

# RETHINKING THE ESSENTIAL ROLE OF MUSIC IN EDUCATION

Julia B. Morrison Elementary, a Title 1 school located in the Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District in Norwalk, California (20 minutes from downtown Los Angeles), continues to be motivated by the desire to serve the school's students, build a school-wide music education program, and research/field test music learning models. The school enrollment is more than 600 students, Grades K through 6. The student population is 88% Hispanic/Latino, and nearly 40% of the students are classified as English Language Learners. Seven out of ten students live below the poverty line, and four out of ten students have parents who did not graduate from high school.

Some years ago, Morrison Elementary was confronting the same dilemma facing scores of schools of schools nationally: A significant percentage of its students demonstrated low levels of achievement in reading, language arts, and mathematics. Faced with a compelling need to find a solution, Morrison Principal Marsha Guerrero set out to design a program that would motivate learning and improve student achievement. The school administration studied the substantial brain research regarding connections between music and learning, and as a result developed a special project that integrates music into the core curriculum as a catalyst for improving student achievement. In 2005, Morrison Elementary became part of the Music in Education National Consortium's Learning Laboratory Schools Network.

Student achievement has improved significantly at Morrison since the school began investing in music education nearly ten years ago. The school scored 813 in the 2008 API and is now rated a *High Performing Title 1 School*. In addition, Morrison Elementary was honored as a *2008 California Department of Education Distinguished School*.

In September 2008 another music project/study was started at Morrison Elementary by District Visual and Performing Arts TOSA, Karen Calhoun. The project/study involved a target 4/5 grade intervention class which specifically works with rhythm in a drum line type of ensemble. The class contained thirteen 5<sup>th</sup> grade students and twelve 4<sup>th</sup> grade students. Out of the 25 total students, 20 were boys. All 25 of the students were English Language Learners. All 25 students were in need of some sort of "learning needs" intervention. The rhythm study/project began the last week of September in 2008. The students get one 45 minute session of "drumline" each week. The following data charts are a record of the student's Language Arts Progress, beginning with their early September Benchmark Test, including their end of October Benchmark Test (after five weeks of rhythm study intervention), and their February 2009 Benchmark Test. Along with dramatic achievements on these Benchmark Tests, student self-esteem, study habits, self-motivation, focus, personal engagement, and self discipline have all improved.

Further information on this project/study can be obtained by contacting;

Karen Calhoun, Visual and Performing Arts TOSA

Norwalk-La Mirada Unified School District

562 868-0431 x2104

[kcalhoun@nlmusd.k12.ca.us](mailto:kcalhoun@nlmusd.k12.ca.us)

2008 – 2009

# Grade 4/5 Intervention

- targeted intervention class
- 25 students (20 boys, 5 girls)
- all English Learners

Targeted Intervention: **MUSIC**

Drumline

Choral music

Musical Theatre

Steel Pan Orchestra (selected students)

# Language Arts Progress

## •Fall, 2008 Benchmark

	<u>Grade 4 (12 students)</u>	<u>Grade 5 (13 students)</u>
Proficient	0%	0%
Basic	18%	31%
Below Basic	45%	38%
Far Below Basic	36%	31%

## •Feb, 2009 Benchmark

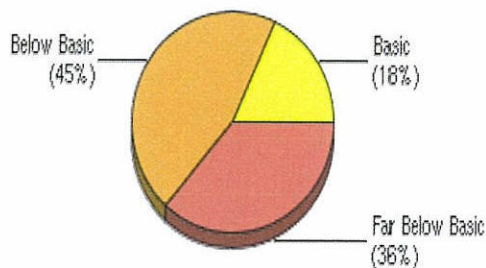
	<u>Grade 4 (12 students)</u>	<u>Grade 5 (13 students)</u>
Proficient	8%	8%
Basic	58%	77%
Below Basic	17%	15%
Far Below Basic	17%	0%

ALS BMK1 HM ELA Grade 4  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Sep 2nd, 2008

Performance

Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	0	0
Basic	2	18
Below Basic	5	45
Far Below Basic	4	36
Total	11	100%

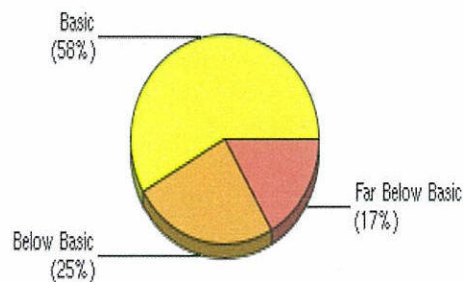


ALS BMK2 HM ELA Grade 4  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Oct 30th, 2008

Performance

Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	0	0
Basic	7	58
Below Basic	3	25
Far Below Basic	2	17
Total	12	100%

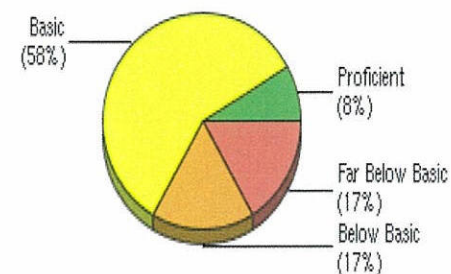


ALS BMK3 HM ELA Grade 4  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Feb 23rd, 2009

Performance

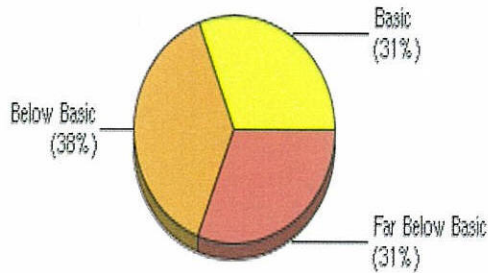
Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	1	8
Basic	7	58
Below Basic	2	17
Far Below Basic	2	17
Total	12	100%



ALS BMK1 HM ELA Grade 5  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Sep 2nd, 2008

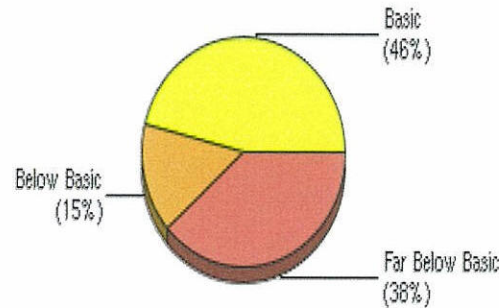
Performance		
Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	0	0
Basic	4	31
Below Basic	5	38
Far Below Basic	4	31
Total	13	100%



ALS BMK2 HM ELA Grade 5  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Oct 30th, 2008

Performance		
Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	0	0
Basic	6	46
Below Basic	2	15
Far Below Basic	5	38
Total	13	100%



ALS BMK3 HM ELA Grade 5  
 School Name Morrison Elementary  
 School  
 Teacher Name McCarthy, Nicole

Test Date Feb 23rd, 2009

Performance		
Level	# Students	% Students
Advanced	0	0
Proficient	1	8
Basic	10	77
Below Basic	2	15
Far Below Basic	0	0
Total	13	100%

