

# **Expeditionary Learning Peer Review and Implementation Report: Codman Academy Charter School**

**April 17, 2003**

## **Introduction**

This report is from the Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound Peer Review Team that visited Codman Academy Charter School on March 6 and 7, 2003. Our report is intended for two audiences: First, it is written for the faculty, staff, directors, and board of Codman Academy. Second, it is written for the other constituencies interested in the progress of Codman Academy Charter School, including the Massachusetts State Department of Education and private foundations interested in supporting the work of the school.

The purpose of the peer review is to provide a formative assessment of the school's work that is useful to practitioners, not to make summative judgments on the success or failure of the school program. In this report we summarize our observations and raise questions that we hope will lead to further inquiry and thoughtful action by the faculty, directors and board.

The report is organized into two parts. Part A, on pages 3-9 presents a summary of our observations and reflections from the peer review visit. Part B, on pages 10-18 is a version of Expeditionary Learning's annual implementation check report. Ordinarily the implementation check would result from a separate one-day visit by a team of two Expeditionary Learning staff. It made sense, in this instance, to collect the data for the implementation check simultaneously while we were at the school and report on the status of Expeditionary Learning implementation in the body of the larger report. The implementation check serves a different purpose from the peer review; it provides a brief outside assessment of the degree of implementation of Expeditionary Learning's Core Practices Benchmarks. The implementation report, presented in Part B, complements our more reflective observations and questions of the peer review report, with a "mile-wide and inch-deep" summary of Codman's implementation of Expeditionary Learning from people who know the model in multiple contexts.

We found, in writing this report, that the findings presented in the implementation report mesh well with our reflections from the peer review, and we make several references to the implementation report in the main body of the report.

We, the members Peer Review Team, are:

Doug Kilmister, Director of Research and Evaluation, Expeditionary Learning,  
Cambridge, MA

Angela Jolliffe, Northeast and Southeast Regional Field Director; and former  
language arts teacher and Director of Instruction at King Middle School,  
Portland , ME

Cheryl Sims, Expeditionary Learning School Designer, NYC; and former Teacher  
of science at the School for the Physical City, NYC.

## ***PART A: Report of the Peer Review Team***

### **How the Data were Collected**

Prior to the peer review, both Doug Kilmister and Angela Jolliffe met, on separate occasions, with Meg Campbell and the Codman teachers to plan and coordinate our visit and discuss how we would collect and analyze data. On January 29, 2003 Doug attended the Massachusetts Department of Education Charter School Office's one-day site visit as an observer, which helped in providing a context for the peer review. In early February Angela met with Meg and the teachers to establish some teachers' guiding questions for the visit and finalize plans for the review. The teachers guiding questions for the visit, which the review team modified and revised prior to the visit, were as follows:

- 1) How are we designing instruction in our classroom so students can meet our promotion standards?
- 2) How do we set expectations so students can meet them?
- 3) How can our out-of-classroom resources and support structures more effectively support classroom instruction and expectations?

These questions were posed, not so that the review team would provide easy answers, but rather as guiding questions for our observations and analysis. We kept these questions in mind as we visited classrooms and conducted interviews and as we wrote this report.

This report is not based exclusively on our two-day visit. Prior to our visit to the school, each of us thoroughly reviewed the Codman Academy student handbook and spent some time exploring the intranet site, which provided a great deal of information and gave us insight into the school's culture and practice.

### **The Visit**

Meg and the teachers developed a schedule prior to the visit. Below is an outline of our schedule:

#### Thursday, March 6

- |      |                                     |
|------|-------------------------------------|
| 9:00 | Orientation and brief tour with Meg |
| 9:30 | Classroom Visits                    |
|      | Cheryl in biology 10                |
|      | Angela in Humanities 9              |
|      | Doug in Humanities 10               |

10:30 Cheryl in Math 10  
Angela in Humanities 10  
Doug in Humanities 9  
11:30 Community Circle  
12:15 Lunch and informal meetings with students  
1:15 Interview with Meg  
1:45 Extended meeting with teachers

(Note: Classroom visits were scheduled for the afternoon, but classes were cancelled due to snow, and so we met with the teachers until 4:30.)

### Friday, March 7

9:00 Visit to Huntington Theatre to witness acting seminar  
11:00 Visit to the Museum of Fine Arts, Greek art  
1:00 Team meeting to review findings

Even with the cancelled classes on Thursday afternoon, at least one of us was able to spend at least ninety minutes time in every teacher's classroom. We were also able to meet and speak with a significant number of students. Codman's intimate size allows visitors to get to know the school quickly.

### **Initial Observations and Highlights**

Upon entering the main reception area of Codman Academy, a visitor is struck immediately with the businesslike bustle and the purposeful utility of the physical space. We arrived early Thursday morning and were able to meet students as they arrived to the school. Students greeted us with handshakes and were comfortable answering our questions. Many went to the computers to check email, others went to a designated quiet room to complete last minute homework and still others talked with friends. A stack of *Boston Globes* was in the reception areas, and a group of students grabbed the sports section and took them to the quiet room to read. Perhaps half of the students were in school nearly a half hour before the official beginning of the day. The layout of the physical space in the main building was more like an architectural firm or a university office than a typical office. The converted three-story home, next door was similarly decorated with several well designed intimate spaces for small meetings and larger rooms carefully laid out as classrooms. In both buildings it was evident that teachers and students felt ownership for the school. A clear indicator of students' respect for the physical plant and for each other: clean, carefully decorated bathrooms without a trace of graffiti or cigarette smoke.

Another strongly evident aspect of Codman Academy is the heavy adult presence in addition to teachers and the mutual respect and decorum among members of the community. On both Thursday, when we were in the school

building and on Friday, when we shadowed students doing their fieldwork, we observed lots of helping hands and minds working with students. We saw tutors helping students, graduate students observing classes, board members dropping by on business, theatre people working with students at the Huntington, and docents and chaperones guiding and interacting with students at the MFA. For the volunteers and visitors working with students, teachers model a consistent and appropriate attitude towards students. Individual students at Codman are known and engage regularly with a variety of adults. In a sense, students are celebrities. The community encourages them to shine and be their best selves. This is not achieved, however, by indulging students. Rather, it is accomplished by treating them respectfully and demanding a lot of them. The tone of adult-student interaction is set by teachers. Teachers treat students as intelligent, capable, and worthy people. They use a combination of humor, logical argument, nagging, cajoling, and direct pressure to help students complete their work and carry out their roles as responsible members of the community. Teachers hold students accountable to high standards of conduct, and they deal quickly and directly with issues of student discipline.

Teachers are getting some help from students. A highlight of our visit was the community circle at 11:30 on Thursday. The circle is illustrative of many of the things that are going well at Codman Academy. The entire school—including all students, teachers, and visitors—assembled in a rough circle, some standing and others sitting around the main meeting room down stairs, which is created by breaking down the wall between two classrooms. The atmosphere was informal and friendly and a little loud just before lunch. A tenth-grade girl, the meeting's facilitator, stepped up to call the group to order and begin the meeting. The facilitator, with clipboard in hand, made a few routine announcements for happenings in and after school, and then she led the weekly "recognitions", a ritual in which a student from each advisory group gave a planned, public appreciation of a student or faculty member for a good deed done. Next a get-well card was circulated around the room for a student who had been out ill, and then the facilitator called the group to attention again and introduced a featured speaker for the meeting. He was an inventor with several patents to his credit, and he brought his newest invention, a conceptual clock that, instead of using hands or numbers to tell time, showed time as light on a two-dimensional map of the globe. The inventor explained his invention and proceeded to lead students through some of the physics and mathematics involved in understanding time. Soft spoken and intellectual, he was not, perhaps, the kind of speaker that would easily hold the attention of the average tenth grader. The group, however, with the good-humored support of the tenth-grade meeting facilitator held it together.

From our experience in most high schools, we might say that bringing together the student body is often a risky and unproductive venture. At Codman,

however, the community circle was a positive experience for all. There was a relaxed, familiar feel to the meeting, and there was a common respect for the process and the people present, whether they were every-day members or guests for the day. The facilitator used humor along with a little bit of strong-willed pushiness to keep the group focused and moving. She and the group were effective, in part, because every one seemed to know the right way to behave and the reasons they were together. Even in its second year of existence there are evident traditions and structures in place that allow for such a meeting to run successfully. Students at Codman Academy are being leaders, they are supporting one another, and they are building habits that will, we believe, go a long way towards supporting their success.

## Summary of Themes

On the afternoon of the second day of our visit, the three of us sat down to compare our notes on the visit. After reporting out on our observations and sharing our strongest impressions we looked for common themes. We reflected, as well, on the guiding questions on page 3 of this report. We decided to report out on our findings as “promising trends” and “questions and recommendations to consider.” The implementation report on pages XX-XX corroborated many of our initial observations and impressions, and we make reference to it in several places.

### Promising Trends

Belief in students: Faculty and students at Codman believe that the mission of the school is real: every student is going to college. The message is communicated in many ways—implicitly and explicitly. The belief by all the adults that students will succeed and complete a four-year degree permeates the environment. We assessed Codman as at a phase-three level on the benchmark for “Ensuring equity” (see page 15).

Classroom management: We saw well managed classrooms with several common structures across classrooms that facilitate learning. Teachers posted the work plan for the session. Routines were clear. Students knew how to gather notes or observations, and there were folders or binders for organizing students’ work. Assignments were written as well as told. In all classrooms instructions were presented orally and were written as well.

Classroom dynamic: Lessons were well paced, and teachers actively worked to keep students engaged and motivated. During the flexible one- to two-hour blocks of time we observed had a mix of whole-group, small-group, and individual instruction. We saw discussions in all classrooms, and the level of

student participation was high. Teachers moved around the classrooms and kept track of all students.

Positive peer culture remarkable. As mentioned above, teacher display respect for students as individuals and thinkers. Students are encouraged to be their best selves. Even in the schools' second year, young high-school students are exhibiting positive leadership with their peers. Codman Academy's attention to student character is noted in the implementation report.

Use of community resources: The connections that students have with people from partner organizations (the health center, the tennis club, the Huntington Theatre, the MFA, and others) as well as with the many individuals orbiting and entering the school (adult tutors, volunteers, adjunct faculty and others) provide students and their families with multiple career connections and opportunities for learning. A coordinated planning process with partners is evident.

Using technology to build and support learning and community: Codman has it's own daily newspaper with the web site and intrasite. The intrasite is far more powerful than a daily school newspaper, in that it permits students to communicate with teachers and one another, provides easily, available access to customized resources and serves as a local portal to the Internet.

Attention to families and the community: Although efforts in this area are still in the early stages of development, the vision of the school and the efforts of faculty are focused on the education of students in the broader context of the family and community. There is an attempt to educate parents, to solicit their input, and to involve them as partners. The health center's mission and services and the schools' mission and services are closely aligned.

### **Questions and Recommendations to Consider**

Conceptual understanding: We observed that students involved in discussions and activities are given opportunities to think about content and concepts, but we noticed that many students seemed confused and hadn't really grasped concepts before they were asked to apply them in assignments. This is not a problem unique to Codman Academy, but a national problem, particularly in the teaching of math and science. On a daily basis, how do teachers monitor students' understandings and check to be sure that students grasp the essential ideas or concepts? What strategies for teaching concepts and checking student understanding could teachers explore together? One book that explores these questions and provides practical strategies is *Understanding by Design* by Grant Wiggins and Jay McTighe.

Homework assignments: Failure to complete outside assignments was an expressed concern of teachers and a frequently cited reason for failure. We wondered about the way homework was used in most classrooms. We offer a series of questions for consideration: What are the various purposes for homework? Is homework intended as practiced application of concepts and skills learned previously? Might students be faltering with homework, in some cases, because they haven't grasped key conceptual understandings? What kinds of homework make the most sense to do outside of class time? Which of the kinds of things that are being asked of students in their homework might be accomplished and supported during class time? How could time during study hall more effectively be used to support completion of outside assignments?

Study hall: Although we did not witness a formal study hall during the two-day visit, two of us had witnessed independent study time on other occasions. We wondered how effective teachers and students viewed this time at the end of the day to be. From our limited experience, we observed students using study hall time for independent study, for independent work at computer stations, for meetings with tutors, for meetings with other students on group assignments, and for socializing. What structures are in place that help students manage their own time and make the most of the study hall time? In alignment with the college prep mission, what structures are modeling the kind of study practices students will need for college?

Using criteria of quality: In all classrooms we were pleased to see teachers using lists of criteria to communicate expectations and to help students follow through on assignments. Criteria were also using criteria to establish grades for assignments. The next step, and the direction we encourage teachers to move in, is using exemplars of authentic work from students—as well as from professionals, artists and scholars—to begin having discussion on criteria for quality work. Having students reflect on and analyze what makes a particular piece of writing emotionally powerful, a particular speech provocative, or a particular mathematical solution elegant, would help students engage more deeply with quality work and facilitate involving them in negotiations about the criteria for quality work. Ron Berger's monograph, "A Culture of Quality," and his new book, soon to be published by Heinemann, should be helpful in this area.

Supporting classroom practice: We gathered in conversation that there are limited opportunities for teachers to visit each other's classrooms, to get and give feedback about their work and practice, and to examine student work together. In the implementation report below, the implementation of the two of the three benchmarks under "Core Practice 2: Reflection and Critique," were in the phase-1 level. We see a need for the faculty to find ways to develop more formal collegial practices that support classroom teaching. Since time is limited and there are many ways to go, the faculty will need to choose carefully how professional collaboration and support for instruction take place. We would

encourage you to focus on analyzing the variety of instructional practices now going on across the school and explore which common practices you would like to improve, which practices you would like to decrease, and what practices you might add to your repertoire. Structures that support teachers in analyzing instructional choices, the day-to-day moves teachers make, will help build a common understanding of what effective teaching is at Codman Academy.

Thinking about Codman as an Expeditionary Learning School: In carrying out the implementation check against the benchmarks, we realized that Codman Academy is doing many Expeditionary Learning practices without being fully aware of them. We were pleased to see the Codman staff at the National Conference in Portland in March. If you are in a Expeditionary Learning school, why not use some of the language of Expeditionary Learning in your practice at school. We would like to engage with you in discussions about learning expeditions and Expeditionary Learning practices that are appropriate for a college prep high school. The school culture of Codman is in many ways an exemplar for Expeditionary Learning and yet teachers may be unaware of the roots of the Expeditionary Learning tradition.

## **PART B Implementation Summary Report**

The implementation report below is the standard report that Expeditionary Learning provides to all its partner schools each year. Expeditionary Learning’s primary purposes in carrying out annual implementation checks is collect data on implementation at individual schools and across schools and to develop strategies to serve schools more effectively. A secondary purpose is to offer an outside prospective on the work the school is doing in Expeditionary Learning and provide helpful feedback. Most implementation reports come with a set of recommendations. In this case, our recommendations are incorporated into the points made above.

Each box below refers to one of the twenty-one benchmarks in Expeditionary Learning’s Core Practice Benchmarks. Page numbers in refer to Expeditionary learning’s publication, *Are We There Yet?: Benchmarks and Tools for Schools Implementing Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound*. A revision of the benchmarks is underway and is due to be released as a prelininary version in the fall of 2003.

### **Core Practice 1: Learning Expeditions**

Planning and teaching learning expeditions (page 8)									
			X						
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the staff does not use the language of learning expeditions, interdisciplinary units, course requirements and expedition components such as guiding questions, fieldwork, use of community resources, authentic audiences, research papers and project based assessments guide any thematic curriculum planning and delivery. A school wide, 3 week unit titled Model UN was taught by Humanities teachers and contained biology / math connections and reflected many of the practices and components of an expedition.</li> <li>The Humanities courses offer year-long field studies at the Huntington and MFA. There is highly focused and ongoing collaboration and planning between the Codman staff and these off site partnerships.</li> <li>Project based studies such as the mock trial, architecture project and science fair provided project based learning experiences for students.</li> <li>The staff documents their teaching plans. Weekly staff meetings are set aside for discussion and ongoing planning. The faculty grapples with the tension between rich topics and in depth studies versus MCAS requirements/tests.</li> <li>The full staff attended the March 2003 National Conference and will sign up for summer off site ELOB professional development opportunities. The school will have (and help to plan) a 5 day summer institute with focus on how to more specifically incorporate the principles and practices of EL into practice.</li> </ul>								

Developing character (page 8)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Codman is a school that promotes and models personal best from every adult and student in the building. Students are encouraged to be their best selves and there is a positive peer culture that permeates the school. Culture and character is continually built through rituals and customs that include:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Explicit expectations such as strict attendance, daily one mile walks to build fitness, respect when traveling on public transportation and responsibilities for hosting/greeting visitors.</li> <li>▪ School wide functions such as the weekly Community Circle meeting that is facilitated by students/crews.</li> <li>▪ Advisory teams that meet 4x's per week for a half hour at the start of the school day.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Classroom expectations encourage quality work and revision. All students are required to complete individual and collaborative long-range assignments. There is ongoing discussion and some concern among faculty on how to assist students in both the overall quality and completion of these projects by due date.</li> <li>• Design principles are posted throughout the school and noted on website.</li> <li>• An ongoing service project focuses on the AIDS epidemic in South Africa.</li> </ul>								

Expecting and attaining high achievement (page 9)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students who attend this school see college in their future. They make full day visits to at least 6 colleges each year, coordinated by the Dean of Enrichment. During this fieldwork, students are exposed to all aspects of college life including entrance requirements such as completion of applications and essays.</li> <li>• Teachers use state/local standards to align delivery of required course content and skills. Specific test taking strategies and practice are done periodically to insure students are familiar with testing format and procedures.</li> <li>• Students are required to attend Saturday classes from 9-12; they also must complete a 30 hour internship called Learning Through Internship (LTI) and 2 summers of pre approved summer programming in order to graduate.</li> <li>• Teachers foster strong, engaging discussions in all classrooms with students.</li> <li>• There has been school wide discussion at staff meetings to consider issues surrounding promotion/retention of students who fail to pass courses.</li> </ul>								

Fostering strong literacy (page 10)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students and teachers engage in daily discussions about their reading and writing. Classroom visits indicated that students are expected to defend /support their position on topic and give reference from specific text passages to verify responses.</li> <li>• Humanities classrooms use an integrated approach to teach reading comprehension and foster strong literacy. Evidence of specific literacy strategies, reading/writing workshop format, reading logs and journals, personal reading/spelling /vocabulary lists, book clubs/literature circles and daily silent reading time is used in these classrooms.</li> <li>• Codman has established a "literacy through drama" partnership with a professional theatre, the Huntington. At school and at the Huntington, English Language Arts time is spent viewing, reading, talking, and writing about the plays produced at the theater. Interactive activities are aimed at improving the understanding of each play as both a literary text and a dramatic production.</li> <li>• Traditional methods of literature study, including vocabulary work, deconstruction of themes, and examination of symbolism and character development, journal writing, and preparation for literary analysis essays are also used.</li> <li>• Classroom /school libraries have a wide assortment of books available for students.</li> </ul>								

Using community resources (page 10)									
								X	
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers reported minimal collective examination/review of student work. No established protocol for looking at student work together.</li> <li>• Teachers give students many written criteria /expectations/organizers/handouts for assignments and required projects. This information is always available to students/parents via school's intranet site as well.</li> <li>• Students are given study and reflective time/assistance to refine and revise their work.</li> <li>• Most classrooms use some form of peer critique to give feedback in a safe and supportive manner. Revision and multiple drafts were noted in most classes and in portfolio work.</li> <li>• School wide sessions such as community meetings and advisory offer additional opportunities for students to develop skills in giving constructive feedback.</li> </ul>								

**Core Practice 2: Reflection and Critique**

Examining and assessing student work (page 12)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teachers reported minimal collective examination/review of student work. No established protocol for looking at student work together.</li> <li>Teachers give students many written criteria /expectations/organizers/handouts for assignments and required projects. This information is always available to students/parents via school's intranet site as well.</li> <li>Students are given study and reflective time/assistance to refine and revise their work.</li> <li>Most classrooms use some form of peer critique to give feedback in a safe and supportive manner. Revision and multiple drafts were noted in most classes and in portfolio work.</li> <li>School wide sessions such as community meetings and advisory offer additional opportunities for students to develop skills in giving constructive feedback.</li> </ul>								

Examining and assessing teacher work (page 12)									
	X								
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Due to tight schedules, teachers do not have opportunities to visit one another's classrooms.</li> <li>No protocol for examination and feedback on lesson plans/instructional practices.</li> <li>Some faculty reported taking time to keep personal journals/reflections.</li> <li>The school has been spent the past year collectively looking at school wide issues and priorities versus individual classroom practice.</li> <li>Visitors to the school, many of which are from educational settings, are requested to give written feedback. This feedback is shared and discussed with faculty.</li> </ul>								

Using portfolio assessment (page 13)									
				X					
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A newly developed passage portfolio system has been established for grades 9-10 for students to be admitted to the Senior Institute. Students are expected to complete 1 major project for each core academic course (Humanities, Math, Science). They then present 1 of the 3 projects to a panel.</li> <li>The portfolio system at Codman requires that students collect and reflect upon their work; it includes components that reflect academic and personal skills.</li> <li>The school examined portfolio systems from other EL schools and developed their format with the help of their EL school designer.</li> <li>Although faculty does not keep professional portfolios, three faculty members have documented/reflected upon their work through professional fellowship papers submitted to the state charter school. The school's director also submitted a report to the Boston City about Codman's work to combat obesity/health issues.</li> <li>Teachers regularly reflect via email / conversations with one another on their challenges around practice.</li> </ul>								

**Core Practice 3: School Culture**

Incorporating the design principles (page 16)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Although the school does not actively use the specific language of the ELOB design principles, they are practiced and modeled in a conscious way in the daily work and spirit of "doing school." Teachers appreciate and respect the ideas of students. Students are respectful of their teachers and one another.</li> <li>The faculty and students use rituals such as crews, advisories, community meetings, celebrations, presentations, and reflections as a means to build community and culture at school. The school handbook lists these and other specific customs (shaking hands with visitors, circling up, respect when walking or traveling on public transportation) to promote culture of shared beliefs/practices.</li> </ul>								

Fostering service (page 16)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school has a long term commitment to the AIDS crisis in South Africa. Students are raising money to support travel funds for seniors to complete a service project in South Africa.</li> <li>Advisory: Service is promoted through specific initiatives determined by a particular crew. Each crew is responsible for 3 weeks of lunch duty (Lunch crews). Each advisory also shares in the responsibility for planning and facilitating the weekly community meeting.</li> <li>Service is not routinely integrated in the curriculum or a part of expeditions; however, some opportunities such as Habitat for Humanity (as part of the architecture project) and some possible service through the Huntington Theater were noted.</li> <li>The Dean of Enrichment recently started a service club.</li> </ul>								

Experiencing Outward Bound (page 16)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All faculty attended the 2003 National Conference. Teachers attended an ELOB site seminar and one has registered for summer literacy institute.</li> <li>Outward Bound protocols such as community meetings, readings, circling up, journaling, and reflection are imbedded in the school's culture.</li> <li>Four students have received full scholarships and will attend Outward Bound courses this summer.</li> </ul>								

Ensuring equity (page 17)									
								X	
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school has a full inclusion model. Special education students receive support in their classrooms, through tutoring and if required, speech/language pull out. Special services/counseling/social support systems are provided for students with exceptional personal, physical or learning challenges.</li> <li>• All students have equal access to a challenging curriculum and there is an explicit expectation that all will graduate and attend the college of their choice. Preparation for college is supported and nurtured through the on going site visits to college campuses and other preparatory work.</li> <li>• Diversity and multiple cultural perspectives are imbedded in academic studies and supported through organizational structures at the school.</li> <li>• Every adult in the building is an excellent role model for students. Respect for students and one another is evident to any who enter the school.</li> </ul>								

Fostering family participation (page 17)									
			X						
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school averages one parent visitor a day. Approximately 25% of parents attend monthly parent meetings (Parent Council) planned and facilitated by the school's Dean of Enrichment. These sessions provide a variety of services to families such as health counseling, family education, etc as well as a forum for family input and communication. Updates on school issues /general information also provided.</li> <li>• The traditionally low levels of parent involvement in urban high school settings challenge the school. The school's intranet site offers password protected, detailed access to parents for information regarding all aspects of school life and information about their child. This includes student progress information, current assignments and technology support sites (Ex: Power School for Math)</li> </ul>								

**Core Practice 4: School Structures**

Building shared leadership (page 20)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school does not have a formalized process for decision making but the staff feels that decisions are made fairly and based upon collaborative input.</li> <li>• There is no EL leadership team; currently the director serves as the liaison to EL. One staff member, after attending the National Conference, has reflected on how she and others can assume shared responsibility in fostering ELOB practices school wide.</li> <li>• Strong leadership on board level to support teachers, families and make connections with the community.</li> </ul>								

Instituting block scheduling (page 20)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Humanities classes are two hour blocks; math and science are one hour.</li> <li>• Bi weekly Friday classes are held off site at the MFA and Huntington.</li> <li>• Students attend mandatory Saturday classes from 9-12.</li> </ul>								

Using teams effectively (page 20)									
					X				
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teachers work in academic teaming situations when interdisciplinary focus areas/thematic work applies.</li> <li>• Since the faculty is small, they discuss school issues, establish goals and make decisions in a team like setting.</li> <li>• Advisories promote "We are crew not passengers." Ground rules for each advisory are posted.</li> <li>• Students have opportunities to work in small groups/teams in classrooms every day. Classrooms have community rules posted.</li> </ul>								

Creating and using common planning time (page 21)									
			X						
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Common planning time is accomplished through the school's schedule and personal commitment for before/after school work by teachers.</li> <li>• Curriculum, looking at student work type planning focuses on individual teacher work and when possible, team collaborations.</li> <li>• Humanities teachers plan weekly with the Huntington and MFA staff who work with Codman students.</li> </ul>								

Fostering multi-year relationships (page 21)									
						X			
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Multi year relationships are provided to all students through core teachers and all advisories.</li> <li>• Volunteers and community partnerships also foster multi year relationships for students.</li> </ul>								

**Core Practice 5: School Review**

Assessing school progress (page 24)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The school met with 3 members of the EL staff to complete an implementation check and school review. The school had spent time generating guiding questions for this review, a pre meeting with the field director and prepared a two day schedule for the review team that also included an off visits to the Huntington and MFA.</li> <li>The school will use information from this review to plan their ELOB summer institute and guide focus areas for next year.</li> </ul>								

Collecting and analyzing evidence (page 24)									
		X							
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a new school, Codman has had minimal opportunity to collect data on test scores.</li> <li>Attendance numbers, pass /fail information, referrals and other data is collected and shared on an ongoing basis.</li> <li>Student achievement from class work, performance assessments, projects, etc. is currently determined course by course by individual teachers.</li> <li>Passage portfolios will present an opportunity for more collective response to student learning through staff review.</li> </ul>								

Creating an action plan (page 25)									
				X					
N/E	1			2			3		
<b>Evidence</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An ELOB action plan will be determined based on the sharing of this report with faculty.</li> <li>The school has completed additional external reviews this year that will also provide input to their school improvement goals.</li> <li>The Codman faculty and the governing board are committed to ensuring that the school's priorities for improvement are always focused on an assessment of students' needs.</li> <li>The governing board gives input to shape curriculum and instructional planning; it also and provides strong leadership for finances, facilities and connections to the community</li> </ul>								

## Concluding Comments

There is much that the school is doing that we did not directly address in this report. We did not mention or mentioned only briefly, for example, the innovative Friday programs, the Saturday school, the physical education program, the Codman Health Center initiatives, and the work of the strong governing board. These areas of work, which are mentioned in the schools' charter, are all moving forward and having an positive impact on students.

In its first two years with students Codman Academy has achieved much. The school has in place a mission that is focussed and ambitious, a clear organizational structure, and a team of dedicated teachers, staff members, board members, and volunteers. The school has been able to harness resources through partnerships and fundraising to a degree that is uncommon in charter schools, or for public schools in general. Every indication leads us to believe that the school is a viable organization that will fulfill its mission.

Codman Academy students made a strong impression on us. It is evident that students face many challenges in their daily lives and that most have arrived at school well behind the norm in their academic skills. The students at Codman Academy believe, however that they have what it takes to be successful, and they are beginning to act like success stories. The care they have for the people in the community and the school facility itself testifies to their self respect and hope. Their academic work is steadily improving under the guidance of teachers and other caring adults.

We hope that the rewards of seeing these students excited about learning and committed to school success sustains the hard-working teachers and staff at Codman. We found the teachers and staff at Codman Academy to be bright, thoughtful and fully engaged. Classrooms were hard-working and positive. Conversations between adults were about teaching and students. The high expectations teachers have for students and the collegial support they offer one another are encouraging discussions about effective instruction. The academic program is growing stronger as teachers take on the multiple challenges. This report is offered in recognition of the work and in the hope that some of our questions and suggestions will be of use to the faculty and staff.