

Galapagos Charter School
Interview with Mr. Michael Lane
Interviewers: Rhoda Bernstein and Donalda Ellek

August 5, 2014

1. Does Galapagos have an annual report and who has access to it?

A financial audit is conducted yearly in accordance with Illinois law and the charter contract with the Chicago Public School System. The audit includes much of the information that is usually contained in an annual report and includes information on student performance on the tests. The financial report is published on the CPS and State of Illinois websites. Parents of the students receive a summary of the report.

2. How is Galapagos evaluated and by whom?

Evaluation is done by CPS in accordance with the charter contract. The assessment is the CPS School Quality Rating Policy (SQRP) and the NWEA (Northwest Evaluation Centers) Measures of Academic Performance (MAP). The Galapagos Board has 6 members: 2 former Galapagos staff; an accountant; a "charter school person" and "a few others". The Board oversees school strategic matters, not operations; and has responsibility for hiring and firing the director.

3. What programming does Galapagos offer that is more beneficial than that of traditional public schools?

G-Core program: a tutoring and mentoring program that is provided throughout the school year to every middle school, 7th and 8th grade child. Other students may request G-Core tutoring, as needed. G-Core provides social and emotional support as well as academic tutoring. The G-Core program is similar to the Teach for America program. College graduates are given intensive summer training to prepare them to provide tutoring to inner city students on a one-on-one basis or in a small group setting. They make a one year commitment and receive a small stipend, health insurance, and a place to live.

ART (Academic Recovery Time) program: students who fail an exam may request additional tutoring with the objective of analyzing the reasons the student failed the test and preparing the student to re-take the test.

4. In what way are parents expected or required to participate in the school or in their children's educations?

Orientation meeting. Quarterly academic conferences. Food for Thought program which is an optional lecture series on specific topics for parents throughout the school year. Parents may observe classes within the bounds of specific parameters.

5. Does Galapagos have a specific code of conduct? Attendance policy? Please share handbook with us.

Yes there is a written policy. The handbook is currently under revision.