



# PART I - ELIGIBILITY CERTIFICATION

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12MA3

The signatures on the first page of this application certify that each of the statements below concerning the school's eligibility and compliance with U.S. Department of Education, Office for Civil Rights (OCR) requirements is true and correct.

1. The school has some configuration that includes one or more of grades K-12. (Schools on the same campus with one principal, even K-12 schools, must apply as an entire school.)
2. The school has made adequate yearly progress each year for the past two years and has not been identified by the state as "persistently dangerous" within the last two years.
3. To meet final eligibility, the school must meet the state's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirement in the 2011-2012 school year. AYP must be certified by the state and all appeals resolved at least two weeks before the awards ceremony for the school to receive the award.
4. If the school includes grades 7 or higher, the school must have foreign language as a part of its curriculum and a significant number of students in grades 7 and higher must take foreign language courses.
5. The school has been in existence for five full years, that is, from at least September 2006.
6. The nominated school has not received the Blue Ribbon Schools award in the past five years: 2007, 2008, 2009, 2010 or 2011.
7. The nominated school or district is not refusing OCR access to information necessary to investigate a civil rights complaint or to conduct a district-wide compliance review.
8. OCR has not issued a violation letter of findings to the school district concluding that the nominated school or the district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes. A violation letter of findings will not be considered outstanding if OCR has accepted a corrective action plan from the district to remedy the violation.
9. The U.S. Department of Justice does not have a pending suit alleging that the nominated school or the school district as a whole has violated one or more of the civil rights statutes or the Constitution's equal protection clause.
10. There are no findings of violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act in a U.S. Department of Education monitoring report that apply to the school or school district in question; or if there are such findings, the state or district has corrected, or agreed to correct, the findings.

# PART II - DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

All data are the most recent year available.

## DISTRICT

1. Number of schools in the district 0 Elementary schools (includes K-8)  
 (per district designation): 0 Middle/Junior high schools  
1 High schools  
0 K-12 schools  
1 Total schools in district
2. District per-pupil expenditure: 16273

## SCHOOL (To be completed by all schools)

3. Category that best describes the area where the school is located: Urban or large central city
4. Number of years the principal has been in her/his position at this school: 6
5. Number of students as of October 1, 2011 enrolled at each grade level or its equivalent in applying school:

Grade	# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total			# of Males	# of Females	Grade Total
PreK	0	0	0		<b>6</b>	0	0	0
K	0	0	0		<b>7</b>	0	0	0
1	0	0	0		<b>8</b>	0	0	0
2	0	0	0		<b>9</b>	55	59	114
3	0	0	0		<b>10</b>	43	41	84
4	0	0	0		<b>11</b>	16	40	56
5	0	0	0		<b>12</b>	14	24	38
<b>Total in Applying School:</b>								<b>292</b>

6. Racial/ethnic composition of the school: 1 % American Indian or Alaska Native  
1 % Asian  
70 % Black or African American  
26 % Hispanic or Latino  
0 % Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander  
1 % White  
1 % Two or more races  
100 % Total

Only the seven standard categories should be used in reporting the racial/ethnic composition of your school. The final Guidance on Maintaining, Collecting, and Reporting Racial and Ethnic data to the U.S. Department of Education published in the October 19, 2007 *Federal Register* provides definitions for each of the seven categories.

7. Student turnover, or mobility rate, during the 2010-2011 school year: 11%

This rate is calculated using the grid below. The answer to (6) is the mobility rate.

(1)	Number of students who transferred <i>to</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	0
(2)	Number of students who transferred <i>from</i> the school after October 1, 2010 until the end of the school year.	33
(3)	Total of all transferred students [sum of rows (1) and (2)].	33
(4)	Total number of students in the school as of October 1, 2010	294
(5)	Total transferred students in row (3) divided by total students in row (4).	0.11
(6)	Amount in row (5) multiplied by 100.	11

8. Percent of English Language Learners in the school: 6%

Total number of ELL students in the school: 16

Number of non-English languages represented: 6

Specify non-English languages:

Cape Verdean Creole, Gio, Haitian Creole, Hausa, Somali (or Mya Mya), and Spanish

9. Percent of students eligible for free/reduced-priced meals: 84%

Total number of students who qualify: 246

If this method does not produce an accurate estimate of the percentage of students from low-income families, or the school does not participate in the free and reduced-priced school meals program, supply an accurate estimate and explain how the school calculated this estimate.

10. Percent of students receiving special education services: 18%

Total number of students served: 51

Indicate below the number of students with disabilities according to conditions designated in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Do not add additional categories.

<u>1</u> Autism	<u>0</u> Orthopedic Impairment
<u>0</u> Deafness	<u>3</u> Other Health Impaired
<u>0</u> Deaf-Blindness	<u>16</u> Specific Learning Disability
<u>5</u> Emotional Disturbance	<u>9</u> Speech or Language Impairment
<u>0</u> Hearing Impairment	<u>0</u> Traumatic Brain Injury
<u>1</u> Mental Retardation	<u>0</u> Visual Impairment Including Blindness
<u>0</u> Multiple Disabilities	<u>16</u> Developmentally Delayed

11. Indicate number of full-time and part-time staff members in each of the categories below:

	Number of Staff	
	<u>Full-Time</u>	<u>Part-Time</u>
Administrator(s)	<u>3</u>	<u>1</u>
Classroom teachers	<u>28</u>	<u>0</u>
Resource teachers/specialists (e.g., reading specialist, media specialist, art/music, PE teachers, etc.)	<u>6</u>	<u>1</u>
Paraprofessionals	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Support staff (e.g., school secretaries, custodians, cafeteria aides, etc.)	<u>33</u>	<u>3</u>
Total number	<u>70</u>	<u>5</u>

12. Average school student-classroom teacher ratio, that is, the number of students in the school divided by the Full Time Equivalent of classroom teachers, e.g., 22:1:

15:1

13. Show daily student attendance rates. Only high schools need to supply yearly graduation rates.

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Daily student attendance	95%	95%	93%	93%	94%
High school graduation rate	78%	64%	86%	76%	48%

14. **For schools ending in grade 12 (high schools):**

Show what the students who graduated in Spring 2011 are doing as of Fall 2011.

Graduating class size:	<u>43</u>
Enrolled in a 4-year college or university	<u>72%</u>
Enrolled in a community college	<u>23%</u>
Enrolled in vocational training	<u>0%</u>
Found employment	<u>2%</u>
Military service	<u>0%</u>
Other	<u>3%</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b><u>100%</u></b>

15. Indicate whether your school has previously received a National Blue Ribbon Schools award:

No

Yes

If yes, what was the year of the award?

City on a Hill, a public high school in urban Boston, emphasizes academic achievement, citizenship, teacher leadership, and public accountability. We seek to graduate responsible, resourceful, and respectful democratic citizens prepared for college and to advance community, culture, and commerce, and to compete in the 21st century.

Dedicated to closing the achievement gap, City on a Hill believes all students can learn when given universally applied rigorous academic standards and support in reaching those standards. CoaH does not sort students into ability-leveled classes or segregate Special Education students. To support students in achieving these high standards, the school runs an extended school day, week, and year, allowing all students to participate in programs that help them achieve such as AP courses, daily silent reading, and individualized tutorial.

The success of CoaH students depends on the leadership and dedication of their teachers. CoaH teachers drive decision-making and are reflective practitioners contributing to urban public school reform in the city, state, and nation. Additionally, City on a Hill has a Teacher Certification Program, which prepares future teachers to make a difference in urban public schools in Boston and elsewhere. CoaH teachers design classroom activities that stimulate higher order cognition and help students acquire academic capital to be productive citizens. CoaH maintains the standards of civility, promotes civic engagement, and requires students to participate in the best institutions and programs that Boston has to offer. Students participate in Town Meeting, a weekly all-school New England-style assembly. All CoaH students participate in school-wide service days, during which they serve the community and prepare for the 100 hours of internship they will complete as part of City Project, a senior public policy course in which students research a problem in the community and its potential solutions.

City on a Hill holds itself publicly accountable for its work and progress. CoaH expects to deliver on its promise to educate students, and involves the community in the educative process. CoaH's Town Meeting often involves guest speakers from around the city, and is always open to visitors. Community members also serve as jurors for CoaH's proficiencies –written and oral assessments at year's end.

City on a Hill's students are those most likely to have been underserved in school. Ninety-six percent of students are Black or Hispanic; 84% qualify for free or reduced-price lunch; many have only one parent or non-parental guardian at home. Students come to CoaH from a wide range of middle schools, often entering performing years below grade level, and four years is a very short time to catch up when it comes to college-readiness.

As a result of its carefully planned and executed programs, City on a Hill has been succeeding at all levels. Organizationally, City on a Hill was named by Governor Patrick as a "Commendation School," recognized for its steady progress in raising student achievement and demonstrating a consistent narrowing of achievement gaps. Additionally, in 2011 City on a Hill was re-accredited by NEASC, demonstrating that the school meets rigorous standards of effective education. Programmatically, CoaH continues to enhance its academic offerings, improving ELL services and developing a junior year college guidance program, giving all students the resources they need to succeed at CoaH and beyond. The tutorial program has also expanded to ensure that *all* its students receive daily tutoring. Most recently, City on a Hill was one of only 18 charter schools nationwide selected by the EPIC as an award-winning school for driving dramatic student achievement gains.

The success of a school must be measured by the success of its students, and City on a Hill has been improving the educational outcomes of its students. CoaH successfully prepares students for the MCAS exams taken in the 10th grade. In each of the past three years, the percentage of CoaH sophomores

scoring “Advanced” or “Proficient” was higher than the state average on the ELA, Math, and Science MCAS tests. On the most recent 2011 MCAS, CoaH student scores were some of the highest to date. In addition to the standardized testing results, CoaH’s programs report impressive results as well. CoaH’s tutorial program is raising student literacy and numeracy skills, and the College Prep program has shown impressive results in preparing students for college. Since the first graduating class of 1998, 100% of City on a Hill graduates have been accepted to college, and one of the 2011 graduates became the first to gain acceptance to an Ivy League school.

City on a Hill has been and continues to be committed to removing obstacles for low income and disadvantaged students and providing them with a high quality education. CoaH has demonstrated its dedication to maintaining a rigorous academic curriculum combined supportive programs to effectively raise student skills, increase college acceptance and degree completion, and close the achievement gap one student at a time.

### 1. Assessment Results:

Massachusetts' assessment system is called the MCAS. The high school version of the exam is given in the tenth grade in ELA, math and science. Students' scaled scores fall in to one of the following categories: warning/failing, needs improvement, proficient, or advanced.

City on a Hill's Accountability Plan is approved by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in the school's re-chartering application and is the foundation for the state's decision to renew City on a Hill's charter at the end of each 5-year term. City on a Hill's Accountability Plan focuses on the growth of students' MCAS performance, from the middle school administration of the test (prior to enrolling at City on a Hill) to the 10th grade (after 18 months of City on a Hill instruction). The school has consistently exceeded these growth measures (in 2011, 27% more students earned proficient in advanced in ELA, 40% in math, and 62% in science). Demographically comparable district schools in Boston show very little growth in any subject between the test's middle school and high school administrations. In addition, City on a Hill has consistently ranked as a "high growth" school among all districts in the state.

The school strives to ensure that the education that occurs at City on a Hill surpasses the standards held by the MCAS exam. Over 90% of students earn Proficient or Advanced designation in ELA and math (and 100% pass these subjects on the first attempt); it is the school's goal that no City on a Hill student will be denied graduation in the state because of MCAS. In addition, students earning Proficient and Advanced in Massachusetts become eligible for full-tuition scholarships in the state's university system. With the majority of students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, it is a tremendous relief to families to have that reduced-cost college option available to them. Every year, City on a Hill faculty and staff strives to ensure that 100% of students pass the state exams, 100% earn Proficient or Advanced (and qualify for state scholarships), and that growth from middle school to high school is high.

The performance data tables show a trend of consistently high performance overall, and no consistent achievement gap. As City on a Hill is a small school, cohort sizes of under 90 students each year mean that an individual student's performance can heavily impact aggregate numbers. Although there are occasional incidents of more than 10% difference between the aggregate scores and the subgroup scores in ELA (such as 10% between aggregate and low income ELA scores in 10-11 and 15% between aggregate and Latino ELA scores in 09-10), these gaps are one-year only and are not present in math. City on a Hill scrutinizes this assessment data annually, and takes seriously its responsibility to provide an education that surpasses this assessment and prepares students to be prepared for the rigors of college.

The largest overall trend is one of annual year-over-year improvement, as City on a Hill analyzes student performance data, refines its curriculum, engages in professional development that improves the instructional skill of its teachers, and increases academic and social/emotional programming that supports all students' learning. The school's overall professional culture and annual cycle of analyze-reflect-plan-improve has supported continued growth over time that far exceeds the students' sending district and meets or exceeds performance of all students in the state. This last point is substantial in the context of demography: while City on a Hill is a school that is 99% low-income, Black, and Latino students, the majority of students across Massachusetts are non-low-income and white.

The largest single program that has contributed to the student outcomes on the MCAS is the school's integrated tutorial program, in which 25 full time college graduates work with every single student in the school to remediate low-skilled students or advance the performance of high-skilled students. This program complements the school's college-prep curriculum well, providing individualized instruction that keeps even struggling students engaged and grows their content proficiency. It is the single most important program investment that City on a Hill has made in its history.

As a note of explanation regarding the data tables, in Massachusetts the high school version of MCAS is a 10th grade level test. The percentages of students participating represented in the data table (ranging from 19%-30%) is the percentage of 10th graders in the school. Every student enrolled in the 10<sup>th</sup> grade takes the MCAS at City on a Hill, as required by law.

In addition, with City on a Hill's small student cohorts, The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not report aggregate data for subgroups of fewer than 10 students, so for many testing years subgroup data for Special Education and ELL students is not available. The new "high needs" designation is introduced for the 2010-2011 school year, and includes students with disabilities, low-income students, English Language Learners, and former English Language Learners.

## **2. Using Assessment Results:**

City on a Hill Charter Public School measures school-wide and individual student progress through external assessments (MCAS, PSAT, SAT), internal assessments (numeracy and literacy testing, midterm and final proficiencies, coursework grades), and measures that have both internal and external components (GRADE assessments, college acceptances). These measures are revisited annually in the required August reporting of progress toward Accountability Plan goals to the Department of Education, as well as quarterly in academic departments, in the school's weekly assembly, called "Town Meetings", and in weekly faculty meetings. All written and oral proficiency assessments are graded on department-developed, vertically-aligned rubrics that also align with the goal set out in the mission to prepare all students for college. All teachers have access to their students' individual data via the school's Student Information System, SchoolBrains, which visually tracks individual students' improvements. Additionally, numeracy and literacy assessment information is tracked and used by tutors to inform their students' personalized curriculum, building proficiency in each of the identified grade level elements.

City on a Hill teachers universally use rubrics to assess student learning, in all academic courses and at all grade levels. In addition, in all courses and at all grade levels, at least one of the major final assessments is not graded by a student's teacher of record; other teachers, community members, and students assess student performance on the school-wide or course-specific rubric associated with the assessment. All course-specific writing rubrics integrate the 6 traits of writing and higher order thinking, both of which are school-wide initiatives to improve students' college preparation.

At City on a Hill Charter Public School, collaboration among teachers toward the improvement of student outcomes is a particular strength; toward this end, teachers meet collaboratively to discuss and share student work and the results of student assessments for the purposes of revising the curriculum and improving instructional strategies. All City on a Hill courses are planned and taught in the context of several school-wide structures and requirements, as well as in the context of the goals set within academic departments. At City on a Hill, we value collaboration among teachers, parents, service providers, and administrators as a key tool to improve learning, and provide the built-in structure to do so in the form of weekly all-day department planning sessions, called Department Day.

City on a Hill Charter Public School's academic departments regularly review quantitative data in order to monitor student progress toward established academic benchmarks and goals and to adjust instruction to better reach these benchmarks and goals. In the spring of their 10th grade year, all CoaH students take the MCAS in ELA, Math, and Biology or Engineering/Technology. Annually, Lead Teachers in English, Math, and Science review item-by-item MCAS data and plan for adjusted instruction in the coming school year to improve MCAS outcomes. All 11th graders take the SAT in June and all 12th graders take the SAT in October. SAT scores are reviewed by the College Counselor (who is also the teacher of all 12th graders in a required course called Senior Seminar), as well as the English and Math departments.

The school's professional staff establishes a culture of transparency through communicating individual student progress to students and families as well as progress toward school-wide expectations to the school community. Eight times per year (as communicated in the annual calendar, distributed to all students, staff, families, and available on the school's website), a mailing is sent to each parent, which

includes a printed report of individual student grades for the period, qualitative comments in progress in tutorial, attendance for the period as well as the entire year, and all behavioral merits and demerits for the period. Four times per year, parents and advisors meet to discuss individual student progress. At the end of the year, a detailed report including each proficiency assessment grade is discussed between parents and advisors. All advisors must maintain a communication log to document their contractual duty to contact parents twice per academic quarter regarding each student's academic and social progress. Finally, since the 2009-2010 school year parents have had real-time access to their student's grade, attendance, and disciplinary data through an online parent portal.

### **3. Sharing Lessons Learned:**

As 2010 EPIC (The Effective Practice Incentive Community) Charter School winner, City on a Hill shared best practices and ideas to help students succeed in other schools and communities. City on a Hill's submission focused on our weekly all-school Town Meeting and end of year proficiencies.

In partnership with the National Center on Time & Learning/Massachusetts 2020, City on a Hill hosted two separate visits for public school educators. These visits focused on City on a Hill's use of Extended Learning Time.

City on a Hill hosted a multi-school Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) training. Teachers from various charter schools across the city participated.

City on a Hill regularly invites members of the community to participate in formal student assessments. In 2011, approximately 100 community members participated, including a number of faculty members from other Massachusetts public schools and colleges, all helping to hold City on a Hill accountable and observe best practices.

City on a Hill has also partnered with Simmons College to offer the Urban Public Schools MAT. This two-year program gives the opportunity for teachers in high-poverty, high-minority schools to receive their MAT at a significantly reduced rate and earn initial licensure. Teachers from Boston charter schools as well as Boston Public schools have taken advantage of this unique program. The collaboration among currently-practicing charter and district teachers is a particular strength of this program.

City on a Hill spearheaded a consortium of Boston charter school college counselors in order to effectively educate college admission officers about Boston Charter students. The consortium held its third annual college fair in the fall of 2011 with over 100 colleges represented.

In October 2011, City on a Hill's Principal, Vice Principal, and Dean of Citizenship presented at the New England Association of Schools and Colleges on developing a positive high school culture. The audience of this presentation filled a large lecture room, and consisted of educators in accredited schools from all over New England.

City on a Hill's Executive Director is an elected member of the Charter-District Compact Steering Committee, a body of ten educational leaders in Boston Charters and in Boston Public Schools focused on creating opportunities for collaboration among Boston's schools. Currently, the Compact is focused on providing cross-sector training for the education of ELL students, closing the achievement gap with African-American boys, and creating a formal pipeline (partnering with Harvard Graduate School of Education) for future school leadership in Boston.

### **4. Engaging Families and Communities:**

City on a Hill Charter Public School engages parents and families as partners in each student's education and encourages their participation in school programs. Annually, over 95% of parents meet with a teacher or administrator about their child's academic and/or social progress toward school-wide goals.

CoaH formally invites parents to the school five times a year: a “Back to School” Night in September—during which parents follow their students’ schedules for a mini “school day,” meeting all of their teachers and tutors in the process—and once at the end of each academic quarter, when they meet with advisors and teachers to discuss their students’ academic and behavioral performance. During these evenings, the Student Services Team has an information table set up, and all faculty and staff members are available to meet with families. Parents of junior and senior students are also invited for a college transition/financial aid presentations each year to answer questions and prepare for the college process.

In addition, Parents meet with the Deans or the Principal in the case of any serious disciplinary infraction (including multiple lower-level infractions), and with members the Student Services team several times per year if the student is identified as having a disability, in need of mental health supports, or as not proficient in English. Prior to 9th grade enrollment and annually each fall, the Principal meets with all families to review the basic expectations for students. At the end of junior year, all families are invited to a meeting where City on a Hill’s College Counselor provides training for the impending college application process. The school’s College Counselor also meets individually with each of the families of every graduating senior to complete the college application and financial aid processes during senior year. Parents attend Parent Council meetings, Board meetings, participate in monthly school culture events (dances, culture night, etc.), and co-chair the School Council.

Advisors call home at least twice a quarter (but usually more often) to check in with parents on their students’ academic progress. All parents are mailed summaries of their child’s academic and social progress. Parents can access this information online as well, through the school’s SchoolBrains online portal. All families annually receive copies of the student handbook, as well as the school’s calendar that lays out the school’s monthly school culture events.

According to the 2009-2010 parent survey which was completed by 229 parents, 75.5% said that they receive calls from their student’s advisor at least once per month (up from 70.1% in 2008-2009), 95.2% find CoaH teachers, staff, and administration to be responsive to parents (96.9% in 2008-2009), and 95.2% believe that City on a Hill prepares their student for college (100% in 2008-2009).

## 1. Curriculum:

City on a Hill Charter Public School's academic departments have designed, organized, and implemented their curricula so that all graduates demonstrate proficiency in the academic expectations articulated in the mission. Our mission promises that "we maintain high academic standards and ensure results." Courses within the math, English, and science departments are designed to prepare students to achieve proficient or advanced on MCAS at the 10th grade level and in the science and history departments to prepare students for college through enrollment in AP courses at the 12th grade level. Simultaneously, integrated tutorial supports remediation and skills development for all students in the school.

Curricular design decisions also take into consideration the second pillar of the mission, citizenship. The school requires all of its students to demonstrate proficiency in a 9th grade civics course as well a 12th grade City Project course. By the time they graduate, all students pass the United States INS test and register to vote, in the context of a citizenship-heavy curriculum. The decision to add AP Environmental Science to the senior year (instead of other AP level science courses such as AP Physics or AP Chemistry) was primarily driven by that curriculum's alignment with the citizenship aspect of the school's mission, as students enrolled in AP Environmental Science study scientific concepts in the context of understanding the wider political and economic repercussions as well.

City on a Hill's College Prep Program provides SAT prep classes to juniors and seniors, and all juniors and seniors participate in either a Junior or Senior Seminar course, designed to help them select, apply to, and prepare for college. Students practice standardized test-taking, visit colleges and businesses, and get one-on-one guidance in their planning. Visits are scheduled to colleges/universities and college fairs. City on a Hill employs a Director of Student Services and College Counseling and an Assistant Director of College Counseling to coordinate these efforts.

Three times a year, all students participate in wellness workshops, which publicize and make accessible such services as suicide hotlines, birth control and pregnancy support, drug and alcohol prevention, eating disorder support, nutrition, etc. All ninth grade students participate in 13 health workshops held throughout the year run by Peer Health Exchange, a non-profit organization that works to bring health education to schools with the majority of students at or below the poverty line.

City on a Hill offers a wide range of extracurricular programs to compliment its strong academic programming including, but not limited to, athletics (basketball, cross country, spring track, and cheerleading), theater, and music and arts clubs.

City on a Hill uses technology to support student learning. There is a computer lab, which can host an entire class, where teachers hold classes throughout the day. Naviance software is an important tool in the college counseling office for college planning. Lessons from Khan Academy are often used as supplemental tool in tutorial.

City on a Hill's curricula engage all students in higher-order thinking and, especially through its juries and required internships, requires all students to engage in authentic application of knowledge and skills in all subject areas. Demonstration of subject mastery is not limited to conventional written exams at City on a Hill. During juries, all students must prepare and engage with a sub-topic of the content, present their findings, and answer a wide range of questions posed by citizen jurors, and can only move on to the next level of the course (required for graduation) if they do so successfully. Teachers integrate real-world examples and higher order thinking in the instruction of all courses, as evidenced in lesson and unit plans. Among a host of other examples, English teachers design and implement cross-grade-level synthesis and evaluation essay questions; math courses require students to engage with a problem of the week to apply and hone their skills; science students perform frequent labs, requiring a high degree of analysis and problem-solving; history students complete quarterly independent research papers; Spanish

students apply and synthesize their knowledge of grammar in order to perform complex, individual, and real-world translations; and City Project students research and debate local policies and programs, engaging with these policies and programs in 100 hours of required internship. In a 2010 survey, 92% of parent respondents felt that their “son/daughter is developing critical thinking and problem solving skills” and 100% of seniors responded that their teachers encourage them “to develop critical thinking and problem solving skills.”

City on a Hill’s curricula maintains a balance between breath and depth, and seeks and captures many opportunities to integrate. In a small school in which the faculty fits and meets in one room weekly, formal and informal cross-departmental collaborations are frequent. Academic departments seek to capture a balance between depth and breadth, as teachers manage the tension among three central responsibilities: (1) remediating substantially below-grade-level entering skills in all subject areas, (2) fitting in the required content to assure student success in external assessments, and (3) incorporating the depth of higher order thinking applied to content that prepares students for a rigorous academic college experience.

## **2. Reading/English:**

The essential question for the English department is: How are we empowered by language? All students must read, analyze, and discuss a core of literature reflecting the best of human thought and endeavor.

English I is designed to teach to basic skills of reading, writing and speaking, and to provide English I students with literature including the genre of the novel, poetry, mythology, and drama. Students explore their identities and roots in an autobiography project.

English II is designed to broaden the students’ knowledge of world literature as well as literary terms and devices. In addition to the novel, drama and the short story, the English II curriculum focuses on poetry. Attention is given to preparation for the MCAS exam.

English III is designed to foster increasingly analytical skills in reading; to require sustained unity, tone, and theme in writing; and to demand that students voice their opinions logically, persuasively, concretely, and at length.

The goal of English IV is to ensure that students are proficient in analyzing a piece of literature and communicating ideas clearly and effectively in their writing and speaking. English IV students read and research critical perspectives, and improve voice and language use in writing.

The literacy tutorial program dovetails with the curriculum required in English classes focusing on developing reading skills through several exercises. First, students are given excerpts of the texts their reading in their English classes to read aloud and analyze in small groups (3:1 student teacher ratio). Second, students choose a text from a list of various grade levels and interests to read in tutorial, allowing them to keep up with class and to develop their skills at the same time. Third, in both the English classroom and the Literacy Tutorial groups students use their vocabulary words out loud in original sentences to demonstrate mastery of nuance and to solidify memorization, and they are rewarded for finding their vocabulary words in any published text they read which encourages word awareness and on-going application. Fourth, we focus a good deal of tutorial time on the 6 traits of writing, because reading and writing skills develop together.

Furthermore, the school offers targeted, additional reading support to its lowest skilled readers, as well as integrated and pull-out ESL instruction to the students identified as LEP. These students also complete the same rigorous, college-prep curriculum, augmented with additional instruction to grow their fundamental speech and literacy skills.

### **3. Mathematics:**

The math department at City On A Hill Public Charter School provides students the mathematical foundation and critical thinking skills necessary to be successful in college level mathematics courses (Algebra, Geometry, Advanced Algebra, Pre-Calculus and AP Calculus). Its curriculum encourages active learning where problem solving and communication skills are woven into the content. In addition to just “doing” math, students are also expected to fluently write and speak about math in order to graduate from mathematics at City on a Hill.

At City on a Hill, students divide learning time between direct instruction and in-class investigations and discussion. Learning activities typically connect prior knowledge to new ideas, pushing students to understand both the “how” and the “why” of that topic and to solve continuously more difficult related problems.

The CoaH math department believes it is important for students to explain their mathematical thinking in writing and speaking in addition to just knowing mathematical content, and for that reason there are final Proficiency exams that assess students’ writing and speaking skills in mathematics. To demonstrate their knowledge of mathematical theory, students are expected to give written and verbal explanations proving the logic and validity of their answers.

City on a Hill’s math curriculum places a high standard on students’ ability to solve complicated, multi-step math problems. Traditionally, the school finds this to be an area of both great need and great potential among our students. The math department and math tutors have incorporated monthly problems based on Number Theory called Problems of the Week. Students are expected to use the tools they have learned from math classes to solve these problems accurately while using an efficient process. They also have to explain in words how and why they performed each step of their process. The formal write-up is aligned with our school initiative to teach writing in all content areas. Our curriculum instructs students how to formulate effective problem statements, how to identify key given information, how to identify necessary missing information, how to devise various methods of problem solving to answer a problem, and how to choose the most efficient method to solve the problem. Many Problems of the Week require students to look for patterns, make conjectures, and prove their conjectures. They also must write an academic extension of the problem that may include research of mathematical formulas or theorems.

For high skilled students in all grade levels, math tutors challenge them with Problems of the Week (POW’s). These are open-ended questions that students explore. In addition to POWs, high skilled students work with their tutors on challenge questions and higher order thinking questions that require students to think beyond the processes and procedures. These POWs and higher order thinking questions are designed to facilitate enrollment and success in AP Calculus as well as in college level mathematics.

### **4. Additional Curriculum Area:**

The History Department at City on a Hill Public Charter School educates students to be active members of society who have the ability to make well-informed decisions. The curriculum provides students with a system of understanding the world via historical study while using modern examples and manifestations to support the study of historical topics and issues. Equipped with the skills necessary to use history as well as a knowledge base of the historical roots that led them to where they are, students have the experience of using history to assist their social and civic lives.

In each History level, as well as in subsequent years, there is an ongoing balance of skills and content. All proficiencies are both skill and content based. Students must be ‘proficient’ in both the skill areas and the content in order to be promoted. In analyzing primary and secondary sources—as is necessary for Proficiencies at all levels—students must bring to the work an understanding of the historical context of the topic or document. The CoaH curriculum heavily emphasizes students’ drawing conclusions and developing arguments based on evidence.

CoaH's History curriculum includes a particular emphasis on civics and government in the first year; in subsequent years, civics and government are included as strands of the History content. Geography and economics are also integrated into all three levels as strands. Whenever appropriate to the specific curriculum, the study of history also includes topics relating to religion, sociology and the arts. It is the History Department's philosophy and practice that the study of other social sciences not only enriches but also is necessary to a fully developed understanding of history.

This principle is at the heart of CoaH's mission; the History curriculum bears a large part of the responsibility for instilling this value early on. The first year of History focuses generally on the study of Civics, and particularly the study of the American democracy and how to participate in it. The History II curriculum provides a narrative approach to the study of US history, helping students locate themselves in the developing narrative of America. In History III, the Facing History and Ourselves unit is taught, from which students analyze the choices citizens make and their consequences. In their senior year, students engage in the year-long City Project, which is at its core community based research and action.

## **5. Instructional Methods:**

City on a Hill supports inclusive learning opportunities for all students. City on a Hill leverages the small size of its learning community to personalize learning both in the academic subjects and in tutorial. CoaHCorps tutors adjust their instruction in 3:1 groupings according to student interest (in reading selections) as well as individual student skills (assessed at least quarterly). As City on a Hill classrooms (with an average class size of under 20) are heterogeneous as well as inclusive of Special Education, Limited English Proficient, and other at-risk populations within the school, City on a Hill teachers are equipped with a range of instructional strategies to address the wide variety of learning strengths and challenges in such an inclusive learning environment, including, but not limited to, video presenters, audio presentations, recorded books, and oral presentations. As a public school that seeks to include and challenge all of its enrolled students toward success in its college preparatory program, CoaH practices inclusion and does not use ability-level grouping. CoaH's students with IEPs or 504s are included in all classes, including Advanced Placement.

Rather than having students removed from the general education classroom, trained inclusion professionals ensure the implementation of accommodations and modifications in the context of the general education environment. Certified Special Education, Reading, and English as a Second Language teachers work integrally with academic departments during dedicated planning periods to ensure targeted, appropriate, college-prep skills growth is occurring in all students. These specialists take a substantial role in shaping curriculum, instruction, and assessment to ensure that all of the school's students can access a college preparatory education.

City on a Hill tutorial program and its curricular attention to higher order thinking successfully meets the needs of disabled students, remediate students with low skills, and challenge students with high skills in the context of the school's college preparatory curriculum.

Every City on a Hill student, grades 9-12, regardless of ability, receives personalized tutorial integrated into the school day. CoaH students work with their tutors on literacy and numeracy skills, one hour each day, for the entire school year. One of the primary benefits of tutorial is that it is individually paced. Students receive the instruction that their assessments indicate they need, not what happens to be covered in a particular class on a particular day, week, or month.

## **6. Professional Development:**

As City on a Hill is a school absent of tenure, teachers continue to improve their practice each year in order to be re-contracted annually. City on a Hill's professional development is in the context of a school-wide culture of accountability, where all teachers are engaged in reaching the accountability plan goals essential to our charter renewal. The school has fostered an inclusive and highly effective evaluation process that begins with teachers and the Principal working in collaboration to create individual, annual

instructional goals around which individualized professional development occurs. Required peer observation and feedback is completed in the context of these goals, as teachers challenge and support one another toward improvement and achievement of individual and school-wide goals. Teachers use feedback from proficiency results, external assessment results, formal and informal peer feedback, evaluator feedback, and self-evaluation against annual goals to improve their instruction. The final evaluation rubric incorporates the achievement of these goals, and informs the decision to re-contract for the following year. In addition to the formal evaluation process, during department days, grade level teams provide feedback to one another about lessons taught in common and instruction in the classroom.

Discussions about instruction and its effectiveness are the center of the professional culture of the school. The most critical time when these formal and information conversations occur are during weekly department meetings, especially, though not exclusively, among teachers who teach the same course. However, conversations about instruction pervade the peer observation process, collaboration between departments and the Learning Network, strategy-focused conversations between content teachers and advisors, and professional development sessions focused on the 6 Traits of Writing and Higher Order Thinking. These sessions are formally scheduled during the 13 required days of in-service professional development scheduled for all faculty and staff, but also regularly occur during weekly department days and weekly two-hour faculty meetings. As final proficiency assessments are graded by members of the public as well as other members of the academic department (based on a common rubric), teachers receive feedback on the effectiveness of their classroom instruction through the objective assessment of their students' performance. Peer support and mentoring are readily available within the academic department, as Lead Teachers provide the new members of their department (as well as anyone who struggles) with the first line of support and mentoring toward the improvement of their instructional practice. The Simmons College partnership also provides collaboration and peer-support opportunities, as the cohort of urban teachers (generally, half from City on a Hill and half from other urban charter schools) provide a resource for impactful reflection on and conversation about effective instruction. Lastly, the on-site certification program provides formal mentorship for new teachers as they progress toward state certification. As a result of the attention that City on a Hill teachers give to their own content knowledge and credentials, as well as the quality and continuous improvement of instruction, instruction is of a high quality across the school; we believe that this quality is demonstrated not only through the outstanding student outcomes that our school achieves, but MORE IMPORTANTLY through the growth data that City on a Hill students demonstrate.

## **7. School Leadership:**

City on a Hill's leadership philosophy is embodied by the founders' 1995 mantra: "At City on a Hill, every administrator teaches, and every teacher is an administrator." While this ideal is not universally and literally true today, it is a shared understanding that it is the business of teaching that drives the school, and a majority of City on a Hill's full time positions blur the traditional teacher-administrator boundary.

City on a Hill's Board of Trustees hires and supervises the school's Executive Director who supervises the Principal, as well as the Finance, Human Resources, Development, and Technology departments. This ensures that the Principal's focus is consistently on the systems and the people that support student learning; the Principal is singularly responsible for the implementation of the academic program according to the school's mission and accountability plan goals.

The Principal provides leadership in the school and maintains the school community's shared vision, direction, and focus for student learning, with the advice, support, and collaboration in the context of a carefully-structured, but inclusive set of leadership participants. The school's Administrative Team (consisting of all faculty and staff with administrative responsibilities, and responsible for the school's systems) and Academic Committee (consisting of Lead Teachers of the academic departments and Student Services, and responsible for the school's academic standards) are consulted for feedback and collaboration prior to any final policy decision.

At City on a Hill, teachers and administrators other than the Principal and Executive Director provide constant leadership that is essential to the improvement of the school. All teachers can be involved in the most fundamentally important decisions in the school, such as hiring, budget, curriculum, and policy development. The school's Deans of Citizenship (also history teachers) develop and support teachers' classroom management repertoire; the Data Coordinator (also the Lead Teacher of math) trains teachers to access and use student data; each academic department is led by a teacher who coordinates and facilitates all curriculum development efforts; and many of the school's key programs, such as the daily Sustained Silent Reading period and Freshman Academy, were implemented due to teacher leadership initiatives. Teachers in administrative roles oversee advisory and tutorial curriculum development, and much of professional development day programming consists of peer teacher training activities. The teachers and administrators who assume leadership roles foster a culture of learning and accountability that is consistent with the culture set by the Principal.

# PART VII - ASSESSMENT RESULTS

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics

Grade: 10

Test: MCAS Math

Edition/Publication Year:  
annual

Publisher: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary  
Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	May	May	May	May	May
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	97	79	92	67	76
Advanced	61	55	61	32	38
Number of students tested	66	55	51	84	69
Percent of total students tested	22	19	19	30	26
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	98	80	89	71	72
Advanced	60	56	71	32	36
Number of students tested	52	34	34	59	44
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	98	75	91	63	73
Advanced	59	55	53	21	35
Number of students tested	46	40	34	48	40
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	95	84	92	70	77
Advanced	65	46	77	47	36
Number of students tested	20	13	13	30	22
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced				20	
Advanced				0	
Number of students tested	5	8	4	10	4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	8	8		4	1
<b>6. High Needs (Includes SpEd and ELL)</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	96				
Advanced	59				
Number of students tested	54				
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not report aggregate data for subgroups of fewer than 10 students. The new "high needs" designation is introduced for the 2010-2011 school year, and includes students with disabilities, low-income students, English Language Learners, and former English Language Learners.					

12MA3

## STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading                      Grade: 10              Test: MCAS English Language Arts  
 Edition/Publication Year:              Publisher: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary  
 annual                                      Education

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr	Apr
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	94	84	94	81	72
Advanced	23	0	25	9	6
Number of students tested	66	56	51	86	70
Percent of total students tested	22	20	19	30	26
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	84	82	93	82	71
Advanced	23	0	29	8	4
Number of students tested	52	34	28	61	45
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	98	88	94	83	66
Advanced	26	0	26	8	7
Number of students tested	46	41	34	48	41
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	85	69	93	78	82
Advanced	15	0	31	10	5
Number of students tested	20	13	13	31	22
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced				20	
Advanced				0	
Number of students tested	5	8	4	10	4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced					
Advanced					
Number of students tested	8	8		4	1
<b>6. High Needs (Includes SpEd and ELL)</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	93				
Advanced	24				
Number of students tested	54				
<b>NOTES:</b>					
The Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education does not report aggregate data for subgroups of fewer than 10 students. The new "high needs" designation is introduced for the 2010-2011 school year, and includes students with disabilities, low-income students, English Language Learners, and former English Language Learners.					

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Mathematics      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	97	79	92	67	76
Advanced	61	55	61	32	38
Number of students tested	66	55	51	84	69
Percent of total students tested	22	19	19	30	26
Number of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
Percent of students alternatively assessed	0	0	0	0	0
<b>SUBGROUP SCORES</b>					
<b>1. Free/Reduced-Price Meals/Socio-economic Disadvantaged Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	98	80	89	71	72
Advanced	60	56	71	32	36
Number of students tested	52	34	34	59	44
<b>2. African American Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	98	75	91	63	73
Advanced	59	55	53	21	35
Number of students tested	46	40	34	48	40
<b>3. Hispanic or Latino Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	95	84	92	70	77
Advanced	65	46	77	47	36
Number of students tested	20	13	13	30	22
<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	0	0	0	20	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	5	8	4	10	4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	8	8	0	4	1
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	96	0	0	0	0
Advanced	59	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	54	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

12MA3

# STATE CRITERION-REFERENCED TESTS

Subject: Reading      Grade: Weighted Average

	2010-2011	2009-2010	2008-2009	2007-2008	2006-2007
Testing Month					
<b>SCHOOL SCORES</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	94	84	94	81	72
Advanced	23	0	25	9	6
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<b>4. Special Education Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	0	0	0	20	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	5	8	4	10	4
<b>5. English Language Learner Students</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Advanced	0	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	8	8	0	4	1
<b>6.</b>					
Proficient + Advanced	93	0	0	0	0
Advanced	24	0	0	0	0
Number of students tested	54	0	0	0	0
<b>NOTES:</b>					

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