain your ideas.
- You use graphs, tables, charts, models, diagrams, or drawings to represent your findings.
- You use a formal scientific tone and adhere to appropriate conventions.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Mathematical Problem-Solving**

Problem-Solving

- You understand the problem.
- You identified special factors that influence your approach before you start.
- Your approach is efficient or sophisticated.
- You clearly explain the reasons for your decisions along the way.
- You solve the problem and make a general rule about the solution.
- You extend what you find to a more complicated situation.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Mathematical Communication**

Communication

- You use appropriate mathematical language to communicate your solution.
- You use graphs, tables, charts, and/or drawings to communicate your solution.
- Your work is well organized and detailed.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Systems Thinking**

Framing the Question

- You identify a complex question you need to explore.
- You break down the question into factors that might affect each other over time.
- You identify how these factors serve as parts of a feedback loop.
- You focus your question by limiting the factors you will include.

Using the Model

- You say what you think about the relationships among these factors.
- You obtain the information you need about each factor to run a mathematical model of the feedback loop.
- You make a prediction or hypothesis about what will happen if one factor changes.
- You simulate and observe that change by running a mathematical model on the computer.
- You make a graph of what you have observed.
- You check your model against your prediction and against actual data.
- You use what you have observed to ask new questions, make new predictions, and test those predictions by running more simulations or by changing the model.

Interpreting the Model

- You use the model to explain how a complex system works.
- You use the model to draw a conclusion or make a decision.
- You can use a model of one system as a way of understanding another system.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Technology***

You use technology for problem solving and exploration.

- You recognize when the use of technology is appropriate.
- You evaluate which technology will best serve your purpose.
- Your use of technology is efficient or sophisticated.
- You clearly explain the reasons for your decisions along the way.
- You find, create, modify or adapt technologies to suit a purpose.

* Technology includes, but is not limited to, Information Technology (data collection, processing and analysis tools).

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in
Wellness

SELF-MANAGEMENT

- You identify responsible health behaviors.
- You identify your personal health needs.
- You compare your behaviors that are safe to those that are risky or harmful.
- You demonstrate strategies to improve or maintain your personal health.
- You develop injury prevention and management strategies for your personal health.
- You demonstrate ways to avoid and reduce threatening situations.
- You apply skills to manage stress.

INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION

- You demonstrate effective verbal and non-verbal communication skills to enhance health.
- You demonstrate healthy ways to express needs, wants and feelings.
- You demonstrate ways to communicate care, consideration, and respect of self and others.
- You demonstrate communication skills to build and maintain healthy relationships.
- You demonstrate refusal, negotiation, and collaboration skills to manage conflict in healthy ways.

ACCESSING INFORMATION

- You evaluate the validity of health information, products and services.
- You demonstrate the ability to utilize resources from home, school, and community that provide valid health information.
- You analyze how media influences the selection of health information and products.
- You demonstrate the ability to access school and community health services for self and others.

DECISION-MAKING and GOAL SETTING

- You demonstrate the ability to utilize various strategies when making decisions related to health needs.
- You analyze how health-related decisions are influenced by individuals, family and community values.
- You predict how decisions regarding health behaviors have consequences for self and others.
- You implement strategies and skills needed to attain personal health goals.
- You evaluate progress toward achieving personal health goals.

HEALTH ADVOCACY

- You evaluate the effectiveness of communication methods for accurately expressing health information and ideas.

- You express information and opinions about health issues.
- You utilize strategies to overcome barriers when communicating information, ideas, feelings, and opinions about health issues.
- You demonstrate the ability to influence and support others in making positive health choices.
- You demonstrate the ability to work cooperatively when advocating for healthy communities.
- You demonstrate the ability to adapt health messages and communication techniques to your audience.

INTERNAL and EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

- You describe the influence of cultural beliefs on health behaviors and the use of health services.
- You analyze how messages from media and other sources influence health behaviors.
- You analyze the influence of technology on personal and family health.
- You analyze how information from your peers and your community influences health.

PHYSICAL FITNESS and MOVEMENT

- You participate regularly in physical activity and movement.
- You achieve and maintain a personal health-enhancing level of physical fitness.
- You exhibit responsible personal and social behavior that respects self and others in physical activity settings.
- You demonstrate competency in motor skills and movement patterns needed to perform a variety of physical activities to maintain your personal health.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in Spanish

SPEAKING -- *HABLAR*

Content: You communicate about a wide variety of topics and express your opinions.

Pronunciation: You imitate native pronunciation and intonation.

Fluency: You express your thoughts without pausing excessively to think.

Grammar: You follow the basic grammatical patterns appropriate for communicating your message.

Spontaneity: You find ways to say what you mean, even if you don't know the exact vocabulary.

Process: You practice speaking, show awareness of your mistakes, and reflect on your progress.

WRITING -- *ESCRIBIR*

Content: You can communicate about a wide variety of topics.

Grammar: You follow the basic grammatical patterns appropriate for communicating your message.

Style: Your writing style suits your purpose and communicates what you mean.

Process: You practice writing and follow a disciplined writing process.

READING -- *LEER*

Comprehension: You can comprehend and restate a variety of authentic texts.

Analysis: You analyze messages that you read.

Process: You practice reading and follow disciplined reading strategies.

LISTENING -- *ESCUCHAR*

Comprehension: You can comprehend and restate a variety of authentic texts.

Analysis: You analyze messages that you hear.

Process: You practice actively listening and follow a disciplined listening process.

CULTURE -- *CULTURA*

Knowledge: You accurately identify key characteristics of the country or group you are studying.

Reflection: You make meaningful comparisons, identify how your own background shapes your perceptions, and ask questions.

Application and Participation: You act with sensitivity to the norms of the cultural setting around you.

Parker School Criteria for Excellence in **Habits of Learning**

- **Inquiry**
In both school work and daily life, you show intellectual curiosity and wonder about the world. You ask thoughtful questions and seek out their answers.
- **Expression**
In both school work and daily life, you communicate honestly what you know or want to know, and what you believe or feel.
- **Critical thinking**
In both school work and daily life, you analyze, synthesize, and draw conclusions from information. You generate solutions to problems using both creative and rational thought. You keep an open mind and appreciate different points of view. You seek out excellence.
- **Collaboration**
In both school work and daily life, you contribute to the overall effort of a group. You work well with diverse individuals and in a variety of situations, using effective communication skills (consulting, listening, and speaking).
- **Organization**
In both school work and daily life, you sift through ideas and data, arranging them wisely and making sense of them. You come to school prepared with what you will need. You set reasonable goals, then plan and manage your time so as to meet them. You persevere in the face of obstacles.
- **Attentiveness**
In both school work and daily life, you focus on the task at hand, observing and taking in the information you need to do it well.
- **Involvement**
Both in school and in the larger community, you take the initiative to participate in the process of learning. You contribute your questions, ideas, and action in group discussions, activities, and projects.
- **Reflection**
In both school work and daily life, you review and think about your actions and the work you produce, with the purpose of learning more.