

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of
Excellence

649 State Street,
Springfield, MA 01109

Annual Report
2007-2008

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence

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1. School Address/Contact Information

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence
649 State Street, Springfield, MA 01109
413-214-7806 Telephone
413-214-7838 Fax
info@mlkcs.org Email
No website

Executive Director: Alan M. Katz
Director of Education: Jamel Adkins-Sharif

2. Introductory Description of the School

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence opened in Springfield in September, 2006. During this second year, MLK Charter School had 240 students in kindergarten through 3rd grades. The school's enrollment cap will increase at the rate of 60 students per year, reaching full enrollment as a 360-student, K-5 school for the 2009-2010 school year.

3. Letter from Chair of the Board of Trustees

July 28, 2008

Commissioner Mitchell D. Chester
Massachusetts Department of Elementary & Secondary Education
350 Main Street
Malden, MA 02148

Dear Commissioner Chester:

2007-2008 was the second operational year for Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence. The school expanded to include 3rd grade in addition to K-2. The school has been fully enrolled since it opened. The school's annual parent satisfaction survey found that, universally, parents are satisfied with the school overall, and are satisfied with the school's academic program and teaching and reinforcing of the Dr. King values.

All members of our school community strive to build Dr. King's beloved community. Throughout every school day and throughout the school building, adults are helping children understand and live the Dr. King values. The children are making tremendous progress toward their goals of academic excellence and character development.

The board of trustees is pleased with the school's organizational structure, curriculum, and instructional methods. The second year brought no significant changes in the philosophy of the school.

The second year was marked by modification of the school program to strengthen the school culture to help achieve our mission. Trustees have had the great pleasure this year of visiting MLK Charter School and experiencing the school culture that we envisioned: friendly, loving, very positive, and respectful with high standards and expectations throughout. We are impressed by and proud of the students and the staff.

Sincerely,

Lisa Beth Wilkins Baker

4. School Mission Statement



MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. CHARTER SCHOOL OF EXCELLENCE

Mission Statement

"Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."
Martin Luther King, Jr.

Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence prepares kindergarten through 5th grade students of Springfield for academic success and engaged citizenship through insistence on rigorous, challenging work. The school incorporates Dr. King's commitment to the highest standards in scholarship, civic participation and the ideal of the beloved community.

5. Summary of Educational Philosophy

MLK Charter School students will achieve academic excellence, be prepared for engaged citizenship, and strive to create beloved community. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and values are fundamental to the school's culture. Our Dr. King, Jr. Curriculum: Building a Beloved Community is the core of the school's culture. We address such concepts as individual responsibility, respect for human dignity, and equal opportunity. From kindergarten through 5th grade, the children will develop their character through our pervasive school culture including the literature-based Dr. King curriculum, its community-service-learning component, the monthly Dr. King values, and our frequently articulated goal of building a beloved community. MLK Charter School responds to the many needs of the children with an individualized, rigorous program of academic and social-

emotional learning. As Dr. King wrote, "Intelligence plus character – that is the goal of true education."

MLK Charter School will achieve its academic learning goal of excellence in scholarship through a schedule that includes lengthy daily periods of both English language arts (reading, writing, and oral) and mathematics, and a school-wide early afternoon reading period. The curriculum also includes social studies and a hands-on science program. Music, art, computer skills, Spanish and fitness instruction flows from our desire to motivate all students and provide a well-rounded education. Students will devote the last part of the afternoon to special studies consolidating learning in English language arts and mathematics and building competence through artistic and other endeavors.

The school will remain a small school with class size that allows all children to feel a sense of belonging and to support and encourage each other in their individual goals toward a personal best. Each class will have two well-educated faculty members. The instructional method is constructivist pedagogy. In this method, teachers support the natural learning process in which students construct knowledge from their experience by structuring learning activities based on the big ideas or concepts. MLK Charter School implements program strategies that show the greatest gains for students: 1) quality implementation, leadership and accountability; 2) academically demanding curriculum; 3) family involvement; 4) individualized supports for students; and 5) community involvement.

MLK Charter School, its students, and their parents and guardians support a culture of high expectations, a commitment that all of the children will successfully learn and develop their character.

6. Summary of Performance Relative to Accountability Plan Goals

(1) Academic Performance Goals: As excellent scholars, all students will (1) read and write proficiently and (2) accurately apply mathematical principles.

The Accountability Plan measures of academic performance are standardized test results. MLK Charter does not yet have any standardized test results.

(2) Organizational Viability Goals: The school will demonstrate its organizational viability by the board's ongoing, active governance, unwavering fiscal responsibility, and the school's demonstrated responsiveness to its customers. Our accountability plan measures our progress:

- a. Ongoing active governance by the board: Friends of MLK Charter School, Inc. will complete Capital Campaign Scheduling Committee process by October, 2008. MLK Charter School has a long-term facility by September, 2009. Funds development adequately supports facility purchase, construction, and renovation.
- b. Unwavering fiscal responsibility: The audit for each fiscal year will confirm an operating surplus or 2:1 ratio of current assets to liabilities on the balance sheet. The audit for each fiscal year will have no material findings.
- c. Responsiveness to the families it serves: The school will have enrollment of 99% of charter capacity each year. The school will have a waiting list for each grade.

MLK Charter School met the organizational viability goals of unwavering fiscal responsibility and responsiveness to the families it serves. It is too soon to know whether the school will satisfy the measures of ongoing active governance by the board.

- (3) Faithfulness to Charter: MLK Charter School will be the school envisioned in the charter.
 - a. Parent involvement consistent with parent/guardian contract: 2/3 of parents/guardians of identified students will partner with us to improve behavior. Parent/guardian confirmation of reading at home with 80% of students.
 - b. Building a beloved community: Less than 10% student attrition for reasons other than moving or need for day program. No more than 10% of faculty annually because they are dissatisfied
 - c. Community service-learning: All students participate in community service learning each year. All teachers report that the community service learning supports academic achievement.

MLK Charter School met the Accountability Plan measures for building a beloved community. While the school might have met the measures for parent involvement consistent with the parent/guardian contract and community service-learning, the school's system for measuring success in achieving these objectives is not yet sufficiently accurate to rely on.

7. Summary of External Assessment Results

MLK Charter does not yet have any external standardized test results.

8. Summary of Internal Assessment Results

Our primary assessment tool for ELA was the Developmental Reading Assessment (DRA). The DRA is a nationally used language arts assessment tool. This instrument was administered in the fall of 2007, and the winter of 2007-2008; for kindergarten students the test was administered in the winter of 2007-2008, and the spring of 2008. We

looked at student growth from one grade year to the next, for example, to see if last terms' (06-07) second graders showed persistent strength in performance as third graders this term (07-08).

In kindergarten, 72% of our students are reading on or above level. In grade one, 71% of students tested on or above grade level in the fall of 2007; this dropped to 37% in winter 07-08. In grade two, 58% of students tested on or above grade level in the fall, and 52% were on or above grade level by winter. Grade three was more consistent, with 54% testing on or above grade level in the fall, and 53% in the winter. Of concern was the decrease across grades from beginning to mid-term, particularly in grade one. A number of factors will be addressed in the 2008-2009 term to improve student performance as tested on the DRA, including interventions by the literacy department and careful analysis and implementation of the DRA's focus for instruction recommendations.

As we are only a year two school, we focused our efforts last term on ELA, and developing teacher proficiency in language arts instruction and administration of the DRA. For the upcoming 2008-2009 term, we have instituted systems to develop internal assessments and analysis procedures for mathematics.

9. Number of Instructional Days

2007 – 2008 School Year

180 days in session (9/4/07 to 6/18/08)

10. List of Members of the Board of Trustees with Details as Defined

Board Member Name	Employer/Expertise	Position Held	Term of Appointment	Term Expiration	Committee Service
Arce, Miguel	Administrator and educator with extensive experience in building and leading community based human service organizations, adjunct social work professor at Springfield College		1 st Term	12/31/2009	Funds Development Committee
Baker, Lisa	Governance experience, legal skills (including analysis & children's legal issues), advocacy, drafting	Chairman	2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Executive Committee, Chair Governance Committee
Degazon, Janet	Experience in information technology (IT) and		1 st Term	12/31/2009	Finance Committee

	information systems organization (ISO) with MassMutual				
deSousa, Beth	C.P.A.	Treasurer	2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Executive Committee Finance Committee, Chair Funds Development Committee
Gianesin, Joseph	Experience as a school social worker and principal, Springfield College social work professor	Vice President	2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Executive Committee Governance Committee, Chair
Harrison, Anne	Professor of education. Experience as an elementary school teacher and VP for academic affairs at Elms College		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Finance Committee Academic Excellence Committee, Chair
Jones, Kisha	Attorney with legal skills including children and family law		1 st Term	12/31/2009	Governance Committee
Jordan, Denise	Has fundraising and governance experience in non-profits, civil rights officer for the MA Executive Office of Health & Human Services	Clerk	2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Executive Committee Human Resources Committee, Co-Chair
Pesce, Gus	Former school superintendent, psychology and education professor and directs special education training at American International College		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Facility Committee
Robinson, Dora	Has management, finance, governance, organizing an education skills, has extensive contacts in Springfield, President/CEO of Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Center		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Funds Development Committee
Scott, Rodney	Senior vice president and commercial relationship manager for Sovereign Bank		1 st Term	12/31/2010	Finance
Smith, Myra	VP of human resources and multicultural affairs at Springfield Technical Community College		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Human Resources Committee, Co-Chair

Stebbins, Marie	Community volunteer active in fundraising and governance for non-profits		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Funds Development Committee, Chair
Waldoch, Terez	Retired elementary school teacher and administrator, most recently principal of a Springfield elementary school		2 nd Term	12/31/2010	Human Resources Committee Academic Excellence Committee

11. Summary of Major Policy Decisions made by the Board of Trustees

In January, one new trustee, Sovereign Bank senior vice president Rodney Scott, joined the board. Ten founding trustees are now serving their second term.

The school and fiscal year ended with positive indications about the board's leadership. The board evaluated favorably the executive director's leadership and job performance in light of the school's financial position, staff retention, student academic progress, and creation of the school culture envisioned in the charter.

The board of trustees began the year by securing a second site across the street from the school's main building. Kindergarten was held at the second site in 2007-2008, while both kindergarten and 4th grade will be at the second site in 2008-2009. The board of trustees approved MLK Charter School's first summer academic support program. The program is serving 40 struggling students.

The board approved the fiscal year 2009 budget. The Friends of Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Excellence, Inc. with the support of the school's board completed a successful feasibility study for a capital campaign.

The board obtained two grants in partnership with Elms College to purchase books for the school's Dr. King Curriculum.

The fiscal year 2008 audit of the school's finances was favorable. The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education Year Two Site Visit was successful. The board of trustees reviewed the report of the site visit, acknowledged the predominance of positive findings, but focused on areas noted as needing improvement.

12. Charter Amendments Approved by the Commissioner or Board of Education

MLK Charter School had no charter amendments during 2007-2008.

13. Summary of Official Complaints

There were no official complaints during FY 2008.

14. Student Demographics

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total	Percentage of Students
Enrollment as of 6/30/08	58	84	59	39	240	
Residence						
Springfield	58	83	59	39	239	
Westfield	0	1	0	0	1	
Race/Ethnicity						
Hispanic	17	31	19	12	79	33%
White	13	20	13	8	54	23%
African American	40	55	39	27	161	67%
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0	1	0	1	
White & African American	2	3	2	2	9	4%
White & African American & Native Hawaiian	0	1	0	1	2	1%
African American & American Indian	0	1	1	0	2	1%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2	4	2	1	9	4%
White & Black & American Indian/Alaska Native	0	0	1	0	1	
White & African American & Asian & American Indian/Alaska Native	1	0	0	0	1	

Gender						
Female	27	39	32	19	117	49%
Male	31	45	27	20	123	51%
Low Income Status	50	68	54	33	206	85%
Special Education Services	4	8	8	3	23	10%
ELL	3	0	0	0	3	1%

15. Total Number of Student Applications Received

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
Student Applications Received	157	26	26	21	230

16. Student Attrition Data

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total	
Withdrawals (during the school year)	6	6	2	5	19	8% of total enrollment
Completed the 2006-2007 school year but did not return in September 2009	15	4	5	2	26	11% of total enrollment

Summary of Reasons for Total Student Withdrawals

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
Family preferred student attend zoned Springfield district school	3	2	1	3	9

Family preferred student attend a K-12 charter school	3	0	0	0	3
Family preferred school choice option out of Springfield	2	0	0	0	2
Transportation needs	0	0	1	0	1
Student need required a day or specialized program	2	3	1	0	6
Family moved out of district	7	5	3	4	19
Enrolled Sibling withdrawn for one of the reasons stated above	1	0	1	1	3
Unknown reason for withdrawal	3	0	0	0	3

17. Number of Students who have been Expelled and who have served In-School and/or Out-Of-School Suspensions

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
Number of Students Expelled	0	0	0	0	0
Number of In-School Suspensions	0	0	0	0	0
Number of Out-of-School Suspensions	6	19	3	4	32
Number of Students Suspended	4	12	2	4	22

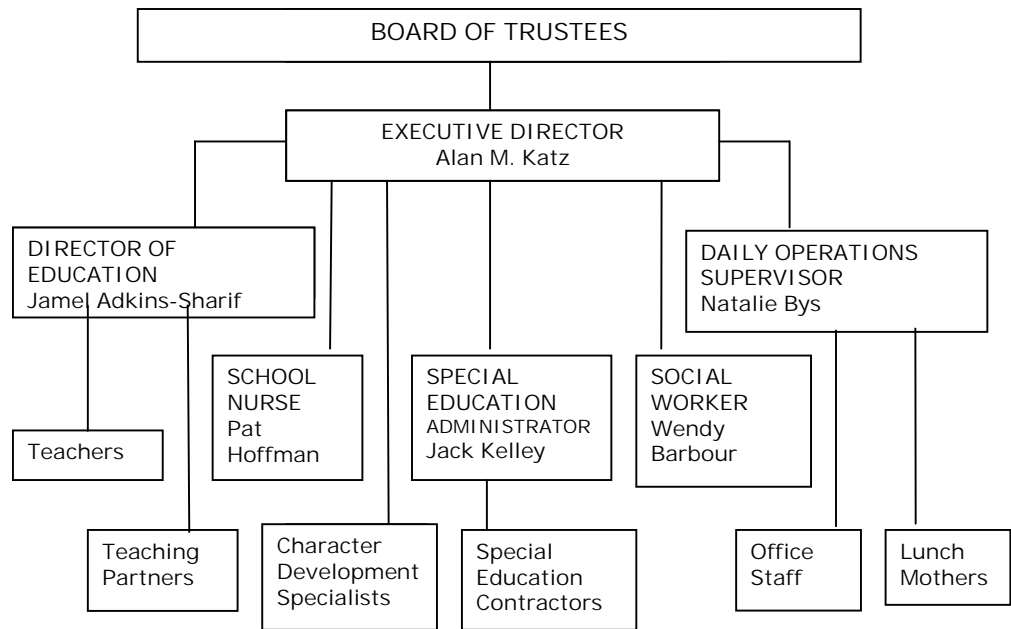
Summary of Reasons for Suspensions*

	Kindergarten	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Total
Hitting classmate and/or teacher	6	17	3	4	30
Defying adult authority	2	7	2	0	11
Damaging School Property	0	1	0	0	1

**In the case of suspensions resulting from more than one suspendible action, each action was listed separately.*

18. Name of School Leader(s), Including Instructional Leader(s)

Executive Director: Alan M. Katz
 Director of Education: Jamel Adkins-Sharif



19. Summary of Classroom Teacher Qualifications

Teacher Qualifications	Number	Percentage
Number of Highly Qualified Classroom Teachers	10	77%
Number of Highly Qualified Specials Teachers: Literacy, Special Education, Art, Music, Spanish	4	67%
Number of teachers with an earned master's degree	6	30%
Number of teachers with Massachusetts licensure	14	70%
Number of Highly Qualified Teaching Partners Note: All have an earned bachelors degree	13	100%
FTEs Teachers	20	
FTEs Teaching Partners	13.5	
Classroom teachers average years of teaching experience	5.4	
All teachers (including specials) average years of teaching experience	7.1	
Average years at MLKCSE <i>Note: The school has operated for only two years.</i>	1.7	
Average class size	20	

20. Teacher Attrition

	Number	Reason
Number of teachers who have left since the beginning of the school year	0	
Number of teachers who completed the year but will not be returning	4	1 moved overseas 1 moved out of state 1 moved to eastern Massachusetts 1 not rehired

21. Unaudited Financial Statement for Fiscal Year 2008

Revenues						
	State Sources					
		Per-pupil revenue				\$2,442,843
	Federal Entitlements & Grants					
		Department of Education				\$461,153
	Other Revenue					
		Other				\$24,316
Total Revenues						\$2,928,312

Expenses						
		Salaries & Wages				\$1,547,282
		Fringe Benefits				\$189,331
		Contractual Consultants/Services				\$79,102
		Professional Development				\$2,676
		Health Services				\$35,687
		Instructional Supplies & Materials				\$109,142
		Student Related Activities				\$7,250
		Transportation				\$2,572
		Maintenance & Grounds				\$244,970
		Insurance				\$6,147
		Depreciation				\$100,574
		Recruitment/Advertising				\$2,090
		Admin Expense & Supplies				\$26,554
		Other				\$37,670
		Total Expenses				\$2,391,046
		Net				\$537,266

Grants Received						Amount Received
		Department of Education – Title I				\$137,387
		Department of Education – Title IIA Teacher Quality				\$22,216
		Department of Education – Title IID Enhanced Educ Technology				\$952
		Department of Education – Special Education				\$53,377
		Department of Education – Special Education Improve/Develop				\$4,500
		Department of Education – Title V				\$611
		Start Up				\$169,550
		Total				\$388,593

22. Unaudited Balance Sheet Setting Forth the Charter School's Assets, Liabilities, and Fund Balances or Equities

Assets							
			Cash-Operating Funds				\$1,187,440
			Revenue Receivable				\$23,358
			Prepaid Expenses				\$16,706
			Equipment-Capital				\$219,250
Total Assets							\$1,446,753
Liabilities & Fund Balance							
Liabilities							
			Accounts Payable				\$39,444
			Accrued Expenses				\$158,128
Total Liabilities							\$197,573
Fund Balance							\$1,249,181
Total Liabilities & Fund Balance							\$1,446,753

23. Approved School Budget for Fiscal Year 2009

Revenues							
State Sources							
Per-pupil revenue							\$3,111,060
Federal Entitlements & Grants							
Department of Education							\$260,000
Other Revenue							
Other							\$50,000
Total Revenues							\$3,421,060
Expenses							
Salaries & Wages							\$2,035,540
Fringe Benefits							\$339,236
Contractual Consultants/Services							\$98,690
Professional Development							\$90,000
Health Services							\$54,600
Instructional Supplies & Materials							\$163,314
Student Related Activities							\$12,135
Testing & Assessment							\$5,000
Transportation							\$4,500
Maintenance & Grounds							\$394,612
Insurance							\$12,818
Depreciation							\$110,000
Recruitment/Advertising							\$7,500
Admin Expense & Supplies							\$83,240
Other							\$9,875
Total Expenses							\$3,421,060
Net							\$0