

# **Renewal Inspection Report**

BOSTON DAY AND EVENING ACADEMY  
HORACE MANN CHARTER SCHOOL  
ROXBURY, MA

**October 15-18, 2007**

Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School  
Renewal Inspection Report

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## **ABOUT THE RENEWAL PROCESS AND SITE VISIT REPORT**

Beginning in the spring of the third year of its charter (and ending August 1<sup>st</sup> following its fourth year), a school may apply for renewal of its charter for another five-year term. Following guidelines set forth in the *Application for Renewal of a Public School Charter*, an application for renewal should be an articulate, affirmative response, based on clear, credible evidence, to the questions that guide charter school accountability. It must also offer compelling answers to questions about the school's plans for the future. The application should be a sound, well-supported explanation of why the Board of Education should renew a school's charter.

Once this application has met a minimal review of its clarity and coherence, the Department of Education works with an independent evaluation team, which conducts a site visit of the school to corroborate and augment the school's application for renewal. This report is the result of one such evaluation.

The renewal site visit process and report provide a detailed and current portrait of a public charter school at the time of its application for renewal. While the renewal site visit report itself is a vital source of information within the renewal process, it is most effective when used in conjunction with the longitudinal school performance data available to the Department of Education. The combination of more general long-term data with the detailed information gathered by the renewal visit constitutes an evidence base rigorous enough to inform decisions about the future of public charter schools responsible for the education of students in the Commonwealth. In keeping with Massachusetts Board of Education's commitment to a public charter school accountability system that is based in robust and diverse performance data, the renewal site visit report does not make recommendations about whether or not a school should be renewed. It presents a detailed picture of the present state of the school as one of several key sources of information to be considered by the Board of Education in its renewal decision.

### **How to read this report**

The first section of this report describes the school's setting. Included in this section are information on the origin and history of the charter, student demographics, staffing and the school's educational program. This is also an opportunity to include any organizational history, such as changes in the board and leadership or challenges the school has faced, and its response to those challenges.

**The core of the report is the Renewal Inspection Team's findings. Findings are the Team's assessment of the school's strengths and areas for improvement that, in their judgment, have the greatest bearing on the school's achievement of its defined goals. Findings are organized under each of the renewal questions: *Is the academic program a success? Is the school a viable organization? Is the school faithful to the terms of its charter?* The Team's comments on the fourth question, *If the school is renewed, what are its plans for the next five years?* Reflect their judgment of the quality of the school's proposed new goals and their assessment of the school's capacity to fulfill those goals. Each finding is a bolded statement followed by explanatory paragraphs reporting the evidence supporting the Team's judgments. Finally, Appendix A illustrates the Team's schedule during the renewal visit.**

## **RENEWAL INSPECTION TEAM**

**F. Daniel Ahern, Jr.** is the President of Clarus Group, a consulting firm dedicated to helping governments and nonprofit organizations meet high standards of performance and integrity. Clarus Group has conducted numerous charter school renewal inspections in Massachusetts and New York as part of the Class Measures inspection team. Clarus Group has also trained and monitored the work of Examiners for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and has developed and delivered procurement training to charter school business managers for the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official program. Prior to co-founding Clarus Group, Dan served for ten years as the First Assistant Inspector General for Management in the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General. He has also been a performance auditor for the Virginia General Assembly and an independent consultant to state agencies in Massachusetts and Virginia. He has taught graduate courses in nonprofit management and public administration at Northeastern University and Clark University. He holds a Master of Public Administration degree and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Northeastern University.

**Pamela Bloomfield** is the Vice President of Clarus Group, which has conducted numerous charter school renewal inspections as part of the Class Measures team, trained and monitored the work of Examiners for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability, and developed and delivered procurement training for the Massachusetts Certified Public Purchasing Official program. Prior to co-founding Clarus Group, she served for ten years as the ten years as the Deputy Inspector General for Management in the Massachusetts Office of the Inspector General., where she led several major reviews of Massachusetts charter schools. She has also been the Assistant Director of Finance and Administration for an Oregon county; a management

**Melanie Gallo** has been an educator for 35 years. A member of the National School Reform faculty, she has been a teacher and a school director. She has been a founder of two schools: a school in New Hampshire and a charter school in Massachusetts. She has been recognized by the College Board for excellence in teaching AP English and is the author of Senior Project in Creating the Good High School by Mackin/Silva. She is a trained Critical Friends coach and has served on the Board of the Massachusetts Drama Guild. She is currently on the graduate school adjunct faculty at Fitchburg State College. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst and a Master's degree in Education from Fitchburg State College. She is at present a Leadership Consultant for Class Measures.

**Caroline Harris** is a veteran educator with thirty-five years experience as a teacher, Social Studies Department Chairperson, and Director of Curriculum and Integrated Technology for the North Reading School District in North Reading, Massachusetts. She has supervised district initiatives in the area of curriculum alignment, integration of interdisciplinary units and the implementation and evaluation of new K-12 curriculum programs, the development of a standards based report card, professional development initiatives for teachers and educational technology. Carolyn served as the district coordinator for the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Legislation. Carolyn is active in the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies. Carolyn consults for the New England League of Middle Schools in teacher and administrative

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professional development, and school assessments. She is currently employed as an Instructional and Leadership Consultant for Class Measures.

**Josephine Napolitano** taught seventh grade and worked on curriculum integration for 36 years in the Methuen public school system. Mrs. Napolitano is active in the Massachusetts Council for the Social Studies and the Massachusetts Geographic Alliance. She was selected as their 1997 Teacher of the Year. Mrs. Napolitano was on staff at National Geographic Society in Washington D. C., training teachers on strategies and techniques in geographic education and has presented at state, regional, and national social studies and geography conferences. She is currently a field examiner for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

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**Peter Davies**, *team supervisor and report editor*, is a former British School Inspector who has worked in school and district accountability for more than ten years in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe, and the Middle East. He was formerly an administrator with the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development in Paris and a visiting professor to the Oxford University Department of Educational Studies. He currently trains Examiners for the Office of Educational Quality and Accountability and monitors their work. He holds a Master of Arts degree from Cambridge University and an advanced graduate degree in educational administration from London University.

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Dan Ahern and Pamela Bloomfield are Clarus Group principals working under contract to Class Measures Ltd. They provided assistance in planning the renewal inspection visit; they also reviewed and reported on the school's governance and financial condition.

Peter Davies, Melanie Gallo and Caroline Harris are members of Class Measures Ltd.

Josephine Napolitano is an independent contractor working for the Massachusetts Office of Educational Quality and Accountability.

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## SETTING

Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School (BDEA) opened in 1995 as the Downtown Evening Academy within the Boston Public Schools. It was committed to serving students in Boston who had dropped out of school or who were in danger of dropping out. In 1998, the school received a Horace Mann Charter and became the Boston Evening Academy Charter School (BEA) serving 154 over-age students ages 16-23. BEA grew to 205 students by 2002-2003. In 2003, the school was granted a charter for a second five years with a maximum student enrollment of 205 students. In 2003, BEA was also awarded full membership into the Coalition of Essential Schools. The mission of the Coalition of Essential Schools and its nationwide group of select schools is to transform public education so that every child in every school receives a personalized and intellectually challenging education. In August of 2003, BEA moved to the Phyllis Wheatley Education Complex in Dudley Square in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston.

In 2004, BEA, received approval to amend its charter to add a Day Program for up to 200 over-age middle school students, (ages 16-23). It then became the Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School. (BDEA) The school currently enrolls 350 over age students in grades 9-12. The school operates a Day program Monday through Thursday from 8:00a.m. to 3:00p.m. and on Friday from 9:00a.m. to 12:30p.m. Evening students attend Monday through Thursday from 1:30p.m.to 7:00p.m. The school also operates a distance learning program for approximately 42 students. This program is intended “to provide students who have difficulty attending school on a regular basis with alternative opportunities for achieving academic goals while maintaining a flexible schedule.” The Boston Day and Evening Academy is the City of Boston’s first diploma-granting public evening high school, the first school to have a Distance Learning Program and as of September 2004, first to become a 12 –hour school when the Day Program was added.

The BDEA mission statement is as follows:

Boston Day and Evening Academy is an innovative, year –round, public high school, founded in 1995, that serves a unique population of students who are overage for grade level and at high risk of dropping out. Working with experienced faculty in an environment that blends strong academics and support, students are given the tools to earn a Boston Public Schools diploma and reach their fullest potential through a competency-based curriculum that inspires critical and creative thinking, independent learning and active citizenship.

The region served by BDEA is the City of Boston. As Table 1 shows, 65.1 percent of enrolled BDEA students were African American/Black, 1.7 percent were Asian, and 26.7 percent were Hispanic, and 4.5 were White according to Department of Education (DOE) data for the 2006-2007 school year. Table 1 also shows that BDEA enrolls a higher percentage of African American/Black students and a lower percentage of Asian, Hispanic and White students in comparison with Boston. BDEA enrolls a high number of lower income students. The Table

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also indicates that for 16.8 percent of its population, English is not a first language and 0 percent is Limited English Proficient.

**Table 1.**  
**Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School**  
**Comparison with Boston and State**  
**2006-2007 Student Demographic Data**

Subgroup	BDEA	Boston	State
African American/Black	65.1	40.9	8.2
Asian	1.7	8.5	4.8
Hispanic	26.7	35.2	13.3
White	4.5	13.5	71.5
Multi-Race	2.1	1.3	1.7
Native American	0	.5	.3
First Language Not English	16.8	38.9	14.9
Limited English Proficient	0	18.3	5.6
Low Income	98.6	72.7	28.9
Special Education	15.1	19.7	16.9
<i>Data Source: Massachusetts Department of Education</i>			

BDEA is governed by a 15 member Board of Directors that meets six times a year. The Board is comprised of community volunteers and representatives of the teaching faculty students and alumni. According to the Application for Renewal, there are five active sub-committees which generally meet monthly. These include: the Executive Committee, the School Site Advisory Council, the Development Committee, the Finance Committee and the Board Recruitment Committee.

BDEA is led by one Head of School. There are two Assistant Heads, one for the Day Program and one for the Evening and Distance Learning Program. There is also one Dean of Curriculum and Instruction.

The school is currently housed in the Phillis Wheatley Educational Complex in the Dudley Square in the Roxbury neighborhood of Boston.

BDEA does not have a DOE approved Accountability Plan.

## **FINDINGS**

The Renewal Inspection Team (Team) spent four days on site at Boston Day and Evening Charter School (BDEA) from October 15, 2007 to October 18, 2007. The Team conducted focus group interviews with the BDEA Board of Trustees, students, parents, and teachers, and conducted interviews with the Head of School, the two Assistant Heads, the Curriculum Director, the Student Support Services Team, the Coordinator of Distance Learning, the Office of Institutional Advancement and the Business Manager. There was also an interview conducted with key community agencies that give support to the school. In addition, the team made 24 classroom observations.

The Team obtained and reviewed BDEA data and documents prior to the renewal site visit, on site, and after the site visit. The information reviewed included, but was not limited to, the school's Application for Renewal; the school's draft Accountability Plan; Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) data, other external test results; curricular materials; student work, literary magazine, examples from recent Symposium and an example of a Capstone Project; annual reports; the school's bylaws; minutes of Board of Trustees meetings held; annual budgets; audited financial statements; personnel evaluations; handbooks; information on teacher qualifications; and the Year Seven Site Visit Report and Year Eight Site Visit Report prepared by the Department of Education (DOE).

### **RENEWAL QUESTION 1: IS THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM A SUCCESS? MCAS RESULTS**

The team examined all results obtained by BDEA students on the MCAS English Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics exams during the period of 2006 to 2007.

In reviewing the MCAS exam results, it is important to keep in mind that because of the relatively small number of students taking the exam each year, a small number of students can have a large impact on the results.

In reviewing the data related to MCAS, it should be stated that the graduation requirements of the Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School call for students to pass the MCAS test, demonstrate mastery of the more than 300 academic competencies and successfully complete a Capstone Project.

- 1. BDEA did not make AYP in either English Language Arts or Mathematics in Aggregate Grouping. Subgroups were not reported due to the low numbers.**

**Table 2. Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School Adequate Yearly Progress 2007**

2007		
English Language Arts	Aggregate	No
	All Subgroups	-
Mathematics	Aggregate	No
	All Subgroups	-
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS data</i>		

**2. BDEA made a 1% gain in the passing rate for ELA from 2006-2007.**

**Table 3. Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School Grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts Results 2006-2007**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficient or Advanced
2006	81	0	27	43	30	27
2007	38	0	16	55	29	16
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>						

Comparing 2006 to 2007, approximately 70% (of 81 students) gained Needs Improvement and thereby passed the English Language Arts MCAS Test in 2006. In 2007 approximately 71% (of 38 students) passed the English Language Arts MCAS Test.

**3. BDEA rate of passing in math MCAS declined by 1% from 2006-2007.**

**Table 4. Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School Grade 10 MCAS Mathematics Results 2006-2007**

Year	N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficient or Advanced
2006	71	3	15	30	52	18
2007	36	0	14	33	53	14
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>						

In Math, in 2006 approximately 48 % (of 71 students) passed the MCAS, and in 2007 approximately 47% (of 36 students) passed the test.

**4. When comparing the BDEA results in ELA to the Boston Public Schools in 2006, BDEA had a lower proficiency percentage and a higher rate of Needs Improvement and Warning. In 2007, BDEA had a lower proficiency rate and a higher percentage of Needs Improvement and Warning.**

**Table 5. Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School Comparison with Boston and State**

**Grade 10 MCAS English Language Arts Results 2006-2007**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficient or Advanced
2006	<b>BDEA</b>	<b>81</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>27</b>
	Boston	3988	9	42	35	15	51
	State	73351	16	53	24	7	69
2007	<b>BDEA</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>29</b>	<b>16</b>
	Boston	4044	11	39	37	13	50
	State	72471	22	49	24	6	71
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>							

**5. When comparing BDEA scores in the math MCAS to the Boston Public Schools in 2006, BDEA had a lower percentage of Proficient scores and they had a higher percentage in Advanced, Needs Improvement and Warning. In 2007, they had higher percentages in Warning and Needs Improvement and lower scores in Advanced and Proficient.**

**Table 6. Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School Comparison with Boston and State**

**Grade 10 MCAS Mathematics Results 2006-2007**

Year		N	Advanced	Proficient	Needs Improvement	Warning/ Failing	Proficient or Advanced
2006	<b>BDEA</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>18</b>
	Boston	3925	32	21	25	22	53
	State	72738	40	27	21	12	67
2007	<b>BDEA</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>53</b>	<b>14</b>
	Boston	3951	33	22	27	18	55
	State	71692	42	27	22	9	69
<i>Data Source: Department of Education MCAS Data</i>							

**6. BDEA recognizes the limitations of using MCAS data to measure student achievement but has not yet implemented an effective alternative method of data analysis.**

In reviewing MCAS assessment, it is important to note the school’s academic program is helping students to overcome obstacles and to meet the state’s standards. In a traditional program the majority of students spend roughly two years at a school and often a longer period of time in a district before taking the 10<sup>th</sup> grade MCAS. This is not the case at BDEA.

It should also be noted that from 2006 to 2007, the number of students taking the MCAS dropped. This is due to the fact that BDEA only added 24 new students in 2006-2007. At Boston Day and Evening Academy any student in the Day cohort who has been at the school for a year

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and a half (from the date of enrollment) may take the test, however, in the Evening School and Distant Learning cohort, anyone enrolled at any time may take the test. BDEA does not have stable cohorts.

According to the Charter Renewal Application and interviews with school leadership, unlike the Evening and Distance Learning Programs, where students enter at different stages of their high school career, the BDEA students who are enrolled in the Day Program come to the school straight from middle school. The Day students were already overage in middle school and had difficulty meeting 8<sup>th</sup> grade benchmarks. For those students, BDEA is a “first chance” high school. Because the school is competency-based and works with an over age group of students, BDEA does not group by traditional grade levels, so the school chose to administer the MCAS in 2006 to every Day student who had enrolled at BDEA between August 2004 and March 2005. This criterion insured that every student who took the test had been at the school for at least a year and a half.

According to the data cited in the Charter Renewal Application, fifty-five students took the MCAS ELA exam in March 2006. Forty-one of those students met the Commonwealth’s minimum standard (Needs Improvement) for a diploma. In the subsequent November and March retest, four more students met the Needs Improvement minimum passing standard. With the addition of the four retake students, 82% of the initial cohort met the ELA requirement.

The math MCAS was administered to fifty-one students. Twenty-four of those students met the Commonwealth’s minimum standard for a high school diploma. In addition in the math retake, seven students met the minimum standard thus resulting in 61% of the initial cohort of the Day students meeting the MCAS math requirement.

The best way for BDEA to show academic growth is to compare students’ middle school MCAS results (8<sup>th</sup> grade) with their results on the MCAS Grade 10 Test. According to documents cited in the Application for Renewal and in discussion with the Director of Curriculum, when comparing the middle school MCAS score for the cohort of Day Program students to the scores they achieved as second year BDEA students, there is evidence of progress.

Forty-seven of the fifty-four students who took the ELA 10<sup>th</sup> grade test had middle school scores to compare with their BDEA test scores. In comparing the two sets of scores, the results indicated that their time at BDEA had resulted in positive gain. The middle school scaled ELA score was 226 and the BDEA scaled score was 229 - a three-point increase in the cohort’s average scaled score over the middle school scaled score.

In addition, when you compare the math scores for forty seven of the fifty students, who took the MCAS math test and had middle school scores to compare, the middle school average scaled score in math was 217 and the average scaled math score of the BDEA MCAS was 226 - a nine point gain.

The Director of Curriculum stated that approaching the data in this manner was the only sensible strategy. The school therefore compares MCAS from students before they go to BDEA and once they are at the school to show growth over time, thereby indicating progress in English

Language Arts and Mathematics. This data becomes part of each student's Individual Learning Plan indicating areas of strength and weaknesses that in turn will drive instruction for that student.

## **OTHER ASSESSMENTS**

### **7. BDEA has several external assessments in place to help measure student academic growth and to inform instruction.**

Boston Day and Evening Academy Charter School administers regular standardized assessments. Teachers use these external assessments to get an assessment profile for each student. Teachers interviewed said that this data helps in student placement and in instructional practice. This data becomes part of the student's Assessment Portfolio. The data is readily available for the teachers via email or hard copy. The results of these tests are analyzed and instruction is reviewed and modified if necessary.

Since the 2004-2005 school year, Boston Day and Evening Academy's teachers have pre-and post-tested students to assess basic reading and math skills. BDEA purchased the Group Reading Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GRADE) (Level M, forms A and B) and the Group Mathematics Assessment and Diagnostic Evaluation (GMADE) (Levels M and H, forms A and B) from AGS Publishing Company. These standardized assessments provide both standardized scores and grade equivalency.

To alternate with these assessments, BDEA also purchased TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education), which also provides basic assessment data in both Reading and Math. BDEA uses a two-year cycle, alternating between GRADE and GMADE, and TABE. In the DOE Eight Year Site Visit Report finding stated that BDEA "needs to administer these assessments more thoroughly." According to the Director of Curriculum, the post-test was given in June, and due to a variety of factors, few students took the post-test. He stated that this year the post-test would be scheduled for May. The team reviewed results of the GRADE, GMADE and TABE Tests for 2006-2007. It was noted that students at BDEA made progress in each area reviewed.

An example of how the TABE test is used to drive instruction at BDEA was reviewed by the Team, using the results of the math TABE test for 2006 -2007. In the spring of 2007, the TABE test was used for diagnostic purposes to give teachers a snapshot of the students' ability to do math computation and to do general basic application of mathematical concepts. The results showed that a significant number of students in both the Day and Evening Programs tested below the 8<sup>th</sup> grade level. The test also indicated that the Day students had more significant gaps in their mathematical knowledge base.

As a result of the TABE testing, BDEA developed a math curriculum that emphasized hands on learning in small classes where students are able to get individualized and differentiated support.

## **8. BDEA uses multiple additional diagnostic and formative assessments.**

BDEA uses several diagnostics to assess the skill level of incoming students and to place them in classes.

- Running Record/Miscue Analysis designed to create a detailed profile of the student as a reader. This is used if the student under achieves on the GRADE Test.
- The GRADE test flags the student for further diagnostic testing. The percentage of students who have clinically severe reading disabilities is (1 %), however, programs such as Wilson Reading are in place to work with those individuals.
- Reading Conference/Inventory matches students with the ‘right’ reading material.

The Teacher Generated Curriculum Based Measurements in Math are used as a placement tool by the Mathematics Department. They are more specific to the placement needs of the BDEA student than the GMADE Test. The test is in two parts, one is general MCAS Mathematics and the second is an Algebra Diagnostic. Students are assigned classes based on these tests. There are three levels of classes; Emerging, Apprentice and Independent. Students transition through the classes when competencies at each level are reached.

There are numerous on-going formative assessments used in the classrooms. Examples of these are:

- Periodic Writing Conferences between the teacher and student to follow student progress and gain insight in the strengths and challenges of each student reader and writer. These take place at least bi-weekly.
- Power-Writing Exercises are given to measure students’ stamina as a writer these are administered twice a month.
- Reading Response Journals and Reading Logs are used in class daily to monitor the rate of independent reading and gather an understanding of a student’s growth as a strategic reader.
- In addition, there are daily and weekly informal observations and conferences with students designed to follow the student’s progress, and formal assessments such as homework, tests and quizzes.

## **9. BDEA has numerous summative assessments that allow students to demonstrate competency. These assessments are reflective of the mission and the school affiliation with The Coalition of Essential Schools and its 10 Common Principles.**

According to documents reviewed by the Team and interviews with leadership and faculty, as a competency-based school, BDEA students progress toward graduation by demonstrating their skills, knowledge and abilities in math, humanities, science and technology. The students demonstrate their specific knowledge and skills by reading books, writing essays and papers, and analyzing and solving math problems. Boston Day and Evening Students also earn competency

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during Assessment Week that is a requirement for all students—Day, Evening and Distance Learners. The purpose of the Assessment Week format is to allow students to demonstrate competencies independent of teacher support. It gives students a formal structure that builds credibility and confidence in their ability to demonstrate competency. This process is the final determination of competency. There are three Assessment Weeks during the school year, one at the end of each trimester.

As a member of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Boston Day and Evening Academy wants its assessment toolkit to not be limited to only pen and paper assessments. Assessment tools used during Assessment Week may include the following:

- Portfolio Review and Oral Defense of the Work, Exhibition of Understanding in which a student teaches a lesson or explains a project or experiment this may include power point or poster presentations
- Oral Exam in which a student discusses a novel and answers questions
- Performances such as role-playing
- Essay exams in which students write what they know about a subject or write to a MCAS-like question on a character in a novel
- Multiple Choice Exams, or MCAS-like Open Response Questions. Aren't these last two pen and paper assessments?

In preparation for Assessment Week, the Team observed classroom teacher responsibilities, Advisor responsibilities and student responsibilities that were clearly outlined.

Documents reviewed by the Team gave examples of Assessment Week products. An example of an Assessment Week product in math asked students to design and build a package made out of cardboard. The box had to be the right shape for whatever they decided it would hold. It had to be attractive, eye-catching, informative and appropriate. On the outside, they had to name the product, tell what was inside, price the product, and give the volume of the package. They had to include a tag that gave the linear dimensions, surface area, and the volume of the package. In order to earn the competencies and benchmarks, students had to turn in all of their calculations for the surface area and volume.

During Assessment Week, students were to give a short presentation in which they told about the product and about the package's dimensions, surface area, and volume. In addition, each student had to evaluate and calculate the surface area and volume for three other students' boxes. In doing so, the students' calculations and measurements would be checked by other students and the individual student would have to show that they calculate surface area and volume not just once, but repeatedly.

At the end of Assessment Week, Boston Day and Evening Academy assesses the week through a survey sent to all Day and Evening staff. According to documents reviewed by the Team, the synthesis of assessment week feedback is collated and reviewed. In addition, the staff indicated the support or training that they felt would be useful before Assessment Week including training staff in portfolio review and exhibitions so they can scaffold the trimester to prepare students,

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backward planning, and continue discussions about various types of assessments to build a menu from which students would choose the appropriate type of assessment.

Teachers and students interviewed stated that the assessment weeks were valuable. Students said that they felt comfortable with this process and they especially like the opportunity to meet with teachers individually to demonstrate what they had learned.

Students at BDEA are required to complete a “Capstone Project” in order to graduate. This is the ‘Senior Project’ at Boston Day and Evening Academy. It is one of the three requirements for graduation; the other two include passing the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System test in ELA, math and science and technology and demonstrating mastery of each of the three hundred plus competencies.

The Capstone Project constitutes the student’s final trimester, during which time he/she must investigate a topic of his/her choice by asking a question, stating a thesis, and doing a wide variety of research in order to answer the initial question. Each student is assigned a Capstone coach. All students in Day, Evening and Distant Learner Programs must submit a Capstone Project and publicly defend it. The topics fall into one of three categories: Career, Creative, or Social Service.

The goal of the project is to prepare the student to become resourceful, independent investigators and problem solvers in the world beyond Boston Day and Evening Academy. The research includes real-life experience such as job shadowing, internships, interviews, surveys, classes, seminars, and tours that relate to the topic. Secondary sources include using books, periodicals, reference materials and internet websites. The students work in class with instructors, with fellow students, and independently to create a written document and a digital video suitable for presentation to an audience.

Students must be must be prepared to clearly explain their project as well as to defend their work, and expand upon the themes of the topic/question investigated. Students must complete the following in the Capstone Project: Project Proposal, Real Life Experience, Written Document, Documentary video, Website and Final Presentation.

Students must present their Capstone to a committee that includes a facilitator, a community representative, a student representative and a Capstone coach. The project is evaluated using specific rubrics that were reviewed by the Team.

The Team also reviewed several examples of Capstone Projects. One student chose the thesis question: What are the best methods for securing computer networks? At the end of his project research, the student was able to report several methods for protecting sensitive information on computer networks. He provided evidence from numerous sources including interviews with computer network professionals, custom surveys, books, websites, and a Linux course that he took at the Franklin Institute (and earned an “A”). The student presented his findings at a public presentation. School documents reported his performance was outstanding.

Another example of a Capstone Project chosen by a student was a thesis on homelessness. The thesis question: What’s it like to be homeless in Massachusetts? The student was unable to come to a single conclusion but, instead, incorporated many vivid examples of the challenges

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that homeless people face into a compelling documentary video, which was reviewed by Team members. The student interviewed social workers, educators, and a variety of professionals who work with the homeless population in and around Boston. The student interviewed people on the street and conducted a survey at school to get people's perceptions of homelessness. Most important, the student interviewed several people who have been living on the streets for years capturing their spirit and frustrations of their lives. In another dimension of the project, the student spent a day in Boston Common posing as a homeless person and panhandling. The student wore a wireless microphone and was captured on video so that his experience could be closely monitored. This film, "What It's Like to be Homeless in Massachusetts" was presented publicly at the Boston Day and Evening Academy, and featured in the Roxbury Film Festival in August 2007. The Boston Day and Evening Academy hosts an annual Symposium to showcase student work in all three cohorts Day, Evening and Distant Learning. Students share their best academic and artistic work with the public. The work serves as a response to the yearly essential question. For example, the essential question of the 2006 Annual Symposium was: "How Does One Contribute to Community?"

Through academic work in humanities, math, and science and through presentations in visual and performing arts, BDEA students explored this multi-layered question using the six Habits of Mind: Reflection, Evidence, Perspectives, Connections, Possibilities and Relevance. In documents provided to the Team, students presented exhibitions in humanities, math, science, and art, as well as a talent show performance during the Symposium. Student Symposium work is assessed by the teachers using a rubric which includes Presentation Skills, Presentation Organization, Presentation Visuals, and Understanding of Content. During the Symposium, the public fills out a Guest Feedback Form. This form includes comments in the following areas: Presentation Skills, Organization, visual Piece and Understanding. Guests can choose to make comments citing the students for a Distinguished Project, Competent Project or a Project that Needs Work. Students receive these feedback forms as part of their presentation assessment.

In an example of student Symposium work, the Team reviewed the essential question – "How does the past shape the present?" The student researched slavery, Pre-Civil Rights Segregation and Stereotyping and its affect on society.

Students at Boston Day and Evening Academy also create a writing portfolio that represents the student's best work including reflections, in order that final credit (writing competencies) can be granted. The portfolio requirements may vary from teacher to teacher. The portfolio is assessed at the end of the trimester.

#### **10. BDEA communicates its student progress to both parents and students.**

Students at Boston Day and Evening Academy receive report cards on a trimester basis. These reports give the student name, advisor name, and MCAS scores. For each academic area-humanities, mathematics, science and technology - it gives the number of competencies/benchmarks completed. For example, it may indicate that 42 out of 119 humanities benchmarks have been completed. In addition, the report card cites the number of days school was in session and the number of days the student attended. There is next to each of academic benchmarks a line graph showing the mastered competencies and a space in which comments regarding the student's progress are inputted. Portfolio Review, while not an assessment as such, is a part of the parent-advisor-student conference that aids in setting goals for the next trimester of school

year. It gives that student the opportunity to showcase the progress he/she has made in learning, and his/her accomplishments. The student chooses what work to put into the portfolio based on portfolio guidelines. In document review, members of the Team noted that there were specific instructions provided to the students regarding which pieces of work should be showcased in their portfolio, how it was to be organized, what should be included in their Reflection section, Advisory section and Elective section. For example, in the Advisory section students should include projects that they have been working on including a statement of goals and strategies they will use.

In addition, students fill out a *Guiding Questions for Student Portfolio Reflection Letter* in which they write to the reader of their portfolio and highlight guiding questions. For example, “What do you want someone to learn about you when they read your portfolio? Of the work included in your portfolio, what are you most proud of and why? What goals will you set for yourself next semester?” In discussion with the Director of Curriculum, he stated that the use of Portfolios would be a topic for further staff discussion and professional development next year.

BDEA is also currently working to put in place access to the EASE Technology for parents and students. Equity and Achievement in a Standards Based Environment (EASE) is a technology program which was introduced in March of 2007. At this time, only teachers and administrators can access this information. The Eight Year Site Visit Report stated that this software has the potential to enable the whole school community to be constantly aware of where each student stands in terms of achieving benchmarks. Time can then be spent using this information to inform instruction so that needed competencies can be addressed. When this program is completely operational, students and parents will be able to access the data that will inform them as to student progress. According to the Director of Curriculum, the staff is comfortable using this program on a regular basis. At this time, the faculty is inputting data on competencies, comments, and evidence during the trimester and after Assessment Week. During the site visit to BDEA, technology specialists were on site working with the Director of Curriculum to further implement the use of EASE.

#### **11. BDEA staff analyzes MCAS results and other assessment data for use in revising curriculum, identifying academic areas needing improvement and student placement.**

Teachers interviewed reported analyzing a number of assessments to improve student learning. They reported using MCAS scores, pre and post tests in ELA and math as well as diagnostic tests to place students in classes and to tailor instruction to weak skill areas. Teachers also view transcripts and receive data from the Director of Curriculum.

Teachers said that because of the competency-based curriculum and the ILP's (Individualized Learning Plans) students are constantly being assessed and teachers are creating lessons to meet individual needs. Teachers reported that the new module system, discussed in the Curriculum and Instruction section, allows for a better delivery of the curriculum and a more focused approach to moving students through the competencies.

Teachers said that their analysis of data led to MCAS prep in math and the focus on literacy in ELA. It also led to the development of the module system.

## **CURRICULUM AND CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS**

### **12. BDEA provides a competency-based curriculum that is individualized.**

BDEA offers three academic programs, which serve 350 students. The Day Program started in 2004 and serves students from Boston's middle schools who did not meet 8<sup>th</sup> grade BPS benchmarks, but are now being promoted to high school. The Evening Program in its thirteenth year serves over age students ages 16-23 who have previously attended high school and are either transferring from another high school or coming back after dropping out of school. The Distance Learning Program, is in its sixth year and serves up to fifty students whose life circumstances prevent them from attending classes on a regular basis. Supported by technology, the program is for particularly motivated over-age students. Students in each program must complete the same competencies, pass the MCAS tests and do a Capstone Project. The curriculum for the Day and Evening programs are similar in style whereas the Distance Learning curriculum is tailored to the circumstances of its student population.

The school has created a competency-based curriculum that identifies the essential components of a high school curriculum in each of the core academic areas: math, humanities, science and technology. In order to earn a BDEA diploma, students must pass the state mandated MCAS tests, successfully demonstrate competency in over 300 benchmarks, and complete, and defend a Capstone project.

The competencies are broken down into four content areas: humanities, mathematics, science and technology. Students in all three academic programs must demonstrate successful completion of all competencies before graduating. Although the competencies are the same for each academic program, different strategies and modifications are incorporated to meet the specific needs of the student population. The Habits of Mind are woven into the fabric of each module. Students in focus groups could explain the relevance of the Habits of Mind in relationship to material they were covering in class. The Team also observed evidence of this in their classroom observations.

Upon enrolling in BDEA, students receive an Individual Learning Plan (ILP). This ILP is a contract that the school makes with the students and their families indicating explicitly what a student has to do to earn a diploma. The ILP consists of transcripts, internal and external test data, diagnostic test data, and the competencies requirements. The team reviewed several ILPs.

The DOE Eight Year Site Report stated that the competency-based curriculum process was progressing well. Interviews with the leadership team, teachers and students as well as classroom observations indicate that this process is a fluid, evolving progression informed by internal and external test data. Documents provided to the Team clearly identified module objectives, competencies and assessment requirements. The modules themselves are divided into three

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strands: Emerging, Apprenticing, and Independent in each of the core curriculum areas of humanities, mathematics, science and technology. The documents reveal specific project assignments and are appropriately scaffolded for student understanding. Teachers develop module content aligned to state framework documents and a set number of competencies to be covered during a trimester.

For example, the goal of the technology curriculum is to provide all students with technology training before graduating. There are eighteen technology competencies divided into the following categories: Navigation, Word Processing, Tables and Graphs, Graphic Flow Charts, and Communication. The Team saw students during classroom observations working on technology competencies while completing math and science assignments.

A yearlong curriculum calendar and timeline for teaching and assessments is available to students and posted on the web site. Course specific competencies for both the Day and Evening Programs are distributed at the beginning of each trimester. Some, but not all of the core subjects include a curriculum map, course objectives and assessment requirements.

According to faculty interviews, BDEA uses a backward design for curriculum development. They identify the Competencies and desired results as to what a graduate will need to be able to do and from there determine acceptable evidence and threshold levels and assessment methods. Lastly, they plan learning experiences and instruction to meet competency requirements.

Teachers indicated that they have input into curriculum decisions. The science and humanities teachers stated that they mapped out themes for each module and then determined individually how to address these themes with their students. They reiterated that the modules help keep them focused and on target for competencies they need to cover during a trimester. It was also noted that competencies could be earned in different modules and different subjects. Teachers interviewed stated that there could be more administrative oversight and teacher accountability for the delivery of competencies in the curriculum.

### **13. BDEA has a competency-based curriculum that is aligned with the Massachusetts State Frameworks.**

The DOE Year Eight Site Report stated that BDEA still needed to link its competencies explicitly to the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and confirm that successful achievement of the competencies will correlate with success on MCAS. Interviews with the Director of Curriculum, the leadership team and a review of curriculum documents confirmed that alignment of the BDEA competencies and the Massachusetts Curriculum Framework documents is complete. Although there is no complete central bridge document between the Framework documents and the competencies for each subject area (curriculum maps or subject, [module] area curriculum documents), school personnel have spent considerable time and effort aligning competencies.

**14. BDEA curriculum is supported by a wide variety of materials that are differentiated and relevant.**

Instructional materials and curriculum resources used at BDEA include, but are not limited to the following. The humanities department uses *Facing History, Facing Ourselves* by Margot Stern Strom. “Just Right” books from classroom libraries, reflecting independent reading levels of diverse students are part of a workshop approach to curriculum in this department. *All Souls* by Michael Patrick MacDonald, *Hamlet* by William Shakespeare, *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe, *Lakota Woman* by Mary Crow Dog, and *Seed Folks* by Paul Fleischman have been taught as a whole class experience.

In science, the SEPUP (the Science Education for Public Understanding Program), which creates innovative science curriculum for use in the classroom and is issue oriented. *Living by Chemistry, General Chemistry and Alchemy* from General Chemistry, *Foundations of Physical Science* by Tom Hsu, *Smells* from Key Curriculum Press, and *Evolutionary Science and Society Activities for the Classroom* from the American Institute of Biological Sciences are also used.

In math, the EMPOWER curriculum developed by TERC and published by Key Curriculum Press and Peppercorn Books fills the need for a math numeracy program for adult basic education. It helps students develop mathematical proficiency by combining the best teaching practices with insight culled from educational research and classroom practice. Teachers also use elements of IMP, the Connected Math for high school students, Connected Math, and *Geometry* by McDougal Little.

The Team reviewed 50-60 examples of student work that included the 2006-2007 literary magazine featuring 42 literary pieces from students and staff. Symposiums projects included a wall poster entitled “The Truth from Within” which combined photographs, the students’ poetry, and essays on the neighborhood, and two tri fold projects, one on the use of the GPS to map the neighborhood and “Stereotypes of Black Athletes” included racial stereotypes, possible solutions and a “test your knowledge” about race. Student work attached to Assessment Week rubrics included student essays and science lab reports. Documents provided to the Team, included lesson plans with attached student work. Samples of student work were posted in the Team room as well as in hallways and individual classrooms. Humanities teachers shared student essays and poetry during classroom observations.

Using Ken Macrorie’s 1988 *The I Search Paper*, BDEA has developed a research protocol aligned to the school’s competencies. It links effective teaching, content knowledge and research processes. According to the Director of Curriculum, this process makes research the topic. Although some teachers said they prefer the traditional approach, students need to know how to do both in order to be successful learners. This approach provides context for alternative education students with diverse learning abilities. The process starts with students developing a question that is important to them from the unit theme. In phase two, students engage in a variety of activities to build background knowledge and gather information. Students then develop a search plan that identifies how they will gather information. In the third phase students, determine what they have learned by analyzing the information and drawing conclusions. In the fourth phase, that decides what it all means to them, by writing an expository piece, revising and

proofing their work. Lastly, they use the MLA citation system to develop a bibliography of sources referenced.

### **15. BDEA curriculum has a strong experiential component.**

Experiential Education as implemented at BDEA allows students to learn through action. Students are engaged and learn through direct experience and focused reflection in order to increase knowledge, develop skills and clarify values. According to faculty and leadership interviews, as well as Team observations, the Experiential Education philosophy informs many educational practices at BDEA. Some examples are:

- The Garden Project which included eight students who spent four weeks during the summer earning science competencies while they planted and cultivated the schools community garden. This program is two years old and is deemed a success by students and faculty. Students using math skills built a small storage shed, conducted tours and reflected on their learning in journal entries. Students tested the PH of the soil in this organic garden and incorporated environmental issues within the curriculum. Students harvested vegetables, sold them at their farm stand, donated produce to Haley House and the day after the Team’s visit, would be “putting the garden to bed” This will be a whole school activity with the kitchen staff preparing three different soups from the last harvest, for students and staff to enjoy.
- Math students went to Six Flags to take part in the amusement park’s Math and Physics Day. The curriculum material provided by Six Flags was modified by teachers before the visit to fit what the students were studying in their math classes.
- In a humanities class, students met with Michael Patrick McDonald, the author of *All Souls*, after reading his book, as part of the conversation with a writer series. One instructional practice observed was students selecting three pieces of dialogue from a chapter and creating a visual blueprint using images and analyzing the deeper meaning. Also in humanities, a media project had students evaluating various advertisements and analyzing the structure of “propaganda” through the media messages. Students then gathered data on local advertisements (Roxbury, Brookline and Boston) and analyzed how the advertisements changed depending on a community, its variety and subject vs. where the advertisements were located. Finally, students created petitions to criticize some of the offensive advertisements located in communities.

### **16. BDEA has an advisory program that serves as a support to every student at the school and serves the mission and values of the school as a community.**

According to the leadership team, the Advisory program is considered the foundation of the school community that supports the vision and values of the school. The Advisory curriculum was developed to help the staff strengthen communication and relationships between teachers and students and students to students. BDEA is designated a Trauma-Sensitive School and as such provides opportunities for collaboration between the Student Support Team (SST) and the teaching staff. This collaboration allows SST to offer gender specific workshops to students on a

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regular basis. In student focus groups, students indicated that this was the most relevant aspect of Advisory and occurred on Mondays. Students also reported that stress management was a topic for their Wednesday Advisory.

In the Day Program, advisories are scheduled four times a week for a full block. In the Evening Program, they are scheduled four times a week with three short blocks and one long block. For the Distance Learning Program there is a meeting once a month for all students. Students must complete three advisory competencies before graduation. These three competencies can be transferable across other content areas. The curriculum is divided into three focus areas that include: having students assemble a personal wellness portfolio, to engage in a community service project and to assemble a personal portfolio for presentation in advisory. All components have a reflective piece that supports and enhances the schools literacy goals. Some topics covered in advisory include: study skills, time management, Symposium and Portfolio introduction and test taking strategies. Some community service projects have including painting a neighbor's house, feeding the homeless and conducting a food drive.

The Head of School indicated that the ultimate goal of advisory is build a common language and strengthen the culture of the school. Teachers have been given curriculum maps for the program. The Team observed three Advisory classes. In one class, the six students were filling out a stress management survey. In the second class the teacher was doing one on one tutoring with a student. In conversations, the teacher indicated that in this class they discuss resume writing and that the advisor will go on job interviews with the students. In the third class, the ten students were discussing genocide as depicted in the movie *Blood Diamond*. This led to a discussion about money and in turn about the cost of the war in Iraq. The follow up was what you could do with the two trillion plus to alleviate poverty in this country. All of the students participated, and the teacher kept the students focused and consistently asked how issues related directly to them opening more conversations with students. This was a meaningful discussion relating to students environment and attitudes.

The Advisory Program is an ambitious endeavor for the BDEA leadership and staff. They have a curriculum in place to meet the needs and social growth of their students and are offering professional development to supplement its' implementation. Observations by the team indicated that the curriculum is not consistently implemented in all classes. The Director of Instruction stated that more work needs to be done. Teachers stated? "love it" and feel it will become richer, more vital and critical to student success at BDEA.

**17. Teacher instruction at BDEA was observed to be consistent and effective. Classroom lessons reflected the school's mission and commitment to preparing students for graduation. Students' behavior was polite and respectful, and students appeared engaged.**

The Team observed twenty-four classrooms: fourteen in the Day Program and ten in the Evening Program. The Distant Learning Program does not have a daily class schedule, although Team members observed students in the Distant Learning classrooms working independently, picking up assignments, and working one on one with a teacher. Of the twenty-four classrooms visited, seven were humanities classes, five were mathematics classes, seven were science classes, three

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were advisory classes and one was a technology class. The sizes of the classes observed ranged from one to twelve, with an average class size of seven.

The Team used a rubric to rate the observed lessons: a score of 3 was high and exemplified good practice, a score of 2 was average and met acceptable standards, and a score of 1 was low and did not meet the standards of acceptable practice. Five areas of focus were rated: objective of the lesson and plan; expectations of learning and attitudes; methodology, pedagogy and formative assessment; classroom management; and resources. Based on the Team's scores, instruction in all the classrooms observed averaged 2.6 to 2.8 out of 3 in all areas. The following are examples of effective instruction observed by the Team:

The Essential Question for a humanities course was "How do race, class, gender, and violence impact our lives, our choices and our stories?" Student's first assignment was to break down the essential question and create a unique poster that explored one of the social locations in the essential question. The teacher explained that students would have the opportunity to demonstrate competency in four different categories over the course of the trimester and discussed three of the Habits of the Mind that would be relevant in this assignment. Students worked in pairs and then the teacher conferenced with each pair.

In a math class, students were using data from an experiment to see how an educational program on the importance of using gloves affected the rate of use by a group of nurses in an inner-city pediatric hospital emergency department. Without their knowledge, the nurses were observed during vascular procedures before and one, two, and five month after the educational program to see how often they wore gloves. Using this real life example, students entered the data on an excel worksheet, sorted the data, and using Chart Wizard produced a Scatter Plot with lines from the data in the small table. Using Power Point Rubric students produced a five slide Power Point presentation to explain their findings.

A science class was working on cell biology. The teacher reviewed the objectives with the nine students in the class and explained the lesson using relevant examples including the breaking down of elements, radiocarbon dating, and assessing rate of decay. The hands on activity consisted of students deciding the half-life of an element and counting the atoms. Students asked questions and discussed possibilities among themselves.

Spike Lee's film *When the Levees Broke*, was being studied as a case study in an Advanced History class to demonstrate how the interconnections of race, class, gender and violence shape the structure of United States society. Using a two page fact sheet on Hurricane Katrina statistics with documented sources, as well as eleven discussion questions, students viewed the film, as the teacher frequently stopped and probed for understanding and to discuss vocabulary terms, such as mandatory evacuation compared to voluntary evacuation and the ramifications of each. One of the stated objectives of the unit was to reconsider the concept and image of "hero" in society. One student drew a correlation between the inspection processes of the city's levee system to the inspection of the Big Dig tunnels. A lively discussion ensued.

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The DOE Year Eight Site Visit Report stated that BDEA teachers are not consistently seizing the opportunity to increase challenges and rigor for students when opportunities arise. Team members reported that during the renewal inspection visit students were constantly challenged to drill down and explain in detail comments and observations. The discussion of safety issues in Boston and New Orleans cited above would be one example. In science, in most classes observed students were able to explain their experiments and the result they were hoping for. In humanities classes, the Team observed students questioning beliefs and assumptions on race and gender after completing reading assignments and class discussions. In many instances, student poetry and personal essays reflected a complex thinking process and analytical higher order process. In several classes teachers modeled assignments by sharing their own writing to the assignment specifications.

All classrooms had an Agenda on the board and a poster of the Habits of the Mind prominently displayed. Most classes began with a do now or warm up activity. Teachers demonstrated knowledge of subject area content and evidence of advanced preparation was evident in all classes. Students were held to rigorous standards and with the small class size differentiated expectations were evident. Students were productive, worked at a good pace and student interactions and responses were polite and courteous. Rubrics were evident and adhered to. Classroom teachers referred to competencies that students would be responsible for completing within each trimester of study. Teachers indicated that adequate resources were available to teach their lessons.

During an interview with the Head of School, she indicated what the Team would see as they observed classes at BDEA. She stated and the Team observed: clarity of lessons, strong rapport between students and teachers and students and students, active teaching and learning, purposeful work, hands on activities and flexibility on the teachers part in working with “over age-second chance” students.

In student focus groups of both Day and Evening Program students, a common theme was expressed over, and over. Teachers care. They care enough to “break down” the work for them and make sure that everyone understands. One student stated that “the work was easy if you are paying attention”, another felt the work was challenging, but not overwhelming. Students indicated they could work at their own pace and “if it took five years to complete, then so be it”. Respect and appreciation for teachers was evident in students’ remarks.

**18. The BDEA classrooms observed by the Team were well equipped, and the classroom teachers made effective use of technology. Classroom rules and student work were displayed in the classrooms, and student artwork was displayed in the hallways.**

Classrooms were well maintained, with teacher and student resources evident. Each room had a minimum of two computers. The school has three computer labs, two with Dell computers and one with Apples. The team observed five classes that effectively used the labs for at least part of their lessons. Motivational posters and student work were evident in the classrooms and bulletin boards. The posters and motivational materials also appealed to the diverse backgrounds of the student body.

**19. Student behavior management strategies employed by teachers were consistently applied and based on mutual respect.**

Student Support Services staff stated in an interview that BDEA is all about relationships. They stated the BDEA philosophy is that expectations are high and that they are built on respect.

As a group, they work with students in helping to understand discipline and the importance of making good choices. Teachers interviewed said that everyone in the school models respect. Several teachers indicated that the school has gotten better about expectations and boundaries. They said that they are all able to have honest conversations with students.

Other teachers said that the staff is good at getting to know students and at building strong relationships with them. They said the yearly trip to Interlocken at the start of the year was a great community building effort that includes both the Day and Evening Program and staff and students.

The Team classroom observations indicated a consistency of approach that was low-key and non-confrontational. Students who came late to class slipped in quietly and waited until there was an opportune time for the teacher to help them to catch up. Teachers were observed unobtrusively handing student the appropriate materials as they continued instruction. Students interviewed stated that they had great respect for their teachers and administration.

**20. BDEA provides a variety of services to students with disabilities. Instruction at BDEA is individualized and each student has an ILP (Individualized Learning Plan)**

Currently, at Boston Day and Evening Academy, there are a total of 45 Special Education students attending the two programs—Day and Evening. Students on IEPs are carefully monitored by the Coordinator of the Special Education Department. There is an elaborate student support program in place at BDEA. There are weekly meetings between clusters of teachers and a student support person assigned to each cluster to talk about students, including those students with attendance issues.

In meetings with the Special Education staff it was apparent that the services are in place to work with students with special needs. Students who are accepted at Boston Day and Evening Academy are between the ages of 16 and 23. Students on Educational Plans, therefore, age out at age 22. When asked how the Boston Day and Evening Academy deals with this situation the Team was informed that a transition plan is developed which builds some supports for them so that they will be successful when they leave.

Transition planning is part of the state's Special Education Law requirement for all students on IEPs who are 16 or older. The transition planning process entails determining the student's interests or needs for their future in the areas of Course of Study, Employment, Community

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Experiences, and Daily Living Skills and Needs and completing a state mandated form annually that presents the goal or vision in each area the student is working towards.

Since attendance is of major concern, the Student Support staff makes home visits and stays in close contact with families to encourage attendance. Each student has an advisor who also monitors attendance and makes frequent calls home.

Although their academic needs may have been identified at an earlier point in their schooling, few students come to Boston Day and Evening Academy with core evaluations in place due to the fact that most of the students are older and often their education has been interrupted. Students who are recommended are usually recommended due to social/emotional concerns. When a referral is necessary the state guidelines for the referral process are followed.

When they reach 18 years of age, students can sign their own Individual Education Plan.

Six of the teachers at Boston Day and Evening Academy have dual certification in their areas of content and Special Education; two additional teachers are in the process of dual certification. There is an Evaluation Team Facilitator (ETF) who makes sure that BDEA is in compliance regarding IEPs and that meetings take place to review these plans.

The ETF is involved in monitoring the IEPs, and working with the Director of SPED to document and organize IEPs. The ETF also conducts professional development with the whole staff on special education and the need for differentiated instruction. In addition, the ETF works with the seven teachers who are in various stages of becoming licensed in Special Education. In addition to BDEA's ETF, a Boston Public School ETF comes to BDEA once a week to work with the Special Education staff on monitoring issues and to schedule and facilitate meetings. Teachers interviewed reported that they were given help in modifications that would enhance the learning of students on IEPs.

Each student is reviewed annually, a review that includes the student's teachers, student support, parents or guardians, and the BDEA Special Education staff. Re-evaluation meetings occur every three years. The timing of these meetings is determined by the date of either the original meeting (core evaluation) or last re-evaluation. There is considerable and ongoing professional development addressing special education issues and the need for differentiated instruction. There is also significant training on literacy. "Given the population of BDEA, the Director of Curriculum stated, our instructional and student support professional development could be characterized as 'regarding special education topics.'"

## **21. BDEA has support in place for English Language Learners.**

In meetings with the English Language Learners staff, it was stated that services are in place to work with students with English Language needs. This year, there are eight students who have been coded as English Language Learners. Seven students attend the day school and one is a Distance Learner. The languages that these students speak at home include Spanish, Haitian, Creole, Cape Verdean, and African dialects. The staff interviewed noted that the English Language Learner group is a small percentage of the student population (3%) but feel strongly

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that they move the students along. The biggest challenge is that this is a transient population. Every year one or two graduate, one or two are discharged (choose to leave) and the rest continue through the program.

Most English Language Learner students enrolled this year have been at Boston Day and Evening Academy for at least two years. It was noted that each of the students communicates in English, and are at varying levels of comprehension. There is total inclusion of the English Language Learner students. The basic principles of a 'Sheltered English Classroom' are in practice at Boston Day and Evening Academy.

The small class size gives the students the individualized attention needed. For example, the teacher repeats directions and has students restate directions for comprehension. The teacher employs a variety of questioning techniques and students have the opportunity to express themselves in a variety of ways. Examples of student work include the following: oral presentations, exhibitions, demonstrations, performances, poster presentations and products.

The Special Education teacher goes into classrooms and provides the teacher with instructional recommendations and resources when necessary. Each student at Boston Day and Evening Academy has an Individual Learning Plan that is closely monitored. The staff reported that they have never had to hire an interpreter. They had one student who was severely limited in English but she went through the school, graduated, and is now in college.

It was noted that several staff members are bi-lingual which is very helpful. Although the very nature of the school is individualized instruction, the staff stated that English Language Learners and Special Education were areas in which they needed to build their capacity. This year (2007-2008) they hired a Special Education Teacher. A future school goal is to hire three learning specialists to work with both ELL and Special Education Students.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 2:  
IS THE SCHOOL A VIABLE ORGANIZATION?**

- 1. BDEA's financial condition is sound and its net asset balance has grown. BDEA has received unqualified opinions from its auditor in each of the last three fiscal years audited. The school contracts with a consultant to provide accounting and financial services to the school on a part-time basis. State and federal grants reportedly account for approximately 25 percent of BDEA's total funding; the school has taken measures to increase fundraising. The school's facility is provided by the Boston Public Schools.**

BDEA has received unqualified audit opinions in each of the independent auditor reports reviewed by the Team for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2006; June 30, 2005; and June 30, 2004. The school received no management letters from its auditors. Table 7., below, shows the school's net asset balance history from 2003 to 2006. As the table shows, the school's net asset balance has varied from year to year. According to BDEA officials and the school's Application for Renewal, the decreases in the school's net asset balance in the 2004 and 2005 fiscal years were attributable to operating deficits incurred by the school because of start-up costs for

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BDEA’s Day program and expenses related to the establishment of the school’s Office of Institutional Advancement. The school’s net asset balance increased in the most recent fiscal year: as of June 30, 2006, BDEA’s net asset balance was \$499,403, of which \$417,086 was unrestricted and \$82,317 was invested in capital assets. According to the school’s Director of Finance, the City of Boston’s fiscal year ended on August 31, and the school was still awaiting final salary figures from the City in order to complete the school’s audit for the 2007 fiscal year. He told the Team that the school’s net asset balance for the 2007 fiscal year was estimated to be \$30,000 to \$40,000 higher than the 2006 fiscal year.

**Table 7. Boston Day and Evening Academy  
Net Asset Balance History 2003-2006**

	2003	2004	2005*	2006
Unrestricted	\$ 463,319	\$ 360,603	\$ 268,682	\$ 417,086
Invested in capital assets	93,856	102,882	89,292	82,317
Board restricted		-	43,923	-
Total net assets	\$ 557,175	\$463,485	\$ 439,057	\$ 499,403
<i>Data Source: Independent auditor reports for the fiscal years ending June 30, 2006; June 30, 2005; and June 30, 2004; 2003 results included the 2004 report.</i>				

The Director of Finance is a consultant with whom the school contracts to provide part-time accounting and financial services. He reported that he works approximately one-quarter time for BDEA: he spends one to one and one-half days per week at the school and conducts additional work electronically from another location.

The Director of Finance told the Team that BDEA relies on state and federal grant funds to fill the gap between the funding, which is based on a standard per-pupil payment, that BDEA receives from the City of Boston and the full cost of serving BDEA’s students; he estimated that City funds cover approximately 75 percent of this cost. The fact that some grants are restricted to certain uses complicates the task of funding school operations. He noted that the recent creation of an Office of Institutional Advancement within BDEA was intended to generate additional resources for the school from private foundations and other sources.

BDEA’s facility in Dudley Square, Roxbury is provided by the Boston Public Schools. As discussed in the following finding, the Board of Trustees is considering options for expanding BDEA to an enrollment of 600.

- 2. The BDEA Board of Trustees is committed to the school’s mission and to expanding the services provided to the school’s students. The school’s performance on the MCAS exams has not been a major Board focus, nor has the Board implemented the assessment-related strategies outlined in the Strategic Business Plan adopted by the Board in July 2006. The Board is exploring the possibility of obtaining increased funding as well as an additional facility from the City of Boston in order to support expansion of the school’s services and enrollment.**

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At the time of the site visit, the BDEA Board of Trustees consisted of 15 members; it was anticipated that two additional student representatives would be added to the Board in subsequent weeks. The five members of the Board who participated in a group interview with the Team included the original Board Chair, who has served on the Board for ten years, and the new Board Chair, who has served on the Board for one year. The Board has five committees, all of which are active and report regularly to the Board: an Executive Committee, a Development Committee, a Finance Committee, a Board Recruitment Committee, and a School Site Advisory Council.

The Board and its Executive Committee do not meet frequently. The BDEA bylaws require the Board to hold no fewer than six regular meetings during the academic year; according to the Board meeting minutes provided to the Team, the Board met five times between September 2006 and June 2007. The bylaws state that the Executive Committee is responsible for oversight of the day-to-day operations of the school; according to the Executive Committee minutes provided to the Team, the Executive Committee met only three times in 2006 and had met five times between January and October 2007.

The state's open meeting law requires the preparation of minutes for executive sessions and for board subcommittee meetings. The Team's review of the Board minutes for the past two years referenced only one executive session held by the Board during that period; the Board members interviewed told the Team that they had neglected to prepare minutes for that executive session. As noted earlier, the Board has active committees; the school provided the Team with meeting minutes for several meetings held by Board committees.

The Board has conducted annual evaluations of the Head of School. The Team reviewed the most recent Head of School evaluation, which contained a detailed report on the Head of School's progress relative to specific goals; the evaluation also included staff and student assessments of the Head of School's performance.

The Board members interviewed by the Team provided an eloquent explanation of BDEA's mission. While acknowledging that the school's MCAS scores need improvement, the Board members pointed to other indicators of the school's academic success: they noted that BDEA graduated 39 students in June of 2007, and 17 in September for a total of 56. Out of the 56 graduates, 43 went on to post-high school educational institutions. They also pointed to the Day program's high student retention rate and BDEA's success in attracting and retaining strong teachers. They also emphasized the importance of providing an expanded set of support services to BDEA students, including residential services if necessary and feasible, to enable the students to attend school and focus on learning.

The DOE Year Eight Site Visit Report observed that in the DOE's interview with the Board, the Board had addressed issues relating to improved MCAS performance only after prompting by the DOE. With respect to this issue, the Board members interviewed by the Team acknowledged, and the Team's review of Board minutes confirmed, that although the Board has received regular reports from the Head of School on student performance, the Board has not engaged in regular discussions of the school's assessment results over the past year. The Board members said that the strategic planning process completed by the Board in 2006, discussed

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below, highlighted the need for the Board to develop a set of metrics that will provide more meaningful information regarding BDEA's impact on the special student population served by the school.

At the time of that the DOE Year Eight Site Visit Report was prepared, the Board was nearing completion of a strategic planning process. The DOE Year Eight Site Visit Report stated, with respect to the plan under development: "In addition to tackling financial, organizational, and other logistical challenges, a successful plan should clarify BDEA's definitions of student success and how the school will help them achieve it. Future evaluators should analyze the report with these goals in mind." In July 2006, the Board approved a 79-page Strategic Business Plan in July 2006 that establishes a framework for BDEA to expand services to its students and to increase the school's enrollment in the coming years to 600 students. The Plan cites four broad programmatic goals for BDEA:

- Strengthen and refine the school's programs within the district, to reach and benefit more students.
- Maximize student engagement by providing wraparound services to enhance students' learning and development, transition to life beyond school, and quality of life outside school.
- Enhance BDEA's abilities to excel as an institution.
- Ensure that all programmatic goals are achieved through the strengthening of BDEA's operational infrastructure.

With respect to the first goal listed above, the Plan provides a series of objectives, the first of which is as follows: "Continue to refine clear educational expectations and outcomes for students." Strategies listed under this objective include pre-assessment of the academic status of incoming BDEA students, development of models for assessing BDEA students based on the demonstration of competencies aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks, clarification of competencies that are minimum expectations for graduation. The Board members said that they planned to discuss the design of new assessment models at a forthcoming Board meeting.

The Board members also told the Team that they had in the past developed a new Accountability Plan for each school year but had not done so for the 2006-2007 school year. (BDEA does not have a DOE-approved Accountability Plan.) They indicated some confusion regarding the Accountability Plan requirements for goal setting over the charter term.

Board members interviewed by the Team noted that there is a \$2,500 shortfall per student between the BDEA's cost per student and BDEA's revenue per student from the City of Boston. The Board members said that although this gap is currently being met through fundraising, the Board is exploring the possibility of increasing the standard per student payment that BDEA receives from the City, based on the special population BDEA serves. Expansion of the school's

enrollment to 600 will require a more reliable revenue source to fill the current funding gap, according to those interviewed.

Increasing BDEA's current enrollment to 600 would have major facility ramifications. The Board members told the Team that the Board's preference would be to operate two facilities in relatively close proximity, each serving 300 students in cohorts of 150. This approach would allow BDEA to retain the intimacy of a small school while serving a larger population in need of BDEA's unique educational program. The Board members interviewed by the Team cited the possibility of obtaining Massachusetts School Building Authority funding for a new facility. They noted that even if BDEA's enrollment remains at 350, the current facility is not ideal: it is not handicapped accessible, lacks upgraded technology, and has insufficient space to provide the student support services that the BDEA Board and staff regard as essential.

### **3. BDEA has strong school leadership that is goal oriented and committed to the school mission.**

According to the organizational chart reviewed by the team and interviews conducted with leadership and faculty and staff, BDEA is run by a Head of School and two Assistant Heads. One Assistant Head is in charge of the Day Program and the second is in charge of the Evening Program and Distance Education. The Dean of Curriculum and Instruction is also a member of the leadership team. The team will have an additional member when the school hires a Dean of Student Services.

The Team found that those in leadership positions at the school are competent, goal directed, and committed to the school's mission and to the use of data analysis as a tool to improve student learning. In interviews with the leadership team, all stated that an important goal for them was transparency in the way decisions are made. They stated that they work collaboratively and that they meet as a team once a week. In addition each member meets individually with the Head of School. All members of the team need to create a work plan that sets specific individual goals for the year. As mentioned in the evaluation section of this report, the team was able to view the work plans for the majority of faculty and the Head of School. According to the Head of School, the leadership team work plans for the Assistant Heads were in the process of being finalized.

The DOE Eight-Year Site Report indicated that the Head of School would need "to work diligently to delegate as much work as possible to the Assistant Heads of School and other school leaders." The team observations and interviews indicate that this delegation has been occurring. The team reviewed the matrix set up for evaluations that delegate responsibility across the leadership team. This system allows each Assistant Head to also monitor the goals in the teacher work plans that in turn will impact student learning. The team was able to observe the Assistant Heads at work within the school while the Head of School met school obligations in the community.

The DOE Eight Year Site Report indicated that "a new comprehensive evaluation process" for the Head of School should contribute to successful leadership at the school." The Team read the evaluation for the Head of School and found it to be comprehensive and specific in its feedback. The Head of School reported that she found her evaluation to be evidenced based and thoughtful

with concrete recommendations that she could put into place. The Board also indicated that they are pleased with the process and there is one member of the Board who is working in a coaching capacity with the Head of School on leadership.

Teachers interviewed stated that the leadership is organized and clear about expectations from faculty and staff as well as students. They feel that the leadership team helps model a tone of reflection in the school. Teachers indicated that they had a voice in the school decision-making process and one teacher indicated that that voice has grown stronger over time. Teachers reported participating in the evaluation process of the Head of School and several stated that they had been involved in the development of the strategic plan. There is they said a culture of respect and community that has been created at BDEA.

**4. BDEA has developed a Student Support Services Team that brings relevant experience and skills to the school and the population of students it serves. They work to support both faculty and students.**

According to the DOE Eight Year Site Report, “the school recognizes the need to increase student services in order to minimize factors that can contribute to their student population not attending.” According to the Application for Renewal and administrative interviews, BDEA has been chosen as a Trauma Sensitive School, one of five in the state. In addition, BDEA has secured funding from three major Boston foundations that will pay for additional staff and professional development in this area.

The eight members interviewed stated that the background experience that they bring to their positions is helpful in serving the unique population of students at BDEA. For example, they have worked for DSS, DYS and in the court system. The Team reviewed the student services manual and found it to be comprehensive and thoughtful. An organizational flowchart clearly explains the process of entry and assistance that is given to students.

This group works with students from the moment they apply to BDEA. They get to know the students immediately. They all stated that personalization is the way they begin to build trust. The strong sense of community is what makes the school unique and the support team contributes to that by helping to create a family environment, making home visits and serving as a bridge between teachers and students. Students can’t get lost they stated.

They expressed a solid sense of collegiality and respect for one another during the interview. They know that the job they have is extremely stressful and they stated that they take care of each other. They feel valued by the students, faculty and administration. Each of those groups when interviewed held the services team in high regard. The students said that they knew that they could seek help with any issue and the teachers said that the services provided enabled them to do their job in the classroom.

Those interviewed felt supported by the school because they had an appropriate budget for Professional Development and that the school is currently seeking a Director of Student Services a recently created position.

**5. BDEA has instituted an extensive professional development program that reflects the school's curriculum initiatives and supports teacher growth. The Team found that BDEA teachers are satisfied with the professional development time and content available to them.**

The Professional Development Calendar reviewed by the Team indicated that there are three areas of professional development for the school year 2007-2008. Those strands are: Assessment and Portfolio Development, Literacy and Knowing BDEA students. According to the Head of School those strands were chosen because they support the mission of the school. Each strand has specific hours allotted to it during the year. Professional Development for the teaching faculty takes place during the school year from 2-4 on Friday afternoons. Several times a year the two-hour period is extended to a full day for professional development work.

In addition, faculty has a number of optional choices for stipend work during the summer. These are the 2007 summer opportunities are: summer work with a department; curriculum development work; read a relevant book and have a virtual book club discussion; attend either the PSEED Summer Institute at the Boston Children's Museum or the Enid Lee Equity Summer Institute in Dorchester. A 6<sup>th</sup> option was to attend the Center for Collaborative Education's Critical friends coaches training. Finally, the 7<sup>th</sup> option was to attend a professional course or workshop of the teacher's choosing. Each option has specific guidelines that link the work to the focus for the year. For example, two of the book choices for the virtual book club were about literacy and the third concerned understanding students with urban issues.

Teachers interviewed stated the administration works hard to make the work relevant and engaging. One teacher shared the recent Friday workshop where the focus was assessment and everyone had to bring an assessment that they had recently given to share. Teachers stated that it was a strong learning opportunity to view assessments in this manner. Teachers said that they were encouraged to get out of the building and attend profession workshops or visit other schools. Administrators said that in November every faculty member would have the opportunity to attend one of three national conferences. Some would be attending The Fall Forum, the national conference for The Coalition of Essential Schools. A second group would be heading to the National Council of Teachers of English fall gathering in New York City. The final group would be going to the national conference for Experiential Education in Alabama.

A few teachers interviewed stated that they had been encouraged and financially supported to pursue dual certification in special education and in literacy development.

In interviews with the Student Support Service team, they stated that the team had its own professional development budget and said it was an indication of the importance of professional development at BDEA.

**6. BDEA is developing a staff performance evaluation system that combines BPS (Boston Public Schools) evaluation tools with the school's instructional focus and individual work plans that reflect the mission of the school and the school's professional development focus.**

According to the 2007 staff handbook, BDEA is currently working to develop their own evaluation system that they hope will be ratified by the BTU (Boston Teachers Union.) They are currently following the BPS teacher /staff evaluation process. All new staff will be evaluated before November 15 and then again by the end of the year. Experienced staff is evaluated once year. The Head of School is evaluated by the Board of Trustees, the Assistant Heads are evaluated by the Head of School and the Assistant Heads are responsible for staff evaluations. There is a matrix in place for these assignments that was reviewed by the Team.

All staff at BDEA must create a work plan. This work plan allows for the creation of three goals: a whole school instructional goal, a personal teaching goal and an advisory goal. In addition, there are specific activities listed as to how that goal will be addressed. This activity section is followed by essential questions to be answered during the activity.

The following is sample goal from a current teacher work plan:

Goal: To increase the amount and substance of my communication with my Advisee's parents and families.

Activity: Reach out to parents and families through phone calls, letters, emails and home visits.

Question: Can greater contact lead to student success as measured by attendance and Academic progress?

This year staff will also be expected to compile a portfolio that addresses the work plan questions. The Head of School reported that several teachers piloted the portfolio process and presented the results to staff. Teachers interviewed stated that the portfolios presented were well done.

The Team reviewed the personnel folders of all staff at BDEA. There were teacher evaluations and work plans in place for all returning faculty. The faculty that was entering their first year at BDEA was currently developing work plans and had yet to be formally evaluated. The Head of School evaluation and work plan were reviewed by the Team. There were no evaluations or work plans in the folders reviewed for one Assistant Head and the Director of Curriculum. When teachers were asked about evaluation they reported inconsistencies in the process. One teacher stated he had never seen his evaluation and another reported not being evaluated in a while. All teachers said that they would welcome more feedback from the leadership team.

**7. BDEA has wide-spread support from the community through the partnerships it has developed with community agencies that offer assistance to the school, the faculty and its student body.**

Eight representatives from a variety of outside agencies that support the students and the faculty at BDEA were interviewed by the Team. Those in attendance assisted the school in a multitude of ways. One organization was family based and sought to help struggling families, three others from different groups provided leadership opportunities, summer internships and training for the student population, and yet another offered mentoring to students. Two organizations provided help for staff; one offered tech support in terms of software that worked with the competency-based curriculum and the second helped with research and professional development. The last organization focused on health education for the students.

All present said that BDEA was not only a high school but a member of the community. They stated that BDEA and their agencies shared the vision of serving an at-risk student population. They believe that the school was a strategic link for the services that they could provide. They said that BDEA's mission was to help kids reconnect with their education and to provide wrap around services that along with a competency-based curriculum would help them be successful. They all felt extremely welcomed in the school. They stated that they got the red carpet treatment when they came into the building and that their phone calls were always answered in a timely fashion. They said that the Head of School was instrumental in getting them there and encouraging them to provide more because she "dreams big" for her students. They said that the school was always thinking-"What else can we do?" All agencies wished they could do more but stated they were constrained by the limitations of time and money.

**8. BDEA teachers appreciate and support the school's mission, commitment to students and the academic freedom they have in curriculum development.**

The Team interviewed three focus groups of teachers. One group of nine faculty from the Day Program, another group of seven from the Evening Program and a group of four, two who were from the Distance Learning Program.

All teachers stated that working with the student population at BDEA was difficult but rewarding. They believe in the mission of the school. They said that they enjoyed building relationships with students as well as the mentoring aspect of their job. Teachers said that small class size and the competency-based curriculum helped them feel successful with students. They believe that the ILPs are a way to keep students focused on earning a diploma. They all showed a commitment to breaking the cycle of failure experienced by their students.

Several teachers stated that the ability they had to create curriculum and individualized lesson plans without the restraint of such things as pacing charts was important to them. They felt the expectations by the leadership team were clear. For example, they were expected to assess regularly, differentiate instruction and be reflective practitioners.

Teachers said they felt supported by the leadership team and by Student Support Services. They also stated that they are supported by each other and there is an extremely collegial atmosphere

in the school. They reported that they have sufficient resources to deliver instruction, although all would like more computers. They said that they have a comprehensive professional development program.

Teachers feel they have a powerful voice in the school. They have a seat on the Board, and opportunity to contribute on the leadership team.

**9. Students at BDEA are focused on the goal of getting a diploma. They believe that this goal is attainable because of the competency-based curriculum, the small class sizes and the support they are receiving from the administration and staff at BDEA. They reported that the school's teachers are committed and caring, the school community is close-knit, and the environment is safe.**

The Team interviewed BDEA students in two focus groups; one group of eight students representing the Day school and another group of eleven students representing the Evening school. The students were articulate and well spoken, showing respect and courtesy to each other and to the Team interviewers. Students appeared to speak candidly about their school and its programs and about what brought them to BDEA. Many students stated that BDEA had changed their lives for the better.

Students in the Day Program reported that they had many problems in the schools they had left. They stated that BDEA was a second chance and an opportunity for success and that they felt lucky to be able to attend BDEA. The Evening students stated that they came to BDEA because of its flexible schedule and smaller class size. Several said they came to the school on recommendations of siblings, friends or previous school staff. All students stated that the expectations at BDEA were clear and that the competency based approach to graduation made sense to them and allowed them to focus their efforts on the goal of earning a diploma. Many students stated that BDEA was a place to get your work done.

Students in both groups reported that the instructional approach used by their teachers helped them learn. Students stated their teachers were really motivating. They broke things down in ways that helped them to understand. Several students used math as an example. They stated that since coming to BDEA, "I *get* math" and a few said reluctantly that they even like it now! Students in both groups stated that the focus on competencies allowed them to work at their own pace and to receive help individually when they needed it. Several students in both groups spoke about the relevancy of the curriculum. Many students reported that the real world connections made learning interesting. They mentioned poetry by Langston Hughes and a book about South Boston called *All Souls* by Michael Patrick O'Donald. They stated they were receiving MCAS help as well. They stated that teachers gave clear instructions used rubrics and standards that also helped clarify expectations. They also said that teachers made certain that every individual in the class understood because they were always available for extra help. One student said that at BDEA students weren't racing anyone, they were learning at their own pace and that if you didn't attain a competency the first time you tried that if you kept working you eventually would make it.

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When asked about the kinds of academic work that was expected of them, all students responded with detail and understanding. One student shared the multi-genre writing project he was working on, another spoke about the I-search paper and several reported the math and science topics they were covering. Students also discussed the rigor and difficulty of assessment weeks and reported that even though they were challenging if you had done what was necessary you would be successful. Several students reported that they were thinking about their capstone projects and one had even decided that his would be focused on music production. Students also showed an understanding of the Habits of Mind that are integrated into the curriculum and displayed on every classroom wall. Students stated that these habits that would help you succeed in your future life. One student reported how the habit of reflection was useful to him in his life.

Students in both groups reported high regard for the faculty and staff at BDEA. One student stated they had a great Head of School and all agreed. Students said that their teachers cared about them. They said that BDEA wanted them to succeed and gave several reasons why they knew this; they called home when you were absent, teachers gave you their phone numbers and you could call them for help with your homework and staff at the school would “get on you every day.” Students stated that the faculty treats them with respect and so they have respect for the faculty. One student said that in her old school she had seventy absences but none since coming to BDEA because she did not want to disrespect her teachers that way. Another student stated that the best way to show respect was to “show up” and a third said that he used to skip classes in his previous school but did not do it now because he would be missed in the classroom and noticed in the hallway.

All students interviewed stated that they felt safe at BDEA. Students stated that fighting was not tolerated at BDEA. Several students stated that the teachers and administrators gave them the parenting they didn’t get at home. Another student stated while she was at school she was safe because her teachers wouldn’t let anything happen to her here. Many students stated that students were not here to cause trouble. They were here to get a diploma and get on with life.

The students described BDEA as a close-knit community that feels like a family. Students at BDEA stated that they have a voice at their school and that they are treated like young adults. Students reported being involved in internships during the summer, the garden group that works on the community garden at the school site and leadership programs sponsored by community based agencies that work with the school. One student reported that she was trying to start a Gay –Straight Alliance. Students also spoke about field trips to college campuses as well as an environmental group several students were working with. One student spoke about the men’s group he was going to lead after the interview that was centered on healing those affected by violence. Another student stated that he enjoyed running the newly started and student lead morning meeting.

**10. BDEA parents are enthusiastic about the school's commitment to ensuring that the needs of all students are met through the competency-based curriculum and the support services provided. They also expressed appreciation for the opportunity that BDEA had given their children to succeed in school.**

The Team interviewed a focus group of six parents; three parents of students in the Evening Program and three parents of students in the Day Program. All parents interviewed expressed satisfaction and gratitude for the efforts of BDEA in reaching out to their children as individuals and in treating them as young adults. Several parents stated that the school helped their students outside of the classroom by helping them find jobs or connecting them to counseling if needed.

The focus group parents also praised the school's community atmosphere and the fact that "everyone knows everyone" at BDEA. Several parents interviewed stated that this was a comfortable and "non-confrontational" place that was a fit for their children.

The parents expressed strong support for the school's competency-based curriculum. Two parents stated that their children had been academically bored before they came to BDEA but now they could set their own pace and move ahead and graduate early. Another parent of a struggling student stated that her son could meet the school benchmarks one at a time and not fail a whole class or year. They stated that their students were now more motivated and focused and actually did their homework. Many parents said that their children were now considering college or some type of post secondary education. They said that their children were learning to be responsible. Many of them stated that the small class size and the great teaching staff were the reasons for their children were succeeding. Several said that the teachers should be rewarded for the amazing effort they put forth in helping students be successful. They also noted that the flexible school hours allowed the students to hold jobs.

According to the focus group parents, communication with parents is strong at BDEA. Parents stated that calls home were frequent and that the school did not just call when something was wrong. The school called when the student was being successful as well. One parent expressed her relief at not having to worry every time the school called. The parents told the Team that the school was a place that welcomed them. Several noted that they were at the school or in communication with the school daily.

A few of the parents interviewed had recently attended the opening of the new family center and met with the new Family and Community Outreach Coordinator. One parent mentioned a parent survey that had recently been sent to her.

All parents interviewed were enthusiastic and pleased that their children were at a school that was working for them.

**11. BDEA students and parents feel that the school is safe and secure environment.**

Students and parents interviewed by the Team indicated that they regard BDEA as a safe, secure environment. While on site, the Team noted that all students, staff and visitors enter through the main door and sign in with the security guard who is posted there. Both Day and Evening Programs are served by School Resource officers and the Team observed these officers as they monitored hallways. The school also uses its community field coordinators and school police to monitor student safety at the bus stops. In interviews with students, all reported that they felt safe at BDEA. Parents interviewed also stated that they felt that BDEA is a safe place. One student interviewed said that the seven hours she spends at the school are the safest of her day.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 3:  
IS THE SCHOOL FAITHFUL TO THE TERMS OF ITS CHARTER?**

**1. The BDEA competency-based curriculum, instruction, professional development program, and school culture, effectively support and promote all aspects of the school's ambitious mission.**

The BDEA mission statement is as follows:

Boston Day and Evening Academy (BDEA) is an innovative, year-round, public high school founded in 1995 that serves a unique population of students who are over age for grade level, and at high risk of dropping out. Working with experienced faculty in an environment that blends strong academics and support, students are given the tools to earn a Boston Public School diploma and reach their fullest potential through a competency-based curriculum that inspires critical and creative thinking, independent learning and active citizenship.

The Team found that BDEA has been faithful to all aspects of its mission statement:

- As detailed earlier in this report, the BDEA's curriculum and instruction reflect the school's commitment to providing its students with a competency-based program that is challenging and relevant to their lives and to the integration of the Habits of Mind that focus on independent learning and critical thinking. The strength of the school's academic program and extensive support provided by BDEA to students is confirmed by the Team's observations, document reviews, and interviews with Board members, the school leadership, teachers, students, and parents.
- The BDEA Student Services Team (described earlier in this report) promotes the school's mission to support students in and out of the classroom so that they can earn their diploma. This was confirmed by the team in interviews with leadership, students, and parents and through document review.
- Consistent with its mission, the school has created professional development opportunities available to teachers in mission-critical areas such as assessment, literacy and getting to know the BDEA student. These opportunities provide teachers with a supportive, and professional, environment that will enable them to give their students the tools they need to become independent learners. This was confirmed by the team through document review and interviews with faculty and leadership.
- The BDEA has focused on developing relationships and building a community centered on mutual respect and trust where all members are valued and their voices are heard creates an environment for learning. Team observations, classroom visits and interviews confirm this.
- By instituting and creating key partnerships (discussed earlier in this report) in the community that focuses on developing student leaders through mentoring and family

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support. This was confirmed through interviews with students, the leadership team and members of the partnership.

**2. BDEA has undertaken dissemination efforts during the current charter period.**

According to the school's Application for Renewal, leadership and faculty interviews, BDEA has disseminated information regarding the school's programs through conference presentations, community collaborations, professional networks, and by hosting visitors from across the country and internationally. Some examples cited by the BDEA Application for Renewal include the following:

- The Head of School has mentored five educators pursuing apprentice based principal preparation and certification in connection with the Greater Boston Principal Residency Network.
- BDEA has contributed to a guide to building supportive high schools in 2006 which focused on practices that support operations and administration for schools that serve at risk populations in connection with Project for School Innovation.
- BDEA staff has hosted educators and educational consultants who have come to understand and see in action the competency –based curriculum and assessment practices that are at work at BDEA.

**RENEWAL QUESTION 4:  
IF THE SCHOOL'S CHARTER IS RENEWED,  
WHAT ARE ITS PLANS FOR THE NEXT FIVE YEARS?**

- 1. The Accountability Plan proposed by BDEA contains both measurable goals that meet the criteria as outlined in the DOE accountability document and objectives that appear to be achievements worthy of pursuit but which do not meet the requirements.**

The DOE's *Guidelines for Writing Charter School Accountability Plans* specify that a school's Accountability Plan should measure the most critical areas of the school's performance and should not attempt to measure all of the work performed by a charter school. Accordingly, the *Guidelines* encourage charter schools to "articulate a limited number of clear, critical, and carefully measured goals." The *Guidelines* set forth four general standards that a charter school Accountability Plan should meet: the plan should be rigorous and realistic, it should be measurable, it should measure outcomes rather than inputs, and it should be focused and manageable. The Accountability Plan proposed by BDEA does meet these standards in some areas and in others does not.

The first five goals that BDEA has set for itself in the Draft Accountability Plan focus on the Academic Program. They are clear and have measurable outcomes. For example,

**Supporting students in making significant gains in reading and writing (literacy)**

Over the next five years, 70% of the students who have enrolled been in BDEA for more than a year and a half will show gains of ten points or more as measured by scaled scores generated by the MCAS ELA exam when measured against previous MCAS scaled scores.

**Supporting students in making significant gains in mathematical thinking and quantitative problem solving (numeracy)**

Over the next five years, 70% of the students who have enrolled been in BDEA for more than a year and a half will show gains of ten points or more as measured by scaled scores generated by the MCAS math exam when measured against previous MCAS scaled scores.

The second sets of goals appear to be consistent with organizational growth but do not meet the requirements for measured results. For example,

**Enhancing in-school services provided to students.**

**Exploring the feasibility of having a residential component attached to the school**

These may not be useful indicators of progress in the forthcoming charter period.

**2. BDEA plans no changes to its charter during the upcoming charter term. The Board has developed a formal, written strategic plan that details goals for the next five years.**

According to the Application for Renewal, the strategic plan developed and approved by the Board of Trustees in June 2006, outlines physical expansion of the school building and also seeks to expand services to support students.

The current focus is to complete implementation plans that help to answer the following questions: How big should the school grow in the future? How to provide a greater array of services to the student body? How does the physical plant support medium or long-term growth plans?

The school also plans to allow further growth of the Board of Trustees to a maximum of twenty-five.

BDEA plans to remain at its current site although the building is not currently handicapped accessible and as the school's enrollment grows will not remain adequate as currently configured.

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**APPENDIX  
SCHEDULE OF THE  
BOSTON DAY AND EVENING ACADEMY CHARTER SCHOOL  
RENEWAL INSPECTION VISIT**

**Day 1: Monday, October 15<sup>th</sup>**

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C
7:30-8:00	Team Arrival in school and Breakfast		
8:00-9:00	Orientation to the five-year renewal process (Charter School Leader and Principal; members of the leadership team are optional)		
9:00-9:30	School Tour		
9:30-11:00	Classroom Observations		
11:00-12:00	Working Lunch		
12:00-2:00	Classroom Observation		
3:00-4:00	Team Corporate		
4:00-5:00	Note writing; evidence sorting		

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**Day 2: Tuesday, October 16th**

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C
7:30-9:00	Arrive at Boston Day and Evening Academy/Breakfast		
9:00-10:05	Focus Group with Day Students	Science Class (day)	
10:10-11:20	Meet with Head of School, Asst. Heads of School	Meet with Director of Curriculum	
11:25-12:25	Working Lunch, Full Team		
12:30-1:15	Humanities Class(day)	Interviews with Evening Faculty/Distance Learning	
1:30-2:35	Focus Group with Evening Students	Humanities Class (eve)	Focus Group with Evening Students
2:38-3:44	Class Observations	Math Class (eve)	
3:44-4:30	Note writing, Evidence sorting		
4:30-5:00	Meet with OIA	Meet with Business Manager (Team Member D)	
5:00-6:00	Team Moderation Session		
6:00-7:30	Class Observations	Interview with Board of Trustees	

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**Day 3: Wednesday, October 17th**

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C
7:30-9:15	Arrive at Boston Day and Evening Academy/Breakfast		
9:20-10:30	Humanities Class (day)	Meet with Director of Curriculum	
10:30-11:05	Observe Day Advisories		
11:10-12:00	Working Lunch		
12:05-12:55	Focus Group with Evening Faculty		Math Class (day)
1:00-1:25	Break, random classroom observation		
1:30- 2:30	Interview Student Support	Technology Class (eve)	Interview Student Support
2:38-3:44	Focus Group with Day Program Faculty		Science Class (eve)
3:46-4:16	Observe Advisory (eve)	Meet with ELL/SPED Staff	
4:33-5:30	Meet with Director of Curriculum	Focus Groups with Parents	

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Day 4: Thursday October 18<sup>th</sup>

	Team Member A	Team Member B	Team Member C
7:30 – 9:00	Arrive at BDEA, Breakfast		
9:30 – 10:30	Meet with Director of Curriculum	Meet with Key Partner Organizations	
10:35 – 11:30	Document Review or Random Classroom Observations		
11:30 – 12:30	Team Lunch, Debrief		
12:30-1:30	Team Moderation Session		
1:30-1:45	Exit Interview		
2:00	Team Moderation Session, Departure		