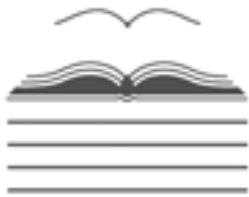


C O N S E R V A T O R Y L A B
C H A R T E R S C H O O L

Annual Report 2009

“Making Minds Sing”



A public school for learning through music

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Introductory Description

The Conservatory Lab Charter School (CLCS) is a public school in the Brighton neighborhood of Boston serving 135 children in grades K-5 from throughout the city (fully enrolled). The school received its charter in 1998 and opened in 1999. The school recently amended its charter to add a K1 class and increase its enrollment to 154 students, which will occur in fall 2009.

CLCS supports high levels of achievement across a curriculum that not only teaches traditional academic subjects as important, independent areas of study, but also fuses these subjects and social/emotional development with musical studies. Children explore math, language arts, science, and social studies through musical projects and lessons whenever such interdisciplinary study is practicable. Teachers implement this instruction using the fundamental concepts that are shared between music and academic subjects to reinforce learning in all areas and to build Learning Through Music (LTM) 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 across all academic disciplines. Students study music daily as a core-curricular subject and starting in grade one, they study violin twice weekly. Music is infused daily and is integral to the school's culture.

The CLCS is also committed, as a laboratory, to building a Learning Through Music curriculum model that will be replicable in other schools. The school's long-term vision is to show how the LTM process makes learning relevant to one's daily life and community; to demonstrate the critical importance of daily arts instruction in public education; and to develop model Learning Through Music curricular materials that other schools can utilize as a model of education reform.

Mission Statement

The CLCS mission is embodied in our motto: *Making Minds Sing!*

CLCS' goal is to develop and utilize a new educational model called Learning Through Music. The school's mission is to use this innovative model to reach children from all backgrounds to help them achieve academic, creative and social success.

Learning Through Music is an interdisciplinary teaching approach where music plays an important role for students' individual academic and artistic development, as well as a critical community-building strategy. The pedagogy most consistent with this approach is project/performance-based learning with clear standards and outcomes.

Learning Through Music is a flexible model which fosters music infusion, but does not require that every subject be taught every day through music. Music is a core subject taught daily as well as a core academic subject. Learning Through Music includes instrumental, choral and general music instruction, and extends beyond any individual classroom so that the whole school becomes music-infused. The Five Processes that come from the learning of music – Questioning, Listening, Creating, Performing, and Reflecting – are an effective tool for learning all subjects. Interdisciplinary teaching which includes music is more effective than teaching each subject in isolation.

Music is our shared passion at the Conservatory Lab Charter School. Music unites us and is a powerful means for us to reach out to families and community. Music is a social activity, and therefore a community builder. Music instills discipline and self-confidence. Equally important, one *plays* music

whether as a listener or performer. Music performed well brings joy to performer and audience. Continuous assessment of performance ensures effective and authentic evaluation.

We aspire to be an exemplary Learning Through Music elementary school where we breathe, listen, perform, create and celebrate music across the curriculum and where every child is achieving proficiency also in all academic subjects. Every adult at CLCS is not only a teacher, but *a teacher of music*, just as every adult is *a teacher of character* implicitly by example, and explicitly through conversations with students. Every adult at CLCS is expected to commit to our mission by sharing responsibility for instilling an appreciation and excitement for *world* music. Music appreciation, music history, chorus and voice, instrument performance and composition are variations on our central theme of tapping into the power of music to learn and build community.

Letter from the Chair of the Board of Trustees

Dear Friends,

This past year has been an interesting one for all charter schools. The Boston Foundation's report on the success of charter schools, with compelling data on comparative student achievement, provided substantial and public support for the value of charters. President Obama's and his administration's support of the charter movement has also been heartening. Finally, we have seen a positive trend in Massachusetts with, for example, both Governor Patrick and Mayor Menino expressing increased support for charter schools. The dialogue seems to be moving away from "either/or" positions toward one where the important issues of access and variety of opportunity for all public school students are central to all of us engaged in public education.

As CLCS completes its 10th year, we have made great strides in meeting the challenges and opportunities before us. This past year, three important occurrences had a major impact on the School: hiring new Head Diana Lam, undergoing an extensive review as part of the five-year charter renewal process and entering negotiations with the Massachusetts chapter of the American Federation of Teachers union.

Diana Lam's leadership has proved to be very successful, providing CLCS with the stable, balanced and experienced internal leadership needed. The other two events also provided opportunities for reflection and growth. The charter renewal process led the School to a thorough review of how its mission is carried out and to the creation of new curricula to better support its mission. CLCS will enter the new school year with a number of faculty-designed LTM units as part of an on-going process for the evaluation and development of this curriculum. During the next three academic years, a sequence of writing, piloting, reflecting, editing and re-writing with another final editing round will occur for each of the 21 proposed LTM units. The finalized curriculum will be published in summer 2012, and will be the focus of the first annual Summer Institute on Learning Through Music hosted by CLCS.

In our negotiations with the union, we are committed to achieving a contract that will recognize the statutory requirements that CLCS, like all charter schools, remains a student-focused and innovative laboratory for educational change with the programmatic and staffing flexibility needed to carry out its mission.

The School continues to operate on sound financial footing in terms of meeting its operational budget needs. Initially, we had some concern about the impact of the union on future giving. However, we are close to reaching an agreement with the teachers and look forward to having a contract that is aligned with the school mission and goals.

CLCS has made significant strides in other areas of operation as well. In the fall, the School will increase in size as we greet our new class of K-1 students. This summer, we have been renovating our existing space to make our building accessible to persons with disabilities. Having accessible classrooms, bathrooms and a first floor meeting space will make CLCS a better place for all students, staff and visitors.

As you will see in this report, we have also made substantial progress in meeting our academic goals and in identifying and implementing specific teaching strategies to support all our students in achieving meaningful growth and success. To continue in this positive direction, CLCS will become an Expeditionary Learning School in 2009-10, partnering with this national non-profit to make multidisciplinary, project-based learning a more integral part of the school's LTM curriculum.

For a small school, CLCS is a complex organization with an ambitious mission; one which requires strong and sustained internal leadership. As we enter our 11th year, Diana Lam is providing such leadership in building the infrastructure and supporting the vision for the next ten years of success. She is a skillful manager of people and operations as well as an experienced professional in terms of curriculum and program development. She has successfully supported teacher ownership and investment in the School and is building a strong faculty using focused professional development and on-going evaluation with the goal of creating a “career ladder” for each teacher. She works very well with the Board of Trustees, achieving the proper balance between oversight and management. She and the faculty have worked hard and successfully not only on curriculum development but also to create a positive school environment for adults as well as students. Ms. Lam is dedicated, experienced and creative, an excellent “fit” for CLCS. Her on-going commitment to the School and its mission bodes well for the future.

Last, the school continues to have a strong and dedicated volunteer board. All members work on at least one committee and the application of their skills and knowledge has made the school a stronger institution than it would be without that input.

We are all very proud of what a wonderful school CLCS is and of its capacity to face opportunity and challenges with creativity and resolve. We look to the future with optimism and commitment to the families, teachers and students who are at the core of its mission.

Stephanie Perrin
Chairman, Board of Trustees

July 24, 2009

Performance and Plans

The goals listed below form the Conservatory Lab Charter School's accountability plan for 2004-2009.

Faithfulness to Charter

Goal 1: The CLCS will enable academic achievement for all students in the context of the continuous and comprehensive study of music.

- All students will show progress through assessment of musical skills as demonstrated on interim assessments and The Gordon Primary Measures of Music Audiation.
- All students will show progress through assessment of violin skills as demonstrated on internal interim assessments and progress through the 11 Violin level checklists.
- All students will show progress in music through exemplary student work samples with attached rubrics from music portfolios.
- All students will show progress in all core subject areas through interdisciplinary learning between music and reading, writing, mathematics, science, and social studies.

RESULTS

- Information on music and violin assessments is provided in the "academic program success" section of this report (below).

Goal 2: The CLCS will assess and evaluate its program for potential dissemination and duplication in other schools.

The impact of comprehensive music study will be evaluated and the findings will be disseminated through collaborations, conference presentations, dissemination grant applications, and scholarly articles and publications.

RESULTS

- Information on dissemination is provided in the "Dissemination" section of this report (below).

Goal 3: Development of a model Learning Through Music program.

- The Conservatory Lab Charter School will develop descriptive statistics that define the parameters and quality of the Learning Through Music program. As such, the School will foster collaborations between the School and educational researchers to validate the effects of the LTM program. Such research will lead to the dissemination of the LTM program and then to replicating LTM to other locations both locally and nationally.

RESULTS

- CLCS hosted Mirjam Lumholdt, a doctoral student at the Royal Danish Academy of Music and music teacher who conducted two weeks of research and observations to study the school's Learning Through Music program. She is the Director of the Groested Korscole in Denmark, a children's music school that CLCS will be partnering with.
- CLCS is exploring the possibility of becoming a site for El Sistema, modeled on the visionary music education program from Venezuela. Our faculty will be working with a representative from the Venezuelan program to learn more about how this can be implemented at CLCS in support of the Learning Through Music program.

Implementation of Mission, Vision and Educational Philosophy

CLCS received important feedback from the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's Inspection Team in October 2008, and staff have been analyzing and refining the school's vision since then.

Aligned with state standards, and working with Expeditionary Learning Schools (a national professional development organization), our teachers are developing three extended Learning Through Music "learning expeditions" for each grade that segment the academic year into trimesters. Teachers will continue to use what is already working well at CLCS such as our leveled reading program and mathematics program. Where appropriate, learning expeditions or extended thematic studies will incorporate music into social studies, language arts and science. To begin, teachers are identifying which state standards are to be taught at each grade level and with professional development support, they are linking those standards to music content.

Learning Through Music encompasses the entire academic and artistic program. Characteristics of LTM include:

- Written, multi-disciplinary extended thematic units (3 units per year, per grade level) with clear assessments and standards will be piloted with the goal of publication after appropriate revisions.
- Five music processes are evident across the curriculum (Questioning, Listening, Creating, Performing, and Reflecting).
- The curriculum units are not prescriptive. They offer teachers a menu of options for lessons.
- Reading and Writer's Workshops are compatible within these units.
- Mathematics stands alone as sequential study supported by Think Math. The curriculum units will include additional mathematics where appropriate. Interim assessments and MCAS results in ELA and mathematics will inform our practice. We will develop music assessments.
- Ongoing professional development and support for Learning Through Music implementation will be provided for teachers.

CLCS' teachers are designing a new Learning Through Music portfolio assessment system which will better capture the qualitative as well as the quantitative elements of our instructional program. They are developing rubrics, scoreboards, demonstrations, exhibitions and other authentic assessments for all classes.

Community partners play an important role in CLCS' Learning Through Music program, providing teachers and students with important resources that enhance learning on all levels. We aim to invite professional quality music into CLCS and to extend our own ideas of classroom boundaries to include the wider Boston music community as part of CLCS. The school is fortunate to have built partnerships with the New England Conservatory, Boston Symphony Orchestra, Community Music Center of Boston, Museum of Fine Arts, Young Audiences, Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra, Boston Lyric Opera, Project STEP and numerous college-level music programs. CLCS is also fortunate to have a strong Parent and Family Organization that hosts community-building events for the students and their families. We will be expanding this network of organizational and individual partners, to make the school's community an even richer place to work and study.

Since 1998 when the school's charter application was written, CLCS has modified its implementation of the philosophy described within. Ten years of teaching, observation in classrooms and data from student assessments has provided the faculty with important information about elements that work well, and those that do not. As a "lab" school, CLCS is constantly evaluating programs and pedagogies to develop the best possible teaching methods and balance of classes (music, academic and integrated) for our students.

We are excited about the major work that is underway, and are confident that the school's Learning Through Music program will be stronger and more effective in coming years than it has ever been.

Academic program success

The MCAS data referred to in this section is from spring 2008.

Goal 1: All students will demonstrate progress in academic achievement.

- 100% of students will demonstrate progress in academic achievement, regardless of scores on tests, through analysis of portfolios, showing evidence of engagement, progress and/or achievement in all subject areas. This assessment will be completed by both teachers and external evaluators.

RESULTS

- We assessed our use of portfolios during the past year, and are aligning their use to our new Learning Through Music units using Expeditionary Learning as a framework.

Goal 2: CLCS students will become proficient in the use of the English language as demonstrated in one or more of the following measurements.

- **2.1** The CLCS will meet or exceed state performance targets in English Language Arts, represented as CPI (Composite Proficiency Index) for the MCAS exams, for grades 3-4 in each year, 2006-7-8-9
- **2.2** Grade 3 MCAS reading test: For the cohort of students who enter CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade, the following percentages will achieve a proficient score or higher for each of the following years: 2005, 35%; 2006, 48%; 2007, 60%; 2008, 70%; 2009 80%.
- **2.3** Grade 4 MCAS English Language Arts test: For the cohort of students who enter CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade, the following percentages will achieve a proficient score or higher for each of the following years: 2005, 25%; 2006, 40%; 2007, 55%; 2008, 68%; 2009 80%.
- **2.4** Comparison to Boston Public Schools: Using the CPI, CLCS grades 3, 4, and MCAS scores will exceed those of Boston Public School students at the same grade levels.
- **2.5** Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA): The school will track improvement through pre- and post-tests in each grade, with the goal of students reading on grade level.
- **2.6** CLCS Writing Prompts: Internally-developed CLCS Writing Prompts are given four times yearly in all grades. Students will demonstrate grade-level proficiency on the CLCS writing prompts, which are linked to the CLCS promotion policy. The CLCS promotion policy is included in the CLCS Family Handbook and is posted on the CLCS website.

RESULTS

- **2.1** The CLCS did not meet state performance targets in English Language Arts in 2008.
- **2.2, 2.3** Third grade CLCS students showed improvement between 2007 and 2008 in reading and ELA proficiency. However, the school did not reach its ambitious goal of 70% proficiency in either the third or fourth grade cohorts. Within CLCS' professional development plan, the school has taken steps to address the learning needs of students more effectively in this subject area (see below).

MCAS Reading and ELA Proficiency

Subject	Students Tested	% Sum Advanced & Proficient	Target	Diff
Reading – Grade 3				
2008	22	55	70	-15
2007	19	48	60	-12
2006	21	60	48	12
2005	23	33	35	-2
ELA – Grade 4				
2008	21	38	68	-30
2007	12	41	55	-14
2006	23	57	40	17
2005	23	20	25	-5

- 2.4 The following table demonstrates that CLCS has exceeded the CPI of Boston Public School students at the same grade levels in English Language Arts consistently.

MCAS Reading and ELA Results (CLCS v. Boston)

Subject	CLCS Students Tested	CLCS CPI	Boston CPI	Diff.
Reading – Grade 3				
2008	22	78.4	64.8	13.6
2007	22	77.3	67.7	9.6
2006	21	82.1	65.8	16.3
ELA – Grade 4				
2008	22	65.5	62.3	3.2
2007	22	70.5	64.3	6.2
2006	23	76.1	62.2	13.9
ELA - Grade 5				
2008	22	75	69.5	5.5
2007	20	88.8	70.8	18
2006	14	69.6	68.6	1

- 2.5 The CLCS faculty has developed a series of interim assessments to use in place of the DRA. These assessments allow us to check student progress on a frequent basis, and provide specific interventions, supports or challenges for students according to their needs.

Interim Assessments: Reading

Grade & Date	Proficient and Advanced	Grade & Date	Proficient and Advanced
Gr. 1 May 2009	78% (18)	Gr. 4 May 2009	48% (11)
Gr. 1 June 2008	68% (15)	Gr. 4 June 2008	19% (4)
Gr. 1 June 2007	42% (10)	Gr. 4 June 2007	27% (6)
Gr. 2 May 2009	56% (13)	Gr. 5 May 2009	33% (7)
Gr. 2 June 2008	30% (7)	Gr. 5 June 2008	23% (5)
Gr. 2 June 2007	41% (9)	Gr. 5 June 2007	11% (2)
Gr. 3 May 2009	73% (16)	School-wide 6/09	54% (73)
Gr. 3 June 2008	59% (13)	School-wide 6/08	40% (44)
Gr. 3 June 2007	23% (5)	School-wide 6/07	29% (32)

- **2.6** Writing prompts were administered to students during the year, and 100% of CLCS' students demonstrated achievement sufficient to progress to the next grade.

Goal 3: CLCS students will become proficient in the use of the mathematics as demonstrated in one or more of the following measurements.

- **3.1** The CLCS will meet or exceed state performance targets in Mathematics, represented as CPI for the MCAS exams, for grade 4 in each year, 2006-7-8-9.
- **3.2** Grade 4 MCAS Mathematics test: For the cohort of students who enter CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade, the following percentages will achieve a proficient score or higher for each of the following years: 2005, 20%; 2006, 35%; 2007, 50%; 2008, 65%; 2009 80%.
- **3.3** Comparison to Boston Public Schools: Using the Composite Proficiency Index, CLCS MCAS scores will exceed those of Boston Public School students at the same grade levels.
- **3.4** Students will be performing at grade level as monitored by our internally developed math assessment for each grade.

RESULTS

- **3.1** The CLCS did not meet state performance targets in math in 2008.
- **3.2** The following table demonstrates that we have not yet reached our ambitious targets.

MCAS Math Proficiency

Subject	Students Tested	% Sum Advanced & Proficient	Target	Diff
Math – Grade 4				
2008	21	19	65	-46
2007	22	33	50	-17
2006	23	21	35	-14
2005	23	13	20	-7

- **3.3** The table below shows that CLCS met this goal in grades 3 and 5, but not in grade 4. Within CLCS’ professional development plan, the school has taken steps to address the learning needs of students more effectively in this subject area (see below).

MCAS Math Results (CLCS v. Boston)

Subject	Students Tested	CLCS CPI	Boston CPI	Diff.
Math – Grade 3				
2008	22	81.8	64.3	17.5
2007	22	65.9	64.7	1.2
2006	22	64.8	62.6	2.2
Math – Grade 4				
2008	21	64.3	66.3	-2
2007	22	64.8	62.3	2.5
2006	23	69.6	62	7.6
Math - Grade 5				
2008	22	65.9	61.9	4
2007	20	80	62.3	17.7
2006	14	44.6	57.1	-12.5

- **3.4** These internal assessments in math aid CLCS’ teachers in identifying the students who are proficient and advanced, and those who need additional aid. Please see the section on “Instruction” below for more details on CLCS’ math tutoring program.

Interim Assessments: Math - % of Students Proficient and Advanced

Grade & Date	Proficient and Advanced	Grade & Date	Proficient and Advanced
K June 2009	87%(19)	Gr. 3 June 2009	74%(18)
K June 2008	86%(19)	Gr. 3 June 2008	59% (13)
K June 2007	90%(19)	Gr. 3 June 2007	91% (20)
Gr. 1 June 2009	79%(18)	Gr. 4 June 2009	40%(9)
Gr. 1 June 2008	73 % (16)	Gr. 4 June 2008	19% (4)
Gr. 1 June 2007	70% (16)	Gr. 4 June 2007	28% (6)
Gr. 2 June 2009	65% (15)	Gr. 5 June 2009	25% (5)
Gr. 2 June 2008	70% (16)	Gr. 5 June 2008	28% (6)
Gr. 2 June 2007	60% (13)	Gr. 5 June 2007	32% (6)
		School-wide 6/09	62% (84)
		School-wide 6/08	56% (74)
		School-wide 6/07	62% (80)

Goal 4: CLCS students will demonstrate mastery of content and skills in History and Social Sciences, as outlined in the Massachusetts state curriculum frameworks.

- Internal unit assessments accompanied by rubrics will demonstrate achievement sufficient to progress to the next grade, using CLCS guidelines for promotion. The CLCS promotion policy is included in the CLCS Family Handbook and is posted on the CLCS website.

RESULTS

- Students were given internal unit assessments throughout the year, and 100% of CLCS' students demonstrated achievement sufficient to progress to the next grade.

Goal 5: CLCS students will demonstrate mastery of content and skills in Science and Technology, as outlined in the Massachusetts state curriculum frameworks.

- Internal unit assessments accompanied by rubrics will demonstrate achievement sufficient to progress to the next grade, using CLCS guidelines for promotion. The CLCS promotion policy is included in the CLCS Family Handbook and will be posted on the CLCS website.

RESULTS

- Students were given internal unit assessments throughout the year, and 100% of CLCS' students demonstrated achievement sufficient to progress to the next grade.

Goal 6: CLCS students will demonstrate mastery of content and skills in general music and violin, as outlined in the CLCS Scopes and Sequences for those subject areas.

- Interim assessments in music: 80% of all students who enter CLCS in or before September of 2nd grade will achieve a secure or mastery score based upon internally-developed rubrics at the end of each school year for each grade, K-5. The interim assessments are internally developed tests by the CLCS Music Faculty and the Learning Through Music Coordinator.
- The Gordon Primary Measures of Music Audiation are given twice yearly to assess rhythmic and melodic audiation skills. These tests are primarily used as a diagnostic tool and for research purposes.
- Violin benchmark levels: 80% of all CLCS students who enter the CLCS in or before September of 1st grade will achieve a score of 70% or higher at the end of each school year in the appropriate level for that child.

RESULTS

- In General Music classes, students were assessed daily based on performance. These anecdotal assessments were used to inform instruction as well as the progress report/report card grades and comments. These were reviewed during parent teacher conferences as requested by parents.
- Within the Learning Through Music curriculum, interim assessments corresponded to the particular units of study. Teacher-based assessments followed original rubrics designed to assess performance based on goals for each unit. Student self-assessment included performance reflections (written and oral) and self-assessment rubrics.
- CLCS is reevaluating the choice of music assessments, and is not using the Gordon Primary Measures of Music Audiation. Other assessment tools will be chosen in 2009-10.
- In 2008-09, 84% of CLCS' violin students scored 70% or higher as evaluated by the Essential Skills Test assessment that corresponds with the violin benchmark levels.

Curriculum and Instruction

CLCS' curriculum follows the state standards in all subjects: reading/English Language Arts, math, science, social sciences and music. At CLCS, students in grades 1-5 also receive violin lessons twice per week.

In 2008-09, the school's curriculum was nearly identical to that of 2007-08 with some notable changes. The core reading and math curricula, involving writers' workshop and the Think Math! program, were used once again. The school contracted with Teachers 21 consultant Virginia Tang as CLCS' primary advisor in the area of math. In 4th grade, a writer's workshop based on the work of Martha Winokur was added and Ms. Winokur herself helped implement it at CLCS. Teachers received training on *Foundations*, a phonological/phonemic awareness, phonics and spelling program, visited a school that is currently using it and piloted the program in the kindergarten classroom last year. In 2009-10, grades K-2 will all be using this excellent program.

In order to provide students with more substantial academic support, CLCS instituted a math tutoring program in 2008-09. Third, fourth and fifth grade students who scored below grade level on internal interim assessments were targeted for tutoring. They met with teachers individually during school, after school and in Saturday morning sessions. Some worked with teachers using *Fastt Math* computer software which was acquired for this program. On the final math assessment of the year, these students showed marked progress, demonstrating the positive effects that the tutoring had on their math comprehension and abilities.

Diverse Learners

CLCS employs a full-time Special Education Coordinator and a full-time English Language Learner (ELL) Coordinator who work closely with students and teachers to provide support. Students needing special accommodations in either area are identified through discussions with parents, testing and through teacher referrals. CLCS' student support team reviews individual students' cases (see School Culture for more details) and helps determine each student's needs. The team meets repeatedly during the academic year to revisit cases and decide whether the accommodations provided are helping, or whether they need modification.

ELL screening is conducted through a Home Language Survey and informal student interviews with the ELL Coordinator. After assessing students with the LAS-Oral and either the Pre-LAS, LAS1 or LAS2, the Coordinator consults with the classroom teachers about each case. They decide on the type of services to provide and goals to set, for students designated as Limited English Proficient (LEP). Students are monitored during the year by the ELL Coordinator who uses the MELA-O and MEPA assessments, and determines whether each student has met the language goals set by teachers and ELPBO (English Language Proficiency Benchmarks and Outcomes). If a student does reach these goals, s/he will be exited and monitored as a Formerly Limited English Proficient student (FLEP).

Program Evaluation

In 2008-09, program evaluation at CLCS has been continuous. The spring 2008 student MCAS scores along with feedback provided by the Department of Elementary & Secondary Education's Inspection Team in the fall inspired a great deal of reflection and action as we endeavor to make our programs and systems as effective as possible. Under the leadership of new Head of School Diana Lam, CLCS' faculty began a major curriculum development project to write, revise and eventually publish 21 project-based Learning Through Music units that will build upon and strengthen existing units. (See "Implementation of Mission, Vision & Educational Philosophy" above for more details.)

When interim assessments showed that a number of students in grades 3, 4 and 5 were falling behind in math, CLCS instituted a math tutoring program to give them the help they needed. (See "Curriculum" above for more details.)

The schedule of faculty professional development for the year was designed to focus on areas where students needed support, as determined by the spring 2008 MCAS test scores. (See “Professional Development” below for more details.)

School Culture

CLCS’ strong school culture stems from a solid system of student support. Being a small school, all teachers and students know each other and work to help each other. The student support team (one administrator, classroom teacher, social worker, special educator, specialist) meets regularly to discuss specific students’ needs and ways of addressing them. The social work team (one licensed social worker and five interns) works with individual students regularly, giving them a place to talk about social/emotional issues. Academically, CLCS instituted a strong math tutoring program during in-school and out-of-school time (see the “Curriculum” section above for details). Through the Sports4Kids program, students learned how to play on teams and how to resolve conflicts. Volunteers donated their time to work with students on reading, writing and art projects, enriching the students’ education.

Assistant Principal Annie Sevelius met weekly with every classroom teacher to discuss behavior management, and collected data on negative student behaviors during the year to track patterns and target ways of helping individual students. She consulted with doctors, hospitals, psychologists and the Department of Children and Families to gather information about the students’ backgrounds to help in this process.

Supervision/Evaluation of Teachers

School leaders provided teachers with significant feedback and guidance throughout the year through frequent, informal observations and more formal meetings. Each teacher attended conferences with school leaders at the beginning and end of the year to discuss the timeline for in-class observations, expectations and results. At least one school leader (Head of School, Interim Principal or Asst. Principal) conducted in-class observations twice during the year and had follow-up conversations with individual teachers to provide feedback quickly. The rubrics used to evaluate teachers were developed by CLCS trustee and veteran educator Kim Marshall, and involve ongoing discussions between teachers and administrators concerning the results of interim assessments, which were used to inform teaching practices, along with the more formal observations and conferences. Results of teacher evaluations were used to suggest areas for additional professional development and to structure professional development sessions with hired consultants.

Professional Development

In order to strengthen teaching throughout the school, CLCS’ administration identified areas from the 2008 reading, ELA and math MCAS tests where students’ scores were lacking and designed the teachers’ professional development sessions to focus on these areas. Specifically, teachers attended sessions on vocabulary development, phonics, number sense and other topics, and worked closely with experienced consultants Martha Winokur, Cynthia Smith (writing/ELA) and Virginia Tang (math) who ran these sessions and provided in-class modeling and coaching. CLCS also instituted a professional development committee of teachers and administrators that met during the year to discuss the types of training that teachers need and want, and the schedule for that training.

Organizational Viability

Goal 1: The Conservatory Lab Charter School will establish principles and procedures that will enable the school to operate in a financially viable and publicly transparent manner.

- **1.1** Maintain current sound fiscal policy that has resulted in keeping balanced budgets and receiving unqualified audits during each year of operation.
- **1.2** Continue the strategic planning process that focuses on development, financial planning, and academic and musical achievement to build financial stability and academic excellence for the school.
- **1.3** Submit annual reports and audits as required.
- **1.4** Build a strong system of external support to help meet the financial needs of the school.

RESULTS

- **1.1** CLCS' administration has been diligent in keeping a balanced budget in 2008-09, and staff members meet with the Finance Committee of the Board of Trustees monthly to review financial statements and projections.
- **1.2** Under the leadership of Head of School Diana Lam, major planning has occurred at CLCS this year. The school made building, curricular, staffing and logistical plans relating to the addition of a grade – pre-Kindergarten – in fall 2009. CLCS also plans to become an Expeditionary Learning School in the fall, partnering with this non-profit to implement project-based learning throughout the curriculum, and is in discussions with the New England Conservatory to become a site for El Sistema USA, the visionary music program founded in Venezuela. Planning around the school's location and size have been ongoing, as the staff and Board explore different ways of making the school more effective (reaching additional students), efficient and accessible.
- **1.3** CLCS submits all official reports and hires Ziner & Murphy PC to conduct annual independent audits.
- **1.4** CLCS continues to have a strong group of generous supporters who contribute funding and volunteer their time. Once again, the school was able to raise sufficient funds to meet budgetary needs.

Goal 2: The CLCS will successfully recruit students to meet enrollment levels as defined in the charter application and subsequent amendments.

- **2.1** Enrollment goals, defined as full-enrollment, will be reached annually by the required filing date of the pre-enrollment report.
- **2.2** Wait lists, after the annual lottery, will constitute no less than 75% of the total number of students in the student body.

RESULTS

- **2.1, 2.2** Each year, the demand for enrollment at CLCS is very strong. The school was fully enrolled in 2008-09, and has over 500 students on the waiting list.

Goal 3: The CLCS will establish a strong management structure.

- **3.1** The CLCS Board of Trustees will represent the diverse skills and expertise required to meet the mission of the school, as defined by the Governance Committee of the Board.
- **3.2** The CLCS Board of Trustees will continue its practice of oversight for all aspects of the school, including maintaining active Board subcommittees for Finance and Audit, Education, Governance, Development, and Research/Replication.

RESULTS

- **3.1** The CLCS Board of Trustees is a diverse group of highly skilled individuals who enrich the school with their expertise in areas including law, financial management, education (teacher training, teacher supervision, early childhood development, etc.), technology, management, fundraising, school leadership and the arts.

- **3.2** The CLCS Board of Trustees met 10 times in 2008-09, and received frequent updates on all aspects of school operations. Board subcommittees also met regularly to discuss planning in each of their areas of focus. The Research/Replication committee did not meet in 2008-09; however, committee members are prepared to reconvene as needed.

Policy Decisions

At their March 10, 2009 meeting, the Board of Trustees voted unanimously to enter into a consulting agreement with Public Economics, Inc. which will provide services and financial, economic, facilities, and administrative advice in connection with the lease or purchase of a new school building.

Amendments to the Charter

CLCS is currently amending its charter as recommended by the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education in its charter renewal inspection report. Now in its 10th year, CLCS' mission has stayed the same – to help students achieve academic, artistic, creative, and social/emotional success using the Learning Through Music curriculum model. The school aims to amend its charter to reflect current plans to implement this mission. The faculty is currently refining Learning Through Music curriculum units to integrate the subjects more creatively and effectively, in order to move closer to the plan outlined in the school's original charter. CLCS will become an Expeditionary Learning school in fall 2009, which will facilitate the implementation of project-based learning, including portfolios and authentic assessments that will enrich and strengthen learning for students.

Complaints

There were no official complaints in 2008-09.

Oversight and Board Planning

CLCS' Board of Trustees met ten times in 2008-09 and stayed in close contact with Head of School Diana Lam who sent weekly updates via e-mail. Subcommittees including the executive, education and finance committees met monthly, and gathered detailed information about school activities from staff. In this way, trustees were able to assess the school's performance on an ongoing basis. In addition, the board evaluated the Head of School by using a comprehensive, anonymous survey that was available online or in hard copy. Requests to fill out this survey were sent by mail and e-mail to all families of students, staff and trustees. Responses were gathered and reviewed by a select group of trustees, who reported on the results to the full Board and to the Head of School directly.

In 2006-07, the Board began the long-term process of finding CLCS a new building. The school's lease ends in 2012, and we must move by that time. In 2008-09, trustees were very active in multiple areas related to this project: evaluating the school's needs (amount/type of space, best locations), locating available buildings, studying ways of paying for a new building (if a purchase is preferable to a lease). This work will continue in 2009-10.

Family Satisfaction

The school sent a survey to all families in September 2008 to assess their experiences and feelings about CLCS. As of October 1, 2008 we had received 17 responses. Most respondents answered all applicable questions.

The survey consisted of ten statements that responders could rate by selecting one of the following options: "Strongly Agree, Agree, Not Observed, Disagree, Strongly Disagree." Statements were worded positively, stating that the school is warm and welcoming, safe and academically strong, that families feel comfortable expressing concerns, understanding the school's mission, and are satisfied with special services their children receive. Those who responded were overwhelmingly satisfied with CLCS' performance. On every question, over 90% responded with "Strongly Agree," "Agree" or "Not

Observed” (in few cases).

Financial Oversight

Each year, CLCS’ Head of School and Business Manager, in partnership with the Treasurer of the Board and the Finance Committee of the Board, utilize a zero-based budgeting process to determine the exact financial needs of the school. This group met frequently during late winter/early spring 2009, to review and discuss the developing budget. The final budget was approved unanimously by the Board of Trustees at the June 9, 2009 meeting. Financial priorities are set and decisions are made in frequent meetings of the Finance Committee. Financial results are reported monthly and reviewed by the Finance committee. Any event which could affect the approved fiscal budget must be brought up and approved by the CLCS Board.

Dissemination

- Student teachers and interns from Boston University, Wheelock College, Simmons College, Lesley University, The Academy and Tufts University worked in CLCS’ classrooms this year, assisting the classroom teachers as they taught Learning Through Music lessons and learning the structures and pedagogies of this method.
- Two administrators and two teachers traveled to Los Angeles to visit the Renaissance Arts School in June 2009. Their high test scores and excellent music program make them a natural partner for CLCS, and we plan to maintain a strong relationship with them.
- CLCS is creating a partnership with the Los Feliz Charter School for the Arts in Los Angeles, through a connection with a former member of CLCS’ teaching staff.
- A group of 3rd and 4th grade students performed as a violin ensemble at the MA Music Educators Association conference in March 2009.

Financial Reports

CLCS Fiscal Year 2009 Statement of Revenues, Expenses & Changes in Net Assets – Income Statement

	Jul '08 - Jun 09
Income	
4000-01 · Tuition	1,770,423.00
4100-03 · Grants - Federal (thru DESE)	141,039.00
4100-5a · Grants - Private - Designated	16,287.50
4200-06 · Nutrition Funding - State	1,251.75
4200-07 · Nutrition Funding - Federal	62,104.94
4200-08 · Nutrition Funding - Fees	6,168.55
4300-09 · Other Program / Student	962.00
440-13b · Contributions in kind - other	10.00
4400-14 · Contributions - Component Unit	200,000.00
4400-15 · Contributions - Fundraising	8,032.89
4500-11 · Medicaid Reimbursements	10,091.25
4700-16 · Interest / Investment Income	795.27
4900-19 · Miscellaneous Income	6,982.55
Total Income	2,224,148.70
Expense	
5100-21 · Administration	302,108.19
5200-22 · Instructional Services	1,359,723.18
5300-23 · Pupil Services	109,691.86
5400-24 · Operation/Maintenance of Plant	71,177.83
5500-25 · Benefits & Other Fixed Charges	128,390.52
5600-26 · Community Services	125.00
5700-27 · Non-Operating Finance Expenses	240,253.49
999 · Miscellaneous	3,188.18
Total Expense	2,214,658.25
Net Income	9,490.45

CLCS Fiscal Year 2009 Statement of Net Assets – Balance Sheet

	Jun 30, 09
ASSETS	
Current Assets	
Checking/Savings	
1000-01 · Cash and Cash Equivalents	510,081.97
Total Checking/Savings	510,081.97

Accounts Receivable	
1100-05 · Grants Receivable - Private	8,890.00
Total Accounts Receivable	<u>8,890.00</u>
Other Current Assets	
1200-07 · Due from related parties	8,103.64
Total Other Current Assets	<u>8,103.64</u>
Total Current Assets	527,075.61
Fixed Assets	
1600-15 · Furniture and Equipment	222,379.69
1690-16 · Less Accumulated Depreciation	<u>-151,681.85</u>
Total Fixed Assets	<u>70,697.84</u>
TOTAL ASSETS	<u><u>597,773.45</u></u>
LIABILITIES & EQUITY	
Liabilities	
Current Liabilities	
Accounts Payable	
2000-24 · Accounts Payable	18,211.61
Total Accounts Payable	<u>18,211.61</u>
Other Current Liabilities	
2100-25 · Accrued Expenses/Accrued Payroll	83,264.26
2300-27 · Due to related parties	<u>1,693.33</u>
Total Other Current Liabilities	<u>84,957.59</u>
Total Current Liabilities	<u>103,169.20</u>
Total Liabilities	103,169.20
Equity	
3000 · Opening Bal Equity	423,051.78
3900 · Retained Earnings	712.02
Net Income	<u>70,840.45</u>
Total Equity	<u>494,604.25</u>
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	<u><u>597,773.45</u></u>

CLCS Fiscal Year 2010 approved school budget

INCOME

Tuition (incl. facilities grant)	1,917,704
State Meal Reimbursement	840
Medicaid Reimbursement	7,500
Federal Meal Reimbursement	64,415
Parent Meal Payments	7,990
Parent Late day	3,500
Federal Title I Grant	155,225
Federal Title IIA Grant	8,755
SPED	43,219

TOTAL INCOME	2,209,148
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EXPENSES

Total Instructional Staff	904,383
Total Administrative Staff	426,891
Total Taxes and Benefits	173,672
Total Non-Salary Compensation	184,570
Total Instructional Program	175,722
Total Administration	224,370
Total Facilities	269,540

TOTAL EXPENSES	2,359,148
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NET INCOME/(LOSS)	(150,000)
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Data section

<i>Instructional Time:</i>	
Total number of instructional days for the 2008-09 school year:	180
First and last day of the 2008-09 school year:	8/27/08 – 6/23/09
Length of school day (please note if schedule varies throughout the week or the year):	8:15 a.m. – 3:45 p.m.

<i>STUDENT Enrollment Information:</i>	
Number of students who completed the 2007-08 school year but did not reenroll for the 2008-09 school year (excluding graduates):	29
Total number of students enrolled as of October 1, 2008:	135
Total number of students who enrolled during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	2
Total number of students who left during the 2008-09 school year, after October 1, 2008:	2
Total number of students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission:	137
Number of students who graduated at the end of the 2008-09 school year:	21

In addition to completing this table, please provide a summary of the reasons for student departures (excluding graduation).

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHIC AND SUBGROUP INFORMATION (for students enrolled as of the June 2009 SIMS submission)		
Race/Ethnicity	# of students	% of entire student body
African-American	50	37
Asian	7	5
Hispanic	21	15
Native American	22	16
White	30	22
Native Hawaiian, Pacific Islander	2	1
Multi-Race, Non-Hispanic	5	4
Special Education	17	12
Limited English Proficient	22	16
Low Income	105	77

ADMINISTRATIVE ROSTER FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR			
Title	Brief Job Description	Start date	End date (if no longer employed at the school)
Diana Lam, Head of School	Oversees all operational, instructional and development work of the school	8/15/08	
Annie Sevelius, Asst. Principal	Oversees student discipline, family support, teacher supervision and evaluation.	9/1/04	
Cindy Goncalves, Business Manager	Oversees all business activities, human resources, IT, facilities, and some DESE reporting.	10/3/08	
Leigh Creighton Kelter, Dir. of Development	Oversees all fundraising and public relations, assists Boards of Trustees; some DESE reporting.	3/20/05	
Allison Thresher, Admin. Coordinator	Oversees student enrollment and records, website, volunteer program, some DESE reporting.	9/8/08	3/31/09
Daniel Berger-Jones, Admin. Assistant	Answers phone, handles student meal orders & distribution, manages supply orders/inventory, supervises front office area.	1/5/09	6/23/09

Add additional rows as necessary. **In addition to completing this table, please provide an organizational chart including administrators' names and titles.**

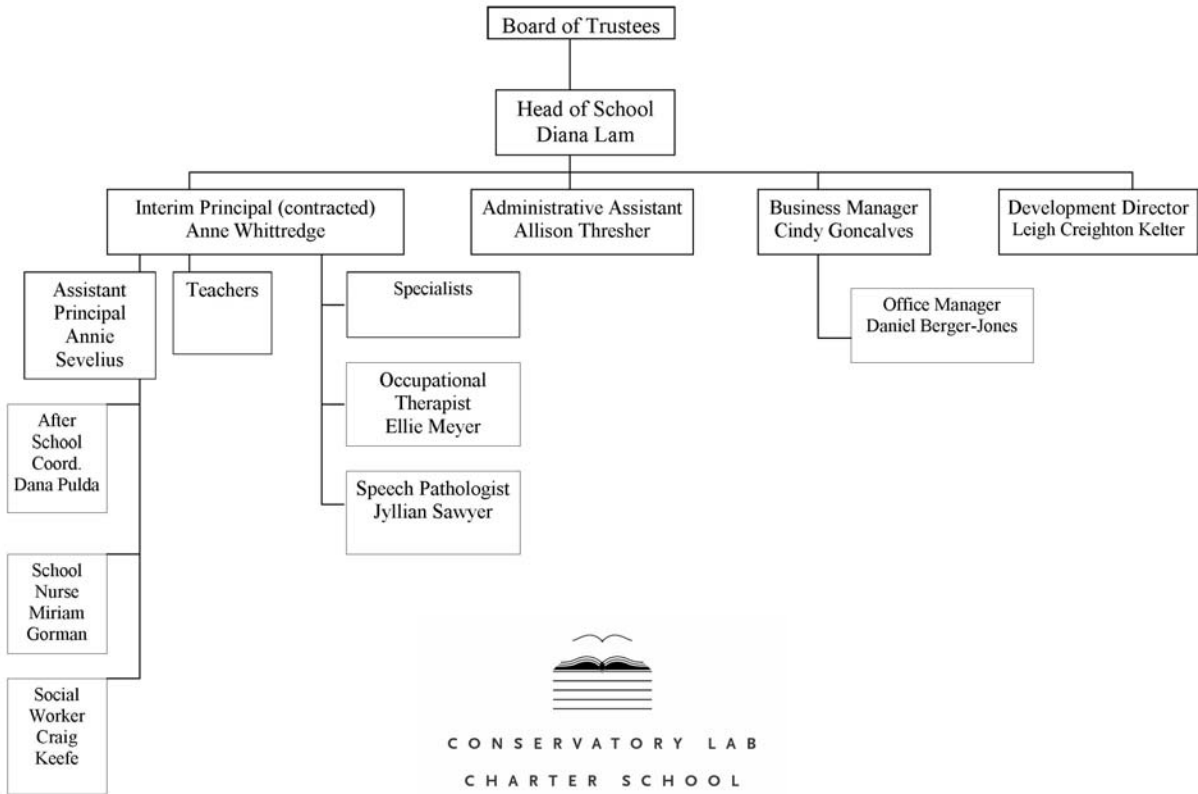
- See below for organizational chart.

TEACHERS AND STAFF ATTRITION FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR			
	Number as of the last day of the 2008-09 school year	Departures during the 2008-09 school year	Departures at the end of the school year
Teachers	18	2	9
Other Staff	6	1	1

In addition to completing this table, please provide a summary of the reasons for teacher and staff departures.

Many teachers and staff left CLCS to take jobs at other organizations. Others moved out of state, or chose to focus more on other pursuits (graduate school, parenthood, etc.).

2008-2009 Organizational Chart



CONSERVATORY LAB
CHARTER SCHOOL

a public school for learning through music

BOARD MEMBERS FOR THE 2008-09 SCHOOL YEAR				
Name	Position on the Board	Committee affiliation(s)	Area of expertise, and/or additional role at school (parent, staff member etc.)	- Number of terms served; - Length of each term, including date of election and expiration
Stephanie B. Perrin	Chair	Member of all committees	Arts education, school leadership	Terms: 3 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Sept. 1998 Term Ending: June 2010
Gary F. Gut	Vice Chair	Executive, Development, Education, Expansion Task Force	Entrepreneurship, fundraising, education	Terms: 2 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Feb. 2002 Term Ending: June 2012
Katharine M. Pell	Vice Chair	Executive, Development, Finance, Governance, Expansion Task Force	Fundraising, school leadership	Terms: 3 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Sept. 1998 Term Ending: June 2010
Robert Grinberg	Treasurer	Executive, Finance, Expansion Task Force	Entrepreneurship, finance	Terms: 2 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: June 2003 Term Ending: June 2012
Betty Allen	Clerk	Executive, K1 Task Force	Early childhood education	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Jan. 2004 Term Ending: June 2010
Judy Blackiemore	Trustee	Development	Parent of former student, fundraising	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: May 2006 Term Ending: June 2009
Charles Bradley	Trustee	Expansion Task Force	Architecture	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Oct. 2003 Term Ending: June 2010
Tamara Bright	Teacher Rep.	Education	Education	Terms: 1 Length: 1 yr. Elected: Sept. 2008 Term Ending: June 2009

Cheryl Render Brown	Trustee	Governance	Early childhood education	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Jan. 2004 Term Ending: June 2010
Jovanne Buckmire	Teacher Rep.	Education	Education	Terms: 1 Length: 1 yr. Elected: Sept. 2008 Term Ending: June 2009
Andrew Cabot	Trustee	Research, Expansion Task Force	Education, entrepreneurship	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: May 2007 Term Ending: June 2010
Mark Churchill	Trustee		Arts education, school leadership	Terms: 3 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Sept. 1998 Term Ending: June 2010
Ronald E. Gwiazda	Trustee	Human Resources, Education	Technology, education	Terms: 3 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Sept. 1998 Term Ending: June 2010
Toni Jackson	Trustee	Education, Expansion Task Force	Education	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: June 2005 Term Ending: June 2011
Adam F. Krauss	Trustee	Governance	Law	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: June 2005 Term Ending: June 2011
Diana Lam	Ex officio	Member of all committees	Staff member, Education, school leadership	Terms: 1 Length: 1 yr. Elected: Sept. 2008 Term Ending: June 2010
Christina Marasco	Teacher Rep.	K1 Task Force	Education	Terms: 1 Length: 1 yr. Elected: Sept. 2008 Term Ending: June 2009
Kim Marshall	Trustee	Education	Education, training school administrators	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Oct. 2003 Term Ending: June 2010

Danna Mauch	Trustee	Development , Research	Research, development, social services/healthcare	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: June 2005 Term Ending: June 2011
Staverne Miller	Trustee		Social services, parent of student	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Sept. 2005 Term Ending: June 2012
Adilene Santos	Trustee		Entrepreneurship, parent of student	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: June 2007 Term Ending: June 2010
Pamela Seigle	Trustee	Education	Education, social/emotional development	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: May 2007 Term Ending: June 2010
Andrew Snider	Trustee	Research	Entrepreneurship, development, leadership	Terms: 3 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Oct. 2000 Term Ending: June 2011
Anne W. Snyder	Trustee	Executive, Education	Education, teacher training	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: May 2005 Term Ending: June 2011
Ellen Winner	Trustee	Research	Research, arts education	Terms: 1 Length: 3 yrs. Elected: Feb. 2007 Term Ending: June 2010