

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



Annual Report 2004

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

Dear Friends,

I cannot help but feel a tremendous sense of satisfaction each spring as the school year winds down and we begin to take stock of what has been accomplished during the course of the year. Every time I walk through the doors of the Conservatory Lab Charter School, I am moved by the difference that the opportunity for a good education makes in the lives of these inner city children. I am particularly moved by the growing sense of self-confidence that I see in our students, fostered by the performance expectations that are integral to this school. Every day and in every classroom, children are composing, playing, and performing music in conjunction with rigorous academics. This is what we see, but behind the scenes other issues, including renewal of our charter and leadership define our capacity to achieve our vision and unique mission.

This last year, the fifth operational year of our original charter, was a time for celebration and a marking of our growth as a school. In February, our charter as a public school was renewed by the Department of Education for another five years. Much of the first six months of this academic year was focused on preparing for the school's on-site renewal evaluation by the Department of Education. The review was intensive and covered every aspect of the school, from curriculum and the quality of classroom teaching to governance and finance. On the basis of that review, the school was recommended for re-chartering, and the Department of Education formally approved the renewal of our charter at the end of February.

This year has been a time of transition in other ways as well. Mary Street, one of the founders of the school and first the Administrative Head and the Executive Director who planned the school's opening, recruited our first classes, moved the school into its current light filled, old fashioned school rooms, and ensured that the school made the progress needed to meet the state's renewal criteria, told us that she had decided to leave at the end of the school year. She had accomplished the goals that she had set for herself, and it was time for her to hand the reigns to another leader. We thank Mary for everything she has helped CLCS achieve and we wish her well. With the help of a dedicated search committee, including members of the board of trustees, one member of the faculty and two parents, CLCS hired a new head of school, Jonathan Rappaport. He will start at the beginning of the 2004-05 school year. Rappaport is a musician and an educator, experienced in urban education and excited by the challenges of CLCS: a job he has always dreamt of. We are lucky to have him, and we all look forward to working with Rappaport during this next, important phase of the school's growth.

As in years past, the focus of the school continues to be building excellence and realizing our vision of an exemplary public school for Learning Through Music--a school dedicated to research and to a program that can be replicated by others.

To the CLCS community and our supporters, thank you all for everything you have done to make this year a success.

Katharine M. Pell
Chairman, Board of Trustees
July 15, 2004

Executive Summary

The Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS) is a public school in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston serving, in 2003/04, 132 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 hopes to test the conclusions of a growing body of research suggesting 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 the CLCS waiting lists.

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 these projects using the 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. The CLCS is working to build a long-term vision that will 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/emotional 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 aligned with the Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks and internally developed scopes and sequences and curriculum maps 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 signif-

icant questions; to create, or invent, multiple solutions to problems; 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 standards are high and support is given 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 developing a comprehensive music program, teaching children to sing, play recorder, read music, compose, and use solfege. Every child attends general 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 also has 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.

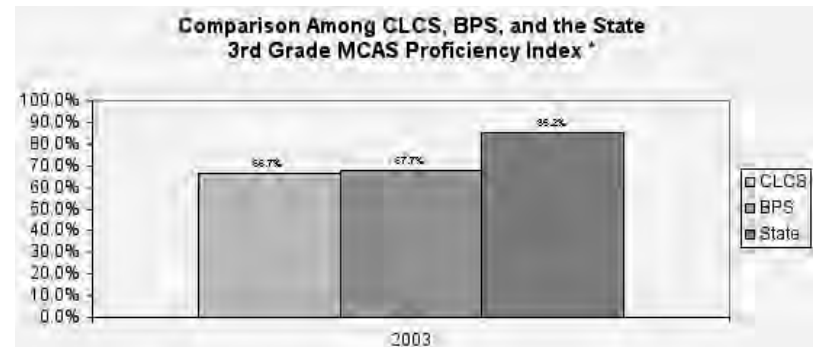
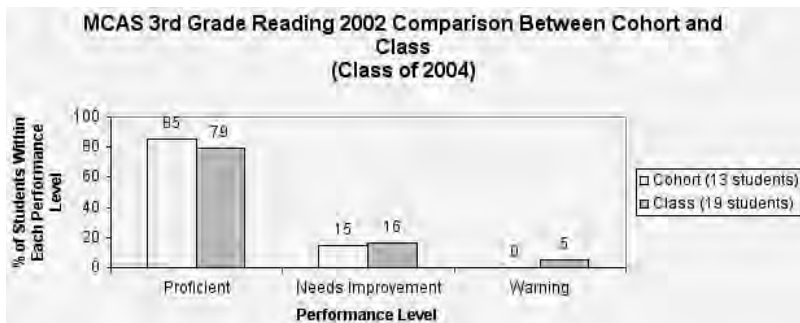
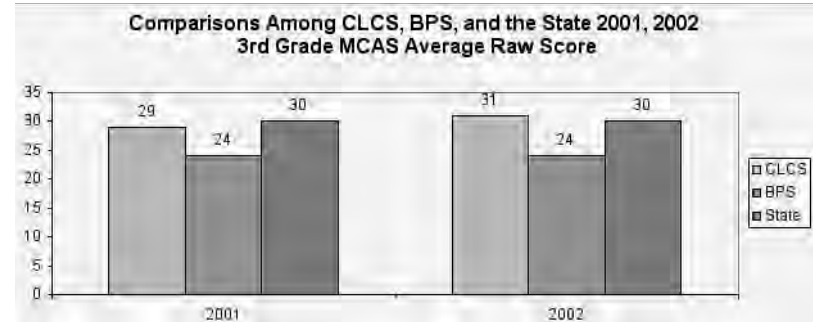
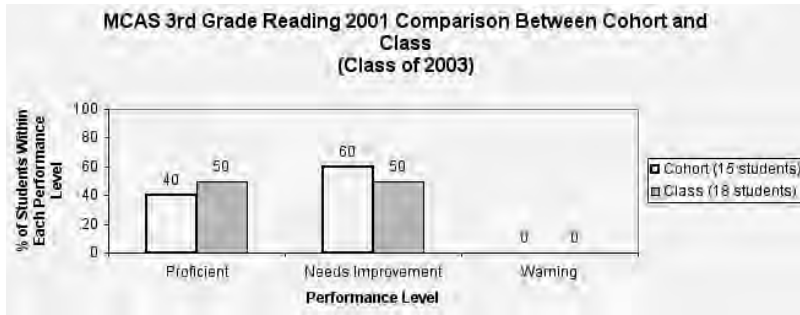
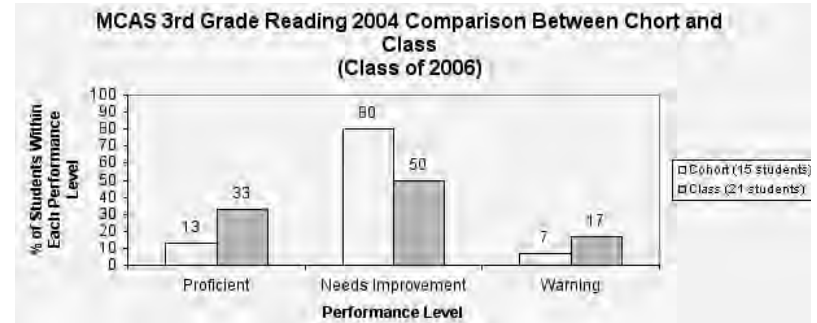
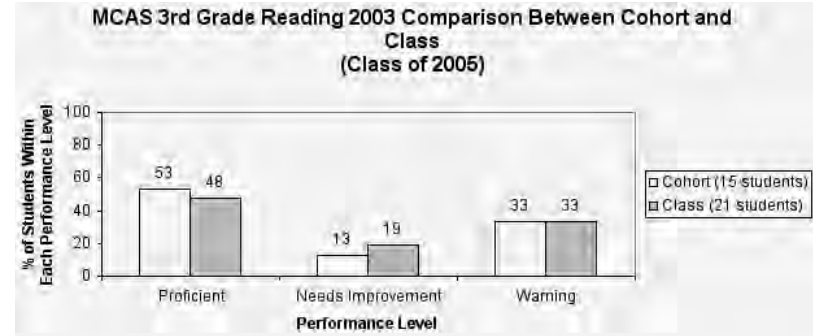
The CLCS is also committed to building a curriculum model that can be widely disseminated to other public schools. Through a comprehensive process of developing this model in close alignment with the Massachusetts Frameworks, the school is creating materials that are accessible to others and support these statewide curriculum requirements. In 2003-04, CLCS teachers and administrators presented exemplary practices at the Massachusetts Music Educators Conference and at the Massachusetts Charter School Association Convention.

External Assessment & Accountability

Two forms of external assessment are used at the CLCS: the Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System (MCAS) and the Stanford 9 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 used as an internal benchmark of student success.

Massachusetts Comprehensive Assessment System

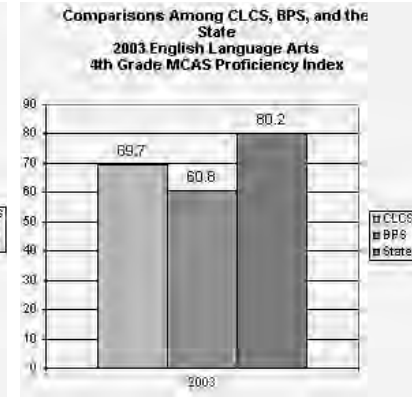
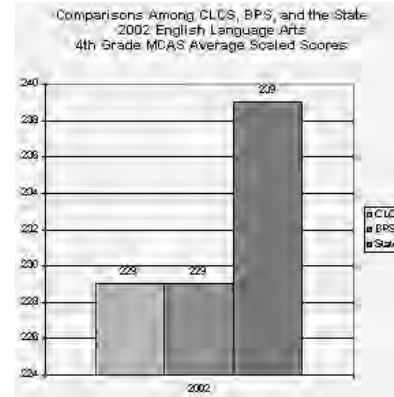
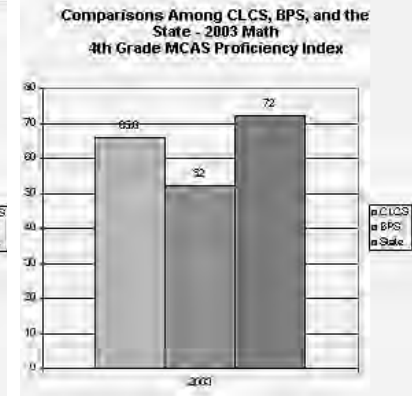
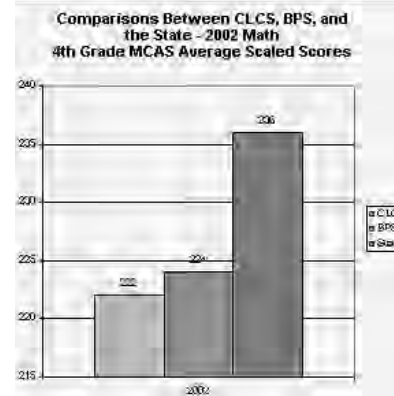
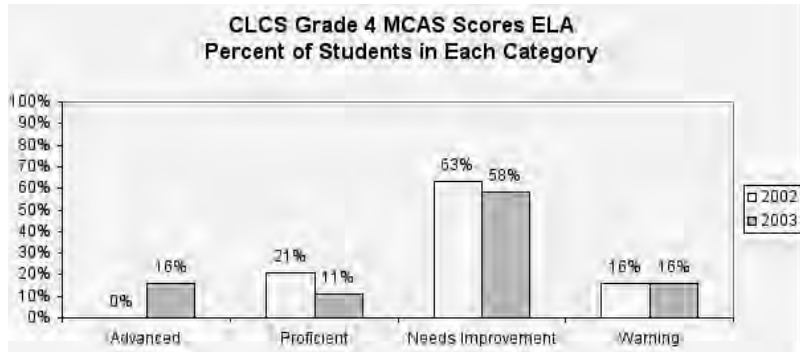
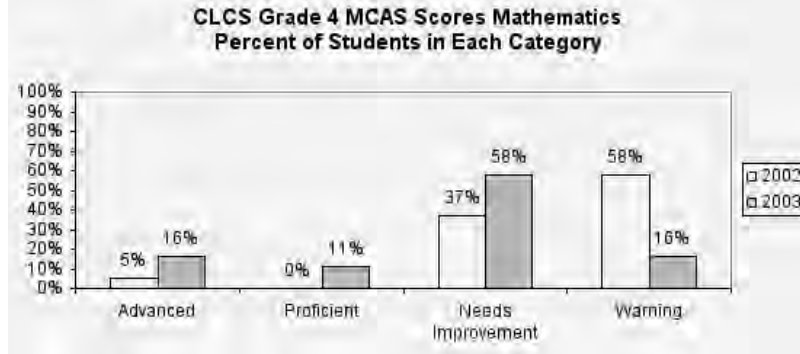
As stated in the CLCS accountability plan, one factor used to measure the progress of CLCS students are MCAS scores. Our English language arts goal is for 80% of all students who enter the CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade to achieve a rating of proficient on the grade 3 MCAS reading test. In 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. In 2004 we were within one point of the Boston Public Schools' proficiency index (in 2004 the State began using a proficiency index rather than an average scaled score). However, despite an initial gain between 2001 and 2002, the number of students scoring proficient dropped between 2002 and 2003. In 2004 a significant percentage of students moved from warning into the needs improvement category (it is important to remember that these scores measure the proficiency of two different groups of students.) 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 at the CLCS.



As the data above shows, we exceeded the Boston Public Schools in 2001 and 2002; in 2003 our proficiency index was within one point of the Boston Public Schools.

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 and English language arts MCAS and that using average scaled scores, the grade 4 scores will exceed those of the Boston Public Schools. As the following data shows, our students are making steady improvement in math. Our warning rate has dropped, while we have seen an increase in the needs improvement category. In English language arts, we have shown an increase in the percentage of students in proficient versus warning. In 2002, 5% of our children received an advanced or proficient in mathematics. In 2003, 27% of our students received an advanced or proficient score. In 2002, 21% of our children received an advanced or proficient in English language arts. In 2003, 27% of our students received an advanced or proficient score.

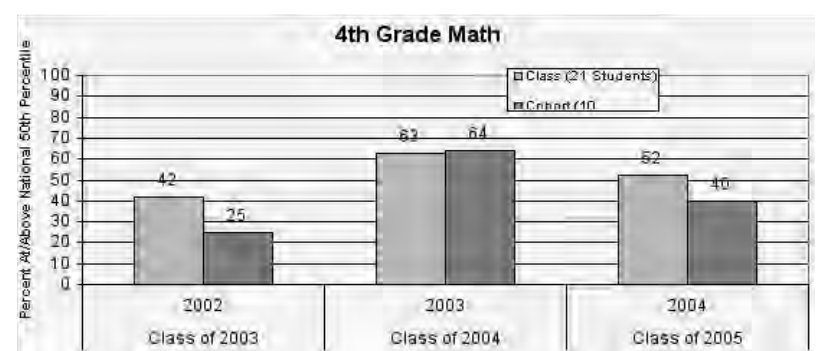
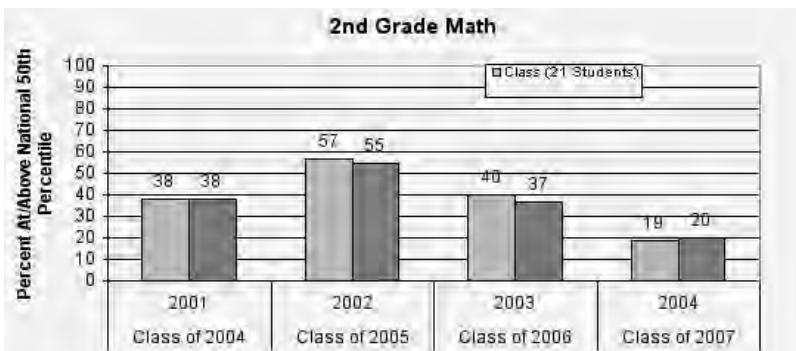
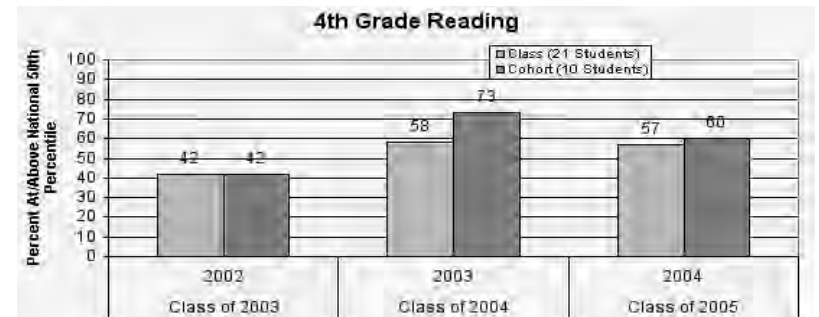
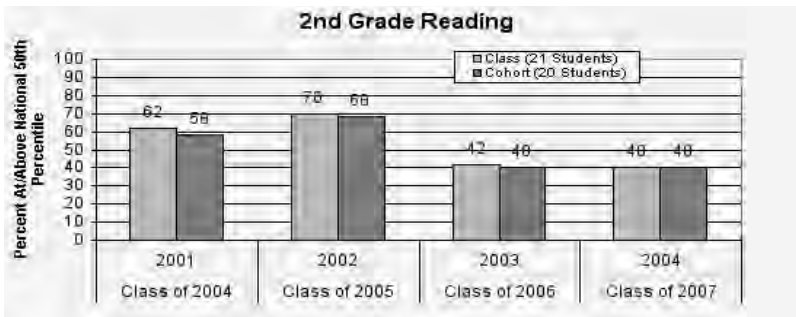
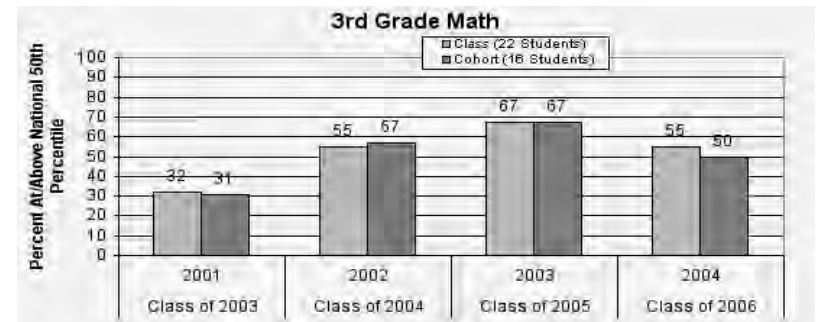
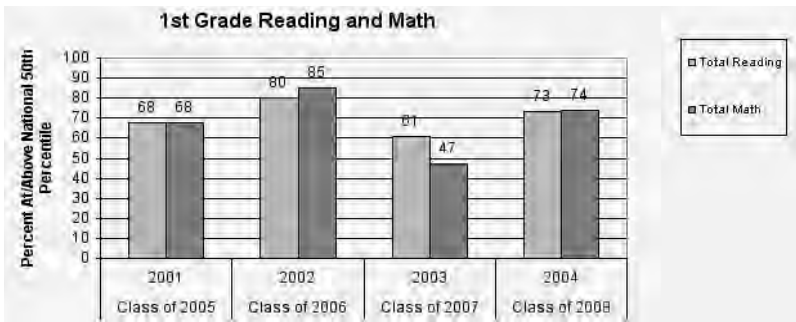
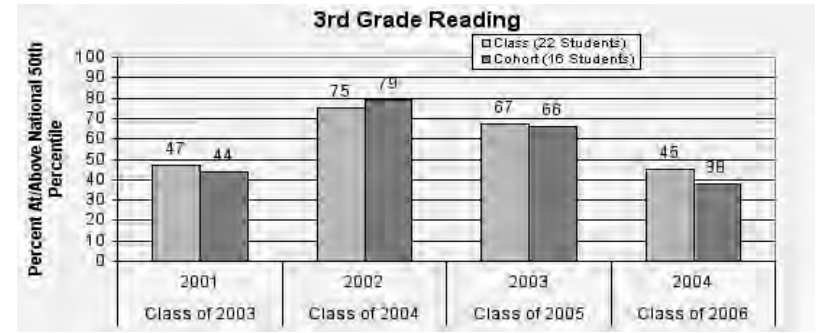
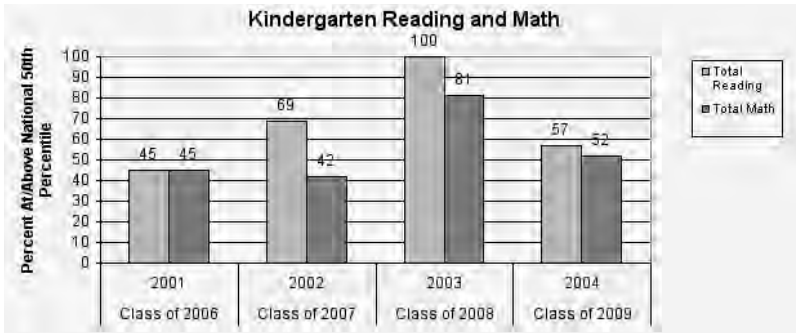
In 2003 we exceeded the Boston Public Schools proficiency index in English language arts and math by a significant amount.

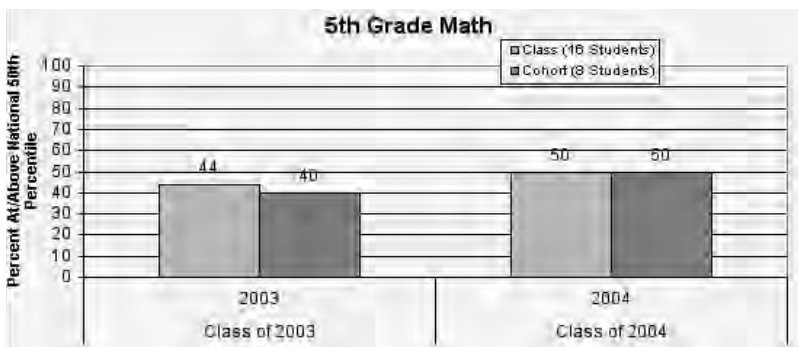
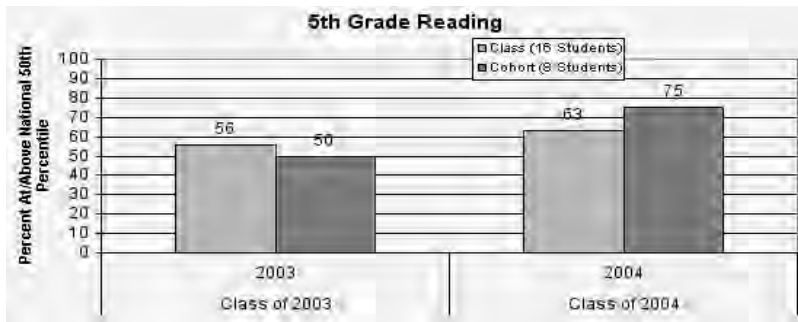


Stanford 9 Tests

The data below shows that we are making fairly 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 (50% percentile score or above) in total reading and math, except for the 2nd grade. This year we standardized our administration of the test across the school, causing a small drop in average scores.

The kindergarten and 1st grade classes are not divided into class and cohort distinctions because all children below 2nd grade are considered a part of the cohort group.





Literacy Challenge Program

The Literacy Challenge Program is designed to identify and increase the literacy skills of those students performing in the lowest 10% of the school. In some cases the program also serves as a pre-referral process for special education. Classroom teachers refer students to the Literacy Challenge program. Once referred, a team reviews students by examining 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, and music. Student placement is reviewed every six weeks. At the end of each six-week cycle, a child may be 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 the Literacy Challenge Program is to help all children achieve at grade level.

Partnerships

In the 2003-04 school year, the partnership with the New England Conservatory of Music (NEC) has provided the means for sharing the work that is being done at the CLCS. Additionally young artists from NEC have provided performance and learning opportunities for CLCS students.

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.

Staff & Students

Staff

- *Total teaching staff:* 19.3; 18.3 teachers; 1 aide; highly qualified: 16 teachers
- *Experience:* 48 years combined total lead & associate classroom teachers
- *Student/classroom teacher ratio:* 11:1
- *Classroom teacher years of service at the CLCS:* 30 years lead teachers combined; 18 years associate teachers combined
- *Turnover at the end of the year:* 1 music teacher went to BPS; 4 associates returned to school, moved, or became lead teachers in other schools

Student Information

- 132 students – grades Kindergarten through 5
- 60 (45%) African American, 34 (25 %) Caucasian, 32 (24%) Hispanic, 6 (4%) Asian American
- 68 (52%) Female, 64 (48%) Male
- 88 (68%) qualify for federal free and reduced lunch programs
- *Special Education:* 34 (26%) of total; 19 (14%) 502.2; 15 (12%) 504
- *Limited English Proficiency:* 7 (5%)
- *Linguistic Minorities:* 22 (16%)

Promotion Policy

Promotion from one grade level to the next depends upon meeting at least three of the following factors:

- 1 Performance on report card of 3.0 or higher indicating that minimum CLCS standards in all academic areas have been met;
- 2 Performance on report card of 3.0 or higher indicating that minimum CLCS standards in emotional, social, and behavioral development have been met;
- 3 Completion of at least 75% of school work, as demonstrated by the student's portfolio, to show that minimum CLCS standards in all academic, art, and music have been met;
- 4 Evidence of minimum level performance on all standardized tests (overall average 50th percentile plus or minus one stamina or a performance score of 2.0 or higher, "needs improvement" or better on MCAS);
- 5 Sufficient reading level demonstrated (kindergarten through 2nd grade)

If a student is judged to be at risk for meeting promotion requirements, the student's parents/guardians shall be so notified after winter recess. In January or February parents/guardians will have the opportunity to meet with the teacher to develop a plan together providing academic support to the student, including, for example, in-school tutoring and supplementary homework.

In April, teachers will contact the parents/guardians of students who are still or newly at-risk, as judged by their portfolio work and classroom performance. At that time, parents/guardians will be advised that the student is still not performing at grade level. The academic support plan will be reviewed (or implemented, if the student is newly identified) with the parents/guardians. It is important to make every effort to help students achieve promotion; students who need to repeat a year should only repeat once if possible.

In June, a final promotion decision will be made after the Stanford 9 tests are administered in March and the Essential Skills Tests are administered in May. The CLCS Principal, in consultation with the student's teachers, will make final decisions on promotion, with input from academic tutors, specialists, other administrators, and parents. They will consider:

Students on an Individualized Education or Section 504 Plan

Students with disabilities are expected to meet promotion and graduation requirements as stated in the student's Individualized Education Plan (IEP) or Section 504 Plan. The Plan will state the expected requirements and the school's academic support plan for meeting promotion goals. It will also describe the conditions under which the student will take standardized tests, Essential Skills Tests, and alternative classroom tests and assignments.

Student Turnover Data

Students who left during year: 15 total
 7 changed schools, 6 moved, 2 unknown
End of year student turnover: 5 total
 3 moved, 2 enrolled in middle school starting in 5th grade

Suspensions/Expulsions

In-school: 13; *Out-of-school:* 41; no expulsions

The Board of Trustees received no official complaints.

2003/04 Applications and Lottery

Neighborhood	K	1	2	3	4	5
Allston	9	0	0	1	1	1
Boston	7	0	1	1	0	0
Brighton	20	2	3	3	1	0
Charlestown	0	1	0	0	0	0
Dorchester	30	3	9	6	4	1
East Boston	0	1	0	0	0	0
Hyde Park	11	1	2	2	1	0
Jamaica Plain	18	1	3	3	0	0
Kenmore	1	0	0	0	0	0
Mattapan	10	1	0	3	0	0
Roslindale	13	1	2	1	2	1
Roxbury	8	5	1	0	2	0
South Boston	5	2	1	2	1	0
West Roxbury	3	0	0	0	0	0
Grade Totals	135	18	22	22	12	3
Boston Total	212					

Out of Boston

Quincy	1	0	0	0	0	0
Boston (no proof of residence)	1	0	1	1	0	0
Out of Boston Total	4					
Sibling Applications	6					

GRAND TOTAL **222**

Openings for lottery: 17

Ratio of applications to openings: 13.06:1

After the lottery, there were 357 students on the wait list: 124 Kindergarten; 51 first grade; 32 second grade; 101 third grade; 45 fourth grade; 4 fifth grade

Finance

Balance Sheet*

Conservatory Lab Charter School
Balance Sheet FY04

<i>Assets</i>	
Cash	303,719
Grants and other receivables	734
Prepaid expenses	4,054
Total assets	308,507
<i>Liabilities</i>	
Accounts payable	0
Accrued expenses	971
Accrued payroll	85,510
Payroll taxes accrued and withheld	4,093
Total liabilities	90,574
<i>Fund Equity</i>	
<i>Fund balances:</i>	
Undesignated	217,933
Total fund equity	217,933
Total liabilities and fund equity	308,507

*Unaudited statement

Conservatory Lab Charter School

Financial Statement of Revenue and Expenditures*

FY04 Actual

<i>Revenue</i>	
Per pupil income	1,258,505
Federal/State meal reimbursement	44,446
Federal grants	92,374
State grants	18,457
Fundraising	413,357
Interest earned	108
Parent reimbursements (meals, etc)	23,926
Total Revenue	1,851,173
<i>Expenditures</i>	
Instructional staff	775,115
Administrative staff	430,934
Payroll taxes	41,504
Benefits	78,621
Non-salary compensation	73,581
Subtotal - Staff	1,399,794
Rent/mortgage/utilities	144,297
Maintenance	42,457
Insurance	2,618
Subtotal - Occupancy	189,372
Classroom materials/supplies	13,943
Classroom technology/activities	6,197
Music/art equipment & supplies	24,479
Subtotal - Educational Materials	44,619
Business services	12,971
Marketing	14,815
Staff recruiting	3,843
Office supplies/technology	26,020
Program and staff development	11,327
Food service	55,377
Subtotal - Support Services	124,353
Total Expenditures	1,758,138

*unaudited statement due to Annual Report deadline

Board of Trustees

Katharine M. Pell
Chairman
Oversight of all Board committees
Tenure: Sept. 1998

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Founder, Snider Associates
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Search Committee
Tenure: Oct. 2000

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Tenure: Sept. 1998

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Tenure: April 2001

Sandy Righter
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Event Committee
Marketing Committee
Tenure: April 2000-Oct. 2003

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Tenure: April 1999-Jan. 2004

Robie White
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Finance Committee
Tenure: Oct. 2003

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Thank you, Thank you!

Parents continue to provide critical support to the school and we thank them for their time, talents, and treasures that they share with our students. The Parent Organization raised considerable funds for CLCS, and parent representatives on the search committee for the new head of school and the School Advisory Council performed an invaluable service this past academic year. Fleet Celebrity Series made it possible for violinist Joshua Bell to perform at the CLCS, and board member Mark Churchill brought the Orchestra of the Americas to play. Thank you to the Patriot's Trail Girl Scout Council for continuing to support our CLCS troop. We also thank the Boston Health Commission, the Massachusetts Eye and Ear Infirmary, and the New England School of Optometry for health screenings.

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.

B-4 Trombone Quartet
Zachary Hollister
Kai Johnson
Tom Otto
Megan Smith-Heafy
Joshua Bell
Julia Scott Carey
Charles Coe
Doriot Anthony Dwyer
Girl Scouts
Susan Halby
Robert L. Hall
Harmony
Harvard After-School Partnership
Kim Marshall
Tanya Magi
Sarah Nagell
Orchestra of the Americas
Phillips Brooks House
Peter Rowe

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Executive Director

Larry Scripp
Director of Research &
Development

Emily Lichtenstein
Principal

Rhoda Bernard
Learning Through Music
Coordinator

Catherine Crosley
Director of Academic
Curriculum, Acting Principal

James Crowther
Acting Assistant Principal

Jacqueline Goggin
Director of Development

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Anne Howarth
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Andrew Graham
Administrative Assistant

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Nurse

Kindergarten
Beth Bronstein
Althea Rugemer

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Caryn Claar
Erin Reynolds

Second Grade
Margaret Dunn
Rachel Gertz
Tricia Patenaude

Third Grade
Ivy Ali-Salaam
Kimon Kirk

Fourth Grade
Sara Scholtens
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Grade Five
Elizabeth Borne
Kimon Kirk

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