



## City Charter High School - Update - September 24, 2009

City Charter High School (City High), located in the Clark Building in downtown Pittsburgh, is completing its seventh year of operation. The school obtained its initial five year charter in 2002 from the Pittsburgh Public Schools and was re-chartered through 2012. City Charter High School, which is incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization, is governed by a nine member Board of Trustees. The school is free and open to the public. Funding is provided to the school from the students' school districts of residence.

City High serves approximately 560 ninth, tenth, eleventh and twelfth grade students. 81% of the students are from the Pittsburgh School district; the rest are from 23 area school districts. The majority of the students previously attended their assigned neighborhood public schools; remaining students attended other charter schools, magnets, parochial schools, private schools or were home schooled.

The demographics of the student population are balanced with respect to race and gender. 65% of the students have low SES as measured by the federal free and reduced lunch program. 14% of the student body receives special education services. Data collected from new 9<sup>th</sup> graders through the EXPLORE national standardized assessment suggests that City High's student body is average in ability - students' mean national percentile ranking in terms of the composite score is slightly less than the national norm.

### **What Makes City Charter High School Unique**

- Teachers stay with the same 156 students for four years (looping.)
- Every student has an Academic and Career Plan that is reviewed semi-annually by faculty, parents and students.
- Career preparation includes three courses covering career exploration, resumé development, interviewing skills, job/college application simulations. Career preparation culminates in a 13-week, 130 hour internship at a company, non-profit or university.
- The school day, from 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM, is divided into four blocks - three academic and one lunch/activities period.
- City High has a year round calendar with three trimesters and three one-month breaks.
- The school promotes lifelong fitness via student memberships to the Downtown YMCA.
- The academic program is built on a clustering of the Pennsylvania Chapter 4 Academic Standards. This clustering allows for flexibility in scheduling and staffing as well as providing a common sense approach to interdisciplinary, project-based learning.
- City High provides a technology-infused learning environment. Students and staff member receives a laptop with wireless Internet access.
- Parents, students and staff use an online, web-based, student and content management system. Students, staff and parents have complete access to student records, grades, attendance and assignments via the Internet.
- The City High professional development strategy is predicated on the belief that the success of a school is dependent on developing and supporting an exceptional faculty. The school uses a Master, Expert, Journeyman and Apprentice teacher model that provides robust support mechanisms for faculty.

### **City Charter High School - Are we succeeding?**

City Charter High School graduated 91 students in the Class of 2009. Approximately 93% of the school's graduates attend 2 or 4 year training schools, colleges or universities. Data collected via assessments, surveys, interviews and observations indicate that City High is



succeeding at its mission. Students are achieving state standards as measured by maintaining Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) on multiple years' PSSA exams. The school's PSSA results are superior when compared with other Pennsylvania schools with similar demographics. Students are also improving year-to-year as measured by the EXPLORE/PLAN/ACT assessments. All graduating seniors spend over 260 hours on their graduation projects. Finally student success regarding workforce skills is apparent in multiple MOS certifications and successful 130 hour internships.

#### Class of 2009

- 91 Graduates
  - 85 were accepted into either a 2 year or 4 year program (93%)
  - 61 students were accepted into a 4 year college/university (66%)
  - 22 students were accepted into a 2 year, technical, or training program (24%)
  - The rest will either work full time, travel, or have enrolled in the military (10%)
- 99 students with 402 MOS certifications

#### Class of 2008

- 94 Graduates
- 87 were accepted into 2 or 4 year programs, colleges or universities
  - 62 - 4 year colleges
  - 25 - 2 year colleges and tech schools
- 117 students with 417 MOS certifications

#### Class of 2007

- 96 Graduates, 99 in the Cohort, Graduation Rate=97%
- 86 Accepted to 2 or 4 year training programs, colleges or universities
  - 55 - 4 Year colleges
  - 31 - 2 Year colleges and tech schools
- 95 students with 196 MOS certifications

#### Class of 2006

- 93 Graduates, 102 in the Cohort, Graduation Rate=91%
- 80 Accepted to 2 or 4 year training programs, colleges or universities
  - 54 - 4 year colleges
  - 26 - 2 year colleges and tech schools
- 111 students with 310 MOS certifications

**External Validation: The school has received numerous commendations that suggest it is succeeding at its mission.**

- In 2009, City High received an **Effective Practice Incentive Community (EPIC)** award from New Leaders for New Schools, recognizing it as one of the six top performing charter high schools in the country.
- City High was accredited in 2007 by the **Commission on Secondary Schools of the Middle States Association**. The school received a seven year accreditation.
- In 2007, City High was accepted into the **Schools That Can** national network of high performing urban charter and independent schools.
- In 2007, City High was granted a second five year charter by the **Pittsburgh School District**.
- In 2007 and 2008, City High received a Bronze Medal distinction from the **U.S. News and World Report** as one of the leading high schools in the country.
- City High has received two **Pennsylvania Department of Education Keystone Achievement Awards** for reaching AYP in consecutive years.