

“Our work with the MCCPSE was invaluable. Their holistic approach, grounded in classroom observations and stakeholder focus groups, helped us establish the right priorities for dramatically raising student achievement. An exceptional team of consultants invested the time required to really get to know our entire school community and the unique challenges we faced. Their candid assessment helped create a shared sense of urgency among the entire school community. Change happened, and the results immediately followed. After four years with stagnant test scores, we were gratified to see 15 CPI point improvements in both ELA and Math according to our 2009 MCAS results! It is wonderful to see our collective efforts pay off.”

Julia Bowen, ED, and Ben Klompus, Principal, Berkshire Arts and Technology

Is your school about to break through? Is academic excellence just within reach? Or is something holding you back, in your way? Struggles with academic performance, a school culture that's drifted off course, transitions in leadership, or preparations for charter renewal are all moments of challenge in the lifecycle of any school. Not well handled, they can keep your school from reaching its true potential.

The Massachusetts Center for Charter Public School Excellence (MCCPSE) can help you break through these barriers, allowing you to find stability during moments of challenge. Based on our work with charter schools in Massachusetts over the past two years, we can provide you with an independent, thoughtful, comprehensive analysis of your school, unpacking and analyzing complex cultural, instructional, and leadership issues that can arise at any school, no matter what its track record. In each stage of your school's life cycle, we want to help you become the school you envision.



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The work of charter school management is arduous, and the pressures on the entire school community are intense. Unfortunately, this is often compounded by a feeling of isolation, and being alone in your work. An external evaluation by supportive, discerning specialists can help you see yourself better and position your school for greater success.

MCCPSE takes an in-depth approach to its work in schools. Our comprehensive school reviews help you evaluate:

- Quality of your academic program
- Strength of your school culture
- Allocation of your resources: human, financial, and time
- Effectiveness of all levels of management
- How ALL these come together

MCCPSE school reviews typically consist of:

- Extensive classroom observations of teaching and learning
- Comprehensive, in depth interviews with community constituents (teachers, administrators, students, parents, and board members)
- Analysis of performance data
- Audits of curriculum
- Reviews of supporting documentation

Once we've completed our review, we can offer follow-up assistance to your school through our extensive program and management support services, all at a price designed to fit into a charter school's resource strapped budget.

"The Foxborough Regional Charter School has always been a strong school. Even so, we grew concerned that we might not be reaching our true potential. Academic gains were not up to our satisfaction, and the school was not realizing a desired level of success given the uniqueness of our K-12 approach to curriculum and school culture. What we needed was an external set of "eyes" to help us embrace our vision and regain our momentum. We turned to MCCPSE and its team of consultants to conduct a comprehensive school review. They evaluated how we allocated our resources and, most importantly, partnered with us to create a dynamic management structure for our K-12 instructional program. I'm certain that our work with MCCPSE will move us from being a strong school to an exceptional school."
Mark Logan, Executive Director, Foxborough Regional Charter School



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MCCPSE offers the deeper program support services a school often needs to achieve the goals of its improvement plan. We can provide these services after completing a school review or as a standalone service.

Leadership Coaching

Sensitive, personalized coaching and support for school leaders to maximize their management effectiveness within their school's unique culture. We serve as critical thought partners and mentors, providing perspective and honest assessments of strengths, weaknesses and strategies for improved performance.

Instructional Improvement & Coaching

The development and implementation of a shared vision for powerful instruction at your school. We help you define the role and goals for the school's instructional leader and instructional team, prioritizing resource needs and developing strategies for meeting those needs. We also provide coaching to teachers and instructional specialists, if needed, to improve teaching throughout the school.

School Design and Restructuring

An evaluation of the current school structure, organizational chart, and allocation of resources to ensure that your school is well positioned to maximize the quality of your school's instructional program. Working closely with the entire school community, we focus on the school calendar, school day, staffing plan, student to teacher ratios, planning time, professional development resources, facilities, budgeting and financial analysis.

“MCCPSE provided the Banneker Board with valuable assistance in determining measurable goals; setting priorities; and developing action plans. With its extensive knowledge of charter schools, MCCPSE was able to share relevant information, identify promising practices, and help the Board build its own capacity. The coaching and technical assistance provided by MCCPSE to our Executive Director, the entire Board, and, most especially, to me as Board Chairperson were instrumental in the School’s achieving its ambitious goals this year.” - Harriet Tolpin, Board Chair, Benjamin Banneker



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As public institutions managing large sums of taxpayer dollars, charter schools are under scrutiny from many sides. Besides producing excellent academic results, schools must be professionally-run, with charter boards providing proper oversight of finances and personnel. MCCPSE assists schools to plan effectively and govern wisely so focus remains squarely on what matters most to schools—academic excellence and student achievement.

We can help with...

Strategic Planning

Typically done in advance of charter renewal, MCCPSE works with boards and senior staff to help them articulate and develop a comprehensive, 5-year strategic plan, including a renewed commitment to the school’s mission and vision, its academic program, and financial and operational health. Outputs include a 5-year vision statement, a revised accountability plan, and annual and long-term goals and objectives.

Board Retreats/Annual Planning

Reflecting on the school’s mission, vision, academic performance and accountability goals, MCCPSE assists board members and senior staff develop and review annual plans, goals and budgets. Retreats also serve as an opportunity to support team- and consensus-building amongst participants.

Board Review

MCCPSE provides independent reviews of a board’s effectiveness, including an analysis of board meeting quality and the board committee structure, oversight of the school leader, and feedback on the board’s decision making process.

Board Coaching

MCCPSE provides coaching services to boards on training to ask the right questions about academic achievement and the strength of the instructional program, assisting boards to reconcile their expectations with the expectations of the school leader, mediating issues between board members and senior staff, mentoring board chairs to be effective leaders, and guiding boards during leadership transitions to position the school to capitalize on change.

“MCCPSE provided the expertise, insight, and guidance required to ensure that The Gloucester Community Arts Charter School was well-designed and ultimately chartered by the state. Each of their workshops expanded our founding group’s perspective and maximized our potential. Without MCCPSE’s support, GCA would still be just an idea. We will continue to work with MCCPSE as we launch our school.” - GCA Board Member



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SCHOOL START-UP

You’ve just been chartered! Celebrate! Although months of hard work are behind you, what lies ahead is equally challenging. Founding boards must get right back to work to create a detailed road map to ensure a successful opening and, believe it or not, charter renewal. MCCPSE knows that schools often get only one chance to “get it right”, so we are available to help you bring your action plan to life during your planning year and your first two years of operation.

Knowing that it’s all hands on deck, MCCPSE provides support to boards, school leaders, and instructional leaders in the following areas:

Board Support

- Board training on the best practices of charter school boards
- Policies and procedures
- Project planning, with an emphasis on the planning year
- School leader hiring process

School Leader Support

- Board communications
- Facilities procurement & management
- Financial management & budgeting
- Instructional hiring
- School calendar and school day
- Student and teacher recruitment strategy

Instructional Leader

- Assessment
- Curriculum development
- Instructional plan
- Instructional resources
- School culture
- Teacher hiring

John Tarvin, MCCPSE

John, the founding Executive Director of MCCPSE, has over 25 years of management experience, including more than 15 years as a senior executive at several education-based non-profits such as Jumpstart, South Shore Day Care Services, and Historic New England. Since MCCPSE's inception, John has advised many of the state's charter schools through school reviews, strategic planning, and leadership and board coaching. In addition, John has advised more than 75% of charter applicant groups over the last three DESE application cycles. John, a certified management accountant, holds a bachelors degree from Boston University in business administration and a masters in computer information systems from Bentley College.

Antonia Rudenstine, ReDesign

Antonia consults on a number of issues facing schools including coaching school directors on instructional issues; training school founders to design mission-driven schools; supporting educational leaders in the creation of improvement and accountability plans; and designing professional development programs for organizational leaders and their staffs. Since MCCPSE's inception, Antonia has been a principal consultant participating in school reviews and providing program support services. A former teacher and founder of an alternative public high school in New York City, Antonia eventually designed and directed the Building Excellent Schools fellowship program is the principal designer and instructor of MCCPSE's school development program. Antonia holds a bachelors degree in political science from Oberlin College and a doctorate in education administration from the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Kirsten Olson, Old Sow Consulting

Kirsten's work focuses on reconfiguring school culture to better support all learners and addressing learning disengagement and learning reluctance. Kirsten has brought this unique skill set to school reviews conducted by MCCPSE at several charter schools. In addition, on behalf of MCCPSE, Kirsten has coached instructional teams to develop and implement a shared vision for instructional excellence. For several years a visiting assistant professor at Wheaton College in Norton, MA, she is the author of *Wounded By School: Recapturing the Joy in Learning and Standing Up To Old School Culture* (Teachers College Press 2009) and *Schools As Colonizers* (Verlag 2008), a critical examination of the radical school writers of the 1960s. Kirsten received her doctorate from the Harvard Graduate School of Education in 2005 and was an English major at Vassar College.

Marci Cornell-Feist, Meetinghouse Solutions

Marci is considered the national expert on charter school governance, having provided training and consultation services to many of the state's charter schools. She is author of the *Charter School Trustees Guide* and numerous articles, including two issue briefs for the National Association of Charter School Authorizers. Before founding Meetinghouse Solutions, she worked throughout the nonprofit sector, including a senior staff position at the former Massachusetts Charter School Resource Center. Marci is a graduate of the Harvard Graduate School of Education and Bowdoin College.



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Brian Anderson, MCCPSE

Brian, a former Boston pilot school teacher and an educator through the National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship and Pacific Science Center in Seattle works with schools to implement best practices gleaned from study tours and has served as an instructional coach. Brian holds a bachelors degree from Princeton University in Anthropology.