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WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

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August 12, 1998

Robert Pinsky
General Delivery
Truro, Massachusetts 02666

Dear Robert:

Thanks for the great op-ed you sent to the *New York Times* in response to R. W. Apple's commentary. I really enjoyed reading it, and I want you to know how much I appreciate your taking the time to respond so enthusiastically and articulately. I know I speak for Hillary as well when I say how grateful we are for your outspoken support.

It's too bad we didn't get a chance to talk at the end of the Millennium evening, but I was glad to hear you'd met Buddy! Hillary and I will hope to see you soon. Keep up the terrific work.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

It isn't the worst
false hit the talent.
Mauler

Eugenie Bisulco

08/03/98 09:38:44 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Nancy V. Hernreich/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Letter to Times

In case the President doesn't see this op-ed...read below. I think we owe a debt of gratitude to Robert.

----- Forwarded by Eugenie Bisulco/WHO/EOP on 08/03/98 09:37 AM -----



Robert Pinsky <rpinsky @ mediaone.net>
07/30/98 05:22:25 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Eugenie Bisulco/WHO/EOP

cc:

Subject: Letter to Times

Dear Eugenie,

Ellen Lovell alerted me to R.W. Apple's piece the other day. I just sent this response to the Letters to the Editor . . . we'll see what they do with it, but I thought you'd be interested.

See you in Albuquerque. I'm going there directly from Iran!

Best,
Robert

Robert Pinsky
General Delivery
Truro, MA 02666
508 487 5522, Fax 508 487 4325
rpinsky@mediaone.net

To The Editor:

R.W. Apple in an essay entitled "Elected Bodies With Hardly A Cultured Bone" ("Arts & Leisure," ponders what he calls "the philistine climate

Handwritten notes:
Don't forget
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in Washington." In his defense of culture against the philistines, Apple has some severe words for President Clinton and Mrs. Clinton. He laments that White House guest lists neglect artists in favor of show business and regrets that Mrs. Clinton "unlike Jacqueline Kennedy" appears to be "disinclined to compensate for her husband in this area."

It's wonderful to have the Times protecting art from the philistines, but a few facts I've observed in my current post suggest a somewhat different story:

On April 22, the President and First Lady entertained about a hundred American poets at an historic East Room event, at which poems by Ralph Waldo Emerson, Emily Dickinson, Walt Whitman, Robert Frost, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes, Frank O'Hara, Robert Hayden, Elizabeth Bishop and others were read aloud.

The readers included school children, a disabled war veteran, a minister, the two previous Laureates, Rita Dove and Robert Hass, and me. The event was cybercast to all of the countries VA hospitals and to many other sites, and we took questions from the cyber-audience. President Clinton took part by reading a poem by Emerson, and Mrs. Clinton read a poem by the late Howard Nemerov. I knew enough about the event to know that both Clintons actively selected the poems they chose.

The guest list included John Ashbery, Lucille Clifton, Carolyn Forché, Jonathan Galassi, Louise Glück, Anthony Hecht, Yusef Komunyakaa, Galway Kinnell, Philip Levine, W.S. Merwin, C.K. Williams. After the reading and buffet supper, President Clinton chatted with the guests for several hours, demonstrating that he could quote hundreds of lines of Shakespeare from memory.

R.W. Apple writes "Bill Clinton, though no worse than the run of American Presidents, is not much better," in this regard. But at an earlier White House dinner, honoring Medal in the Arts recipients, Nadja Sonnenberg-Salerno performed, including in her program a violin arrangement of a prelude by George Gershwin. Ms. Sonnenberg mentioned Gershwin's approaching centennial, and in remarks that appeared spontaneous to me the President observed that William Faulkner's centennial was also at hand. "Think of those two imaginations," he said, and invited his listeners to consider how much better the history of our last hundred years might have been if we could have been guided by those imaginations.

In my experience of American politicians, indeed journalists, few of them could use the word "imagination" with that kind of assurance and grace. As to Mrs. Clinton, who selected Nemerov's poem "The Makers" by reading through her own books, when the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities were under the most severe Congressional attack, she wrote an effective OpEd piece supporting the Endowments.

The White House event for poets on April 22, honoring American poetry as part of the Millenium Celebration, was called "historic" and "unprecedented" by the newspapers and magazines that covered it. (USA

Today devoted a page to the evening.) It was the launch of a nationwide project to make a video and audio archive of many ordinary Americans, each reading aloud a poem the person loves.

The April 22 poetry evening at the White House was not reported by the New York Times. At the time, thinking about that omission, I wondered to myself if poetry just seemed an unimportant highbrow diversion to you. I am glad if the essay by R.W. Apple indicates otherwise.

Robert Pinsky
Poet Laureate of the United States

--
Robert Pinsky
236 Bay State Road
Boston, MA 02215
(617) 353 2821

get this
Robert Pinsky sends to Eugenie Bisulco his op-ed piece to *NY Times* in response to one by R.W. Apple who indicated you and Mrs. Clinton had little regard for culture. Mr. Pinsky described the April 22 event for American poets and the earlier White House dinner honoring Medal in the Arts recipients. He quoted your comment about the imaginations of George Gershwin and William Faulkner and said few American politicians or journalists could use the word "imagination" with that kind of assurance and grace.

THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
8-12-98

✓ JCC. POTUS

THE WHITE HOUSE

August 5, 1998

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Emanuel

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should consider
a DC charter school
visit to highlight
20th initiative in
September
Be

Mr. Joe Lucente, Executive Director
Ms. Irene Sumida, Director of Instruction
Fenton Avenue Charter School
11828 Gain Street
Lake View Terrace, CA 91342

Dear Mr. Lucente and Ms. Sumida:

It was a pleasure to meet you recently at the
"Conference for Promising Practices for Public Charter Schools
in the District of Columbia." I enjoyed learning about the
incredible transformation, under your leadership, of the Fenton
Avenue Charter School. Your school serves as a model for
others across the country, and we are grateful that you shared
important insights with new public charter schools in D.C.

Thank you for your kind invitation for me to visit. I
have forwarded your request to my scheduling office for
consideration. They will contact you directly in the future.

With best regards, I am

Sincerely yours,

Hillary Rodham Clinton
Hillary Rodham Clinton

cc: Patti Solis Doyle, Director of Scheduling

Joe Lucente
Executive Director



CLIMBING NEW HEIGHTS TOGETHER

FENTON AVENUE CHARTER SCHOOL

A California Public Charter School

11828 Gain Street • Lake View Terrace, CA 91342
(818) 896-7482 • FAX (818) 890-9986

✓ POTUS THE PRESIDENT HAS SEEN
R 8-12-98

Irene Sumida
Director of Instruction

August 4, 1998

Dear President and Mrs. Clinton,

Fenton Avenue Charter School, with an enrollment of nearly 1300 students in grades pre-kindergarten through fifth grade, is the largest elementary charter school in the nation. Prior to becoming a charter school on January 1, 1994, our school community was entrenched in helplessness and despair reflected by our single-digit test scores, continuous vandalism, and high student transiency rate. During the past four and one half years, our charter status has allowed every member of the school community: students, teachers, parents, and staff, to participate fully in the transformation of our school. The result of our efforts is total accountability in every aspect of the management, operation, and governance of the school; higher student achievement across all grade levels; and continuous focus on a schoolwide vision. Our efforts in technology and bilingual education particularly are clearly aligned with the President's views and direction for education in the 21st century. Our students, who were once viewed as "disadvantaged" are very quickly becoming "advantaged".

The case study and evaluation commissioned by the Los Angeles Unified School District and conducted by West Ed was the most comprehensive study to date of charter schools. Realizing your busy schedules, please read just the first few pages of the document. It will give you the overall reason for our success: We are an empowered school community who will no longer accept excuses for failure. We seek only solutions.

Perhaps during your next trip to California to visit Chelsea, you could take a half day to visit our school. What an impact your visit would have on the school and the entire surrounding community! Your visit would serve to validate our accomplishments and confirm what we have always believed - that our children are special and our President and First Lady recognize it. If the time factor is a problem, we also have a broadcast studio from which a live or videotaped message could be transmitted to every classroom in the school.

Thank you for this opportunity to share our thoughts with you. We look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,

Joe Lucente
Executive Director

Irene Sumida
Director of Instruction

Tony Peña
Family Center Director

Kathy Branam
Community Representative

CASE STUDY

*Fenton Avenue
Charter School*

June 30, 1998

Acknowledgements

This document was developed by WestEd under contract with the Los Angeles Unified School District and in partnership with consultants from the University of Southern California.

WestEd would like to thank the Los Angeles Unified School District, as well as its Board, for giving us this unique opportunity to evaluate its charter schools. Our warmest gratitude is extended to Joe Rao and Kathy Swank for their leadership and guidance. We appreciate the efforts of Esther Wong and the rest of the District Charter School Advisory Committee for their commentary and assistance with data collection.

We would also like to thank the numerous charter school administrators, teachers, parents, and school community members who contributed their time to participating in this evaluation. Their graciousness, flexibility, and helpfulness during a very busy time of the year is greatly appreciated.

Thanks also goes to our research colleagues, Julie Marsh at SRI International, for sharing data with us, and Beryl Nelson and Diane Joyce at RPP International, for their insights and suggestions. In addition, we would like to thank Bruce Fuller and Jeff Cohen for their helpful feedback on the reports.

For their input and direction, we would like to pass along our sincerest gratitude to the following individuals: the members of our Student Outcome Technical Advisory Committee and Advisory Group – Ed Haertel, Roger Rasmussen, Marc Wilson, John Perez, Eric Premack, and Leslie Woldt, as well as the following WestEd staff members – Jorge Cuevas, Rose Marie Fontana, Jerry Higgs, Paul Hood, Tracy Landauer, Robert Linqanti, Joan McRobbie, Luana Morimoto, Marisela Sifuentes, Doris Smith, Marianne Smith, and Melissa Sydeman.

Finally, we are indebted to Marycruz Diaz, Christian Holden, and Ann Wallgren for their assistance with the management of the project and production of the reports.

Contact Information

If you would like more information on this report, please contact: Kathy Swank, School Reform/LEARN Office, Los Angeles Unified School District, 213/625-6530.

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Preface

Relation of Case Study to Overall Evaluation

This case study is one of five developed as part of an evaluation of Los Angeles Unified School District's (LAUSD's) charter schools. Collectively, the case studies account for one of three major elements in the evaluation:

- **Case studies of five charter schools up for renewal.** The case studies are designed to provide a comprehensive, descriptive analysis of each school's origins, student and staffing characteristics, budget flexibility, governance, educational program, school and students assessment measures, and performance outcomes.
- **Cross-site report of 13 charter schools in the District.** Focusing on the categories listed above, the report analyzes and explores cross-cutting themes and issues in the data across the five charter schools up for renewal and the eight schools that make up the Palisades Charter Complex. For some issues, we compare charter schools to other District schools.
- **A set of profiles of eight developing charter schools.** Intended as formative information, these profiles provide brief descriptive summaries of charter schools that are not up for renewal this year. The profiles focus on the schools' development to-date, with a primary emphasis on student characteristics, governance, educational program, and assessment and accountability structures.

Brief Description of Methodology

The case studies are based on a wide range of qualitative and quantitative data derived through multiple methods, including:

- **Content analysis of charters:** We reviewed each school's charter petition to identify structures and themes that provided background information for site visits.
- **School documents:** From each school, we collected brochures or descriptive material about the school and its programs; personnel manuals or guidebooks that outline the roles and responsibilities of participants; sample report cards and student assessment materials; schoolwide self-assessment instruments, third party evaluations or reports, and parent surveys or parent satisfaction information. School budgets, strategic plans, salary schedules, sample contracts, and fiscal audit reports were also collected.
- **Site visits:** A team of two to four researchers made two one-day visits to each school to observe and conduct interviews. The size of the team depended on the size and complexity of the school: large schools were visited by four people, smaller schools by

two. The evaluation teams interviewed administrators, teachers, instructional aides, parents, members of the school governance council, and, where appropriate, coordinators or specialists related to special programs. In several schools, some of the parent interviews were conducted in Spanish. Semi-structured interview protocols guided the interviews covering the major topics of these case studies. Observations of classrooms and/or events also helped to contextualize or confirm the interviews. Where possible, we observed governance or committee meetings.

- **Follow-up phone interviews and brief visits:** In some cases, we made subsequent phone calls and brief visits to clarify or collect additional information.
- **Parent, teacher, and administrator surveys:** Although survey data is primarily intended to inform the cross-site analysis, some school-specific survey data is incorporated in these case studies.
- **District data:** Fiscal and staffing data as well as student demographic, standardized test score and other outcome measures were provided by LAUSD.

As in any study, there are limitations to the data and approach we have used. In particular, much of the data included in these reports are self-reported, and the samples of school staff and parents we spoke to were not selected at random. Whenever possible, we have triangulated our data sources.

For the Fenton case study, our site visits included interviews with three administrators, 21 teachers, eight parents, and eight school staff. Our team also observed classrooms, governance meetings, student study team meetings and toured the entire campus, including all classrooms, the broadcast studio and resource supply room.

Overview

Fenton Avenue Charter School is a year-round, multi-track, elementary (K to 5th grade) charter school that serves an ethnically-diverse, economically-disadvantaged student population of nearly 1,200 students.¹ Some 62 percent are limited English proficient and 85 percent are eligible for Title I services. Since its conversion to charter status in 1994, the school has achieved several goals. It was named a California Distinguished School in May 1997.

As one of the District's five fiscally independent charter schools, Fenton administrators are entrepreneurial, having identified, managed and maximized a wide array of public and private resources to meet the educational goals outlined in the school's charter. For example, to enhance and modernize the learning environment, in 1996, the school's leaders negotiated contracts with outside companies and secured support from foundations to enable them to install 350 computers and begin to wire an integrated sound, image and data network for the entire school. Other changes include a shift to managing and operating their own food services program; compensating teachers for additional responsibilities such as serving as grade-level chairs or teaching in afterschool programs; and upgrading school safety by employing security personnel and installing a school-wide alarm system.

Since Fenton became a charter, its teaching staff has expanded by 43 percent; most of that increase is due to class size reduction. Four mentor teachers work with all emergency and probationary teachers. By almost all accounts, the school has created a collaborative and collegial climate for its staff. This atmosphere is supported by codes of professional conduct which, in turn, are guided by the needs of students. Staff credit the school's two co-directors for the supportive work environment, saying they make it possible to have the resources and instructional guidance teachers need to do their best.

Interviews and documentation reveal an increasingly cohesive and focused educational program. This uniformity is facilitated by inclusive, well-integrated vertical and horizontal decision-making structures that help articulate curriculum and instructional strategies among and between grade levels. Improvements and changes to the educational program, though implemented swiftly, are usually researched, piloted and/or carefully deliberated upon by staff through governance councils and grade-level teams.

A cadre of teachers, identified by their peers as exemplary, has been appointed to serve as Standards Consultants. They are currently working with grade-level teams to set specific performance goals for what students should know and be able to do within given time periods based on the school's year-round calendar and aligned with student report card periods. Fenton's teacher codes of conduct help build mutual responsibility for attaining the standards. Until the school completes its standards and develops aligned assessments, it will continue relying solely on standardized tests, including the Stanford 9 and Apenda.

Fenton's motto of "children first" and "high standards for all" is the driving force of its educational program. The school has put multiple interventions and structures in place aimed at accelerating student achievement. With some 70 percent of its students falling below the 50th percentile in reading, the education program reflects an increasing emphasis on phonics and basic skills. Besides reducing class sizes, the school has instituted a number of supplementary programs such as after-school study halls, enrichment classes and weekend workshops for parents and students. It also participates in a District pre-kindergarten program.

For the most part, student test scores indicate progress, especially on Aprenda. Over the four years of charter status, Fenton's rank relative to other District schools with similar characteristics has improved from the bottom to the top. Students who stay at Fenton for at least two years are more likely to improve their performance than those in comparison schools. The school recognizes the importance of assessment in moving all students to the next level of performance—e.g., conducting more frequent assessments of special education students to determine readiness to exit the resource specialist program and of English language learners to determine their readiness for transition into English.

The school's governance structure has been streamlined over time, with a reduction in the number of committees (called councils) and changes in the jurisdictions of decision making. Teachers report very high levels of involvement with decision making. Parents, however, tend not to participate in governance activities—a situation the school hopes will improve with a new administrator assigned to this area of responsibility. Parents say they are pleased with the school and frequently communicate with the school about the educational progress of their children. Under a home-school contract, parents agree to a set of behavioral expectations and agreements, including helping students come to school every day, completing homework on time and wearing the appropriate uniform.

Context

History

Fenton Avenue Charter School is located in the northeast quadrant of the San Fernando Valley in an area known as Lake View Terrace. The surrounding neighborhood has undergone several transformations. Those who knew it in the 60s describe it as a white, middle-class, tract-home neighborhood. In the 70s, African Americans became the predominant population in the immediate attendance area of Fenton, but were soon surpassed by Latino families who started to move into the vicinity in large numbers during the 80s.

Ten years ago, the school was considered one of the worst in the San Fernando Valley. Staff familiar with the school at that time describe it as a place "under great distress." The school had changed principals five times in six years. Drug traffickers were not uncommon in the

neighborhood, cars were stolen, and the school was the weekly target of vandalism, graffiti, and theft, explained teachers and administrators. Another current administrator turned down an offer to work there because of the violence and overall run-down climate of the school.

Even before the school converted to charter status, efforts were made by the current co-director to turn the school's image around. Today, that transformation has been realized. The school, surrounded by a high, heavy-duty iron fence, employs personnel who provide security services until 8:00 p.m. every night. An alarm system has been installed in every building and classroom to avoid theft of computers and equipment. The school's Health, Safety and Special Education Council reports it has partnered with local police to try to keep the community around the campus crime-free.

There is a pervasive sense of safety, orderliness, and cordiality about school – qualities observed during site-visits and mentioned by parents and staff too. The morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up were observed to be carefully orchestrated with cones and signs that direct traffic to ensure students' safety. The facilities were very clean and freshly painted. Even the school's landscaping, much of which is done by a parent, was carefully manicured and nearly all plots of ground were arranged with a variety of flowers and shrubs.

The immediate neighborhood also appeared revitalized. Homes that were said to have been boarded-up appeared habitable and well-maintained. According to Fenton staff, however, residents are still struggling economically; single-family dwellings on the same street as the school actually house multiple low-income families, and criminal activities still occur at night.

Student Characteristics

Fenton serves a poor, predominantly Hispanic population. Since converting to charter status, the school's absolute enrollment appears to have increased only slightly during the past five years from 1,060 to 1,164. However, in actuality, the school has expanded the number of students served by grade level, because last year it dropped sixth grade (about 150 students) and expanded its kindergarten. In prior years, other schools in the same District cluster as Fenton had already matriculated their sixth graders to the middle school. But Fenton, because of parent demand to be a K-6 school, chose not to. However, as a result of a surge in enrollment in all primary grades, this past year, the school decided to matriculate its sixth graders to the middle school.

As seen in Figure 1, the student body's ethnic composition has remained relatively unchanged. However, African American student numbers have declined over the years from 20 to 18 percent, a shift consistent with the changing demographics of the community. Student mobility has also declined.

According to District data, 57 percent of Fenton's population was considered "transient" the year before it converted to charter status. In 1996-97, only 32 percent of the students fell into that category.²

Figure 1: Student Demographics

	Pre-charter 92-93	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97	97-98
Grades served	PreK-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-6	K-5
Enrollment	1060	1087	1053	1105	1153	1164
Student ethnicity:						
American Indian/ Alaskan	0.5%	0.2%	0.1%	0.2%	0.2%	0.0%
Asian	1.0%	0.9%	1.1%	1.0%	0.7%	1.0%
Black	20.0%	19.3%	18.4%	18.7%	15.9%	17.6%
Filipino	1.0%	1.6%	1.4%	2.0%	2.0%	1.8%
Hispanic	75.0%	74.9%	76.1%	75.4%	77.9%	76.7%
Pacific Islander	0.0%	0.1%	0.3%	0.1%	0.1%	0.3%
White	2.7%	3.0%	2.6%	2.7%	3.3%	2.7%
% of LEP	57.5%	55.1%	59.5%	62.2%	63.0%	61.7%
# Special Ed	*	*	*	*	*	*
% AFDC	*	23.2%	26.5%	29.2%	26.6%	24.7%
% Free or Reduced Price Lunch	*	*	93.8%	90.6%	95.3%	94.9%

* This table does not include data for pre-K students.

** Data not available at time of printing.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District School Accountability Report Cards (October 1994 and January 1998), and Los Angeles Unified School District School Information Technology Division (data received on 4/30/98 and 5/18/98)

Leadership and Staffing Characteristics

Administrators. The school's two co-directors – an Executive Director and a Director of Instruction – say they have a good synergy. They agree with each other “ninety-nine percent of the time,” claiming that the degree of success in their working relationship is rare: “[We] don’t know if you can find two people who can work together like us.” The Executive Director describes his job as akin to how a Chief Financial Officer handles budget, facilities and operations, and is known to go to great lengths to secure resources for the school. The Director of Instruction, whose responsibilities include curriculum and instruction, teacher evaluation, professional development, parent concerns, and student placement issues, is credited by staff with fostering a well-articulated, consistent educational program.

This division of labor appears to have worked well – allowing each co-director to play to his/her individual strengths and meet the competing demands of running a fiscally independent charter. Survey data indicate that teachers acknowledge the strong role that their administrators play, both in optimizing the availability of resources and in providing curriculum and instructional leadership. Interviews also revealed that the dedication and support provided by these administrators is acknowledged and appreciated by staff. Many credit them for fostering the school’s high expectations, professionalism, and family-like environment. Survey data also indicate that the majority of teachers view their administrators as active in making the best use of available resources, building community relations, and leading curriculum and instruction.

This spring the school created two assistant director positions, both of which were filled by internal candidates. An Assistant Director for Curriculum will handle curriculum, testing, and compliance issues. A fourth administrator, an Assistant Director for School-Community Relations, will be responsible for improving parent involvement and community outreach, a position that was similar to one held by a Dean of Students a few years ago.

Teacher Leaders. To facilitate communication, coordination, and peer-support among teachers, the school has several teacher leader positions. Four Mentor Teachers are assigned to work with all emergency and probationary teachers. There are also Grade Level Chairs for all grades who represent the interests of teachers and provide an on-going link to the deliberations of the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Council. In 1996, the school selected a group of teachers who they believe to be exemplary to serve as the school's Standards Consultants. These consultants support the development of content and performance standards.

The school went from 44 (pre-charter) to 63 teachers this year, a 43 percent increase largely triggered by the reduction in class sizes. Nineteen teachers (30 percent) hold an emergency credential, while almost half the faculty have an A level, CLAD or BCLAD certification. Seventeen teachers (27 percent) also have masters degrees. Last year's data indicate a diverse certificated staff (teachers and teacher's assistants): 38 were white, twelve were African American, 56 were Hispanic, one was Filipino, five were Asian or Pacific Islander, and two were American Indian.³ Since January of 1994, Fenton reports that it has added the equivalent of 31 full-time staff, including teachers, a psychologist, a counselor, librarians, resource teachers, security personnel, and clerical staff.

Reasons for Coming. Fenton's draw is its people and school culture, according to teachers who chose to come to Fenton after it became a charter school. The primary reason for wanting to work at Fenton was their first impressions of and interviews with administrators and teachers. They felt as though they shared a common set of beliefs and were nice people. Others mentioned being attracted by the orderly and clean environment, classroom supplies, and "high academic standards." One novice teacher said she selected Fenton because she saw professional development structures in place to support her, such as mentors, unlike what she had found when interviewing at other schools. Only a few of the teachers interviewed knew what a charter school was or came explicitly because of the school's charter status, although that was considered a plus by some who thought it would be "exciting" and an opportunity to influence the school's direction.

Calendar, Class Size Reduction and Other Unique Aspects

Fenton is on a 163-day calendar with an extended school day, which administrators explain translates into the same number of instructional minutes found in a 180-day schedule. Under this "Modified Concept 6," three-track schedule, there are nine days when tracks overlap. Depending on availability, students can select between an A, B, or C track. While this three-track schedule

Just about that time, another principal mentioned charter schools at a cluster meeting. After analyzing District audit reports, they discovered they could receive as much as \$4,300 per student. That realization led one administrator, who was the principal at that time, to write a "dream list" for Fenton that included such items as reducing class size to 25, hiring certified resource specialists, and having a librarian. He then presented his list to the school's leadership team and said he posed a question to the group along the lines of, "If these things could be done, how many of you would still consider leaving?" At that point, the real chartering process began.

Chartering Process

A series of conversations among the leadership team and staff ensued. Despite their apprehension about experimenting with an unknown reform, teachers unanimously voted to write the charter. Writing was done in small working committees, and every teacher was on at least one committee. As part of the process, they reviewed other schools' charters, the enacting legislation, and the District's LEARN guidelines, developed 11 categories, solicited community input and eventually submitted the charter for District approval. The total process took about six weeks, a compressed timeline because the school was aware that other schools were also writing charters and the District had a ten-charter limit. The charter was officially approved by the Los Angeles Unified School Board the end of July, 1993 and assigned a number by the State Board of Education in September (see Figure 2).

Because the school estimated it would most likely not be officially designated a charter school by the State until after the 1993-94 school year began, they decided to postpone opening as a charter school until January of 1994. This five-month lag time turned out to be propitious. With those few extra months, Fenton administrators report they were better able to plan their conversion and begin to phase in components of their charter, e.g., setting up governance councils and notifying parents of the switch from a four- to three-track school. They were also able to investigate alternative ways to handle finances and operations. In particular, they found out the Los Angeles County Office of Education could offer them personally tailored payroll services, such as twice-monthly pay periods and speedy payroll error correction.

Figure 2: Charter Status and Reforms

Type of School	Public School Conversion
Charter Approval and Start Date	Approved July 26, 1993 by LAUSD, State Board Signed in Sept 1993, Started January 1994
Fiscal Flexibility	Fiscally Independent
Participation in Other Reforms	No current or prior participation in State site-based management or restructuring reforms

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District "Charter School Roster" (revised 7/25/96) District Relationship

Membership. Today, all full-time staff, including paraprofessionals and classified staff, are required to serve on at least one of these councils. Community members and parents also serve. In the early years, staff could volunteer for councils based on their interests. But recently there have been attempts to encourage certain people to serve on certain councils, e.g., Standards Consultants on the Curriculum & Instruction Council. There is also encouragement of others to rotate. School administrators are wary of assigning staff (i.e., "telling them what to do"), yet at the same time they want to avoid entrenchment and encourage some membership, especially those on councils that are considered most influential (e.g., Human Resources Council), to turn over.

The staff have also begun holding more elections for some positions, such as the co-chair positions. Earlier, they had chairs and vice chair positions, but felt they lost time when one of these went off-track, so they moved to co-chair positions. Meeting times are made available to all staff, and meetings are open to anyone. Staff confirmed they had used this open-meeting rule to stay informed or present a concern to a council on which they did not sit.

No training for decision-making was mentioned, but one person said they learned the meeting protocol (e.g., having agendas and minutes) quickly because it is modeled by administrators. Roberts Rules of Order is the guide they use to conduct meetings and make decisions.

Administrator Influence

Fenton's co-directors attend all meetings, but are only members of one council each (i.e., the Budget & Facilities Council and the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Council). As such, they only have one vote each. Items brought to a council's attention appear to come from various sources. In one governance council meeting observed, administrators provided helpful contextual and factual information, but chairs and teachers largely led the discussion.

The majority of teachers surveyed view administrators as encouraging their involvement in decision-making. For example, 88 percent of the 53 teachers surveyed agreed with the statement that "my principal promotes involvement in school decisions." According to this survey data, 88 percent of teachers agreed with the statement that "my principal shares information broadly."

Teacher Influence

Staff report multiple opportunities and high involvement in school decision-making. Almost all teachers could provide concrete examples of proposals they had presented to either their respective grade level chair, or directly to a council for deliberation, that had an impact on their daily work and the school. Several teachers reported that they were able to influence a schoolwide policy by piloting a new curriculum and giving feedback on its effectiveness.

As further illustration, 97 percent of teachers who responded to the survey consider themselves either "a little" to "very much" involved in the school's decision-making process, and 48 percent

In the review of school records and documentation, it appeared that the school was meeting the requirements for receiving funds through each of these programs. No financial audit of program funds was conducted; rather, observations were made of the school's record keeping functions, and personnel were interviewed about program requirements and how they were met. Within this limited review, no evidence of inappropriate use of State or Federal funds was noted. The 1996-97 auditor's report made a similar finding.

Budget versus Actual Analysis

Figure 4h (in Appendix) provides an analysis of budget versus actual expenditures for fiscal year 1996-97 for Fenton. Figure 4h is divided into three sections: unrestricted funds (Figure 4h.1), restricted funds (Figure 4h.2), and all funds (Figure 4h.3). Figure 4h.3 shows that the school received over \$300,000 more in revenue than it anticipated when it developed its budget. All of this revenue came from gains in unrestricted funds, mostly other State revenues. Overall, unrestricted revenues were almost half a million dollars higher than anticipated. The major source of this is the large amount of revenue received for class size reduction.

Unrestricted expenditures were \$366,274 above budgeted, largely in response to the class size reduction program. As a result, expenditures for certificated salaries were \$337,505 above budget, with a resulting increase in employee benefits.

On the other hand, restricted revenues were \$180,832 below the figure budgeted by the school. Most of this was from lower than expected categorical revenues from both the Federal and State governments. However, restricted expenditures were only \$39,583 below budgeted expenditures, with substantial cutbacks on expenditures for certificated salaries, but additional expenditures for books and supplies and capital outlay.

Overall, the school received \$314,052 more than anticipated in revenue, and spent \$326,691 more than budgeted. The most likely sources of these changes is increased enrollment and the class size reduction program. Overall, the District had budgeted a surplus of \$157,507 and ended the fiscal year with a surplus of \$144,868, a difference of some eight percent.

Readers will note that the actual expenditure data presented in Figure 4h do not match exactly those reported in other figures. These data were taken from the school's J-201 series reports, the only source of budget data for the schools. The data reported elsewhere are based on the school's audited financial statements. Because the year end financial closing takes place approximately one month before the audit, some expenses that come through during that time may be allocated to the past fiscal year by the auditors and the current fiscal year in the school's J-201 reports.

Cafeteria

The 1997-98 budget for Fenton shows total cafeteria revenues of \$533,767 and total cafeteria expenditures of \$564,228. If these figures hold up through the school year, there will be a deficit

of just over \$30,000 which the school will have to compensate for with a reduction in its cafeteria fund ending balance. Virtually all of the revenues the school receives are from Federal revenues to pay for free and reduced price meals. Under Federal law, food services funds can not be used for other purposes, and must be directed to the food services program. Our analysis of Fenton's budget and accounts showed that the school maintains comprehensive records, along with careful tracking systems to insure that reimbursement for free and reduced price meals, which comes through the District, is accurately reported, and the proper funding is received. Moreover, a review of the school's record keeping systems showed it keeps track of payments for food and supplies, staff costs and other costs associated with operation of the cafeteria. It has been able to use some funds for capital improvements to the kitchens and food services operations.

Along with another independent charter school, Fenton contracts with Marriott Food Services for management support. For an annual fee of approximately \$19,000, the school has access to Marriott's food and supply purchasing contracts, thus reducing costs to the school. In addition, for this fee, Marriott provides the assistance of a nutritionist to help plan meals that are both nutritionally sound and meet Federal requirements for food quality and content. Marriott also provides management advice to the food services supervisor, and helps with the detailed record keeping required for food services programs. The principal reports great satisfaction with the services provided by Marriott, and states that the \$19,000 fee the school pays is more than earned back through savings Marriott personnel help them identify.

Facilities

Since its conversion to charter status, the school has expanded from about 40 to 60 teaching stations which includes the addition of 11 new classrooms. This increase is primarily due to class size reduction. Administrators had hoped to build a two-story structure with more classrooms, but there have been delays due to requirements imposed by the Department of State Architecture (e.g., the need to include an elevator). As such, they report being a year behind schedule in building this additional space.

Fiscal Accountability

The auditor's reports do not identify any problems in the management of the school's fiscal operations. Our review of the attendance accounting procedures did not turn up any problems or concerns. The school is aware of the importance of accurate attendance accounting and has a full time attendance clerk to ensure that attendance is reported accurately. The systems in place closely parallel the District's own systems, and in the absence of a full fledged audit, there is no evidence of any problems or irregularities in attendance accounting.

Lessons Learned

Administrators and staff point to several advantages of their fiscal independence. Most notable, as mentioned before, is the ability to quickly purchase materials and provide support for the implementation of new programs. Also an advantage, from their perspective, was the ability to implement class size reduction immediately when they converted to charter status in 1994 and, then again, within a month of the Governor signing the State's new law. Their ability to negotiate with private companies (e.g. EMG and GTE) to develop a technology infrastructure and long-term financing is another example. Teachers also appreciate having their own budget, which ranges from \$200 to \$400, for educational materials. Grade level teams are also provided \$2,000 to spend on joint projects or professional development opportunities.

Operationally, administrators and classified staff report added benefits of this flexibility. By having the Los Angeles County Office of Education handle their payroll, they were able to receive pay checks every two weeks and work with an agency which corrects errors quickly. Administrators and classified staff also spoke to the advantages of being able to do comparison shopping between District and other vendor prices. Simple things, such as being able to purchase garbage bag liners the day they run out, eliminates many of the daily hassles associated with maintaining the school's facilities and grounds, explained a staff person.

Budget flexibility has also meant that the larger school community takes more responsibility for making budget decisions. Survey data also indicates that the majority of teachers feel they have influence over the budget and are involved in making related decisions. For example, 83 percent of the 52 teachers surveyed said that they strongly agree or agree that budget decisions are made collectively at the school.

Staffing

Certificated Staff

The 1997-98 staff roster indicates that there are a total of 63 teachers at Fenton Avenue Charter School. Fifty-nine are regular education teachers, two are special education teachers, and two are resource specialist teachers. Nineteen of the 63 have emergency credentials, 11 have CLAD certification, and six have BCLAD certification. There are 13 teachers with A-level certification indicating they are fluent in the language, but they do not have full bilingual certification. Seventeen of the teachers have master's degrees. Figure 5a summarizes this information for the school's certificated staff.

Figure 5a: Staffing Characteristics

Position	Total	Type of Certification					
		Regular	Emergency	A-Level	BCLAD	CLAD	Sp. Ed.
Administrators	4	4					
Regular Teachers	59	40	19	13	6	11	
Special Education	4	4					4
Counseling	1	1					
Psychologist	1	1					
Totals	69	50	19	13	6	11	4

Source: School reports

There are three administrative staff members – the Executive Director, the Director of Instruction, an Assistant Director of Instruction and an Assistant Director of Community Relations. Other certificated staff include a school psychologist, school counselor, and two resource specialist teachers. The school contracts with the District for:

- ⊖ A school nurse two days a week,
- ⊖ A language and speech specialist 1.5 days a week, and
- ⊖ An adaptive physical education teacher for 1.5 hours a week.

Fenton's salary schedule is slightly lower than the District's salary schedule for teachers. An analysis by the Executive Director indicates that Fenton's salaries for 1997-98 at each step and column of the schedule were between 0.89 and 0.94 percent lower than the District's schedule. To mitigate this difference each employee will receive a one percent bonus based on their 1997-98 base salary. This is to be paid with the July payroll, making Fenton's salary schedule essentially identical to the LAUSD schedule.

Related to that, an analysis provided by the school also indicated that the various career increments and increments for advanced degrees are higher than the same increments for District employees. The difference ranges from just under 3.0 percent for the second career increment, to approximately 6.5 percent for the first career increment and for advanced degrees. For the second career increment, the difference is over 19 percent. Because all of these are relatively small differences in total dollars, even a teacher earning all of them is unlikely to find his or her base salary substantially different from the District's.

Additionally, an administrator indicated that in 1994-95, the school restored five percent of the 10 percent salary reduction given all District teachers. In 1995-96, it restored the remaining five percent (District restored only 4 percent.) Fenton paid out \$85,000 in bonuses that year to all employees. This represented \$1,000 per certificated staff member and per classified manager, \$800 for all other full-time employees, and \$150 for part-time employees. Also in 1995-96, the school

gave food services and student supervision personnel an additional five percent salary increase because they are the lowest paid workers in the system. In 1996-97, the school gave personnel a two percent salary increase which was the same as granted to District employees, but the increase was not paid until mid-year to be sure funding would be available. This year (1997-98), there was a four percent increase both at Fenton and in the District. But one percent of this was held back until the end of the year to be sure there were adequate funds. The school, expecting only a three percent District increase, budgeted accordingly and wants to be sure money will be available before paying the teachers.

Fenton has investigated having a merit-pay or incentives-based compensation system, but has found the issue complicated and has not identified an approach that would work for them. In the meantime, the school does provide stipends to teachers who wish to assume additional responsibilities. For example, teachers who serve as Grade Level Chairs are compensated an additional \$1,200 for their coordination, meeting facilitation and liaison role. Teachers are also compensated for providing after-school or other supplementary classes.

Classified Staff

Paraprofessionals. All regular classroom teachers at Fenton have a teacher's assistant. Figure 5b (in Appendix) provides a summary of all classified staff at the school. This figure shows that most teachers have an aide for 3.27 hours a day. Others have aides for either six or 6.6 hours a day. Special education classes have 6.6 hour aides, while the pre-K classrooms have six hour aides. Aides working more than six hours a day qualify for full benefits. For those working four to six hours a day, the charter school follows District policies to determine partial benefits and those working less than four hours do not qualify for benefits.

Other Staff. The school has a number of other classified staff positions. These include two individuals responsible for plant management and a custodian. There are three full-time office assistants, an attendance assistant, and an administrative assistant. The cafeteria has a full-time manager, two full-time workers and four 3.5 hour a day workers. There are a number of other positions at the school, including office assistants, librarians, playground supervisors, and other types of aides. All of this is summarized in Figure 5b in the Appendix.

Benefits and Retirement

The employee benefit plan at Fenton offers medical, dental, vision, and life and disability insurance. While it only offers two medical plans instead of the four available to long time District employees, the co-payments are 50 percent lower for dental and medical and 40 percent lower for vision than the District's policy requires. The school-provided disability insurance offers 60 percent of salary after 90 days of illness or disability. This is available for up to five years. Employees who have insurance coverage through a spouse can elect to receive an opt-out stipend (\$3,600 for 1997-98).

The school currently pays the District \$96,060 a year as its share of the costs of retiree benefits. This figure is based on an estimate of the number of active employees at the school at the time it became independent. The District claims this is the school's fair share of the liability for these benefits. The District and Fenton have a memorandum of understanding as part of the original charter defining this agreement. Fenton is seeking to re-negotiate this payment as part of the renewal.

This is an issue because the District and the school use different mechanisms to fund these retirement benefits. The District funds its retirement health benefit program out of current funds as part of each year's annual budget. District officials indicate that when the independent charter schools were granted their charters, they considered their status a formal "breakup" in terms of benefits. The District contracted for an actuarial report to estimate the future liability for retiree benefits. This liability was estimated at \$1.8 billion. District staff indicated that their first estimate of the liability was based on taking each school's percentage of the total District benefits eligible employees at the time of independence and applying that percentage to the total liability. When spread over 20 years, they estimated the school's liability at approximately double the current agreement. At the present time, the costs of the benefit package for District employees includes \$1,601 a year for retiree benefit payments. Using this figure times the number of employees at each charter school at the time of independence provided the agreed upon annual payment to the District. This payment was then to be made for 20 years.

The independent charter schools have asked to renegotiate this agreement as part of the renewal process. Fenton has started its own retirement health benefit reserve fund with a current balance of \$50,000, and another \$15,000 contribution slated for this year. The school will conduct an actuarial study next year to ascertain the level of payments that must be made to this fund in the future. Because of the different ways in which the retirement benefits are funded, Fenton claims that it is actually paying for the benefits of 155 people rather than its own 95 employees.

There are clearly two points of view on this issue. While the school is creating a reserve fund for its current employees, the District argues that it is still responsible for the liability created while it was part of the District. The 95 current employees represent a future liability, which is different from the current liability of the 60. The District argues that the school still needs to pay for the costs associated with providing current and retired District employees their retiree benefits. How the school chooses to pay for these benefits for current employees is, in theory, up to the school. Thus, it seems that the real question is how well the estimate of \$1,601 a year and the estimate of 60 employees represents the true costs of meeting Fenton's share of that liability. Both the District and Fenton administrators reached a reimbursement agreement on this issue about employees with benefits who are of retirement age and who will stay with the school.

Staffing and Hiring Flexibility

The school makes its own decisions about whom to hire. The process for hiring includes initial interviews with administrators and also with members of the Human Resource & Personnel Council. That Interview Committee does the initial screening, using a standard interview protocol, and makes recommendations to the council. Sometimes the whole faculty will vote on a hiring decision as was the case earlier this year when two new administrators were selected. Teaching assistants are required to take a placement exam (and teachers have to pass the CBEST State test).

Teacher assignments are usually made by a team comprised of the co-director, co-chair of the Human Resources & Personnel Council and a co-chair of the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Committee. Such assignments are made on a set of 10 criteria, and when they have two equally qualified people they make a choice based on experience and student needs.

Lessons Learned

Because of its flexibility in being able to carefully screen and hire staff, Fenton has been able to ensure that teachers are all of the same belief and mind-set. Teachers hired are told they are expected to work cooperatively and abide by professional codes of conduct. Staff who are not willing to be as committed, usually "stick out like a sore thumb," and are reported to either change or leave of their own accord.

They have also been able to hire staff to better meet the needs of their academically at-risk student population, e.g. a full-time school psychologist. And they say they are able to make choices about teachers' assignments based on the best match between a teacher's experience and the needs of students.

Educational Program

Overall Vision and Major Goals

Many of the educational concepts outlined in the charter are evident in the school's current approach to its educational program. In recent years, a concerted effort by administrators, teacher leaders, and grade-level teams has been made to improve the consistency and articulation of what students are supposed to know and be able to do. The school has also modified its program in several ways, including, but not limited to implementing a phonics-based curriculum, providing supplemental academic enrichment and support during non-school hours, and building the skills of teacher leaders through intensive professional development so they can mentor and model new approaches with colleagues.

Fenton's 63-page charter has several components. At its core is a mission and vision statement reflecting the school's values about teaching and learning, expectations about the roles that each member of the school community plays, and commitment to holding everyone mutually accountable for students. As written on page two of the charter:

The students of the charter school will work cooperatively, become self-directing, think critically, develop self-esteem and respect for cultural diversity, and actively seek learning opportunities. The teachers of the Charter School will thirst for life-long learning, and maintain a commitment to model the appropriate and desired behaviors and attitudes expected of students. The entire school community (Faculty, staff, administrators, parents, and community members) will work cooperatively and collaboratively to create a child-centered environment in which all partners are empowered by their own sense of ownership and responsibility to the school.

From there the charter follows a logical, multi-level set of organizational constructs. Specifically, there are six basic "Elements" that serve as the primary categories for the document: Curriculum, Parent/Student, Employee/Personnel, Health/Safety, Governance, and Budget/Business/Accounting. There are three "concepts" under the Curriculum section that further elaborate the types of educational programs and activities the school planned to implement in 1993.

Not surprisingly, the school's description of its educational program reflects some of the beliefs and emphasis found in policy documents, such as the notion of "higher order thinking" found in State curriculum frameworks at that time. For example, "Concept One" states that "all learning involves thinking." That section states that it's curriculum will focus on building thinking skills and pro-social values, listing at least 27 different activities and strategies, such as integrating reading and writing throughout the curriculum, providing instruction in phonics, working closely with the business community to see if skills match their needs, , setting up after-school study halls, etc. To promote pro-social values the school talks about establishing an "Opportunity Room" and offering conflict resolution among other things. The other two concepts in the charter also promote and outline an extensive list of activities to develop thinking ability and pro-social values.

Perhaps the best summary statement of the many things the charter said the school would accomplish is encapsulated in its goal statement. Specifically, the charter lists six goals on page 3:

- ⊕ Students will master basic skills in context, develop concepts, critical thinking and become problem solvers.
- ⊕ Students will develop an appreciation for themselves and their heritage, and the cultural heritage of others.
- ⊕ Students will receive an enriched curriculum in the arts, literature, mathematics, science, and technology.
- ⊕ Students will have the opportunity to learn a second language other than English.

- Students will demonstrate cooperative pro-social behavior with a sense of responsibility to their school, home, and community. Students will display this sense of responsibility by being of service to their school and community.
- Students will be exposed to career and post-secondary opportunities and develop personal and professional life goals.

Although this evaluation was not meant to systematically confirm the implementation of everything mentioned in the charter, many of the beliefs, activities, and goals in Fenton's charter were reflected in the documentation, interviews, observations, and survey data collected.

When describing the role of the charter document, staff responses varied. For example, some staff were more likely to discuss the charter as a central document, describing it in such terms as "constitution" or "bible." Other staff said that while they had received a copy of the document when hired, they had yet to read it thoroughly; others described the charter as a reference document used during a decision-making impasse.

Curriculum Focus

Improved Coherence and Articulation. Both administrators and teachers commented that since conversion to charter status, the school had improved its communication and curricular consistency within and across grades. As mentioned previously, structures facilitating such consistency include weekly grade level meetings, meetings among team chairs with the Director of Instruction and the cross-representation of team chairs on the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability Student Assessment Council.

School-wide thematic units also lend coherence while at the same time providing students equal access to a common curriculum. During the time of our site visit, several classrooms and grade levels were focusing on projects related to a celebration of Earth Day. For example, upper grade students were observed researching reports on the Internet on endangered species, and bulletin boards exhibited environment-related material. This particular thematic unit is specifically mentioned in the school's charter.

The revision and upgrading of the school's content and performance standards is another example of Fenton's continued efforts to improve articulation. Starting in the spring of 1996, a group of teachers – selected by their peers – were identified to serve as Standards Consultants in three areas, mathematics, language arts, and history/social science. Part of the process for developing standards has entailed a review of other national, State- and locally-developed standards. Teachers report they are looking beyond the District's standards, building from the California Department of Education's Challenging Standards for Student Success. In math they are also using the National Council on Teaching Mathematics (NCTM) standards and have purchased NCTM materials for each grade level. After reporting to the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Council on their review, the Standards Consultants began working with grade

level teams on the pacing and sequencing of topics covered in certain subject matter areas. One outcome of this process will be to have student progress reports better aligned to performance benchmarks for the three reporting periods. In the future, Fenton also hopes to identify or develop its own tests, aligned with these standards. The school also wants to tie these standards to its grade-level portfolios.

Articulation among grade level teams has been improved by both formal and informal opportunities for dialogue and reflection between teachers and administrators. Such opportunities have been provided through regular meeting time made possible by a "banked schedule" that allows for early student dismissal one day a week. One teacher mentioned that grade level coherence and camaraderie was also facilitated by encouraging new teachers to remain in the same grade for two to three years until they mastered the curriculum.

Adoption of New Curriculum. Serving a large, academically at-risk student population, administrators and teachers are proactive about researching and trying new curriculum or instructional methods. Some of these new approaches are instigated by visits to other schools or participation in conferences. Others happen at the suggestion of an administrator or a grade level team. As described previously, some form of piloting (e.g., a teacher or group of teachers agree to experiment with a curriculum package and report out) and a deliberation process is usually involved before the change is phased in and implemented among grade levels or across the entire school. If they believe a program is clearly beneficial, staff claim they can pilot or implement it almost immediately, unlike when they were a non-charter school.

Several examples of curricular changes adopted in this manner were mentioned by administrators and teachers. In one instance, the kindergarten grade level team decided that given the emphasis on academic studies, students did not have enough opportunities to engage in creative and arts-related activities. The grade level chair brought the issue to the attention of the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Council, who in turn, recommended to the Council of Councils that they pilot test an extended-day program. As a result, the school piloted the extended day approach in three classes.

Improving literacy is a major impetus of recent curricular changes. Just this past year, Fenton adopted a phonics-based program package in grades pre-K, K, and 1st, including "Sing, Spell, Read, and Write." "Estrellita," a Spanish phonics program, is in its third year of adoption. The process for selection included discussions with publishers of different reading series, piloting of materials, and a comparison of their effectiveness. Some teachers and administrators say they are already seeing results of these adoptions. For example, one kindergarten teacher said that since implementing "Sing, Spell, Read, and Write," 15 of her 20 students were already reading with fluency. Currently, teachers report relying on a combination of whole language and phonics-based curriculum and instruction, depending on the language and other needs of the student. Beyond in-school strategies to promote literacy, such as silent reading periods, the school has incentives for extra-curricular reading. There is also a monthly "Readers' Circle" for grades 3- 6, where students

are invited to meet with the school's two co-directors to discuss their independent reading. And as part of the home-school contract, parents are supposed to read to kindergarten children every night.

The school has also had a long-standing math program, called "Mathematics Their Way," implemented in January of 1994. As mentioned in its charter, this program was implemented K-2 and new teachers receive training in the program when they join the faculty. And "Mathematics – A Way of Thinking" has also been implemented in the upper grades. While most teachers and administrators pointed to the benefits of being able to implement programs quickly, one teacher felt there were sometimes too many changes. To supplement this manipulatives-based program, some teachers report integrating more computational skills development into their lesson plans.

In addition to literacy and mathematics, teachers mentioned that the school has placed an emphasis on developing students' spelling skills and has implemented a psycho-motor program aimed at improving students' fitness, coordination, and kinesthetics.

Integration of Technology. In just two years, technology has become a centerpiece of the Fenton's educational program. The school has already phased in the first part of a sophisticated, multi-dimensional technology plan. In our interviews, students, parents, and teachers all mentioned their use of the school's various forms of technology, identifying it as one of Fenton's most significant assets. To support its expansion of high-end technology, Fenton has implemented an integrated sound, data, and image fiber optic network and has a T-1 Internet connection that can be accessed campus-wide.

Currently, all students have several opportunities to access Fenton's extensive technology resources. First, each classroom in grades K-3 has at least four computers. As of May, they have also provided one fourth grade class with computers for every student and also plan to have another class fully equipped by the end of that month. At the fifth grade, each student has their own multi-media computer and there are plans to offer computers for all students at the fourth grade as well. The school also has two computer labs. Students in primary grades attend them an hour a day for a ten-week period where they use a self-paced, creative writing program called "Writing to Read" or a Spanish program called "Voy a Leer Escribiendo (VALE)."

Last year, Fenton piloted a sixth grade, self-contained, "Virtual Learning Classroom" where every student has his/her own computer. The school has measured, analyzed, and documented the impact of this setting on student achievement and found promising improvements in student test scores. Consequently, they decided to expand the program to every fifth grade classroom and initial test scores indicate similar increases in performance (see Assessment discussion below).

According to the school's electronic literature (<http://fenton-cs115.LAUSD.k12.ca.us/>), the rationale for its plan to create a technology-enhanced learning environment is based on the view that such a context is most analogous to a future work force environment where computers and technology will be an integral part of daily work life. The leadership for much of this technology

expansion has stemmed from a fifth grade teacher, a former businessman. To help fund the expansion, the school has negotiated special contractual arrangements with EMG and GTE and secured foundation funds (Mattel and Riordan Foundation). The school is currently seeking additional funding to expand the effort to other grades. This year, Fenton submitted a \$1.6 million Title VII grant to the U.S. Department of Education.

Grouping and Instructional Strategies

Grouping. Teacher interviews and observation data reveal a range in approaches to grouping. They include the use of heterogeneous ability groups (i.e., a mix of low and high) for certain times of the day and types of activities (e.g., art, social studies, and science) as well as homogenous grouping of students by ability, especially in Reading and Language Arts, so that curriculum and instruction is modified to meet specific language needs of students. In some instances, students switch classrooms during certain subject matter periods, such as Language Arts, to be placed in a group that is better suited to their level. Similarly, when possible, initial student classroom assignments are based on English language ability level. Observations also confirmed that mixed and heterogeneous ability groups, alongside cooperative learning and a combination of small and whole group instructional strategies, were employed. Some team teaching within grade levels was also reported.

There is also some experimentation with multi-age classrooms. Currently the school is piloting a K-2 class of LEP, Spanish-speaking students. This grouping strategy is used for students who are identified as especially at-risk and below grade level. The class also allows the teacher to spend more time to determine whether they may need a more thorough assessment of their learning needs. According to teachers and administrators, the class provides intensive academic support and provides older students opportunities "to shine" by helping and teaching younger ones. Students' progress is continually monitored and when they reach grade level, they are mainstreamed into a more typical classroom setting. The school is considering piloting a similar program next year for its English-speaking population. Another multi-age classroom has been created to support "newcomers" (i.e., immigrant students) and transitory students who come in during the middle of the year. In addition to ensuring "they don't get lost in the cracks," the newcomer classroom will also cover special socialization skills, explained one administrator.

At-Risk Student Population. To further support the needs of its large, academically at-risk population, Fenton offers a myriad of interventions and academic enrichment programs. Daily After-School Enrichment Classes, Study Halls and Academic Clinics are offered. Some of these supplementary academic enrichment opportunities are offered on weekends and during off-track periods. On Saturdays, for example, the school holds monthly Parent/Student Workshops that provide students with opportunities to do a project with their parents or attend a field trip. Teachers can apply for a position to offer an after-school class or clinic and, if selected, are paid hourly to do so. The student-teacher ratio for After School Enrichment Classes and Study Hall is 20:1 and led by teachers who are assigned a paraprofessional. Students who participate in

Academic Clinics, which are also offered daily, are in a 9:1 class setting. About 200-250 students participate in these supplementary programs and those who are considered especially at-risk academically are given first priority, since space is limited.

There is also a Primary Intervention Program (PIP), funded through a three-year Early Mental Health Initiative grant provided by the California Health and Human Services Department. The program provides individualized attention to those students who it identifies as low-performing and exhibiting behavioral problems in their early years. An Academic Study Team has been established, similar in function to Student Study Teams, to provide further support for special education students. As another early intervention, Fenton offers SRLDP (School Readiness Language Development Program), a District pre-kindergarten program.

Services to LEP Students. Given its large LEP population, the school tries to have at least one full bilingual class at each grade level in each track. Based on their language needs or parent preferences, students are likely to be placed in either:

- A full-bilingual class (where students are offered native language support and at least 45 minutes of English-language development);
- A modified bilingual class which includes a combination of LEP, English-only (EO) students, and fully English proficient (FEP) students (where Spanish support is provided primarily in language arts);
- A transitional bilingual class (where formal English language instruction is provided in all subject matter areas and is supplemented by one hour of Spanish language arts) that is offered to third, fourth or fifth graders who pass the Criteria for the Addition of Reading in English (CARE) test or are approved by a language appraisal team; or
- A mainstream classroom with other FEP's and EO students.

Partly because of the State's new legal requirement that they administer SAT-9 in English to all students and a District literacy goal by third grade, administrators and teachers say they will be accelerating the rate of transition in earlier grades. Currently they have transition classes in fourth and fifth grades, but plan to have them by third grade too. To further support such an early transition, one teacher said that administrators would be reorganizing and reassigning the strongest bilingual and phonics teachers to the primary grades. LEP students also have access to technology: computer programs are available in both Spanish and English.

Special Education. Since the school converted to charter status, it reports that it has gone from serving 52 to about 114 special education students. There are two self-contained special education classrooms (K-2, 3-5) for students who are physically disabled or learning disabled and in need of a special day program. In addition, there are two RSP teachers, with their own trained bilingual paraprofessional assistants, and a full-time psychologist who assesses and observes students and teaches parenting classes in the Family Center. There is also a full-time counselor.

The philosophy of the program is to mainstream as many students as possible to avoid having them “stuck in self-contained Special Day classrooms all day.” Besides providing assistance through a pull-out program, two RSP (Resource Specialist Program) teachers work with regular classroom teachers as much as possible to assist them in developing modifications in the classroom that are tailored to the needs of special education students. The school continually assesses students and reports it has seen more growth with students who are assigned an RSP teacher. In fact, eight out of 32 RSP students in one RSP class were exited from the special education program. Student Study Teams also meet weekly. One of our site visits included an observation of a Student Study Team comprised of two RSP teachers, the school psychologist, counselor, regular classroom teachers and the Director of Instruction.

According to one administrator, before a student is placed in the program, staff try to make distinctions between the child’s language and special education needs. RSP students who are also LEP are treated as any other LEP students, namely they are placed into a full bilingual classroom. However, if by second grade they are still not showing progress, then a language appraisal team (which includes some overlap in representation with the Student Study Team) will decide whether to place them in a modified bilingual class so that they start to learn English. By doing this, the school hopes to ensure that RSP are English proficient by middle school since, at that level, they are less likely to get the language support they need.

Gifted Students. Students who are identified as gifted and talented are clustered into one classroom and provided additional enrichment opportunities after school and on weekends. Last year, six students were identified as gifted and talented.⁵ This year only three students were identified as gifted, despite the fact that their school psychologist will test any child that is referred by a teacher or parent and that the school reports it has been aggressive in trying to identify them.

Professional Development and Evaluation

Professional Development Opportunities. Teacher interviews reveal that most have had several, and in some cases intensive (e.g., week-long), professional development opportunities – a luxury they say is afforded to them by their fiscal independence. Most of the curriculum-related training appears targeted to specific grade levels or teacher leaders who, in turn, are supposed to share what they have learned with others.

For example, all K-2 teachers receive one-week training in the “Mathematics Their Way” program. Given the emphasis on standards development, the school has also invested in sending its teacher leaders to several standards conferences, including the National Standards Conference in San Antonio and the New Standards Project conference, sponsored by both the California Department of Education and Los Angeles County Office of Education. Other documentation provided by the school indicates that four teachers have attended the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) Writing Project, a program designed to explore issues of writing instruction for diverse student populations. Standards Consultants, Grade Level Chairs, and Mentor Teachers have also

participated in five days of Early Literacy training sponsored by the Los Angeles County Office of Education. All teachers have also participated in 16 hours of professional development in brain research and multiple intelligences (e.g., participation in the Learning and Thinking Skills Training Institute) funded through the California Department of Education's Charter School Development Grant program. Teachers have also been trained in discipline and classroom management (e.g., the "Discipline with Dignity" program) and technology. All teachers have been trained, for example, on the Internet, E-mail, ClarisWorks, and a variety of educational software programs.

Survey data also confirms that teachers have been exposed to many topics through professional development opportunities. Teachers spent time on professional development in a wide range of areas including student assessment, bilingual/ESL instruction, computer technology use and instruction, and parent and community involvement. Other survey data indicates that most teachers "strongly agree" or "agree" that changes made to the educational program were supported by professional development (82 percent), and that professional development led to changes in their classroom practice (94 percent). Moreover, they "strongly agree" or "agree" that many of these activities are connected to the school goals and mission outlined in the charter [(4 percent).

While there are many opportunities, one teacher commented that implementing such professional development evenly among all teachers on a school-or grade-wide basis is sometimes challenging given the multi-track schedule. According to other teachers and administrators, while certain teachers may be off-track, their team chair keeps them up to date or alerts them when necessary.

Teacher Evaluation and Accountability. As with students and parents, the school has a code of professional and teaching standards where certain behavioral norms and principles are spelled out in detail. For example, one section of the code addresses the commitment to students with such statements as: "Honor the integrity of students and influence them through constructive criticism rather than by ridicule and harassment." Another principle stresses a "commitment to the public" and democratic participation. Another set of statements relates to the educational environment staff should maintain, stating that staff "will exert every effort to raise standards, to improve service, to promote a climate in which the exercise of sound personal and professional judgment is encouraged, and to achieve conditions worthy of trust to careers in education."

If there is violation of the code, a grievance procedure is outlined which includes bringing up the issue with the co-directors and, if necessary, going through a series of mediation steps with the Human Resource and Personnel Council. Complying with this code is one of the terms of agreement mentioned in all staff hiring contracts (tenured teachers, non-certificated staff, teacher assistants, etc.).

Part of the school's culture includes an expectation that new knowledge will be shared and peer support provided. Survey data indicates that the majority of teachers have devoted several hours in the past year to a range of professional development activities including "classroom coaching, classroom observation, individual research," etc. Several staff mentioned that if they are given a

professional development opportunity (e.g., attending a conference or piloting a new curriculum), they are automatically expected to give a presentation to their grade level, confer with the appropriate council or speak with the Director of Instruction about what they learned.

The school is also implementing a grade level peer observation process. As part of that process, a grade level team will meet and pick a standard to which each teacher will write a formal lesson plan. Then a senior teacher on that team will present his/her lesson plan and the others will observe. A structured discussion then follows. This process is especially helpful for beginning teachers. New teachers are also supported by mentor teachers. There are currently four and another one will be appointed in the coming year.

The formal staff evaluation process varies according to teacher status. Beginning teachers are evaluated two times a semester until they are given a probationary contract. These evaluations include an observation of a lesson plan by a school administrator and a submission of a portfolio. Probationary teachers are evaluated once a semester and an observation and portfolio are also part of the process. Permanent teachers are evaluated through informal observations and primarily through portfolio submissions. According to one teacher, the goal of teacher evaluation is not to be "punitive", but instead "enhance the craft and encourage self-reflection." Currently, teacher evaluation is not tied to any compensation, but teachers are provided stipends for assuming more responsibilities, such as serving as a grade level chair or offering an after school class.

Resources and Support

Fenton staff were quick to point out the many resources at their disposal which assist them in doing their jobs. The school has a fully-stocked resource room with visual aides, a copy machine, art supplies, etc. Several staff, including classified staff, report that they always feel like they have the supplies to do their work. In particular, teachers mentioned the benefits of having their own budget for materials (\$400 for new hires and \$200 for all other teachers) and each grade level receives \$2,000 as a team to spend on joint projects.

Other resources mentioned were in the form of collegial support. For example, Fenton's cadre of teacher-leaders and administrators were described as always willing and available to come to the classroom, provide feedback, and even model a new lesson. The support, mentoring, and encouragement provided by the two co-directors was also acknowledged by many staff.

Lessons Learned

According to staff, the school has come a long way from its pre-charter status. Most important, Fenton now offers several different interventions and preventative measures to ensure that students receive the adequate academic support they need. Staff see the benefits of a tighter articulation among and within grade levels. There are also more opportunities for teachers and administrators to interact, share ideas and provide feedback, both formally and informally. The

overriding philosophy is that these structures and peer-support all lead to helping students – the primary goal of the school. As one teacher summarized:

The value of a charter school like ours is obvious – student achievement, professional development, overall efforts are being realized. When you have a system set up and in place where everyone is working toward that goal with the same intensity, then the benefits are numerous for students who have a chance to be a part of that school.

Assessment & Performance-Based Accountability

Student Assessment

Survey and interview data indicate that student progress is assessed through a variety of measures. Although assessments have varied due to changes in State and District testing requirements, the school has still attempted to use such measures in determining the progress of students. Fenton's charter mentions five types of outcomes including performance-based and norm-referenced test results. The school uses several standardized and self-developed assessment processes. Many of those mentioned by staff are listed in Figure 6. Survey data indicate that teachers rely on many assessment methods, such as performance-based tests, portfolios, consultation with teachers, and standardized tests.

Unfortunately the school, along with other public schools in the State and District, has had to switch standardized tests several times in the course of the past five years. This has made tracking longitudinal data difficult because of test comparability issues. The school is currently participating in the new State-mandated Standardized Testing and Reporting (STAR) program and administered SAT-9 this Spring (which is the test the District administered last year as well). In 1996-97, the District switched from CTBS/U to SAT-9. Despite these inconsistency in measures, the school has moved forward and started to disaggregate and analyze the progress of students by reviewing prior CTBS/U scores. Now they will use last year's SAT-9 data as their baseline year. One analysis administrators showed to the site visit team examined student progress in quartiles, i.e., identifying the number of students who have fallen above or below the 25, 50 or 75th percentile. Teachers also reported that they may request from the Director of Instruction alternative ways in which they would like their student data disaggregated.

The State's new STAR test – SAT-9 has had several ramifications. Due to the school's visibility, the teachers and administrators naturally expressed a desire to demonstrate good performance. Partly as preparation, they are reviewing their pacing schedule for introducing concepts in basal units. They are currently working on such pacing schedules in Math. There is also an interest in giving younger students (e.g., kindergartners) opportunities to practice their test-taking skills.

Another influence of the SAT-9 has been on the school's bilingual education program. Because the State requires that all students, regardless of English-speaking ability, take the SAT-9, the school has decided to accelerate their transition to English to earlier grades. Currently, a student's transition is decided by using a cut-off score on the Criteria for the Addition of Reading in English (CARE) test or the recommendation by a language assessment team. A critical concern raised by the school is the subjectivity involved in scoring parts of the CARE test (e.g., writing section) and the implications that has for the comparability of LEP designations among schools in the District. They also suspect that other schools may have been purposefully holding back their students to avoid having them tested in English.

To further determine student progress, the school also administers the BEST test every year as a pre- and post-measure of student performance on basic skills. This measure is also used to determine the impact of piloted programs, such as the technology and phonics program. For example, the school has administered the BEST test to students who are placed in a "Virtual Learning Classroom." Based on an analysis of BEST results for the 1996-97 school year, the school presented data on 24 students that indicates for that year 25, 27, 18 and 10 percent increases, on average, in vocabulary, reading comprehension, math concepts and math computation respectively.

Beyond standardized measures, the school is currently identifying and developing measures that more accurately reflect the breadth and full impact of its educational program. According to teachers, Standards Consultants are currently working with them to identify and develop pre- and post-tests that will be aligned with the school's new standards. In addition, it hopes to tie its standards and assessments to student grades and report card formats. Teachers are also refining rubrics for the writing portfolios that have been in place for several years so that information and student work is presented and rated in a standardized way.

Schoolwide Measures and Assessments

The Director of Instruction, along with the Curriculum & Instruction/Accountability & Student Assessment Council, is also examining test scores and other achievement indicators at a school-wide level. In addition to having an outside evaluator from the University of Southern California examine its program, Fenton's instructional sub-committee conducted a review – sponsored by the District – of the school's educational program based on the State's Program Quality Review (PQR) process. As a result of the recommendations from that review, the school is upgrading its standards and benchmarks by grade level. The school also reports that it conducts periodic surveys of students, teachers and parents to determine needs. Attendance is also monitored by the school, along with teacher absenteeism.

Figure 6: Types of Assessments

Expected Outcomes as Mentioned in Charter	Types of Assessments Currently in Use	Comments
<u>Student</u> - California Learning Assessment System (CLAS) scores will increase by at least 10 points in reading, written expression and Mathematics (Replaced by STAR/SAT-9) - CTBS/U and Aprenda scores for all students will increase by 5 percentile points 75% of students at SOLOM level 4 and who have had 3 years of primary language instruction will pass the CARE test and transition to English Reading Program - Attendance will increase from 92% to 96% - Develop evaluation instrument for collecting baseline and exit data on transient students	<u>Standardized</u> - SAT- 9 annually (formerly CTBS/U) and Aprenda - Basic Elementary-Secondary Test (BEST) in English and Spanish (for new students and beginning year to determine pre/post growth) - SOLOM and CARE for assessing student transition from Spanish to English <u>Locally/School Developed</u> - Writing portfolios - Standards-based tests are under development in certain grade levels (e.g., fourth) - Kindergarten tests - Electronic portfolios (in some fifth grades classes) - Locally developed tests	- School uses multiple measures - Push to test students in English has led to a re-thinking of bilingual transition level - Rubrics for portfolios are under development - School is still identifying ways to measure progress toward their new standards – it hopes to locate pre-existing tests or develop its own
<u>Schoolwide</u> None mentioned	- Appropriate councils and administrators compare statistics of student performance yearly (e.g., progress of students in percentage quartiles), transition, attendance, etc. - Conducted District sponsored Program Quality Review Process (PQR) - Independent evaluation by the University of Southern California - Parent/ student/teacher surveys periodically	- Disaggregated school data reveals that English-Only population is lowest performing. - The school has also participated in national and State evaluations (e.g., Hudson Institute, SRI study, etc.)

Source: School's charter petition and site visits

Lessons Learned

As members of a charter school, teachers and administrators feel pressure to show results – describing the situation as “a fishbowl.” The dilemma they face, as they see it, is being held accountable for variables over which they feel they have little control (e.g., other schools sending their special needs students to them). Many of their English-only population are also their most transient students. And staff are also concerned that, while they believe they are following proper

testing protocol in testing all students (even those who are most likely not to perform well because of their LEP status), other schools may choose not to. As a charter school, staff and administrators feel highly accountable and visible. Although tests such as SAT-9 may only reflect a narrow slice of the impact of Fenton's overall program, they know they will be compared to other schools, and therefore take such tests seriously.

Outcomes, Accomplishments & Outstanding Issues

Student Performance

Fenton students have shown gains in both standardized student achievement test scores and in other outcome measures since becoming a charter school. Though Fenton's students more often score below the 50th percentile, on English language basic skills tests, the school has consistently brought performance on Spanish language testing up, with scores currently close to the 50th percentile. Relative to schools with similar demographic characteristics, Fenton has moved from the bottom to the top in rank in performance. Those students who stay at Fenton for at least two years are more likely to improve their performance than in comparison schools.

Academic Performance on Standardized Tests. Several of the student achievement outcomes listed in the charter are based on performance on standardized tests used by the District, e.g., CTBS/U (Comprehensive Tests of Basic Skills, Form U), Aprenda, and CLAS (California Learning Assessment System). Since the inception of the charter school, CLAS has been discontinued and, in the 1996-97 school year, the District switched from the CTBS/U to the Stanford Achievement Test, Ninth Edition (SAT-9). As a result, specific percentage increases outlined by the school as achievement goals are difficult to interpret. (See Figure 6 in Assessment section above). For example, it's unclear if the 5 percent increase would start with the 1993-94 school year as the baseline and be used as an annual benchmark. In any case, the school has presented its own interpretation of its scores as part of the renewal material presented to the Board. To lend further perspective, we have analyzed student performance on these tests using several approaches.

One approach is to compare Fenton's achievement scores to a group of non-charter schools selected according to their similarity to Fenton on several key criteria. Schools were selected from the entire District based on whether or not they fell within 15 percentage points of the school along the following criteria: student enrollment (size), grades served, percentage of LEP students served, ethnic breakdown of students, and percent of students qualifying for AFDC (Aid to Families with Dependent Children). (See Figure 7 in Appendix, Selection Criteria for Comparison Schools, to see how schools fall on the selection criteria.) This selection process allowed us to include a "cluster" of comparison schools, instead of a single school, for each of the five charter schools that are up for renewal. The cluster consists of other non-charter District schools, some of which participate in other district reforms.⁶ For Fenton, 13 schools met these criteria. In

addition, at the request of the school, a group of five schools were selected by Fenton to be used as comparisons because Fenton felt the schools were more closely matched on a particular criterion. The characteristics of these schools are included in Figure 7 in the Appendix.

The District provided WestEd with CTBS/U scores from Spring 1994, 1995, and 1996; SAT-9 scores from 1997;⁷ and Aprenda scores from each of these four years. This analysis had to take into account that basic skills in English were assessed with one test for three years and with a different test the final year.⁸ To accommodate the differences in tests, scores were analyzed in three ways. First, the *year-to-year* change in scores was analyzed to see the performance of students attending the charter schools relative to students attending the comparison schools, and to the District as a whole. In this way, one could understand whether the performance of charter school students was like or unlike other schools' students. Second, the *relative* position of the scores from a charter school was compared to the relative position of the comparison group's scores. More specifically, we looked at how many schools had a score higher than a charter school in Spring 1994 and again in Spring 1997. Third, we examined the relative change in rank of charter schools to other elementary schools in the District overall. None of these three methods of analyzing scores required students to have taken the same test in *all* years; they only required that students take the same test within the years analyzed. We also reviewed the performance of students who stayed at the school one or two successive years to see how continued student enrollment at Fenton affected test scores.

In Figures 8a-8c (in Appendix), the average achievement scores for Fenton students and for students in each of the comparison schools over a four-year period are shown for Reading, Mathematics and Language Arts, with separate graphs for students tested with CTBS/U and SAT-9 than for those tested with Aprenda. In the graphs depicting CTBS/U and SAT-9 test scores, the vertical line demarcating the first three years spanning 1993-94 through 1995-96 from the fourth year represents the point at which the District switched tests. As is to be expected with a new test, and as can be seen in reviewing these graphs, generally the entire sample of schools shows a slight decline in scores, including Fenton. Such a decline in scores usually occurs when a school District switches to a test that has more recent norms because the norms for the newer test are generally more difficult than those of the test that the District has been using for many years. Below is an analysis of Fenton's achievement test scores relative to its non-charter comparison schools as demonstrated in these graphs. (See Figures 9a-9c in Appendix for actual scores that correspond to the plots in Figures 8a-8c.)

Year-to-Year Changes on CTBS/U and SAT-9 Performance. The Reading scores of Fenton students ranged from the 18th to 22nd percentiles. These low scores can be said to reflect Fenton's significant Spanish speaking population. Scores rose from 1994 to 1995, remained the same from 1995 to 1996, and then with the change in test declined in 1996 to 1997. Given the change in tests in 1996-97, it's not surprising that the Reading scores of the District elementary students as a whole, and all but three of the schools in Fenton's comparison group, declined from

1996 to 1997. Reading scores rose from 1994 to 1995 and then from 1995 to 1996 stayed the same from one year to the next for the District as a whole and for six of Fenton's comparison schools.

Mathematics and Language scores are generally higher at Fenton than Reading. In Mathematics, for those years that the District administered the test, Fenton's scores showed steady progress. Specifically, scores of Fenton students ranged between the 25th and 38th percentiles, increasing each year from 1994 to 1995 to 1996. Only two comparison schools also had Mathematics scores which increased from 1994 through 1996. At four comparison schools and for the District as a whole, between 1994 and 1996, scores rose one year and remained the same the second year. Reflecting the change in test, between 1996 and 1997, Mathematics scores declined at Fenton, all of its comparison schools, and for elementary District students overall.

Fenton's Language scores ranged between the 23rd and 29th percentiles. The pattern of changes in Fenton's Language scores was the same as their Mathematics scores: they increased from 1994 through 1996. This was the same pattern of Language Arts scores exhibited by the District's elementary students and students at one comparison school. There were no other comparison schools where Language scores rose between both 1994 and 1995 and 1995 and 1996. Scores at four comparison schools rose one year and remained the same the other year, 1994 to 1995 or 1995 to 1996.

Relative Changes on CTBS/U and SAT-9. In all three subjects, Reading, Mathematics, and Language, the relative rank of Fenton students increased between 1994 and 1997. In 1994, 11 of the 13 comparison schools had Reading scores which were higher than Fenton's (20th percentile). In 1997, Fenton's Reading score was slightly lower (18th percentile); however, only seven comparison schools had higher Reading scores in that year. In Mathematics, 12 of the WestEd comparison schools had higher Mathematics scores than Fenton (29th percentile) in 1994. By 1997, only four comparison schools had Mathematics scores which were higher than Fenton's (25th percentile). Fenton's Language score in 1994 (25th percentile) was lower than that of 12 WestEd comparison schools. Again, by 1997, Fenton's Language score (23rd percentile) was lower than the scores of only six of these comparison schools. Thus, although the performance of Fenton students on the SAT-9 placed them in the first quartile in Reading, Mathematics, and Language, it appears that students attending many of the comparison schools had a more difficult time on the SAT-9 than did Fenton students.

Fenton identified five schools against which they believed their performance should be compared. Two of these schools had higher Reading scores than Fenton in 1994. By 1997, none of these five schools had higher Reading scores. One of them, however, had a Reading score that was identical to Fenton's score. In Mathematics, two of the self-selected comparison schools had 1994 scores which exceeded Fenton. Fenton's performance in Mathematics also rose to the point that, by 1997, it scored higher than any of its self-selected comparison schools. Fenton's relative 1994 ranking in Language was similar to its ranking in Reading and Mathematics: two schools had

Language scores higher than Fenton. By 1997, only one self-selected comparison school had a Language score that was higher than Fenton's.

Year-to-Year Changes on Aprenda Performance. Reading, Mathematics, and Language skills in Spanish, assessed by Aprenda, show marked increase each year at Fenton from 1994 through 1997. In 1994, these scores ranged from the 25th percentile in Mathematics to the 36th percentile in Language. By 1997, scores were between the 45th and 51st percentiles. None of Fenton's comparison schools gained in Reading across each of these years. One comparison school did so in Mathematics and three gained across the four years in Language. For LAUSD as a whole, Elementary students gained in Reading, Mathematics, and Language from 1994 to 1995 to 1996. Scores remained constant from 1996 to 1997 in Reading and Language, but declined slightly in Mathematics.

There were six comparison schools where Reading scores from year to year increased or were the same, mirroring elementary students Districtwide. Mathematics scores increased or remained constant from year to year at three comparison schools. In Language, there were no other schools in Fenton's comparison groups where scores did not go down at least one year in the 1994 to 1997 time period.

Relative Changes Aprenda. Like their skills when assessed in English, the scores of Fenton students on the Aprenda increased relative to the schools in the WestEd-selected comparison group. In 1994, nine of the WestEd comparison schools had Reading scores higher than the scores of Fenton students. But, by 1997, Fenton was at the top: no comparison school had average scores higher than Fenton's Reading score at the 50th percentile. (One comparison school also scored at the 50th percentile.) In Mathematics, six of the WestEd comparison schools had higher average scores than Fenton's 1994 Mathematics score (25th percentile). By 1997, Fenton students had closed the gap between themselves and other students. Only one comparison school had a higher average Mathematics score than Fenton. Fenton's 1994 Language score (36th percentile) was lower than that of seven comparison schools. By 1997, only two comparison schools had a higher average Mathematics score than Fenton's score at the 51st percentile.

Fenton students performed well on the Aprenda compared to its self-selected group of comparison schools. Three of these schools had higher Reading scores in 1994. By 1997, Fenton scored higher than four of the schools. Its score at the 50th percentile tied the Reading score of the fifth comparison school. In Mathematics, three schools in this comparison group averaged higher than Fenton in 1994. By 1997, Fenton's score exceeded the Mathematics score of all of five comparison schools. Results in Language were similar. Two schools in 1994 and one school in 1997 had Language scores that exceeded Fenton's Language score from those two years.

Rank Order in District. Another approach to examining relative performance is the change in school rank as compared to all other elementary schools with test data in the District with test scores for kindergarten through sixth grade, as depicted by Figures 9d and 9e. While the total number of elementary schools in the District with testing data for CTBS/U and SAT-9 and

Aprenda fluctuates from year-to-year, a school's ranking allows us to avoid direct comparisons of CTBS/U and SAT-9 scores while still enabling us to make use of all available scores for all years. Consistent with other analyses, Fenton shows a large improvement in Aprenda in Reading, Mathematics and Language. In Aprenda, the biggest gain in rank was in Mathematics: in 1993-94 the school was ranked 249 out of 390 elementary schools and in 1996-97 was ranked 42 out of 381 elementary schools. There is also an increase in rank on CTBS/U. Specifically, the relative rank of Fenton in Reading and Language increased slightly, while in Mathematics it rose from 406 out of 469 to 280 out of 481 elementary schools.

Figure 9d: School Rank in District - CTBS/U, SAT-9

	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
	CTBS/U (N=469)*	CTBS/U (N=478)*	CTBS/U (N=480)*	SAT-9 (N=481)*
Reading	380	347	349	350
Mathematics	406	356	319	280
Language	384	352	329	332

* N = Total number of elementary schools within LAUSD with test scores for K-6th grade students.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Figure 9e: School Rank in District - Aprenda

	1993-94 (N=390)*	1994-95 (N=380)*	1995-96 (N=361)*	1996-97 (N=381)*
Reading	248	177	102	57
Mathematics	249	156	94	42
Language	120	177	125	82

* N = Total number of elementary schools within LAUSD with test scores for K-6th grade students.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

School Interpretations and Concerns. One issue for Fenton in drawing comparisons to other schools is that, while Fenton uses District policy for testing students, other schools may use different criteria or practices for who actually takes the test. They are especially concerned about whether other schools abided by the 30-month rule for excluding LEP students from testing (i.e., other schools wait longer than 30 months). Figures 10a-10c (in Appendix), shows that Fenton tends to test slightly higher percentages than most comparison schools. Fenton's percentages (of students tested in Reading, Mathematics, and Language) range over time from the high 60s to the low 70s. In addition to testing a higher percentage of students than its comparison schools, Fenton also feels that its English-only population, which administrators report as its most transient, are not typically with them long enough to show the improvement they would like.

The school also feels that the variation in types and numbers tested has more recently been exacerbated by a letter sent out by the District alerting parents that they can opt out of the test this year. Because Fenton – and other charter schools – did not send this letter to parents, they feel that other District schools may end up testing a different and smaller set of students, which could further complicate comparisons that are drawn.

Performance of "Stayers" Over Time. Another approach to examining changes in student performance is to measure the success of an education program in boosting the skills of lower-performing students while helping students with higher skill levels increase, or at least maintain, their skills. Ideally, such an analysis would also demonstrate that those students who stay with the school for longer periods of time show more growth, and in the case of Fenton, it does. What follows in Figures 11a and 11b are two tables which examine the relationship between the length of time students have "stayed" with a school and the probability that their performance will improve. Specifically this analysis examines how Fenton's and its comparison schools' students' performed on the CTBS/U and Aprenda basic skills tests according to two cohorts of students: 1) those who had test scores for two consecutive years, 1993-94 and 1994-95 (or "one year stayers"), and 2) those who had test scores in the first and third years, 1993-94 and 1995-96 (or "two year stayers").

The benchmark for performance is the percentage of students scoring below and above the 50th percentile. First, we examined whether, over time, greater proportions of students who began below the 50th percentile scored at or above the 50th percentile after staying in the school for one or two years. Second, we examined whether students who were already scoring at or above the 50th percentile continued to do so in successive years. The same data was analyzed for students in the comparison schools as a whole.

Figure 11a shows Fenton's student performance for those who stayed for a year and those who stayed for two years on the CTBS/U. For the first analysis, students were divided into two groups based on their Spring 1994 scores on the Reading, Mathematics, and Language sub-tests: those students who scored below the 50th percentile and those who scored at or above the 50th percentile. These data are shown in the first column (Percent in Group, One Year Stayers). In the second column, the table then shows the percentage of students, one year later, who are either:

- ⊕ *improving* – i.e., have moved from scoring below the 50th percentile in Spring 1994 to scoring at or above the 50th percentile in Spring 1995 or
- ⊕ *maintaining* – i.e., have scored at or above the 50th percentile in Spring 1994 and remain scoring above it in Spring 1995.

The same data is shown for students in Fenton's comparison schools.

For the second part of this analysis (also shown in Figure 11a in columns 3 and 4), the same data is shown for Fenton students and students in the comparison schools who stay in their respective schools for Years 1 and 3 – that is, for whom we had scores in 1993-94 and 1995-96.

As can be seen by the different percentages of students considered below and above the 50th percentile (shown in the Percent in Group column), these two analyses did not necessarily include the same students, since more students stay for one year than for two, i.e., more have test scores from Spring 1994 and 1995 than for Spring 1994 and 1996. For example, there were 277 students who remained at Fenton for one year, 1993-94 to 1994-95, and 173 students who remained there for two years, 1993-94 to 1995-96. Therefore, the percent of students scoring in the upper or lower half of percentiles is not likely to be equal across the first and second analyses.

Figures 11a and 11b, show that large percentages of students attending Fenton and its comparison schools scored at or below the 50th percentile on each of the CTBS/U and Aprenda sub-tests. The percentages at Fenton ranged for the one-year analysis from about 69 percent of students scoring in the bottom half of scores on Aprenda's Language sub-test to almost 88 percent of students scoring at or below the 50th percentile on the CTBS Reading sub-test.

For the one-year stayers, the percent of students most likely to move from the bottom half of the distribution and to the top half was lowest for CTBS Reading (10.3 percent) and greatest for CTBS Mathematics (25.5 percent). At Fenton's comparison schools, the corresponding percentages were from 8.6 percent (CTBS Reading) to 24.7 percent (Aprenda Language). With one exception (Aprenda Language), in the CTBS/U and Aprenda one-year analyses, and for each sub-test, Reading Mathematics, and Language, a larger percentage of Fenton students were likely to move out of the 1st to 50th percentile group to the 51st to 99th

percentile group than students attending the comparison schools. This finding suggests that Fenton students who remained with the school generally performed better on the CTBS/U and Aprenda from 1993-94 to 1994-95 than students at the comparison schools.

Data regarding the percentage of students who scored between the 51st to 99th percentiles in 1993-94 and remained there after one year show Fenton students again more likely to score higher than students attending comparison schools. For each of the CTBS/U and Aprenda sub-tests, a greater percentage of students attending Fenton remained in the 51st to 99th percentile range from Spring 1993 to Spring 1994 (between 80 percent and 94 percent) than at the comparison schools (between 64 percent and 75 percent).

Figure 11a: Performance of "Stayers" Over Time -
Fenton and Comparison Schools (CTBS/U)

CTBS/U	Stayers One Year 93-94 to 94-95		Stayers Two Years 93-94 to 95-96	
	Percent in Group	Percent Improving*/ Percent Maintaining**	Percent in Group	Percent Improving*/ Percent Maintaining**
Reading				
Fenton (n=277)			Fenton (n=173)	
1st to 49th Percentile	87.7	10.3	89.6	13.5
50th to 99th Percentile	12.3	94.1	10.4	77.8
Comparison Schools (n=2908)			Comparison Schools (n=1181)	
1st to 49th Percentile	81.5	8.6	82.0	11.2
50th to 99th Percentile	18.5	72.1	18.0	60.6
Mathematics				
Fenton (n=281)			Fenton (n=130)	
1st to 49th Percentile	69.8	25.5	75.6	23.8
50th to 99th Percentile	30.2	82.4	24.4	81.0
Comparison Schools (n=3064)			Comparison Schools (n=1176)	
1st to 49th Percentile	61.5	17.6	59.4	17.7
50th to 99th Percentile	38.5	75.4	40.6	72.5
Language				
Fenton (n=273)			Fenton (n=172)	
1st to 49th Percentile	86.1	18.3	87.2	22.0
50th to 99th Percentile	13.9	89.5	12.8	72.7
Comparison Schools (n=2911)			Comparison Schools (n=1172)	
1st to 49th Percentile	76.8	14.7	77.3	17.1
50th to 99th Percentile	23.2	74.6	22.7	74.1

* This is the percentage of students who are below the 50th percentile who move above the 50th percentile in the following year.** This is the percentage of students who are at or above the 50th percentile who remain there in the following year.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Figure 11b: Performance of "Stayers" Over Time -
Fenton and Comparison Schools (Aprenda)

Aprenda	Stayers One Year 93-94 to 94-95		Stayers Two Years 93-94 to 95-96	
	Percent in Group	Percent Improving*/ Percent Maintaining**	Percent in Group	Percent Improving*/ Percent Maintaining**
Reading				
Fenton (n=172)				
1st to 49th Percentile	70.9	19.7	67.0	19.7
50th to 99th Percentile	29.1	84.0	33.0	94.3
Comparison Schools (n=2212)				
1st to 49th Percentile	70.7	16.9	74.7	20.5
50th to 99th Percentile	29.3	73.9	25.3	73.3
Mathematics				
Fenton (n=174)				
1st to 49th Percentile	74.1	19.4	71.8	25.3
50th to 99th Percentile	25.9	80.0	28.2	77.4
Comparison Schools n=2272)				
1st to 49th Percentile	79.8	14.1	81.8	12.7
50th to 99th Percentile	20.2	63.5	18.2	54.5
Language				
Fenton (n=158)				
1st to 49th Percentile	68.4	24.1	67.3	27.9
50th to 99th Percentile	31.6	82.0	32.7	75.8
Comparison Schools (n=2036)				
1st to 49th Percentile	68.5	24.7	72.3	22.2
50th to 99th Percentile	31.5	67.4	27.7	64.6

* This is the percentage of students who are below the 50th percentile who move above the 50th percentile in the following year.

** This is the percentage of students who are at or above the 50th percentile who remain there in the following year.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

The two-year analyses looked at students' scores from 1993-94 versus 1995-96. The findings from these analyses were much like the scores from the one-year analyses. Fenton students, as opposed to students at the comparison schools, were more likely to a) leave the lower half of scores between Spring 1994 and Spring 1996 and b) to remain in the upper half. In summary, the data suggests strong evidence that the longer students stay at Fenton, the more likely they are to improve performance.

Non-Academic Student Outcomes. Beyond academic outcomes, such as these, there are also other indicators of the school's impact, including the numbers of students returning, attendance rates and LEP redesignation rates.

Returning Students. Administrators and staff indicated that transiency appeared to be declining, especially for their LEP population, and that students were staying at the school. In an attempt to measure how many students return year to year, an analysis was conducted that examined the proportion of students who returned in one year to the next. That analysis is presented in Figure 13 in the Appendix.

Fenton students returned in larger proportions than students in the majority of its comparison schools during the first and second year of its charter status. Between 1993-1994 and 1994-95 school year, approximately 76 percent of the students returned. Between the second and third years, nearly 83 percent returned and between the third and fourth years of the charter, nearly 80 percent of all students returned. In relation to comparison schools, during the first two years of the charter, five comparison schools exceeded Fenton's percentage. In the second and third years, only two surpassed Fenton in the proportion of returning students. And in the third and fourth years, three schools exceeded Fenton.

Attendance Rates and Charter School Average Daily Attendance. The Charter School Act did not specifically define how charter schools' Average Daily Attendance (ADA) should be calculated. The California Code of Regulations, Subchapter 19, Article 1, Section 11960, defines "regular average daily attendance," as used in Education Code Section 47612 (1), to mean "...the attendance of charter school pupils while engaged in education activities required of them by their charter school, on days when school is actually taught in their charter schools." The charter school ADA calculation includes a 5 percent adjustment to compensate for the lack of apportionment absences. Charter schools are not required to differentiate between apportionment and non-apportionment absences.

At the time Fenton's charter was written and approved, ADA and attendance rates were calculated using apportioned absences. During Fenton's first year of charter operation, the California Department of Education used the 5 percent add-on to replace loss of apportioned absences. Fenton's pledge was to increase from 92 percent (which included apportioned absences) to 96 percent. Assuming the 5 percent is a relatively fair substitute for apportioned absences,¹⁰ it appears that Fenton did meet its goal.

Effective 7/1/98, the entire state (including charter schools) will receive ADA based on actual attendance which will simplify future evaluations and comparisons.

Figure 14: Attendance Rates

	1992-93	1993-94	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97
Fenton Attendance*	91.86	92.24	97.19	97.19	97.61

* Actual attendance + 5% allowance as mandated by charter law

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District School Accountability Report Cards (October 1994 and January 1998), and Los Angeles Unified School District School Information Technology Division (data received on 4/30/98 and 5/18/98)

LEP Redesignation. Given the high number of LEP students, Fenton expressed a strong interest in ensuring students become English proficient, especially given concerns that they be adequately prepared when they enter middle school. Also driving this interest are new testing requirements, as mentioned previously. As demonstrated in Figure 15 on the following page, the numbers of LEP students increased over time as did the number of students redesignated. These data were obtained from School Accountability Report Cards (SARC) which are drawn from school reports. Administrators report that prior to charter status, primary grade students were seldom tested for redesignation. Since then, the school constantly assesses students' language proficiency and academic progress. Administrators explain that part of the increase in redesignation stems from a desire to ensure students are progressing and reaching their highest potential and that they "don't get stuck" at one level. As such, the school has been more aggressive in testing and continually checking student progress.

Figure 15: Numbers of LEP and Redesignated Students

Year	Number of LEP	Number of Redesignated
1992-93	609	7
1993-94	599	32
1994-95	627	28
1995-96	687	42
1996-97	726	54

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District School Accountability Report Cards (October 1994 and January 1998), and Los Angeles Unified School District School Information Technology Division (data received on 4/30/98 and 5/18/98)

Survey data also indicates high satisfaction. When asked overall how satisfied they were with the school, 68 percent of the 215 parents responded "very satisfied" and 28 percent responded "satisfied." The majority of parents also responded they were "very satisfied" to "satisfied" along several other dimensions, including the mission of the school, its governance, their children's academic progress, the teachers and principals, etc.

Summary of Other Accomplishments

In five years, Fenton has met and exceeded several of the goals it set for itself. And much of this staff attributes to the school's budget flexibility and cost effectiveness in maximizing the use of their dollars. As mentioned earlier, Fenton not only reduced class size to its original goal as stated in their charter, but went further, reducing class size to 20:1 in K-3 and 25:1 in the upper grades, partly because of State categorical funds.

Another example is the expansion of Fenton's technology program. While use of computers were only touched upon in the charter, Fenton has begun to prepare the necessary infrastructure that it will need to continue to meet the technological challenges that lay ahead. Although moving quickly, the school has tried to be deliberate in its approach, from piloting the program's impact on student performance to developing a long-term implementation plan. They have also been creative and resourceful in their financing of such a plan, negotiating long term leases with private companies and securing about \$140 thousand dollars in foundation funding.

Recognizing the academic needs of many of its students, the school has created multiple opportunities for students to excel. After school, weekend and intercession academic and other enrichment opportunities are provided. New curricula and instructional methods are constantly under review and, when deemed worthy, implemented as soon as possible. Building connections and coherence to the school's educational program has been a driving force in recent years and such structures appear to be working.

The school has also paid close attention to the affective needs of students. They have developed strategies to nurture students' self-esteem, while at the same time instilling social norms of behavior, through such programs as Discipline with Dignity. As a result, teachers report that student behavior has improved: students show more respect for teachers, staff and other students and they also show more self-control and responsibility. They have also used their budget flexibility to manage a school lunch and breakfast program that offers more meal choices for students and a meal for every child.¹² Through comparison shopping they were even able to purchase a walk-in cafeteria refrigerator and cooling system. They have also hired a full-time psychologist and counselor to provide further support to children's emotional, behavioral and social service needs.

In five years, they have also created, maintained and improved a governance structure that includes every full-time staff member at Fenton. As a school that essentially started site-based governance from scratch, there have been several lessons learned about how to better structure and streamline

the councils. Overtime administrators, teachers and other staff have grown to trust one another's judgement and motivation in decision-making, realizing that choices are made with the interests of students in mind.

From most indications, they have also managed to keep a complex, multi-faceted operation fiscally sound. The school's administrators have had to learn how to navigate a new set of issues, such as how best to expand, renovate and construct new facilities while at the same time providing employee benefits, bi-monthly salaries and even bonuses. To build goodwill within their immediate local community, they have developed close working relationships with local vendors and contractors. And when possible, parents are hired to help with maintenance, gardens and other facilities repair.

Issues Remaining

Fenton has come a long way since it first opened as a charter school. And while staff are proud of their hard-won accomplishments, they understand, yet are frustrated by being characterized as part of "an experiment." While the school has received many visits from State and national dignitaries, such as State Superintendent Delaine Eastin and Senator Gary Hart, staff would like more District officials to come see for themselves what they have accomplished thus far.

One of their biggest challenges, as admitted by administrators and teachers, is continuing to push their largely low-performing students up to and beyond grade level. At this point the school is still trying to continue to more tightly interlock the many pieces of it's educational program. Critical to being able to demonstrate their success – outside of their performance on SAT-9¹ – will be their ability to identify or develop a set of standards-based tests that genuinely reflect the breadth of their entire educational program.

Another clear challenge is improving parent involvement, especially with regard to school governance. Parents interviewed suggested that more information about the school and governance councils might assist in raising parent participation. This may be the case since of the 213 parents who responded to this study's survey, 58 percent said they were not sure if the school had a governance council.

The school has had to modify and change its direction several times, yet they have done so of their own accord and through an inclusive governance process. Such freedom has not come without a price, namely spending long hours in council meetings, supporting peers and spending extra hours with students and their families. In their minds, there is still much more to be done. As one administrator explained, she tells teachers that "Until every classroom in our school is good enough for your child, we have a lot of work to do."

¹ They also serve pre-kindergarten students through a district program. With those students (120) included, enrollment is over 1,300.

² LAUSD, May 1998, Table 2, Elementary Schools By Region.

³ SRI, 1997.

⁴ One of the school's administrators has suggested that a charter school representative be appointed to this committee as a way to assist in addressing these issues. The District is currently considering that suggestion.

⁵ SRI, 1997.

⁶ In response to the Request for Proposals (RFP), the original design for the evaluation included selecting a cluster of comparison schools, similar demographically to a given charter school, that participate in other district reform efforts. As a result of the evaluation's technical advisory group on student outcomes suggestions, subsequent design refinements increased the comparison cluster of schools to also include schools that do not participate in other district reforms. Given the number of District, State and Federal reforms in which schools participate, it is exceedingly difficult to identify schools that are not participating in any reforms. Therefore, schools in the comparison cluster fall into two categories: 1) reform comparison schools – schools that participate in both LEARN and LAAMP, some of which are magnet and former SBM schools, and 2) other comparison schools – schools that may or may not participate in other reforms such as magnet or LEARN.

⁷ LAUSD's student assessment program from Spring 1994 to Spring 1997 included basic skills tests administered in English and in Spanish. For Spring 1994, 1995, and 1996, the District administered the English language CTBS/U which was normed in 1981. The District changed from the CTBS/U to the Stanford Achievement Test-9 (SAT-9) for testing in Spring 1997. The SAT-9 was developed more recently than the CTBS/U, having 1995 norms. Basic skills were assessed in Spanish each year using the Aprenda test.

⁸ It is common for school Districts to periodically change the battery used to assess basic skills. When basic skills tests are developed, the tests' publishers base the tests' content on the curriculum reflected in textbooks and curriculum guides currently in use by schools. School curricula, however, are not static. They are always changing to reflect current understandings of curriculum and pedagogy. Therefore, test publishers periodically issue a new edition of an existing basic skills test or develop new tests. Each of these new tests is normed on a representative sample of students enrolled in the nation's schools at that time. The performance of these students determines what is low, average, or high performance in the basic skills areas of reading, mathematics and language arts. It is frequently not possible to equate scores from one edition of a test or scores from tests developed by different publishing companies.

⁹ Although we have labeled these students "one year stayers," they may have, in fact, been at the school for two years or more; however, we are basing this analysis on whether there were test scores in both years. The student may, therefore, have only been there for one year which spanned both testing dates for the two years. Similarly, "two-year stayers" have test scores that span three school years, but have, at a minimum, been at the school for Year 1 testing and Year 3 testing.

¹⁰ LAUSD's 1996-97 apportioned rate was 5.3%.

¹¹ Of the handful of comments submitted on open-ended section of the surveys, most were positive, with only a couple comments that raised concerns about a "power struggle" within the school.

¹² Because of its interest in finding ways to be more cost-effective, Fenton identified the U.S. Department of Agriculture provision that allows for this program. There are currently 90 other schools in the District who also participate in the "Provision Two Program." Schools with high concentration of poor students may serve all students in the school without meal tickets through this special program.

CASE STUDY

*Fenton Avenue
Charter School*

Appendix

Figure 4a: Three Year Analysis of Revenues and Expenditures

Category	Amount (\$)			Percent Change (%)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1994-5 to 1995-6	1995-6 to 1996-97	1994-5 to 1996-97
Revenue						
Revenue Limit Sources	2,932,878	3,302,965	3,674,583	12.62	11.25	25.29
Federal Revenues	812,505	796,860	791,766	(1.93)	(0.64)	(2.55)
Other State Revenues	1,342,400	1,750,409	2,575,162	30.39	47.12	91.83
Other Local Revenues	122,200	222,539	154,461	82.11	(30.59)	26.40
Other Funding Sources*			389,601			
Total Revenue	5,209,983	6,072,773	7,585,573	16.56	24.91	45.60
Expenditures						
Current						
Certificated Salaries	2,779,801	2,851,784	3,456,059	2.59	21.19	24.33
Classified Salaries	860,996	935,586	1,123,851	8.66	20.12	30.53
Employee Benefits	793,040	743,684	912,349	(6.22)	22.68	15.04
Books and Supplies	350,917	416,438	459,340	18.67	10.30	30.90
Services and Other Operating Ex.	182,035	249,331	339,079	36.97	36.00	86.27
Capital Outlay	28,363	366,925	1,065,072	1,193.67	190.27	3,655.15
Other Outgo	223,185	185,332	311,091	(16.96)	67.86	39.39
Total Expenditures	5,218,337	5,749,080	7,666,841	10.17	33.36	46.92
Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over (Under) Expenditures and Other Financing Uses						
	(8,354)	323,693	(81,268)	(3,974.71)	(125.11)	872.80
Prior Year Adj. Ending Fund Bal.**	262,654	254,300	563,544			
Year End Fund Balance	254,300	577,993	482,276	127.29	(16.56)	89.65

*Other Funding Sources includes net transfers in and out (which balance to zero in 1994-95 and 1995-96) and Proceeds from Contracts Payable in 1996-97

**Includes adjustments as shown in Audited Financial Statements

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years,
Los Angeles Unified School District Forms J-18/19, various years

Figure 4b: Three Year Analysis of Revenues and Expenditures Per ADA

Category	Amount (\$)			Percent Change (%)		
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1994-5 to 1995-6	1995-6 to 1996-97	1994-5 to 1996-97
Revenue						
Revenue Limit Sources	2,876	2,961	3,162	2.97	6.79	9.96
Federal Revenues	797	714	681	(10.33)	(4.63)	(14.48)
Other State Revenues	1,316	1,569	2,216	19.22	41.21	68.36
Other Local Revenues	120	200	133	66.51	(33.38)	10.93
Other Funding Sources*	-	-	335			
Total Revenue	5,108	5,444	6,527	6.57	19.90	27.78
Expenditures						
Current						
Certificated Salaries	2,726	2,557	2,974	(6.20)	16.33	
Classified Salaries	844	839	967	(0.65)	15.30	14.56
Employee Benefits	778	667	785	(14.26)	17.76	0.97
Books and Supplies	344	373	395	8.51	5.88	14.88
Services and Other Operating Ex.	178	224	292	25.23	30.54	63.48
Capital Outlay	28	329	916	1,082.85	178.62	3,195.65
Other Outgo	219	166	268	(24.07)	61.12	22.33
Total Expenditures	5,116	5,154	6,597	0.73	28.01	28.94
Excess of Revenues and Other Financing Sources Over (Under)						
Expenditures and Other Financing Uses	(8)	290	(70)			
Prior Year Adj. Ending Fund Bal.**	258	228	485	(11.47)	112.71	88.30
Year End Fund Balance	249	518	415	107.82	(19.91)	66.44
Average Daily Attendance (ADA)	1,019.91	1,115.47	1,162.11	9.37	4.18	13.94

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years,
Los Angeles Unified School District Forms J-18/19, various years

Figure 4c: Change in Sources of Revenue, 1994-95 to 1997-98

Revenue Source	Total Revenue (\$)				Percent of Total (%)			
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Revenue Limit Sources	2,932,878	3,302,965	3,674,583	3,930,796	53.59	52.20	47.36	50.58
Federal Revenues	812,505	796,860	791,766	834,423	14.85	12.59	10.20	10.74
Other State Revenues	1,342,400	1,750,409	2,575,162	2,392,943	24.53	27.67	33.19	30.79
Other Local Revenues	122,200	222,539	154,461	130,463	2.23	3.52	1.99	1.68
Carry Forward of Ending Balance	262,654	254,300	563,544	482,276	4.80	4.02	7.26	6.21
Total Revenue	5,472,637	6,327,073	7,759,516	7,770,901	100	100	100	100

*Budgeted

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years,
 Budget Services and Financial Planning Division Charter School - Revenue Sources Allocation, fiscal year 1997-98

Figure 4d: Change in Expenditure Patterns: 1994-95 to 1997-98
All Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditures (\$)				Percent of Total (%)			
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Certificated Salaries	2,779,801	2,851,784	3,456,059	3,559,023	53.27	49.60	45.08	53.25
Classified Salaries	860,996	935,586	1,123,851	936,384	16.50	16.27	14.66	14.01
Employee Benefits	793,040	743,684	912,349	895,232	15.20	12.94	11.90	13.39
Books and Supplies	350,917	416,438	459,340	200,000	6.72	7.24	5.99	2.99
Services and Other Operating Ex.	182,035	249,331	339,079	817,364	3.49	4.34	4.42	12.23
Capital Outlay	28,363	366,925	1,065,072	275,492	0.54	6.38	13.89	4.12
Other Outgo	223,185	185,332	311,091		4.28	3.22	4.06	-
Total Expenditures	5,218,337	5,749,080	7,666,841	6,683,495	100	100	100	100

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years

**Figure 4c: Change in Expenditure Patterns: 1994-95 to 1997-98
Current Expenditures Only**

Expenditure Category	Total Expenditures (\$)				Percent of Total (%)			
	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*	1994-95	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98*
Certificated Salaries	2,779,801	2,851,784	3,456,059	3,559,023	55.97	54.88	54.94	55.54
Classified Salaries	860,996	935,586	1,123,851	936,384	17.34	18.00	17.87	14.61
Employee Benefits	793,040	743,684	912,349	895,232	15.97	14.31	14.50	13.97
Books and Supplies	350,917	416,438	459,340	200,000	7.07	8.01	7.30	3.12
Services and Other Operating Ex.	182,035	249,331	339,079	817,364	3.67	4.80	5.39	12.76
Total Expenditures	4,966,789	5,196,823	6,290,678	6,408,003	100.00	100.00	100.00	100.00

*Budgeted

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years

Figure 4f: Percentage of Funds Spent for Personnel, 1994-95 to 1997-98

Year	Amount (\$)	Amount Per ADA (\$)	Percent of Expenditures (%)	
			Total	Current
1994-95	4,433,837	4,347	84.97	89.27
1995-96	4,531,054	4,062	78.81	87.19
1996-97	5,492,259	4,726	71.64	87.31
1997-98*	5,390,639	4,639	80.66	84.12

*Budgeted

Source: Fenton Avenue Charter School Audited Financial Statements, various years

Figure 4g: Projected Categorical Funding, 1997-98

Program	Restricted		Unrestricted	
	Estimated Allocation* (\$)	Per ADA (\$)	Estimated Allocation* (\$)	Per ADA (\$)
District and State Programs				
Class Size Reduction (Operations)			602,400	518.71
Class Size Reduction (Facilities)	80,000	68.89		
Summer School (intersession)			21,635	18.63
Special Education	368,538	317.34		
96-97 Special Education Deficiencies	46,000	39.61		
Gifted	8,473	7.30		
ELA bilingual	209,000	179.96		
School Improvement	93,500	80.51		
State Instructional Materials	31,522	27.14		
Year Round Incentive			71,000	61.14
Early Mental Health Initiative	24,000	20.67		
Integration Program	666,000	573.47		
Lottery			124,351	107.07
Mentor Teacher Program	20,136	17.34		
Categorical Mega Item	26,388	22.72		
Sub-total, District and State Programs	1,573,557	1,354.94	819,386	705.55
Federal Programs				
Title I - VI	352,301	303.35		
Other Federal Revenues	14,420	12.42		
Sub-total Federal Programs	366,721	315.77		
Food Service	533,767	459.61		
Total	2,474,045	2,130.32	819,386	705.55
ADA	1,161.35			

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District Budget Services and Financial Planning Division Charter School - Revenue Sources Allocation, fiscal year 1997-98

**Figure 4h.1: Fenton Avenue Charter School
Comparison of Budget v. Actual for 1996-97
Unrestricted Funds**

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference (Actual - Budget)	Percent Difference (%)
Revenue				
Revenue Limit Sources	3,653,230	3,674,583	21,353	0.58
Federal Revenues		-	-	-
Other State Revenues	102,600	514,800	412,200	401.75
Other Local Revenues	62,000	123,331	61,331	98.92
Total Revenue	3,817,830	4,312,714	494,884	12.96
Expenditures				
Current				
Certificated Salaries	1,913,028	2,250,533	337,505	17.64
Classified Salaries	274,224	266,260	(7,964)	(2.90)
Employee Benefits	543,000	663,771	120,771	22.24
Books and Supplies	100,808	126,384	25,576	25.37
Services and Other Operating Ex.	661,341	455,295	(206,046)	(31.16)
Capital Outlay	309,171	405,603	96,432	31.19
Other Outgo				
Total Expenditures	3,801,572	4,167,846	366,274	9.63
Surplus or (Deficit)	16,258	144,868	128,610	791.06

Source: School J-201 and 251 Reports

**Figure 4h.2: Fenton Avenue Charter School
Comparison of Budget v. Actual for 1996-97
Restricted Funds**

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference (Actual - Budget)	Percent Difference (%)
Revenue				
Revenue Limit Sources		-	-	-
Federal Revenues	396,169	347,547	(48,622)	(12.27)
Other State Revenues	2,161,980	2,029,770	(132,210)	(6.12)
Other Local Revenues		-	-	-
Total Revenue	2,558,149	2,377,317	(180,832)	(7.07)
Expenditures				
Current				
Certificated Salaries	1,306,800	1,202,554	(104,246)	(7.98)
Classified Salaries	610,100	631,820	21,720	3.56
Employee Benefits	341,500	203,901	(137,599)	(40.29)
Books and Supplies	61,000	91,358	30,358	49.77
Services and Other Operating Ex.	97,500	147,684	50,184	51.47
Capital Outlay		100,000	100,000	-
Other Outgo		-	-	-
Total Expenditures	2,416,900	2,377,317	(39,583)	(1.64)
Surplus or (Deficit)	141,249	-	(141,249)	(100.00)

Source: School J-201 and 251 Reports

**Figure 4h.3: Fenton Avenue Charter School
Comparison of Budget v. Actual for 1996-97
All Funds**

Category	Budget	Actual	Difference (Actual - Budget)	Percent Difference (%)
Revenue				
Revenue Limit Sources	3,653,230	3,674,583	21,353	0.58
Federal Revenues	396,169	347,547	(48,622)	(12.27)
Other State Revenues	2,264,580	2,544,570	279,990	12.36
Other Local Revenues	62,000	123,331	61,331	98.92
Total Revenue	6,375,979	6,690,031	314,052	4.93
Expenditures				
Current				
Certificated Salaries	3,219,828	3,453,087	233,259	7.24
Classified Salaries	884,324	898,080	13,756	1.56
Employee Benefits	884,500	867,672	(16,828)	(1.90)
Books and Supplies	161,808	217,742	55,934	34.57
Services and Other Operating Ex.	758,841	602,979	(155,862)	(20.54)
Capital Outlay	309,171	505,603	196,432	63.54
Other Outgo	-	-	-	NA
Total Expenditures	6,218,472	6,545,163	326,691	5.25
Surplus or (Deficit)	157,507	144,868	(12,639)	(8.02)

Source: School J-201 and 251 Reports

Figure 5b: Analysis of Classified Staffing Patterns

Position	Full Time	Number of Hours								
		7	6.6	6	5	4	3.5	3.27	3	2
Teacher Aides (Track A)			4	1				17		
Teacher Aides (Track B)			0	2				17		
Teacher Aides (Track C)			2	1				17		
Opportunity Room Assist.		1							1	
WTR/VALE Lab Coord.		1								
WTR/VALE Lab Assist.			1							
Campus Aides		1							2	
Librarians		1				1				
Family Center Director						1				
Community Representative						1				
Plant Manager	1									
Assistant Plant Manager	1									
Supervision Personnel							1			
Administrative Assistant	1									
Office Assistants	2				1					
Office/Teacher Assistant										
Attendance Assistant		1								
Resource Room Office Asst.	1									
Resource Room Assistants						1			1	
Child Aides									2	
Special Education Assists.			2							
Technology Assistant	1									
Custodian	1									
Cafeteria Manager	1									
Cafeteria Staff	2						4			
Playground Supervisor										1
Playground Worker										1
Nurse's Aide				1						
Total	11	5	9	5	1	4	5	51	6	2

Source: School reports

**Figure 7: Selection Criteria for Fenton Comparison Schools
(1996-97 Data)**

School	Low Grade	High Grade	Total Enrollment	% AFDC	% LEP	% Nat. Amer.	% Asian	% Black	% Hisp.	% White	% Filip.	% Pac. Island.
Fenton	0	6	1300	27	57	0	1	17	78	3	2	0
R1	0	5	1073	30	68	0	0	18	80	1	0	0
R2	0	5	1266	24	67	0	2	5	86	5	1	0
R3	0	5	1280	20	64	0	2	3	90	4	2	0
R4	0	6	1149	28	50	0	3	11	69	9	5	3
R5	0	5	1372	32	61	0	2	3	78	14	4	0
O1	0	5	1360	38	70	0	2	3	80	14	1	0
O2	0	5	1376	35	60	0	5	3	85	1	5	0
O3	0	5	1309	31	70	0	0	5	92	2	0	1
O4	0	5	1396	38	70	0	8	6	77	7	2	0
O5	0	5	1292	30	61	0	3	9	79	4	4	1
O6	0	5	1124	40	60	1	3	3	91	1	1	0
O7	0	5	1385	35	71	0	2	2	86	1	8	0
O8	0	5	1160	29	62	0	1	6	89	4	1	0
S1	0	5	1283	0	72	0	0	17	83	0	0	0
S2	0	5	1036	0	75	0	0	17	83	0	0	0
S3	0	5	864	37	65	0	2	11	80	5	1	1
S4	0	6	1467	40	73	1	0	17	82	0	0	0
S5	0	5	1243	50	78	0	0	16	83	0	0	0

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-Selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Schools in the comparison cluster fall into the above two categories:

1) reform comparison schools – participate in LEARN and LAAMP, some of which are magnet and former SBM schools, and 2) other comparison schools – schools that may or may not participate in other reforms such as magnet or LEARN. This note applies to all other figures in the Appendix that make reference to reform and other comparison schools.

**Figure 8a: Reading Score Plots - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97**

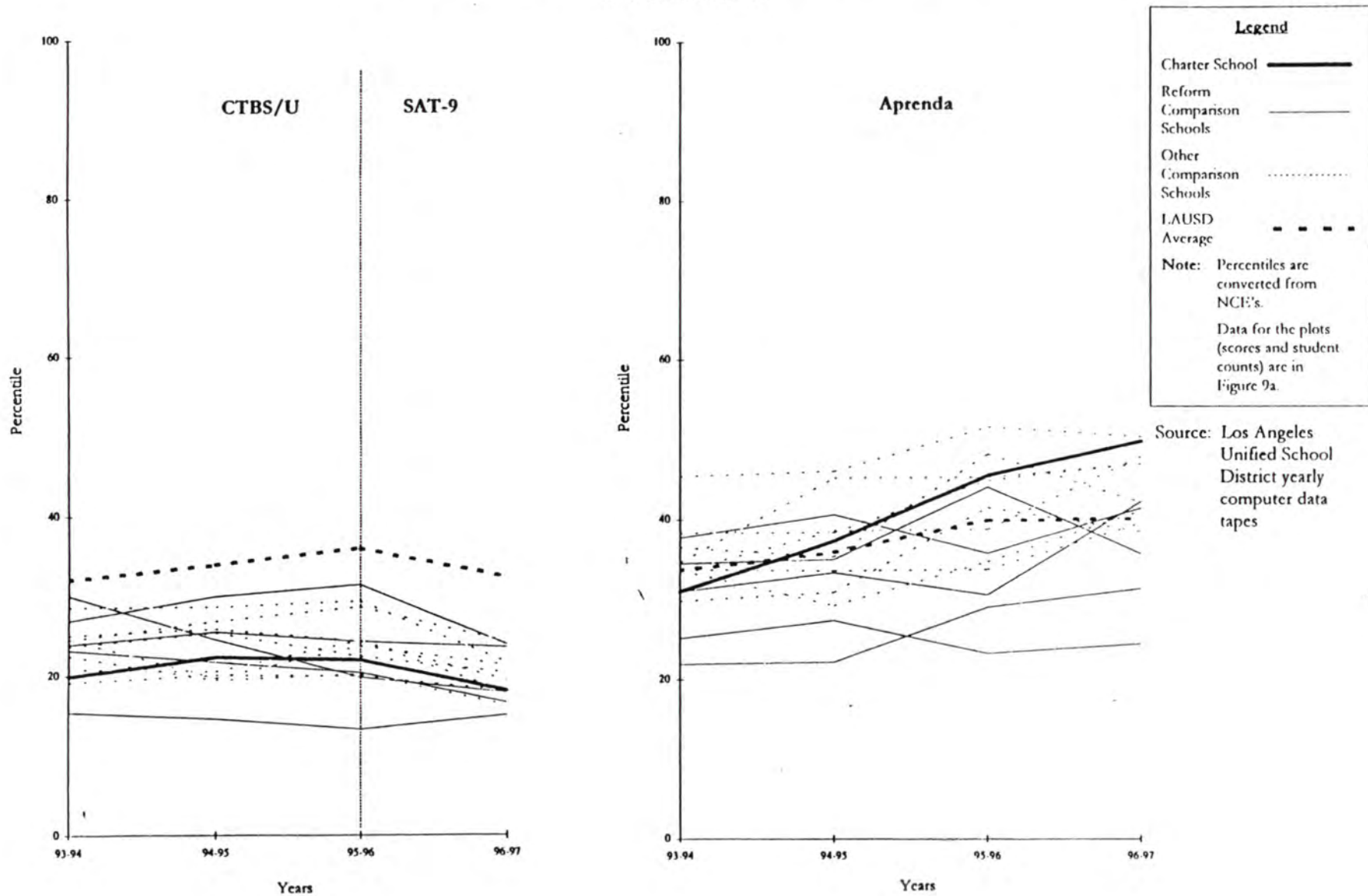
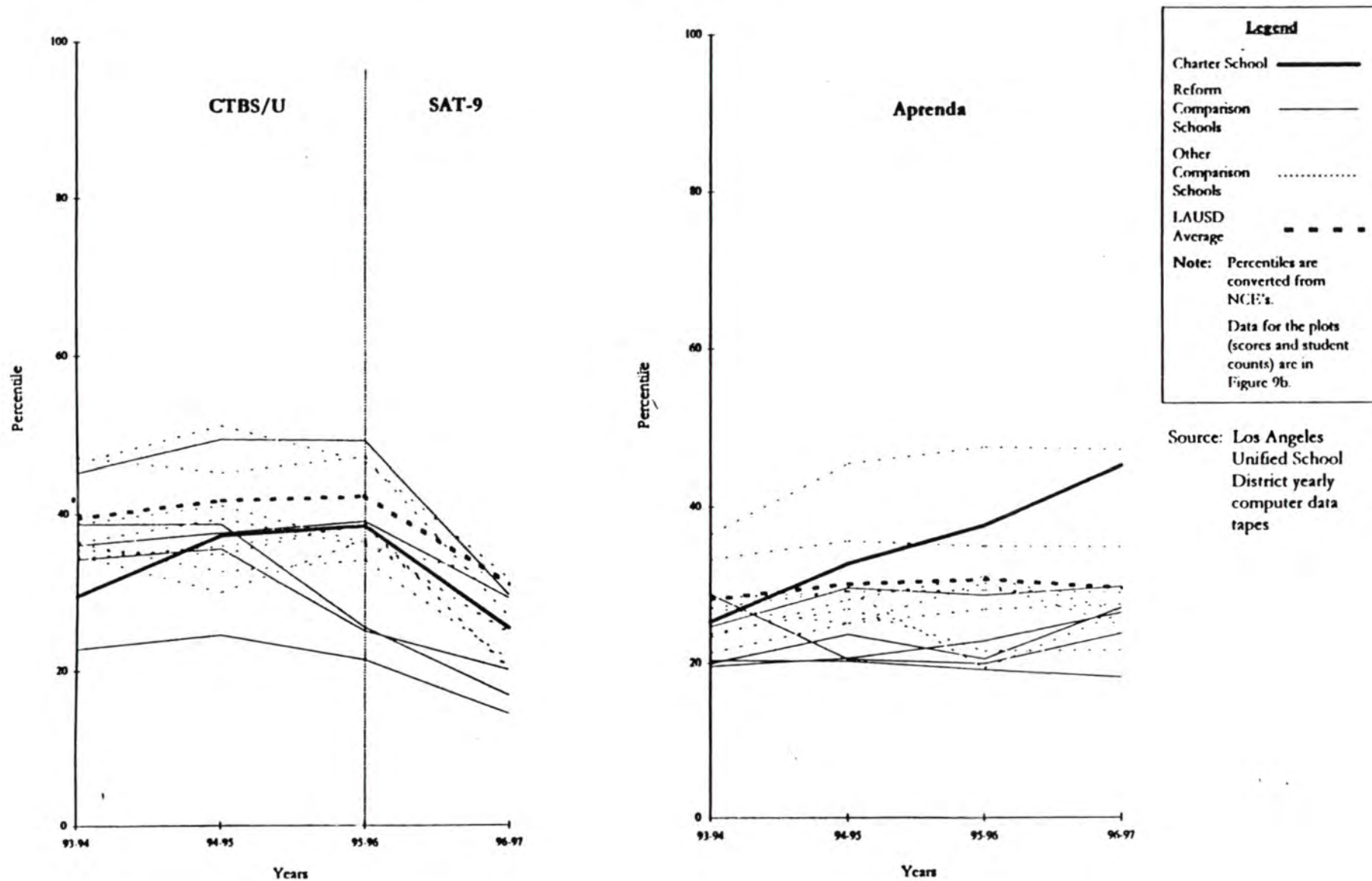


Figure 8b: Math Score Plots - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97



**Figure 8c: Language Score Plots - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97**

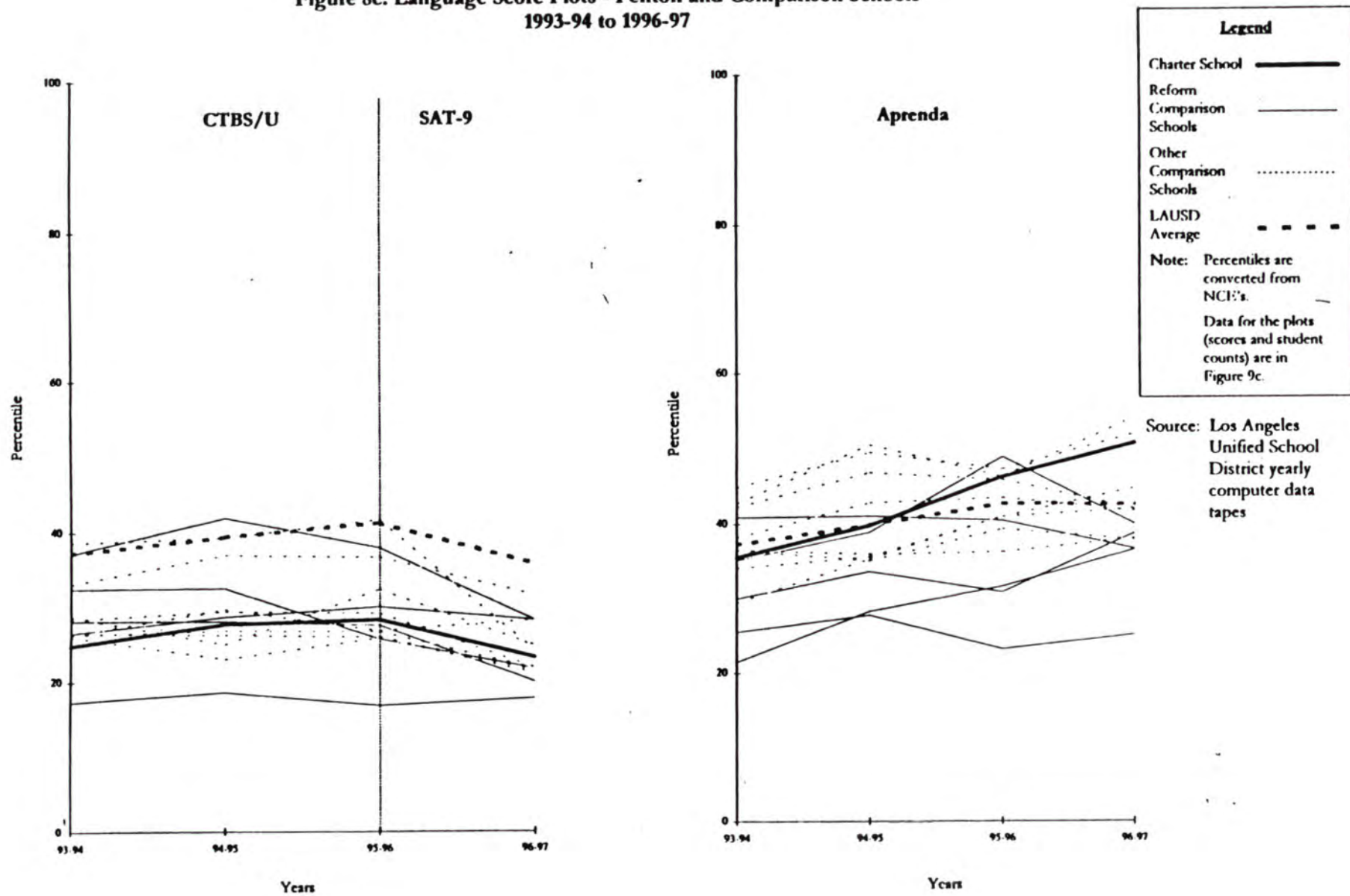


Figure 8d: Reading Score Plots - Fenton and Self Selected Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

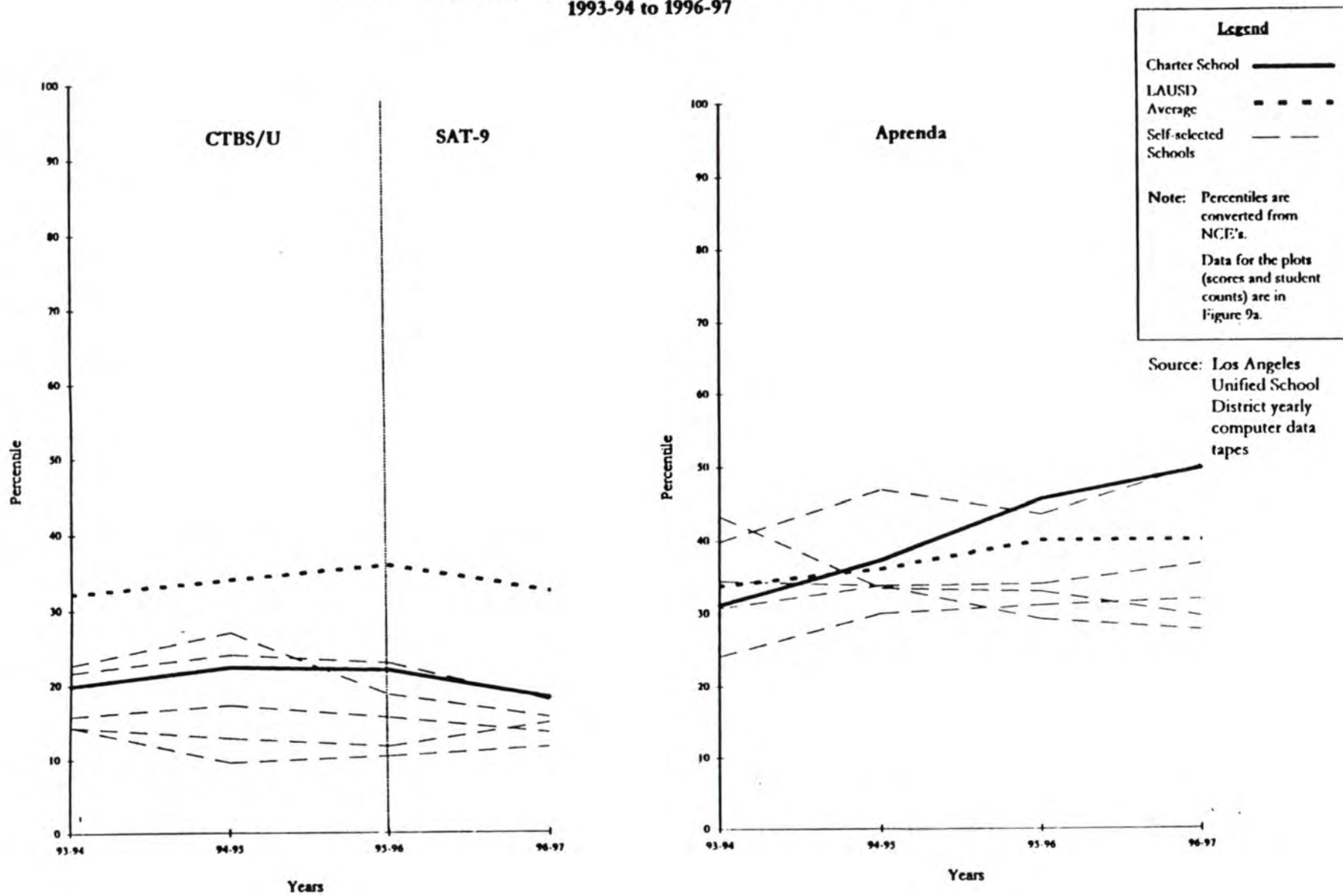


Figure 8e: Math Score Plots - Fenton and Self Selected Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

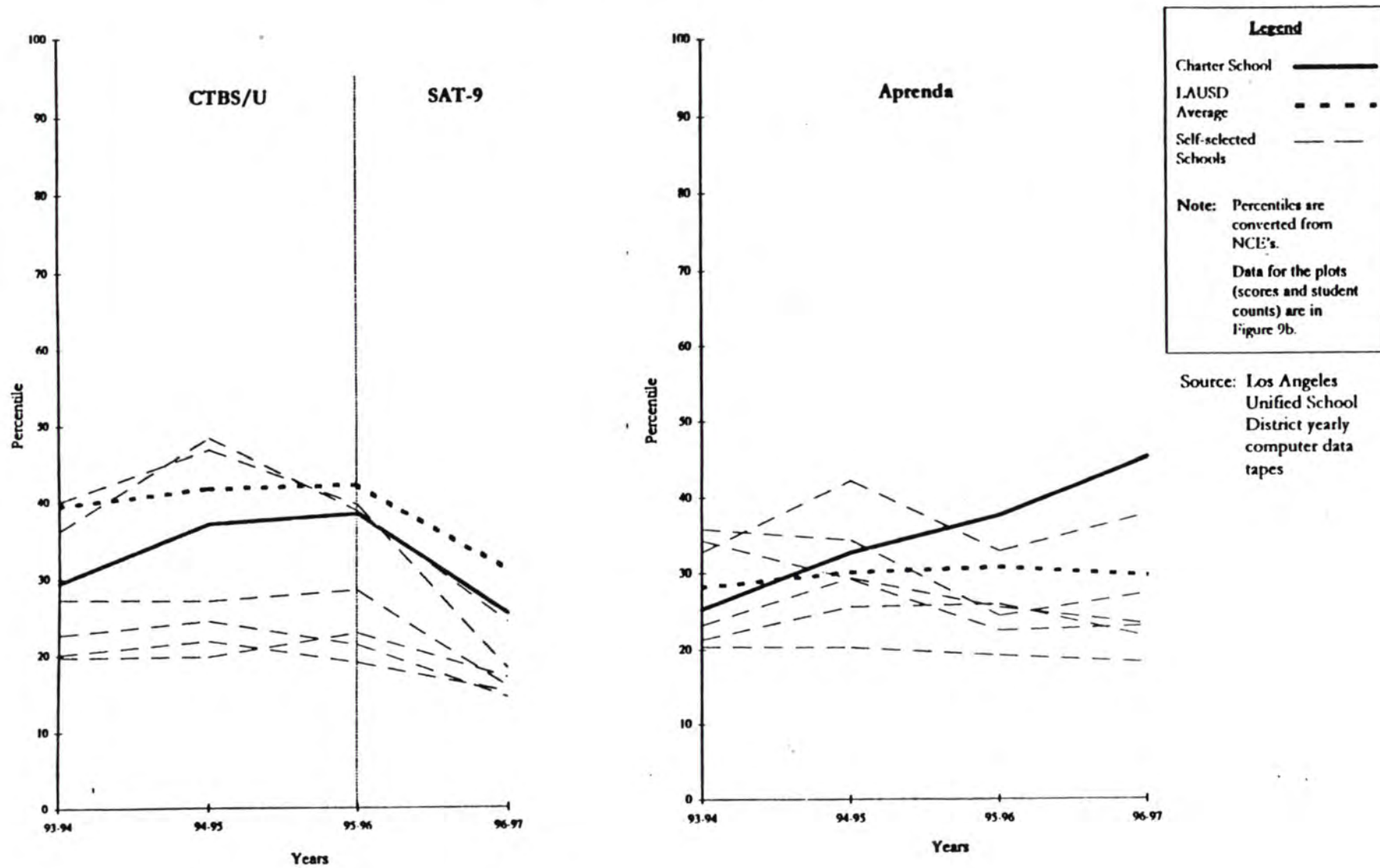


Figure 8f: Language Score Plots - Fenton and Self Selected Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

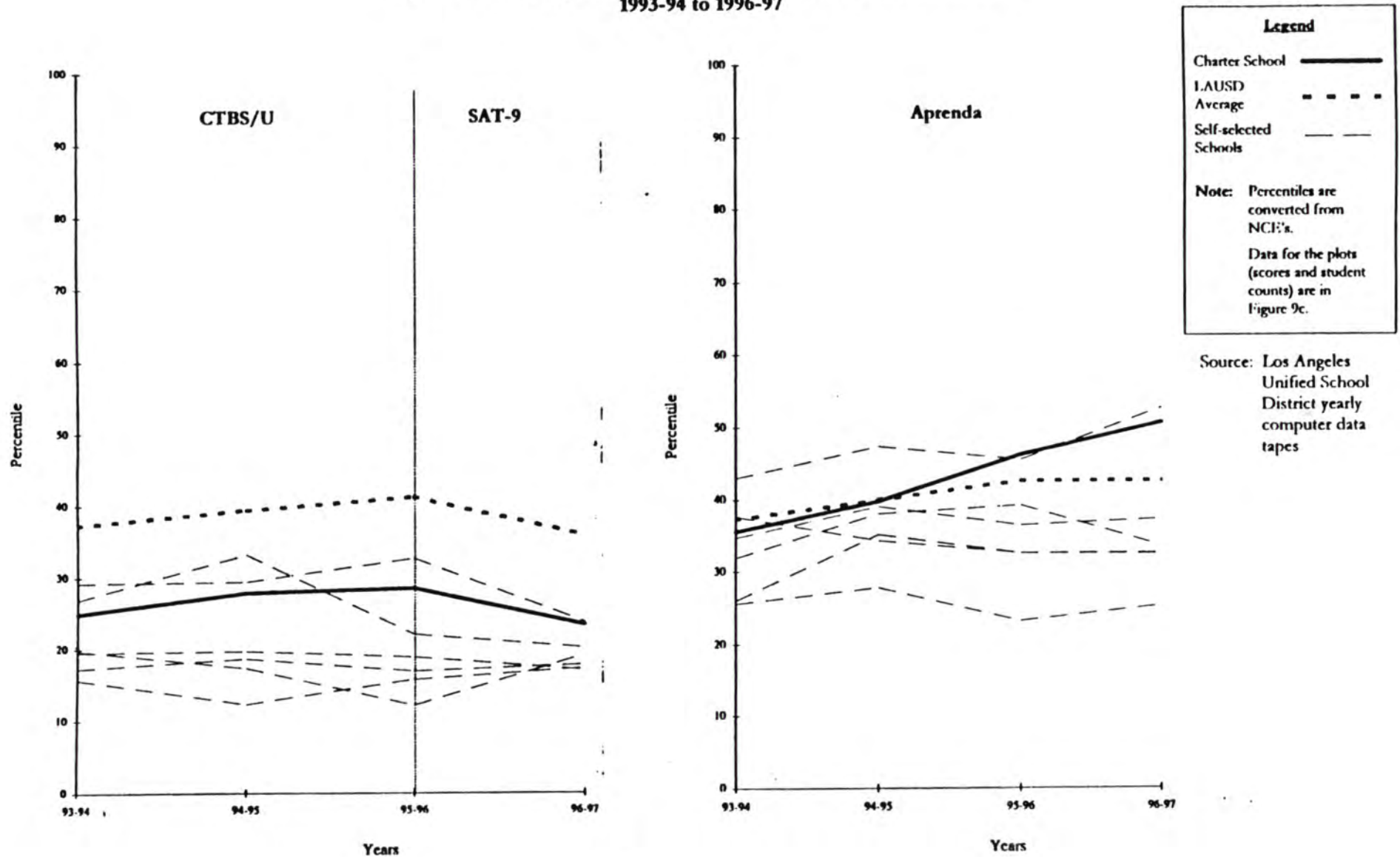


Figure 9a.1: CTBS/U & SAT-9 Reading Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

	CTBS/U 93-94	CTBS/U 94-95	CTBS/U 95-96	SAT-9 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	19.9 (521)	22.4 (485)	22.0 (483)	18.3 (611)
LAUSD Elementary	32.1 (231,869)	34.1 (239,505)	36.1 (186,926)	32.6 (253,224)
Composite Comparison*	22.1 (7397)	22.6 (7082)	21.6 (4247)	18.6 (7093)
R1	23.3 (359)	21.9 (337)	20.4 (79)	16.8 (472)
R2	30.2 (66)	24.7 (363)	19.9 (302)	18.0 (359)
R3	15.4 (369)	14.7 (307)	13.3 (277)	15.2 (260)
R4	24.0 (585)	25.7 (618)	24.4 (511)	23.7 (526)
R5	27.0 (553)	30.2 (513)	31.6 (382)	24.1 (441)
O1	20.9 (589)	20.6 (552)	24.6 (93)	18.0 (551)
O2	24.6 (349)	27.0 (332)	28.8 (240)	24.4 (321)
O3	24.7 (499)	19.8 (457)	23.9 (75)	21.4 (384)
O4	19.1 (518)	20.1 (556)	20.0 (579)	18.3 (462)
O5	25.1 (416)	26.0 (434)	24.4 (310)	19.5 (442)
O6	28.7 (463)	28.8 (376)	29.6 (262)	21.9 (444)
O7	23.7 (514)	25.6 (466)	22.6 (129)	20.4 (568)
O8	22.6 (446)	19.5 (455)	20.3 (84)	16.4 (335)
S1	21.7 (319)	24.1 (245)	23.0 (251)	17.9 (274)
S2	15.8 (299)	17.3 (217)	15.7 (333)	13.7 (349)
S3	14.4 (261)	9.6 (236)	10.5 (235)	11.6 (312)
S4	14.4 (261)	12.9 (179)	11.8 (26)	15.0 (200)
S5	22.7 (500)	27.0 (437)	18.8 (78)	15.7 (393)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 9a.2: Aprenda Reading Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

	Aprenda 93-94	Aprenda 94-95	Aprenda 95-96	Aprenda 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	31.2 (267)	37.3 (334)	45.4 (382)	49.6 (318)
LAUSD Elementary	33.9 (85,362)	36.1 (91,603)	39.9 (69,706)	40.0 (99,014)
Composite Comparison*	33.2 (6258)	34.7 (6987)	35.7 (5245)	38.0 (7427)
R1	34.7 (367)	35.2 (377)	44.0 (208)	35.7 (417)
R2	37.8 (71)	40.6 (408)	35.8 (370)	41.3 (446)
R3	25.3 (403)	27.5 (429)	23.3 (459)	24.4 (436)
R4	22.0 (283)	22.3 (304)	29.1 (181)	31.4 (383)
R5	31.2 (232)	33.5 (249)	30.7 (273)	42.2 (289)
O1	33.8 (349)	29.4 (418)	34.8 (191)	41.0 (383)
O2	34.8 (325)	45.2 (344)	45.2 (405)	46.8 (401)
O3	36.6 (402)	35.5 (499)	48.2 (157)	42.0 (508)
O4	33.7 (404)	38.6 (380)	38.8 (430)	47.8 (437)
O5	45.4 (251)	46.0 (342)	51.5 (213)	50.2 (377)
O6	38.4 (301)	38.4 (303)	44.8 (118)	46.8 (269)
O7	34.0 (366)	33.7 (394)	33.8 (154)	39.5 (411)
O8	30.0 (271)	31.0 (338)	41.5 (160)	38.4 (414)
S1	39.8 (297)	46.8 (296)	43.4 (299)	50.0 (289)
S2	24.1 (672)	30.0 (661)	31.0 (646)	31.8 (631)
S3	43.2 (465)	33.5 (413)	33.0 (580)	29.6 (439)
S4	30.8 (348)	33.8 (432)	34.0 (193)	36.6 (448)
S5	34.5 (451)	33.8 (400)	29.1 (208)	27.7 (449)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 9b.1: CTBS/U & SAT-9 Math Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

	CTBS/U 93-94	CTBS/U 94-95	CTBS/U 95-96	SAT-9 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	29.4 (521)	37.2 (491)	38.4 (483)	25.4 (625)
LAUSD Elementary	39.4 (234,360)	41.8 (242,629)	42.2 (189,433)	30.9 (264,988)
Composite Comparison*	35.5 (7512)	37.5 (7216)	35.2 (4274)	22.9 (7540)
R1	34.2 (364)	35.5 (327)	25.0 (78)	20.1 (485)
R2	38.6 (74)	38.6 (367)	25.6 (304)	16.9 (380)
R3	22.7 (373)	24.6 (301)	21.4 (277)	14.5 (282)
R4	36.0 (573)	37.5 (637)	39.0 (512)	29.3 (551)
R5	45.2 (562)	49.4 (515)	49.2 (378)	29.6 (464)
O1	34.3 (607)	35.8 (570)	38.4 (93)	20.3 (567)
O2	46.4 (355)	51.2 (348)	46.6 (240)	31.6 (327)
O3	34.7 (511)	30.0 (465)	36.6 (75)	24.7 (416)
O4	36.2 (531)	32.7 (579)	34.0 (587)	21.4 (505)
O5	38.8 (421)	41.0 (436)	36.2 (309)	24.9 (467)
O6	47.2 (465)	45.2 (377)	47.2 (261)	26.8 (467)
O7	36.4 (543)	39.3 (488)	35.8 (127)	31.6 (570)
O8	35.3 (454)	34.8 (469)	38.8 (85)	20.1 (387)
S1	40.0 (324)	46.8 (252)	39.7 (263)	18.3 (283)
S2	27.3 (307)	27.2 (218)	28.5 (333)	15.9 (370)
S3	19.8 (268)	19.9 (236)	23.0 (246)	17.1 (358)
S4	20.1 (270)	22.0 (185)	19.1 (28)	15.3 (226)
S5	36.2 (509)	48.3 (444)	38.8 (77)	24.4 (435)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools

S = Self-selected Comparison Schools

O = Other Comparison Schools

**Figure 9b.2: Aprenda Math Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97**

	Aprenda 93-94	Aprenda 94-95	Aprenda 95-96	Aprenda 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	25.3 (270)	32.7 (327)	37.5 (383)	45.0 (318)
LAUSD Elementary	28.2 (86,360)	30.2 (92,682)	30.7 (72,206)	29.5 (101,892)
Composite Comparison*	26.3 (6414)	28.3 (6943)	25.9 (5515)	26.7 (7699)
R1	24.7 (361)	29.6 (375)	28.7 (207)	29.6 (422)
R2	28.8 (65)	20.6 (392)	19.9 (354)	23.7 (445)
R3	20.4 (452)	20.3 (400)	19.1 (504)	18.1 (461)
R4	19.6 (283)	20.7 (319)	22.9 (180)	26.3 (397)
R5	20.0 (228)	23.7 (248)	20.6 (272)	27.0 (308)
O1	27.2 (374)	25.1 (425)	30.2 (186)	24.7 (403)
O2	33.3 (354)	35.5 (352)	34.8 (407)	34.7 (401)
O3	28.3 (405)	29.1 (494)	29.3 (182)	28.8 (511)
O4	21.4 (408)	25.1 (405)	26.8 (445)	27.3 (464)
O5	36.4 (252)	45.4 (342)	47.4 (209)	47.0 (385)
O6	27.2 (305)	29.3 (308)	19.4 (118)	26.2 (276)
O7	23.9 (364)	27.0 (382)	21.6 (176)	21.6 (404)
O8	23.4 (294)	28.2 (334)	31.0 (161)	26.5 (434)
S1	32.8 (296)	42.2 (293)	32.8 (301)	37.7 (293)
S2	21.3 (670)	25.6 (660)	25.9 (831)	21.6 (664)
S3	34.3 (491)	29.1 (403)	22.4 (577)	23.0 (486)
S4	23.3 (357)	29.3 (413)	25.4 (194)	23.3 (459)
S5	35.8 (455)	34.3 (398)	24.4 (211)	27.3 (486)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 9c.1: CTBS/U & SAT-9 Language Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

	CTBS/U 93-94	CTBS/U 94-95	CTBS/U 95-96	SAT-9 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	24.9 (515)	27.8 (479)	28.5 (482)	23.4 (616)
LAUSD Elementary	37.2 (222,571)	39.5 (231,396)	41.3 (178,012)	35.9 (259,167)
Composite Comparison*	27.2 (7367)	28.5 (7057)	28.0 (4127)	23.1 (7418)
R1	28.2 (365)	28.2 (328)	27.7 (79)	20.1 (483)
R2	32.5 (67)	32.7 (360)	25.9 (302)	21.9 (368)
R3	17.4 (364)	18.8 (296)	17.0 (272)	18.0 (272)
R4	26.7 (559)	28.8 (602)	30.2 (507)	28.5 (547)
R5	37.2 (558)	42.0 (513)	38.0 (360)	28.5 (464)
O1	26.3 (580)	27.0 (544)	26.8 (94)	21.9 (566)
O2	33.2 (356)	37.0 (332)	36.8 (240)	31.8 (326)
O3	28.8 (515)	25.1 (454)	32.5 (74)	25.0 (384)
O4	26.7 (521)	26.3 (557)	26.2 (577)	21.7 (489)
O5	28.5 (420)	29.6 (429)	29.3 (306)	22.0 (463)
O6	38.6 (459)	39.3 (370)	41.7 (261)	24.4 (462)
O7	26.3 (516)	29.9 (478)	27.0 (130)	28.5 (589)
O8	26.2 (450)	23.1 (464)	26.0 (85)	21.3 (386)
S1	29.1 (317)	29.4 (245)	32.7 (254)	23.9 (279)
S2	19.5 (305)	19.8 (221)	19.0 (295)	17.3 (348)
S3	15.8 (265)	12.4 (242)	15.9 (186)	17.5 (340)
S4	19.8 (254)	17.5 (186)	12.3 (26)	19.3 (221)
S5	26.8 (495)	33.2 (434)	22.1 (78)	20.3 (431)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 9c.2: Aprenda Language Scores - Fenton and Comparison Schools
1993-94 to 1996-97

	Aprenda 93-94	Aprenda 94-95	Aprenda 95-96	Aprenda 96-97
	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)	Percentile (# tested)
Fenton	35.5 (246)	39.7 (331)	46.2 (371)	50.6 (319)
LAUSD Elementary	37.3 (81,328)	39.9 (87,684)	42.6 (65,465)	42.5 (99,317)
Composite Comparison*	34.2 (6098)	38.4 (6609)	37.3 (4697)	49.0 (7569)
R1	35.2 (350)	38.8 (349)	48.8 (199)	39.8 (424)
R2	40.8 (67)	41.0 (420)	40.4 (353)	36.6 (420)
R3	25.6 (431)	27.8 (403)	23.1 (431)	25.1 (428)
R4	21.6 (234)	28.3 (302)	31.6 (176)	36.4 (383)
R5	30.2 (232)	33.7 (257)	30.8 (274)	38.6 (318)
O1	36.6 (366)	35.0 (390)	39.2 (185)	37.7 (399)
O2	42.8 (357)	50.4 (346)	46.2 (391)	54.0 (401)
O3	42.2 (386)	46.8 (405)	45.8 (119)	41.8 (512)
O4	34.2 (377)	35.5 (372)	40.8 (405)	44.7 (443)
O5	44.8 (229)	49.4 (335)	47.2 (210)	51.8 (386)
O6	38.2 (266)	42.8 (302)	43.4 (97)	41.7 (275)
O7	36.6 (369)	36.0 (359)	36.2 (190)	38.0 (400)
O8	29.6 (296)	35.3 (317)	40.8 (139)	41.8 (431)
S1	43.0 (278)	47.4 (297)	45.4 (300)	52.6 (293)
S2	26.0 (635)	35.2 (610)	32.5 (646)	32.3 (646)
S3	37.7 (444)	34.3 (327)	32.5 (452)	32.5 (451)
S4	32.0 (324)	38.0 (427)	39.2 (191)	33.5 (476)
S5	34.7 (457)	39.0 (391)	36.4 (209)	37.2 (483)

* The composite comparison is the average achievement of all the students in all the comparison schools listed in the table.

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools S = Self-selected Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 10a: Reading Response Rates*

	93-94	94-95	95-96**	96-97
Fenton	68.6	71.2	69.3	71.5
R1	68.2	74.1	23.0	70.2
R2	11.5	65.2	56.6	62.9
R3	65.7	63.8	61.3	64.9
R4	70.2	71.1	49.8	66.3
R5	60.7	66.3	60.4	63.5
O1	63.9	71.9	19.8	68.7
O2	52.3	63.1	48.0	52.5
O3	68.2	71.0	17.8	68.1
O4	67.4	69.8	68.7	64.4
O5	67.1	66.4	42.3	63.4
O6	67.7	71.9	35.1	63.4
O7	63.3	66.1	19.5	70.7
O8	64.8	72.9	18.8	64.6

Figure 10b: Math Response Rates*

	93-94	94-95	95-96**	96-97
Fenton	68.9	71.2	69.4	72.5
R1	68.1	72.1	22.8	71.6
R2	11.7	64.2	55.5	64.5
R3	70.2	60.8	65.0	69.2
R4	69.2	73.7	49.8	69.1
R5	61.1	66.4	59.9	67.2
O1	66.8	73.7	19.4	71.3
O2	55.0	65.3	48.1	52.9
O3	69.3	71.2	19.7	70.8
O4	68.6	73.4	70.3	69.4
O5	67.7	66.5	41.9	65.9
O6	68.3	72.6	35.0	66.1
O7	65.3	66.8	20.9	70.3
O8	67.6	73.8	19.0	70.8

* Response rates are the total number of students taking CTBS/U, SAT-9, and Aprenda as a proportion of total student enrollment for a given year.

** In 1995-96, the District only required testing of 4th grade students. All other testing was optional

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison

O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 10c: Language Response Rates*

	93-94	94-95	95-96**	96-97
Fenton	66.3	70.5	68.3	71.9
R1	67.2	70.4	22.3	71.6
R2	11.2	65.9	55.2	61.6
R3	67.7	60.5	58.5	65.2
R4	64.1	69.7	49.2	67.8
R5	61.1	67.0	58.4	68.1
O1	64.4	69.2	19.4	71.0
O2	55.3	63.2	46.9	52.8
O3	68.2	63.8	14.8	68.4
O4	65.6	69.3	66.9	66.8
O5	65.3	65.3	41.8	65.7
O6	64.3	71.2	33.1	65.6
O7	63.7	64.2	22.1	71.4
O8	67.5	71.8	17.3	70.4

* Response rates are the total number of students taking CTBS/U, SAT-9, and Aprenda as a proportion of total student enrollment for a given year.

** In 1995-96, the District only required testing of 4th grade students. All other testing was optional

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Legend

R = Reform Comparison Schools
O = Other Comparison Schools

Figure 12a: Quartile Distributions - Fenton Reading Scores

	CTBS/U			SAT-9
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	56.0	53.8	54.5	61.9
≥25 & <50	29.4	28.7	28.4	22.6
≥50 & <75	11.1	12.6	12.4	10.3
≥75	3.5	4.9	4.8	5.2
total number tested	521	485	483	611

	Aprenda			
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	43.1	35.3	26.7	22.3
≥25 & <50	24.3	28.7	28.5	24.8
≥50 & <75	22.5	21.6	24.1	31.4
≥75	10.1	14.4	20.7	21.4
total number tested	267	334	382	318

Figure 12b: Quartile Distributions - Fenton Math Scores

	CTBS/U			SAT-9
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	45.1	37.5	35.6	52.8
≥25 & <50	25.7	24.4	27.3	22.6
≥50 & <75	19.0	21.2	17.2	16.2
≥75	10.2	16.9	19.9	8.5
total number tested	521	491	483	625

	Aprenda			
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	51.5	41.3	36.6	28.3
≥25 & <50	22.2	28.7	26.9	24.5
≥50 & <75	17.8	17.1	21.9	27.0
≥75	8.5	12.8	14.6	20.1
total number tested	270	327	383	318

Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Figure 12c: Quartile Distributions - Fenton Language Scores

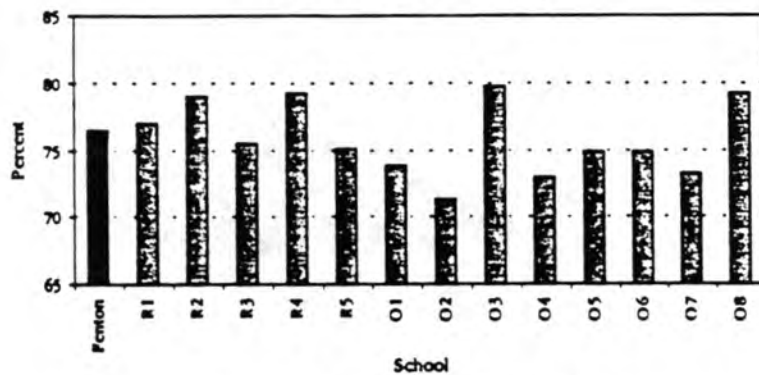
	CTBS/U			SAT-9
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	48.9	44.7	47.9	57.8
≥25 & <50	32.2	32.2	27.4	20.6
≥50 & <75	11.8	15.0	15.1	14.1
≥75	7.0	8.1	9.5	7.5
total number tested	515	479	482	616

	Aprenda			
	93-94	94-95	95-96	96-97
<25	39.0	34.4	30.5	23.5
≥25 & <50	26.4	28.4	25.1	29.2
≥50 & <75	22.0	20.5	23.7	22.6
≥75	12.6	16.6	20.8	24.8
total number tested	246	331	371	319

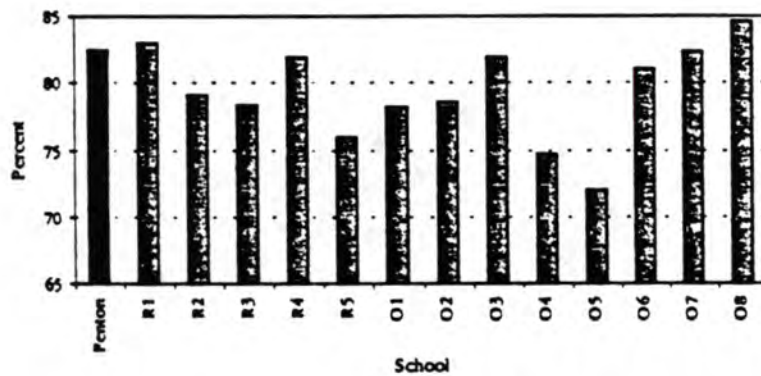
Source: Los Angeles Unified School District yearly computer data tapes

Figure 13: Returning Students

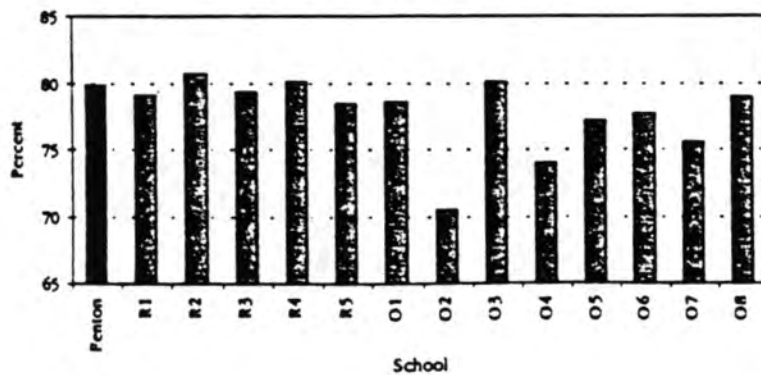
Fenton and Comparison Schools:
Percent of Students Returning
Interval 1 (93-94 to 94-95)*



Fenton and Comparison Schools: Percent
of Students Returning
Interval 2 (94-95 to 95-96)*



Fenton and Comparison Schools:
Percent of Students Returning
Interval 3 (95-96 to 96-97)*



* Percent of year one students who were enrolled in year two.

Legend

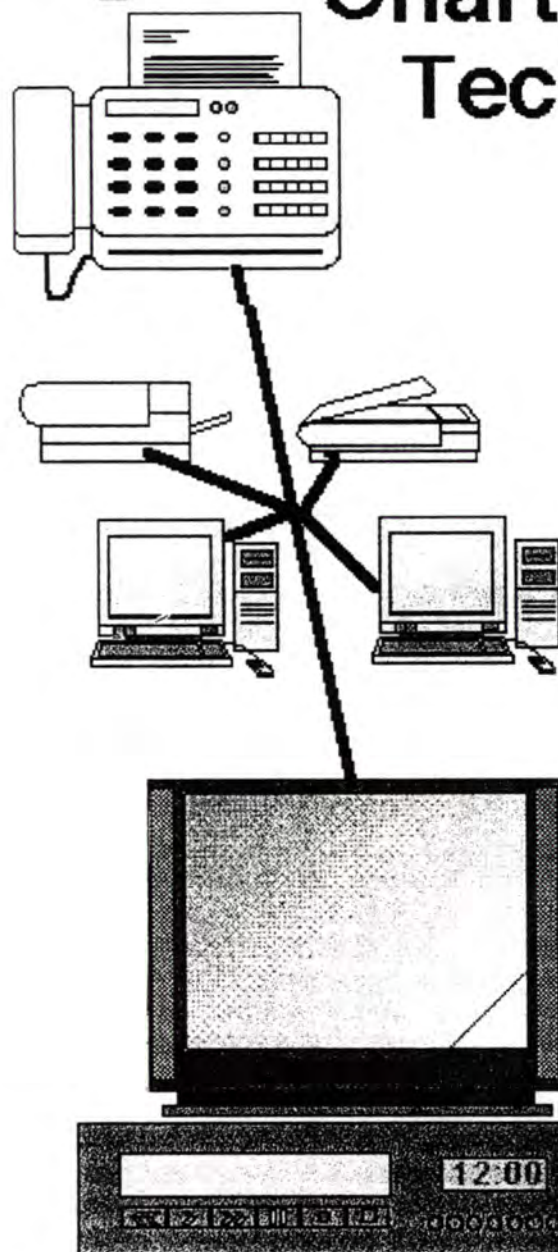
R = Reform Comparison
School

O = Other Comparison
School

Source: Los Angeles
Unified School
District yearly
computer data
tapes



Fenton Avenue Charter School Technology Story



A Living
and
Evolving
Education
Revolution



Visit us on the Internet @:

<http://fenton-cs115.lausd.k12.ca.us>



We Are Honored By Your Visit To:

**Fenton Charter School
Lake View Terrace, California 91342**

A California Public Charter School

May 1997

California Distinguished School Award

**The Fenton Charter School Technology Story:
*A Living and Evolving Educational Revolution***

Our 1993 Charter Proposal embraced the information revolution as a cornerstone to education reform for the future. We envisioned a day when every student and teacher would have a computer at their desk, not as a single-minded solution to education's structural ills, but as a facilitating tool integral to effective educational reform. Technology alone can not teach a child to read, write, or compute. Technology can, however, deliver the individualized hands-on/minds-on help each child needs to become a stronger partner in her/his own mental development.

In 1992, we began to perceive the possibilities of technology in our Writing to Read lab experiences with kindergarten and first grade students. We now know that when facilitated correctly, technologies become the great knowledge equalizer for all learners, especially children. Multimedia technologies can enhance our multiple intelligences with a multidisciplinary sophistication impossible to achieve by even the best teachers using conventional delivery methods only.

Our recent and rapidly developing understanding detailing how the human brain functions, constructs knowledge, evokes behavior, and develops wisdom is critical to education reform. Descarte's "*Cognito ergo sum* " (*I think, therefore I am*) which focused on language and logic needs to be enhanced to "*I think and feel, therefore, I am* ". Technology can supply multiple intelligence enhancements to neural pathways and neural networks. It can leverage the same teacher and student energy expended historically to produce students that can meet higher quantitative and qualitative standards for the world of tomorrow.

(Critical for education in the 21st Century, click here to see the outstanding LA TIMES series on current brain research and links to other brain information sites)

After Charter approval and start-up in 1994, a technology committee of the Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment & Accountability Council was established. A Fenton technology delivery system vision was developed and adopted to portray the then existing or available stand alone technologies and the potential for transition to multimedia, networked technologies over time. It advised:

New technology users are primarily interested in using the information and learning delivered by new methods IF it does a more effective job than the existing delivery methods. This is an organizational culture and classroom management challenge more than it is a technical challenge, although one should not underestimate the degree of difficulty of any of the challenges.

The nature of these challenges, however, can change almost overnight from one of convincing most users to try these new fangeled methods to one of not having enough resources to satisfy the demand for hardware, software, & training. Evolution from stand alone equipment, to partially networked equipment, to fully networked equipment and data becomes an accelerating issue of change management. In other words, a three piece combo becomes a full orchestra very quickly.

In *student driven* technology solutions, ease of use is critical. The faster the student becomes an independent learner, the more a teacher becomes a facilitator. To the extent possible application software menus should have a consistent feel and look across the program library so the student and teacher spend less time on how to run the programs and more time on applying the program to meet learning needs. Another critical issue becomes system management and maintenance. Users of the system need support from outside the classroom to maximize the investment. Users sour quickly on unreliable hardware, software, or 'customer service'. Various levels of system 'customer support' will be required over time if the orchestra is to stay in tune.

The technologies that produce multimedia products and systems are, of course, in revolution also. Running formerly separate media of sound, image, and data through one box be it a computer, a television, or some hybrid of both is daunting technically and financially. The information superhighway is, and will be for sometime to come, fraught with potholes large and small. Making decisions to take advantage of the information revolution requires reasonable risk taking and substantial investment. To deliver the best available functionality to students in a world where change is the constant, demands a flexible sound, data, and image network infrastructure as well as enough electrical power to operate the network and the devices attached to it over time.

This is a brave new world not only for educators, but also for power companies, telephone companies, cable TV operators, TV networks, entertainment giants, software developers,

and hardware vendors. Infrastructure integration requires collaboration and connectedness *among humans* before wires and machines are connected, especially when dealing with old facilities, cultures, and government bureaucracies.

In late 1994, Fenton representatives evaluated the Los Angeles County Office of Education's Teacher Technology Training Center. This multimedia state of the art facility became the prototype hardware configuration for our delivery system vision for the classroom of the future. In early 1995, Fenton representatives began evaluating the services of a company called Educational Management Group(EMG), a division of Simon & Schuster, Paramount, and Viacom. EMG provides various multimedia instructional assists such as live satellite/electronic field trips around the world, interactive standalone technologies, and networked multimedia data solutions and lessons through student computer workstations. We visited in-state and out-of-state school sites using these services and got feedback from kids, teachers, and administrators. We uncovered an overwhelmingly positive response from everyone. Our personal experiences were and continue to be positive as we explore the best usage techniques of multimedia technologies. Concurrently, discussions were being held with General Telephone and Electronics (GTE) about a "backbone" sound, data, and image network. This simply meant providing wires to carry voice conversations, fax transmissions, television transmission, and computer text and graphics to each classroom. It also meant installing the equipment attached to the wires to send and receive electronic instructional information externally to and from the campus as well as internally within the campus for students, teachers, and others to use.

Generous grants from the Mattel Foundation and the Riordan Foundation along with wonderful offers of ten year network financing from GTE and five year software and workstation financing from EMG appeared to make implementation of an integrated sound, image, and data network feasible. None of this would have happened of course without the independence for entrepreneurship provided to Charter Schools by the State of California and the prudent, but visionary fiscal management of Fenton administrators and governing councils.

By January, 1996 Fenton had entered into a multi-party partnership to begin the foundation of one of the most sophisticated electronic educational delivery systems of certainly any elementary school in the nation. Vendor system maintenance was included in agreements to supplement our on-site staff, who were developed and trained for immediate response to campus-wide troubleshooting needs. By July, 1996 Fenton had completely installed its sound, fiber optic data, and image backbone network along with upgraded electrical power throughout the campus. By September 1996, nine new modular classrooms were added to the campus and wired to the network to accomplish class size reduction to 20 pupils in all K-3 classrooms. Grades 4 and 5 have 25 students maximum. Campus-wide Internet continuous connection at 128,000 bits per second in all 50 class and administration rooms was live by 9/96 also. This was upgraded to a full T-1 frame relay Internet connection at 1.5 million bits per second in 8/97.

To date, over 300 computers and 50 printers are in use constantly by about 860 on-track students and staff every school day of every month of the year (not to mention increasing after school and Saturday programs). The vast majority of these machines are multimedia and networked to the printers, our intranet, a WAN, the Internet, and even one "extranet" vendor. Maintenance as mentioned is done primarily by on-site trained personnel. All professionals have a Fenton e-mail account and anyone can access our web site (<http://fenton-cs115.lausd.k12.ca.us>) from, of course, anywhere in the world. The hits on our web-site and e-mail volume have skyrocketed since installation. By October 1996, 14 classrooms were wired for our *classroom of the future* configuration described below.

In the 96/97 school year, we piloted one sixth grade self-contained class as a *classroom of the future*. The pilot began in July 1996 as a test for a new multimedia networked

technology solution of our own design. A second class, identically equipped as described below, was added to the pilot after 3 months. Basic skills testing results in reading and math improved 25% and 15% respectively in the original pilot class by year end. Self esteem, writing skills, and attendance improved dramatically in both classes. After these successful pilot regular classroom implementations, two more classrooms in July 1997 began being operated also as *classrooms of the future*. 150 students and six teachers are currently experiencing the school day with their own Power Macintosh at their classroom desk available anytime they need it to use as a writing instrument, electronic paper, a dictionary, an encyclopedia, the Internet, a drawing tool, or an integration of all of the above. Each of these four regular classrooms contains one networked computer for every student and teacher, two networked printers (1 color), a color scanner, and two big screen *electronic bulletin boards* enabling the teacher to electronically guide students in all disciplines before allowing students to explore or implement on their own. The *electronic bulletin boards* also deliver other multimedia capabilities to be described later. Editing from the teacher workstation can be performed on text and/or graphics work resident on each networked student computer. This easy file sharing has many classroom benefits. Technology's impact on everything from classroom management challenges, to the most effective student work configurations, to the most practical software and hardware solutions, to subject mastery, are being developed and tested live with six year-round 5th grade self-contained classes.

Our rationale: In an information based society, adult work tools are located/accessed from the primary workstation, not down the hall nor in another building like a lab environment. Certainly in the upper elementary grades, teachers must facilitate all learning, not lab technicians. Learning technology is a by-product of learning content, process, and production when technology tools are the best delivery method. Teacher/student work tools must be integrated into classroom teaching environments to maximize the benefits. In a multimedia environment, teachers then become even more facilitating for more intrinsically motivated learners. The Information Superhighway links students to the world while we concurrently build basic skills and higher order skills. Students can utilize stand alone computer applications, our intranet systems, and the Internet daily as needed for their job of learning process and production. All students become true partners in their own education which in turn can be structured and paced to fit their needs much more effectively. *Basic skills testing for 135 fifth graders show six classes' annualized average rates of improvement were 27% in reading and 32% in math per student per class 7/97 to 12/97.* The annual acceleration should actually be greater in the last half-year.

The upper elementary grades also have access to a networked multimedia data base of over 750 lessons and a search capability allowing computerized education plans to be set-up for large groups, small groups, or individuals. As funds become available, more multimedia workstations will be added; but the school is near it's upper limit in providing for technology out of the operating budget. More grant providers and corporate sponsors are being sought to maintain our momentum. We need approximately \$75,000 per classroom just to upgrade to the already successful pilot classroom configurations described below. However, the technology foundation that we have in place should convince potential donors of the value of any support they provide to move us forward.

To that end, we have submitted a five year, \$1.6 million 1998 grant request to the U.S. Department of Education to support installation of *classrooms of the future* in grades 3 and 4. This will also expand our K-2 technology centers from 4 computers to 7 per room. In all grades then, but especially in the third through fifth grades, more sophisticated learning of computers and multimedia is a by product of reading, writing, math, science, and social studies projects that naturally create linear and non-linear learning opportunities. The concept of *classroom of the future* then is more than hardware and software. It is a seamless mind, body, machine, curriculum interface when facilitated to maximize student involvement. This is a paradigm shift that must naturally include our students as critical

partners in their own education in a system that orchestrates an increasing understanding of brain research, the best educational practices, and networked technologies implemented by a caring staff of master educators, support personnel, and community members.

Fenton operates a 16 channel digital satellite receive station and a Cable in the Classroom connection that jointly will allow developmentally appropriate choices on about 1000 hours of educational programming per month per classroom. All new VCRs with VCR+ easy video taping were purchased to tape programs to best coincide with lesson plans. We will also receive 12 live electronic field trips per year from around the world in which students can interact with other students, scientists, experts and scholars in those locations.

Our video distribution system allows closed circuit, campus initiated broadcasts by Fenton students and staff. Our studio could eventually be connected to community sites and homes through cable TV. Information on leveraging more functionality from the video network cable was gleaned by attending the Cable Industry Convention in May 1996. Unexpectedly, the Cable Industry announced in July, 1996 its intent to provide free high speed access to the Internet for schools on a first come, first served basis. Fenton formalized its request that morning for network access as soon as possible to Continental Cablevision, a U.S. West Telecommunications company. This timing was extraordinary since we had just completed the upgrading of recently installed coaxial wiring for even more powerful video signals as well as in anticipation of the ultra fast Internet multimedia data access we knew would be available in the future.

Compact Disc Interactive Stations were also installed throughout the summer of 96 in all classrooms. A library of Interactive Compact Discs, many of which are in Spanish and English, covering Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, and multimedia encyclopedia are in each room for large and small group or individualized use. As mentioned, each PreK-6 room also has a minimum of four multimedia computers with a variety of multimedia programs for math, history, and science, reading, writing, critical thinking, and reference work.

To stay on top of all these new tools and concepts teachers need both training and continuing education. They specifically need on going staff development in additional brain research, curriculum content and instructional process for their classrooms, for credential renewal, and for professional growth. To that end, we wish to create a distance learning as well as an on-site facility for college credit courses and professional collaboration. Therefore, we are very excited that the University of Southern California's Center for Multilingual, Multicultural Research has offered to collaborate with us on technology strategy and technology curriculum integration training in reading, mathematics, college preparation, and career development. This will enhance our ongoing efforts in these areas and tie directly to the Applied Learning Standards of the State of California adopted by Fenton in June, 1997. In addition, EMG's training channel, Fenton's on site staff development, and independent multimedia hands-on practice continue to be available in the *classrooms of the future* or in 41 other classrooms on the Fenton network. Specific training and staff development times have been and will continue to be "banked" and scheduled during each week of the year for all teachers.

In summary, now that Fenton is an independent educational entrepreneurship of the State of California all decisions, be they financial, technological, or curricular are able to be made by the Fenton community of parents, staff, and local supporters free from most of the red tape that bogs down many school districts. We have high energy visionaries in all the critical leadership positions and an ever evolving group of support outside the community. One might think of us as a "managed entrepreneurship": controlled where appropriate and innovative and unrestricted where appropriate. This creative energy evokes the best of the best synergy even from constructive differences of opinion. We have likened the process to the old steam engine locomotive chugging down its dual track and transforming into a

monorail. This kind of change is never seamless, but the intent is to be as seamless as possible.

We see multimedia technologies not as simple *sound byte* solutions to education's structural ills, but as facilitating tools integral to effective educational reform. We agree that multimedia information and its access technologies will be the dominant force in 21st Century society. Knowledge workers able to critically think and constructively collaborate with other knowledge workers around the globe and at home will help solve our intractable 20th Century dilemmas. It is predicted that these types of jobs will have some of the highest career satisfaction, quality of life, and living standards.

Fenton Avenue Charter School endeavors to be a role model for effective education reform. We wish to give Fenton students the chance to contribute to and live in a better world. We have implemented a student driven technology plan, not a technology driven student plan. As examples, students have had an interactive multimedia (TV, radio, and Internet) conference with the White House and launched Fenton Charter TV Broadcasting Studio with Delaine Easton, Superintendent of California Schools as our first in studio guest. Our students now broadcast weekly closed circuit programs campuswide. They can utilize stand alone computer applications, our intranet systems, and the Internet daily as needed for their job of learning process and production. Therefore, the Fenton technology story is the story of providing state of the art functionality to our 1300 students, many of whom are disadvantaged. They deserve the possibility to compete with, as well as become, the best of the best. We think globally, and act locally. We expect our students to do the same.



***** [Click here to talk to us by E-mail@Fenton Charter School](mailto:E-mail@Fenton Charter School)*****

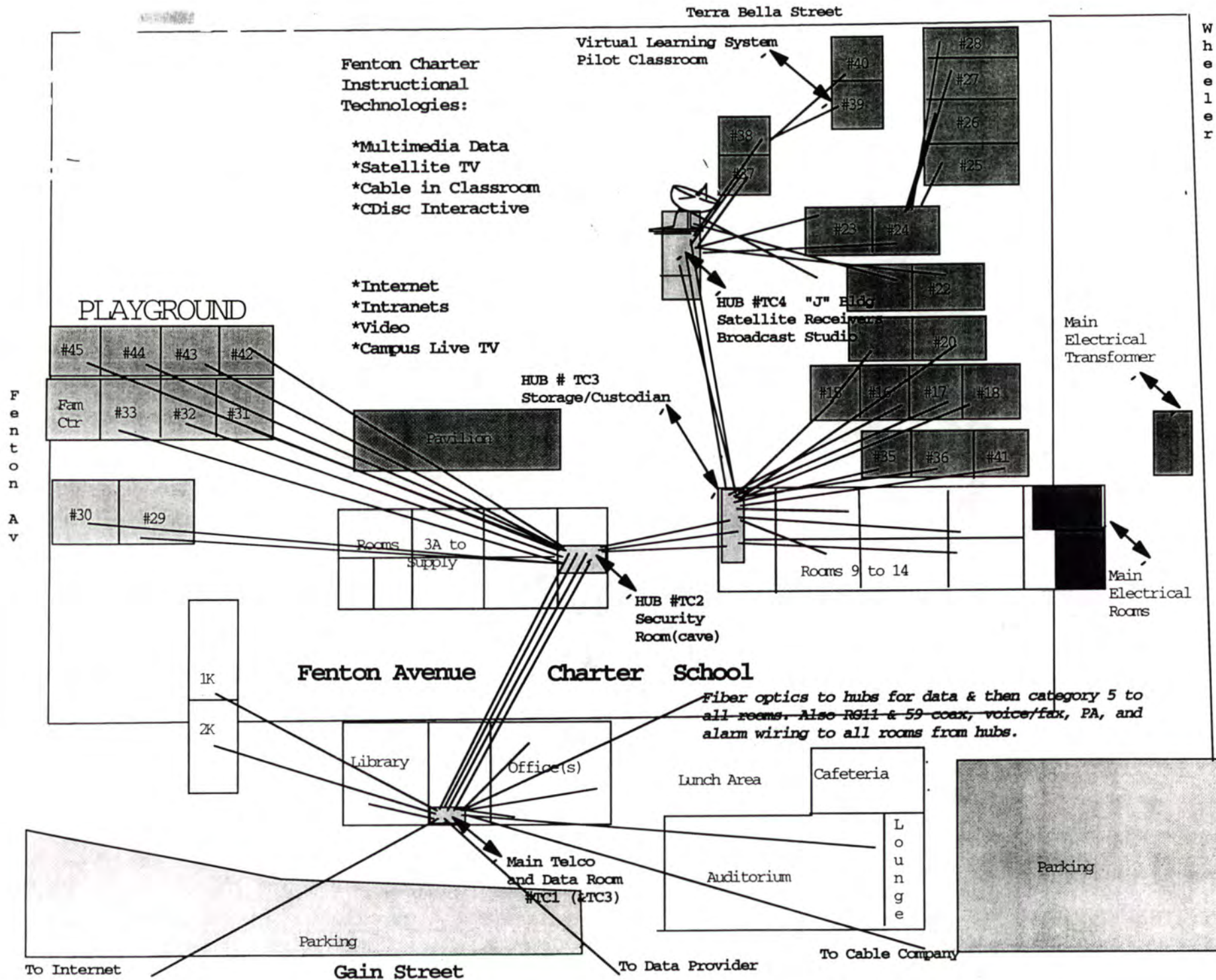


Fenton Charter has adopted the California Department of Education's *Challenging Standards for Student Success*. [Click here to view or download Contents](#) (requires Adobe Acrobat Reader 3.0 which can be obtained through the Challenge Standards Contents page for Netscape or Explorer)

To learn more about Charter Schools visit the following WWW sites [California Network of Educational Charters \(CANEC\)](#) and [US Charter Schools](#)

Thanks to LAUSDnet for their support. Please visit them [here](#). Make sure to check out their excellent search engine page.

This site has been visited times since April 21, 1997.



**“Every school in California
should be given the technology
tools I see here at Fenton!”**

**Delaine Easton
Superintendent of Public Schools
for the State of California**

***L A TIMES, DAILY NEWS, Fenton
Charter Broadcasting System***

11-8-96

Pilot Technology Classroom 96/97 School Year

Standardized Basic Elementary-Secondary Test (BEST) Test Results 7-15-96 Compared to 6-10-97

	Vocabulary out of 16	1996 %	1997 #/16	1997 %	Comprehensi- out of 16	1996 %	1997 #/16	1997 %	Total reading #/32 7/96	Total reading #/32 6/97	Math Concepts of 20: 1996	1997	Math Comp of 20:1996	1997	Total Math % of 40: 96	Total Math: % of 40: 97	
Alfredo Ortega (RSP)	3	19%	7	44%	5	31%	6	38%	8	13	AO	8	13	11	9	45%	55%
Adalberto Gonzalez	7	44%	7	44%	10	63%	13	81%	17	20	BG	9	12	11	4*	50%	45%*
Antonio Angulo(Spanish)	10	63%	4	25%	8	50%	7	44%	18	11	AA	8	8	7	6	36%	35%
Christina Lorenzo	6	38%	9	56%	10	63%	11	69%	16	20	CL	13	16	14	10	68%	65%
Darnell Owens (RSP)	n/a	n/a	7	44%	n/a	n/a	5	31%	n/a	12	DA	n/a	10	n/a	11	n/a	53%
Darrone Scott	9	56%	10	63%	12	75%	13	81%	21	23	DS	14	15	13	17	68%	80%
Ernesto Alvarez	9	56%	9	56%	4	25%	11	69%	13	20	EA	13	12	9	10	55%	55%
Francisco Maz(RSP Spanish)	5	31%	6	38%	4	25%	6	38%	9	12	FM	6	11	9	7	36%	45%
Jamie Miller	9	56%	10	63%	8	50%	10	63%	17	20	JM	16	17	15	16	74%	83%
Jesus Gonzales (Spanish)	9	56%	6	38%	11	69%	4	25%	20	10	JG	12	9	12	14	60%	58%
Jose Luis Martinez	13	81%	13	81%	10	63%	15	94%	23	28	JM	14	17	17	15	78%	80%
Josemanuel Garcia	9	56%	10	63%	14	88%	13	81%	23	23	JG	10	14	12	13	52%	68%
Juan Cordero	4	25%	7	44%	6	38%	10	63%	10	17	JC	9	11	8	8	43%	48%
Julio Casillas	6	38%	7	44%	7	44%	9	56%	13	16	JC	8	10	6	12	35%	55%
Marisela Castro	10	63%	10	63%	12	75%	15	94%	22	25	MC	18	18	11	16	73%	85%
Melissa Martinez	9	56%	8	50%	9	56%	11	69%	18	19	MM	14	14	15	12	69%	60%
Monica Ramirez(RSP)	8	50%	12	75%	9	56%	13	81%	17	25	MR	10	15	5	18	38%	83%
Paola Zaldivar	8	50%	10	63%	10	63%	14	88%	18	24	PZ	19	18	17	20	90%	95%
Rocio Soltero	5	31%	9	56%	10	63%	11	69%	15	20	RS	13	14	14	12	68%	65%
Rosa Flores	6	38%	11	69%	11	69%	12	75%	17	23	FF	8	15	12	10	50%	63%
Vanessa Rodriguez	10	63%	12	75%	13	81%	15	94%	23	27	VR	17	16	17	19	85%	88%
Vanessa Serrano	6	38%	11	69%	9	56%	13	81%	15	24	VS	9	15	13	14	55%	73%
Cynthia Rodriguez	n/a	n/a	10	63%	n/a	n/a	14	88%	n/a	24	CR	n/a	17	n/a	13	n/a	75%
Brandon Anderson	n/a	n/a	15	94%	n/a	n/a	14	88%	n/a	29	BA	n/a	9	n/a	12	n/a	53%

*bubbling sequence errors

(11 Girls 13 Boys)

Blue= tested in Spanish	Red= tested in English	Jul-96	Jun-97	Jul-96	Jun-97
Green = Students over 70% in Total Reading Points	3 Green	11 Green	Green = Students over 70% in Total Math Points	4 Green	9 Green

VOCABULARY		READING COMPREHENSION		MATH CONCEPTS		MATH COMPUTATION	
Start points	End	Start points	End	Start points	End	Start points	End
138	172	169	215	222	262	220	241
25% increase in vocabulary on average for 18 students who took both tests in English		27% increase in reading comp on average for 18 students who took both tests in English		18% increase in math concepts on average for 18 students who took both tests in English		10% increase in math comp on average for 18 students who took both tests in English	
14 of 18 students increased even though the tested vocabulary words were never reviewed in any way since 7/96.		17 of 18 increased comprehension though the tested passages were never reviewed in any way since 7/96.					

- Three ESL students who did not have enough language skills to take the 7/96 test in English were able to take it 6/97 in English
- Including the three ESL students above, 17 of the 22 original students tested were LEP (limited English proficient) to some degree
- All students leave the class with strong keyboard and mouse skills; an ability to integrate text and graphics; do word, paint, and spreadsheet programs; manipulate electronic objects spatially with substantially enhanced hand/eye coordination; use electronic reference programs and the Internet for academic research individually and collaboratively; with a refined awareness of process and product; with awareness of big ideas of pre and ancient history and science; and with a better balance of extrinsic and intrinsic values.
- On top of all this, students became a team to lead the attendance and breakfast statistics every month of the school year. The vision has begun to take form!

1

Fenton Charter School 1997/98

Summary: Fifth Grade Basic Education Skills Test

7/97Read	6/98 Read	7/97 Math	6/98 MATH
----------	-----------	-----------	-----------

23/24 A	392	446	24 students	476	581
---------	-----	-----	-------------	-----	-----

14% average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
22% average per student increase in math concepts and computation

23/24 B*	301	339	20 students	347	359
----------	-----	-----	-------------	-----	-----

25% annualized average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
7% annualized average per student increase in math concepts and computation

23/24 C	343	401	21 students	391	530
---------	-----	-----	-------------	-----	-----

17% average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
35.6% average per student increase in math concepts and computation

39/40 A	355	435	25 students	468	618
---------	-----	-----	-------------	-----	-----

22.5% average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
32% average per student increase in math concepts and computation

39/40 B*	291	348	22 students	318	412
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38% annualized average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
59% annualized average per student increase in math concepts and computation

39/40 C	303	400	24 students	382	532
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32% average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
39% average per student increase in math concepts and computation

All Classes	1985	2369	136 students	2382	3032
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19.3% actual average per student increase in vocabulary and comprehension
27.2% actual average per student increase in math concepts and computation

*Exit tests as of 12/97

8/11/98

45

98 AUG 12 AM 8:27

Ottawa, Ontario
K1A 0A2

July 28, 1998

Bill

Dear Mr. President:

Thank you for your kind note. I too appreciated the walk and, somewhat less so, the climb. It was a rare, and pleasant, opportunity to speak with you directly and one that I also hope is repeated soon.

Aline joins me in extending to you and Hillary our very kindest regards and best wishes.

8/12/98

Sincerely,

Give to NSC? ☒ F-1
Yes ☒
No ☐

Paul

No REPLY
NECESSARY UNLESS
NSC HAS CP
FOREIGN POLICY
REASON

The President of the United States of America
The White House
Washington, D.C.
U.S.A.

AUG 5 1998



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ב"ה

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Ms. Ann Lewis
Assistant to the President
Director of Communications
The White House
Washington, D. C. 20502

Dear Ann,

Enclosed please find the next missive to the President entitled "On Seeing". The author is Dr. Moshe Sokol, who is the Chairman of the Philosophy Department of Touro College.

Sincerely,

Rabbi Menachem Genack

MG:sg

8/12/98

Send to Muller?

Yes ☒

No ☐

C

ON SEEING

Moses, it seems, was just minding his own business, shepherding the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, when he arrived on the mountain of Horeb. This is how the Bible describes what next occurs:

And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him [Moses] in a flame of fire out of the midst of a bush; and he looked, and behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said: 'I will turn aside now, and see this great sight, why is the bush not burnt?' And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush and said: 'Moses, Moses'. And he said: 'Here I am'. (Exodus 3:2-4)

Over the space of just these three verses the Hebrew root of the verb "see" is repeated no less than six times. Whatever else this episode is about, it is also about seeing, about the Moses' progress from his first "look" to the culminating "great sight". What does it take to journey from a "look" to a "great sight"? And is this linked to Moses' transformation depicted here from shepherd, to liberator and leader?

An angel of God first "appears" (iteration #1) to Moses in the flame of the burning bush. But Moses doesn't see the angel. What he "sees" (iteration #2) is a burning bush unconsumed by fire. Why doesn't Moses see the angel? Probably because he wasn't ready to interpret what he saw *as* an angel. I know that what I wear on my wrist is a watch, and so I see a watch when I look at it. But if I had never learned what watches were, I would not see a watch on my wrist, but only a shiny piece of metal and glass. Seeing always involves interpreting. Therefore, Moses failed to see the angel, reality at its deepest. The journey to a "great sight" begins in blindness.

But what then *does* Moses see? Really only one thing, a "bush burning with fire". After all, at first **glance**, that's all there *is* to see. But Moses must have glanced for more than a moment, because he also notices something else, that the "bush was not consumed by fire". Now Moses must have stopped to look, to **regard** his first vision of a burning bush, for otherwise, why would he have noticed that the leaves were still whole? Couldn't the fire have just begun? Moses must have been preternaturally *aware*, wholly present in the moment, and in his immediate surroundings. And he must have been radically open to new experiences, to new ways of looking. That's why his **glance** becomes what we might call "**regard**". Moses may have been shepherding his father-in-law's flock but he was also doing much more. And because Moses *did* so much more, he *was* so much more.

After **regarding** this vision of the burning bush Moses commences with something unusual. He talks to himself. And not only does he talk to himself, but he calls himself to action: "And Moses said: 'I will turn aside now and see (iteration #3) this great sight (iteration #4), why is the bush not burnt?'"

Why does Moses talk to himself? Why doesn't he just go ahead and look? And why does Moses add that he will "turn aside" to see? Let him just get on with the looking!

But this "turning aside" seems critical. Because what does God respond to? "And when the Lord saw (iteration #5) that he turned aside to see (iteration #6), God called to him ..." God calls to Moses only after God *sees* Moses: Moses' seeing thus yields God's seeing. Had Moses not been the gifted "see-er", God would not have bothered to see him.

But it isn't really just Moses' *seeing* -- really **regarding** -- that yielded God's seeing, because the Bible says that what God saw was that Moses had **turned aside** to see. The "turning aside" is thus crucial. Why?

Aren't there moments in all our lives when we observe something that strikes us? A plaintive sunset, a wise comment, a warm smile, a small kindness, the feeling of being blessed, or of being called. But how often do we stop what we're doing, and *say* to ourselves: "Now that was meaningful, that touched me."? First, there is **glancing**. Then there is **regarding**. Then, the first step beyond regarding, the first step towards "turning aside" and then transformation, is **logos**, the word. We see because we apprehend, and we apprehend because we can **speak**.

But the next, and perhaps most difficult step is *praxis*, to act, a **turning aside**. To "turn aside" from the busyness of shepherding a flock or managing a corporation or government, in order to observe and reflect, and to respond.

Notice that Moses says "I will turn aside now and see *this great sight*". Moses' hyper-awareness, his radical openness to new experience and transformation, made it possible for him to interpret what he saw, as a **great sight**. Most of us see many sights, but, alas, we lack the capacity to see them as "great sights".

That capacity, I think, is linked to the capacity for amazement. Notice that Moses's very description of the "great sight" incorporates a question: 'Why is the bush not burnt?' Some of us see facts, and that is all we see. Others of us **see facts-as-questions**, facts that summon up wonder and amazement. Isn't the warmth of that smile wondrous? Isn't the feeling of being called an amazement? Whence the plaintiveness of the sunset?

When God called Moses out of the burning bush, Moses responded with one, explosive word in the Hebrew: "**Hineni!**", "**Here-I-am!**". Moses was eternally present. He was aware, open, wondering, stopping and reflecting, ever-ready for transformation. That is why Moses "saw" the burning bush, and that is why God "saw" Moses.

So we find a complex, progressive odyssey of seeing in these three verses: from the *shepherd's* blindness, to glancing, to regarding, to speaking, to turning aside, to seeing facts-as-questions, and finally, to the *leader and liberator's* great sight.

And we find only one response to that great sight, *the response of the leader*: **Hineni!**

