



annual Report 2003

L A B C H A R T E R S C H O O L

C O N S E R V A T O R Y

Making Minds *Sing*



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From the Chairman of the Board

This, our fourth year of operation, has been a watershed year for the Conservatory Lab Charter School. In 2003, the CLCS was fully operational with six grades (K-5) and 120 students. Most importantly, we graduated our first class of fifth graders.

In September the school year began in a new, more permanent home in Brighton. An old parochial school, with big airy classrooms, an auditorium, a park nearby and lots of parking, the new space brought a renewed sense of commitment and energy to the school's community. This was particularly true as finding and securing a 'permanent' home had been a priority of the Board and of the school's leadership since the beginning and there had been moments when all of us had despaired that we would ever find appropriate space. I don't think any of us realized how important the move would be in terms of building a permanent 'community of learners' or that it would allow that community to become so much more productive and effective.

Besides the move, 2003 saw a continued commitment to building excellence. For CLCS excellence has meant: strong governance; a continuing student achievement; a more fully implemented and effective academic/music/Learning through Music curriculum and program; excellence in leadership and teaching; clarity around the commitment to research and replication; and successful fundraising. The school made significant progress in each of these areas. In particular, funding from the Mifflin Fund enabled the CLCS to work with a team from the Executive Service Corps to clarify the roles and responsibilities of both the board and of the school's leadership. It also helped the school strengthen its fundraising capacity through training and software development and to continue dialogue with the New England Conservatory of Music around the parameters of partnership. Working collaboratively with faculty and leadership, the Learning through Music Coordinator and a new Director of Academic Curriculum provided the concrete guidance, support, and professional development necessary around the integration of Learning through Music and academic disciplines. The result was significant in terms of building a strong infrastructure to support student achievement, more effective teaching, development of the Learning through Music curriculum, and progress toward a well-documented, replicable program. Continuing to build excellence in each of these areas remains a primary focus of the board.

The CLCS will seek charter renewal next year and the school has been preparing for its review by the Massachusetts Department of Education for the past year. Part of the renewal process requires developing a plan for what CLCS intends to accomplish over the period of its next five-year charter. Much of what the school will seek to accomplish continues to strengthen areas that are already priorities: academic achievement, governance, leadership, and curricular and programmatic excellence. In addition, a new Board committee is bringing a fresh focus to the questions of future research and the implications of the school's commitment to replication. The recommendations coming from that committee will have far reaching implications for the future of the school and for its unique "Learning through Music" approach to teaching and learning.

Finally, if fund raising is one measure of our success, then our track record over the last year must speak for itself. Last fall the board voted to undertake a three year, three million dollar capital campaign. As of June 30, we had raised almost one million dollars in gifts and pledges.

Congratulations to all. We couldn't have done it without each and every member of the team.

Katharine M. Pell
Chairman, Board of Trustees
July 3, 2003

Executive Summary

The Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS) is a public school in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston serving, in 2002/03, 120 children in grades K-5 from throughout the city. The school was founded in 1998 on the premise that music can provide a universal language of learning for all children and seeks to test the conclusions of a growing body of research that suggests that achievement in reading, math, and social studies is enhanced by the study of music. Students are selected in a random, open lottery without the expectation for either academic or musical ability. Currently, there are about 250 children on our waiting lists.

Since music is fundamentally interdisciplinary, the CLCS encourages high levels of achievement across a curriculum that fuses academic subjects and social/emotional development with musical studies. Children explore math, science, social studies, and language arts through musical projects. Teachers implement projects using those concepts that are shared between music and academic subjects to reinforce learning and to build Learning Through Music lessons that explore and experiment with the many ways music stimulates and increases learning. Processes intrinsic to learning music – listening, questioning, creating, performing and reflecting – are used to enhance intellectual curiosity and the love of learning.

The CLCS is also committed, as a laboratory, to building a Learning Through Music curriculum model that will be replicable in other schools. Through its founding partnership with New England Conservatory and its Research Center for Learning Through Music, and by joining in other strategic partnerships, the CLCS is building a long-term vision for how to have a lasting impact on the use of the arts in public education.

Mission Statement

The CLCS will engage all children by using the Learning Through Music curriculum model to ensure every child's academic, artistic, creative, and social success, as validated by qualitative and quantitative measures.

Learning Through Music

The CLCS is committed to building a strong, public elementary school to serve children from the City of Boston. The curriculum model at the CLCS has evolved by organizing developmentally appropriate learning activities and integrating these activities with music into lesson plans and interdisciplinary projects. Curriculum planning is also closely aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and internally developed scopes and sequences for each grade by subject area, including music. Curriculum development is done in the context of two primary operating principles. The first principle is that of five fundamental processes which serve as core values for

teaching and learning in music and academic subjects. These processes are: the ability to listen and make distinctions; to question or formulate and investigate significant questions; to create, or invent, multiple solutions to programs; to perform and interpret information accurately and fairly; and to reflect, personalizing learning by making learning relevant to one's daily life and community.

The second guiding principle is that of shared fundamental concepts. Planning and implementation make conscious use of fundamental concepts shared among disciplines to strengthen learning across the curriculum. For example, learning in math and music is enhanced through the study of fundamental concepts shared between these two subject areas, such as patterns, ratios, and measurement. Similarly, interdisciplinary lessons grounded in the fundamental concepts shared between English language arts and music, such as story elements, description, and compositional structure, reinforce both areas of study. Teachers write lesson plans that explicitly name the shared fundamental concepts being explored and reinforced for students. The school is building a closely aligned body of lesson plans that can be implemented and adapted across the school to further support student achievement.

The ethos of the school that follows from these core values is one of respect for each other, respect for the multiple abilities of children from administrators and teachers, and a highly supportive environment where encouragement is offered for maximum learning and achievement. Teachers and students alike are expected to be learners, and teachers are committed to continuing their own professional development as they encourage children to become life-long learners.

In addition to the integration of music into academic lessons, the school is also developing a comprehensive music program, teaching children to sing, play recorder, read music, compose, and use solfege. Every child attends music class each day and starting in first grade, all children study the violin. The CLCS believes that just as music can support academic achievement, music can also have a powerful impact on social/emotional development. Since every child is required to participate in group violin classes, semi-private lessons, and to practice at home, children learn self-discipline and the meaning of being part of a group. The simple act of taking a bow together after a performance is a strong lesson in support of building a sense of community.

The CLCS is also committed to building a curriculum model that can be widely disseminated to other public schools. Through a comprehensive process of developing this model in close alignment with the Massachusetts Frameworks, the school is creating materials that are accessible to others and support these universal curriculum requirements. Planning is currently underway on how best to disseminate these best practices to others.

Assessment and Accountability

Internal Assessments

The school uses two types of school-wide internal assessments to track student progress: Essential Skills Tests (ESTs) and the evaluation of Student Exemplary Work Portfolios.

Essential Skills Tests in English language arts and mathematics are internally developed pre/post tests that assess the mastery of material outlined in the CLCS scope and sequence documents which are based on the Massachusetts State Curriculum Frameworks. They also incorporate the Learning Through Music model under development at the school. The Music Essential Skills test is based on the CLCS Music scope and sequence and tests musical literacy (reading, performing, listening, and reflective thinking about music). These tests are administered three times each year in September, December, and June. The tests are used as a source for report card ratings supplied to the parents in December and June of every academic year. They also serve as a resource for determining need for special education review, tutoring services and grade level promotion.

Every student at the CLCS also creates an Exemplary Work Portfolio during each school year. Students and teachers choose work samples that are considered exemplary because they demonstrate a particularly high level of skill mastery or may demonstrate improvement throughout the school year. At the end of the school year, each teacher, child, and parent reflects on the overall content of the portfolio and the growth it demonstrates. In the fifth grade students present their portfolios to a panel of adjudicators made up of school staff, board members, and outside reviewers. Our portfolios are an excellent way to assess student learning, progress over time, and to demonstrate that curricular objectives have been met.

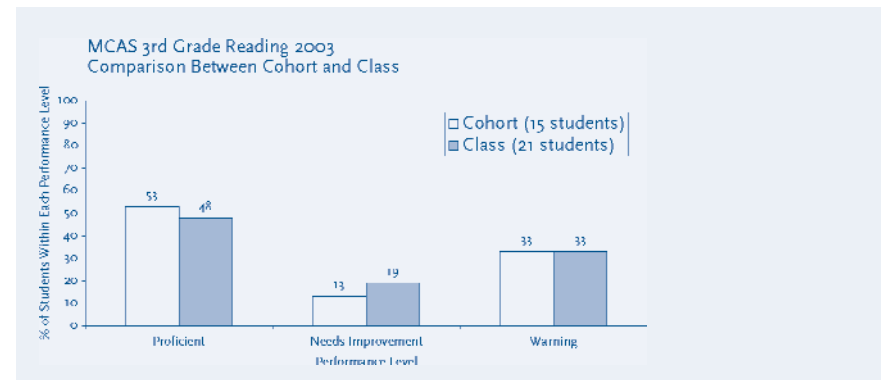
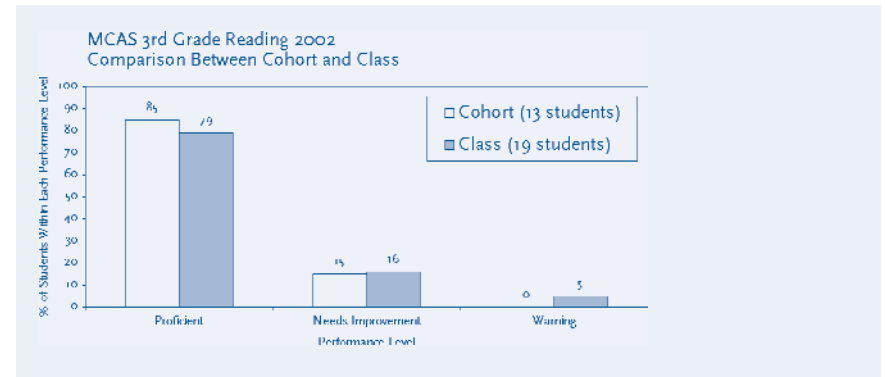
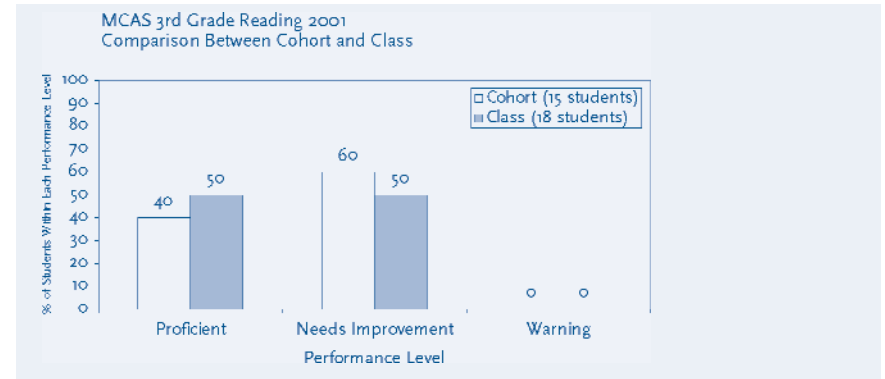
External Assessment & Accountability

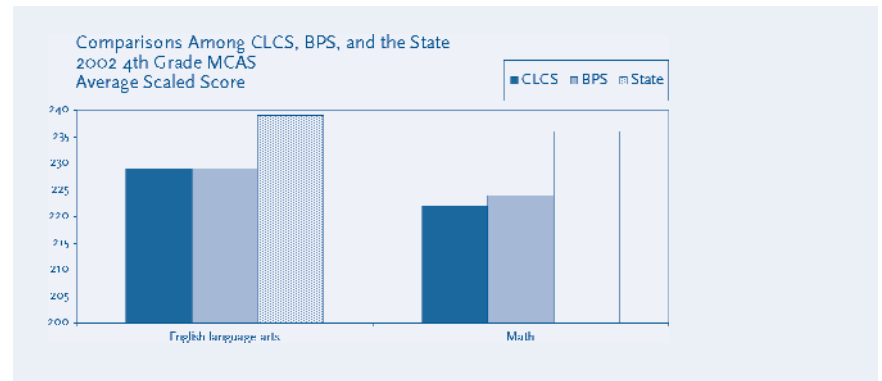
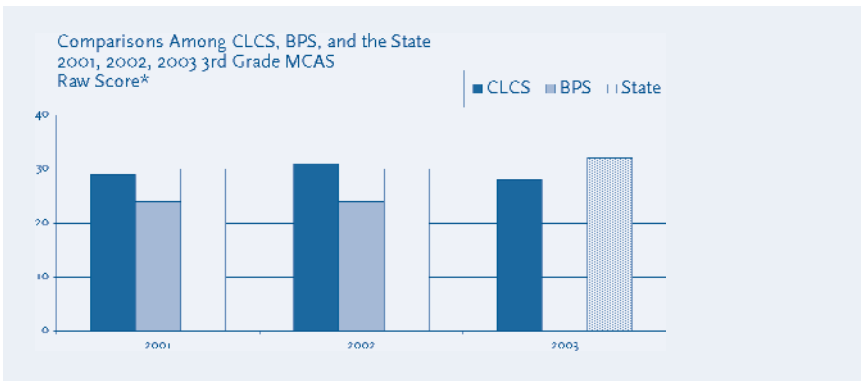
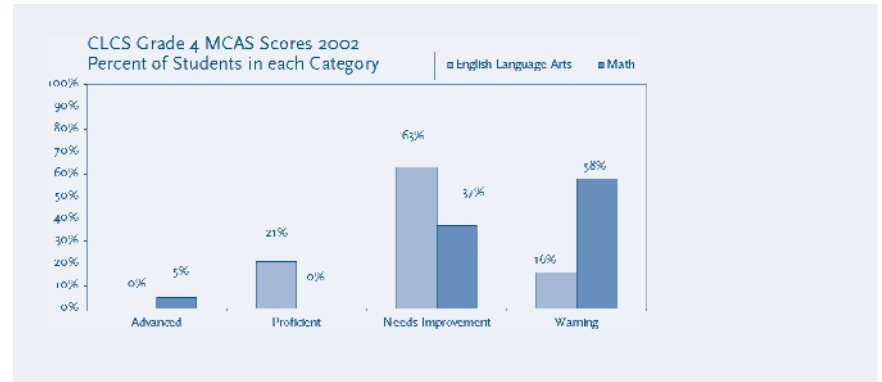
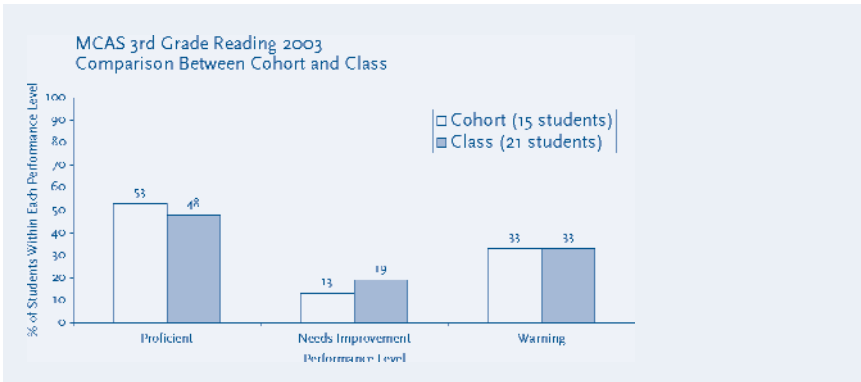
Two forms of external assessment are used at the CLCS: the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and the Stanford Tests of Academic Achievement. The MCAS is a state mandated test designed to measure individual student achievement against a state standard. The Stanford 9 is a nationally normed test that we use as an internal benchmark of student success.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

The goal for English Language Arts is that all students will become proficient in the use of the English language. According to our Accountability Plan, this goal will be demonstrated on the Grade 3 MCAS reading test by 80% of all students who enter the CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade achieving a rating of proficient. In addition, using average scaled scores, our grade 3 MCAS scores will exceed those of Boston Public School students at the same grade level. As shown in the data display below, we met our goal of exceeding the Boston Public school average scaled scores in both 2001 and 2002. However, despite an initial gain between 2001 and 2002, the number of students scoring proficient dropped between 2002 and 2003. It is important to note, however, that in 2003, of the four children who received scores of

needs improvement, two were within one point of receiving a proficient rating. The data is analyzed in cohort groups which are defined as the group of children who started attending the school by September of second grade or earlier. Class indicates the total group of students who took the test in a given year, regardless of when they started school at the CLCS.



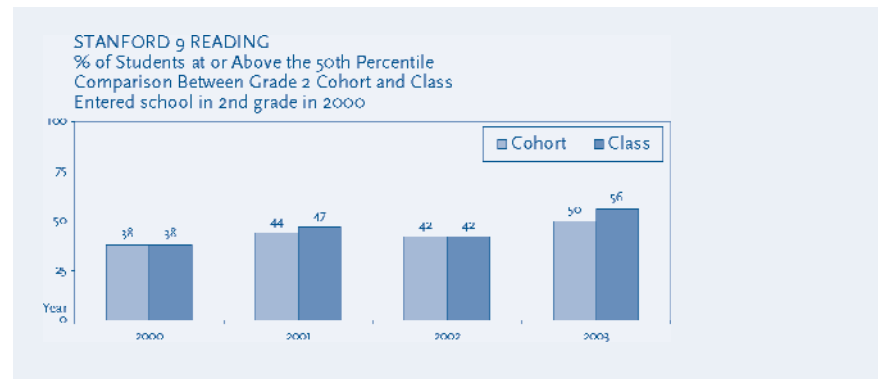


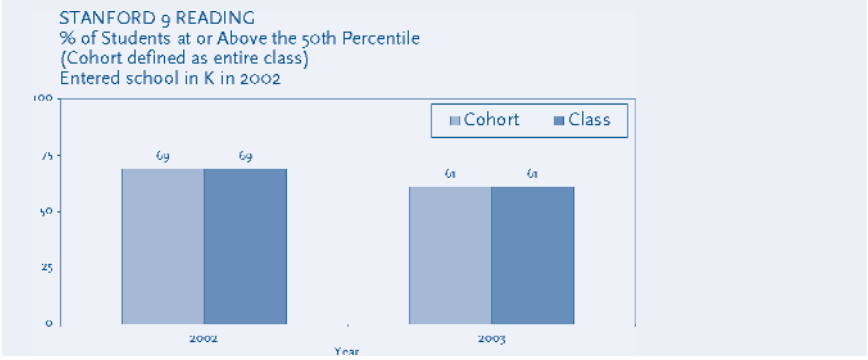
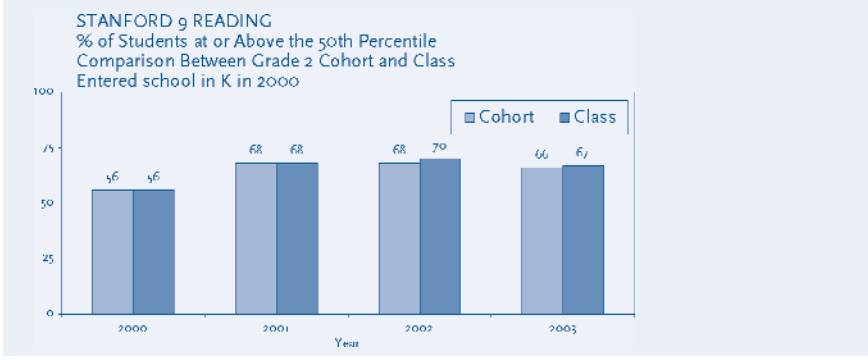
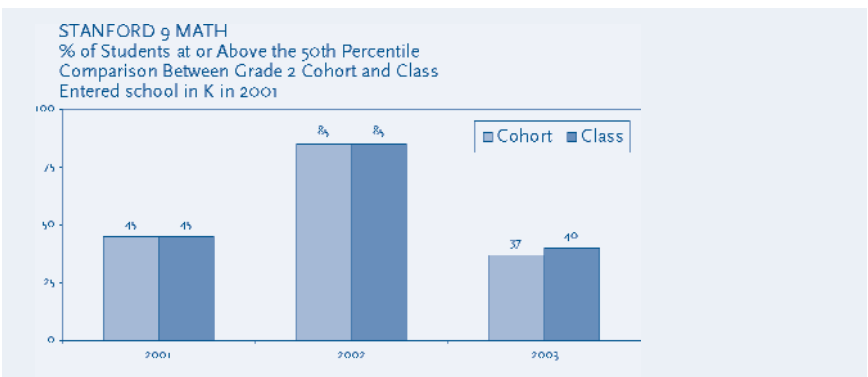
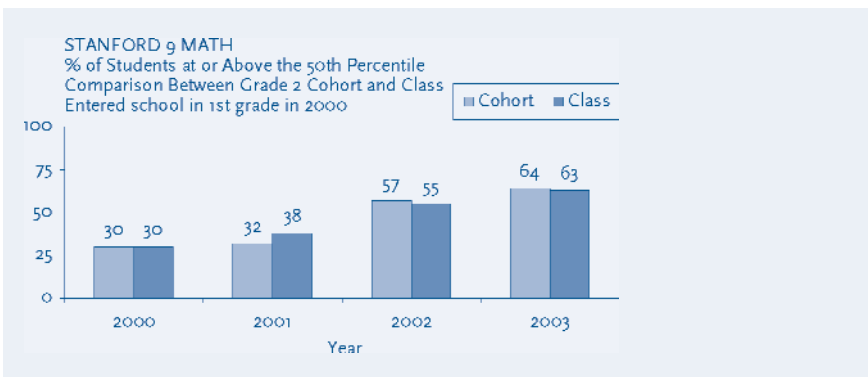
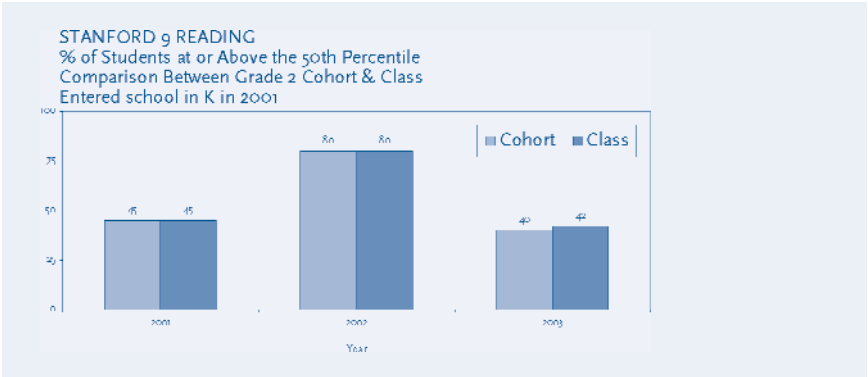
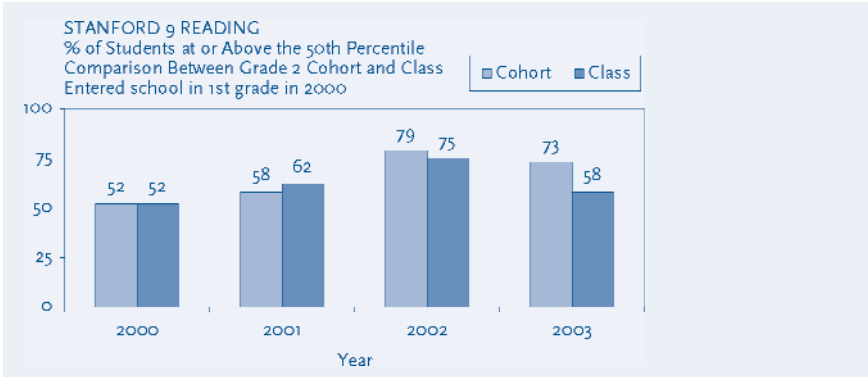
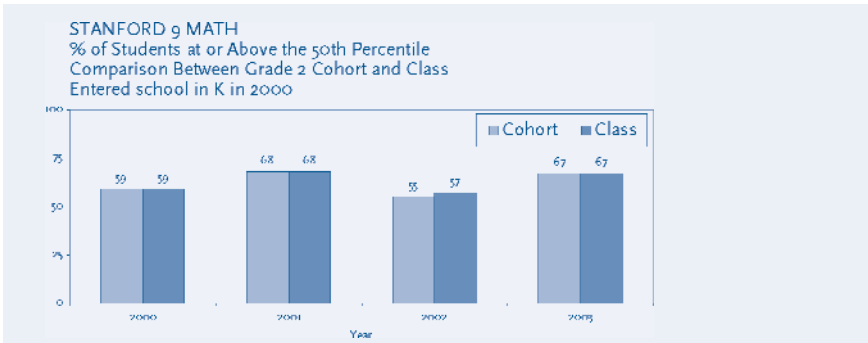
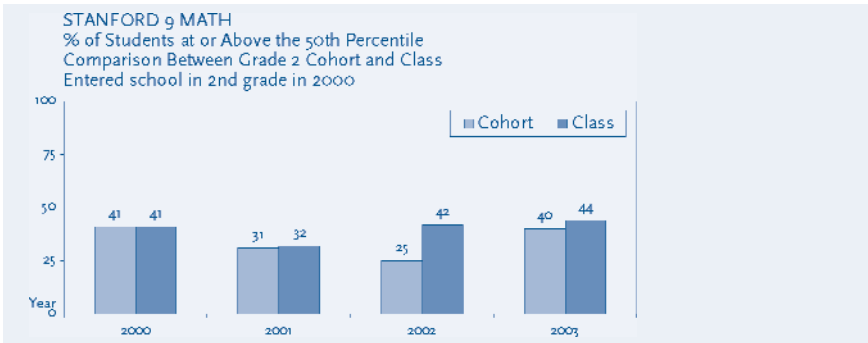
*2003 Boston Public Schools data was not available when this report went to print. The state raw score for 2003 is an estimate based on initial data.

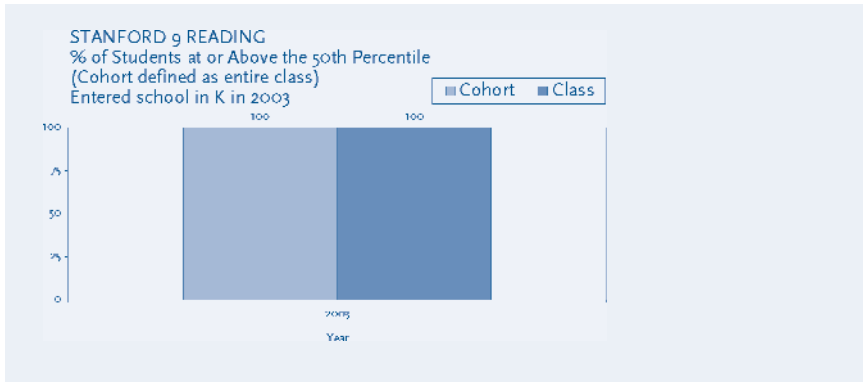
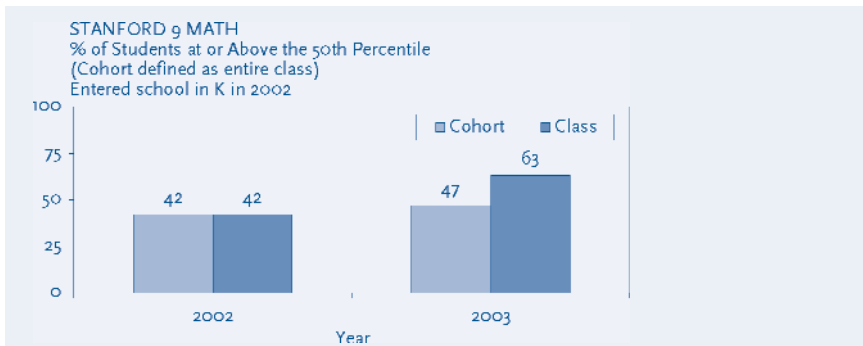
An additional goal stated in our Accountability Plan is that all students who enter the CLCS in or before September of the 2nd grade will achieve a rating of proficient or advanced on the 4th grade mathematics MCAS and that using average scaled scores, the grade 4 scores will exceed those of the Boston Public Schools. Our 2002 MCAS scores demonstrate that we have not reached either of these goals. A systematic analysis of the 2002 MCAS exam demonstrated specific areas of weakness. These areas were addressed during the school year throughout the school. In addition, the class that received these scores received intensive math instruction to help strengthen their skills. Internal benchmarks demonstrate that the 2003, 4th grade MCAS scores (unavailable at time of publication) should demonstrate improvement when compared with the previous year's results.

Stanford 9 Tests

The data below shows that we are making steady progress to our Accountability Plan goal that 80% of all CLCS students who enter the school before or by the beginning of grade two (the cohort group) will achieve a score of proficient (50th percentile score or above) in total reading. With several exceptions, all cohorts have shown improvement from their initial test in their first year in the school through the spring test of 2003.







Literacy Challenge Program

This year marked the beginning of the Literacy Challenge (LC) Program. The LC program is designed to identify those students performing in the lowest 10% of the school and in some cases to serve as a pre-referral process for special education. Students are referred to the Literacy Challenge program by their classroom teachers. Once referred, students are reviewed by a team that examines the areas of concern, the student’s Exemplary Work Portfolio, and Essential Skills Tests in English language arts, math, and music. Children are then ranked by need and provided with appropriate services in reading, math, music, and Learning Through Music. Student placement is reviewed every six weeks. At the end of each six week cycle a child is either phased out of the program because he/she has made adequate and appropriate progress, returned for another six week cycle, or referred to special education.

It is our belief that all students can succeed with early intervention and increased support. One of the primary goals of this program is to give children who require it a boost in order to catch up with their grade level peers.

Ongoing Development

The past year has been one of growth and development at the CLCS. In addition to the implementation of Exemplary Work Portfolios, the Literacy Challenge program, and a developing Learning Through Music Curriculum, teachers have become more reflective and are anxious to do more work with scoring rubrics and portfolios in their classrooms over the coming school year. Our social studies and science curriculums have been aligned with the state frameworks and will be implemented in September 2003.

Research and Replication

The CLCS charter, curriculum frameworks, overall assessment practices, and Accountability Plan have been designed to produce a fully accountable and replicable Learning Through Music program. As the school approaches the charter renewal process, the research agenda stemming from the unique mission of the school has been defined as proceeding in four steps:

Step One: Provide evidence that the CLCS has established a replicable Learning Through Music (LTM) program.

Step Two: Provide documentation of the process and resources provided that led to the establishment of the LTM Program at the CLCS.

Step Three: Provide evidence of the impact of the LTM Program on student achievement.

Step Four: Provide evidence that the CLCS Learning Through Music program has been disseminated to other school communities.

Partnerships

The Conservatory Lab Charter School has an ongoing partnership with the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) and its Research Center for Learning Through Music. The Research Center has provided the means for sharing the work that is being done at the CLCS and for performance opportunities with other schools and with students at NEC. The partnership also enabled the Metropolitan Opera Guild, Creating Original Opera project to provide training for the Learning Through Music Coordinator, who worked with the fifth grade students and their teachers to create an original opera. The Metropolitan Opera Guild also provided a choral teacher who directed a chorus in the extended day program. The Research Center provided several interns who helped in music classes, and created the composition performed by CLCS students with the NEC orchestra in Jordan Hall.

Harvard University's Harmony Program provided several tutors as did Harvard University's Phillips Brooks House. The CLCS also participates in the Project for School Innovation, which offered programs in parental involvement, support for principals, and portfolio assessment.

Staff & Students

Staff

Total teaching staff: 20.3; 19.3 teachers; 1 Aide. Highly qualified: 17
Experience, lead & associate classroom teachers: combined total of 49 years;
lead teachers: 34 years total/5.7 years average; associate teachers: 15 total/2.5 years average
Student/classroom teacher ratio: 10/1
Classroom teacher years of service at the CLCS: lead: 16 total; associate: 9 total
Turnover: 4 full or part-time associates at the end of the year;
to become lead teachers

Student Information

120 students – grades Kindergarten through 5
58 (45%) African American, 31 (26%) Caucasian, 26 (22%) Hispanic, 5 (4%) Asian American
62 (52%) Female, 58 (48%) Male
58% qualify for federal free and reduced lunch programs

Special Education: 37 (31%) of total; 23 (19%) 502.2; 14 (12%) 504
Limited English Proficiency: 7, 6%
Linguistic Minorities: 24 (20%)

Promotion Policy

Students are promoted as they meet two of the three standards:

Report card scores of 3.0 out of 5.0 or higher (based on Essential Skills Tests) in all subjects and social/emotional development;
Completion of sufficient work, demonstrated in student portfolios, to show minimum CLCS standards in all subjects and social/emotional development;
Evidence of minimum level performance on all administered standardized tests.

Suspensions/Expulsions

In-school/8; out-of-school/12; no expulsions

2002/03 Applications and Lottery

<i>Grade</i>	K	1	2	3	4	5
Allston	0	0	1	0	0	0
Boston	9	0	2	0	0	0
Brighton	1	0	2	0	0	0
Charlestown	0	0	0	0	0	0
Dorchester	31	7	11	5	4	3
East Boston	1	0	0	0	1	0
Hyde Park	4	4	1	0	1	0
Jamaica Plain	11	0	0	0	0	0
Mattapan	3	1	1	1	0	1
Roslindale	3	1	0	0	0	0
Roxbury	8	1	1	1	0	0
South Boston	0	10	3	3	0	1
West Roxbury	1	0	0	0	0	0
Neighborhood Total	72	24	22	10	6	5
Boston Total	139					
<i>Out of Boston</i>						
Arlington	1		1			
Chestnut Hill	1					
Total	2	0	1	0	0	0

Openings for lottery: 22-Kindergarten; 3-fifth grade

Ratio of applications to openings: 5.68

School year student turnover: 5 changed schools

End of year student turnover: 14: 4 moved; 3 changed schools; 7 enrolled in middle schools starting in 5th grade

267 students on Wait List: 50-Kindergarten; 47 first grade; 78 second grade; 67 third grade; 25 fourth grade

Finance

Balance Sheet*

<i>Assets</i>	
Cash	199,352
Grants and other receivables	8,916
Prepaid expenses	17,798
Fixed assets	155,693
Total	\$381,758
<i>Liabilities</i>	
Accrued payroll	46,603
Total	46,603
<i>Fund Equity</i>	
Fund balances	149,265
Undesignated	30,197
Investment in general fixed assets	155,693
Total	335,155
Total liabilities and fund equity	\$381,758

*unaudited statement due to Annual Report deadline

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures*

	FY03 Actual	FY04 Budget
<i>Revenue</i>		
Per pupil income	\$1,133,224	\$1,682,272
Federal/State meal reimbursement	33,925	34,474
Federal grants	80,797	78,689
State grants	15,087	15,087
Fundraising	412,338	375,000
Parent reimbursements (meals, etc)	5,718	5,000
Total	\$1,681,089	\$1,682,272
<i>Expenditures</i>		
Instructional staff	771,517	756,959
Administrative staff	377,847	394,233
Payroll taxes	44,390	51,747
Benefits	75,249	88,683
Non-salary compensation	54,360	43,000
Subtotal	\$ 1,323,363	\$ 1,334,622
Rent/mortgage/utilities	138,454	149,950
Maintenance	38,304	45,319
Insurance	2,481	3,000
Subtotal	\$ 179,239	\$ 198,269
Classroom materials/supplies	20,921	21,000
Classroom technology/activities	9,100	5,800
Music/art equipment & supplies	17,862	20,100
Subtotal	\$ 47,883	\$ 46,900
Business services	19,021	10,000
Marketing & Development	22,769	10,000
Staff recruiting	2,912	3,500
Office supplies/technology	19,141	19,000
Program and staff development	39,230	12,500
Food service	40,172	49,000
Subtotal	\$ 143,245	\$ 104,000
Total	\$ 1,693,730	\$ 1,683,791

*unaudited statement due to Annual Report deadline

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Seth and Beth Klarman
David Larcombe and
Sandra Carrillo
David and Susie
Lawrence
Thomas Lemaire
Carla Lynton
Peter and Betsy Madsen
Deborah Meier
Kyra Montagu
Mary Newman
Geoffrey Nunes
Anne and Joseph
Pellegrino
Edward and Margaret
Phillips
Harold I. Pratt
Bernard and Susan
Pucker
Robert Radloff
Dusty and Susan Reeder
Masami Stampf
James L. Terry
Nicholas and Joan
Thorndike
Sally and Peter Wilde

Other

Abner Baez
Shawn and Lesley Cooper
Margaret Dunn
Sam Fisk
Edward and Ellen
Frechette
Katherine Hakim
Priscilla Hindmarsh
Anne Howarth
Joseph S. and Sara C.
Junkin
Margaret Moody
Eli and Carolyn
Newberger
Elise and Jack Rockart
Sara Scholtens
Mary Fran and Tom
Townsend

Thank you, Thank you!

Special thanks to the Parent Organization for selling cookie dough, wrapping paper, scholastic books, and for organizing a spring fair. Through their efforts, almost \$5,000 was raised this year for the school. Thanks also to Codman Farm, who donated fertilized chicken eggs for the Kindergarten and first grade classrooms to hatch in their incubators. Fleet Celebrity Series made it possible for violinist Gil Shaham to perform at the CLCS. The Berklee School of Music's Urban Outreach program also brought a jazz band to perform for the students. Thank you to the Patriot's Trail Girl Scout Council and Audrey Desmaris and Amanda Hamel for our first Girl Scout Troop.

A number of individuals and agencies helped us to keep our students healthy. Margaret Reid and The Boston Health Commission provided equipment and referrals for children, Ann Dix of Boston University, helped coordinate hearing screenings for CLCS students, vision screening was done by the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, the New England School of Optometry, and Drs. Stacey Lyons and Barry Barresi. Thanks also to the New England Aquarium Education Department for the Aquarium Camp and Heather Deschenes, Camp Supervisor for the Harbor Discoveries Program.

Travel for Educational Enrichment

This year our students were fortunate to travel to town and country, to many different places: Blue Hills Reservation; Boston Globe; Boston Lyric Opera/Shubert Theater; Freedom Trail; Marino Lookout Farm; Museum of Fine Arts; Museum of Science; and the New England Aquarium. They hiked, picked apples, looked at fish and aquatic life, learned about newspapers, theatre, science, and art, and had a wonderful time making discoveries outside the boundaries of CLCS.

Volunteers and Visiting Artists

Thank you to all those volunteers who helped in the classrooms, wrote compositions and poems or performed for our students, or supported the overall growth and development of the children in this school.

Rahel Abraham
Deborah Beale
Julia Cadrain
Amanda Capone
Julia Scott Carey
Sarah Charness
Mikki Cloud
Charles Coe
Girl Scouts
Barbara Glauber
Susan Halby
Robert L. Hall
Ellen Lee

Steven Leonard
Kim Marshall
Corinne Morini
Kelly Perlick
Ross Popoff
Lisa Quay
Gil Shaham
Emilie Steele
Kokoe Tanaka
Jennifer Turner



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Learning Through Music
Coordinator

Catherine Crosley
Director of Academic
Curriculum

Jacqueline Goggin
Director of Development

David Larcombe
Business Manager

Anne Howarth
Executive Assistant

Najya Mawasi
Administrative Assistant

Andrew Graham
Data Assistant

Margaret Moody
Nurse

Kindergarten
Caryn Claar
Erin Reynolds

First Grade
Beth Bronstein
Sandra Carrillo

Second Grade
Margaret Dunn
Alicia Osborn

Third Grade
Ivy Ali-Salaam
Kimon Kirk

Fourth Grade
Sara Scholtens
Amy Soffer

Grade Five
Elizabeth Borne
Adam Clark

Classroom Music
Abner Baez
Katherine Hakim

Violin
Deborah Greenebaum
Masami Stampf

Art
Sivan Burkstein

Computer Lab
Paul Lipson

Physical Education
Emily Saul

Reading Specialist
Kerri Schaub

Language Specialist
Sandra Carrillo

Special Education
Jennifer Cohen
Craig Keefe
Koskia Lara

Speech Therapy
Elisabeth Gilbert

Occupational Therapy
Catherine Tetzlaff

Extended Day
Matthew Gore
Helga Stutts
Tomoko Turner



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