
THE CHARLES SCHOOL

AT OHIO DOMINICAN UNIVERSITY

2008-09 Annual Report to the Community

Introduction

Based on the successful program at The Graham School, The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University combines an experiential learning curriculum with rigorous academics. At The Charles School, experienced teachers prepare students for college-level work in small classes that guarantee individual attention to learning styles and student needs. All aspects of teaching and learning at The Charles School are enriched by technology and on-line support that complement accelerated classroom work.

The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University is focused on a college preparatory curriculum with a mission to increase access to higher education for first generation college students from Central Ohio. It is a five-year program that allows students to move rapidly through the equivalent of three high school years in two and take classes for college credit at Ohio Dominican University (ODU) while in high school. If successful, students can take a full load of college courses during their fourth and fifth years and receive both a high school diploma and an associate's degree at the end of five years. There is no college tuition for our students while enrolled at The Charles School.

Board; Sponsor

The Charles School Board meets monthly. A schedule of meeting dates and times, as well as a record of actions taken, is kept at the school's office and is available for review by the public. Board members in 2008-09 included: **Sally Speer Leber**, President; **Chuck Graham**, Vice President; **Melody Steely**, Secretary; **Tom Copeland**, Treasurer; **Peggy Fein** and **Joe Busch**. In 2008-09, the school and its Board reported to the Delaware-Union Educational Service Center, until January when DVESC merged with the Franklin County Educational Service Center (ESC) to form the Educational Service Center of Central Ohio (ESCCO) as its sponsor.

Honors/Recognitions/Special Occasions

The Charles School presents several awards each year in June to students who exhibit achievement and leadership in a variety of categories important to the work of the school. In 2008-09 the following students were honored as recipients of these awards: English, **Brittany Gates**; Global Language, **Tyhauna Henley**; Science, **Takaze Turner**; Mathematics, **Daylen Platt**; Social Studies, **Adrian Gorzitze-Maxey**, Experiential Education, **Jennifer Jamar**; Deans' Award for Leadership, **Taja Titus**; Deans' Award for Perseverance, **Dahir Aden**; and Deans' Award for Courage, **Mary Alice Holmes**.

Ohio Dominican University

Ohio Dominican University is the university partner of The Charles School. A fully accredited, four-year liberal arts institution, Ohio Dominican was founded in 1911. The university occupies 64 beautifully wooded acres, centrally located in Columbus. Today, Ohio Dominican has over 3,000 students. Ohio Dominican is committed to academic excellence, life-long learning and community service. Classes are small and students may choose from more than 50 undergraduate majors. The student body is diverse and individualism is celebrated, regardless of age, race, gender, religious background, ethnic or cultural heritage. We are grateful to the faculty and staff at Ohio Dominican for their work alongside us to fulfill our important educational mission.

Middle College National Consortium

The Charles School is honored to have been selected as a member of the Middle College National Consortium (MCNC). The Consortium, an organization of some 40 schools across the country and headquartered in New York City, is committed to driving educational reform by making college a reality for traditionally under-served youth. MCNC's network of schools are situated on college campuses that provide youth access to college. In April 2009, eight Charles School students were selected by their peers and teachers to represent the school and city at the annual MCNC student conference outside Denver. The group was a mixture of both 9th and 10th graders, who have proven themselves to be leaders academically and in the community. As a group, they worked hard to develop a project, based on research, that would help make their communities more eco-friendly.

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Students built a model of a “green” home that is achievable by every individual who is willing to put forth the effort; develop a public service announcement to educate the public about environmental issues in Columbus; and created a video to show the simple things that can be done to make homes more energy efficient. At the end of April, the participating students, along with three members of the TCS staff, flew to Denver, where they met with some other 300 middle college students and staff and shared ideas of how best to solve global climate change. They were excited to have the chance to see different ways that everyone can help pitch in to help save the planet.

Charles School students attending the conference were: **Taja Titus, Tobechi Titus, Chris Sumlin, Jordan Singer, Mary Alice Holmes, Jazmine Kiser, Brionne Powell, and Bethany Wehner** along with staff members **Yolanda Perez, David Hall, and Ed Ingman.**

Financial Status

In fiscal year 2008-09 the school received \$1,041,109 in state funds. The school also received \$123,376 in federal Title funds and \$688,608 in development funds, among other separated categories. Sources of income totaled \$1,723,676. In fiscal year 2008-09 the school paid for employee salaries and benefits including payroll taxes and retirement through The Graham School, The Charles School’s financial manager: and paid \$62,594 in lease payments to the Columbus City Schools for the use of the Brentnell building. Uses, including the aforementioned items along with classroom support expenses, utilities, insurance and assorted services to and purchases for the school, totaled \$1,579,327 in expenses. When the current cash in bank was added to the sources, the year-end adjusted cash balance was \$242,802 to be carried over to 2009-10. This carry over subsequently was paid mainly to bills that came due after the close of the fiscal year. The school conducts its own on-going internal financial audit under the direction of its Board Audit Committee and treasurer Brian Adams, MBA, CMA, CFM, CGFM. Finances also were audited by the school’s sponsor. And, the school is audited annually under the auspices of the State of Ohio Auditor’s Office. All found the finances to be accurately and appropriately accounted for.

Celebrating Our Work Together

In its third year the school established several events to celebrate our work together including the International Dinner and the end of the year family cookout. The International Dinner is a family event in which members of The Charles School community join in an informal setting and are able to meet with teachers and other students and their families. The food offers a “taste” of our diversity and parents are able to visit the classrooms and talk with teachers. Proceeds from the dinner help to fund the experiential expedition program of the school. We held a series of breakfast for community members during which students made presentations about expeditions and the MCNC trip. The Charles School joined with The Graham School for “Have a Heart” a celebratory evening of dinner and auctions for parents, staff and community members to recognize community partners and raise funds for school operations. We initiated a 5K run in the spring to raise funds for sports programs and celebrate fun and fitness.

Athletics

A coed cross country team was established with 15 participants in the fall. They participated in 5 meets throughout the season. A boys basketball team was initiated in the winter months as well as a dance team that competed at the Arnold classic in March.

Family/Community

The parent group has continued to meet monthly. Initially established to help communicate school information to parents, it has grown to offer educational opportunities for parents to improve their understanding of all of the aspects of college readiness being experienced by their students. This group promotes volunteerism and members have participated in each of our supplementary events including our athletics program. A full day symposium was initiated to deal with issues of bullying and anger management with the support of the parent group.

Academic Curriculum Requirements

The Charles School curriculum includes courses in all the required core academic areas as designated by the State of Ohio. In order to graduate from The Charles School, students must earn requisite credit in these areas, as well as in other areas designated by the school, particularly experiential education and successful completion of courses and/or experience at college. Academic areas include: English, mathematics, science, social studies, global language, fine arts, technology, health, physical education, and experiential education (see below).

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Gateways are the means by which student progress is demonstrated. They are based on a range of activities: formal classes, internships, seminars, performances, exhibitions, expeditions, demonstrations and independent learning activities that are tied to the learning goals for each student and the requirements of the Ohio Department of Education.

Expeditions Curriculum

This past school year, the experiential learning program at The Charles School took the form of expeditions. Expeditions are school-wide, week-long, theme-based projects that take students outside the classroom and into the community. In 2008-2009 The Charles School had three expeditions centered on a variety of themes, from environmental science to electoral politics. During expeditions, students explore engaging questions through observation, collaboration with teachers and with each other, and in-depth reflection on their experiences. With each expedition, students have the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned through a final project and presentation. Expeditions build on work done in the classroom and enhance students' understanding of fundamental concepts by addressing educational standards in all academic areas. Through experiential work, students develop the critical thinking skills, self-knowledge, and collaboration abilities necessary for success in college, and the professional world beyond it.

Election Expedition

During the Election Expedition, students engaged in experiential projects the entire week to explore the political climate of the city, state, and nation, including: volunteered for political campaigns, conducted exit polls, informed voters about various key issues, analyzed news coverage related to the election, held debates around topics relevant to the 2009 election, volunteered with community organizations and area businesses, and wrote stories for daily print and online editions of the *TCS Times* student newspaper.

In their final projects and presentations, students demonstrated an understanding of several key concepts: the electoral process, the impact of national politics on local issues, the role of the mass media in shaping public opinion, persuasive techniques in public speaking, and how environmental concerns influence governmental decision-making.

Through interactions with faculty and staff at TCS and ODU, community members, political organizations, activists, and everyday voters, students learned about the importance of U.S. national politics in relation to key issues in the everyday lives of people in the United States and abroad. This experience gave students insight into what it means to be an active citizen and community leader in a diverse democracy.

14th Amendment Expedition

During the 14th Amendment Expedition, included focused their work on various aspects of equal rights and opportunities. The groups included: gender, civil rights, disability, environmental justice, international issues, immigration, educational opportunity, and homelessness. All of our students visited the National Underground Railroad Museum in Cincinnati, and read the book "Warriors Don't Cry", about the Little Rock 9 who integrated Central High School in Arkansas in 1957. As our culminating event, Jefferson Thomas (one of the Little Rock 9) spoke to the entire student body of The Charles School. Mr. Thomas lives in Columbus and has received both the Spingarn Medal and the Congressional Gold Medal, as well as an honorary degree from Ohio Dominican University.

Science Expedition

During the Science Expedition, students focused their work in one of the following topics: genetics, bioengineering, dietary science, disease and pathogens/forensic science, global climate change, alternative energy resources, naturalism and the conservation ethic, and sustainability.

Students had the opportunity to listen to speakers from the faculty and staff at TCS and ODU, Byrd Polar Research Center, Net Jets, Children's Hunger Alliance, and community members as well as taking field trips to visit Capital University's outdoor classroom in Logan, OH, North Star Café and an organic farm. This experience gave students insight into how science affects our everyday lives.

CELLT

The Center for Learning Leadership and Technology is in its second year of operations within the school, creating and supporting curriculum related to 21st century skills such as time management, self knowledge, study skills, reflection, and technology. All students are working towards having individual electronic portfolios where they are collecting examples of their best work and will be able to see their growth and progress over their careers at the school. A CELLT conference

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was held in May during which our faculty members as well as those from other Ohio schools came to learn about eportfolios and had hands on assistance in creating their own faculty eportfolios. CELLT intends to partner with other organizations to expand 21st century skills and eportfolio offerings available to high school and college students.

Staff Members

The full-time and part-time staff roster in the 2008-09 school year included: **Michael Beard, Greg Brown, Kyle Brown, Mike Butsko, Doug Desiderio-Finley, Brice Dobler, Elaine Fujimura, Julia Gebhart, Diana Glaus, David Hall, Ahmed Hosh, Ed Ingman, Thomas Kindred, Molly Knost, Cheryl Long, Dianthia Lowry, Michelle Lowry, Jeremy Luke, Marianne McCulloch, Scott McMullen, Eileen Meers, Kris Michaels, Brian Murphy, Anna Parker, Yolanda Perez, Michelle Swender, Robert Wilson, and Chelsea Zimmerman.**

Ohio Graduation Test; State Report Card of TCS

Another graduation requirement is passing all five parts (Reading, Writing, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies) of the Ohio Graduation Test (OGT), which is given for the first time in 10th grade. The OGT is a statewide testing requirement. The results, as published in the Ohio Department of Education's "2008-09 School Year Report Card" for The Charles School are as follows:

Regarding the school's 2008-09 OGT scores for TCS 10th graders, the passing rate was: Reading, 93.6 percent; Writing, 100 percent; Mathematics, 76.6 percent; Science, 66 percent; and, Social Studies, 78.7 percent. The school was considered by the state to be proficient (75 percent or higher passing rate) for the Reading, Writing, Mathematics, and Social Studies categories.

The Charles School had a student attendance rate of 91.6 percent. The state requirement is 93.0 percent.

The school met the state requirement in 4 of 6 indicators placing the school in a rating of "Effective." On the Report Card the state compares The Charles School to other public schools across Ohio. For a more detailed report of this information please visit the Ohio Department of Education's web site www.ode.state.oh.us/reportcard and search for The Charles School in Franklin County, or ask for a copy of our report card at the school's front office.

The Charles School Mission:

The mission of the school is to prepare students for life-long learning, commitment to community and informed citizenship by immersing them in real-world, active learning as well as rigorous academics. Significant to its purpose is to make higher education affordable, accessible and attractive for a broad diversity of Ohio's high school students. As well, the school works to provide successful college preparation and experience to high school students who may have faced obstacles in the past, along with an arc to higher education for students who might not have considered college an option.

The Charles School Vision:

The Charles School at Ohio Dominican University is a five-year program offering students a high school diploma and up to 62 hours of college credit tuition free. Students who may have faced obstacles in the past, and students who might not have considered college, have teachers and advisors who smooth the transition to college. This school is a significant partnership initiative of The Graham School and Ohio Dominican University with both entities fully committed to the success of its students as well as the many opportunities to bring our communities together for productive learning opportunities.

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