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Welcome to Central Park School for Children’s 2015 Impact Report!

In July 2003, Central Park School for Children (CPSC) opened its doors as a learning laboratory. Our challenge was to design a child-centered, diverse learning community—a space where children grow into critical thinkers who solve real problems to make the world a better place. Over the last thirteen years, each child’s motivation to grow, relate to others, and explore the world has defined our research-driven work.

The results so far are inspiring. The North Carolina State Board of Education recently recognized CPSC as a model charter school for our academic, financial, and operational performance. Of the state’s 146 charter schools, we were one of nine that received a “high quality” rating of our outcomes for children.

This inaugural Impact Report highlights CPSC’s impact and growth over the last thirteen years, details significant achievements in 2014-15, and offers a glimpse into our future plans for action-based research, leadership, and innovation. To help us achieve these future goals, the Impact Report also serves as a call for new partnerships with our families, our local community, and national education reform organizations. We share our approaches and impacts through five sections mapping to areas central to our school’s vision and mission. These five areas reflect CPSC’s values of diversity, inclusivity, community, and a child-centered philosophy.

For the many partners, families, and educators who collaborated with CPSC in the 2014-15 school year, we are grateful. And we are grateful to the children of CPSC—the curious, creative problem solvers who are at the heart of this work.

Best regards,

John Heffernan
CPSC Director
Timeline

1996

➤ NC Board of Education grants Community School for Children charter.

2003-2004

➤ Community School for Children changes its name to Central Park School for Children (CPSC).
➤ CPSC purchases and renovates 724 Foster Street with loan from Self-Help Credit Union.
➤ Carolyn Kirkland is selected as Director and Tammy Macomson is hired as CPSC's first teacher.
➤ CPSC opens in July 2003.
➤ After-School Program begins.

2004-2005

➤ All-school recess begins.
➤ Central Park School for Children Foundation is incorporated as NC nonprofit.
➤ Ownership of 724 Foster Street is transferred to Central Park School for Children Foundation.
➤ CPSC holds inaugural Strawberry Festival.

2005-2006

➤ Fund for outdoor learning spaces is formed.
➤ Upper floor of Foster Street campus opens.

2006-2007

➤ CPSC earns NC Public School of High Growth recognition.
➤ Charter School Character Education Partnership awards CPSC the Promising Practices Award.

2007-2008

➤ CPSC charter is renewed for 10 years, with option to renew for an additional 10 years.

2008-2009

➤ John Heffernan becomes Director.
➤ Peaceful Schools pilot program begins.
2009-2010

- CPSC earns NC Public School of Distinction recognition.
- Professional development focus is Peaceful Schools, a systems approach to peaceful conflict resolution, supported by NC Psychoanalytic Foundation.

2010-2011

- CPSC earns NC Public School of Distinction recognition.
- Professional development focus is Project-Based Learning. Research teams analyze and build frameworks for documentation, assessment, outdoor learning, and skills with habits of mind.
- CPSC develops clear vision of Exceptional Children’s (EC) Program and commits resources.

2011-2012

- CPSC earns NC Public School of Distinction recognition.
- Professional development focus is mathematics. Staff analyzes and builds curriculum framework for instruction, learning targets, and assessment.

2012-2013

- CPSC leases Trotter Building for use as fifth-grade campus.

2013-2014

- CPSC institutes weighted admissions lottery to increase economic diversity.
- Middle School Planning Team begins designing middle school expansion.
- First Strawberry Festival 5K is held.
- Professional development focus is Responsive Classroom, school wide training in social-emotional curriculum.
- Milk is offered for all children.

2014-2015

- CPSC’s NC Public Schools Performance Grade is B.
- Middle School opens, expanding CPSC through grade six.
- Trotter Building upfit is complete for temporary middle grade campus.
- Professional development focus is Racial Equity Institute (REI) training.
- Non-EC learning support in reading, writing, and math begins.
- Major technology initiative includes mobile computer carts for all grades, iPads for K-2, and Chromebooks for 3-5.

- CPSC’s NC Public Schools Performance Grade is B.

- Development Office forms.
- Professional development focus is Writer’s Workshop.
- CPSC’s NC Public Schools Performance Grade is B.
CPSC is committed to growing a child-centered charter school that is accessible to all children. Our charter sets our course to “treasure and take advantage of the diversity and richness that comes with a free, public school.” We support the principle that children educated in diverse settings develop higher-level critical thinking and cognitive skills.

The diversity among CPSC children, families, staff, and community partners—and in our curriculum—strengthens our school. To continue to increase diversity and ensure equitable outcomes, we are intentional about our location, recruitment, admissions, and teaching methodology.

**Increasing Economic Diversity in 2014-15**

Piloted in 2013-14 with support from the Office of Charter Schools, the North Carolina Board of Education, and Self-Help Credit Union, our Economic Diversity Lottery Initiative continued successfully in 2014-15. Our effort to become a socioeconomically integrated and racially diverse school stems from research showing that economic and racial diversity in public schools increases civic, social, and cognitive benefits for all children.

The lottery initiative counters the overrepresentation of middle- and high-income families in CPSC’s applicant pool. We’re proud to be the first charter school in the Southeast to implement an economic diversity lottery initiative, an approach that has sparked the interest of other southeastern charter schools.
In 2014-15, CPSC increased efforts to close the opportunity and resource gaps common to charter schools, such as transportation and school lunch, which are crucial for some families to apply and enroll. With less funding from the state than traditional public schools, these unfunded areas often create barriers to charter school entry.

The positive effects of our equity and diversity initiatives show promising results in recently matriculated kindergarten, first-, and sixth-grade classes, where the most seats have been filled since these initiatives began. In 2014-15, 12% of CPSC children qualified for free or reduced-price lunch—an increase of 7% since 2012. Over the next six years, we anticipate growing the percentage of our population qualifying for free or reduced-price lunch to 40%. This level of socioeconomic integration matches Durham County demographics and national research on optimal percentages for successful outcomes for all children.

CPSC is committed to continuing to provide leadership to promote diversity within charter schools by serving as a model and sharing our experiences with others. The North Carolina State Board of Education is monitoring the progress of our pilot lottery initiative, with the potential to make the model available to all state charter schools. And during National Charter School Week, Director John Heffernan and parent Yolanda Brown spoke to a regional audience on NPR’s The State of Things about ways charter schools can counter growing trends of racial and economic segregation and related achievement gaps.
Supporting Diversity and Equity in Learning: Meeting Children Where They Are

Embracing diversity and ensuring equity means appreciating the differences of each child—and meeting children where they are in their learning. CPSC’s child-centered curricula and small class sizes allow us to support children at diverse levels in each classroom. Teachers challenge each child in areas of strength, provide support or intervention in areas of struggle, and promote a collaborative learning community.

In areas of academic strength, students are given guided instruction and increased rigor to promote creative thinking. Individually and in small groups, time is provided to stimulate questions that ignite curiosity and motivate deeper learning.

For children with learning struggles, including academic and behavioral challenges, we’ve implemented a tiered response system. This system provides support ranging from changes in instructional approaches in the classroom to development and implementation of an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) by our Exceptional Children’s Program staff. A CPSC parent speaks to the impact this approach had for her son:

“Our son’s teacher noticed him struggling to keep pace with his peers, and we also sensed his growing frustration about schoolwork. His teacher tried some supports in the classroom, and he began seeing the learning specialist. When these initial attempts did not help close the gap, we agreed to form a Student Assistance Team (SAT) where we met periodically with our son’s teacher and other learning specialists at the school to take a closer look at his strengths and
struggles. This group integrated activities into his day to help assess his skills and determine the effectiveness of various learning strategies. School and home interventions were created and tweaked over time to support him. Ultimately, as a team, we decided to refer him to CPSC’s Exceptional Children’s Program. He was formally evaluated to determine his specific areas of struggle, and we worked with the EC team to develop an Individualized Education Plan. The way everyone in this whole process protected our son’s self-confidence and love of learning was so impressive. We were amazed at the guidance through what could have been a daunting and distressing process.”

This kind of caring, knowledgeable guidance helps CPSC children who are at risk of not achieving a year’s worth of growth due to a range of factors, from learning challenges to insufficient support for academic strength. Each year—from wherever the child begins—CPSC is committed to helping all children experience a full year of development.

“Teachers have different teaching styles that make each year interesting. If you are ahead in math or whatever, all the teachers will give you harder math. If something is hard for you, they will help you learn up so that you can be with the rest of the class. They will find a way to help you learn it. So wherever you are, teachers pretty much meet you there and help you move yourself forward in your learning. The teachers also have different ways to get out energy; like if you’re all fidgety, they will help you find ways to keep your body calm so you can work.”

- two fifth-grade friends who have attended CPSC since kindergarten
12% received extra literacy support in our new Rocket Learning Lab Program.

Student Assistance Teams (SAT) supported 16% of CPSC children. One-third of these were eventually referred to the Exceptional Children’s Program, one-third continue to receive SAT support, and one-third phased out of SAT support after successful interventions.

22% were supported by Exceptional Children’s Program instructional specialists, occupational and speech therapists, and behavior support therapists.
Nurturing the Whole Child: Inspiring Lifelong Problem Solvers through Child-Centered Learning

At the heart of the CPSC community, you’ll find child-centered learning that considers each child’s distinct interests, needs, and cultural background. We’ve developed our learning program through years of examining children’s work, exploring model school programs, analyzing research, and studying state and national standards. The result has been a learning community that nurtures children’s natural motivation to explore the world—and develops their abilities as ethical, caring problem solvers.

Our child-centered curricula include research-based instructional models in subject-specific work as well as integrated project work. Teachers utilize approaches of guided reading and literature circles, conceptual mathematics, writers-workshop, inquiry-based science, social studies, the Project Approach, and Expeditionary Learning. Students learn how to accomplish goals and overcome challenges in independent work and group projects. Hands-on learning across subjects connects students to real-world problems, and authentic work improves skill and knowledge acquisition.

Impact on Our Children

In 2014-15, CPSC children completed a total of 63 classwide projects embedding group and individual work, and more than 1,500 parents and community members engaged as Project Share and Expo audiences.

96% of CPSC parents surveyed feel that their children are getting a good education.

Standardized Performance Measures

These end-of-grade test results are one measure of learning. CPSC’s 2014-15 fifth-grade EOG science results were the highest among all Durham County traditional and charter public schools. As we disaggregate our student achievement data, it is noteworthy that both African American and low socioeconomic students at CPSC had the highest EOG proficiency of any Durham County charter elementary school. (Math and reading scores in this graph are the average of grades 3 through 6, and science is from grade 5.)
Project-Based Learning

Project-Based Learning is one child-centered teaching method we utilize, allowing children to investigate meaningful questions and real-world problems through hands-on activity, field work, and research. Children work cooperatively with others to create products, present findings, and arrive at possible solutions. CPSC teacher Aaron Sebens brings Project-Based Learning to life as he talks about the way his fourth-grade class embraced their learning:

“In our solar-powered classroom, we decided to put a wind turbine on top of the school to add supplemental electricity. We had a competition, and each kid in the class designed a wind turbine, solving for each of four variables to come up with their final design. When we actually made the giant turbine, the kids designed a schematic diagram for it, and we went up on the roof. The kids actually did the wiring. They ran the wire 120 feet from the wind turbine to our classroom. It was really cool to see how invested the kids were in making this happen and how they chose the jobs they were each going to do to get these three wires—the positive, negative, and ground wires—through these 120 feet of pipe. It was a unique experience—being up on top of our school, seeing out into the world, these fourth-grade kids climbing up this huge ladder and being really focused and collaborative in taking this on.”

And it’s not just Aaron’s fourth graders. All CPSC children engage in Project-Based Learning stemming from state and national curricular objectives and the children’s interests. Their projects facilitate learning in four ways:

➤ Children **apply their learning** in science, math, social studies, arts, and language arts in a way that builds deep understanding and furthers acquisition of Common Core National Standards.

➤ They **communicate their ideas** using math, writing, graphic arts, performance arts, and technology and share their results in Project Shares and Expos.

➤ Children **develop lifelong critical-thinking and problem-solving skills**.

➤ They **establish habits of mind** including creativity, initiative, perseverance and a love of learning.
While nationwide trends show creativity decreasing as children get older, our assessments show creative problem-solving increasing as CPSC children grow.

Impact on Our Children

Impact on Our Community

First graders partnered with the Piedmont Wildlife Center to learn about local efforts in rehabilitation, research, and education. Their Project Share raised funds and awareness to support NC wildlife habitats.

Impact as a National Model

In 4 of the last 5 years, CPSC has met all measures of performance growth set by the NC Department of Public Instruction.

The NC State Board of Education recently recognized CPSC as a model charter school for our academic, financial, and operational performance during 2014-2015. Of the state’s 146 charter schools, we were one of nine that received a “high quality” rating of our outcomes for children.
Nurturing the Whole Child: Emotional and Social Growth

Parallel to their academic growth and achievement, children also need opportunities to grow emotionally and socially. At CPSC, this growth is promoted by programs such as Peaceful Schools—a schoolwide program that systematically promotes peaceful conflict resolution while developing a culture of responsibility, equity, and nonviolence. As a result of this program, we often hear teachers coaching children and children coaching each other on our playground and in classrooms as they talk through conflicts and solve problems.

A third-grade child, new to CPSC in 2014-15, talks about the personal impact of the school’s emphasis on social and emotional skills:

“At my old school, some of the kids would be mean a lot… so it was kinda hard to ask for help. Most of the kids here are really nice, and they are helpful. If I need help finding a person at recess, they will stop playing and help me find them. If we can’t find them, and I say ‘That’s okay. You can go back and play if you want to,’ usually people don’t go back. They just stay with me and keep helping me, and it is very nice.”

The social and emotional skills we practice with children help them empathize and connect with one another, forming a strong, caring school community. To promote this directly, we engage in all-school activities, including all-school recess, all-school walks around the block, and all-school biweekly meetings. Children learn that they are significant as individuals and valuable members of our community.
This year marked our second use of the Elementary School Success Profile (ESSP), a school assessment tool developed by UNC’s School of Social Work. The ESSP measures a school’s social and emotional environment and identifies strengths and weaknesses of key dimensions of the school climate. The ESSP is unique among school assessment tools in that it uses a survey to collect and jointly analyze feedback from three partners: children, teachers, and parents/caregivers. We share these data in several sections of the report and highlight social and emotional measures below.

90% of our students reported feeling positively about themselves.

Compared to other schools participating in the survey nationwide, CPSC students self-reported a much higher level of peer acceptance, reducing risk from factors like loneliness and exclusion.

CPSC teacher Charlie Butchart shared his insights on a national stage in his presentation *Rehearsal for Life: Using Theater for Social Curriculum and Conflict Resolution* at the Annual Conference for Middle Level Education.
“Recess is my favorite thing about my new school. I like it because everyone from the whole school goes outside at the same time, and you can meet new people and play with people you wouldn’t usually ever get the chance to know. I like that I get to move my body a lot during the day.”
– Adri, first grade

Nurturing the Whole Child: Physical Wellness and Outdoor Learning

We believe the whole child learns best with a balanced emphasis on time outdoors, recess, and physical education classes. We promote this emphasis by providing ample time for outdoor activity and physical education through our Movement Program.

Children use outside time to engage in rigorous exercise and cooperative play. Research shows that a connection to nature improves children’s focus in the classroom, promotes environmental awareness, and increases feelings of well-being.8

CPSC’s Movement Program integrates social and emotional growth with physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle. In yoga, cooperative games, modern dance, CrossFit, and aikido, children develop self-control, collaborative problem solving, and empathy, as well as overall fitness.
In contrast to the North Carolina mandate for 150 minutes weekly of physical activity time, CPSC’s approach is developmentally responsive: cumulative time for physical activity, as well as time for structured and unstructured activity, varies by age to meet children’s needs. It is notable that, with outside time alone, CPSC children receive an average of 46% more physical activity time than the state mandate.

CPSC’s physical wellness activities build connections within our school and with our Durham community partners. Guided by CPSC’s Wellness Policy and North Carolina learning standards, our classroom teachers collaborate with the Wellness Committee to plan events, activities, and lessons that support children’s well-being.

Impact on Our Children
Every Friday of fourth quarter, the entire CPSC community enjoys a springtime walk around the block. Parents and siblings often join the nearly four hundred walkers.

Impact on Our Local Community
Eighteen CPSC students performed as part of the American Dance Festival’s children’s matinee at Durham Performing Arts Center.
Planning and Creation of the Middle School

In 2013, in response to the CPSC Board’s request for proposals, a highly committed parent group formally proposed an idea that had been discussed for many years—creation of a CPSC middle school. They made a strong case:

- Research supports that academic gains are greater in K-8 schools when compared to stand-alone middle schools.\(^\text{10}\)
- Research supports that K-8 schools have stronger social and emotional environments for development into adolescence.\(^\text{11}\)
- A CPSC middle school could deepen elementary-level Project-Based Learning through the Expeditionary Learning model, a unique offering in Durham.

With Board approval, a dedicated group of parents, Board members, and staff members worked to bring the middle school to fruition. Thanks to their intense efforts, we opened our middle school with fifth and sixth grades in the 2014-15 academic year.

CPSC Middle School Associate Director Tiffany Grant recalls the infectious energy on that first day:

“Our grand opening of CPSC’s middle school was full of excitement, wonder, and awe! Countless students and families came out to lend helping hands in the days before the school opened. Words cannot express the level of energy and anticipation. I am so honored to be a part of this exciting new journey for CPSC.”
We started small and stayed close with an upfit of the nearby Trotter Building. During the school year, we selected the new Hunt Street site as our future middle school home, and construction began to get it ready for the addition of seventh grade in 2015-16. The Hunt Street space is just two-and-a-half blocks from the elementary school, offers great access to our downtown partners, has room for incremental growth, and provides stability through a secure lease.

Opening in concert with the early stages of our Economic Diversity Lottery Initiative, the middle school now includes our most economically and racially diverse cohort. Per our plan to grow incrementally, full middle school enrollment is expected by 2020-21—the same year we expect to reach our target of 40% of CPSC children eligible for free or reduced-price lunch.

**Middle School Learning**

Social and emotional growth is unique for the middle school age group, so our middle schoolers meet in CREW groups—Cooperation, Responsibility, Empathy, Wonder—every morning. CREWs are single-grade groups of around 20 children with one teacher, a structure designed to support the whole child and foster active engagement. CREW members build relationships through initiatives that nurture understanding, teamwork, and trust—and CREW time also includes character development and academic goal setting.

As with social and emotional needs, middle school academic needs are unique. Our middle schoolers engage in subject-specific core curriculum classes for English/Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science and in integrated project-based curriculum inspired by the Expeditionary Learning model. Working collaboratively with community experts on nine-week projects, their efforts extend into service and citizenship by tackling real-world problems and presenting their solutions for public use. An expedition for Erin Dawson Linn’s fifth-grade class started with curiosity about voting:
“The kids were initially interested in figuring out the participation of Durham and North Carolina residents in midterm elections, so we did a survey. They figured out that participation is really, really, really low in a midterm year, and they wondered ‘What does that mean for us?’ and ‘Why is that the case?’ In looking at other ways that citizens are important, we discovered that helping alleviate stresses like homelessness, or hunger, or stray animals is important, too.”

“We gathered and read information about local nonprofits, and the kids got into groups to pick which ones they wanted to research and advocate. We had Camp Royall (the Autism Society of NC’s summer camp program), the Coalition to Unchain Dogs, PORCH-Durham, Carolina Tiger Rescue, Girls Rock NC—there were so many. The kids got in touch with the people in charge, figured out what the organizations needed, and learned how people could help each organization. Then, the kids put together a civic participation rally downtown to inform the community about these organizations and how individuals can participate and help. The kids designed posters, advertisements, commercials, videos, songs, all kinds of promotional information. It was very cool. Very successful.”

Though our middle school children are in new stages of academic and social development, connection to the younger grades remains important. Middle school children can learn by mentoring younger children. School community is created when middle schoolers invite fourth graders who are studying macroinvertebrates to share their microscopes and learn about one-celled organisms—or when middle schoolers present their own new ideas at an elementary school assembly. The close proximity builds unity between campuses. CREW, the Expeditionary Learning model, mentorship—the CPSC middle school is a natural extension of our child-centered elementary school.
SECTION 4

Developing Innovative Instructional Leaders

Teachers make a greater difference in a child’s achievement than any other school factor, so our charter makes teachers—rather than administrators—the instructional leaders at CPSC. Our teachers collaborate and shape decisions for children’s learning and growth. Fourth-grade teacher Cheryle Pope talks about the effect this has:

“We have an incredible faculty. Far, far beyond the norm. The skill level, the love of the children, the appreciation of who each child is, the knowledge base, the teaching styles.

And I love that as a professional, I get to design and implement curriculum in ways that are meaningful to the children as well as to me. It keeps it fresh. It makes me want to keep doing my job, year after year. I love that there is a certain level of autonomy that comes with this job because I am trusted as a professional to do the right thing. It makes me rise to a higher level, because I take that responsibility seriously.”

To support the development of excellent educators, we seek to give our teachers the tools they need to develop project-based, child-centered curricula. Thoughtful planning and collaboration with colleagues and the larger community is vital—which means that professional time outside the classroom is one of our teachers’ most important tools for success inside the classroom.

“All of the teachers at Central Park are fair. They are respectful. They are really helpful. They really teach. Sometimes when I feel bad, whatever teacher is nearby is there to help. They help each kid figure out how to do things in a way that works for them. I mean, us kids don’t just have to do exactly the same thing as each other. Teachers here help us do what works best for us. Every teacher in the school is just very, very helpful.”

– CPSC fourth grader
Collaboration is frequently evident during teachers’ dedicated weekly planning time. New CPSC teachers also have weekly time with an experienced mentor teacher for support, classroom observation, and year-long feedback. In addition, the entire CPSC staff sets aside 13 days each year to gather for in-depth professional development. Research has repeatedly shown that teacher collaboration opportunities enrich children’s learning experiences and achievement.14

In 2014-15, the CPSC teaching staff cumulatively spent 220 hours engaged in mentorship, 1,600 hours toward professional development, and more than 3,400 hours communicating with families about each child’s goals, challenges, and growth.

**Racial Equity Institute Training**

Our staff partnered with the Racial Equity Institute (REI) to focus 2014-15 professional development on our personal and collective implicit bias and racial stereotyping that impact our students’ achievement. As a group, they spent 1,600 hours in formal training about how race matters when it comes to ensuring equity in children’s educational outcomes. This growing awareness is leading to changes in instruction, parent engagement, and relationship building. One teacher’s story reveals the potential impact for children and their families as members of the CPSC community:

“I really reached out and tried very hard to connect with this parent, which I wouldn’t have done before the Racial Equity Institute training. I mean, that sounds ridiculous, but I think without realizing it—I just—there would have been a gap. We developed a strong parent-teacher relationship, and he eventually told me about his own horrible experience in school. We ended up having this incredible dialogue. And it just wouldn’t have happened before REI.”

Conversations rooted in lessons learned through REI training continue to spark learning among our teachers about the way historical, systemic racial injustice plays out in institutions today. Working to make the invisible visible, CPSC staff is committed to analyzing personal and collective attitudes, knowledge, and beliefs about race—with the goal of a more equitable school community and learning environment.
95% of CPSC parents believe our teachers care about their children, according to the ESSP assessment.

CPSC teachers reached out to more than 70 local and national experts to collaborate with children on research and projects.

CPSC is the first school in our state to train all teachers and staff through the Racial Equity Institute.
CPSC’s financial decisions are guided by our vision of a child-centered learning lab that sparks ethical, caring, problem-solving thinkers. We are committed to sustainably funding child-centered learning, nurturing the whole child, and meeting children where they are. We are dedicated to investing in an innovative teaching staff and a diverse learning community. This way of framing our finances requires a solid and sustainable fiscal policy—one that leverages public funds, institutional grants, and parent and community donations.

### 2014-15 Revenue

Private donations fill a critical gap: North Carolina funding for charter schools—both at the state and county levels—is almost 25% lower than for traditional public schools. CPSC received approximately $3.3 million in county, state, and federal public funds in 2014-15, while a traditional K-6 public school with similar enrollment would have received an estimated $4 million.
Investing in Our Teachers

When the Burroughs Wellcome Fund recognized CPSC teacher Aaron Sebens’ innovative science and math curriculum, making him one of just six statewide finalists for their Career Award to Math and Science Teachers, he was energized. Aaron created a plan to share his Wind Power Curriculum across North Carolina, and he proposed that the CPSC Board create a Teacher Innovation Fund. The fund would provide CPSC teachers with start-up grants of $300 to $5,000 for curriculum innovations, and it would be managed by the teachers themselves. The CPSC Board voted to live its values financially by specifically funding teacher innovation. Our new Teacher Innovation Fund will begin awarding dollars in 2016.

2014-15 Expenses

Despite a per-child revenue that is 25% less than in traditional public schools, CPSC spends more per child in targeted areas that improve outcomes. We invest the majority of the school’s funding in our teachers—recruiting and retaining the right teachers and providing them with the tools they need.

- Personnel
- Instructional
- Office and Administration
- Facilities
The CPSC foundation, a legally separate entity from the school, maintains ownership of the school's properties and significant financial assets and works in concert with the Board of Trustees to provide capital resources for CPSC’s child-centered programs. The CPSC Administration is responsible for managing the operating budget and the day-to-day operations of the school.

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Organizational Chart

The CPSC Foundation, a legally separate entity from the school, maintains ownership of the school’s properties and significant financial assets and works in concert with the Board of Trustees to provide capital resources for CPSC’s child-centered programs. The CPSC Administration is responsible for managing the operating budget and the day-to-day operations of the school.

- **$1,200**
  for project work and hands-on experiences in each classroom
  (National per-classroom average is $1,000, more than half of which is typically funded out-of-pocket by teachers.)

- **2:1 ratio**
  of child-to-Chromebook for Grades 3 through 7

- **$5,000**
  in funding for guest artists

- **14,760**
  volunteer hours in support of the school’s work

- **Almost $26,000**
  donated by 110 families for the Sunshine Fund, CPSC’s annual fund
Fundraising Events

We fundraise as a cohesive school community to model work ethic, caring, and problem solving, while fostering relationships and adding to our neighborhood’s vibrancy.

- Literary Festival
  - $3,051

- Read-a-thon
  - $12,457

- Grow Our Arts
  - $6,576

- Strawberry Festival
  - $10,105
Looking Ahead

Right alongside our children, we are learning and growing. Here are some questions we’re engaging in 2015-16 as we devise a five-year strategic plan:

As we become a more socioeconomically integrated school, **how will we ensure an inclusive, equitable school climate that removes barriers and enhances success for all children?**

We seek to close opportunity gaps. By 2016-17, **can we fund After-School Program and intersession camp scholarships for every CPSC child who needs financial assistance to attend?**

We anticipate needing to grow our transportation offerings so that we can continue to provide safe and reliable rides to and from school for every child who needs transportation. **With limited funds for transportation and fewer subsidies than traditional public schools, how will we continue to provide this important service?**

We’ll expand our middle school through eighth grade by the 2016-17 school year. **How will these Expeditionary Learners affect our local community through their service learning work?**

We seek to eliminate the role that race plays in the academic outcomes of our children. **What will end-of-grade assessments tell us about our progress?**

We strive to measure what matters when assessing our children’s growth. **How will we develop and share alternative tools for measuring outcomes in such areas as creativity and critical thinking?**

We’ll fund projects through our new Teacher Innovation Fund for the first time in 2016. **How will we measure the impact on our children, and how will we share what we learn with other schools who want to invest in teacher innovation?**

We believe we are only as strong as our connections with our community. **What new partnerships will be forged to support both our students’ and the community’s growth?**

We look forward to sharing our learning in next year’s impact report!
Dear Friends,

Central Park School for Children began as a challenging experiment: to determine if it was possible to have a truly progressive, free, public, charter school in the tradition of the great university lab schools—where staff, especially teachers, were also researchers, always looking for evidence to make learning better for all children. The mechanics of reading, writing, math, and scientific method would be included in the “progressive” education that embraced learning through authentic projects, play, art, music, dance, groups, integrated subjects, and individualized, developmentally appropriate work—as well as physical, emotional, and social growth.

In so many ways, the experiment was a success. Our methods were effective and always improving. Visitors from universities and professional organizations complimented our work. The children were happy. CPSC students did well on the EOGs.

But we realized our original goal was too modest; it was about having great inputs in the child’s education. What we really wanted to know is whether we were getting great results. We wanted to be sure that children leaving CPSC had acquired the sophisticated skills necessary for succeeding in the twenty-first century. We needed to be sure we completely understood those skills.
A study group of Board members, staff, and outside consultants worked for a year to create CPSC’s twenty-first century goals. They are as follows:

While educating the whole child socially, emotionally, intellectually, and physically, all students will develop:

➤ Critical-thinking and problem-solving skills
➤ Effective oral and written communication strategies
➤ Habits of mind, including curiosity, imagination, agility, openness, and initiative
➤ Joy and enthusiasm for learning

The challenge with these twenty-first century skills is that they are very difficult to measure objectively. EOGs measure things that are easy to measure and therefore have become the coin of the realm in public education. We believe our twenty-first century goals include skills that are essential, and we must find a way to measure them.

At CPSC, our staff/scientists have courage, imagination, and outrageous ambition. They believe it is possible to assess whether we are achieving our twenty-first century goals for our children. CPSC staff members have researched and more thoroughly defined these goals. They have studied how CPSC students grow into these goals at various stages in their development and have begun to create indicators at these stages. Our amazing teacher/scientists are actually creating a new measurement framework.

It is, indeed, an outrageous ambition. We are committed. And when we get it done, we will change the future of all public education.

So excited about CPSC,

Vicky Patton, Chair
Endnotes

3 Kahlenberg/Potter.
4 According to the North Carolina State Board of Education, an "at-risk student" is “…a young person who, because of a wide range of individual, personal, financial, familial, social, behavioral, or academic circumstances, may experience school failure or other unwanted outcomes unless interventions occur to reduce the risk factors.”
5 Katz and Chard.
6 EL Education.
11 Yecke, 20-25.
13 Mizzell.
14 Darling-Hammond.

2014-15 School Staff

Our innovative instructional leaders impact CPSC children more than any policy or plan. Our impact at a national level is only because of our impact—every day—at the child level.

We appreciate these professionals from the 2014-15 year—and each educator who has contributed to the CPSC community since its inception.

**ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF**
John Heffernan, Director
Rae nel Duncan-Edmonds, K-4 Associate Director
Tiffany Grant, 5-6 Associate Director
Amy McMullen, Exceptional Education Director
Erica Asbury, Office Manager
Kristen Gerondelis, Data Manager and Bookkeeper
Lauri Brandenburg, Technology Support
Gretchen Mauney, Nutritionist

**CLASSROOM TEACHERS**

**Kindergarten**
Aileen Clougherty
Scott Larson
Tammy Macomson

**First Grade**
Julie Janes
Anna Morrison
Evika Sturdivant

**First / Second Grade**
Lindsay May
Lauren Vejvoda

**Second Grade**
Erica Bentley
Melissa Cabrera
Katie Cramer
Carolee Helgesen
Suzanne Tyler

**Third Grade**
Chanel Carrell
Megan Hendrickson
Emily Kinder
Leah Mahony

**Fourth Grade**
Judy Compton
Cheryle Pope
Aaron Sebens

**Fifth Grade**
Erin Dawson Linn
Fiona Rae
Dawnsa Smith

**Sixth Grade**
Charlie Butchart
Morgan Carney

**Specialist Teachers**
Anjanee Bell, 5-6 Dance
Darcy Berger, K-4 School Counselor
Bryan Carey, K-4 Yoga
Sandy Coats, 5-6 Spanish
Arlie Harris, ESL
Kerry Howard, 5-6 EC
Jason Lord, Expeditionary Learning/Integrated Arts
Gaspard Louis, K-4 Dance
Lucia Marcus, Art
Josh Montoya, 5-6 CrossFit
Katrina Morgan, 5-6 School Counselor
Erin Niven s, Occupational Therapist
Nakeitha Owens, Speech Therapist
Elizabeth Ricker, K-4 EC
Andrea Rohrbach, 5-6 EC
Lindsey Sachs, Library/Media/Technology
Melanie Sebens, Speech Therapist
Brent Smith, K-4 EC
Liz Wells, Music
Aubrey Whisler, Learning Specialist
Jason Widener, Aikido, Cooperative Games, 5-6 Wellness

**Teaching Assistants**
Sherry Bridges, K-4 EC
Atisha Burnett, 1-2
Liz Clark, Kindergarten
Marsha Edwards, EC
Liz Raymer, 5-6 EC
Wendy Richesin-Dodd, Kindergarten

**After-School Program**
Amy Elmore, Director
Eli Carleyolson, Assistant Director for Middle School
Tanita Carleton, Counselor
Katie Kovach, Counselor
Kay Mueed, Counselor
Stephanie Shaw, Counselor
Thank you for connecting with our community.

You can help spark ethical, caring, problem-solving thinkers.

To give, go to cpscnc.org/support or contact Aubrey Whisler in the CPSC Office of Outreach and Development at aubrey@cpsfc.org.

To partner, contact John Heffernan at john@cpsfc.org.

To apply, visit cpscnc.org
Central Park School for Children
Elementary School: 724 Foster Street  |  Middle School: 121 Hunt Street
Durham, NC 27701
919-682-1200  |  cpscnc.org