

FACTS ABOUT SILVER HILL HORACE MANN CHARTER SCHOOL

Massachusetts has two types of Charter Schools – Commonwealth Charters and Horace Mann Charters. Commonwealth Charters are the type currently being addressed in the November 8th ballot question. Silver Hill is a Horace Mann Charter School, and they operate quite differently from Commonwealth Charters. We will NOT be impacted by the vote on Question 2. There are only nine Horace Mann Charter Schools in Massachusetts, with Silver Hill being the largest. The process to begin a Horace Mann Charter School is extensive, and rigorous annual site visits ensure that we remain in compliance with all Department of Elementary and Secondary Education mandates.

The premise of all Charter schools, as stated in the DESE Website, is:

To provide independently run public schools that do not charge tuition and are open to everyone. They are based on the basic premise of increased autonomy in exchange for greater accountability—and have the freedom to lengthen their school day and year, establish their own educational culture, hire and fire teachers for performance and in some cases (not Horace Manns) tie teacher pay to performance. If charter schools do not demonstrate significant student achievement during the five years for which they are chartered, they can and will be closed.

Authorized by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts' Education Reform Act of 1993, charter schools are independent public schools that operate under five year charters granted by the Commonwealth's Board of Elementary and Secondary Education. The increased freedom available to charter schools coupled with increased accountability, infuses all aspects of the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education's oversight of charter schools, beginning with the rigorous application process that groups must go through to receive a charter. Once the Board of Elementary and Secondary Education has awarded a charter, the new charter school has the freedom to organize around a core mission, curriculum, theme, or teaching method. It is allowed to control its own budget and hire (and fire) teachers and staff. In return for this freedom, a charter school must demonstrate good results within five years or risk losing its charter. <http://www.doe.mass.edu/charter/>

Unlike Commonwealth charters, which operate independently of local school districts, Horace Mann charters are schools that are created with the approval of the local school committee and the teachers' union. Horace Mann teachers are members of the local collective bargaining unit and are paid according to the district scale. Silver Hill teachers, custodians, clerks, ESPs, and Administration are HEA Union members, and pay union dues.

Currently Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School has neither control over its own budget, nor the ability to hire (and fire) teachers and staff. We operate under a Memorandum of Understanding between the SHHMCS and the School Committee. We have accepted many teacher transfers from Haverhill Public Schools. Our evaluation process is the MA Educator Evaluation Model for Inclusive Practices, a 2014 revision of the MA Educator Evaluation Framework which promotes evidence-based best practices for inclusion following the principles

of Universal Design for Learning, Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS), and Social and Emotional Learning.

The following are facts to help you gain increased insight into our Mission and Key Design Elements. Our Annual Report must be posted on our web site once it is approved by the Commissioner of Education. The year 2014-2015 is available, and 2015-2016 is currently being reviewed by the DESE Charter Board, and once approved by Commissioner Chester will be posted for the public. The Annual Report is the Charter equivalent to an extensive School Improvement Plan, which is a mandate for all public schools. We also receive annual site visits from the Department of Education to ensure that we are making progress to complete all criteria for Charter renewal.

Mission and Key Design Elements

Silver Hill's mission is based on three guiding principles: educational and social support for the whole child; continuous growth in teaching methodology; and community involvement is integral to student success.

1. **Educational and Social Support for the Whole Child:** The school recognizes each child has unique gifts and strengths and deserves a rich, authentic, and meaningful learning experience, which is accomplished by providing Core Competencies, Social-Emotional Competencies, and Enrichment Competencies.
2. **Continuous growth in teaching methodology:** High quality practitioners will learn along with their colleagues and students, engage in meaningful dialogue, and reflect on their practices in order to improve instruction.
3. **Community involvement is integral to student success:** The school recognizes the importance of family and community to learning. As a Title 1 school, we have active parent involvement. We emphasize equal access to education and establish high standards and accountability, by providing each child with fair and equal opportunities to achieve an exceptional education.

Fact:

Until the 2015-2016 school year, Silver Hill had the largest student enrollment of Haverhill Public elementary schools. With the construction of the new Hunking, there was some enrollment restructuring, and Bradford Elementary's numbers increased. As a Charter, our enrollment is capped at 580 students. Our class sizes are 18 in kindergarten (without the Educational Support Personnel provided to other HPS), and the average class size for the remainder of the grades is the following: 23 per class in grade 1; 24 per class in grade 2; and 25-26 in grades 3, 4 and 5.

Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School must have a Recruitment and Retention Plan, revised annually, to maintain a percentage of High Risk students (Economically Disadvantaged, English Language Learners, and Special Education) equivalent to like schools. The designated schools are chosen by DESE, and this information is available on the DOE CHART website. The information currently posted is outdated and provides the October 2015 SIMS data. With active

recruitment over the last two years, our June 2016 data showed increases in all of the High Risk categories (Special education, English Language Learners, Economically Disadvantaged).

We actively recruit for all of these demographics, and welcome and encourage all Haverhill families to apply to our lottery. We currently have seven languages spoken in our school. (English, Spanish, Greek, Swahili, Bengali, Arabic, Mandarin) Because all children must enter our Charter through a lottery, it is “luck of the draw” which demographics are selected. Our lottery is supervised by people not affiliated with our School, and the Haverhill Public School’s IT Department manages the lottery systems data input and oversees the actual lottery drawing. This year, with the help of City Councilman Andy Vargas, who is also on our Board of Trustees to assist us in recruiting and welcoming the Latino community, we had a 91% increase in the number of Latino children who applied to our lottery. We realize that at 4% (22 students) the number of ELL students is lower than in other HPS’s, however historically Level 1 and 2 ELL students did not attend Silver Hill due to the school not having a Beginner program staffed with appropriate personnel. This year we have five Level 3 children, and we are hopeful that with continued extensive recruitment activities we will achieve our goal to house a Beginner ELL program with children who have entered our school through the lottery process. We are members of the Mount Washington Alliance, and are optimistic about those community outreach opportunities.

With the exception of one teacher who will be retiring this year, 100% of our classroom teachers have taken the RETELL SEI class, and are certified to teach our ELL students, providing appropriate differentiation for these children.

Our special education percentage as of the **June 2016** student data entry is 18% (103 students). This is the same percentage as some other Haverhill Public Schools. Our Special Education population is comprised of the following disabilities:

- Autism
- Communication
- Intellectual
- Neurological
- Hearing Impaired
- Emotional
- Developmental Delay
- Health
- Specific Learning Disability

As a full inclusionary school, we welcome our special education students into all general education programs, and are continuously expanding and improving our special education programs. Unlike the other HPS, we are not provided with staffing for “integrated classrooms”. Our staff stays current with special education instructional practices and takes a variety of courses. This summer, two teachers attended the Landmark School Outreach program to learn more about best instructional practices for children with dyslexia, and two other teachers took the class *Instructional Practices Children with Behavior Disorders*. This professional development was fully funded with Silver Hill grant money. Our Reading Specialist took *Understanding Dyslexia*, 3 credit graduate course, at her own expense.

We are a Title 1 school, and our percentage of Economically Disadvantaged students as of **June 2016** is 40% (231 students).

We are the only free, all day kindergarten in Haverhill, and accept 90 new kindergarteners every year, with a waitlist.

We are primarily a neighborhood school, and 74% of our “graduating” fifth graders are now attending Consentino. Another 4% whose neighborhood school is Consentino will instead be attending a special education program in another HPS.

As part of our Charter Accountability Plan, our teachers must receive professional development every year. This is extensive, and is separate from Haverhill Public Schools. As part of our Shared Leadership model, the teachers choose this professional development through data driven discussions after careful analysis of intended student outcomes. All of our professional development is funded through grants written and managed by Silver Hill administration. The following is a comparison of HPS grant funding with SHMCS for FY17.

	Title 1	Title IIA	240 – IDEA – Special Education Entitlement Grant
Haverhill Public	1,986,793.00	325,554.00	2,304,201.00
Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School	105,463.00	21,225.00	126,954.00

Silver Hill is not included in the use of Haverhill Public School’s Title 1 funding. During the 2016-2017 school year, 3 teachers, 1 ESP, and a .5 Title 1 Parent/Community Liaison will be funded through Silver Hill grant money. As noted throughout last year’s budget session to determine the FY17 budget, Silver Hill receives a lower per pupil spending than other Haverhill Public Schools. Our families are Haverhill residents who pay the same tax rate as all other Haverhill residents.

As a Charter school, Silver Hill has operating costs not covered by Haverhill Public Schools. This includes approximately \$10,000 for an annual audit, \$6000 for a book keeper/business manager, and \$7500 to have our student and staff data and demographics entered into the Department of Education data base. These operating costs must be raised through fundraising efforts.

As a Charter School, we are required to provide initiatives to Haverhill Public Schools. Silver Hill funds the professional development, and in some cases, the materials for these initiatives.

All of our teachers must be Highly Qualified. 92% of our instructional staff holds Masters degrees. Both Administrators have Advanced Graduate Studies in Educational Leadership.

We believe in giving back to the community. As part of our Accountability Plan, all grade levels complete Community Service Projects, and we have several all school projects. We have a vegetable garden with seeds planted by our second graders, assisted by the Bradford Grange, and this summer one of our families diligently kept it watered and made weekly deliveries to the Sacred Hearts Food Pantry. Once a month we house the Boston Food Bank Brown Bag project for the elderly who live in the Washington Street neighborhood, and our fifth grade Student Council members act as volunteers to put the bags together. We hold a school wide coin/can drive each year to assist Emmaus House over the holidays. We donate food and blankets to the local SPCA. We assist in the spring clean up of Winnekenni, with parents, children, and staff raking and picking up litter, and hold all school Earth Day clean up, which includes cleaning the paths to the surrounding neighborhoods and the surrounding playing fields. Our students participated in collecting money for "Heavenly Hats" when everyone wore a hat for \$1.00 and all money went to a children's cancer foundation. Our Title 1 Summer School students made Thank You cards for the school resources officers who assist with the summer program and Grade 3 Junior Police. We are fortunate to have Consentino School as our neighbor, and welcome them to our Field Day events. Last year when their library was destroyed by fire, several of our grade 5 students coordinated a fundraiser to assist with raising money to purchase computers and collected new and gently used books to donate to Consentino's new library. This summer the Haverhill DARE program used our gym and cafeteria while Consentino was under construction. The administrators of the two schools work collaboratively, and during the June Coffee with the Principal at Silver Hill, the three Consentino administrators provide a very informative Q/A session for our fifth grade parents/guardians to help with the transition to middle school. We even share a float in the Santa Parade!

I hope that this fact sheet dispels many Haverhill residents thinking that Silver Hill Horace Mann Charter School is an elite and selective charter school. We value our urban public school diversity and community spirit as we provide excellence in education to a wide variety of Haverhill children.