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Academic Challenge:

The Foundation of Academic Excellence and Social Justice

CAMBRIDGE PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Academic Challenge: The Foundation of Academic Excellence and Social Justice

Introduction

Rigorous Curriculum, Instruction, & High Expectations for All Students

To achieve the Innovation Agenda's twin goals of academic excellence and social justice, the Cambridge Public Schools must offer all students the challenge—and the support they need—to pursue and achieve academic excellence. In addition, CPS must support students in developing the lifelong habit of embracing challenge and persevering through it. Providing individualized challenge and support to all students, wherever they may be at any moment on the continuum of achievement, is acting in the socially just way CPS is committed to through the Innovation Agenda. It is also key in closing the district's persistent achievement gaps.

> **Our Belief:** *If* the academic program provides rigor for every student…*and* upper school teachers and administrators are trained to effectively guide, encourage, and support all students in their academic, social, and emotional development…*then* students will be challenged to push forward in their learning and development as Scholars…*and* students will achieve greater levels of achievement and the habits of challenge and perseverance.

Academic Challenge Vision for Upper Schools: All Cambridge students will be challenged and supported in advancing their academic, social, and emotional development in rigorous heterogeneous classrooms, throughout their upper school experience. Upper school curriculum and instruction, the Scholars Challenge, and the Math Academic Honors Option will provide *all* students with the opportunities, guidance, encouragement, and support they need to develop self-efficacy and mastery of academic content and the CPS Habits of Scholarship. Professional development in high expectations, culturally competent teaching, student self advocacy, and differentiated instruction will provide teachers with the training they need to challenge and support each student and create an upper school climate conducive to learning for all students.

Academic Challenge Goals: The Academic Program has been designed to achieve the following three goals for upper school students. Specific objectives and measurable outcomes will be established for these three goals when the Innovation Agenda Accountability System is developed in the coming months. These goals, objectives, and measures will be aligned with CPS district goals, which also include the district's Race to the Top (RTTT) targets. The RTTT outcomes related to each goal are listed below; additional, alternative student

achievement measures will certainly be included when the Innovation Agenda Accountability System is developed.

1. *Upper school student achievement in English language arts and mathematics will increase annually*
    a. Race to the Top: Accelerate the increase in overall achievement on the mathematics and ELA MCAS by 15% over 4 years
2. *Achievement gaps for all upper school student subgroups will decrease annually*
    a. Race to the Top*:* Reduce achievement gaps for each low performing subgroup, as measured by CPI, in ELA and math, by 25% over 4 years
3. *Upper school students will demonstrate increased high school readiness and preparation for honors-level work*
    a. Race to the Top*:* Increase the percentage of students who graduate from high school within four years by 5% over 4 years
    b. Reduce gaps in high school graduation and college enrollment for each low performing subgroup by 15% over 4 years

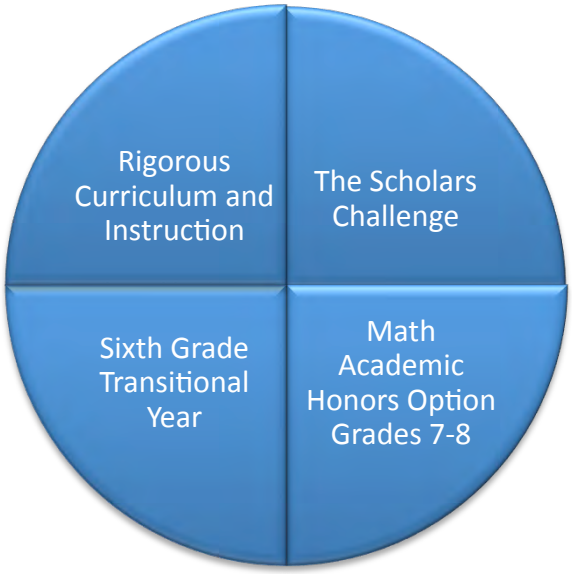
The Four Components of the Academic Challenge Plan

In the Upper School Program, academic challenge and support are not opposite ends of the achievement spectrum; they are two sides of the same coin for every student. Challenge opportunities start with where students are today and provide students with the support, guidance, and encouragement they need to push forward—to the next level of achievement, a higher level of motivation, a new set of study skills, and so forth.

All students will have access to the following four challenge components in the upper school Academic Program:

- Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction
    - Elevating the academic experience for all students
- The Sixth Grade Transitional Year
    - Closing achievement gaps for entering students, providing individual challenge, and preparing all students for the rigors of Grade 7
- The Scholars Challenge
    - Developing habits of challenge, perseverance, and self efficacy of our Upper School Scholars
- The Math Academic Honors Option Grades 7-8
    - Providing advanced math and honors opportunities to all students, and strengthening the grades 6-12 pathway for students in math

Four Components of Academic Challenge



All students will participate in rigorous curriculum and instruction, the Scholars Challenge, and the Sixth Grade Transitional Year. All students *will be encouraged to participate* in the Math Academic Honors Option for Grades 7-8, experiencing one or more honors units of study. Learners who are 2+ years above grade level may be assessed according to the Subject Acceleration Protocol upon request. More detail on these components is available in following sections of this plan.

All four components will be offered to all upper school students in September 2012. We will be working with teachers and administrators this spring to develop the current vision and framework of the Scholars Challenge, the full implementation of which may be phased in over the next two years depending on design. In 2012-13, we will also be working with teachers and coordinators to explore the possibility of adding Honors options to the other core content areas of English language arts, social sciences, and science. As they implement new units of study in 2012-13, teachers and coordinators will have the opportunity to evaluate challenge and support options and identify where honors might work best in these content areas. In spring 2013, we will contract with an external evaluator to evaluate the Academic Program in relation to its goals.

The Design Process to Date: The development of academic challenge components was guided by research, promising practices within CPS and other districts, and CPS program evaluations such as the Intensive Studies Program (ISP) and WestEd reports. Components were designed and revised through multiple feedback loops with a variety of CPS educators, including principals, curriculum coordinators, and Cambridge teachers Association (CTA) leadership. The critical next step is a design and feedback loop with middle grades teachers, particularly in the development of the Scholars Challenge, presented here as a vision and framework. It is what happens in the classroom between teachers and students that is most critical, and teachers' contributions will be invaluable in creating successful challenge opportunities. A synthesis of academic challenge research is included in the Appendices of this document, for more detail.

Rigorous Curriculum and Instruction

Rigor in the Innovation Agenda

Rigor is defined by the quantity and complexity of knowledge, habits and skills, academically, intellectually and socially, that each student is asked to master at all levels in each subject from 6th to 8th grade.

Rigor is not only manifested in learning more sophisticated content, but in the notion that students are expected to demonstrate mastery of this new knowledge and skills. Exposure or a passing knowledge of information is not the standard. Demonstration of mastery through assessments, presentations and performances is the new standard.

Many of our students currently experience rigor in some classes, with some teachers in some schools or some programs in their academic, intellectual and/or social endeavors. There is no one school or program across all grades 6-8 that holds all students accountable to the level of rigor expected to exist at all four of the upper campuses and Amigos. Below are some examples of the discernible enhancements planned for the middle grades experience.

Mathematics

The major subject areas of English/ Language Arts (ELA) and Mathematics are being redesigned by the curriculum coordinators, teachers and instructional coaches based on the new, rigorous Common Core standards. In many cases this means that our 6th, 7th and 8th grade students, as they move forward into their new upper campuses within the Innovation Agenda's Academic Program, will be asked to master content and skills never taught to them before in our middle grades classrooms regardless of what school or program they may currently attend.

For example, grade 8 math students will be expected to learn about linear relationships and equations, to begin the study of functions, and to compare rational and irrational numbers. This content is currently taught in the grade 9 Algebra I course. Also, grade 8 students will be expected to learn geometry standards that relate graphing to algebra in a way that is not currently included in the grade 8 math program.

English/Language Arts

In English/ Language Arts, grade 8 students will be expected to produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Specifically, they will be expected to utilize the techniques of persuasive writing while drafting a number of editorials on topics of their choice. They will be asked to write arguments to support their claims with clear reasons and relevant evidence. Students will learn specific persuasive techniques and will engage in revision to strengthen their

arguments. Finally, they will be expected to publish their work and submit it to a professional publication, eg. a newspaper, literary magazine.

Science

Science students will be asked to engage in a newly designed curriculum, starting in 2012-2013 in grade 6. The program is being developed by the curriculum coordinator, teachers and coaches based on current national standards called the Next Generation Science standards. The development of these new standards represents the first time in fifteen years that science content, knowledge, skills and processes have been upgraded nationally. Given the vast increase in the knowledge-base of scientific information in the past decade and a half, our students will be asked to learn and master information and processes for exploring ideas never presented in our middle grades classrooms before.

For example, the grade 6 science students will explore Newtonian physics, ie. forces and motion, friction, light and waves. They will be expected to learn both the methods of design and the modeling necessary to conduct scientific investigations. Students will be expected to study cells, the building blocks of life. Opportunities for Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) integration will be available throughout the year. All upper campus students will investigate, explore and experiment in fully equipped science labs.

Social Science

The social sciences curriculum was recently re-written in grades 6-8 to align with the newly configured high school course sequence to create a seamless and rigorous 6-12 pathway for our students. The grades 6-8 curriculum is once again being reviewed to make improvements for students in our upper campuses. The grades 6-8 units of study are being reviewed and rewritten by the curriculum coordinator, teachers and coach in the Understanding by Design (UBD) format. This work will ensure rigorous exploration of social science ideas. For example, grade 8 students will explore questions like: What is lost and gained when cultures interact? How do the conflicts and achievements of a particular era provoke social, political and intellectual change? What does it mean to be a good citizen? The social sciences coordinator and coach are also working with the Facing History and Ourselves organization to incorporate a unit on civic participation into the grade 8 curriculum.

Another improvement is the creation of comprehensive performance assessments designed to allow students to "show what they know" in ways beyond pencil and paper answers, eg. plays, monologues, debates, national history competitions, power-points, pod-casts, etc.

Additionally, as a result of the new rigorous demands of the Common Core standards, the social sciences department will be asking teachers and students to focus their efforts in the area of "disciplinary literacy." This means that the mastery of the attributes of an effective historian, i.e. reading, writing, critical thinking, habits of scholarship and research skills will be equal to or more important than the mastery of facts, dates and events that are the usual expectations of a social sciences class.

Learners 2+ Years Above Grade Level

We acknowledge that even with a more rigorous experience, some students may present learning profiles that necessitate a different approach. These students, who are typically two or more full grade levels ahead in a content area and are seeking a different experience, will be invited to participate in a process called the "Subject Acceleration Protocol." This protocol, adapted from the Public Schools of Brookline, includes an evaluation that uses quantitative and qualitative evidence to assess a student's progress in a number of areas. The Subject Acceleration Protocol is included in the appendices.

In such cases, a school-based team composed of teachers and administrators will conduct a formal evaluation and write an individual plan that articulates the most developmentally appropriate way in which to provide additional challenge to the student. Once mutually agreed upon, parents/guardians sign off on the plan and it is implemented.

Currently, as the result of successful plans written through this protocol, students are participating in a variety of experiences designed to meet their academic, intellectual and social needs. Some students are in a cluster group studying math together at the high school. Some students continue to take math with their grade level classmates to support identified social goals as they take on-line math courses to support their advanced math goals. The idea is to provide academic challenge to students presenting this unique profile.

Habits of Scholarship

All students will be asked to engage in their own growth and development within a series of intellectual habits that the Innovation Agenda has identified as "Habits of Scholarship." These intellectual habits are aligned with a similar configuration of intellectual habits that are taught at the high school. The creation of a solid pathway in grades 6-12 will help to ensure that our students are equipped with the habits and skills necessary to successfully navigate the rigors of high school and beyond. The particular set of "Habits of Scholarship" identified for the upper school campuses was derived from national organizations such as the Foundation for 21st Century Skills, the Expeditionary Learning Group, the Common Core Standards and other national and regional middle school organizations. The commitment to a district-wide (across all four upper campuses and Amigos) implementation of a program designed to measure, teach and report out the progress of students in these areas of intellectual development is another upgrade for our students and staff especially in the area of intellectual rigor.

Student Advisory Program

For the first time all students will participate in a student advisory program across all four campuses and Amigos that is being designed by teachers, the Physical Education, Health and Wellness department and national consultants from the Origins organization. One of the goals of this program, in addition to its commitment to ensure that each student is known well, is to provide a structure for students to develop and grow intellectually and to stay on track academically, emotionally and socially through the support of an advisor.

Creating Environments Conducive to Learning

A requirement of the Upper School Academic Program is the ability to successfully create classroom environments conducive to rigorous learning. In Nancy Brigham Associates' ISP Program Evaluation, "Perceptions and Realities: An Evaluation of the Intensive Studies Program," this is a challenge we face today in some of our middle grades classrooms. The Advisory Program presently being designed by middle grades teachers for the Upper School Program is a key strategy for creating this learning environment. The Advisory is aligned with the classroom Developmental Designs program and is an extension of the JK-5 Responsive Classroom. The Advisory will adhere to the guiding principles of the Developmental Designs Approach.

The Scholars Challenge, one of the four components of the Academic Challenge Plan, is also aligned with these principles and the Advisory program. The Scholars Challenge, to be designed by middle grades teachers and Heads of Upper Schools, provides a structured opportunity for each student to challenge him/herself to develop academically, socially and emotionally. The Scholars Challenge will also serve to support the creation of a community of learners.

In addition to providing programming for students, the district is committed to assuring that teachers and administrators are provided the same level of support. The goal of challenging *all* students requires professional development that spans across a number of areas including academic content, instructional grouping practices, cultural competency and targeted supports to meet the needs of all learners.

Teachers in the Upper School Program will incorporate Developmental Designs into their classroom practice and the Advisory Program. On-going professional development will be offered to both teachers and administrators so that all classrooms will provide environments conducive to high levels of learning and student engagement. Professional development for teachers around classroom management will be provided. Strategies such as structured routines, providing opportunities for movement and student choice, role playing to teach appropriate behaviors and creating written behavior contracts between teachers and students will be explored.

Teachers, in collaboration with the Heads of Upper School, will be developing Upper School Student Handbooks and Codes of Conduct that identify behavioral guidelines for Upper School Scholars.

Professional Development Plan

In order to increase rigor and raise expectations for all students, our teachers will continue to engage in professional development as they form their new Upper Campus Professional Learning Communities (PLC's). The content of their professional study may include, but will not be limited to the following areas:

- Teaching new, more rigorous curriculum units of study
- Leading a successful student advisory program
- Exploring cultural competencies in a new teaching and learning environment
- Promoting student effort and growth mindset

- Meeting the needs of all learners, particularly special needs students, second language and advanced learners
- Becoming effective teaching teams
- Engaging families in the continued support of their adolescent learners
- Collaborating to develop well-designed inter-disciplinary projects

Separate Challenge Programs Will Not Be Offered in the Upper Schools: The Upper School Academic Program will not include the Intensive Studies Program (ISP), or any other program in which upper school students are separately enrolled. Through the four components of the Academic Challenge Plan, all students will have access to challenge opportunities appropriate for them within heterogeneous upper school classrooms.

The development of the Academic Challenge vision and plan has been guided, in part, by findings of the Nancy Brigham Associates' ISP program evaluation, "Perceptions and Realities: An Evaluation of the Intensive Studies Program." This report highlighted the desirability of challenge opportunities from both the student and parent perspectives, and the importance of building a community of learners across our upper schools such as that in evidence at the ISP. Through the challenge opportunities available to all students in the upper school Academic Program, we will build rigorous classrooms with high levels of student engagement.

The design of the Math Academic Honors option, in particular, reflects a variation of the report's recommendations that CPS create "risk free" honors courses all students are encouraged to take in the middle grades. The Math Academic Honors option offers students the choice of selecting honors on a unit-by-unit basis rather than enrolling students in a separate honors course. We believe this model will provide all students with even greater accessibility to more challenging work in mathematics, and help ensure that all students experience honors-level work before they enter high school. It is our intention that such exposure will impact students' course through CRLS and beyond.

The Sixth Grade Transitional Year

The Sixth Grade Transitional Year is under development and will include extended learning periods for every student in both English language arts and math, including organizational & study skills. During this extended time, individual students will receive the support and challenge they need in ELA and math. A co-teaching model will be used in sixth grade math classrooms, with special educators and math content specialists teaming to increase individualized attention for every student. In addition to providing individual challenge, these extended periods will help upper schools close gaps for students entering from the variety of CPS elementary programs, and ensure that all upper school students are prepared to access the rigors of the Grade 7 program.

The Scholars Challenge

Personal efficacy is defined by Efficacy Institute founder Dr. Jeff Howard as , *"A strong awareness of one's own strengths, weaknesses and needs in order to plan effectively to achieve personal goals."*

As a school community, we are committed to incorporating this mindset into the fabric of the learning experience for all students. Through the development of a Challenge Habit of Scholarship and corresponding protocols, all Upper School scholars will be asked to identify academic and/or personal goals designed to encourage students to challenge themselves in new ways. The characteristics of self-reflection, planning, building confidence, trying one's best, perseverance, attainment of identified outcomes, and continuous development are key elements of the Scholars Challenge component of the Upper School Academic Program.

A sample framework for the Scholars Challenge has been designed and is described below, and rubric examples are included in the appendix. It is important to note however that a finalized description of the protocols to be used will need to be identified and completed in concert with feedback from staff members at each Upper School Campus. This work with Upper School campus teachers will take place during the spring of 2012 and continue during the summer professional development sessions.

Challenge Habit of Scholarship **As we develop the Scholars Challenge with our Upper School teachers, we will design a way to monitor and measure student's development of these critical characteristics. For example, one possibility might be to create and add a habit such as the following to the CPS Habits of Scholarship:**
SAMPLE: ***Challenge and Perseverance:*** the willingness to take risks and challenge yourself, in learning and the development of new skills, and to stick with it through difficulty.

SAMPLE Upper School Scholars Challenge Framework		
Sample Academic Challenges	**Sample Personal Challenges**	**Sample Resources**
This trimester I will strive to: ▪ Participate in an academic competition ▪ Use reflection, research, feedback, and evaluation criteria to modify my work ▪ Complete my homework every day ▪ Improve math assessment scores ▪ Try an honors level unit of study ▪ Learn & use one new vocabulary	***This trimester I will strive to:*** ▪ Demonstrate a positive attitude toward my learning ▪ Make one new friend ▪ Prioritize my time more effectively ▪ Join a club ▪ Volunteer in my community ▪ Speak up in class when I have a question ▪ Create a "green" campaign ▪ Persist when I am having difficulty	▪ Teacher Mentor ▪ After School Programs ▪ One-on-One Meetings ▪ Tutoring ▪ Summer Opportunities ▪ Small Group Instruction (FlexBlock)

word each week ▪ Create and maintain a digital learning portfolio ▪ Use thinking strategies to organize information ▪ Evaluate my performance using self-evaluation rubrics	▪ Listen to others without interrupting	

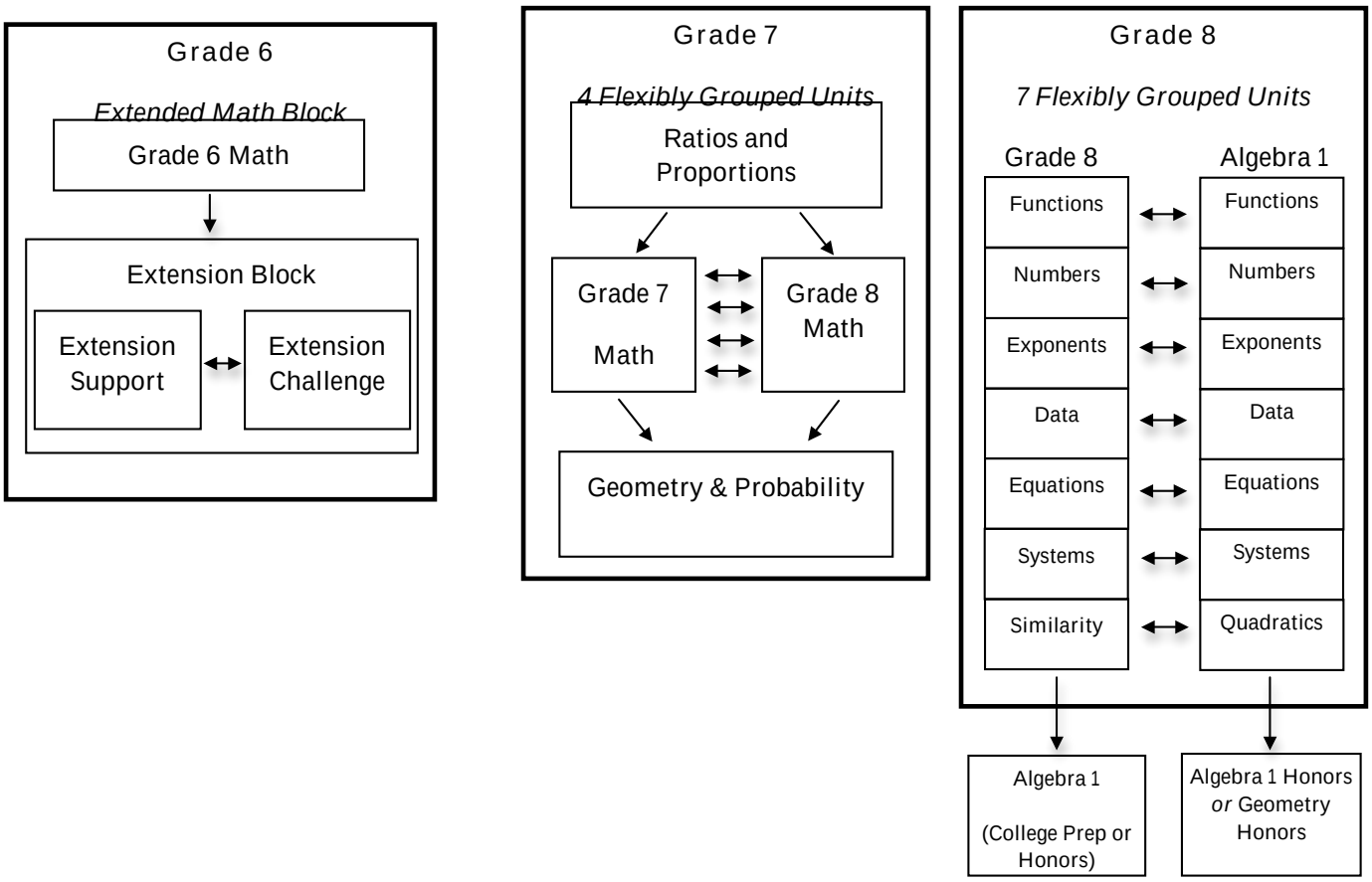
Math Academic Honors Option Grades 7-8

The Mathematics Academic Honors Option (MAHO) will be implemented this fall for the 2012-2013 school year. This option is open to all students in grades 7 and 8.

Grade 7 students will start the year working in heterogeneous groups on proportions and ratios, topics that are rich and engaging. In the middle of the year there is a series of four units during which time grade 7 students can opt to study grade 8 mathematics material. In order to make this choice, students need to demonstrate readiness on a pre-assessment designed for each unit. The MAHO will provide prep classes for any student who wishes to participate in the honors option but needs support in doing so. These prep classes will happen in advance of the student's participating in the class and will prepare the student for success in the class. Prep classes will be offered during a variety of times, ie. before, during and after the school day. Participation in this option is on a unit by unit basis. Grade 7 students will work in heterogeneous groupings for the three remaining units of study learning geometry and probability together.

The MAHO in eighth grade can best be described as an opportunity for grade 8 students to study some algebra or if desired, to study a complete algebra course. Students work in heterogeneous classes and may participate in the MAHO on a unit-by-unit basis. As is the case for grade 7 students, the MAHO will provide prep classes for any student who wishes to participate in any or all of the algebra units. The successful completion of the full algebra course allows the student to enroll in Honors Geometry in ninth grade. Students not completing the full algebra course in eighth grade may enroll in Honors Algebra in ninth grade. Students wishing to enroll in either Honors Algebra or Honors Geometry without successful completion of the prerequisite course material in eighth grade may enroll in summer school to be more adequately prepared to enroll in either of those honors classes in their 9th grade year. The year-long College Prep ninth grade algebra class will still be available, but with successful implementation of the MAHO it is a goal of the Math Academic Honors Option that the enrollment for the year long ninth grade class will decrease over time.

Upper School Math Program



Services to Support All Scholars

What does it mean to be a CPS Upper School Scholar?

In the Cambridge Public Schools, all Upper School students are regarded as unique individuals filled with unlimited potential. The characteristics of CPS Upper School scholars are numerous and wide-ranging --- scholars are critical thinkers, leaders, creative, motivated, engaged, respectful, confident, problem solvers, self-reliant, persistent, curious, independent thinkers, collaborative, kind, and resilient --- just to name a few.

Scholars are expected to engage in a Scholars Challenge goal setting protocol during each trimester of each school year. With support from Upper School faculty, students participate in structured activities rooted in the six principles of the Developmental Designs[1] approach to building a community of learners to help scholars define and achieve their academic and/or personal Scholars Challenge. As part of ongoing progress monitoring and to help scholars stay on the track to success, Scholars Challenges may be assessed by a Challenge Habit of Scholarship, a Scholars Challenge rubric and supported by resources as needed.

What if I am an Upper School Scholar who receives services for second language acquisition and/or learning differences?

All Upper School Scholars are expected to have access to the same range of rigorous, high-quality learning experiences as their academic peers. The academic program includes structures and supports designed to provide the necessary regular, language acquisition, or special education and related services designed to meet individual needs and increase academic performance.

Scholars Receiving English Language Learner Services

The goal of the CPS Office of Bilingual & English Language Acquisition is to provide English Language Learners (ELLs) with a comprehensive curriculum in all content areas as we develop students' English language skills.

Families of Upper School Scholars receiving English Language Learner services can expect:

- Grade six, seven, and eight enrolled in the Sheltered English Immersion (SEI) program will receive instruction in all content areas that is aligned with the state and CPS curriculum standards. Instruction is provided by teachers who are specially trained in English language acquisition or applied linguistics, and in their content area.
- All English language learners will receive English as a Second language instruction.
- ELL students with advanced English language levels will have the opportunity to choose to participate in the Mathematics Academic Honors Option.

Upper School Program Locations *in the Upper Campuses*

Upper Campus	Program	Grade
Cambridge Street	English as a Second Language	6 – 8
Rindge Avenue	English as a Second Language	6 – 8
Putnam Avenue	English as a Second Language	6 – 8
Vassal Lane	Sheltered English Immersion	6 – 8

Scholars Receiving Special Education Services

The goal of the CPS Office of Special Education is to narrow/close the achievement gap between students with disabilities and their peers and to increase the number of Upper School scholars that will choose to participate in the Math Academic Honors Option. To achieve this goal, general education and special education teachers will have common planning time to prepare lessons and units of study.

Below are the recommendations from the Office of Special Education (OSE) to challenge students with disabilities. These recommendations are based on reviews of different sources, such as:

- WestED Report
- Parent Surveys, Focus Groups and Meetings
- Dr. Jerome Schultz Preliminary Feedback
- Special Education Data

Families of Grade 6 Upper School Scholars receiving Special Education services can expect:

- ***English Language Arts (ELA):*** All students in 6th grade receiving services on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) will attend ELA class with their typical peers. Identified students* will participate in a flexible learning block where they will receive specialized instruction for ELA (reading, writing and comprehension). During this flexible learning block students on IEPs will be working on goals written in their plan. This flexible block will provide students with resource room type of services as recommended in the WestED report in response to the need for additional services for partially included students. Identified students* that may also need support in the ELA class will receive support in the general education setting.

- ***Mathematics:*** Identified students* in 6th grade that may need support in Math will receive their services in the class and an extended learning block. During the Math class, a general and special education teacher will be working together when introducing a concept to the whole group. This "co-teaching model" is in response to the recommendation made by WestED regarding increasing classroom supports for students with disabilities without interruption of instructional time. In addition, students on IEPs will meet in a smaller group with the special education teacher a portion of the extension block to work on their IEP goals and objectives and received specialized instruction.

Identified students refers to students whose IEP team has determined that the individual will benefit from being supported by attending a flexible learning block, receiving in class support, or both.

Upper School Program Locations in the Upper Campuses

Upper Campus	Program	Grade
Cambridge Street	Autism Spectrum Disorders	6*
Rindge Avenue	Structured Academics (Emotionally Fragile)	6-7
Rindge Avenue	Structured Academics (Emotionally Fragile)	7-8
Putnam Avenue	Developmental Delay	6-8
Putnam Avenue	Developmental Delay	6-8
Vassal Lane	Learning Disabilities	6
Vassal Lane	Learning Disabilities	7
Vassal Lane	Learning Disabilities	8

Autism substantially separate program currently is for students up to 5th grade. In September 2012 the program will continue to 6th grade. The program will grow to 7th and 8th grades in subsequent years, location to be determined.

Scholars Receiving 504 Accommodation Services

The goal of Section 504 and the Americans with Disabilities Act is…."to ensure that no student by reason of his/her disability be excluded from participation in any program or activity".

Requests for 504 Accommodation services are overseen by the Office of Special Education.

Families of Upper School Scholars receiving 504 Accommodation services can expect:

- Processes, protocols and web-based 504 forms will be fully implemented and consistent among all 4 Upper Campuses.
- All Heads of Upper School and Guidance Counselors will be fully trained on Section 504 prior to the beginning of the school year.
- All general education staff in Upper School Campuses will be trained in the implementation of accommodations and modifications.
- All Heads of Upper School will be responsible for holding teachers accountable for the implementation of accommodations and modifications.

Footnote:

[1]Six Principles of the Origins Developmental Designs Approach

1) Social learning is as important to success as academic learning. 2.) We learn best by constructing our own understanding through exploration, discovery, and application. 3) The greatest cognitive growth occurs through social interactions within a supportive community. 4) There is a set of personal and social skills that students need to learn and practice in order to be successful socially and academically: C-Cooperation A-Assertion R-Responsibility E-Empathy S-Self-control. 5) Knowing the physical, emotional, social, and intellectual needs of the students we teach is as important as knowing the content we teach. 6) Trust among adults is a fundamental necessity for academic and social success in a learning community.

Next Steps

- Complete external evaluation of the implementation of the academic program in relation to its goals.
- Provide teachers with professional development in the following areas:
    - High expectations
    - Culturally competent teaching
    - Student self advocacy
    - Differentiated instruction
    - Advisory
    - Developmental Designs
- Develop the Scholars Challenge with middle grades teachers.
- Work with teachers and coordinators in 2012-13 to explore the possibility of adding Honors options to other core content areas, after they have experience teaching new units of study.
- Offer Summer Institute for all middle grades teachers.
- Attend the *18th Annual New England Conference on Gifted and Talented Education* and/or other relevant middle grades conferences.
- Attend the Minority Student Achievement Network: *Increasing the Number of Students of Color Successfully Completing Honors Courses* in March 2012.
- Offer a course by the Math Department for special education teachers: *Achieving Fluency: Special Education and Mathematics.*
- Implement the Common Core Curriculum for Mathematics and English Language Arts in grades Kindergarten to 8.
- Continue with the implementation of Response to Intervention (RTI) and Positive Behavior Interventions Systems (PBIS).
- Implementation of the new statewide Educator Evaluation System

Appendices

Proposal for Mathematics in Cambridge Upper Schools

Research Summary on Academic Challenge

Sample Assessment Templates

Subject Acceleration Protocol