Schoolwide Title 1 Program

1. Comprehensive Needs Assessment

Codman Academy Charter Public School (hereafter Codman Academy) assesses student needs in a variety of ways, both at the beginning of the 9th grade year and throughout a student’s school career. The most telling assessment is the Degree of Reading Power (DRP) test, administered twice during the 9th grade and every spring thereafter. Most newspapers and high school texts have a DRP of 65, yet the majority of Codman students enter the 9th grade still reading at an elementary school level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Class</th>
<th>% of Students Reading at an Elementary School Level in the 9th</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>70%</td>
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DRP unit scores are reported in accordance with the most difficult text the student can read on his or her own, while the percentile rank compares Codman students to their peers nationwide. The Codman internal goal for the DRP test is a score of 65 or higher for 85% of all graduating students.

Codman Academy also uses the English / Language Arts and Math MCAS exam to assess student needs. The school is currently looking for a Math entrance exam to better pinpoint student deficiencies at the beginning of the 9th grade year.

2. Schoolwide Reform Strategies

All students at Codman Academy have access to the same teachers, programs, and academic resources. Due in part to our small size (only 103 students in grades 9-12), for example, the same highly qualified Math teacher teaches all 9th and 10th grade students. No students are tracked into separate classes. As an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound School (www.elob.org), Codman Academy is part of a national network of schools adhering to five core benchmarks:

The five benchmarks and their sub-categories are as follows:

I. Learning Expeditions
   a. Planning and teaching learning expeditions
   b. Developing character
   c. Expecting and attaining high achievement
   d. Fostering strong literacy
   e. Using community resources

II. Reflection and Critique
   a. Examining and assessing student work
   b. Examining and assessing teacher work
c. Using portfolio assessment

III. School Culture
   a. Incorporating the design principles
   b. Fostering service
   c. Experiencing Outward Bound
   d. Ensuring equity
   e. Fostering family participation

IV. School Structures
   a. Building and shared leadership
   b. Instituting block scheduling
   c. Using teams effectively
   d. Providing and using common planning time
   e. Fostering multi-year relationships

V. School Review
   a. Assessing school progress
   b. Collecting and analyzing evidence
   c. Creating an action plan

As any EL school, Codman never plans to plateau but rather work daily toward all five of the core practice benchmarks. In four years, the school has made considerable progress in strengthening its academic program via the core benchmarks.

The practice of Benchmark I, learning expeditions, emphasizes depth over breadth and insists upon the teaching of reading and writing in all classes. Learning Expeditions are created around a central guiding question that covers the required Massachusetts state curriculum framework and builds skills while engaging students in relevant material. Historically underserved populations often have difficulty accessing traditional texts because they lack the background knowledge and personal entry points of their more affluent peers. Low achieving students may also disengage from learning due to previous failures in school. The 9th and 10th grade Math expeditions explore Algebra and Geometry through furniture design and the architecture of staircases, two tangible points of entry for all students. In Humanities 9 and 10, students gain literacy skills by studying a curriculum heavily infused with the theatre arts, including play reading, play writing, acting, and interaction with professional actors and actresses from the Huntington Theatre Company of Boston. Sound research on the effect of classroom drama in strengthening verbal skills informed the school’s decision to structure its Humanities classes around the study and performance of plays.¹

Codman Academy runs both an extended school day and year. Students attend school from 9 – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday and 9 – Noon on Saturdays. The school year includes 197 instructional days. Students must pass all core academic classes in order to achieve promotion to the next grade. Any 9th grade student who fails a core academic class (Humanities, Math, or Science) must attend an intensive summer program taught by full-time staff members. Three Fridays per month are considered field days, in which students participate in intense, focused Math and Humanities workshops.

Many additional structures contribute to the support of the school’s at-risk population. The school’s licensed Social Worker administers family in-take interviews to all students prior to their first day of school. These interviews cover a range of questions for the guardians and students, including prior academic experience and home environment. All 9th grade students participate in weekly single-sex talking circles with a licensed Social Worker who counsels the students on the transition to high school and related teen issues that hinder one’s academic achievement, such as peer pressure and domestic violence. The Social Worker is also available for individual counseling for all students on an as-need basis. One full-time Special Education teacher runs a support classroom called the Learning Institute and oversees individual tutoring for students with intense academic support needs.

The majority of Codman Academy students will be the first in their families to attend college. Accordingly, college awareness and counseling begins in Grade 9 with monthly college visits. Students must also complete two Codman approved summer programs. All Seniors must complete an LTI (Learning through Internship) in a field of their choice. Senior internships provide students the opportunity to build skills while exploring careers from clinical research to journalism.

Codman Academy determines if student needs have been met by administering both external and internal assessments. Internal assessments include the DRP, final semester exams, and 10th and 12th grade portfolios. External assessments include the state-mandated MCAS exam and college acceptance and retention rates of Codman students.

3. Instruction by Highly Qualified Teachers
Eight of nine full-time teachers meet the highly qualified requirements under NCLB. Two applications are pending, including one full time and one part time teacher.

4. High-Quality and Ongoing Professional Development
As a member of the ELOB network, Codman Academy receives on-going professional development for all staff members. ELOB assigns a coach to all participating schools who is responsible for training teachers in the teaching methods of expeditionary learning and supporting all administrative staff. Codman Academy runs an ELOB 101 course prior to the start of school for all new faculty members. The school also offers numerous opportunities for faculty to attend workshops in their field throughout the year, including ELOB institutes and summits, the national ELOB conference, and the Massachusetts Charter School conference.

5. Recruiting Strategies
Codman Academy makes many efforts to recruit highly qualified teachers. The school offers an array of impressive professional development opportunities from national conferences to summer Outward Bound trips. All teaching faculty have two full days per month for curriculum planning and professional development written into their contracts, and all faculty receive personal laptops. Codman also offers teachers small class sizes and significant freedom in designing their curriculum.

6. Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement
The school’s mission makes parent involvement a priority: “...We view parents and community members as integral partners in this endeavor...” The initial family intake interview sets the tone for parent/guardian involvement at Codman
Academy, during which parents are asked about their goals for their children. The school maintains an open door policy, whereby parents may arrive to speak with a faculty member without an appointment. A Parent Council with elected officers meets monthly with the Head of School to discuss current school issues, including uniform and discipline policies. Parents receive regular mail communication, including monthly reminders of parent meetings, semester grades, and annual DRP test results. In addition, parents are encouraged to participate in the Saturday School Program and have access to the same courses as their children.

7. Plans for Assisting Preschool Children
   Not Applicable

8. Measures to Include Teachers in Decision Making with Regard to Academic Assessments
   Codman Academy’s small design fosters an environment of communication among faculty members. The Head of School has direct contact with each faculty member daily. DRP data is collected, analyzed and shared with all faculty at the beginning and end of each school year. Humanities and Reading teachers monitor the progress of those students in the lower percentile and target instruction. In 2004 the school solicited an external DRP analysis by a Masters student at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. The analysis was shared and discussed at both a faculty and Board of Trustees meeting.

9. Activities for Students who Experience Difficulty Mastering Proficiency Levels
   Math MCAS practice tests are regularly administered by the classroom teacher in grades 9 and 10. The school also offers a structured MCAS prep program throughout the school year for any student retaking the exam. Classroom practices are also designed to regularly assess student progress in reading, writing, and math more frequently than the one 10th grade MCAS assessment. The passage portfolio assessment system is our main method of monitoring ongoing student progress across the curriculum.

   In order to complete the 10th grade, all students must complete passage portfolios in Humanities, Math, and Science. Portfolios include examples of a student’s best work and long-term projects, such as the Geometry stairs expedition. Students present their portfolios to a panel of judges, including a classroom teacher, parent, and fellow student. The Passage Portfolio is completed at the end of the 10th grade year and the Graduation Portfolio is completed at the end of the 12th grade year. The portfolio system assesses student learning in the following ways:
   • It allows our students to engage in authentic tasks. Students demonstrate their learning using a “real world” process (in contrast to standardized tests). They are then asked to defend their knowledge in the face of inquiry from their peers and teachers.
   • Students are able to demonstrate the skill of revision over time. Long term planning and execution are keys to success in college. We want to foster these skills in high school.
   • It asks students to reflect on their learning.
   • It asks students to work on their public speaking skills. Students demonstrate that they are able to orally convey their ideas to various audiences.
In order to be promoted to the 11\textsuperscript{th} grade all students must complete a Passage Portfolio project for each of their core academic courses (Science, Math and Humanities). They then present 1 of the 3 projects – presumably their best work - to a panel. We call this the “passage” portfolio because it is the gateway to being a Senior Institute (11\textsuperscript{th} and 12\textsuperscript{th} grades) student. The Passage Portfolio simulates the tasks and process that students will be asked to engage in during the Senior Institute years. Students who are capable of fulfilling the requirements for the Passage Portfolio will demonstrate that they are capable of success at the next level here at Codman.

10. \textit{Coordination and Integration of Federal, State, and Local Services and Programs}

Codman Academy embodies a holistic approach to education. The school is on site of its primary partner, the Codman Square Health Center, enabling the school to provide health and dental care to all students. The school’s small size allows all programs to be integrated and each child to be known. The on-site full time Social Worker provides counseling for individual students and serves as the school/family liaison. A peer mediation program administered by the Social Worker works to prevent acts of violence and conflict in school.

A full time Athletic Director oversees a comprehensive health and wellness program required for all students. Students participate in four hours of physical fitness per week, and the school does not permit vending machines on its premises. Rather, a local vendor caters a healthy lunch daily, which includes fresh fruit and vegetables.