

## **The Conservatory Lab Charter School Proposal Abstract**

(submitted by Larry Scripp, Ed.D, January 5, 1998 as Founding Director of the CLCS Founding Coalition and approved by the Massachusetts State Board of Education, February 25, 1998)

### Mission

The purpose of The Conservatory Lab School is to provide an opportunity for any inner city school child to achieve the highest standards of academic achievement in the context of the continuous and comprehensive study of music. This public school is not intended to serve a limited population of so-called musically gifted children, but to provide a learning community where all public school children will have a chance to learn academic skills in conjunction with developing musical listening, performance, composition, and literacy skills. Based on a growing body of research which suggests that achievement in reading, math and science is enhanced dramatically through association with the continuous study of music, this school will provide a model learning community in which music is used to transform even at-risk children into high-achieving learners, parents into effective partners in both academic and music learning processes, and teachers into action researchers and collaborators who will work with highly experienced consultants and interns to design a fully accountable "music-centric" elementary school curriculum that is adaptable to other public school settings.

### Education philosophy

The Conservatory Lab School embraces the belief that all pupils can benefit from musical instruction, from learning other subjects in conjunction with musical studies, and from a school culture that uses the process of musical growth as a model of learning in all subjects. Accordingly, in this school, a comprehensive study of music serves as a "universal language of learning" because of its effectiveness in engaging every child physically, emotionally, and cognitively, often simultaneously.

It is also the philosophy of this school that, as musical activities are threaded throughout the school day, children can learn to approach other academic subjects with a similar level of physical, emotional and intellectual stimulation. Accordingly, teachers in this school will be challenged continually to foster and/or observe evidence of learning transfer from musical skills across the curriculum. In particular, teachers and researchers will document closely the changes that occur in each child as music becomes the foundation for ever-increasing listening and observation skills, improved physical coordination, a more active imagination, increased powers of memorization, reading and interpretive skills—skills which may prove essential to the development of literacy in various disciplines, regardless of cultural background or initial proclivity for music.

A final element of the school's philosophy is the essential role of parents in their children's learning process. The core curriculum will include the study of a musical instrument through the Suzuki approach, precisely because it is a widely recognized and successful method for musical training; its success relies on the active and continuous participation of parents. Consequently, the Suzuki approach not only serves as the entry point for musical instruction, but also as a school-wide standard for parents' engagement and responsibilities in their child's learning processes in all subjects at school and at home.

### Most Important goals and expected outcomes

The primary deliverable of this school is the development of a model "Learning through Music" program for public elementary schools that meets the highest standards of musical and academic achievement and suggests clearly how music and learning in other disciplines can be integrated. The development of this model will be guided by faculty members from New England Conservatory, early childhood music specialists, and experts in learning academics through the arts. Teachers will be selected not only for their expertise in their primary disciplines, but also for their willingness to continually create, document and evaluate aspects of teaching and student assessment practices focused on learning in and through music. This school will also serve the Boston community as a laboratory for professional development and research focused on the impact of learning through music.