

BULLIS CHARTER SCHOOL

Annual Charter School Report to the Santa Clara County Board of Education 2011-2012



**Submitted by Wanny Hersey, Superintendent/Principal
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BULLIS CHARTER SCHOOL 2011-2012 Annual Charter School Report

Highlights

a. Three Highlight Activities for 2011-2012

Eighth Grade

After an extremely successful launch of its 7th grade class in 2010-2011, Bullis Charter School (“BCS”) is excited to welcome its inaugural 8th grade class. The BCS program is based on five Essential Elements that have been extended to meet the unique age- and developmentally-appropriate needs of the middle school students:

- i. High Expectations: academic rigor; exceed state standards; highly qualified staff; intensive professional development; prepare students for high school regardless of environment, contributing role in society, and life
- ii. Individualized Learning: Focused Learning Goals; self-development (develop passions, find voice, social-emotional development); life skills assessed and emphasized (learn how to learn, technological competence, 21st century skills)
- iii. Integrated Learning: Collaborative teaching; interdisciplinary studies (opportunities for inquiry); flexible scheduling (time for depth & mastery & project-based learning); authentic assessment (exhibit mastery across curriculum)
- iv. Real World Applications: Increase student engagement through meaningful learning (immersion, relevance through action, application to reinforce learning); “Intersession” (learning beyond classroom; synthesizes previous learning; applies learning to new experiences)
- v. Community Supported Learning: Mentor Program (experts, field professionals); Utilize Technology & Resources.

While some of these elements (e.g., Focused Learning Goals, Project-Based Learning, flexible scheduling, collaborative teaching, interdisciplinary studies, intensive professional development, etc.) are more common in regular elementary programs, they are less so in most middle schools. But, because they are already an integral part of the Bullis Charter School’s elementary school program and philosophy, we have the ability to successfully extend these best practices to the 7th and 8th grades. Additionally, BCS middle school students have unique opportunities during the Intersessions to participate in a variety of courses that reinforce and extend the State Standards, utilize mentoring from the outside community, provide opportunities to apply conceptual understanding in an interdisciplinary manner and in real-world situations, and allow for self-reflecting and participation in meaningful assessment practices. These are all instructional methods identified by research to be effective means by which students most successfully learn and retain knowledge.

For example, in 7th grade, before students produced, directed, and acted in a production of “Midsummer Night’s Dream” in a professional theatre in front of a live audience, they were taught in their classes to:

- Read and respond to the play, a *historically or culturally significant work of literature that reflect(s) and enhance(s) their studies of history and social science (ELA Standard 3.0)** that is also an example of the *advances made in literature, the arts, science, mathematics, engineering, and the understanding of human anatomy and astronomy (e.g.by Alighieri, da Vinci, Shakespeare, etc.) (History/SS Standard 7.8)*
- Design models of sets to scale (*construct and read drawings and models made to scale – Math Standard Geometry 1.2*) and costumes using a variety of media including pencil, pastels, fabric, technology (Google Sketch-Up), etc. for “Much Ado About Nothing” in different time periods and societies, thereby *using various drawing skills and techniques to depict lifestyles and scenes from selected civilizations (Art Standard 5.2)*
- *Compose and arrange simple pieces for voice and instruments, using traditional and non- traditional sound sources, including digital/electronic media (Music Standard 2.5)*. Students used Garage Band, traditional and Orff instruments including voice.
- Create meals from different cultures (Cooking); design and construct structures in Woodworking; and learn basic sewing techniques by hand or machine in Sewing.

It should be noted that the students were also mentored by a professional Shakespearan actor, auditioned for the roles, casted the parts, built the sets, procured the costumes & props, created the playbill, composed the soundtrack, motifs, and songs, manned the lights and sound, and managed the budget for this entire project-based learning culminating Intersession (*Students apply what they learn in theatre, film/video, and electronic media across subject areas. They*

develop competencies and creative skills in problem solving, communication, and time management that contribute to lifelong learning and career skills.– Theatre Standard 5.0)

** all standards listed are from the California Content Standards for 7th Grade*

Strategy III – “Create an environment and process that attracts, develops, and retains the highest quality of staff”

Action Plan #2: *All staff will be evaluated and compensated on a school-wide performance-based model.*

As part of the Strategic Planning process, the entire BCS staff embarked on a yearlong effort to develop a performance-based compensation model for its teaching faculty. Using a collaborative and consensus process, the staff felt it was important to first articulate and define the “Role of the BCS Educator”, thereby outlining the responsibilities and expectations for every teacher within and outside his/her classroom.

Next, the staff set out to create a Continuum, a matrix upon which teacher performance would be evaluated. Samples of teaching rubrics, such as the California Department of Education’s Continuum of Teaching Practice, Teach For America’s Teaching as a Leadership Rubric, and National Board for Professional Teaching Standard’s Core Propositions, were reviewed and analyzed by the entire staff. It was determined that none of these aligned with the mission statement or our aspirations for our students, therefore, staff writing committees were formed to create a Continuum for BCS. The writing committees met weekly from January to May (and 8 hours on two afternoons in May); the leadership team had been meeting weekly since 2010 and continued to undergird the process; and the entire staff met bi-weekly to review and reach consensus on decisions every step along the way.

The BCS Continuum was completed in May 2011 consisting of five evaluative columns: Solid Foundation, Effective Application, Purposeful Synthesis, Successful Innovation, and Exemplary Model, for five major areas: Content Knowledge/Pedagogy, Assessment and Knowledge of Students, Lifelong Love of Learning, Global Perspective, and Professional Partnerships/Models of Excellence with 24 sub-sections. The entire BCS staff is very proud to have created such a meaningful Continuum that can be used to evaluate, develop, compensate, and retain its teaching faculty and even more proud that this was accomplished in an extremely collaborative and inclusive manner.

Student and Staff Achievements 2010-2011

- Since its inception, the School’s Academic Performance Index consistently places BCS in the top 1% of all schools and as the highest performing elementary charter school in California.
- Lisa Stone, BCS 7th grade teacher, recognized as 2011 SCCOE Charter School Teacher of the Year.
- National Currents Events League - BCS 6th graders awarded 3rd place.
- Chinese Language Teachers Association of California’s 2011 Mandarin Speech Contest and the Confucius Institute’s Chinese Writing Competition – three First Place awards.
- California Music Educators’ Association 2011 Choral Festival - The BCS G-Clef choir received a “Unanimous Superior” ranking .
- California Student Media Festival - Bullis Kids News students were awarded “Best Elementary News Show” 2011
- San Jose Tech Museum “Tech Challenge” - BCS teams won top prize in 5 different categories.
- BCS is a beta test site for new technologies such as GoalBook, GoalPost and Kahn Academy.
- One of the first schools to implement innovative programs such as Brainology and KidLead.
- Partnership with the Stanford Design School (dschool) to engage communities and inspire a creative confidence utilizing design thinking.
- Association for Continuing Education (“ACE”) – BCS was designated an ACE Innovative Partner School.
- BCS 4th graders were awarded 2nd place in the National Siemens Foundation’s “We Can Change the World” Challenge with their Adobe Creek Erosion Abatement and Watershed project. With over 18,000 student entrants, BCS was the only California school to be recognized.

School Location and Facility: Include pictures of your school

- Location:** Bullis Charter School is located in Los Altos adjacent to the Egan Jr. High School.
- Current Facility Arrangement:** BCS currently receives Prop 39 facilities from the Los Altos School District.
- Capacity of Facility:** We have asked the Los Altos School District what the capacity of our current site is and they have declined to provide a maximum capacity number.



- d. **Special Features:** The BCS facility includes space that must be shared with Egan Junior High School, as well as several facilities BCS has built at its own expense to provide needed facilities not offered by the District. This includes a Multi-Purpose Room, a covered lunch area, and two playground structures.

Enrollment/Registration

a. Enrollment and Demographics

	# of Students	% of Students	LASD 10-11
African American/Black	7	2%	0%
Asian	123	26%	28%
Mixed/Other	96	21%	12%
White	240	52%	52%
Total	466	100%	92%

* Per CDE, "Hispanic" is no longer disaggregated as a category for demographic purposes, although LASD continues to report using the older method. As a point of comparison, BCS's Hispanic population is 5.3% and LASD's is 8%

Enrollment/Recruitment Plan

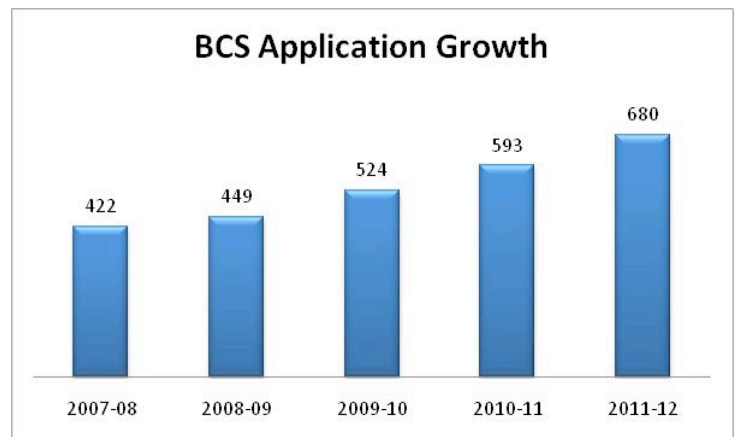
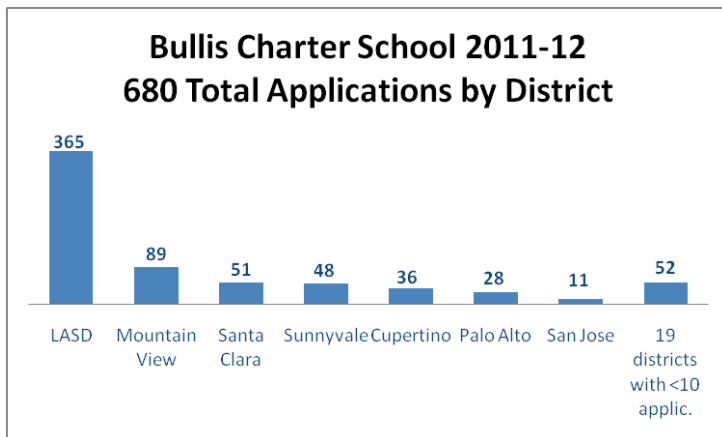
Bullis Charter School strives to attract, enroll, and retain the broadest spectrum of students and families who are representative of the general population residing within the territorial jurisdiction of the Los Altos School District. In order to accomplish this, a Communications Committee develops and executes a communications and recruitment plan for the school's Open Enrollment Period. This comprehensive plan employs a variety of strategies and distributes a range of materials to promote and inform the various racial, ethnic and interest groups represented in the Los Altos School District and beyond. These included, but were not limited to:

- 5 Parent Information Nights and 6 School Tours
- Advertising in local paper, flyers in merchant windows, libraries, and community centers
- Email announcements to local parent groups, neighborhood email lists
- Direct mail postcards to Los Altos School district residents
- Signs in Los Altos and Los Altos Hills
- Bullis Charter School web site
- E-mail Opt-In list (over 1500 names)
- Kindergarten readiness panels at local preschools
- Special tour for pre-school directors and the Los Altos Children's Librarians
- Outreach to over 10 preschools

As a result, for the 2011-2012 school year, BCS received:

- 680 applications from 26 different school districts;
- Kindergarten applications from 98 different preschools; and
- 1st-8th grade applicants from 133 different elementary schools.

b. Number of Applications Disaggregated by District of Residence



Growth Plans

a. BCS currently has no plans for increasing the number of schools but has added 8th grade this 2011-2012 school year.

Special Programs

a. Special Education

	BCS	LASD (10-11)
Special Education Students	5%	10%

b. Special Education Services

Bullis Charter School is designated a public school of the Santa Clara County Office of Education (SCCOE) for the purposes of special education services and funding and enjoys a collaborative working relationship with the SCCOE special education staff. Presently, the special education programs that are provided include Speech and Language, Occupational Therapy, and Resource Specialist.

c. English Language Learners

We presently have 20 new students who, through the Home Language Survey, have been identified for CELDT testing so that we may determine their eligibility for the ELL program.

	BCS	LASD (10-11)
English Language Learners	1%	8%

d. English Language Learners Program:

All English Language Learners are referred to Bullis Charter School's ELL Support Team in order to determine appropriate instructional and program placement. The ELL Support Team members, which include the student's parents and teacher(s), review the student's instructional and program placement and identify the student's needs in order to establish a course of action to eliminate all barriers to achievement.

Through the Focused Learning Goals (FLGs) process, goals are developed for every ELL student in 6 categories: Math, Reading, Writing, Content, Behavioral, and Personal. Within each category the following are addressed: strengths, areas for improvement, data, focused learning goals, and how the party(ies) responsible for implementing, monitoring, and evaluating each of the goals. ELL students must also have additional goals for Speaking and Listening. Parent and student input, including a parent survey, will be solicited in the development of these goals as will other BCS staff members. ELL students participate in the process in developmentally meaningful ways.

Bullis Charter School evaluates and monitors State assessment results and data of disaggregated populations (including ELL and former ELL students). The progress of individual students is monitored by the regular classroom teacher at least once every 4 weeks. The information obtained is used to make data-driven decisions regarding instructional plans and practices (at the classroom and school level), professional development, and changes to the student's FLG plan. The objective of every decision and change is to ensure that students make yearly progress on standardized evaluations and reach the highest possible levels of English language and academic proficiency in the shortest time possible.

On a semiannual basis, the progress of each English Language Learner in English language acquisition and academic progress will be evaluated through the following means:

- CELDT (California English Language Development Test) data
- SOLOM (Student Oral Language Observation Matrix) data
- California Content Standards Test results (if applicable)
- Student Focused Learning Goals
- Site-created assessments

Monitoring of the student's progress will continue for a minimum of two years after the student exits the program. ELL records will be maintained for each ELL student in his or her cumulative folder.

Fundraising

a. School's Fundraising Methodology

Bullis Charter School's only fundraiser is our very popular annual Walkathon. Students collect pledges from families and friends in order to raise money for school-wide efforts that benefit all students and even the greater community. For example, the building of the play structures as well as equipment and materials for our Science and Engineering program were underwritten by Walkathon monies. This year, monies raised by the BCS community will be used to fund the 3rd Charter School Junior Olympics that BCS hosts and invites other charter schools to attend for free.

b. What amount are parents requested to donate?

BCS does not request parents to donate to the school. The school does receive financial support from an independent public foundation, the Bullis-Purissima Elementary School Foundation (BPESF), a separate 501(c)(3), in order to make up for approximately a \$4,300 disparity in public funding between BCS and the local district schools (e.g. Parcel Tax, Basic Aid benefits, county taxes), including taxes that 94% of all BCS families pay towards public education that is not shared with BCS. This equates to BCS receiving public funding at a level that is less than 60% of what the local school district receives. This funding disparity increased by nearly \$600 dollars per ADA this year with the passage of an additional parcel tax by the Los Altos School District. Additionally, there have been the added challenges of a significant decrease in per pupil state funding and a continued cap on class size reduction monies; therefore, BPESF suggests that parents, whose financial means allow, donate, during the fall annual campaign, to cover the approximate \$5,000 funding gap between the amount of public funding and the amount required to run the program.

We are hopeful that our families will continue to donate to the foundation as generously and for the same reasons they've chosen to do so in the past: they understand the funding disparities; they know that 99% of their donation will go directly to fund their child's school; they believe the money is well spent by BCS; they support having credentialed and highly qualified teachers in all subject areas including music, foreign language, art, PE, and drama; and they appreciate the extraordinarily rich programs, including after school classes, that are available to all students, at no extra charge.

c. In the context of your overall operational budget, what is your current fiscal position?

The Bullis Charter School financial position is strong. Our fund balance and cash positions are positive, and we have adopted a balanced budget for 2011-12 based on conservative ADA funding projections.

Foundation Donations and Other Grants

a. What foundation donations do you receive?

As mentioned above, Bullis Charter School receives generous support from the Bullis-Purissima Elementary School Foundation, an independent public foundation.

b. What grants do you receive?

This year, BCS received an Association for Continuing Education (ACE) Technology Grant that awarded 50 iPads to the middle school program. As a 2nd place national winner, BCS also received a \$3000 grant from Siemen's "We Can Change the World" competition.

Replicable Practices

The BCS Strategic Planning process is the means (including process and discipline) by which the school community, parents, staff, and outside community members, continually creates systems to actualize the BCS Mission Statement and Strategic Objectives. Annually, and bounded by a set of *Beliefs*, expressions of fundamental values, and *Parameters*, self-imposed boundaries, the entire school community makes an uncompromising commitment to achieve specific measurable, observable, or demonstrable results that exceed present capability. This "living and breathing" process allows BCS to remain focused on the needs of students, identify and analyze internal and external "threats" and "opportunities", and prioritize the school's resources and energies relative to its capacity and need.

Through the Strategic Planning process, 19 Action Plans, had been realized the past 2-5 years including the school's middle school, Foreign Language, Science and Engineering Lab programs and the Focus Learning Goals process. This year, BCS is looking forward to the process of writing new Action Plans for its new Strategies (4 are new):

- I. We will build organizational capacity to promote sustainability, vitality, balance, and quality.
- II. We will establish our unique relevance in and serve the broader educational reform community.
- III. We will create an environment and process that finds, attracts, develops, and retains the highest quality of staff.
- IV. We will engage all parents in joyful, active partnership to support their children and the BCS mission.
- V. We will foster positive relationships with our constituents and communities to reinforce our value to them.

Bullis Charter School has shared its Strategic Planning process at the Charter Schools Development Center's "Best Practices" symposium, at the California Charter Schools Association's annual state conference, and with the many educators who have come to visit and observe on site every year. In addition, representatives from other schools, community organizations, and the SCCOE have been members of the BCS Strategic Planning Team and many have inquired about and some have implemented a strategic planning process back at their sites.