Making Minds Sing
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 solfège. 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.
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; 19.3 teachers; 1 Aide. Highly qualified: 17
Experience, lead & associate classroom teachers: combined total of 49 years;
lead teachers: 34 years total/2.5 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 (46%) 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

Experience, lead & associate classroom teachers: combined total of 49 years;
lead teachers: 34 years total/2.5 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

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

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<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
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<td>Boston Total</td>
<td>159</td>
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| Out of Boston | 4 |
| Boston | 0 |
| Arlington | 1 | 1 |
| Charlestown | 1 | 1 |
| Total | 2 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 0 |

Openings for lottery: 22-Kindergarten; 7-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; 24 fourth grade
Finance

Balance Sheet*

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Assets</th>
<th>FY03 Actual</th>
<th>FY04 Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Cash</td>
<td>199,352</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grants and other receivables</td>
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<td>Prepaid expenses</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Liabilities</td>
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<td>Accrued payrolls</td>
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<td>Total</td>
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<td>Undesignated</td>
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<td>Investment in general fixed assets</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>330,235</td>
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<th>Total liabilities and fund equity</th>
<th>FY03</th>
<th>FY04</th>
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<td></td>
<td>366,839</td>
<td>381,758</td>
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*unaudited statement due to Annual Report deadline

Statement of Revenue and Expenditures*

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<th>Revenue</th>
<th>FY03 Actual</th>
<th>FY04 Budget</th>
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<tr>
<td>Per pupil income</td>
<td>$1,132,844</td>
<td>$1,682,272</td>
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<td>Federal/State meal reimbursement</td>
<td>35,941</td>
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<td>Fundraising</td>
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<td>Parent reimbursements (meals, etc)</td>
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<td>Total</td>
<td>$1,681,089</td>
<td>$1,682,272</td>
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<th>Expenditures</th>
<th>FY03</th>
<th>FY04</th>
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<td>Rent/mortgage/utilities</td>
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<td>Maintenance</td>
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<td>Insurance</td>
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<td>Classroom technology/activities</td>
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<td>Musc/sports equipment &amp; supplies</td>
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*unaudited statement due to Annual Report deadline
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Overseer of all Board committees  
Tenure: Sept. 1998

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Governance Committee  
Tenure: Sept. 1998  
Head, Walnut Hill School

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Tenure: 2002

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New England Conservatory  
Dean, Preparatory Division  
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Tenure: Sept. 1998

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Individuals

$10,000 And Up

- Patricia Casale  
- Andy and Judy Snider  
- Patricia and David Maddox  
- Ron Gwiazda  
- Joan and Henry Wheeler

$500-$999

- Blair and Carol Brown  
- John and Ann Clarkson  
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- Lee and George Sprague  
- Daniel and Prudence Steiner  
- Michael and Virginia Plummer  
- Steve Truemp

$2500-$4999

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- Anne and Jim Righter  
- Betty Michel  
- David and Marie Louise Scuddler  
- Salvation and Grace Viniguerra

$1,000-$2,499

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- Chip Bachelor  
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- Lionel and Vivian Spinis  
- Janet Spitz  
- Mary and Scott Street  
- Deborah Thompson  
- Steven M. Weiner

$500-$999

- David Alook and Katherine Lefevre  
- Joan K. Alden  
- Anonymous  
- Rhoda Bernard and David Sihng  
- Mabel and Louis Cabot  
- Mark and MaryLou Churchill  
- Kate and Peter Delbore  
- Jenny Edwards  
- Ron Gwiazda  
- Elizabeth and Francis Hunnewell  
- Bruce and Holly Johnston  
- Gordon and Mary Ford Kingsley  
- Emily Luchtelsen and John Monahan  
- Dr. Nina Longtine  
- Elizabeth Lydon and Daniel Cardinale  
- Joseph and Anne Pellegrino  
- Stephanie Perrin  
- Sam Phipps and Wendy Shattuck  
- Lisa and Bill Porous  
- Robert Radloff and Anne Beha  
- Susan and Philip Ragon  
- John Roberts

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- Steve Tromp  
- Michael and Virginia Plummer  
- Robert Radloff and Anne Beha  
- Peter and Adelaide Atken  
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- Deborah and Marshall Beale  
- Elizabeth Borne  
- William and Nanette Braucher  
- Beth Bronstein  
- Barbara and Ken Burns  
- John G. L. and Carroll Cabot  
- Deborah W. Callard  
- Barbara and Ken Burnes  
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- Deborah W. Callard  
- Robert and LaLan Cable  
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Volunteers and Visiting Artists

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- Rahel Abraham
- Deborah Beal
- Julia Cadrain
- Amanda Capone
- Julia Scott Carey
- Sarah Charmess
- Miki Cloud
- Charles Coe
- Girl Scouts
- Barbara Glauber
- Susan Holley
- Robert L. Hall
- Ellen Lee

- Steven Leonard
- Kim Marshall
- Cornell Moore
- Kelly Perlick
- Ross Popoff
- Lisa Quay
- Gil Shabam
- Emilie Steele
- Koko Tanaka
- Jennifer Turner

- Debra and Gary Cooper
- Shawn and Lesley Cooper
- Margaret Dunn
- Sam Fish
- Edward and Ellen Frechette
- Katherine Hakim
- Prisilla Hindmarsh
- Anne Howorth
- Joseph S. and Sara C. Junkin
- Margaret Moody
- Eli and Carolyn Newberger
- Eliza and Jack Rockart
- Sara Shohet
- Mary Fran and Tom Townend

- Deborah Greenbaum Nicholas and Marjorie Creville
- Elizabeth T. Hathorn Caroline and Frederick Hogan
- James and Beth Hughes
- Stephen and Anne Kendal
- Seth and Beth Klarman
- David LaRocque and Sandra Carrillo
- David and Susie Lawrence
- Thomas Lemere
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- Peter and Betty Madzen
- Deborah Miler
- Kena Montega
- Mary Newman
- Geoffrey Nurses
- Anne and Joseph Pellegrino
- Edward and Margaret Phillips
- Harold L. Pratt
- Bernard and Susan Pucker
- Robert Radoff
- Dudy and Susan Reeder
- Maxam Stampf
- James L. Terry
- Nicholas and Joan Thumske
- Sally and Peter Wide

- Other
- Alvin Baez
- Shawn and Lesley Cooper
- Vincent Dunn
- Sam Fish
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  office@conservatorylab.org
  www.conservatorylab.org

- CLCS Staff
  - Mary Street
  - Executive Director
  - Larry Scripp
  - Director of Research & Development
  - Emily Lichtenstein
  - Principal
  - Rhoda Bernard
  - Learning Through Music Coordinator
  - Catherine Crosby
  - Director of Academic Curriculum
  - Jacqueline Goggin
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  - Administrative Assistant
  - Andrew Graham
  - Data Assistant
  - Margaret Moody
  - Nurse

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$100-499 (continued)

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