

*Lawrence Family Development
Charter School*



*Annual Report
2002 - 2003*

A Message from the President of the Board

The 2002-03 school year was a time of review and renewal at Lawrence Family Development Charter School. As a school community, we embarked on a two-year process to revisit our curriculum to strengthen alignment with Massachusetts Curriculum Frameworks. A school-wide team of educators, along with a consultant, worked to shape the direction of curriculum, benchmarks, and a K-8 scope and sequence to insure the mastery of skills and knowledge to satisfy state expectations.

The entire teaching staff participated in eight accountability teams addressing student achievement through the objectives of school performance identified in our year 2000 charter renewal. Research and recommendations by staff are included in this annual report and will help inform our 2005 charter renewal application. Summer workshops will specifically address assessments, helping to create a comprehensive authentic assessment plan for the school effective September 2003. This will inform the design of a revised report card during the 2003-04 school year.

Fall 2002 brought news of significant improvement in MCAS scores—particularly grade four English Language Arts, with 91% of students passing—just *ahead* of the state average and eighth grade math with an average score of 230, a significant growth from previous years. Spring 2002 third grade MCAS reading showed 88% passing, including 40% in the *proficient* category.

Improved reading skills and our goal that all students read at or above grade level by third grade mirrors the national goals of *No Child Left Behind* and supported our strong application for a Reading First grant. LFDCS was one of 38 districts and 55 schools in Massachusetts awarded a six-year grant which will enable us to build a first class reading department with experienced leadership, expanded reading materials, and directed professional development opportunities for all K-3 teachers. Fourteen teachers will accompany our Principal and new Reading First Coordinator to a week-long training in August to prepare for implementation in September 2003.

Student success was measured not only by MCAS growth but through successful participation in special projects. A science lab partnership with Northern Essex Community College expanded to include all seventh and eighth graders—helping to instill an excitement for learning science. Our second annual Science Fair featured 150 young scientists from grades 6, 7, and 8 with four projects, earning the opportunity to represent the school at the statewide Middle School Science Fair in May. A team of eighth grade students took third place and two projects earned honorable mention in our first entry in state competition. Our current graduating class (June 2003) continued the record of their predecessors. With more than half of the graduating class (17 of 31) applying for acceptance at private or parochial schools, 16 were accepted at one or more schools with \$400,000 (for four years) in scholarships and financial aid being awarded.

LFDCS continued its efforts to disseminate effective practices as required by Charter School legislation. A two-year project to document effective practices in parent involvement in education was led by our Director of Development and outside consultants. A survey designed to gather data and perspectives on the importance of parent involvement as a factor in academic achievement gathered information from almost 1000 individuals, representing 24 charter schools state wide. A conference to present best practices will take place in October 2003. At LFDCS, the statewide survey was carried out by parent volunteers who also gathered opinions and data on parent satisfaction at our school. More than one third of our parents responded with 97% indicating satisfaction with their children's academic program.

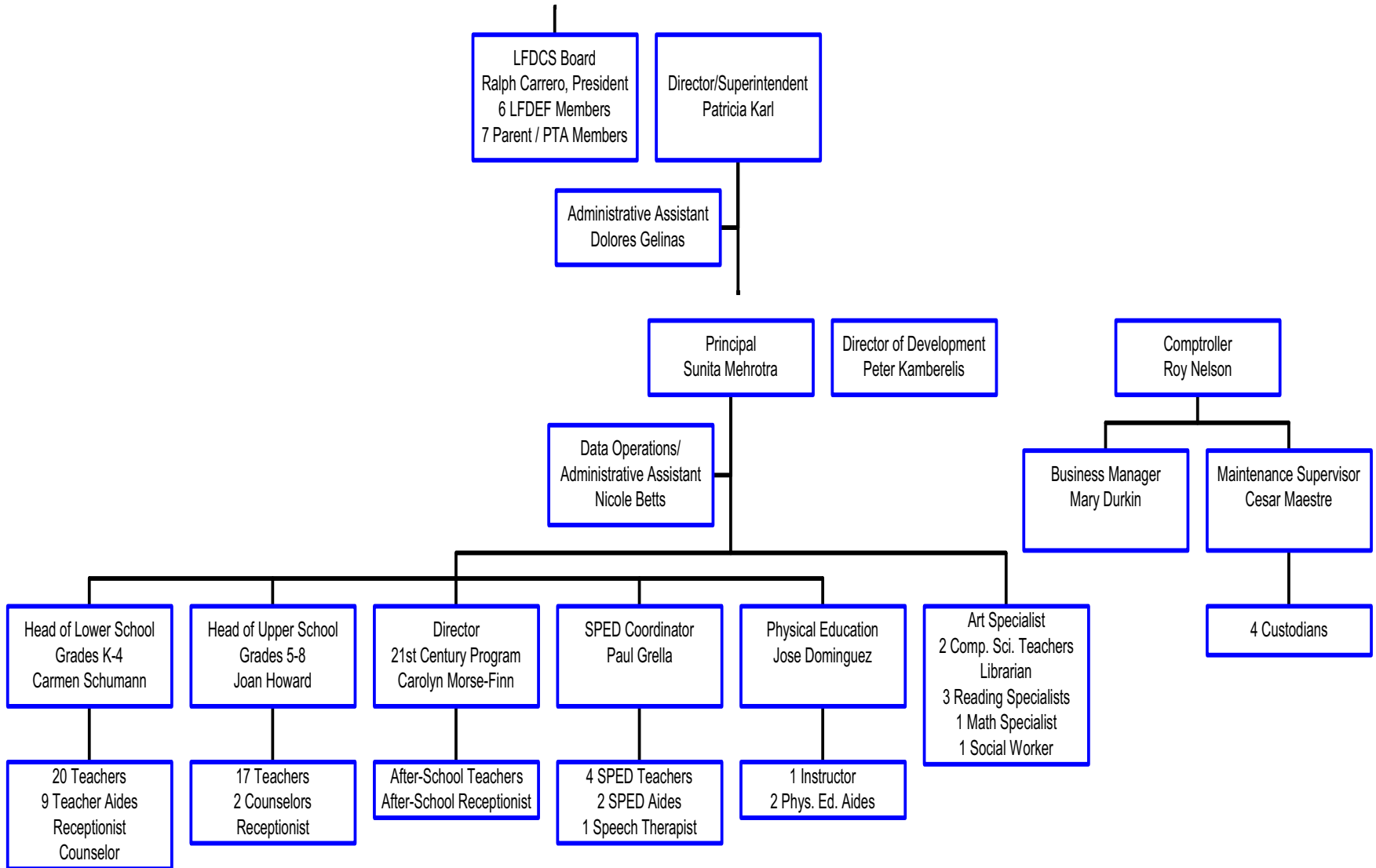
On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I wish to express our gratitude and appreciation to the parents who entrust their children to our school and assist us as partners in their education. To the educators and administrators who help them learn and develop and to all who give of time, talent, and treasure as volunteers and funders, *gracias a todos!*

Ralph L. Carrero
President

Organizational Chart

Lawrence Family Development Charter School

2002-2003



Growth of Our School at a Glance

	1995-1996	1996-1997	1997-1998	1998-1999	1999-2000	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Grades Served	K-3	K-4	K-5	K-6	K-7	K-8	K-8	K-8
Number of Students Enrolled	180	238	296	360	428	475	483	491
Number of Classrooms	9	12	15	18	23	27	29	29
Maximum Number of Students in Classroom	20	20	20	20	20	20	21	20
Number of Student Computers	19	24	27	50	59	71	84	84
Number of Students on Waiting List	90	165	216	111	111	198	139	222
Total Number of Teachers	11	14	21	26	31*	46	53.5	49
Student to Teacher Ratio (Professional Staff)	12 : 1	10 : 1	12 : 1	12 : 1	12.5 : 1	10.3 : 1	9:1	9:1
Student to Teacher Ratio (Class Size)	20:1	20:1	20:1	20:1	(20:1 K-6 -- 15:1 7&8)			
Staff Turnover	30%	27%	14%	8%	24%	22%	28.9%	22%
Percentage of Certified Teachers	44%	40%	59%	60%	52%	61%	67%	68%
Teacher Salary Range	\$25,000 - \$29,000	\$25,500 - \$29,580	\$26,000 - \$30,080	\$26,500 - \$31,090	\$26,490 - \$35,810	\$26,360 - \$38,000	\$31,615 - \$47,750	\$31,850-\$ 50,180
Average Per Pupil or State-Allocated Expenditure	\$6,125	\$6,242	\$6,398	\$6,723	\$7,312	\$8,069	\$8,635	\$9,795
Average Daily Attendance	96%	95%	95%	95%	95%	96%	95.8%	96%
Average Number of Students in Attendance	178.43	237.42	293.42	357.3	423.7	473.8	462.8	475.6
Students Receiving Special Ed. Services	3%	3%	4%	5%	7%	9%	12%	11%
Non IEP Students Receiving SPED Services	**	**	**	**	3%	2%	4%	4%

The Guidance Placement Program – Paths for their Futures

The Guidance Placement Program celebrated its third anniversary with impressive outcomes. Eighth graders achieved an overall 88% acceptance rate to private high schools with 53% obtaining financial aid and/or scholarships. Students initiated their hard work in the summer of 2002 by attending two preparatory programs—the Summer SSAT Prep Program here at LFDCS and Prep@Pingree in Hamilton. These programs served to initiate students to the complex process of being accepted at college preparatory high schools, including the taking of entrance exams, completing applications, conducting interviews, and submitting grades and letters of recommendation. Students received intensive instruction in Language Arts and Mathematics to help ensure successful outcomes to the entrance exams. They were also encouraged to apply to many private high schools such as Proctor Academy, Concord Academy, The Pingree School, Noble & Greenough, Brewster Academy, Phillips Academy, Kimball Union Academy, and The Putney School. During the fall, many guest speakers from parochial and private independent high schools came to talk to eighth graders about the expectations of private schools.

The placement program conducted nineteen group sessions after school twice a week for two hours to help students complete applications and edit essays. Three special meetings informed parents of the admission and financial aid processes and provided them with information on the overall progress of their children. Students were interviewed individually at least three times to monitor their academic and admission progress. Eighty-one applications were submitted to parochial, private independent high schools, vocational schools, and other schools of choice.

Financial Assistance

In order for students and parents to believe in the possibility of private school admission, sufficient financial aid must be obtained. This year, forty-five waivers were granted to cover application fees, entrance test registration, and financial aid reports for a total value of \$1,726. Additionally, our students received a total of \$109,000 in tuition assistance and scholarships. Three students obtained full financial aid for a total of \$94,000.

ACCEPTANCE RATE	2000-2001	2001-2002	2002-2003
Parochial High Schools	7/19=37%	12/19=63%	13/16=81%
Private High Schools	1/7 (waitlisted)=14%	3/5=60%	6/10=60%
Vocational Schools	6/7=85%	8/8=100%	10/14=71%

ENROLLMENT RATE		SCHOOL PLACEMENT	
Parochial High Schools	6/16=38%	Central Catholic High School	4
		Lowell Catholic High School	1
		Presentation of Mary Academy	1
Private High Schools	4/10=40%	Proctor Academy	1
		Noble & Greenough	1
		The Putney School	1
		Community Christian Academy	1
Vocational High Schools	10/14=71%	Greater Lawrence Technical School	10
Other		Lawrence Public Schools **	8
		Out of State	3

**Three students are still waiting for vocational school acceptance results.

