



Park City Prep Charter School

Annual Report 2013-2014

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Mission Statement

The mission of Park City Prep is to maximize the academic achievement of each student in preparation for admission to, and success at, selective college preparatory high schools.

As part of a rigorous curriculum that emphasizes mathematics, scientific inquiry and technology, the faculty and staff work to instill in each student the “PREP” values of responsibility, excellence and perseverance, and to imbue students with a vision of a future filled with opportunity and promise.

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From the Director and Governing Board Chair...

The 2013-2014 school year was a momentous one for Park City Prep Charter School on many counts. Our charter was renewed, we added a fifth grade, our application for repayment of debt was approved and we completed the last phase of construction of our new fourth floor in the school building.

When our first charter was renewed, it was only for three years, rather than the maximum five years. At that time, we were informed that in order to receive a full five-year renewal, we had to demonstrate greater performance in the area of language arts. On the strength of our students' improvement in language arts over the past three years, and their continued strength in the area of mathematics, we were granted a full five-year renewal this past year.

In light of the outstanding progress our last graduating cohort made over the three years that they attended our school, we recognized that having students start our school one year earlier, starting in grade 5 rather than grade 6, would enable our students to make even greater progress and growth. On the strength of how well we did in just three years, our application to add a fifth grade to our existing 6th through 8th grade school was approved. Based on that approval, we immediately took steps to insure that will have our first fifth grade class in September of 2014.

We also applied for a grant to be used for repayment of the debt that we incurred in moving into our new building in the fall of 2013. Again, based upon our impressive track record, we were awarded the full amount that we had requested. At this point, we are awaiting approval of the funds from the State of Connecticut Bond Commission. With this award, we will be able to pay down our entire debt and use some of the funds to pay for programs and materials to support our ever-expanding educational opportunities for our students.

When we moved into our new location in 2013, we were able to occupy three of the four floors of the building. With the upper, fourth floor unoccupied, we were concerned that another tenant could rent that space. With the approval of the addition of a fifth grade, we were able to take over the fourth floor and have full occupancy of the building, ensuring an even higher degree of safety and security for our students and staff.

With the addition of our fifth grade, a full, five-year renewal of our charter, paying down our debt and securing the entire building as our own, we are on course to continue to demonstrate that charter schools, such as ours, do, in fact, make a much-needed, positive difference in closing the achievement gap and ensuring that young people in Bridgeport have every educational opportunity to succeed in the future.

Bruce Ravage, Executive Director

John Bryk, Board Chair

About Our School...

School Program

In 2013-2014, Park City Prep served 260 students in grades 6 through 8. Classes met from 7:55 am until 3:55 pm. Extended day classes and activities ran from 4:00 to 5:00 pm various days of the week. On Fridays, students are dismissed at noon, after which the staff is engaged in meetings and professional development. The focus of the instructional program is science, technology and math; however, a comprehensive curriculum included courses in English, social studies, computer science, art, and physical fitness and health, as well as science and math. Technology is imbedded in all curriculum areas.

Admission Process

Admission was open to all students entering grade 6 in August of 2013. Applications were accepted between January and April for admission by public lottery, which was held in April of 2013.

Students were recruited through direct mailings to their homes as well as to the principals, counselors and parent association presidents in the Bridgeport Public Schools. In the past, outreach was made to boards of education in various surrounding communities, as well.

Transportation was provided by the City of Bridgeport for all its resident students. Parents of the few students who resided outside of Bridgeport provided transportation for their children.

Student Information

Enrollment Applications				
		Total Received	Accepted	Wait Listed
2013-2014	Grade 6	117	96	6
2014-2015	Grade 5	120	91	15
	Grade 6	144	92	38

Curriculum Design and Instructional Method and Modification

Brief Summary

Science is the core curriculum that drives an inquiry-based, hands-on instructional program throughout all subject areas. Aligned with the content standards and expected performances outlined in the *Core Science Curriculum Frameworks*, and updated in alignment with *The Next Generation Science Standards*, the academic program serves to support the overall mission of the school to promote the greater participation of under-represented minorities in the fields of science, technology and math in the future.

The instructional program consists of inquiry-based, developmentally-appropriate units of study in life, physical and earth science. Through issues-oriented investigations, students develop greater appreciation of the relevance of science in their lives and in the world around them. Students learn to conduct investigations by making careful observations, asking critical questions and by collecting, analyzing and interpreting data. Students use mathematical operations to calculate and analyze data and develop the reading, writing and speaking skills needed to conduct research and report findings. Across all curriculum areas, skills are developed that enable students to utilize technology as an essential tool to access information and analyze data.

In order for students to recognize the relevance of science in their daily lives, to appreciate its impact on our world, and for students to envision future careers in science-related fields, the social, economic and political connections to scientific research and discoveries are highlighted throughout the curriculum, as well as in science classes.

A combination of teaching methods are used - both direct and student-centered, inquiry-based instruction. Our goal is to help students develop a firm foundation in basic skills and acquire the background information to provide a context in which to solve “real world” problems and develop confidence to think creatively and independently. Research-based curricula, standards-based instruction, regular assessment and on-going professional development are all part of a plan to ensure that students excel. Teachers are expected to set expectations of excellence for their students and hold themselves, as well as their students, accountable for exemplary performance.

In the past year, we have aligned our curriculum with the new *Common Core Standards* in both language arts and math.

School Goals

I. Educational Progress of Students

With the advent of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC) testing this year, there was no statewide standardized test data available to use as a basis for evaluating our students' performance with respect to state-wide standards and goals in language arts and math; therefore, we set school-wide goals, which served as the basis for assessing our students' performance in those areas of instruction in 2013-2014.

In terms of science, we used the Connecticut Mastery Tests (CMT's) to measure our students' performance and progress in that subject area.

GOAL A: Students will show substantial growth in reading and math from September to June, as measured by pre- and post- STAR Reading and STAR Math assessments, respectively.

Measurable Objective A.1:

There will be substantial growth in the percentage of students at or above grade level in reading, from September to June, as measured by pre- and post- STAR Reading assessment.

Measurement Tool:

STAR Reading assessment

Benchmarks:

The percentage of students who score at or above grade level will increase at least 10% from September to June.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

Student Performance in Reading						
	Sept. 2013		June 2014		Growth	
	GLE	At/Above Grade Level	GLE	At/Above Grade Level		
*Grade 6						
Grade 7	5.9	33%	6.8	53%		+20%
Grade 8	7.0	37%	7.4	49%		+12%

- Grade 6 data was not available.

Although our target goals were exceeded in both grade 7 and grade 8, the average overall performance remained below grade level.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

Our goals and objectives remain the same for the 2014-2015 school year.

Improvements Needed for 2014-2015:

We are implementing the Readers and Writers Workshop model in our language arts program and expect to have a positive impact on students’ reading levels.

We would like to see grade level growth of at least 1.0 to 1.5 in the course of one school year.

Measurable Objective A.2:

There will be substantial growth in the percentage of students at or above grade level in math, from September to June, as measured by pre- and post- STAR Math assessment.

Measurement Tool:

STAR Math assessment

Benchmarks:

The percentage of students who score at or above grade level will increase at least 10% from September to June.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

Student Performance in Math						
	Sept. 2013		June 2014		Growth	
	GLE	At/Above Grade Level	GLE	At/Above Grade Level		
Grade 6*				71%		
Grade 7	5.7	33%	7.9	63%		+30%
Grade 8	8.3	66%	9.8	84%		+18%

* Grade 6 pre-test data was not available.

We far exceeded our target goals in both grade 7 and grade 8. There was an average growth of more than two years in grade 7 and 1.5 years in Grade 8, both indicators of substantial progress.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

Our goals and objectives remain the same for the 2014-2015 school year.

Improvements Needed for 2014-2015:

We intend to maintain the same instructional program in 2014-2015 that produced such positive results in 2013-2014.

GOAL B: There will be substantial growth in the percentage of students at or above the Proficient level (Level 3), as well as the Goal level (Level 4), in science, from 2011(end of grade 5) to 2013 (end of grade 8), as measured by the science CMT's.

Measurable Objective B.1:

There will be substantial growth in the percentage of students at or above the Proficient level (Level 3) in science, from 2011(end of grade 5) to 2013 (end of grade 8), as measured by the science CMT's.

Measurement Tools:

2011 & 2013 Science CMT's

Benchmarks:

The percentage of students scoring at the Proficient level will increase at least 10% from grade 5 to grade 8.

Measurable Objective B.2:

There will be substantial growth in the percentage of students at or above the Goal level (Level 4) in science, from 2011(end of grade 5) to 2013 (end of grade 8), as measured by the science CMT's.

Measurement Tools:

2011 & 2013 Science CMT's

Benchmarks:

The percentage of students scoring at the Goal level will increase at least 10% from grade 5 to grade 8.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

Science CMT Progress from 2011 to 2013

	Grade 5 (2011)		Grade 8 (2013)		Improvement
Proficient (Level 3)	45/67	67%	51/67	76%	+9%
Goal (Level 4)	18/67	27%	29/67	43%	+16%

The goal was nearly met in terms of the increase in the number scoring at the Proficient level and substantially exceeded at the higher Goal level.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

It is clear that we are making significant progress with the enhancements we have made to our science program in recent years; therefore, we do not want to make any major changes in the instructional program. We will continue to find ways to make it even more effective. For example, are presently modifying our curriculum to align with the new *Next Generation Science Standards*. We have also designated our most veteran science teacher to be a lead teacher to mentor our new and less experienced science teachers, particularly in grades 5 and 6, as those elementary level teachers have less background and training in the area of science.

Improvements Needed for 2014-2015:

1. Although substantial progress was achieved, our goal is to meet, or exceed, the statewide average overall.
2. Although many of them did improve from grade 5 to grade 8, in terms of absolute scores, our female students scored much higher than our male students and our Hispanic students outperformed our Black students. Going forward, our goal is for our male and our Black students attain higher scores than they did in the last three years, regardless of progress from grade 5 to grade 8.

II. Accomplishment of Mission, Purpose and Specialized Focus

The mission of Park City Prep is to maximize the academic achievement of each student in preparation for admission to, and success at, selective college preparatory high schools.

As part of a rigorous curriculum that emphasizes mathematics, scientific inquiry and technology, the faculty and staff work to instill in each student the “PREP” values of responsibility, excellence and perseverance, and to imbue students with a vision of a future filled with opportunity and promise.

GOAL A: To prepare our students for admission to, and success at, selective college preparatory high schools.

Measurable Objective A.1: To make substantial growth in the performance of our students on standardized measures of reading comprehension and mathematics.

Exemplary reading and math performance will qualify our students for admission to selective, college preparatory high schools.

Measurable Objective A.2: To gain admission to selective college/career preparatory high schools.

In the past year, 73% of our graduates were accepted to one or more selective public choice or private high schools, setting them on a path for success in college and careers.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

Our goal is for at least 90% of the next graduating cohort, the class of 2015, to gain admission to one or more public choice or private high schools.

Improvements/Plans for 2014-2015:

Based upon our success in the past 2013-2014 school year, we intend to continue building upon our academic successes by

- continually enhancing and updating our curriculum, in alignment with the new Common Core;
- maintaining a high level of continuous professional development;
- keeping our parents and students well-informed about high school choices.

GOAL B: Students will demonstrate proficiency in using computer technology as a learning tool.

Measurable Objective B.1:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in using Microsoft Word, Excel and Power Point.

Measurement Tool

Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and Power Point presentations.

Benchmarks:

Assessments of various Microsoft Word documents, Excel spreadsheets and Power Point presentations.

Measurable Objective B.2:

Students will demonstrate proficiency in doing Internet-based research.

Measurement Tool

Projects involving research from Internet sources

Benchmarks:

Satisfactory scores on assessments and research projects

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

The majority of students made significant progress mastering computer skills of which they had little knowledge before coming to Park City Prep, such as

producing Power Point presentations, learning to master the keyboard and conducting research. With the addition of mobile MacBook labs and I-Pads, technology is being integrated across all curriculum areas more broadly and more effectively.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

We will continue to fully utilize the additional computers and I-Pads, which are already having a clear, positive impact on our students' technological literacy. We plan to add additional mobile computer labs as teachers are more and more utilizing them as daily instructional tools for their students.

Improvements Needed for 2014-2015:

Students will refine the skills developed in word-processing, researching and preparing presentations in each curriculum area.

We aim to accomplish this by continuing what we did last year:

- enhancing the integration of technology in all curriculum areas.
- providing greater professional development in computer technology for faculty.
- Expanding the use of I-Pads and mobile laptop labs.

III. Efforts to Reduce Racial, Ethnic and Economic Isolation and to Increase the Racial and Ethnic Diversity of the Student Body

Goal: Grade 8 students will seek and gain admission to selective high schools with more diverse student populations.

Measurable Objective:

1. Students will apply to selective high schools with more diverse student populations.
2. Students will gain admission to selective high schools with more diverse student populations.

Measurement Tool

Applications to selective high schools with more diverse student populations

Benchmark

1. At least 95% of students will apply to selective private or public choice high schools with more diverse student populations.
2. At least 90% of students will gain admission to selective private or public choice high schools with more diverse student populations.

Progress in Meeting the Goal:

1. 86% of students applied to selective private or public choice high schools with more diverse student populations.
2. 73% of students gained admission to selective private or public choice high schools with more diverse student populations.

Modification in Goal/Objectives for the 2014-2015 School Year:

Our goals and objectives remain the same; however, we continually seek to increase both the number of students applying to selective high schools and the number of students admitted to, and attending, schools of choice.

Although 73% did gain admission to a choice high school, we would like to see an even greater number of students attend the most selective high schools, including more independent schools.

Improvements Needed for 2014-2015:

1. To get all grade 8 students to seek “choice” public or private high schools or high school programs.
2. Enhance the “test prep” program by starting earlier and including more students.
3. Invite directors of admission from additional schools to address the students and their families.
4. Have more alumni who attend private, or public “choice” high schools address our students and parents.
5. Take grade 8 students on visits to a greater number and variety of private and public high schools of choice.
6. Provide students and parents with increased assistance with the high school applications and the financial aid applications for those applying to tuition-charging schools.

Efforts to Effectively Attract, Enroll and Retain Students from Among High Need Populations

Pursuant to Section 10-66bb(g) of the Connecticut General Statutes (C.G.S.) describe efforts the charter school has made to effectively attract, enroll and retain students from among the following populations.

(a) students with a history of low academic performance,

In 2013, 73% of the graduating cohort scored at or above Goal level on the CMT’s (average of language arts and math). When they came to our school three years earlier, after grade 5, only 27% of that same cohort had attained

Goal level or better performance. This data vividly illustrates the fact that we attract and retain students with a prior history of low academic performance.

For 2013-2014, we recruited in exactly the same manner as we had the year earlier and enrolled students from the very same feeder schools and neighborhoods as we had the year before.

(b) students who receive free or reduced priced lunches pursuant to federal laws and regulations

Annually, approximately 60% of our students receive free or reduced price lunches.

(c) students with a history of behavioral and social difficulties

Many of our students come to us with histories of behavioral issues every year. In the vast majority of cases, the problems that these students had in their former schools are much less severe at Park City Prep, demonstrating that, in an environment with is supportive, structured and well-supervised, problems are minimized.

(d) students identified as requiring special education

In the 2013-2014 school year, 12.5% of our students had special needs (9% with IEP's and 3.5% with 504 plans). This is not very different from Bridgeport's public schools.

(e) students who are English language learners

We have many students whose families do not speak English as their primary language at home; however, since we do not accept students before 6th grade, by that age, most of them will have exited from ELL. Our recruitment literature is mailed to every family in both English and Spanish and posted on our website in Spanish, as well as English.

Yearly, our student population consists of students from every non-magnet public school in Bridgeport (as well as a small number from local magnet schools or charter schools), representing the full spectrum of students from those schools (Note: Local magnet schools are selective in admission and retention of students.), including students with special needs (Students with IEP's & 504 plans). For example, in this 2013-2014 school year, 12.5% of our students have special needs.

To be sure that we are reaching out to every segment of the larger Bridgeport community, our recruitment includes a direct mailing, with an enrollment application, in both English & Spanish, to the parents of every 5th grade student attending a Bridgeport public school. In addition, an individual

mailing is made to every Bridgeport public school principal, school counselor and parents' association president.

Further, we have placed recruitment posters in high-traffic locations and announcements are placed in local newspapers. An appearance on Cablevision News 12 also gave the opportunity to attend our school an even wider audience.

Every year, we make a concerted effort to get coverage from the *Connecticut Post*, as well. One or two articles are published each year, including some feature articles, presenting our school as a very attractive option for families in and around Bridgeport.

Financial Information

Park City Prep Charter School has maintained a healthy financial status since the school's inception in 2006. A generally recognized indicator of financial health is the school's net assets. As of June 30, 2014, the net assets were \$1,217,265.

Of this amount, \$909,822 was restricted. In addition another \$250,000 was restricted by the Board of Directors for future expansion of the school and associated costs. Restricted assets are reserved for general fixed assets.

\$57,443 was unrestricted and available to be used to meet the school's ongoing expenses, programs, and activities.

As of June 30, 2013, net assets were \$1,221,477, of which \$700,000 was restricted by the Board of Directors and \$29,419 was unrestricted. As of June 30, 2012, net assets were \$1,272,378, of which \$225,221 was unrestricted.

The net assets have remained comparable each year even as significant expenditures were made for the relocation of the school, computer purchases, furniture and fixtures for the new school, textbooks, and teacher professional development.

The school's financial statements reflect a strong financial history because of well-managed finances and sound business practices.

The compliance reports issued under the State of Connecticut Single Audit Act noted no material weaknesses or significant deficiencies in Park City Prep's internal control over financial reporting. There were no reportable instances of noncompliance with regard to the financial statements or major programs.

FY 2013-2014**Jun 30, 14****ASSETS****Current Assets****Checking/Savings**

1010 · People's Bank - Checking 68,746.31

1020 · People's Bank - Savings 915,168.97

Total Checking/Savings 983,915.28**Accounts Receivable**

1110 · A/R Bridgeport Bd of Ed 11,400.00

Total Accounts Receivable 11,400.00**Other Current Assets**

1322 · A/R - NSF Checks 211.50

1323 · A/R - State lunch reimbursement 21,280.74

1450 · Prepaid expenses 31,666.67

1452 · Prepaid Health Insurance 16,021.84

Total Other Current Assets 69,180.75**Total Current Assets** 1,064,496.03**Fixed Assets**

1630 · Leasehold improvements 7,783.25

1635 · Leasehold Imp. 1550 State St. 565,338.89

1640 · Furniture, fixtures, & equip 256,457.07

1641 · Computers and Peripherals 531,902.05

1642 · Signage for 1550 State Street 23,768.54

1643 · Security System Equipment 37,905.00

1745 · Accum deprec- furn,fix,equip (513,333.00)

Total Fixed Assets 909,821.80**Other Assets**

1801 · Security Deposits 84,520.00

Total Other Assets 84,520.00**TOTAL ASSETS** **2,058,837.83****LIABILITIES & EQUITY****Liabilities****Current Liabilities****Other Current Liabilities**

2110 · A/L - Payroll 140,834.80

2111 · A/L - Fica & Medicare 1,809.41

2115 · A/L - TRB withholding (6,439.44)

2116 · A/L - 403B Withholding 2,022.69

2150 · A/L - Other Expenses 17,955.68

2201 · A/L -Audit and Tax Fees 17,800.00

2550 · Line of Credit - People's Bank 667,590.50

Total Other Current Liabilities 841,573.64

Total Current Liabilities	<u>841,573.64</u>
Total Liabilities	841,573.64
Equity	
3010 · Unrestrict (retained earnings)	1,221,477.00
Net Income	<u>(4,212.81)</u>
Total Equity	<u>1,217,264.19</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u>2,058,837.83</u>

Best Practices

- 1. Professional Development: Ongoing professional development, which is aligned with the school’s common focus and high expectations to improve the performance of all students, is critical in high-performing schools. These professional development offerings are focused and informed by research and school/classroom-based assessments. Appropriate instructional support and resources are provided to implement approaches and techniques learned through professional development.***

Indicators

These research-based indicators represent qualities found in successful schools:

- Professional development addresses student learning needs as well as program needs, identified through a variety of means (assessment, data, mandates and curriculum changes).**

The student learning needs, as well as the program needs, were identified by a variety of means including Connecticut Mastery Test results, Blue Ribbon data, Common Formative Assessments, performance tasks, and student work. Grade 6 Math Fluency results were analyzed using Xtra.math.org. Professional development was provided throughout the year by an independent Math Consultant and an independent Language Arts Consultant. The professional development included researching new common core math programs, reviewing common core math and ELA standards, reviewing SBAC practice materials, participating in the SBAC practice tests, providing intervention resources, conducting classroom observations, modeling strategies, analyzing student data, attending an assessment consortium, and sharing best practice instructional strategies.

- **Professional development is planned, ongoing and systemic.**
Professional development was on-going and occurred every Friday. Math teachers attended the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics regional conference and Language Arts and Math lead teachers attended the C.E.S. Assessment Consortium along with the independent consultants. Science teachers attended the National Science Teachers Association conference in Boston, as well.
- **Professional development, which addresses school goals, is a collaborative process involving all stakeholders.**
Classroom teachers, the special education teacher and instructional aides were involved in a collaborative process to provide the best support for the students at each grade level.
- **Professional development supports the development of collaborative learning communities by providing time for staff to meet, share, reflect and modify instructional practice.**
Staff met with consultants in grade level teams during prep times and during the designated 3 hour PD every Friday. Classroom coaching and modeling by consultants was ongoing as needed.
- **Modifications are made, as needed, in assessment methods and procedures to address special needs of students.**
Math Intervention and Language Arts intervention was provided to small groups of students. Teachers providing the intervention worked with the consultants to plan and deliver the instruction. Special Education modifications were made by the special education teacher.
- **Professional development results in improved student performance.**
In the three years since our last charter renewal, with consistent, on-going professional development, we saw a dramatic improvement in the percent of students in our 2013 graduating cohort performing at both the proficient and goal levels on the CMT's.
- **Professional development outcomes are implemented with appropriate support and resources.**
All instructional supports and materials have been financed by the school to ensure that our teachers could benefit from the latest and most effective resources for implementing the instruction based upon the professional training.

- **Professional development programs are monitored and evaluated through data gathering and analysis.**

The students' performance on common formative assessments, the CMT's and observations of lessons were the benchmarks by which we measured the effectiveness of the professional development.

Status of Charter Renewal Findings and Follow-Up Activities

Renewal Report Responses (updated January 22, 2014)

C.1 Responses to Observations and Comments:

- **Board of Directors**
 - Effective immediately following the date of the renewal visit, the status of the Executive Director and Assistant Director was changed from voting members, to ex officio members, having no vote nor can they be part of a quorum.
 - Effective immediately following the date of the renewal visit, the Assistant Director ceased serving as the Treasurer of the Board. A search for a member of the community, with strong financial background, immediately commenced. At the Board meeting immediately following the renewal visit, Kenneth Flatto, a CPA and former First Selectman of Fairfield, was unanimously elected to our Board and also elected to serve as its Treasurer. Ken also serves on our Finance Committee.
- **Policies & Procedures:**
 - New Hires – Based upon the recommendation of the OIA, the Board will approve new hires before the Operations Manager enters them into the payroll system.
 - Cash Receipts
 - A daily log of cash receipts is being kept and maintained by our receptionist, who opens the mail daily.
 - Classroom receipt books and cash receipt logs are being reconciled at least once a month.
 - Check Signing – Checks of \$5,000 or more (other than for recurring payments such as rent, which the Board has already authorized), will be signed by the Executive Director and co-signed by the Board Chair or the Board Treasurer, both of whom serve on the Finance Committee.

C.2 Responses to Observations and Comments:

- **Restricted Funds:** “The school is now in its new facility, therefore the restriction of those funds should be removed in the near future.”
The funds were unrestricted to take a \$700,000 loan from People’s United Bank to finance the move and fit-out of our new building. The Executive Director is submitting an application for *RFP 128 for State Charter School Building Projects, General Improvements, and/or Debt Repayments for School Building Projects*, which was just issued and due on February 28, 2014. It is our hope and expectation that we will be able to recover the costs that we incurred as a result of moving into a new building. \$450,000 of restricted funds will be unrestricted in the 2014-2015 school year.

Governance

Governing Board Meetings held in 2013-2014:

October 2; December 4; February 12; March 26; May 22; and, June 12.

Summary of Major Policy Decisions

- Approved application to add grade 5 to current grades 6-8 configuration, increasing enrollment from 260 to 356 students.
- Approved addition of a 4th floor to our new building and spend a significant portion of our savings on the fit-out of the new space and additional rental.
- Continued to award performance bonuses based upon both student performance and other professional responsibilities.

Summary of Other Key Accomplishments

- ☐ *The final phase of our school expansion was approved to add a fifth grade and occupy the 4th floor of our school building.*
- ☐ *73% of Park City Prep students gained admission to selective public choice and private high schools such as The Center for Global Studies, St. Luke’s School in New Caanan, Hopkins School in New Haven, Notre Dame of Fairfield, Fairfield College Preparatory School, as well as many others.*
- ☐ *Added the positions of Technology (Computer Science) teacher and part-time Social Worker.*

Attachments

In the News...

Connecticut Post

ONE OF THE STATE'S BEST PERFORMING CHARTER SCHOOLS

Park City Prep enjoys new home at former factory

Linda Conner Lambeck

Published 4:47 pm, Friday, September 13, 2013



Chris Van Etten teaches on the first day of school at Park City Prep on Monday, Sept. 9, 2013. The eight year old charter school moved to a new location on State St. in Bridgeport. Photo: BK Angeletti, B.K. Angeletti

BRIDGEPORT -- Park City Prep, the 8-year-old, state-funded charter middle school traded one old factory building for another this summer and moved from the former Singer factory building on Barnum Avenue to the former [Bead Chain Manufacturing](#)

building clear across town on the West Side. Its new digs on State Street, director [Bruce Ravage](#) said, are brighter, bigger, and a place the school doesn't have to share with dozens of other businesses.

The 30,000 square foot space has been custom renovated to include science laboratories and there is till room to grow. If it is granted permission from the state, the school, with 260 sixth through eighth graders wants to add a fifth grade next year.

"Most charter schools have at least four years to work with kids," said Bruce Ravage, the founder and director of the school from the start.

One of 18 state charter schools, Park City Prep has quietly established itself has one of the best performing.

In a city where some 33.7 percent of students met the math goal on the Connecticut Mastery Test and 45.3 percent met the reading goal in 2013, Park City Prep students far exceeded expectations and the state average. This year, 73.3 percent of Park City eighth graders met the goal in math and 79.4 percent of seventh graders met the goal in reading

"I am getting the results I hoped I would," said Ravage. What he looks for is the amount of improvement students make over the three years they are at the school.

Park City Prep recruits students from all over the city. It has a special education population comparable to the city, but very few English Language Learners.

More than anything else, Ravage, who previously was director of the [Math/Science Institute](#) at [Stuyvesant High School](#) in New York City, credits the results to the teachers he hires and the rules the school keeps. Two teachers, math teacher [Jennifer White](#) and social studies teacher [Chris Van Etten](#), have been with him from the start.

"I get very few teachers who have the mettle to be successful with our students," said Ravage. "They need high energy and a sincere desire to work with our student population because making a difference makes a difference to them."

He also looks for a dynamic stage presence. Students need to be engaged, he said.

Ravage said he spends a good chunk of his budget -- the school gets \$10,500 per pupil from the state -- on teacher training.

Two consultants come in twice a month, he said, to work with teachers and model lessons, and teachers attended summer workshops.

The school has a science theme, but students spend two hours on reading and one on math in every eight hour academic day. Students are also grouped by ability.

As for being a stickler for rules, students will be called out for walking through the halls without the right belt on. "We take pride in our look," said Ravage.

The school has gotten better, though, at applying positive discipline. Students who earn academic honors wear special scholar sweaters. During one ice breaker this week, eighth graders in an advisory class where most wore sweaters were asked to choose between being popular and being smart. In this school, it may have been peer pressure talking, but 17 of the 20 in the class chose being smart.

The school's suspension rate is half of what it was two years ago. In 2010-11, 75 in-school suspensions were served and 25 out of school suspensions. Last year, that number was down to 25 in-school, 1 expulsion, and 23 out-of-school suspensions, most of which were one or two days in duration, Ravage said.

Earlier this year, the state took charter schools to task for having much higher student suspension rates than traditional public schools. "We don't suspend for minor infractions," Ravage said. There is also a concerted effort to intervene early so that misbehavior does not escalate.

That's one thing [Precious Bynum](#), 13, likes about Park City Prep; teachers know how to handle kids who act up. "And there are not a lot of people that you disagree with in this school," Bynum added.

Student turnover is also down. In 2013, 80 of the 96 students who started as sixth graders graduated eighth grade. Most who left, Ravage said, moved out of the area.

"Occasionally a family is not pleased that they have to honor the contract that says their kid has to follow the rules. We try to keep them here. Sometimes families get frustrated."

Others like the discipline. "I like that it is a better learning place," said [Andre Lawson](#), 14, an eighth grader. "There are not as many kids getting into trouble."

Fewer students per class -- the average class size is 22 -- means less friction, said Lawson, whose last school was Batalla, a school with more than 1,000 students.

As for the new space, [Caitlyn Hughes](#), 14, who graduated last year and now attends St. Luke's High School in New Canaan, said she is not jealous. She said she got out of Park City Prep what she wanted. Like Park City Prep, St. Luke's has small classes. "I felt very prepared," she said.

In the new space, voices will echo against the walls and high ceilings until acoustic panels -- in the schools yellow and navy blue colors -- are installed.

The school spent about \$500,000 toward the renovation and has a five-year lease, with an option for five more. The annual rent is \$400,000.

"The one thing I liked was that this building was a shell. We could customize it to meet our needs. This is a much better, secure, safer environment," Ravage said.

Education Matters

Park City Prep Charter school wins renewal, will add fifth grade

Posted on February 7, 2014 | By Linda Conner Lambeck



Bruce Ravage

BRIDGEPORT – The state school board on Thursday gave a five-year renewal to Park City Prep Charter School and approved its request to expand to the fifth grade.

The eight-year-old charter school, which has a math and science focus, currently serves six through eighth graders. The school, located at 1550 State Street, will grow from 260 to 300 students beginning this fall.

Bruce Ravage, the school's founder and director, said the school's attrition rate is three percent when students who move out of the area are not counted. He said in 2013, 96 percent of Park City Prep graduates gained admission to selective public and private high schools such as Hopkins in New Haven and Fairfield College Preparatory School.

For 2012-13, Park City Prep's school performance index – which factors in the state test scores of all students – was 72.9, compared to 53.7 for Bridgeport. In 2013, about one third of sixth graders in their first year at Park City scored at the goal level in math and 43.5 percent scored in the goal level in reading comparable to sixth graders in the district. Some 73.7 percent of eighth graders in 2013, after three years at Park City Prep met the state goal in math, more than double the city average. In reading, 67.5 met the goal, compared to 45.3 for the city.

Kids enjoy Trout in the Classroom program

Martin Armstrong

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"This is fun! I caught six fish," boasted a very happy Danielle Nichols as she reeled in her last fish from Bunnells Pond in Bridgeport.

Danielle, age 13, and 15 other students from Bridgeport's Park City Prep and Bridge Academy are participants in the Beardsley Zoo's Trout In The Classroom (TIC) program. Recently the students teamed up with the Connecticut Aquatic Resources Education (CARE) program for a day of hands on learning and some fishing.

The youngsters have been participating in the school-year long TIC program. With the help of Jim Knox, Education Director at the zoo and his staff, the students attend sixteen workshops at the Zoo during the school year.

They not only participate in the routine duties of raising trout from eggs to fry such as monitoring water quality and tank maintenance. But they also learn about the biodiversity of the Bridgeport area in general, and the Poquonnock River specifically, by doing stream habitat surveys.

Last week their assignment was to learn about catch and release fishing and how to fish efficiently and safely. Many of the students caught fish and some didn't. Those catching fish and attend Bridge Academy were: Tamia Bagley, 13, (bluegill and sunfish) and Andre Wilson, 13, (two pumpkinseeds).

From Park City Academy: Jennifer Olavarria, 13, (sunfish); Susana Franco, 12, (pumpkinseed); Juvaughn Lee, 13, (bluegill) and Odera Smart, 13, (pumpkinseed).

Not everybody caught fish. Kaija Powell, 12, and Diti Kapoor, 13, both fought and ended up losing a fish before they could land them.

Park City students Cherish Johnson, 12, caught a line full of seaweed and Jennifer Adorno, 13, landed some very wet tree leafs.

Even Ms. Kate Mayer from Park City Prep got into the `swing' of things and `hooked' a few trees.

Other students participating in the TIC and CARE programs included Toni Philips, 12; Tiare Phillips, 12, Kali Devellis, 12; Carlos Velez, 12, and Jaleah Bennett, 13, from Bridge Academy.

When the fishing was done it was back to the Zoo's Research Station classroom where the students tested the water quality of their trout nursery. They also tested and recorded the water temperature and made other learning observations before heading back to their

schools.

Who says learning can't be fun! These students and the educational staff all had a great time. Jim Knox was assisted by [Lisa Heinemann](#) of the Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), [Chris Clark](#) from the Zoo, [Gian Morresi](#) (CARE) and [Marty Armstrong](#) (CARE). For more information about Beardsley Zoo visit www.beardsleyzoo.org. And to learn more about the Trout In The Classroom check out www.troutintheclassroom.org

If you have some time next Saturday the Mianus Chapter of Trout Unlimited needs volunteers to help out at its annual [Special Olympics Fishing Derby](#) in Wilton. The Mianus Chapter of TU has been hosting this day of growth and fun for more than 10 years.

The Derby will be held on Sat. October 5 and will run from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m. at the pond at Merwin Meadows Park. Volunteers are needed to help set up and assist the Special Olympians. With your help this will be a day the Special Olympians will never forget. Volunteers will be paired with Special Olympics athletes to help them bait hooks, cast and reel in the big one! Everyone there will enjoy a free lunch. Email [Jeff Yates](mailto:jjyates@mianustu.org) at jjyates@mianustu.org for details and to volunteer.

Fishing is improving as the fall migration south is bringing a lot of fish through the Western Sound. Bluefish are your best bet and striped bass angling is right behind.

The Catch of The Week honors goes to Ray Gilbody. While fishing with Lynn Youdin in 16 feet of water south of the Norwalk Islands, Ray hooked a 40-pound striped bass. Lynn caught a 16-pound bluefish and a 12-pound striper. They were using fresh bunker for bait.

Gary at Pete's Place reported that [Marvin Manaka](#) caught a 36-inch striper while fishing inside Stamford Harbor. The linesider tipped the scales at 19 pounds and was taken using a live bunker for bait.

Capt. [Jim Christianson](#) took [Sam Bell](#) on an early morning outing to the Norwalk Islands last Thursday. Sam caught several bluefish including a huge 19-pounder while fishing in 18 feet of water. He was using chunks of bunker for bait.

[Pete Miller](#), [Jose Lopez](#) and [Paul McFarland](#) spent time together fishing for choppers in Stamford Harbor. Their largest blue measured 38 inches and was taken on fresh bunker.

Ron Lombardo reeled in a 38-inch bluefish and a couple of small striped bass while fishing inside Stamford Harbor. He was also using fresh bunker.

Bottom fishing is still very good. Last week John Klinga caught lots of porgies while working the waters at Cockenee Reef. His largest fish was a 2.4-pound porgy. He was using some pieces of bunker for bait.

[Fred Bova](#) spent some time fishing near the Stamford Lighthouse and was rewarded with a pail full of porgies including a 3 pounder. The fish were caught using a squid and clam combo.

Mike Black fished over on Greens Ledge during the week. Using a combination of squid and spearing he caught a limit of porgies and a couple black sea bass. His largest porgy weighed 3.5-pounds and his largest sea bass weighted 5 pounds.

[Martin Armstrong](#) is a member of the Fisheries Advisory Council, a lifetime member of Trout Unlimited and part of the [Outdoor Writers Association](#)