



ptions in Education

The best time to plant a tree is 20 years ago. The next best time is now.

- Chinese proverb

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In partnership with the Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School November 2017

ANNUAL DRIVE

We are forever grateful for each donation that provides a safe and structurally sound “home” that reflects the quality of education and community that is the Charter School.

We Completed Phase One!

If you have a chance to stop by The Charter School you might not **see** all the changes, but you can certainly **feel** them. We were successful in getting Phase One of our Three Phase renovation plan completed over summer break. We are grateful to South Mountain Company for their professional and thoughtful services, the scope of their work included:

- Repairing the ventilation system in the four lower school rooms serving grades 1-4
- Installing new ventilation systems in the rest of the school except the new Science Wing
- Installing new heat pump systems in the four lower school rooms serving grades 1-4
- Installing a new heat pump system serving the middle school
- Adding interior storm windows in the middle school to reduce the heating load (13 windows)
- Connecting an electrical service upgrade
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These improvements have made a world of difference in the health and comfort of the learning environment at the MV Charter School.

And yet.... We need your help to complete Phase Two

- Interior storm windows for the balance of the single glazed windows (53 windows)
- New heat pump systems (5) for the balance of the school
- New heat pump water heater to serve the kitchen and original bathrooms
- Upgrades to, or replacement of, walk-in cooler and kitchen appliances
- Wall insulation, air sealing, and isolation of ground moisture in the crawl spaces and basements
- Solar electric system

Please help us complete these needed renovations.

If you are interested in a complete update on the scope of the work needed, please visit our website www.mvoptionsineducation.org for the South Mountain Analysis.

Our school has provided an education for 180 students each year for twenty years!!! Let us make sure that the facility is up to date and environmentally flawless for the students of the Charter School and the community at large. **Thank you again!**

Options In Education

Also known as OIE!

Options in Education took flight in 1994 when a group of Islanders banded together to support the launch of the Martha’s Vineyard Public Charter School. OIE worked tirelessly to identify a suitable site for MVPCS and secure the funds needed to purchase land and build the school. It has been leasing the property to MVPCS ever since, expanding the facility as the school’s popularity soared. OIE continues to act as the school’s landlord and raises money to maintain and improve the property. It does so without *any* government assistance. In 1994, each charter community in the state of Massachusetts had to cover the costs of its facility. OIE is honored to play that role and grateful for the community’s solid support.

1994-2017

Additions and renovations to the MVPCS facility have been the mainstay of OIE’s mission. We have also supported and sponsored community events. Our strategic plan calls for additional maintenance responsibilities and future additions that reflect the programmatic needs of the school.

Advisors to Options In Education, Inc.

For the past twenty-plus years, a group of volunteers have driven the vision of Options In Education, Inc. There are too many people to name, yet at the risk of offending many, it is time to mention Seth Mosler and Lynn Van Auken, both recently retired after tirelessly keeping the organization afloat.

Standing behind these two were a number of “advisors” who worked their magic to introduce OIE to the larger Vineyard community helping us raise the necessary funds to build a school. These founding OIE advisors are Betsy McIsaac and Sam Feldman who guided and initiated efforts to support the work of Options In Education, Inc. We call them the “Founding Funders” as they led the first fundraising efforts the summer of 1998. And, for every year since then, they have contributed financially, provided invaluable advice, and made themselves available as they led us to the successes we can count to date. So, this is not simply an acknowledgement of their financial contributions, but a well-deserved, long overdue, thank you for their commitment, can-do spirit and never ending dedication and generosity to



the school we created so long ago. There are many other advisors, all participating and taking a behind the scene role as they offer the gift of their time, expertise, generosity and kindness. As we move forward into out next twenty years we hope to share the role of all advisors and board members. The “village” we have created is remarkable and we are all forever grateful to these unsung champions.

Options in Education Welcomes New Faces and Says a Grateful Goodbye to Former Board Members

It's been a year of change for the Board of Options in Education as we've welcomed newcomers, Dina ElBoghady, Jonathan Chatinover and Nelia Decker.



Dina lives year-round in Washington, D.C. but spends summers (and just about every holiday she can) on the Vineyard. She is a former reporter for The Washington Post and recently founded a non-profit called MentorPrize, which recruits mentors and places them with mentoring programs throughout the D.C. region that serve at-risk youth. She's known about OIE for ages because she's related to one of its founders, Betsy McIsaac. When a slot opened on OIE's board, Dina enthusiastically grabbed it.



Jonathan is a current parent of a Charter School High School senior and, along with his wife Beth O'Connor, is the owner of AAC Consulting which is full-service consulting group specializing in financial systems utilized by professional services firms. He is also coach of the regional high school's boys' and girls' swim teams.

Nelia has been a part of OIE and MVPCS since their inception and has served on the Board of Trustees, twice as its President. She is currently Clerk for OIE. Nelia is the Children's Librarian at the West Tisbury School and is the grandmother of island children that she hopes some day will be able to attend the Charter School.



As we've been excited by these additions to the Board, we have also been sorry to say goodbye to Lynn Van Auken, Kathryn Harcourt and Laury Binney.



Lynn served on the OIE board for sixteen years, ten of those as President. Prior to that, she served on the MVPCS Board of Trustees for three years, one year as Secretary and one year as President. Going back even farther, Lynn first became involved in 1995 when she was asked to be a "reader" of the MVPCS application to the state. Lynn continues to be involved as a member of the OIE Advisory Board, and we are indebted for her long-term and continuing commitment.

Kathryn worked in the school library for nearly 15 years, beginning as a volunteer in 2000, then hired as an assistant and eventually becoming the head Librarian/Media Specialist in 2009. She served on the OIE board for five years, three of those as Clerk. The Tisbury School Library is now lucky to have her as their Educational Support Professional.



Laury Binney is the former principal of the Oak Bluffs School where he worked for 14 years. He currently works at MVPCS meeting with and supervising teachers through classroom observation and reflection. His greatest joy is having lunch with his grandson in kindergarten. He is a member of the Search Committee for the new Charter School director and remains the liaison between the Committee and OIE. We are grateful for Binney's representation of OIE during this important process.

Charlotte Morris Costa continues as board President. Jennifer Crawford, treasurer, helps us maintain financial stability, assuring that our bills are paid on time, and that our long range planning budget is viable and on target. It is her vigilant eye on our "books" that makes her such an asset to the OIE board. Billy Dillon, another hero of our board, monitors our



relationship with MVPCS in regards to building issues. He is on call for our questions and concerns regarding maintenance issues at school. We are grateful for a team of doers, a team of volunteers that works to ensure that the facility that houses some very special people at the Charter School is safe and structurally sound.

Another good year under our belts! Thank you.



THOUGHTS ABOUT SCHOOL SCIENCE

Jean Lythcott Ph.D



I was the science and math teacher at MVPCS in its first several years. I wish I could have been there to witness the dedication of the new science building, to thank the donors for making the marvelous gift possible, and to share in celebrating the naming of it as the Vernon Jordan science building.

Those early years gave me many glorious and indelible memories of our school community, students, teachers, board, and parents.

Having been a life-long scholar and teacher of the sciences, most recently at Stanford University, had I been at the dedication, I would have said something akin to the following:

There are two very different ways of having students learn the ways and ideas that science has invented to think about how the world works.

1) We can tell students the way science says it is and have them remember both what we said and what's written in the books. I am thinking, for example, of statements such as 'All things in the world are made of atoms.'

2) We can bring phenomena, i.e. happenings, into the classroom ... carefully heat up an open, empty 2 liter plastic bottle for a minute or so, screw the lid back on tightly, set it in a cool place, then watch and listen ... and, as changes occur, invite students to figure out what must be happening there, by dint of what they saw and what they already know about the world.

The second way puts the students in the driver's seat of their own learning, it is an invitation to them to be smart, to figure things out.

We do want students to build their own facsimile of the undeniably reliable understandings that science has created over the years. I am thinking of such explanations as where all the wood goes when you burn it and why it makes heat, how all living things are connected and what DNA has to do with that, what makes things move as they do, and what makes earthquakes and the seasons.



It is one thing to assert that there are atoms. It is a different kettle of fish for students to do an investigation where something so odd happens that it invites, no, demands an attempt to explain it. Thence to figure out that the very idea of minute, indivisible clumps of mass – what we call atoms - are a really good invention to explain what happened.

The first way of bringing science to students can be readily done in a regular classroom, with a white board, desks, a video screen, and maybe a computer projection system. Bringing phenomena to students to create puzzlements that invite them to see the unexpected, especially the more sophisticated ones, requires good lab. equipment, space for growing things, surfaces to leave equipment to stand to see what happens over time, running water source, reliable safe heating sources, all in a well-equipped, specialized science classroom.

That MVPCS now has this gorgeous new facility promises teachers and students that science studies will leap forward in wonderful ways.”

The Island is Our Community

A cornerstone of the Charter School's mission has always been to expose the students to the community outside of their classrooms and to bring that community into our classrooms. In fact, a portion of the school's mission statement notes,

*"Within an environment that models interdependence as the foundation of society...
The community will support and interact with the school body."*



To that end, students at the charter school have been encouraged to engage in a huge array of community involvement opportunities. These have included a variety of community service projects that have focused on raising money for local, national and international efforts and every age group has participated in these activities. High School students are required to engage in at least one community service project per year of high school. K-8 students have had weekly classes with artists from our abundantly creative community of artists on Martha's Vineyard. Some 5-8th-grade students and every high school student participates in weekly mentorships with experts in their fields of interest. Poets, reporters, fishermen, lawyers, teachers, business owners, medical professionals, all types of artists, and many, many others have enriched the lives of our students through our thriving mentorship program. Students have been given that eye-opening, mind-expanding glimpse into the world beyond their classrooms, even beyond Martha's Vineyard, through our extensive field trip program. Students have traveled to many parts of the world, from New Orleans to L.A., to NYC and Boston; to Guatemala, Mexico and to Italy and Spain. Thanks to the school's continued commitment to these various programs, our students have been able to experience the many rewards of community involvement, which they will carry with them for the rest of their lives.



In the early 2000s, I was asked by a 16-year-old Charter School student if I would mentor him in aikido, a Japanese martial art in which I hold a black belt. The student had been practicing aikido for a few months at our West Tisbury dojo, but the request came out of the blue. What did he mean by “mentor”? What was the purpose? What were the obligations? The program was new to me at the time, but I felt honored to be asked. I said yes.

Little did I know that this simple request, made casually one afternoon, would lead to a chain of adventures that would be life-changing for both me and my student. Our mentorship evolved into friendship, and our mentorship sessions soon began to include nature hikes and long talks about life and work and the future. I supervised his senior project, a 50-page collection of original poems. I helped him learn to drive and get his license. Together we toured colleges, and went through the arduous process of applying for admission and college aid.

In 2010 my student graduated from Marlboro College with honors, and entered the grown-up working world. He has just turned 30, and is an accomplished landscape painter among other things. He still writes poetry. We still meet for dinner at least once a week, although now we are simply fellow artists and equals. I'm grateful to the Martha's Vineyard Charter School for giving me a lifelong friend through its mentorship program, and for writing a chapter of my life I'll always be proud of!

Dan Waters

MVPCS Board of Trustees Corner: **Notes on the New Director Search**

We are well into a search for a new Director of the Charter School. Earlier this year, following Bob Moore's announcement that he would retire, the Charter School board came to two main points of agreement about how we would go about finding his replacement: 1.) that the search process would involve, in a meaningful way, the full Charter School community and 2.) that we did not have the experience or expertise to handle this search ourselves.

Board member Steve Nierenberg, himself a longtime school head (now retired), reached out to Carney Sandoe & Associates, one of the nation's top education-focused search firms. That led him to Barry Rowland, the firm's expert on charter school director searches (with over 120 searches under his belt). The board then made the decision to sign a contract with Carney Sandoe, with the goal of making an offer to a new director candidate in early 2018.

Late last spring, we convened a search committee comprising parents, teachers, board members, an OIE representative, and community members. At our initial meeting, we group-edited a draft of the job announcement, and also grappled with some of the key issues that would confront us during the search – from the educational values that we should prioritize, to the challenges associated with recruiting both on- and off-Island candidates. Above all, we established a shared commitment to preserving – and nurturing – the unique values and culture of the Charter School.

Over the summer, much of the work of the search fell to Barry Rowland, who reached out directly to a broad range of potential candidates. The early signs were promising, as Barry reported on a high degree of interest in the position.



On Wednesday, October 18, Barry visited the Charter School with another colleague from Carney Sandoe. He convened focus groups with parents, teachers, administrators, and the search committee, with the goal of developing an overall feel for the school, its culture, and its future leadership needs. The excellent turnout for these meetings was a great sign of the community's investment in our search process.

At our search committee meeting with Barry, he laid out a schedule that was both daunting and exciting.

Using the input from his October 18 focus groups, Barry will send the search committee approximately twenty-five candidate dossiers. From this "first cut", we will make a selection of 6-8 semifinalists, each of whom will be invited to a two-hour interview via Skype or conference call with the committee. Following that process, we will whittle down the candidates to (ideally) three finalists. Each finalist will be invited to the school for a day of interviews and Q&A sessions with the community, in January 2018.

We truly hope that everyone who is able to attend these sessions will engage with the candidates, ask tough questions, and share feedback with the committee. The community's involvement is the key to making this search – and the resulting hire – an important step forward in the life of the Charter School.

The Charter School board's goal will be to announce a final decision in late January.

Marc Favreau
MVPCS Board President

From the MVPCS Director



The Martha's Vineyard Public Charter School is well on its way to successfully move through its third decade of serving students and families with the mission of multi-age, child centered learning. This mission is as strong today as it was when the Founders opened the school in 1996. The Founders' dream of a kindergarten through grade 12 progressive school has been realized. The Charter School has over 100 high school graduates and many have gone on to study at college or university.

Teaching and community involvement have been at the core of the Charter School's work. The school has been blessed with outstanding teachers throughout its history who have assisted our students to become engaged local and global citizens. Community service is prevalent throughout our school and the lives of our students, and is a component of the Charter School's Graduation Requirements. The Trustees of the Reservations, The Yard, the MV Museum, Polly Hill Arboretum, the Wampanoag tribe, island writers and poets, and local professionals and businesses have graciously contributed to the project-based, hands-on learning of our students. We are most thankful for the kindness of the island and its contributions to the education of our students.

Project Period, Artists in Residence, Personal Education Plans (PEPs), public school option, international travel, student voice, Morning Meeting, Offerings, Community Congress, School's Pillars and School Rights, and Mentorships have been part of the Charter School's culture from 1996. The Scarecrow Contest, Person of the Day, the annual 8th grade trip to Italy, Grandparents and Special Friends Day, Regional High School Swim Team, Kindergarten, Island Grown Schools collaboration, High School Graduation, Middle School Basketball, Student Showcase Evening, and the ukulele group have become essential parts of the Charter School as we move into 2018. The Charter School began with four trailers in 1996 and now has transitioned to a building of twelve classrooms, two science labs, two art studios, and a media center. Our science labs were the last to open in 2016.



It has been a remarkable journey to date. The student voice continues to be at the core of what we do. The supportive parent, families and island community have been essential to our success. And we are so very grateful for the talented and caring teachers who have been the backbone of the Charter School's success and ability to carry out the Charter School's mission. The Founders spearheaded the Charter School's vision and many others have contributed to bringing that vision to fruition.

We are excited about the future.

Bob Moore

Director



Charter School Tours

When: 9:00 am on Wednesdays in November, December and January.

Please contact the front office to schedule a Wednesday tour.

828-693-9900



The Open House for 2018 Enrollment is scheduled for January 17th at 5:30 PM

Options In Education, Inc.
2017-18 Board of Directors

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As we conclude 2017 and welcome in 2018
please consider us in
your Vineyard charitable giving.
100% of your donation will support actual renovation
and construction costs at The Charter School.
We are committed to maintaining and providing a
healthy, safe, and structurally sound facility.

THANK YOU

Options In Education, Inc
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