



Seattle is a center of arts and culture, as well as creativity in many sectors – high technology, biotechnology, aerospace, retail, sustainability. The Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs and the Seattle Arts Commission join Seattle Public Schools in wanting our public school system to prepare all Seattle’s children to participate fully in that creative culture of work and life.

What is the City of Seattle/Seattle Public Schools Arts Education Partnership Initiative?

- A **Five-year** initiative starting in 2007-08 to build **sustainable capacity** at the District **to make quality arts education accessible to every student**, especially in less affluent communities and communities of color.
- Provides the District arts manager with **staff and resources** (parallel to teams in other academic areas) to plan and implement **system-wide improvements**.
- **Increased capacity is urgently needed to kick-start systemic change and overcome inequity of access.** Currently, award-winning arts programs exist in some schools, while others have little or no arts.
- The city of Seattle and other community supporters will provide partner funding for five years, which will be matched by district investments.
- The Partners have identified **initial priorities**:
 - Conducting a **district-wide arts education audit** and needs assessment;
 - increasing support and **professional development** for teachers and principals;
 - **building up elementary music and visual arts programs**, especially in schools with the highest percentages of diverse and at-risk students;
 - coordinating and placing **community partnerships** where need is greatest, and enlisting new public/private investment;
 - focusing on **equity of opportunity** for students and schools with fewest resources
- We intend this Arts Education Initiative to be
 - a **model partnership** for positive change,
 - **aligned** with other SPS efforts to close the achievement gap,
 - a **“win”** for Seattle students, families and schools.

ARTS EDUCATION is Core Learning

Federal and State law mandate the arts as a core academic subject.

- 1993 Washington state law (RCW 28A.150.210) affirmed the arts as basic and mandatory education.
- 2002 Federal No Child Left Behind Elementary and Secondary Education Act identified the arts among core academic subjects.
- 2004 Washington passed HB 2195 requiring comprehensive, sequential, standards-based instruction in all arts disciplines, taught by highly qualified instructors, accessible to all students, and assessed in 2008-09 and beyond, with results reported to OSPI.

The American Public overwhelmingly supports Arts in Education

According to a May 2005 Harris Poll:

- 93% agree the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education, a 2% increase over 2001.
- 79% agree incorporating the arts into education is the *first step in adding back what's missing in public education today.*

Seattle Parents and Public want increased Arts Education

In the community market research conducted for the 2006 SPS Citizen Advisory Committee on Investing in Educational Excellence, *the MOST favored curricular improvement proposed was "Expand music and art offerings in all elementary schools."* (88% of Respondents Favored)

The Value of ARTS EDUCATION

Arts Education and Academic Achievement

- ✓ Study and practice of the arts is intrinsically meaningful and rigorous.
- ✓ Learning in the arts improves academic performance in other academic subjects, notably reading and language skills and mathematics skills.
- ✓ Students who participate regularly in the arts outperform “arts-poor” students in other academic subjects. This positive correlation increases with levels of arts participation.
- ✓ *Arts education has proved particularly powerful in helping struggling students – children from economically disadvantaged backgrounds, children of color, English language learners.*

Arts Education and Cognitive Development

- ✓ Arts education regularly engages multiple skills and develops the “executive” capacities – spatial reasoning, concentration, critical thinking, problem solving, intellectual curiosity.
- ✓ “The arts...invite students to explore the emotional, intuitive, and irrational aspects of life...while affirming the interconnectedness of all forms of knowing.”
- ✓ Learning and practicing the arts offers scope for all learning styles and opens up paths to success and self-confidence for students.
- ✓ The arts connect the learning experience to the values of the 21st century workplace.

Arts Education and Social/Emotional Development

Training and participation in the arts

- ✓ keep students in school and engaged—motivate students to want to learn;
- ✓ promote sustained attention, persistence and risk taking;
- ✓ cultivate interpersonal skills in communications, collaboration, conflict resolution;
- ✓ foster self-directional capacities such as self-confidence and self-control;
- ✓ bring students together across social, experiential and cultural differences, and cultivates communication skills, empathy and respect for diverse perspectives.

Arts Education and the Learning Environment

Integrated arts education enriches the entire learning environment.

- ✓ The arts foster new ways of teaching as well as learning, invigorating *both* teachers and students.
- ✓ The arts help students learn about and appreciate other cultures, perspectives and traditions—and develop pride and confidence in their own cultural identities.
- ✓ Strong arts programs increase parental engagement, contribute to school spirit and identity and help make schools attractive to families.
- ✓ Arts-rich schools interact with the surrounding community, connecting students to the world around them and increasing the impact of schools as neighborhood centers.

Arts Education promotes Equity in Achievement

- ✓ Research consistently shows that learning in and through the arts has special power to level the playing field for youth from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Schools & Districts that invest in ARTS EDUCATION show Academic Gains

- “A study of 23 arts-integrated schools in Chicago showed test scores rising up to two times faster there than in demographically comparable schools.” (Rabkin & Redmond, *Washington Post* 2005)
- ArtsPartners, a partnership of the Dallas city government, cultural community and school district, trains elementary school teachers to boost academic achievement by integrating field trips and artist residencies into their lesson plans for core subjects like reading, math, science and social studies. The program has strengthened the teacher force, and brought measurable improvements test scores and literacy. It is now serving as a model for curricular reform in other cities. (Ford Fdn. Rpt, Winter 2005)
- A Tucson study of eight schools, showed dramatically higher academic scores for the four schools with a very rich arts program, with “a special resonance for our Latino kids, who were 55% higher in their language scores.” (Education Commission of the States *Conversations About the Arts in Education, May 2006*)
- Academic gains are achievable through arts programs *both in-school and out-of-school*, so long as they are thoughtfully framed to integrate with curricular and other goals for student development. “A decade-long study of after-school programs for low-income youth found that arts programs attracted higher-risk students than sports or community service programs did and had far greater academic and developmental benefits.” (Rabkin & Redmond, 2006 ref. Heath, 1999)
- Principal Robert Gary, Jr. of Rainier Beach High School gives substantial credit to a multi-year partnership with the Office of Arts & Cultural Affairs for helping “inspire student achievement and help keep them motivated to succeed.” WASL scores in 2006 compared to 2005 showed an improvement of 8% in Reading, 30% in Writing and 16% in Math. The model program supported teaching artists, arts curriculum and other opportunities, and served as a catalyst for school district plans to make Rainier Beach a performing arts-focused school beginning in 2008-09.

The ARTS Are Essential to a Complete Education for All Students

“Today’s education system faces irrelevance unless we bridge the gap between how students live and how they learn. . . .As much as students need knowledge in core subjects, they also need to know how to keep learning continually throughout their lives. Learning skills comprise three broad categories of skills:

- information and communication skills,
- thinking and problem-solving skills, and
- interpersonal and self-directional skills.

Good teachers always have fostered these skills. The challenge now is to incorporate learning skills into classrooms deliberately, strategically and broadly.”

—*Learning for the 21st Century: A Report and Mile Guide for 21st Century Skills*, 2005

“The possibility that minorities are more likely to experience a narrowing of the curriculum raises important questions of educational equity. . . .[we] must maintain a long-term vision of what constitutes educational excellence, one that both incorporates and moves well beyond literacy and numeracy. Though we must certainly strive to close racial achievement gaps in mathematics and reading, we run the risk of substituting one form of inequality for another, ultimately denying our most vulnerable students the full liberal arts curriculum our most privileged youth receive as a matter of course.”

—*Academic Atrophy*, a report published by the Council for Basic Education (Zastrow, 2004)

“The creative skills students develop through participation in the arts strengthen and enhance their preparation for living, learning and working in a changing world. Music, dance, drama and visual arts programs open children to new ideas, new experiences and new challenges, and instill the habits of minds that last a lifetime—confidence, perseverance, a drive for excellence, the ability to analyze and solve problems.”

—Susan Sclafani, Asst. Secretary for Vocational and Adult Education, U.S. Dept. of Education, speech addressing the importance of the arts to fulfilling the No Child Left Behind Act’s goal of improved student achievement, May 7, 2005