



NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER ON  
**CHARTER  
SCHOOL**  
FINANCE & GOVERNANCE

# PROMISING PRACTICE PROFILE

## Tapping Federal Programs to Fund Tutoring Programs

MATCH Charter Public High School, Boston, Massachusetts

**SUMMARY** Many charter schools across the nation serve high-risk students who need academic interventions to raise their achievement levels. One popular approach among charter schools is to create supplemental programs that provide students with additional assistance in core subject areas. Creating and operating these types of programs, however, requires extra resources. In this promising practice profile, the National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance highlights MATCH Charter Public High School's strategy of tapping two widely available federal programs—AmeriCorps and work-study programs—to find personnel and funding for its tutoring programs that provide intensive academic support for students in Boston, Massachusetts.

### Promising Practice in:

- Charter School Finance
- Charter School Governance

### Implemented by:

- State Policymaker
- Charter Authorizer
- Charter Operator
- Other

### Inside:

- Implementation Details
- Impact
- Lessons Learned
- Additional Comments
- Useful Resources
- Contact Information

**BACKGROUND** The mission of MATCH Charter Public High School is to reverse underachievement among inner-city students and prepare them to succeed in college and beyond. More than 70 percent of the student body is from low-income households, and most students entering the school have failed their eighth-grade math and English state exams. To raise achievement levels in core subject areas and develop students who not only can compete but also excel in college classrooms, MATCH requires a rigorous college-preparatory curriculum. All freshmen and sophomores take five classes and also have one hour of supervised silent reading every day. Juniors take five classes, including a mandatory Advanced Placement (AP) course in U.S. history. Seniors have a full academic load, including between one and three AP courses, and they must also pass two Boston University courses.

MATCH also offers extensive support in the forms of tutoring, homework lab, after-school help, and staff availability during out-of-school time to help students with the challenging curriculum and build the foundations they need for future success. The charter high school's tutoring programs are an integral part of its educational model. MATCH has created two separate tutoring programs, both of which create opportunities for high-quality tutoring characterized by frequent, sustained, and one-on-one learning interactions.

- **MATCH Corps**—Every MATCH student receives two hours of tailored, one-on-one tutoring every day. Each student is assigned one tutor to work with during the entire school year. Tutors are recent college graduates who are employed full time by the charter high school. They individually tutor students in 9th and 10th grades in mathematics and English and 11th and 12th graders in AP classes and college courses. Tutors also serve as teaching assistants or perform administrative tasks and research, as needed.
- **Work-Study Tutoring**—The work-study tutoring program operates during the weekends and summer months. Tutors are undergraduate students receiving work-study financial aid from local colleges and universities who provide 100 hours of tutoring per year and, in some cases, an additional 100 hours in the summer. Each year, 50 tutors are hired to work with 10th graders on weekends, when the MATCH sophomores receive four hours of one-on-one tutoring in math, English, and biology in preparation for the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) state graduation tests. In the summer, tutors work with the returning students who have failed school-year core classes as well as with all incoming freshmen.

## IMPLEMENTATION DETAILS

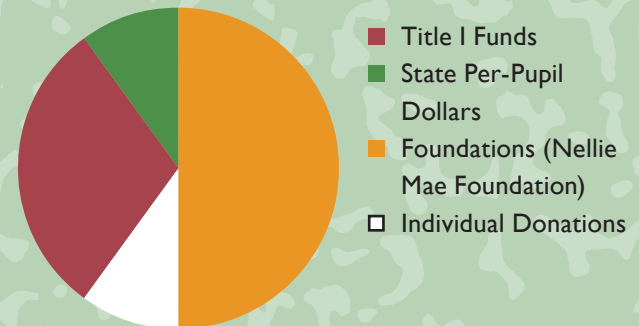
MATCH successfully established its tutoring programs by tapping two federal funding sources. The charter high school also has developed partnerships with area colleges and universities and other community supporters.

### MATCH Corps

MATCH founded this tutoring program in 2004 to increase state graduation test scores, increase the number and passing rate of students taking AP exams, and reduce the transfer/attrition rate by having more students do their homework and find academic success. A 2003 pilot program assigned 12 ninth-grade students to a group designated to receive an extra tutor and other similar ninth-grade grade students to a control group. When the pilot proved very effective in achieving the desired results, MATCH decided to fully develop the MATCH Corps program for all students.

MATCH Corps is supported by the federal AmeriCorps program, which provides grants to public and nonprofit organizations to engage AmeriCorps members

### Operating Funds for the MATCH Corps Program



in service to help meet critical community needs in health, education, public safety, and the environment. Local programs design service activities for a team of members serving full time or part time for up to one year. Local programs also are responsible for recruiting, selecting, and supervising AmeriCorps members to serve in the programs.

MATCH has designed its MATCH Corps tutoring program as a one-year urban fellowship program for recent college graduates. Each year, the charter high school employs 45 to 50 full-time tutors, 25 of whom are AmeriCorps members. AmeriCorps-sponsored tutors receive a \$900 monthly stipend and a \$4,000 educational award at the end of their service. These tutors are provided with residential housing at a minimal cost in the school's building as well as health insurance at no cost and neighborhood meal discounts.

In 2004, MATCH applied for funding from the Corporation for National and Community Service and received a \$309,000 AmeriCorps grant to help fund this initiative. The grant was renewed in 2007 for an additional three years. AmeriCorps volunteers make up about half of MATCH Corps tutors, and the AmeriCorps grant pays about half of the total salary costs for the tutors and the MATCH Corps director (see "Operating Funds for the MATCH Corps Program").

MATCH also needed to raise the funds to convert the top floor of the school building into a dormitory to house the MATCH Corps tutors. Within six months, MATCH raised 75 percent of the funds, or \$750,000, from individual donors through networking, direct mail solicitation, and an annual fundraising gala. The other 25 percent of funds came from the Akamai Foundation and a large

anonymous charitable foundation; subsequent funding has included grants from the Staples Foundation and the Noyce Foundation.

## Work-Study Tutoring

MATCH's weekend and summer tutoring program takes advantage of the availability of high-quality, low-cost tutors in the community. When federal law changed in 2000 to require that a minimum of 7 percent of all federal work-study funds be allocated to students working in community-based, off-campus jobs—with a target of 20 percent—MATCH saw an opportunity to use students from the 66 colleges and universities in the Boston area as tutors for its students.

MATCH first approached the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) to start a tutoring program using the university's work-study students. MATCH and MIT reached an agreement that involved hiring 100 MIT students as tutors, with each tutor completing 100 hours of tutoring in his or her first year. MIT determined that federal work-study funds would pay 90 percent of each tutor's salary at \$17 per hour and MATCH would pay 10 percent, or \$1.70 per hour. The arrangement proved immensely beneficial to both parties. MIT was fulfilling its grant requirements to allocate its work-study money toward community-based, off-campus jobs, and MATCH was gaining some of the nation's best and brightest college students to tutor at minimal expense.

### Cost-Sharing Arrangement for MATCH's Work-Study Tutoring Program

The cost-sharing arrangement for MATCH's work-study tutors is negotiated with each college or university partner. Following is the current share of costs paid by each partnering institution.

- Massachusetts Institute of Technology—90 percent
- Harvard University—90 percent
- Boston College—75 percent
- Northeastern University—75 percent
- Tufts University—75 percent
- Boston University—50 percent

MATCH has since expanded its work-study program, now in its seventh year, to include six local colleges and

universities and approximately 150 tutors annually. The charter high school works with each institution's job placement office to negotiate the cost-sharing arrangement and recruit students for the tutoring program (see "Cost-Sharing Arrangement for MATCH's Work-Study Tutoring Program"). In addition to the federal work-study funds that its university partners provide, MATCH supports the work-study tutoring program with funds from Title I, state per-pupil dollars, and private grants and donations. The charter high school employs a part-time staff person to oversee tutors for the school-year work-study program; a full-time staff person manages the summer program. Salaries for these staff had been paid out of funds received from the Nellie Mae Foundation until the grant ended in 2007.

## IMPACT

MATCH's use of work-study students as tutors has enabled the charter high school to establish, fund, and expand its tutoring services at a greatly reduced cost. Through the work-study program, MATCH pays only a fraction of these tutors' salaries, with the rest paid by the federal work-study program and the students' respective higher education institution. Since MATCH began recruiting tutors from MIT in 2002, it has expanded the program to six neighboring colleges and universities. Accordingly, this growth has enabled the charter high school to expand the grades and subjects in which its students receive tutoring.

Likewise, MATCH's success in using the AmeriCorps program has enabled the charter high school to bring in a key source of funds to develop and fund its MATCH Corps tutoring program. Securing this base of funds has also enabled the school to leverage these funds with additional contributions from foundations and individuals. For example, MATCH Corps attracted the interest of several venture capitalists who were drawn to the pilot program's promising results.

Establishing ongoing relationships with the AmeriCorps program and surrounding colleges and universities has brought benefits for MATCH well beyond funding. For example, Boston University allows MATCH students to audit undergraduate classes for free, offers the use of its gymnasium three times per week, and provides space for graduation ceremonies. The relationships also facilitate the process of recruiting and hiring tutors. MATCH easily recruits from a talented and diverse pool of college students who are lured to the charter high school by the flexible hours

and desirable compensation and who are referred by fellow students or alumni of their institution who have served as tutors. Furthermore, MATCH credits the tutoring experience it offers with guiding numerous tutors into careers in urban education they had not previously contemplated.

“With university partnerships and federal work-study funding, there’s no reason this can’t happen everywhere.”

—Alan Safran, executive director, MATCH Charter Public High School, *The New York Times*, August 9, 2002

## LESSONS LEARNED

MATCH’s model of partnering with higher education institutions and organizations to access resources for tutoring relies on all partners recognizing the mutual benefits of and interests in doing so. These include placing highly qualified work-study students in a challenging and rewarding work environment, negotiating wage payments based on each organization’s ability to pay and its operational budget, and incentives that encourage university partners and college-educated tutors to participate.

## Implementation Challenges

MATCH faced numerous challenges in developing partnerships with universities and raising funds to develop its tutoring programs. One issue the charter high school encountered in trying to establish partnerships with colleges and universities for the work-study tutoring program was that these institutions have caps on dollar amounts that can be distributed to off-campus work-study partners. Moreover, because colleges and universities only pay a certain percentage of work-study students’ wages, MATCH needed to assess how much it could afford to provide to cover the rest.

Another challenge in developing partnerships was how to effectively engage colleges and universities and provide incentives for them to buy into the tutoring program. MATCH addressed this challenge by effectively communicating the purpose of the program and ensuring its accountability, for example, through two-way tutor-student evaluations, while providing publicity incentives to its partners. Universities in the Boston area were struggling to expand their reach in many low-income and minority communities. Through press articles detailing their partnerships with an

inner-city charter school tutoring initiative, MATCH was able to enhance the institutions’ community image.

In addition, undergraduate tutors require considerable training and oversight. Over the years, MATCH honed its training and ultimately published a guide useful to any school interested in providing training for effective urban tutors. Links to several national and local press articles, as well as the tutoring guide, can be found in the Useful Resources section below.

## Keys to Success

MATCH’s partnerships with local colleges and universities, as well as its ability to raise funds from multiple sources in the community, are the keys to the continuing success and growth of its tutoring programs. School officials devote significant time and resources to these efforts (see “Strategies Underlying MATCH’s Recruitment Campaign”). The executive director spends approximately 20 percent time of his time on development.

### Strategies Underlying MATCH’s Recruitment Campaign

To attract highly qualified undergraduate students, MATCH’s recruitment campaign includes six main strategies:

- posting jobs online and in work-study books in college career offices;
- distributing fliers on campuses;
- conducting information sessions on campuses;
- enlisting former tutors to recruit new tutors;
- developing a solid working relationship with work-study directors; and
- placing advertisements in college newspapers.

MATCH’s trustees are well connected in the community and have the credibility to attract attention and sponsors to the project. For example, they were able to help with developing relationships with Boston University and the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and with fundraising for MATCH Corps.

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

MATCH’s tutoring programs have received national

attention in numerous media publications. The charter high school also was featured as one of the eight top-performing charter high schools in the nation by the U.S. Department of Education in 2006 and named one of the 53 National Charter Schools of the Year in May 2007 by the Center for Education Reform.

Although it is difficult to isolate the impact on student achievement of the tutoring programs relative to other factors, including teacher quality and curriculum refinements, MATCH attributes its staggering results in student achievement to the effective and relentless relationships that form the basis for teaching and tutoring. Some encouraging signs that MATCH students benefit from the individual academic attention tutoring provides are these.

- Before the MATCH Corps program was introduced, MATCH had about six students taking AP exams. In 2006, more than 50 AP exams were taken, with the passing rate improving from 14 percent in 2005 to 29 percent in 2006. In 2007, 84 AP exams were taken, with an average passing rate of 21 percent. The passing rate for MATCH students in the calculus exams (AB and BC exams) has exceeded 75 percent each year.
- In 2005, 2006, and 2007, MATCH students made significant gains in English and math proficiency rates for the MCAS state exams.

## USEFUL RESOURCES

- AmeriCorps Program: <http://www.americorps.org/>.
- Work-study programs: <http://fsa4counselors.ed.gov/clcf/workstudy.html>.
- Aucoin, Don. "Afterschool Specialists—These Tutors Give a Boost to Students' Grades and to Themselves." *Boston Globe*, 17 April 2006. <http://www.matcheschool.org/about/articles/globe-04-17-06.htm>.

- Clowes, George A. "MATCH School Shows Poverty Isn't Destiny." *School Reform News*, 1 October 2003. <http://www.heartland.org/Article.cfm?artId=12948>.
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- Goldstein, Michael. "The 'No Excuses' High School Tutor: Tutoring Teenagers in High Poverty Schools." MATCH, 2005. [http://www.matcheschool.org/publications/Tutor\\_Guide\\_2006.pdf](http://www.matcheschool.org/publications/Tutor_Guide_2006.pdf).
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- Zezima, Katie. "Where's a Tutor When You Need One? Check Upstairs." *The New York Times*, 21 December 2005. [http://www.matcheschool.org/about/articles/nytimes\\_12-21-05.pdf](http://www.matcheschool.org/about/articles/nytimes_12-21-05.pdf).

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This Profile is one in a series highlighting promising practices in charter school finance and governance implemented by state policymakers, charter authorizers, and charter operators across the country. This Profile was written by The Finance Project for the National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance (NRC). Promising practices are selected from nominations received by the NRC on the basis of innovativeness, evidence of positive impact, and potential for transferability and usefulness. The NRC has not conducted program evaluations of the initiatives profiled and does not endorse particular policies, practices, or programs. For more information on this Profile, please contact The Finance Project at (202) 628-4200.

The contents of this Profile were developed under a grant from the Department of Education (Grant No. U282N060012). However, those contents do not necessarily represent the policy of the Department of Education and you should not assume endorsement by the Federal government.

To nominate a promising practice for inclusion in this series, go to <http://www.charterresource.org/promising/nomination.asp>.