

Renewal Inspection Report

SOUTH SHORE
CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOL
NORWELL, MA

October 20-23, 2009

Class Measures
Woburn, MA



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Introduction

A. The Renewal Inspection Process and Site Visit Report

The charter renewal application process begins with the charter school's submission to the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education (ESE) of a completed Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter. After the Charter School Office (CSO) has reviewed the application and determined that it is clear and complete, the school is notified of the application's acceptance. The ESE contracts with an independent organization to conduct a detailed review of the school's performance. The renewal inspection organization assigns a team of specialists to conduct a renewal inspection site visit and prepare a renewal inspection report summarizing the team's findings regarding the school's performance relative to its Accountability Plan and the ESE's *Common School Performance Criteria*. The inspection is conducted following the ESE's *Massachusetts Charter School Renewal Inspection Protocol*, collecting and examining evidence relating to three areas of inquiry:

1. The school's faithfulness to the terms of its charter,
2. The success of the school's academic program, and
3. The viability of the school as an organization.

After the renewal inspection site visit, the team prepares a draft of the renewal inspection report and submits it to the CSO and the school for review. The renewal inspection report does not make any recommendations regarding renewal, nor does the report make any recommendations to the school regarding its operations. After incorporating any factual corrections, the team submits the final report to the CSO. This report is the result of one such inspection.

B. Overview of this Report

This renewal inspection report contains the following information:

- Professional biographies of the renewal inspection team members;
- A report setting that provides contextual information regarding the school;
- The methodology employed by the renewal inspection team in conducting the renewal inspection; and
- The renewal inspection team's findings and supporting evidence concerning the school's performance relative to its Accountability Plan objectives and measures and other performance topics, as discussed in the *Protocol*.
- Appendix A of this report contains the detailed schedule of the renewal inspection site visit.

Renewal Inspection Team

Helen Apostolides is an independent education consultant. She was a school district examiner for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability (EQA) and participated in numerous school district reviews, underperforming school reviews and charter school renewal inspections. Ms. Apostolides has over 34 years of experience as a teacher, mentor and administrator in public education. Before she retired in 2003, she was an elementary school principal for 11 years in Peabody, Massachusetts. She instituted the Skills for Life program at her school, which won national recognition. In addition, her school was the first to collaborate with the Lesley University Literacy Collaborative, restructuring the school's reading program to the Collaborative's standards. She also helped facilitate the development of full-day kindergarten throughout the district. She was an assistant principal for 14 years and a classroom teacher in numerous grade levels. She has a Master of Education in Elementary Education from Boston State College and a Master of Teaching in History on the secondary level from Salem State College. She received the Pride of Peabody award in 2003 and was a semi-finalist in Massachusetts in NASA's Teacher in Space Program.

Dr. George Gearhart has worked in education for over forty years. He has a doctorate in mathematics education from Harvard University, and has taught mathematics in all grades from kindergarten through college in schools in Ohio, Alaska, Ghana, Oregon, and Massachusetts. He has been a teacher and administrator in Massachusetts since 1969, including 27 years in Marblehead as program administrator for mathematics, high school principal, and assistant superintendent. His duties have included teaching mathematics at all levels, developing and implementing mathematics curriculum, supervising teachers and other school personnel, staff development, school business administration, facilities design and management, and district leadership. Since 2005 he has been a consultant in K-12 education and an examiner for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability for whom he inspected 15 school districts and 95 schools.

Joanne Grenier has been a middle school teacher, secondary level administrator, sabbatical content specialist at the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, and an examiner for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability. In addition to completing twenty-three EQA examinations, she participated on many panel reviews of underperforming schools, compass schools and fact findings for the DESE.

Jeanne Simons, *renewal inspection team leader*, is the director of educational development for Class Measures. She worked previously as a high school mathematics teacher and in mathematics reform in urban school districts as a targeted mathematics specialist with the Massachusetts Department of Education. She is a content and pedagogical expert in mathematics. She has experience in the development of coaching programs, effective differentiation, assessment and the formative usage of data, and in developing and providing professional development for teachers and leaders across a variety of reform topics. In addition, she has been involved in the development of a variety of technology-based educational initiatives, most recently providing educational support in the development of one of the first online teacher licensure programs in the Middle East. She holds a Bachelor of Science Degree from the California Institute of Technology and a Masters of Education in Mind, Brain and Education from Harvard.

F. Daniel Ahern, Jr. and **Pamela Bloomfield**, principals of Clarus Group, provided technical assistance to Class Measures on specific issues related to the school governance and finance. Clarus Group also provided quality assurance and editorial advice regarding drafts of this report.

Setting

The South Shore Charter Public School (SSCPS) is a Commonwealth charter school located in Norwell. The school's mission statement is as follows:

South Shore Charter Public School inspires students to achieve their potential in academics, career, and life. This is accomplished with an innovative curriculum that addresses the learning styles of the individual student, complemented by a real-life experiential learning program, within a community that encourages service, leadership, and respect.

The original SSCPS charter, which was granted in 1995, allowed SSCPS to enroll a maximum of 150 students initially in grades K through 2 and 6 through 12 with expansion to 400 students by September 1996. The initial student body would consist of 108 students in grades 6 through 12 and 42 students in grades K through 2. Approval was given for a charter amendment to increase maximum enrollment in November 2005 to 540 students. SSCPS currently serves 524 students in grades K through 12 as of October 1, 2009.

SSCPS enrollment data for October 1, 2009 year show that 23 percent of enrolled students are African American, two percent are Hispanic, three percent are Asian, 69 percent are White, and 5 percent are multi-race, non Hispanic. In addition, 13 percent are low income, 14 percent receive special education services, and no enrolled students are classified as Limited English Proficient (LEP). SSCPS enrollment data for the 2009-2010 school year show the following enrollments by grade:

SSCPS Enrollment by Grade 2009-2010	
Grade	Enrollment
K	44
1	43
2	48
3	51
4	41
5	40
6	43
7	41
8	43
9	40
10	33
11	32
12	25
Total	524
<i>Data Source: SSCPS (October 1, 2009)</i>	

SSCPS is governed by a 15-member board of trustees; the number of board members permitted by the board's bylaws is no fewer than 12 and no more than 18. The school reports that the board has executive, finance, facilities, personnel, governance, and development committees. The

board has one secondary student, the head of the parents association, and two teachers in place as active board members. All of these members are elected by their peers.

From 2005 through June 2007, there were no changes in the leadership of the school. In June 2007, the executive director resigned to accept another position, and an interim director was hired who has remained in the position to date. She will, however, be ending her term at the end of this year, and plans for a search are in place. One focus for the new director will be prior experience in development work. In February 2008, the board of trustees approved the interim executive director's recommendation to reorganize the school leadership from two K through 12 building administrators to a grade K through 6 principal and a grade 7 through 12 principal. In April 2008, after an unsuccessful search for a permanent executive director, the board of trustees voted to apply for a waiver for a second year for the school's interim executive director. The grades K through 6 principal has been at the school for 15 years. The grades 7 through 12 principal recently announced his intention to resign, for personal reasons, at the end of 2009 after approximately a year at the school. An interim principal has been selected from the teaching staff and is currently enrolled in a principal training program.

The school is broken into "levels," each consisting of two to four grades. The levels are identified as follows: level I, grades K through 2; level II, grades 3 and 4; level III, grades 5 and 6; level IV, grades 7 and 8; and the high school. Each level has associated exit requirements which students must meet to move to the next level. Exit requirements are described in more detail later in this report.

The current SSCPS Accountability Plan was approved by the CSO in July 2005. The school's performance relative to the objectives and measures in this approved plan are discussed in the "Findings" section of this report.

Renewal Inspection Methodology

The five-day renewal inspection site visit was conducted at SSPCS during the period from October 19 to 23, 2009. The renewal inspection team (“the team”) conducted interviews with the interim executive director; the K through grade 6 principal, the 7 through 12 principal; the business manager; and the director of the project program for grades K through 6 and the director of the workshop program for grades 7 through 12.

In addition, the team conducted the following focus groups of school community representatives:

- A board of trustees focus group consisting of seven of the 15 current members, including the chair, development chair, governance chair, and a student member. Experience on the board ranged from less than one year to 11 years.
- The administration focus group consisting of the interim executive director, who had been at the school for three years; the K through 6 principal, who had been at the school for 15 years; the grade 7 through 12 principal, who had been at the school for one year; and the business manager, who had been at the school for more than nine years.
- A teacher focus group consisting of 12 teachers representing the following grades, subjects, and specialty areas: three generalist teachers for grades K through 4 (teachers teach multiple grades), a K through 6 Spanish teacher, two grades 5 and 6 subject area teachers who each taught several different subjects, the grades 5 through 12 visual arts teacher, the grades 7 and 8 history coordinator and science teacher, the high school social studies teacher/dean of students, the high school English teacher, and a grades K through 2 learning services teacher. Their teaching experience ranged from four years to more than 30 years, and their time at the school ranged from eight months to 15 years.
- A student group consisting of ten students representing grades 6 through 12 who had been at the school between one and eight years,
- A parent focus group consisting of 11 parents; eight of the parents had more than one child at the school. The parents represented a total of 24 students enrolled at the school. The grade level of the students covered all grades from K through 12 with all grades except grades 1 and 10 represented at least once. Four parents represented students with individualized educational programs, and one parent represented a student receiving Section 504 services.
- Projects and workshops focus group consisting of students in grades 3 through 12, the K-6 project and 7-12 workshop coordinators, one student from Level II, two students from Level III, and two students each from Level IV and from the high school).

The team conducted 33 classroom observations in grades K through 12. Many classrooms observed had students from multiple grade levels in them. Two observations were full class sessions and the other 31 observations ranged from 20 to 30 minutes in length. Both mathematics and English language arts (ELA) lessons were observed for each of the grades K through 8, with

the following exceptions: ELA was not observed in grades 5 and 8, and mathematics was not observed in grade 6. A grade 3 Spanish class and a grade 5 science lesson were also observed. Every teacher in the high school was observed. A total of 10 ELA lessons, 10 mathematics lessons, three science lessons, two Spanish lessons, and two social studies lessons were observed. Six projects or workshop lessons were observed. Team members observed various parts of lessons with a sampling being taken from the beginning, middle, and ends of lessons. Team members kept running records of their observations using the CSO classroom observation evidence worksheet.

The documents and data reviewed by the team before, during, and after the renewal inspection site visit included the following:

- SSCPS Accountability Plan
- SSCPS Application for Renewal
- SSCPS annual reports
- CSO site visit reports
- Curriculum documentation
- Lesson plans
- Assessment data
- Student progress reports
- Student enrollment, waitlist, retention, and attrition data
- Professional development calendar and binder
- Current organization chart and staffing list
- Staff turnover data
- School handbooks
- Board of trustees' minutes of meetings held between May 27, 2007 and May 21, 2009.
- Independent auditor's reports for the fiscal years 2009, 2008, and 2007 and the associated management letters for fiscal year 2008 and 2009
- Performance evaluation forms and completed evaluations for teachers, interim executive director, and principals
- Classroom walkthrough feedback sheets
- Parent surveys and school analysis of surveys
- Personal education plan project forms

The Appendix to this report contains a detailed schedule of the renewal inspection site visit. This renewal inspection has been conducted pursuant to the Massachusetts ESE *Charter School Renewal Inspection Protocol*.

Findings

This section presents the renewal inspection team's findings regarding the school's performance relative to the three areas of charter school accountability: faithfulness to charter, academic program success, and organizational viability.

A. Faithfulness to Charter

Progress Toward Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

1. SSCPS has met all measures of faithfulness to charter in the school's Accountability Plan with the exception of one measure that relates to the TerraNova assessment, which is no longer administered.

The SSCPS Accountability Plan contains three objectives and 17 measures related to the school's faithfulness to its charter. The Accountability Plan contains four columns of information regarding each measure; in the following discussion, some measures are summarized or paraphrased.

Objective 1: SSCPS will remain faithful to our charter in providing a balanced academic and project-based learning environment.

The school's performance relative to each of the twelve measures pertaining to this objective is discussed below.

Measure 1: K-12 correlation to revised Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

SSCPS has met this measure. The team found that the school's curricular documents were complete and aligned to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks (MCF). The school has taken each standard, broken it into its components, and aligned the individual pieces to the curriculum, filling identified gaps with supplementary material. Further discussion of the curricular alignment is provided in the "Academic Program Success" section of this report.

Measure 2: Students will have a personal education plan.

SSCPS has met this measure. The team reviewed students' personal education plans (PEPs). The executive director reported that all students develop PEPs in a process that involves their advisors and input from their parents.

Measure 3: All students will have access to quality yearlong projects in which students learn academic and social skills

SSCPS has met this measure. The executive director and the team's review of school documents such as the school schedule confirmed that all students are involved in projects or workshops. The length of time spent in projects and workshops varies with age and ranges from two to four hours a week. Team members found in classroom observations that the content of these classes was innovative, aligned to concepts in the MCF, and promoted student teamwork.

Measure 4: Faculty will engage in Professional Development that directly enhances student learning or interest.

SSCPS has met this measure. Documents showing professional development provided at the school for the 2008-2009 school year reflect a commitment of professional development time in certain target areas, including three full day trainings and two trainings on early release days, to the Writing Across the Curriculum program. In addition to this program, professional development was also made available in executive function skills, data warehouse, and Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), best practices in mathematics, the McDougall Littell mathematics program, lesson design, Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS), Edline, and GradeQuick. All of these trainings have direct application to improving student learning.

Measure 5: SSCPS will provide an educational program that meets all applicable statutory and regulatory requirements.

SSCPS has met this measure. As identified in the school's Application for Renewal, the school has addressed changes identified and required through coordinated program reviews in the 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 school years, as well as those required by the 2006-2007 Corrective Action Plan and the most recent mid-cycle review.

Measure 6: SSCPS will meet school wide performance goals on MCAS as determined by MA DOE.

SSCPS met this measure in 2009: for the first time during the current charter period, SSCPS has made AYP in both the aggregate and for all subgroups.

Measure 7: SSCPS will maintain a NCE score of no less than the 50% on Terra Nova scores in reading, language arts and math for a combined group of all students (Grades 1-12).

This measure is no longer applicable since the school has discontinued the use of the TerraNova assessment. It was replaced by the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE), and the Group Reading and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) assessments in the 2008-2009 school year.

Measure 8: Student access to technology will support student learning.

- 75% of parents surveyed feel technology supported student achievement

SSCPS has met this portion of the measure for all years of the current charter period. A parent survey administered by the school showed that more than 75 percent of parents agreed that student access to technology supported student learning. The survey results for each year were as follows: 2005-2006, 95 percent; 2006-2007, 80 percent; 2007-2008, 91 percent; and 2008-2009, 87 percent. Sixty percent of parents/guardians (208) returned these surveys.

- Faculty will be provided with ongoing technology training

SSCPS has met this portion of this measure. In the 2008-2009 school year, teachers received training in data warehouse, Edline, and Grade Quick.

Measure 9: SSCPS will maintain a student/teacher ratio of no more than 18: 1 (all students/all teaching and academic support staff).

SSCPS has met this measure for all years of the current charter period, during which the student to teacher ratio has ranged from 9:1 to 12:1. The most recent ratio for the 2008-2009 school year is 11:1.

Measure 10: Teachers will use various modalities.

SSCPS has met this measure. In classroom observations, the team observed teachers using a variety of modalities to include whole group, individualized, seminar type discussions and small group instruction. In addition, students were observed to be engaged in lessons using visual, auditory and kinesthetic modalities. These lessons included manipulatives and games such as a Spanish version of "Simon says."

Measure 11: SSCPS students on Levels II through VI will have access to a diverse choice of projects.

SSCPS has met this measure. A partial listing of projects and workshops available to students at these levels include fine arts; political action and social awareness; music; writing and publication; theater; writers and poetry slam; conservation; the literary magazine; Shakespeare; a healthy you; and students, sailing, and the sea.

Measure 12: SSCPS will publish community events in the SSCPS Update both on paper and on the SSCPS website, as well as on school bulletin boards.

SSCPS has met this measure. The team reviewed both paper and online versions of the Update. It was found to contain substantial information on both academic topics such as assessments as well as community activities such as picture day, committee meetings to organize events such as golf tournaments, and information on book fairs. The Update was observed to be posted at the school.

Objective 2: SSCPS will be faithful to its charter by promoting a mutually respectful culture and a responsive family/school partnership.

The school's performance relative to each of the three measures pertaining to this objective is discussed below.

Measure 1: SSCPS will promote a mutually respectful culture within all facets of the school community through the use of a Social Competency Curriculum, Code of Conduct, and Student/Parent Expectation Form.

SSCPS has met this measure. The team reviewed the school's student handbook and found that it contained a student handbook agreement form that parents and students were required to sign,

agreeing to the contents of the student handbook. It also contained a highly detailed code of conduct with infractions and their consequences broken down by grade level. The social competency curriculum is embedded in the life skills program curriculum.

Measure 2: SSCPS will promote a partnership in which the school and the families each have responsibilities for the growth and progress of the students through goal setting meetings, parent-teacher conferences, school council, narrative progress reports, weekly update, encouragement of volunteerism, and Parent Association meetings.

SSCPS has met this measure. Families, students and the school partner widely in many areas at the school in order to promote the growth of the students. Parents are involved in the development of the PEP along with the student and advisors, assisting students in the development of personal goals for the year at annual goal setting meetings. The team confirmed the practice of holding parent-teacher conferences in interviews with administrators and in the student handbook. The conferences take place following the issuance of report cards in December and additionally for high school students following interim grade reports. Progress reports contain a substantial narrative component that provides detailed information on the student's progress. The school council meets monthly and is composed of parents, faculty, and students. It addressed policy issues at the school such as the development of the school improvement plan and code of conduct. The weekly Update, the school's weekly newsletter, was reviewed by the team; the Update was available both in hard copy and online on the school website. Parents in interviews reported that they were actively encouraged to volunteer, both on committees and in a variety of other activities such as office support and assisting in classrooms. The parent association is active and maintains an active subsection on the school website; the association is the vehicle through which parents are elected to the school council.

Measure 3: All students/parents will understand the standards expected for promotion, and 100% of students/parents will be provided with detailed exit standards that set clear rigorous and minimum academic requirements.

SSCPS has met this measure. Exit standards are detailed in the student handbook, and parents and students must review the handbook and sign a document indicating that they have reviewed the document. In addition, teachers reported that exit standards are made clear to parents and students during the goal- setting process discussed above.

Objective 3: SSCPS will be faithful to its charter and share the strengths of our model with schools and educators throughout the Commonwealth.

The school's performance relative to each of the two measures pertaining to this objective is discussed below.

Measure 1: SSCPS will disseminate its model by providing information about its programs to the community and other schools through presentations, publications, media, visitors and the website.

SSCPS has met this measure. According to the interim executive director, there have been several dissemination efforts. The school hosted meetings with central office administrators from Holbrook, Randolph, Rockland, and Weymouth in 2007-2008 to share strategies to improve student performance. In addition, SSCPS has partnered with the Holbrook Public Schools, after receiving a grant, to partner and disseminate its best practices in the Core Knowledge reading program. The school has also been active with the South Shore Collaborative and ran a very successful mathematics camp in partnership with Holbrook and Randolph, designed to improve teaching quality while simultaneously provide instruction to students.

Measure 2: SSCPS will work with district schools to improve education for all students by cooperating on grants and joint programs.

SSCPS has met this measure. As detailed in the measure above, the school partnered with Holbrook on two grants in the areas of mathematics and reading.

Other Performance Topics

2. SSCPS is in the process of revising its mission statement. The school has operated in a manner consistent with its mission.

The school's mission statement is as follows:

“South Shore Charter Public School inspires students to achieve their potential in academics, career, and life. This is accomplished with an innovative curriculum that addresses the learning styles of the individual student, complemented by a real-life experiential learning program, within a community that encourages service, leadership, and respect.”

According to teachers, board members, parents and leaders interviewed in the focus groups, the school is in the process of revising its mission statement to a much shorter and more memorable version. They stated that they wanted the mission statement to be more useful for all school stakeholders and that the above version was difficult to recite and, although the stakeholders understood its intention and used it to guide their work, they could not state it from memory. The process of revising the mission statement has included stakeholders from a number of groups including parents, teachers, administrators and board members in meetings to design a simple mission statement that provides clear guidance for the school. The new mission statement has been agreed upon and at the time of the review members of focus groups were pleased they could recite it from memory. Parents, members of the board, administrators, and staff were pleased with the new statement, which is as follows: “Inspiring every student to excel in academics, service, and life.”

SSCPS has an academic and service focus that is unique. The school's project/workshop program engages each student in two to four hours of this program twice per week. Younger children have more guidance in this program, while older students pursue work that is more self-directed. Programs for younger students include such programs as a student store, the redesign of Hingham harbor, which is being dredged and redeveloped, and knitting projects. Older students may participate in activities such as a performing band or a fine arts program where students

have art shows and market their work. These projects frequently have real world application with members of the outside community coming in to bring knowledge and expertise to the students. One of the sessions observed by the team was for the harbor redesign project. The harbor master for Hingham harbor came in with detailed maps of the harbor and explained a great deal of detail about how the harbor would be dredged, concerns the students should consider when spacing moorings such as the tides, currents, and incoming silt. They were to go on a field trip during the next week to see the harbor and make plans for their redesign. The students would then present their design to the city along with other proposals. Another project from a previous year was the purchase, renovation, and installation of a vegetable oil engine in an old van. The students located the van which was for sale, raised money to purchase and renovate it, and decorated the entire outside with student art images of vegetables.

Other programs at SSCPS support student learning styles and levels. Students may be moved into to higher grade level classes for individual subjects to accommodate their needs, and some students have special classrooms to provide more individualized instruction in a subject area, such as algebra. All students also participate in a service program where they give back to their community.

B. Academic Program Success

Progress Toward Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

1. **SSCPS has met 14 of the 17 measures of academic program success in its Accountability Plan; the school has discontinued use of one measure relating to Microsoft Office User certification. The measures that the school has met reflect the fact that SSCPS has established a comprehensive and detailed set of exit standards to ensure that students are obtaining an education that is of high academic quality and aligned with the philosophy of the charter. They cover a number of areas of competency and the school enforces this policy. The unmet measures relate to students' performance on the MCAS mathematics and science and technology tests and the student attendance rate.**

The SSCPS Accountability Plan contains three objectives and 17 measures related to the school's academic program success. The school's performance relative to these objectives and measures is discussed below. Many of the objectives and measures in the school's Accountability Plan related to the school's academic program success relate to the school's exit standards. The team found that SSCPS has established a comprehensive set of exit standards for each level. The exit standards, which are requirements that each student must meet in order to move to the next level, are detailed in the school's Application for Renewal. They include requirements such as minimum grades; minimum scores on assessments; involvement in projects or workshops for all levels; completion of portfolio work; presentation requirements; community service requirements; and for high school seniors, the requirement that they take two college courses and be accepted to at least one accredited college or university. The team found that students are held to these standards for promotion or graduation. If the student is close to meeting the standards, he or she may be allowed to work during the summer to complete requirements; however, if the requirements are not met, the student is not promoted or, in the case of a high school senior, does not graduate. The team found this to be an active practice with students occasionally not being awarded diplomas until after completing summer work. Exit standards are communicated to parents and students through the parent student handbook and through conferences.

The Accountability Plan contains four columns of information regarding each measure; in the following discussion, some measures are summarized or paraphrased.

Objective 1: All students will work towards developing essential skills in initiative, critical thinking, teamwork, and communication.

The following table provides the data showing the school's performance relative to the six measures corresponding to this objective for each year of the charter period.

Data Pertaining to Measures Listed Under Objective 1			
Measure 1: 100% of students will participate in experiential projects/workshops.			
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 100%
Measure 2: 1. 90% of Level IV, V, and VI SSCPS students will successfully complete project requirements. 2. 90% of all Level I, II, and III students will meet project requirements.			
2005-2006 1. 98% 2. 100%	2006-2007 1. 100% 2. 100%	2007-2008 1. 100% 2. 100%	2008-2009 1. 98% 2. 100%
Measure 3: 90% of students will reflect on project work on a weekly basis.			
2005-2006 42%	2006-2007 95%	2007-2008 91%	2008-2009 99%
Measure 4: 1. 90% of SSCPS students will successfully complete exhibitions of mastery. 2. 100% of Level VI students will successfully participate in a formal debate. 3. Students will demonstrate writing ability in a variety of genres in short and long writing assignments. 4. 90% of students in Levels I-IV will successfully complete Science Fair Exhibition. 5. Students will successfully communicate in an artistic mode.			
2005-2006 1. 99% 2. 100% 3. 100% 4. 100% 5. 100%	2006-2007 1. 98% 2. 100% 3. 100% 4. 100% 5. 100%	2007-2008 1. 99% 2. 100% 3. 100% 4. 100% 5. 100%	2008-2009 1. 99% 2. 100% 3. 100% 4. 100% 5. 100%
Measure 5: 100% of students will successfully complete internship. <i>Internships are no longer a part of the school's exit standards; they have been replaced with senior projects, as discussed below.</i>			
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 Removed from exit standards	2007-2008 Replaced with senior project 100%	2008-2009 Replaced with senior project 100%
Measure 6: 75% of the students will agree SSCPS provides opportunities for students in initiative and leadership The percentages below reflect the students' response to student surveys. They were answering a question that asked if they felt that there were meaningful opportunities for initiative and leadership.			
2005-2006 92%	2006-2007 81%	2007-2008 84%	2008-2009 80%
<i>Data Source: SSCPS Application for Renewal</i>			

The school's performance relative to each of the seven measures pertaining to this goal is discussed below.

Measure 1: 100% of students will participate in experiential projects/workshops.

SSCPS has met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows. All students at SSCPS participate in experiential projects/workshops, as required by the school's exit standards. The class schedule provided to the team revealed that students participate in these classes twice weekly. The team confirmed this through review of school class schedules.

Measure 2: SSCPS students will meet project requirements.

- 90% of Level IV, V, and VI SSCPS students will successfully complete project requirements.
- 90% of all Level I, II, and III students will meet project requirements.

SSCPS has met both parts of this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows. In the 2008-2009 school year, 98 percent of Level IV, V, and VI students completed project requirements, and 100 percent of all Level I, II, and III students met project requirements. Students at all levels must complete project requirements for each level as a condition of promotion. The school enforces this practice at all levels.

Measure 3: 90% of students will reflect on project/workshop work on a weekly basis.

SSCPS has met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows. In the 2008-2009 school year, 99 percent of students met this measure. The team found that students work in student journals where they reflect on their project or workshop activities. The journals are maintained on a weekly basis.

Measure 4: SSCPS Students will demonstrate proficiency in communication skills.

SSCPS has met all five parts of this measure as detailed below.

- 90% of SSCPS students will successfully complete exhibitions of mastery.

SSCPS has met this part of the measure in all years of the current charter period, as shown in the previous table. In the 2008-2009 school year, 99 percent of students completed exhibition of mastery. The team found that all levels of students have requirements for exhibition of mastery as part of the school's exit standards. Students at all levels are subject to expectations of mastery related to the science fair and project fair. There are sets of scoring rubrics to measure mastery for these programs.

- 100% of Level VI students will successfully participate in a formal debate
- Students will demonstrate writing ability in a variety of genres of in both short and long writing assignments
- 90% of students in Levels I-IV will successfully complete Science Fair Exhibition.
- Students will successfully communicate in an artistic mode.

As shown in the preceding table, SSCPS has met the preceding parts of the measure in all years of the current charter period.

Measure 5: 100% of Level VI students will complete an internship with an organization/business.

SSCPS has met this measure. Seniors spend the last term of the school year working at an organization or business outside of the school. Although the school refers to these activities as “senior projects” rather than “internships,” the concepts intrinsic to this measure are embodied in the senior project program. The program has been very successful with a number of students being offered jobs by the organizations following their completion of the program. The senior project is a graduation requirement.

Measure 6: 75% of the students will agree SSCPS provides opportunities for students in initiative and leadership.

SSCPS has met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as shown in the preceding table. Students were asked through a student survey if they felt that they had meaningful opportunities for initiative and leadership; in the 2008-2009 school year, 80 percent of students agreed that they had been provided with these opportunities.

The second objective in the SSCPS Accountability Plan related to the school’s academic program success is as follows:

Objective 2: All students will master essential academic skills.

The following table provides the data showing the school’s performance relative to the seven measures corresponding to this objective for each year of the charter period.

Data Pertaining to Measures Listed Under Objective 2							
Measure 1: 90% of students will pass each course or subject.							
2005-2006 90.1 % passing rate	2006-2007 90.1% passing rate	2007-2008 93.3 % passing rate	2008-2009 91% passing rate				
Measure 2: 100% of students will complete required portfolio work (Levels III-VI with a minimum score of 80%).							
2005-2006 95%	2006-2007 95%	2007-2008 97%	2008-2009 94%				
Measure 3: 100% of high school students must meet state requirements for graduation on MCAS.							
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 100%				
Measure 4: 100% of high school students will receive a passing grade (C or better) at an accredited college or university.							
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 100%				
Measure 5: 100% of high school students must attain proficiency in Microsoft Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and internet use.							
2005-2006 88%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 not formally measured				
Measure 6: 90% of SSCPS students (in grades 3-10) will meet or exceed the Needs Improvement Score.							
2005-2006		2006-2007		2007-2008		2008-2009	
ELA	92	ELA	97	ELA	92	ELA	97
Math	72	Math	81	Math	79	Math	87
Sci/Tech + Bio	80	Sci/Tech + Bio	86	Sci/Tech + Bio	89	Sci/Tech + Bio	85
Measure 7: Student scores will be acceptable for college entry.							
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 100%				
<i>Data Source:</i> SSCPS Application for Renewal and ESE							

The school's performance relative to each of the seven measures pertaining to this goal is discussed below.

Measure 1: 90% of students will pass each course or subject

SSCPS met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows. Data was obtained from the Application for Renewal.

Measure 2: 100% of students will complete required portfolio work (Levels III VI with a minimum score of 80%).

SSCPS met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows.

Measure 3: 100% of Level VI students must meet state requirements for graduation on MCAS.

SSCPS has met this measure in all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows.

Measure 4: 100% of Level VI students will receive a passing grade (C or better) at an accredited college or university

SSCPS has met this measure. The school's Application for Renewal states that the student must "[c]omplete, with a passing grade 75 or better, two pre-approved three-credit courses at an accredited college or university. At least one of the courses must be taken on a college campus." This requirement is one of the graduation/exit standards for the high school level. The team found through interviews that the school adheres to these standards.

Measure 5: 100% of Level VI students must attain Microsoft Office User Certification

SSCPS has discontinued this requirement because of the expense of the certification program, according to school administrators and the Application for Renewal.

Measure 6: 90% of SSCPS students (in grades 3-10) will meet or exceed the Needs Improvement Score.

SSCPS has not met this measure, as the previous table shows. Although the school has met this measure for ELA in every year of the charter period, with 97 percent of students meeting or exceeding the Needs Improvement score, the school has not met the measure in any year of the charter period for mathematics or science/technology.

Measure 7: Student scores will be acceptable for college entry.

SSCPS has met this measure for all years of the current charter period, as the previous table shows. One hundred percent of graduating SSCPS students were admitted to a college or university in the 2008-2009 school year. As previously noted, SSCPS has a graduation requirement that each student be accepted to at least one accredited college or university.

The third objective related to the school's academic program success is as follows:

Objective 3: All students will demonstrate active engagement in their education.

The following table provides the data showing the school's performance relative to the four measures corresponding to this objective for each year of the charter period.

Data Pertaining to Measures Listed Under Objective 3			
Measure 1: 95% of students will meet an average daily attendance rate of no less than 90%.			
2005-2006 88% of students met this target	2006-2007 No Records	2007-2008 96.7 % of the students met this target	2008-2009 93.9% of the students met this target
Measure 2: 90% will meet Community Service hour requirement.			
2005-2006 99%	2006-2007 99%	2007-2008 95%	2008-2009 98%
Measure 3: Students will participate in weekly Level Town and Pod meetings.			
2005-2006 Participation in weekly meetings	2006-2007 Participation in weekly meetings	2007-2008 Participation in weekly meetings	2008-2009 Participation in weekly meetings
Measure 4: All students with advisors will create a yearly educational plan.			
2005-2006 100%	2006-2007 100%	2007-2008 100%	2008-2009 100%
<i>Data Source: SSCPS Application for Renewal</i>			

Measure 1: 95% of students will meet an average daily attendance rate of no less than 90%.

SSCPS has not met this measure for the 2008-2009 school year. As the previous table shows, the only year in which the school met this measure was the 2007-2008 school year, based on the information provided in the school’s Application for Renewal.

Measure 2: 90% will meet Community Service hour requirement.

SSCPS has met this measure for all years of the current charter period. Community service hours are a requirement of the exit standards for all levels.

Measure 3: Students will participate in weekly Level Town and Pod meetings.

SSCPS has met this measure for all years of the current charter period. Team members observed that level town and pod meetings are held weekly and that students are required to attend. Level and pod meetings are weekly meetings held to promote communication between the school and students. Topics for these meetings vary.

Measure 4: All students with advisors will create a yearly educational plan.

SSCPS has met this measure for all years of the current charter period. As noted in the “Faithfulness to Charter” section of this report, the team reviewed PEP templates as well as completed forms for students. All students are required to sit with an advisor and develop a PEP each year.

Other Performance Topics

2. **SSCPS made AYP in 2009 in mathematics and ELA in the aggregate and for all subgroups for the first time in three years. The school has implemented a new formative assessment program based on released MCAS assessments and has targeted its academic program on aggressively improving the performance of all students rather than only students who have been targeted as being at risk.**

The following table summarizes the school’s AYP history.

SSCPS Adequate Yearly Progress History				
	2006	2007	2008	2009
English Language Arts				
Aggregate	Yes	No	No	Yes
All subgroups	Yes	No	No	Yes
Mathematics				
Aggregate	Yes	No	No	Yes
All subgroups	No	No	No	Yes
<i>Data Source: ESE</i>				

In response to the school’s low MCAS scores and failure to make AYP in previous years, the school formed an MCAS Action Team in the 2008-2009 school year. This team is focused on identifying weak areas of performance and promoting improvement for all students. According to interviews with administrators, the school’s perception of how to support student improvement changed. Instead of focusing on keeping students from failing, the teachers and support staff now work to move all students forward.

Formative assessments, based on released MCAS assessments in ELA and mathematics, were developed in the 2008-2009 school year. A similar science assessment was added this year (2009-2010). These assessments are administered three times a year. After the assessments are given, the staff collectively scores and analyzes the results. The team was on site for the fall administration and observed the process. A review of the 2009 MCAS scores showed significant improvement when compared to students’ performance in previous years. As the previous table shows, the school made AYP in ELA and mathematics in aggregate and for all subgroups. Administrators told the team that the faculty aggressively used the assessment data to modify curriculum, inform instruction, and provide increased instructional time for students during the 2008-2009 school year. Administrators explained that they created a learning center to provide tutorial support to struggling high school students and had changed the grade 7 and 8 schedule to be in line with the high school schedule. Furthermore, the school has hired a consultant to provide professional development for teachers in teaching writing skills. The school wanted to address the weaknesses students had in writing long compositions and answering open response questions. Administrators attributed significant student improvement to this program. In addition, a curriculum change was put into place in mathematics as a result of concerns over student MCAS scores and the identified lack of alignment to the standards, which was uncovered as a result of trying to understand the poor student data.

3. SSCPS administers external and internal assessments to measure student progress. The school administers internally developed formative assessments in ELA, mathematics, and science. Administrators and faculty use the data to inform instruction and to determine which students need assistance to improve MCAS scores.

In addition to the MCAS tests, SSCPS evaluates the academic progress of students in grades K through 6 using the DIBELS. In grades 2 through 9, the school uses the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) and the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) assessments. Administrators and faculty use the tests to measure progress, identify and make modifications to the curriculum, and as a diagnostic tool to provide targeted instruction to students. Individual student targets are modified on the basis of these assessments. The school had previously used the TerraNova but phased it out in 2008 because the test did not give the school the depth of information it needed to improve instruction, according to the interim executive director. The school also administers formative assessments created from released MCAS assessments in mathematics and ELA.

As previously discussed, the school has developed exit standards for each level. The teachers use the exit standards and portfolios to measure student progress and performance. The school uses other internal tests to assess its students such as quizzes, midyears, and finals. Beginning in the 2008-2009 school year, the passing grade in core academic subjects for students in grades 6 through 12 was raised from 60 percent to 70 percent.

Chart of the Spring 2009 GMADE and GRADE				
Results of Median National Percentile and Normal Curve Equivalence by grade				
	Math		ELA	
	Median National Percentile score	Mean Score NCE (Normal Curve Equivalent)	Median National Percentile score	Mean Score NCE (Normal Curve Equivalent)
Second	69	61	85	72
Third	82	69	88	70
Fourth	79	67	79	68
Fifth	66	55	77	64
Sixth	75	65	79	68
Seventh	73	60	71	64
Eighth	34	44	56	57
Total NCE Mean		60		66

Students must receive a score of 70 percent or higher to pass the course work.

4. SSCPS has developed a fully documented curriculum that is aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. The curricula include a variety of commercially developed texts and internally developed materials and resources. The school has a five-year cycle for curriculum review.

SSCPS provided the following curricula to the team: ELA, mathematics, science, social studies, and Spanish. Each curriculum referenced the appropriate Massachusetts curriculum framework.

The school also provided a copy of its life skills curriculum and binders that detailed projects and workshops.

The school primarily uses commercially produced curriculum materials in its core curriculum. The major texts used in the ELA curriculum are Core Knowledge Language Arts, Skills Strand, and Listening and Learning in grades K through 2. Teachers generate ELA curriculum in grades 3 through 6. Supplementary materials include Writers Express from Write Source, What Your Third Grader Needs to Know as well as the similar texts for fourth and five grades, (also used in grades K through 2). Grades 7 through 12 use Norton Anthology of English Literature, Prentice Hall, the American Experience, Holt World Literature, and selected novels. High school binders reviewed by the team were labeled Introduction to Literature and Composition (9), American Literature (10), World Literature (11) and British Literature (12). The binders were similar in format, containing a course syllabus, reading list, writing expectations for the student portfolio, curriculum maps, lesson plans and assessments (quizzes, midterms, and finals). The school uses the John Collins writing program in grades K through 12.

Mathematics classes in grades K through 6 use Singapore Math textbooks and workbooks published by Marshall Cavendish. The curriculum is aligned to the MCF; the team observed that the curriculum documents contained references to the MCF for each unit. The interim executive director reported to the team that upon analyzing 2008 MCAS scores there was a concern that the Singapore Math program was not effective for level IV and the high school. The school hired a consultant from Curry College. The consultant mentored and coached staff and assisted the school in the research for a new program. The school chose the McDougal Littell math program in the spring of 2009. In the fall of 2009, grades 7 through 12 started the transition from Singapore Math to using the newly adopted McDougal Littell math program. Teachers received professional development in August of 2009 in the use of the new textbooks, resource guides, and software. In addition to the training, additional time was spent on alignment of course curriculums with the MCF.

Mathematics texts from McDougal Littell are Pre Algebra, Algebra 1, Algebra 2, Geometry, Pre-Calculus, and Calculus. Binders for the mathematics courses included course descriptions, class expectations, grading rubrics, and topics to cover. Also included were the year's calendar and lesson plans. The lesson plan format contained the following categories: week of, frameworks, objectives, procedure (Monday through Friday), special education strategies, homework, and assessment. The weekly syllabus contained the following categories: Objective, do now, class work, homework and assessments. In addition to the texts, McDougal Littell provides on-line support.

Teachers in grades K through 6 developed units of study in science and social studies. The developed science curriculum is composed of four units: earth and space science, life science, physical sciences, and technology/engineering. Each grade level studies different topics under each unit. The social studies curriculum in each level has various topics assigned in each level. Lesson plans, curriculum maps, and black line masters were in the binders that the team reviewed.

In Grades 7 through 8, the teachers use Prentice Hall Science Explorer. Grades 9 through 12 use Pearson Science, Holt and Glencoe Science texts. The high school offers science courses in

engineering, physical science, biology, environmental science, chemistry, anatomy and physiology, and physics. Social studies texts in grades 7 through 12 are Glencoe, The American Vision and The American Pageant, and History Alive. The high school offers courses in world cultures, United States history 1 and 2, and ethics in grade 12.

According to the interim executive director, the school hired an outside consultant in the fall of 2008 to work with the Spanish teachers. Upon review of the curriculum, the recommendation was to adopt a new textbook series for grades 7 through 12. The teachers chose the Descubre series by Vista Learning Systems. In addition, the consultant assisted the three grade K through 12 Spanish teachers on curriculum review, mapping, and alignment. All K through 12 students have an opportunity to learn Spanish as a second language. Spanish teachers use teacher-developed materials in grades K through 6 and the Descubre Spanish series in the upper level. To accommodate incoming new students, there are four levels of Spanish from beginner to advanced at the high school.

SSCPS has developed a life skills curriculum that teaches organization, accountability, character, communication and teamwork. These skills are incorporated into the projects and workshops in which all students participate. The school established two new positions: a grades K through 6 project director and a grades 7 through 12 workshop director. The team interviewed the directors, who told the team that their role is to assure that timetables and accountability measures are met and to help the teachers and students in the planning and development of the project/workshops.

According to the school administrators, they promote the school's mission to inspire students to achieve their potential in academics, career, and life, with a curriculum that addresses the learning styles of the individual student and is complemented by a real-life experiential learning program. The school unites the academic curriculum with work on projects/workshops. According to the school's Application for Renewal and the team's interviews with school administrators, the projects and workshops are aligned to the MCF and are designed to develop the skills and attributes needed to take responsibility to work individually and collaboratively for a common goal. They reflect the school's philosophy that students take a leadership role in their education. According to project/workshop directors, some examples of project topic areas are fine arts, political action and social awareness, music, writing and publication, theater, writers, and poetry slam. Projects currently being offered include conservation; the literary magazine; Shakespeare; a healthy you; and students, sailing and the sea. The team reviewed the project/workshop binders and found detailed documentation, including student work samples.

According to the interim executive director, in a response to new staff's concerns, a mentoring program to assist new teachers in the design and implementation of projects/workshops was created. Teachers receive help with the project/workshop requirements, timelines, lesson planning, setting up binders and other criteria in the development of the project/workshop from more experienced teachers. Teachers also develop a project/workshop overview with accompanying goals, intended learning outcomes, contents of student portfolios, community service opportunities, dissemination plans, and other criteria.

5. SSCPS has an ongoing process of curriculum review. The review includes updating and mapping the curricula and aligning them to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks.

According to the interim executive director, SSCPS has an established five-year cycle for curriculum review. The team's review of the maps in the core curriculum revealed that SSCPS has done collaborative work in mapping its curriculum. The school updated its ELA curriculum in 2006; the science and technology curriculum in 2007; the history, social science, and Spanish curricula in 2008; and the mathematics curriculum in 2009. The mathematics curriculum work started in 2008 due to the school's concern with the low MCAS scores. As previously explained, a new textbook series was adopted for grades 7 through 12 for the 2009 school year as a result of the curriculum review and MCAS analysis work. Furthermore, the K through 6 math program is undergoing the review process in addition to continuing work on the grade 7 through 12 level. According to the interim executive director, the school established lead teacher positions at the secondary level in mathematics, science and technology, and humanities. The lead teachers' role is to direct teachers in the mapping of the curriculum and establishing of interdisciplinary connections. According to the interim executive director, the education committee, a school-level committee, is a guiding force in reviewing and revising the school's curriculum and educational program. The members of this committee include parents, teachers, administrators, and a board member.

6. The team observed an orderly, respectful classroom and school environment at SSCPS. Students were quiet and well behaved; the team saw no disruptive behavior. Teachers had the resources they needed for their instructional programs.

The team observed that the classrooms, hallways, and common areas of SSCPS were orderly. During the visit, the team saw that students were quiet and well behaved as they moved from class to class. The team saw no instances of disruptive behavior by students in classrooms, hallways, or the common areas. They were respectful to each other and to all adults. Teachers reported in interviews that they had the necessary resources for instruction.

The student handbook includes the school's code of conduct, policies, rules, regulations, and consequences associated with discipline. According to administrators, teachers and parents, the school has implemented an anti-bullying campaign. The school has had several trainings on bullying for staff as well as presentations for teachers, parents, and students. The student focus group told the team that they had anti-bullying discussions. The students felt they were safe and that the teachers help students solve issues. They reported that there are no fights at the school.

7. Instructional practices observed by the team in SSCPS classrooms were consistent with those described by the instructional leaders. The team also observed that instructional practices at all but the youngest grade levels at SSCPS promote self-motivated learners who can learn independently and solve complex problems. This is particularly strong in workshops and projects. Teacher expectations for student learning and responses were very high.

The team conducted 33 classroom observations of SSCPS classes in grades K through 12. (The methodology used by the team is discussed more fully in the "Renewal Inspection Methodology" section of this report.) A document provided to the team by the interim executive director and the principals stated that the team would observe the following instructional practices implemented in SSCPS classrooms: clear beginnings, middles and ends to lessons; Writing

Across the Curriculum practices; rich questioning; and both teacher- and student-driven instruction.

The team saw consistency with the instructional practices cited by the interim executive director and the principals in most classrooms. In most lessons, lesson structures to include clear beginnings, middles and ends of lessons were in place and appropriate for the portion of the lesson observed. The Writing Across the Curriculum program was in evidence. Lessons had more grouping variation and addressed more various learning styles in the younger grades, while instruction was more teacher-directed in upper grades, particularly at the high school. Teacher questioning was designed to elicit complex and thoughtful responses and student responses in all but the lowest grade levels were very strong in this area. Students responded clearly in several sentences to each question. The teachers probed more deeply through Socratic questioning methods to move students to explore their own responses. Expectations for student responses were extremely high, with teachers promoting multisentence responses and connections to previous learning. Meaningful content and learning were observed in all but three lessons. The teachers repeatedly checked for understanding. Moving about the classroom checking with a large percentage of students to ensure they were learning.

The team observed solid consistency with the school design and student learning objectives. Students exhibited good behavior and engagement: approximately 90 percent of students in the classes observed appeared engaged. Students were charged with a number of independent learning opportunities. The students appeared very comfortable taking charge of their learning, with students easily working together in groups. In one high school mathematics class, students were taking two separate but related courses: pre-calculus and calculus. While one group of students received instruction in pre-calculus, the other group worked independently to learn calculus. Both groups of students appeared highly engaged. Behavior expectations were very high, with students obviously aware of the rituals and expectations within each classroom and no problems were observed. Students entered classrooms and engaged in work assigned for the beginnings of the lessons without instruction.

In all but two classes, instruction was well-paced and allowed for students to engage actively with the lesson. In the classes where pacing was not as strong, the lessons were more prescriptive and students were less engaged. Even when students were not well engaged with the material, behavior problems such as talking were not in evidence, and students generally paid some attention.

The team observed mixed evidence of instruction that promoted higher-level thinking. This type of instruction was strongly evident in nearly all of the projects and workshops observed, with students working hard to understand and process complex, multidisciplinary concepts, and in approximately 30 percent of other classrooms. These concepts included using mathematics when understanding how to position boats in a harbor, exploring proportion using calipers for drawing a self portrait, and imagining how a cell would function if several properties were changed.

8. SSCPS has established a data-driven culture that informs instructional modifications and the implementation of new instructional programs. School leaders use data from formative and summative assessments on an ongoing basis to inform instructional leadership practices.

School leaders are very involved with the process of analyzing data and using it to inform and guide instructional planning and practice. The K through 6 principal is the data person who analyzes and disseminates assessment and other related information to staff. The data is analyzed on a student by student basis as well as by cohort and grade level to provide insight into weak areas of student performance. The leaders use this information to inform decisions about curriculum change, as in the move away from Singapore Math at the high school and middle school levels. There are a number of other examples of the school's use of data to inform instructional practices provided throughout this report. Teachers use both individual and grade level data to inform their instruction. Goals are set for each child's progress.

9. Instructional leadership is effective at SSCPS. Teachers are strongly supported in their classroom endeavors and provided with feedback on their performance.

Teachers are evaluated regularly at SSCPS, with new teachers having formal evaluations/observations twice per year and more senior teachers being evaluated once a year. These performance reviews include pre- and post-conferences and formal written feedback as well as goal setting which is facilitated by the instructional leader, frequently the principal for the teachers' grade. In addition, the school has instituted a ten-minute walkthrough process by which instructional leaders visit the classroom every two to three weeks and complete a form that is included in the teacher's annual evaluation.

The formal teacher evaluation forms, which were reviewed by the team, include a rubric focused on board presentation, classroom management, communication with students, instructional practices, instructional goals, recordkeeping, outside of class academic support for students, and assessment practices. The form also includes a narrative overview of the teacher's performance.

SSCPS leaders provide a number of supporting programs for teachers, including professional development to help improve their classroom effectiveness. For example, teachers have received instruction in the Skillful Teacher program, have had access to a mathematics coach, have had extensive professional development in the Writing Across the Curriculum program, and attended programs on classroom management practices. The principals and interim executive director attribute improved student scores to this professional development. Teachers reported that they felt that the sustained Writing Across the Curriculum training had their instructional practices in a positive manner and was responsible for improved student results.

C. Organizational Viability

Progress Toward Accountability Plan Objectives and Measures

1. SSCPS has met five of the six measures of organizational viability in the school's Accountability Plan.

The SSCPS Accountability Plan contains two objectives and six measures related to the school's organizational viability. The Accountability Plan contains four columns of information regarding each measure; in the following discussion, some measures are summarized or paraphrased.

Objective #1: SSCPS will maintain financial solvency and stability.

The school's performance relative to the measure pertaining to this objective is discussed below.

Measure: Board of Trustees will continue to oversee a balanced budget and school annual audit will reflect good business practice.

SSCPS has met this objective. The SSCPS Application for Renewal indicates that the school interprets the measure as requiring balanced budgets and annual independent auditor reports that contain no findings of significant deficiencies. According to the information provided in the Application for Renewal, SSCPS has met this measure in each of the first three years of the current charter period.

According to its Application for Renewal and its annual audits for 2007, 2008 and 2009, the school ended the year with positive net assets indicating budget surpluses. The Annual Report for 2009 showed that the budget voted by the Board of Trustees for the 2010 fiscal year is also balanced.

The team reviewed the independent auditors' reports for fiscal years 2007 and 2008 and the management letter accompanying the fiscal year 2008 audit report. Both audits were unqualified, and neither audit report identified any material weaknesses in internal controls. The reports also indicate that the SSCPS net assets increased over the prior year balance in fiscal years 2006, 2007, and 2008.

Objective #2: SSCPS will demonstrate itself to be a viable organization.

The school's performance relative to the five measures pertaining to this objective is discussed below.

Measure 1: SSCPS will include students, faculty, and parents in its democratic governance model.

SSCPS has met this measure. The school maintains a strong collaborative process in nearly all of its activities with all of its stakeholders. Parents and teachers reported that there are a wide variety of ways to be involved at the school. The board also has student and parent representatives.

The school has taken steps to promote transparency: board of trustees meeting minutes, annual reports, development information, assessment information, the Application for Renewal, and a

number of other documents are available online. Recently the board decided to purchase new mathematics curriculum and it was a school-wide effort, involving parents, teachers and administrators on the selection committee. Students are kept updated through student boards and weekly town or pod meetings.

The SSCPS Accountability Plan provides the following standards for determining whether this measure is met:

- Written communication process

The school maintains a number of school policies regarding communication concerning topics including but not limited to behavior, sexual harassment, confidentiality and parent teacher communications. These are primarily detailed in the faculty handbook.

- Active School Council - meets monthly, provides opportunities for communication

As described elsewhere in this report, the school council is active; includes members from the faculty, parents, and student body; and is concerned primarily with policy issues.

- Focused committees in which students, faculty and parents work together

According to administrators, teachers, parents, and students, a variety of stakeholders are included on virtually every committee, including hiring committees, the members of which include parents, teachers, and administrators, and the education committee, which is not a board committee but a school committee, the members of which include parents, teachers, administrators, and a board member.

- Newly designed survey

SSCPS did not redesign the survey as planned. The primary reason for considering the redesign was because the school had received poor compliance from stakeholders in returning the forms in previous years, preventing survey results from having statistical significance. According to the interim executive director, the school retained the same survey format to allow for continued comparison from year to year, but instead became much more proactive in seeking responses to the survey.

- Reorganized Parent Association

The parent association is active, meets monthly, and maintains an active website and presence at the school.

- Student Boards and Town/Pod Meetings

The students meet weekly in town pod meetings. In addition to other activities, these meetings provide a venue for students to provide recommendations to the administration and faculty about areas of concern for students.

Measure 2: SSCPS will strive for teacher retention.

SSCPS has met this measure. The school's teacher retention rates for the current charter period have fluctuated between 85 percent and 90 percent; in the 2008-2009 school year, the teacher retention rate was 87 percent. The interim executive director told the team that the school has no deep concerns about teacher retention. The SSCPS Accountability Plan provides the following standards for determining whether this measure is met:

- Provide mentoring for new teachers

The school provides a mentoring program for teachers, with all new teachers matched with experienced educators to provide guidance. Teachers are introduced to their mentors during the professional development period prior to the beginning of school.

- Provide competitive salaries and benefits

Salaries for teachers and benefits are competitive with those at some of the sending districts for the school, but not all. The executive director reported that the school's salary and benefits are competitive with those offered by the Randolph and Holbrook school districts.

- Provide a strong commitment to Professional Development

Teachers have access to quality professional development both internally and externally and may also take advantage of a \$2,000 annual college tuition benefit for advancing their educational degrees.

- Teachers' opinions are solicited on major initiatives

According to interviews with teachers and administrators, teachers have a presence on most major committees and are consulted on major initiatives. For example, teachers serve on the committee for the selection of new mathematics texts for the middle and high school as well as on the committee for the development of the new hiring policies.

Measure 3: SSCPS will strive for student retention.

SSCPS has met this measure. The SSCPS Accountability Plan provides the following standards for determining whether this measure is met:

- Provide peer mentoring

The school provides peer mentoring and the ability for students to take an active role in the school.

- Provide Advisors

As described in more detail elsewhere in this report, each student meets in an advisory period every day with his or her assigned advisor who assists the student in defining personal goals.

- Provide Student Learning Support Services

The school also provides customization of the academic program with acceleration possible for more advanced students and learning support services, tutoring and instructional modification available for struggling students.

Although SSCPS has met the above standards for the measure, student retention rates dropped over the term of the current charter: in the 2005-2006 school year, the retention rate was 96 percent, whereas in the 2008-2009 school year, the retention rate was 89 percent. The interim executive director attributed this drop in retention rates to a difficult economy, with many departing parents reporting financial difficulties providing student transportation as a leading reason for withdrawal of their children from SSCPS.

Measure 4: SSCPS will provide clear and stable leadership.

SSCPS has met this measure. The SSCPS Accountability Plan provides the following standards for determining whether this measure is met:

- Board of Trustees Annual Training

Board members and the interim executive director reported that new members received an orientation and training materials on the bylaws and on board roles and responsibilities. Board meeting minutes and the team's interviews with board members indicated that members have attended Charter School Association and ESE training sessions, and they have held annual retreats with consultants to do long-range strategic planning and to review their policies, bylaws, and meeting procedures.

- Ongoing administration professional development

Administrators reported that the school has encouraged professional growth for administrators by financially supporting their graduate coursework and attendance at professional conferences.

- Offer salaries to attract and keep school leaders

The interim executive director reported that administrator salaries were competitive with those paid by some local school districts.

- Board will plan ahead for leadership changes

The board reported that they have had difficulty recruiting for and hiring a permanent executive director. Despite efforts to fill this position, the school was unable to identify a candidate the

board felt was strong enough for the position. They stated that they are attempting to find a candidate with a strong development background, who could promote fundraising. No candidates meeting these criteria were identified in the last round of hiring. Plans were being made at the time of the review to begin another search beginning in December.

SSCPS has met these standards. However, the school's Application for Renewal noted that there has been considerable turnover in administrative staff at the school: previous searches for an executive director have been unsuccessful, and the interim director is in her third year. A principal is leaving after less than two years. The team learned in administrator and board interviews that stable leadership is a concern of administrators and the board alike, and board members reported that, although they wished the interim executive director could stay on, the search and appointment of a permanent director is a priority. The second principal has been with the school since it opened and the business manager with the school for ten years.

Measure 5: SSCPS will maintain adequate facilities to meet our students needs.

SSCPS has not met this measure. The SSCPS Accountability Plan provides the following standards for determining whether this measure is met:

- Ongoing capital campaign begun to provide sufficient funding to complete renovations.

The school has not met this standard. Over the past few years, the school has engaged a full-time development consultant and a part-time development associate to promote development for the school for expansion and to help in raising more money through fundraising events. Both of these positions were eliminated, primarily due to budget constraints and the fact that neither individual was able to raise the significant funds to offset their salaries.

Board members stated that the current plan of the board is to hire a permanent executive director who has development experience. According to the board, these problems have hampered the capital campaign efforts.

- Development committee formed

The board, in interviews, reported that a development committee has been formed and conducts meetings. Administrators, teachers and parents stated that current facilities at the school did not include a space that could serve as a combination gymnasium, auditorium, and cafeteria. There is undeveloped space within the current building that is available to be remodeled to serve this purpose if capital campaigns can bring in funding. Administrators, board members, and parents interviewed by the team identified this as a goal.

- As needed, additional space will be located, i.e. athletic facilities and recreational facilities

The school has sufficient unused space in the building in the existing building to house additional classrooms, and a space to serve as a multipurpose area for use as a gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium. Plans are to renovate this space when funds become available.

- Facilities Task Force changed to Building and Grounds Committee

Currently a board facilities committee is in place.

Although the school did not meet all of the standards for this measure, the team found that the facilities were quite adequate to meet student needs, including specialized spaces for projects and workshops, such as a design studio, and a new library.

Other Performance Topics

- 2. Independent auditor reports on the financial statements of SSCPS and its related foundation contained unqualified opinions. The audit reports indicated that SSCPS has substantial total net assets; it saw a significant increase in net assets from \$2.9 million in fiscal year 2007 to almost \$4.5 million fiscal year 2008, including \$2.1 million in unrestricted operating assets. The audit reports also noted that the foundation's net assets declined significantly over the same two year period, from \$90,361 to a negative \$1.3 million; the audit reports indicated that the change was due to a refinancing debt for the school building.**

The team reviewed independent auditor reports on SSCPS financial statements covering the fiscal years ending June 30, 2009, June 30, 2008, and June 30, 2007, and the associated management letter for fiscal year 2008. Both audit reports contained unqualified opinions. The audits reported on SSCPS and its related foundation, South Shore Charter Educational Foundation, Inc. The foundation owns the school building, and holds the related debt for the building.

As shown in the table below, SSCPS saw a significant increase in net assets from fiscal year 2007 to fiscal year 2008: \$2.9 million to almost \$4.5 million, including \$2.1 million in unrestricted operating assets. The increase was in investments in capital; unrestricted operating assets and restricted assets both declined from one year to the next. As also shown in the table, the foundation's total net assets decreased significantly over the same period, from \$90,361 to a negative \$1.3 million. According to the fiscal year 2008 audit report, "This decrease was due to the new bond payable and the forgiveness of SSCPS's prior bond debt and write-off of old financing costs related to the initial purchase of the property." Elsewhere the audit report indicates that in May 2008 the foundation secured \$7.2 million in bonds which is secured by substantially all assets of the foundation and the school and is guaranteed by the school. Using proceeds of the bond, the foundation refinanced a \$5.5 million note and paid off \$2 million bonds; as part of the transaction the foundation forgave approximately \$1.2 million of school debt.

Assets	Fiscal Year 2008			Fiscal Year 2007		
	School	Foundation	Total	School	Foundation	Total
Unrestricted operating	2,117,436	93,809	2,211,242	2,610,406	49,052	2,659,458
Invested in capital assets, net of related debt	2,299,384	(1,503,960)	795,424	267,216	(105,104)	162,112
Restricted	45,265	61,915	107,180	62,387	146,413	208,800
Total net assets	4,462,085	(1,348,239)	3,113,846	2,940,009	90,361	3,030,370
<i>Data Source:</i> SSCPS audited financial statements						

The business manager told the team that the 2008 negative net asset number for the foundation does not reflect the increased value in its primary asset, the building: the 2007 reassessment document indicated the building's value at \$8,000,000 (before the 2008 renovations), approximately \$2.5 million more than the asset value used in the auditor's balance sheet. The business manager stated that the increased value of the building would more than offset the \$1.3 million negative net asset value for 2008.

The fiscal year 2008 audit report also notes that one-third of the school building is unoccupied and future renovation of that space is important.

3. The SSCPS budget supports student achievement. SSCPS is financially solvent and uses effective internal financial controls and oversight.

School budgets for FY2009 and FY2010 support student achievement; for example approximately 80 percent of the FY10 budget is allocated to instruction such as teaching, professional development, instructional materials, and instructional leadership, and ESE data on 2007 charter school budgets indicated SSCPS spent proportionally more than the state average on most educational functions. The school's Application for Renewal indicated that during the period under review the school enrollment has ranged from 494 to 519 students, with a maximum limit of 540, and the school has a current waiting list of 314 students. This enrollment has sustained the school budget, which the business manager reported has been conservatively based on 10 percent less than the maximum enrollment and on current lottery distributions among local town tuition rates paid by towns according to the current distribution of students.

The combined total change in net assets has been positive each year, indicating a budget surplus. The Annual Report for 2009 showed that the budget voted by the Board of Trustees for the 2010 fiscal year is also balanced.

Annual audits for each year did not identify any deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting considered to be material weaknesses or any instances of noncompliance. The auditing firm's 2008 letter to management made some recommendations such as a periodic review of payroll by the interim executive director and the development of a formal risk assessment policy; according to 2009 management letter and the business manager, all of the 2008 recommendations have been addressed. The 2009 audit report noted over \$2 million in

uncollateralized deposits; according to the business manager these funds are spread across several money market and other bank accounts used for regular expenditures and she believes the school is not exposed to any significant risk based on the viability of the banks involved; these deposits are in addition to \$750,000 in fully insured certificates of deposit.

This has resulted in large reserves: the 2009 audit shows a June 30 cash balance of \$2,431,369 for the school and, additionally, \$161,092 for the foundation. According to the business manager, the cash balance has provided more than adequate cash flow for 90 days' expenses, as required by the lending bank, and the school has not had to use its line of credit in several years. The annual surpluses and reserves have also been sufficient to cover needed expenses not in the budget: board members stated they had voted to use \$750,000 from reserves for roof repairs, and the business manager reported that new mathematics materials were purchased from the 2009 surplus.

The annual audits indicated that the school has no material deficiencies in internal controls. The business manager reported on procedures for purchasing, personnel contracts and payroll, cash, and check signing, and team members found them appropriate: for example, invoices are checked against packing slips, checks greater than \$5,000 must be signed by two officials (the interim executive director, treasurer and vice chair have the authority to sign checks), and the interim executive director periodically reviews the payroll. She also reported that the school uses sound business practices such as soliciting three quotes for large purchases and a bidding process for capital expenses over \$100,000.

The board has been responsible for fiscal oversight of the school. Board members and the business manager reported that the timeline for the development of the school budget has been set by the finance committee. Administrators prepare budgets after meeting with level coordinators, who solicit input about school needs from teachers. Requests must be approved by the principal and interim executive director, who recommended the budget to the board for final approval. The board receives monthly reports on school revenues and expenses, including a comparison of actual revenues and expenditures to budgeted year to date figures. If a line item is over expended by \$5000 or more, the business manager brings it to the attention of the finance committee, which covers the deficit from excesses elsewhere in the budget.

The board has done long-range financial planning, as evidenced by the budgeting process as outlined by the board and business manager, and its strategic plan, which notes a need to develop a network of foundations, businesses and individuals to increase financial support of the school, possibly with the help of a professional. The board has formed a development committee to plan specific activities. Board members and administrators also described long-range plans for a capital campaign to renovate 13,000 square feet of the building. The strategic plan and progress on it are reviewed at the board annual retreats which are held annually. Board members also reported that the board's future priorities are to search for and hire a permanent executive director and to develop a successful fundraising plan to complete renovations of the building.

The school budget process includes input from staff as well as final approval by the board. The Application for Renewal emphasized that 2009 was a difficult budget year, and the director submitted six versions of the budget in order to keep it balanced and to take into account board and other constituents' feedback. Administrators described some of the school needs which have

not been funded by the budget including tutoring, an additional reading teacher, and renovations to create cafeteria and additional library and classroom space. The board members emphasized the importance of supporting in the school budget good classroom instruction; they cited as examples the board's funding of competitive teacher salaries, a science lab, and used surplus funds for materials for a new mathematics program.

4. The board of trustees is active and effective in its oversight of the school, the roles of the board and school leadership are clear, and the board is actively engaged in goal setting and strategic planning.

The board interviews revealed that there are 15 members of the board of trustees, including a student, two non-voting teachers, the president of the parent association, seven parents of SSCPS students, and two grandparents of SSCPS students. Board members and administrators stated, and meeting minutes reviewed by the team confirmed, that the board has met monthly. Board meetings have covered issues such as financial reports, policy issues (such as a personnel policy and a policy on solicitations), and school goals such as those incorporated into the Accountability Plan and a long-range strategic plan. The team's review of board meeting minutes between May 27, 2007 and September, 24 2009 indicated that most of the board's meeting time was devoted to presentations and discussions of school programs, especially academic programs and assessment results. Much of their work was done in standing committees which met frequently and reported back to the board: governance, finance, development, personnel, and facilities. Minutes from these committees were examined by team members.

Board members and administrators reported that the board members' roles and responsibilities are well understood. They stated that the board oversees school policy and finances and does not micromanage or participate in hiring and firing staff, with the exception of the executive director. For example, board meeting minutes indicated that a principal was recently appointed by the interim executive director (not by the board), while the board approved a recommended policy to restructure the administration of the school from a principal and assistant principal to two principals. Board members and the interim executive director also stated that members have received training from the Charter School Association and ESE, and that new members received an orientation including training materials discussed previously in this section.

Administrators and board members described effective communications. In separate team interviews with board members and with administrators they described a common mission and goals for the school, and they stated that both groups had shared in the development of the Accountability Plan and the revised mission statement. They described common views on such areas as collaboration, the importance of a seamless K through 12 school, and the use of assessment to measure academic success. They referred to a communication process of two triangles, one inverted on top of the other, where all communications went through a common vertex: the interim executive director. Administrators praised the board for not micromanaging: for example, the appointment of a new principal was made by the interim executive director, and some staff's interest in unionization was handled at the staff level. Board members emphasized that their responsibility was fiscal oversight and policy. The chairman of the board reported that he met with the interim executive director and committee chairs regularly to set meeting agendas, and the interim executive director stated that members called her first when they heard concerns. Board members also praised the interim executive director for letting them know quickly about crises, and they felt well informed by presentations and reports at their meetings.

Team members reviewed the board's evaluation of the interim executive director, which was timely: dated September 23, 2009. The evaluation categories included communications, community relations, personnel, fiscal management, facilities management, instructional management, management of student services, planning, and professional growth; the comments and ratings were generally supportive. Board members reported that they had also evaluated themselves approximately two and four years ago.

The Board reported working for two years on a Strategic Plan with consultants at their annual retreats, and the plan was approved in 2008. The plan sets four general goals: to become a seamless K through 12 school, to focus on academic excellence for all students, to secure the financial viability of the school, and to ensure effective school and board leadership. Some goals have sub-goals such as fundraising/development and the search for a permanent executive director. The plan includes key actions, with the owner/monitor of progress for each action, deadlines, and status. The board has also identified a more effective development process as a goal so that in the future remodeling can take place in the existing unfinished space at the school to provide extra classrooms, a library, and a multipurpose space that can serve as a gymnasium, cafeteria and auditorium.

5. The school has a well designed and efficient hiring procedure in place that involves administration, board members, teachers, parents and students. SSCPS has had some difficulty recruiting a new, permanent executive director and is losing the principal for grades 7 through 12 in December. An interim principal has been identified.

According to the interim executive director, the school's hiring practices were recently revised to implement long-needed changes identified by the school's attorney. For example, the school has implemented a new policy that limits the hiring of family members of students at the school. The school recruits from standard pools such as online job sites, newspapers and job fairs.

The hiring process is initiated with postings being placed on job sites. Incoming resumes are initially screened by the business manager. Resumes that pass through the initial screening are then forwarded to the principal and level coordinator, who recommends several to be interviewed by the hiring committee. The hiring committee consists of about six people, including the principal, level coordinator, teacher, parent, and, at the high school level, a student. The committee recommends one or two candidates to the principal who may hire at that time. If a second interview is necessary, it is conducted by the interim executive director. For the hiring of a principal a larger committee is formed. The principal candidate spends the day visiting the school and is interviewed by a board and parent panel.

A new search will commence at the beginning of the year for a full-time executive director. The school hopes to recruit an individual with development expertise. One principal has been at the school for 15 years, while the other will be leaving December 1, 2009 after a year at the school. He is leaving because of commuting issues. An interim replacement from within the teaching staff has been identified. The school is satisfied with the level of turnover. The interim executive director has been in place for approximately two years and other administrators have been in place for many years.

6. SSCPS maintains a strong focus on providing professional development that will have an impact on teachers' instruction and classroom management in the classroom.

Professional development has included a week-long summer session as well as ongoing professional development during the year. Professional development was provided in the 2008-2009 school year to refresh teachers' skills in Writing Across the Curriculum. Teachers received ten hours of training during the year. Furthermore, teachers in grades 9 through 12 participated in an interdisciplinary writing program in August 2009. A Collins writing consultant worked with the mathematics, science, English, history, and Spanish teachers.

7. SSCPS has a well established evaluation system in place for evaluating teachers, principals, and the interim executive director. Feedback is provided in the performance evaluation forms.

The executive director is the only individual evaluated by the board. Because of her interim status she has only been evaluated once, at the beginning of this year. The principals are evaluated by the interim executive director, and are evaluated on the efficacy of their instructional leadership, organizational leadership, administration and management, promotion of equity and appreciation of diversity, relationships with parents and community, and fulfillment of professional responsibilities. Each section of the evaluation contains a rubric as well as a substantial narrative discussion. The teacher evaluation process was discussed in the "Academic Program Success" section of this report.

8. SCCPS has well established systems in place for academic planning, financial planning, and facility/operational planning.

The financial planning process begins in the fall with the board's finance committee, which sets a timeline for the budget and considers what is happening at the legislative level and with the economy. For example, in consideration of the economic downturn this year, the finance committee instituted a five percent reduction in the school's budget.

Following that, the budget process moves to the administrative team, who begin working on a budget, giving consideration to issues such as the need for academic supplies based on the curricula and professional development needs. Level coordinators and teachers are consulted at this time. By March, the budget is submitted to the finance committee who revise it. Staff contracts are renegotiated at this time. According to the business manager, efforts are made to maximize teacher salaries in order to maintain a competitive salary scale with adjacent districts.

The academic planning process is multileveled, some of which, such as the curriculum review process has been discussed previously. The process begins by looking at data, at the student level, where goals are set for each child; and at the classroom and grade level where teachers and level coordinators look for missed standards in the curriculum. The education committee, a school level committee, is the committee responsible for the formal evaluation of the educational and academic program and reviews and approves suggested changes in curriculum, such as the move away from Singapore Math at the middle and high school levels. They were involved in the curriculum review process in the search for a new curriculum.

The board's facilities committee oversees the facility/operational planning process. To date, according to board interviews, plans for major renovations have been limited because of lack of success in raising money through a development consultant and a full time development director, neither of whom are still working with the school. All interviewed stakeholders felt that the team structures at the school played a strong role in developing and sustaining effective educational and supporting programs for students.

The meeting structure at SSCPS incorporates leadership, whole school, grade level and subject area meetings. Many of the same individuals serve on multiple teams. The table below details these activities.

Meetings at SSCPS		
Team	Topics	Time
Administration team meeting- Interim executive director, principals, and the business manager	General administrative issues, student issues, and data	Tuesdays
Level coordinators, HS dean of students, principals, interim executive director, director of learning services	Educational topics- assessment analysis and formative assessment, curricular changes	3 to 4 times per month
Level coordinators with level teachers	Issues related to the level, student issues, academic issues regarding grade level issues (horizontal)	2 times per month
Grades K-6	Meet around a single curriculum topic and concerns about vertically aligning the instructional program (vertical)	Second Tuesday
Grades 7-12	By discipline, discussions related to that discipline including alignment between various different courses (vertical)	Second Tuesday
Whole staff	General school issues	Fourth Tuesday
<i>Source:</i> SSCPS Interim executive director		

9. SSCPS parents, staff, and students interviewed by the team were very satisfied with the school’s rigorous academic standards, discipline, and individualized support provided to students by SSCPS teachers.

The 11 SSCPS parents interviewed by the team expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the school. All spoke enthusiastically about school’s academic expectations, commitment to prepare their children for college, and zero tolerance for bullying. They described the school’s teachers as very committed to their students.

The parents praised the individualized support provided to their children by the school. They said the school supported struggling students and provided challenging work to advanced students. Parents said that teachers work late and are always accessible to parents. Furthermore, the school has EdLine, a web-based program that allows teachers to enter attendance, homework

assignments, and grades. Families have user accounts with a password. Both parents and students praised the program. Teachers post student grades, progress reports, homework, and the students may be missing. Parents told the team that there are no surprises about their children's progress and that the school makes their children accountable for their work.

Parents have access to teachers by email, telephone, and receive school communications in the form of the Update. Furthermore, parents said the school had a system called Alert Now that enables the school to call all parents if there is an emergency, to announce school closings, and to send out announcements of special events.

The school reports in its Application for Renewal that it collected 208 family surveys soliciting parent views on 47 statements. According to the survey, the following percentages of parents strongly agreed or agreed with the following statements:

- 85.9%.: Overall, I am satisfied with the educational experience and program at SSCPS.
- 94.8%: The school provides a safe environment in which student can learn.
- 94.4%.: The school provides a good balance of academic instruction and project/workshop participation.
- 89.5%.: The school offers a rigorous academic program that prepares students for future schooling.
- 97.2%.: The school leadership guides regular open communication through meetings, Updates, letters, web postings, telephone broadcasts, open houses and individual conferences.
- 83.7%: The school's exit standards are clear and the academic requirements are rigorous.
- 65.8%: The school provides adequate facilities for its students.

The ten students interviewed by the team characterized SSCPS as a school that allowed them the freedom to express their opinions and feelings. They cited several other reasons why they were happy with SSCPS: they said that teachers work with them, help them to understand the work, and go out of their way to do special things for students. One student told the team that her passion was writing; the teacher helped her to improve her writing skills and helped her with an application to attend a summer writing program. Students also said that teachers differentiate the work to make it easier for them to learn. Teachers give advanced work to students who need extra challenges; for struggling students, teachers stay after school to provide help.

Students were able to cite some of the key elements of the school's mission, such as "real life" skills through the project/workshop and respect for all. They told the team that the mission statement was long and that they could not remember it all. They noted that the discipline system in place was fair and that it was enforced. Students said fights do not happen. They also added that they had had anti-bullying discussions, and that they felt very safe in school.

Students also verified new instructional strategies by noting that they knew each day and in each subject what they were going to learn because their teachers listed the learning objectives for them on the board. Besides the objectives, students said the teachers listed the "do now" or "activator." Students reported that teachers reviewed the do now, taught the lesson, reviewed or

summed up, and assigned the homework. Students were knowledgeable about the school's exit standards and projects/workshops.

Teachers and administrative staff in interviews reported that they felt supported in their work. They also expressed that they felt that they had a strong voice in the school, primarily through their involvement in multiple committees.

10. SSCPS is a physically safe environment. The school has established clear policies prohibiting harassment and discrimination as well as guidelines encouraging a supportive and productive school climate. The team observed that students were polite, respectful and well behaved during the visit.

SSCPS has established an environment that is safe and secure for students and staff. The team found all outside doors to the school locked and a buzzer system in place at the front office to allow visitors in. According to the Application for Renewal, the school annually receives occupancy certificates to operate from the Town of Norwell. The town's building inspector, fire chief and health inspector must certify that the building is safe to operate as a public school.

Teachers, students, and parents interviewed by the team said that they felt safe at SSCPS. Students told the team that the school is based around respect, there are no cliques, and that fights do not occur at the school. New students are made to feel welcome and part of the community. The students told the team that students and parents had to sign a form from the student handbook that states that they understand and agree to the school's regulations.

Parents told the team that the school locks all doors. Parents and visitors are required to sign in and wear visitor passes when in the school. Parents said the school has a zero tolerance for bullying. The student handbook contains a code of conduct, code of ethics, and students and parents have to sign a form stating that they understand the school's policies.

The faculty and student handbooks contain policies to ensure that the school environment is free from bullying, harassment, and discrimination. According to the Application for Renewal and interviews with the interim executive director, the school scheduled a number of trainings and workshops on bullying, internet safety, and harassment for faculty, students, and parents in 2007, 2008, and 2009.

11. The SSCPS facility is suitable for delivering the school's programs. The school lacks a gymnasium; it makes effective use of its indoor common areas and outdoor play areas to provide physical activities to its students. The school has additional space it can renovate to enhance its programming when funding becomes available.

The team found the SSCPS facility to be suitable for delivering the school's programs. The facility is spacious and efficiently utilized. The school has 29 classrooms, an art room, music room/auditorium that seats 60, two faculty work areas, a small K through 8 library, tutoring spaces, resource rooms, faculty offices and two playgrounds areas. The building does not have a cafeteria or gymnasium. Although SSCPS has no gymnasium or other physical education facilities, the school makes effective use of its indoor common areas and outdoor play areas. According to the Application for Renewal and interviews with the interim executive director,

there is an additional 13,000 feet of space that will be renovated into a gymnasium, larger library, additional classrooms and/or tutoring spaces when funding becomes available.

According to the technology coordinator, the school has three computer labs, five AV carts, and three mobile carts with laptops for student use in the classroom. The school has wireless capability. The team observed a teacher and students using one of the labs during Writing and Publication Workshop.

The team observed that student artwork and student academic work adorned the hallways, the carpeted hallways were clean, and the classrooms were clean and well lit. Student papers as well as charts and other graphic aids were posted on the walls. Tables, chairs, and other furniture appeared to be in good repair and sufficient in quantity for the student body. Equipment varied according to needs; most classrooms had or a combination of, a white board, overhead projector, screen, television, teacher computer, two or three computers for student use, student texts and manipulatives for instruction. Teachers told the team that they had the resources they needed for their instructional programs.

The team observed the school's efforts to become environmentally friendly or greener. The school had converted a diesel van to one fueled by vegetable oil. Energy is conserved by turning off lights and computers. Students told the team that they can send in their reports electronically, thereby, saving paper.

Parents were satisfied with the facility; however, they told the team that the school has no gym or cafeteria. They said that the school has additional space that is currently undeveloped in which to it may enhance its academic program in the future. According to board members interviewed by the team, when funding is available, the school will renovate the space to include a gym, additional classrooms, and a larger library.

12. SSCPS has undertaken several activities to disseminate models for replication and best practices to other public schools.

The SSCPS Application for Renewal reported dissemination activities undertaken by SSCPS. The following are several examples cited in the Application for Renewal entailing the dissemination of models for replication and best practices to other public schools in Massachusetts:

- In the 2008-2009 school year, SSCPS collaborated with the teachers at the John F. Kennedy Elementary School in Holbrook. SSCPS received a \$72,500 Charter School Dissemination Grant to share best practices in literacy with KK, grade 1, and special education teachers at the JFK in Holbrook.
- In the 2008-2009 school year, SSCPS collaborated with the South Shore Educational Collaborative and the Randolph and Holbrook Public Schools to apply for and receive two Title 1 grants. Both of these grants supported mathematics training for upper elementary teachers in the summer of 2009. One of the grants provided summer mathematics instruction for at-risk students.

- SSCPS invites educators to visit the school, sit in on classes, and meet with teachers and administrators to learn about the SSCPS model. Over the past four years, SSCPS has hosted educators from area Catholic Schools, the Boston Public Schools, the Fall River Public Schools, and schools from out of state.
- SSCPS teachers and administrators attend workshops and conferences and a number of staff members were invited to be presenters at school conferences. In 2008 and 2009, school leaders and teachers participated in Charter School Study Group visits.

Appendix: Renewal Inspection Site Visit Schedule

Day 1 Monday- Document Review (Team Only)			Day 2 Tuesday			Day 3- Wednesday			
Time	Scheduled Meetings	Classroom Observations	Time	Scheduled Meetings	Classroom Observations	Time	Scheduled Meetings	Classroom Observations	
8:15-12:15	Team Organizational Meeting/Document Review		7:30 – 8:00	Team Meeting		7:30 – 8:00	Team Meeting	Classroom Observations	
12:00-1:00			8:00-9:00	Board of Trustees Interview		8:00-9:00			
1:00-2:00		Observe Project Classes	9:00-10:00	Meeting with Administrative Team		9:00-10:00			
2:00-3:00			10:00-11:00	Interview with the Business Manager	10:00-11:00				
3:00-3:30			11:00-12:00		11:00-12:00		11:00-12:00	Student Focus Group	
3:30-5:00			12:00-1:00	Team Working Lunch/Teacher Focus Group (11:45-12:45)	12:00-1:00		12:00-1:00	Team Working Lunch	
			1:00-2:00		Classroom Observations	1:00-2:00	Parent Focus Group (1:30-2:30)	Classroom Observations	
			2:00-3:00			2:00-3:00			
			3:00-3:30			3:00-3:30			
			3:30-5:00	Team Meeting / Check In with Principal		3:30-5:00	Team Meeting / Check In with Principal		

Day 4- Thursday		
Time	Scheduled Meetings/Focus Groups	Classroom Observations
7:30 – 8:00	Team Meeting	
8:00 – 9:00		Classroom Observations.
9:00 – 10:00		
10:00-11:00		
11:00-12:00		
12:00 – 1:00	Lunch	
1:00 – 2:00		Classroom Observations
2:00-3:30		
3:30- 5:00	Team Meeting / Check In with Principal	

Day 5-Friday		
Time	Scheduled Meetings/Focus Groups	Classroom Observations
7:30 – 11:30		
8:00 – 9:00		
9:00 – 10:00		
10:00 – 11:00		
11:30 – 12:00		
12:00 – 1:00	Team Summation Session	
1:00 – 2:00		
2:00-4:30		
4:30- 5:00	Thanks and Farewell	