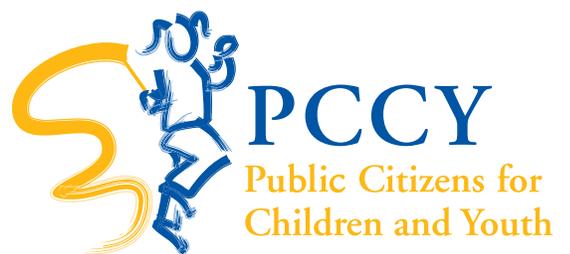


Anchoring and Amplifying the Arts in Our Schools



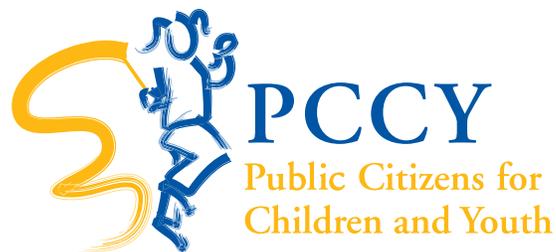
January, 2009

About PCCY

Public Citizens for Children and Youth (PCCY) serves as the region's leading child advocacy organization and works to improve the lives and life chances of its children.

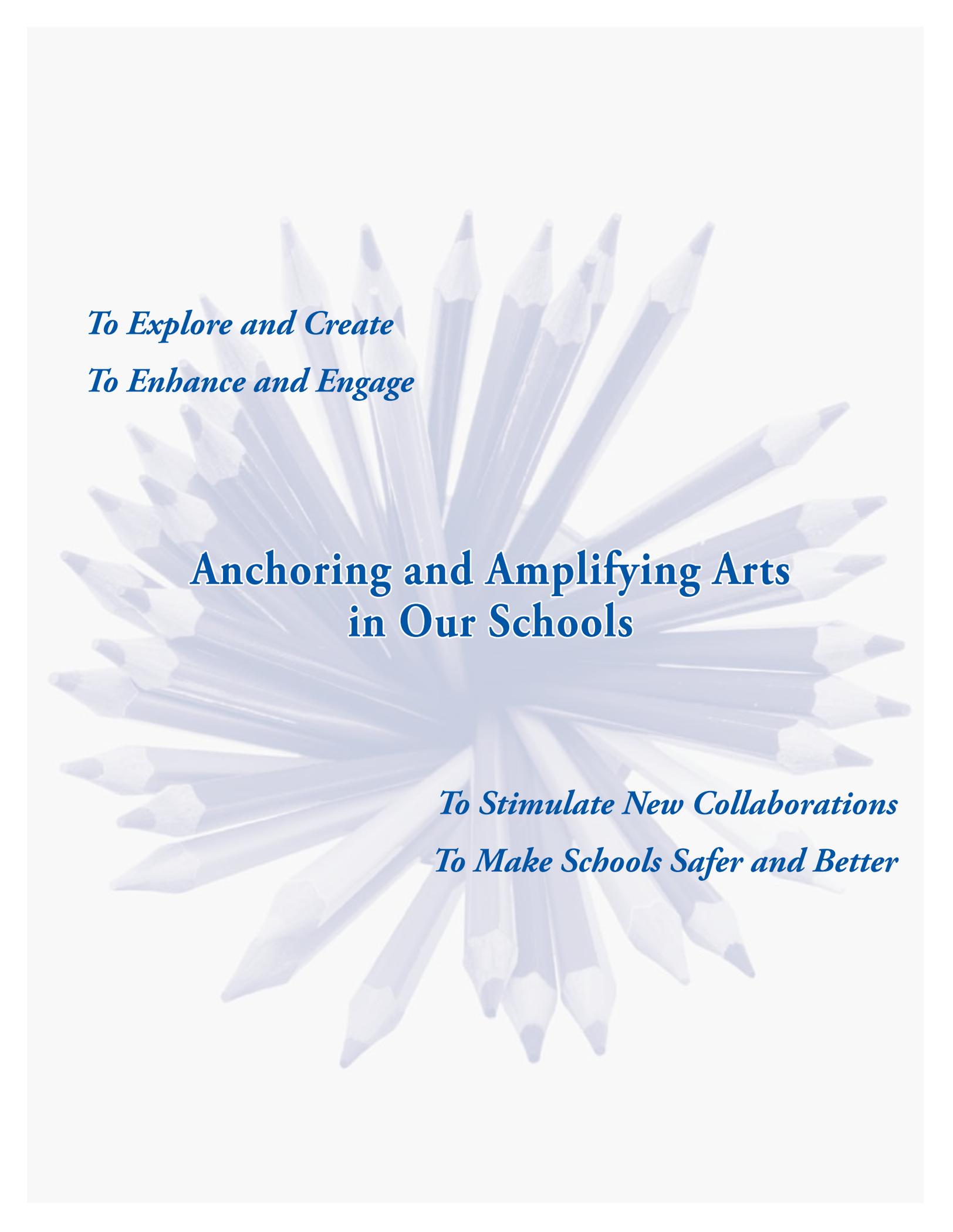
Through thoughtful and informed advocacy, community education, targeted service projects and budget analysis, PCCY seeks to watch out and speak out for children and families. PCCY undertakes specific and focused projects in areas affecting the healthy growth and development of children, including child care, public education, child health, juvenile justice and child welfare.

Founded in 1980 as Philadelphia Citizens for Children and Youth, our name was changed in 2007 to better reflect the expanded work in the counties surrounding Philadelphia. PCCY remains a committed advocate and an independent watchdog for the well-being of all our children.



Public Citizens for Children and Youth

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To Explore and Create
To Enhance and Engage

**Anchoring and Amplifying Arts
in Our Schools**

To Stimulate New Collaborations
To Make Schools Safer and Better

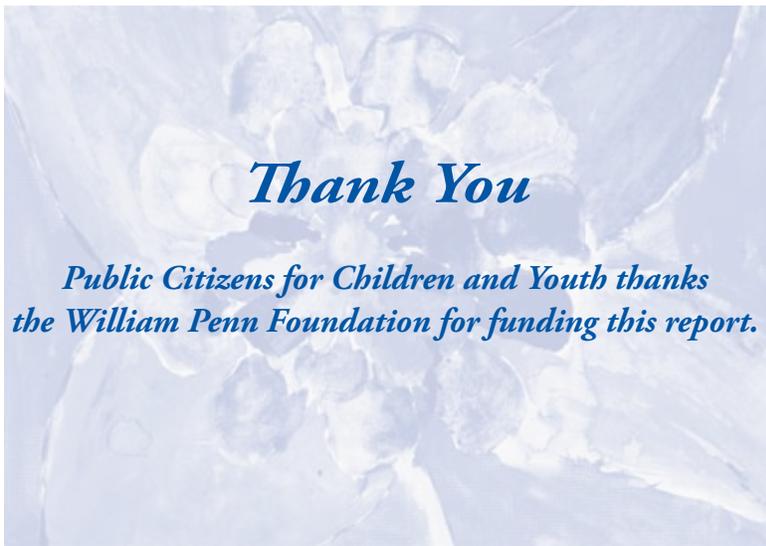


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Introduction

Philadelphia is known for its cultural riches, both its large institutions and museums and its small community programs. Similarly, our public schools once had strong arts programs that, in turn, fed the arts community. Hundreds of singers, dancers, actors, sculptors and painters grew up in our schools. Many musicians who have played in orchestras and jazz clubs sharpened their talents in the city's comprehensive high schools during regular school hours as well as special Saturday sessions. But for the most part, those days are gone.

Though some individual schools have maintained stellar arts programs and there are several arts magnet schools, focus on the arts has been on the decline in Philadelphia schools since the 1970s. Fewer arts experiences for students and fewer arts teachers have characterized public schooling for tens of thousands of our children. Many factors have contributed to this decline including budget challenges and the increased pressure to measure a school's success solely through the prism of No Child Left Behind's Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) requirements.

Over the last several years there has been some improvement. In October 2006, 65 Philadelphia public elementary, middle and high schools (25%) had neither art nor music teachers on staff. During the 2007-2008 school year, the School Reform Commission adopted a position supporting the presence of an arts teacher in every school. The decision was backed with a funded directive in May 2008, designating \$15.4 million to pay for the minimum of one part-time music or art teacher at each Philadelphia public school. As a result, over 30 art teachers and 20 music teachers were hired in the fall of 2008. While this change signifies growth, much is left undone. The increase in the number of schools with arts teachers masks the reality that many students still are not being served. In the fall of 2008, 23 schools (9%) still had vacancies for full- or part-time positions.

The typical Philadelphia public school profile reveals one visual arts teacher serving 500-800 students with few (if any) funds for supplies, and no music teacher, drama or dance programs. Students are not receiving the exposure and opportunity to participate in the arts that could be their keys to being engaged in and staying in school, as well as developing the inquiry-based approaches necessary for success as a part of the 21st century workforce. The impact of strong arts programs on schools as well as individual students can be striking. Yet, in an atmosphere of scarcity, schools that have prioritized the arts have done so by maximizing their capacity to seek outside grant funding and enduring shortages in administrative, counseling and library staff positions. As schools awaken arts programs from dormancy, the programs are challenged to stretch their impact.

Wielding a paintbrush, acting in a play and singing in the school chorus contribute to a student's well-rounded education. Participation in the arts in general, whether the visual or performing arts, has been shown to increase student engagement in school and understanding across subject areas, reduce drop-out rates, and contribute to students' feelings of self-worth. The presence of arts in schools can also stimulate increased staff creativity and collaboration as well as an improved school climate. There are schools throughout the District that have combined creativity, outside support and internal leadership to infuse the arts into their learning environments. These schools anchored and embedded the arts into their school culture and as a result, built better learning environments.

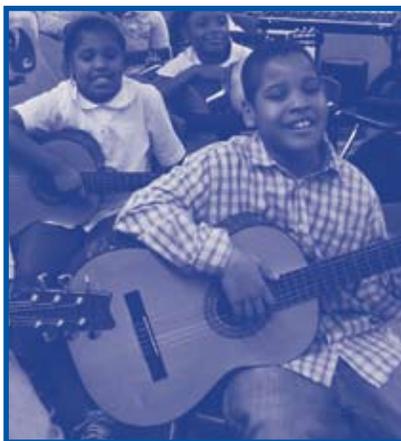
In this report, we focus the spotlight on some exemplars, while noting the need for more commitment and resources across the board.

Case Studies: Schools that Anchored and Amplified the Arts

PCCY interviewed principals, teachers, resident artists, arts organizations and students at eight selected Philadelphia schools that began with meager arts resources within the last ten years, and leveraged them for broader impact and strong experiences for their students, staff and surrounding community. We attempted to discover how these schools expanded and spread the arts to enrich the entire palette of their school's culture and climate despite limited resources.

The schools had different approaches to the arts: some combined sequential, discipline-based instruction and integration of arts with other subjects; others approached arts as project-based learning. They all tapped local resources and outside grant funds extensively, showing the transformative impact of engaging students and the school community in arts initiatives.

These few case studies may be instructive for the community at large as we work together to gather the resources necessary to sustain, build and grow these programs, and those at schools that have not yet infused the arts into the fabric of their days.



“This project has allowed the children to focus on their work and their writing, on sharing with each other and encouraging each other.”

- Teacher

Overbrook Elementary School

At Overbrook Elementary School, the principal had already begun amassing a high-caliber technology center when she received word of being awarded a small arts grant. She and her technology teacher had collected state-of-the-art computers, new software and on-going updates and maintenance for the computer lab over many years. The team of tech mentors had decided to use technology as a window to the visual arts in their school, which had no arts teachers on staff.

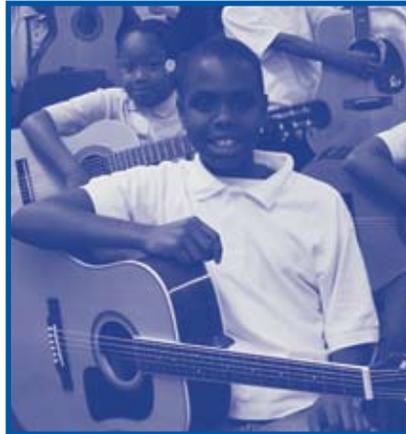
With a \$5,000 award they were able to boost projects in the technology lab in 2007 to include digital cameras, color printers, scanners, and time spent with resident artists who helped the 4th and 5th grade students create digital stories and movies using Photoshop and iMovie. Collaboration with Overbrook’s Center for Environmental Education led to a student photo contest, “Faces and Places of Overbrook”, where students received awards sponsored in 2008 at Philadelphia’s School of the Future, and students were able to travel to City Hall to view their work on exhibit outside Council chambers.

Overbrook also brought in professional development in arts integration from the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and spread the impact of the initial project to the entire 3rd grade, which undertook a visual arts project, visited the Barnes Museum and translated its experience into digital media.

The combination of school expertise, resourcefulness and community collaboration appears to have made a huge impact on the lives of Overbrook Elementary students. The teacher explained, “When they saw their pictures they said ‘Hey, that’s my picture!’; they took ownership of their work. Now they notice things in their neighborhood and want to capture it, and realize that their neighborhood is a good place to live.

“This project has allowed the children to focus on their work and their writing, on sharing with each other and encouraging each other. The children now have developed good skills with technology, the camera, production, and can see art in new ways.”

In 2008, Overbrook Elementary secured more Title I funds and was able to hire a full-time music teacher. Though the principal has changed positions and moved to another school, Overbrook planned to continue digital arts exploration in 2008-2009.



"This project made me more excited about school. Especially because I love the piano. Also, when there's a recital I want to get my butt over here."

- Student, 3rd grade

Eugenio Maria De Hostos Charter School

The Hostos Charter School wanted to start a piano learning program for 204 students, grades 3 through 6, and had a half-time music teacher on staff ready to expand his reach. After success in receiving a small outside grant and soliciting instrument donations from a local individual donor, Hostos used the \$4,000 fund to buy keyboards and consult with Latin American Music Association musicians about integrating Latin culture and music into curriculum.

The teacher's multi-media expertise was tapped and he developed "Tech Tutor", an innovative, multi-media video tool for students to self-teach a basic piano curriculum the school plans to develop and expand for wider distribution. Through students' immersion in this process the first cadre of student piano teacher mentors was prepared to instruct the next set of students in 2008. Parents visited the school in increasing numbers to get their children involved and to support performances.

Hostos used a nearby, outside facility to provide children with formal performance opportunities, raising \$900 at its Christmas show which it used to hire a piano specialist one half-day a week to augment the students' self-taught lessons.

Some students performed at a Camden River-sharks game in the spring of 2008. Hostos has expanded its vision of arts at the school to a five-year plan called "Salsa In Five" (Salsa en Cinco). All five years involve piano instruction for all the students. The second year begins Latin Percussion training, and the third year will feature year-long brass playing for every fourth grader. As the music expands, so too will the dance and social studies curriculum.

The school has expanded its music teacher staff to two teachers who split their time between Hostos and a nearby school. At the same time, the school has used its success as a springboard to receive more grant funding to support the vision of embracing multiculturalism through the arts. The school will receive a Kennedy Center "On Location" media lab grant in 2009 - one of only ten awarded nationally.



"It was fun because piano is my life. I play by ear. I figure it out myself."

- Student, 3rd grade

“This had a huge impact on the students’ ability to get along with each other in groups and teams, to see themselves as part of a team, and part of a larger school body. There was a huge amount of pride in the fact that the school was delivering a community parade.”

- Counselor

Feltonville Intermediate School

The Feltonville Intermediate School counselor witnessed a change in social dynamics as a neighborhood demographic shift added diversity, stretching the space limitations of the newly formed 3rd-5th grade school. Seeking to bring the school together, the school counselor and principal turned to the arts, initiating “Lifting our Cultures and Families”, a year-long, giant puppet-making project with Spiral Q Puppet Theater addressing intercultural understanding and artistic skill development.

Some teachers were reluctant at first, but in time bought in wholeheartedly by welcoming resident artists and the requisite paint and paper mache mess into their rooms, working weekly art-making sessions into their schedules and giving up lunch to meet and plan for the project. After working all year developing life-size puppets, the 5th graders paraded their work through the neighborhood in June 2008 with the participation of the community surrounding the Feltonville schools.

They have established a new school/community annual tradition. The impact of the project on school climate and on the community has been significant. Parent involvement - particularly the involvement of parents whose children had behavioral challenges - was increased as parent volunteers were pulled in for regular instruction weekly and for the final parade. The project was covered by a TV report, reinforcing a positive message about Feltonville to its neighbors and Philadelphia at large. Community members experienced a new level of connection to their local schools through the parade.

Spiral Q’s approach included strong emphasis on problem-solving and conflict resolution, focusing on the school’s need for climate change along with strengthening students’ basic arts skills and addressing of key elements of arts standards.

The counselor and principal secured resources from Philadelphia Arts in Education Project (PAEP), the Picasso Project, the School District, and Spiral Q to support the project.

The key initiators of the project designed the first year to be one of arts immersion - a year of awakening for parents, students, teachers and community; they anticipate the second year of immersion to have even more impact on student learning and school climate. Feltonville’s arts exploration revealed other challenges the school wants to tackle. More space and more staff are needed. “We need a lot more than one person in charge of art,” says the principal.



“We need to do art across the curriculum and incorporate it into math and writing. We need professional development for all teachers in arts integration.” Itinerant music teachers are “piecing back together” a program that has been long dismantled, and for which supply money is short. The school struggles to meet academic hurdles. But through the arts project, teachers have realized they can push a little more, raise expectations and successfully challenge their students to use higher order thinking skills...and to enjoy school more.

“I know they need math, science and reading. But they have to have some outlet so that they won’t be as frustrated and fighting all the time. I saw how the children were really, really proud of the work they did.”

- Parent

“Music makes me get to a farther level that I always wanted to go to.”

- Student, 5th Grade

Meade School

Ten years ago, there were no arts at Meade School. In 2008 Meade has a full time music teacher for K-8, and all students get general music instruction. There’s a rigorous developmental instrumental program for middle schoolers supported by itinerant teachers for choir, recorder and woodwind. Students attend and compete in a winning drumline with nearby Duckery School.

Meade works with a music partner, Musicopia, Inc., to enhance and augment its music program with instruments and additional teachers. This support extends to Meade’s arts-integrated summer and extended-day programs. Temple dance students work with 1st and 2nd graders, Philadelphia Young Playwrights work with middle school students, and the Philadelphia Writing Project brings drama into the classroom. The Clay Studio works with a blend of gifted and mainstream students.

How did Meade go from arts-starved to arts-rich? Progress in the arts did not happen overnight. Perhaps most importantly, the principal sees the arts as an integral part of Meade’s three-pronged model for school success:

- 1) providing rigorous, age-appropriate instruction,
- 2) investing in professional development of teachers and,
- 3) keeping arts as a central element to the entire instructional approach in the school.

The principal noted that, “children need to have a rigorous instructional program that is age appropriate, assesses their individual needs and develops their comprehension through real life.”

This means students need the skills and venues to communicate effectively and writing, music and the arts are vital means of communication.

When Meade shifted to adopt this central instructional approach they began by hiring an art teacher. Through an arts residency, the Clay Studio began developing the public space of the school and shifting the tone of the environment.

Subsequently, Meade began working with Musicopia, Inc., acquired itinerant instrumental teachers with the help of the School District, and decided to shift its funds from having a visual art teacher to hiring a full-time music teacher. Musicopia and the school’s education management organization, Temple University, were able to help Meade recruit highly-motivated applicants for the current music teacher position.



The dynamic young teacher who joined the faculty has anchored an expansion in Meade’s music program. As a whole, the School Leadership Team’s emphasis on seeking out and nurturing relationships with outside partners has reflected a synergy and collaboration between the partners and has brought additional funds into the school. Teachers stretch to incorporate the arts into the instructional program and as outside partners bring particular skills to the building, the arts-centered approach becomes more comprehensive.

These arts riches have come at some cost; resources are still limited. Meade has lost students yearly (and therefore funds) for the past five years due to shifting demographics in its North Philadelphia neighborhood. Meade has had to sacrifice a librarian and an assistant principal and still cannot afford a school-based art teacher. More resources are needed to achieve the full potential of the school’s arts integrated vision; but the impact of the vision is reflected in its atmosphere and academic success.

*“Arts keep kids out of trouble.
We enjoy it.”*

- Student, 8th grade

“Arts in school are important because they help you get through life.”

- Student, 8th Grade

E. M. Stanton School

Stanton Elementary has developed a uniquely artistic climate through investment in its philosophy that everyone is an artist and creativity is essential to exploration and learning. Beginning ten years ago, a “prep” teacher at Stanton proposed the creation of a Cultural Arts Program that would engage students in learning about the four art forms (visual, music, drama and dance) as they explored world cultures. Through the collaborative work of committed teachers the Cultural Arts Program is now an established initiative that is supported by the principal, resident artists and community members.

The goals of the program are to expose children to the arts and various cultures and integrate this learning into their other key/core subjects; to help children think in a complex fashion; to learn discipline; to be open to change and suggestions and to be sensitive to people of different cultures. Each of these goals contributes to developing life-long learners and productive citizens.

Using an interdisciplinary model, four or five units of study at Stanton are taught each year focusing on different continents of the world. Students begin each cultural arts class period with a “rap” which includes the continents and oceans while a student drummer accompanies and another student points to the map location of each. With each continent (or country), the students learn not only about the art-forms of that culture but also about the people and the geographic location.

With support from the school and unique support in resources, ideas and grant-writing from a community organization, Bainbridge House, Inc., the school’s Cultural Arts Program is devoted to providing opportunities for students to experience a variety of art forms and to share their skills with the school and broader community. Students, additionally, have become involved in arts opportunities around the city such as The University of the Arts Saturday Lab, Moore College of Art and Settlement Music School.



The Cultural Arts room is a wonderful hybrid of the arts, with spaces for painting and sculpting, performance and serious thinking, reading and writing. The array of partnerships evolving from this program is broad and includes institutions such as the Clay Studio, Singing City, the Folklore Project, Fleisher Art Memorial and the Rebecca Davis Dance company as well as many individual artists-in-residence in six-week residencies. These collaborations have involved students in multiple projects supporting their success in school, from Shakespeare production to dance performances, from African drumming to putting poetry to music. The program has enriched the lives of students and the entire school by recognizing the importance of culture in the life of a learning community and extending the arts into the school’s curriculum.

The school invests in parent engagement by encouraging parents and families to share their culture with students. Parents have become more involved in their children’s learning process, and children can proudly display their cultural heritages and learn from others.

Is it coincidental that Stanton - as well as several of the other highlighted schools - have some of the most improved PSSA scores in the city? A visit to the school makes it clear that the dedicated school leadership and staff are serious about improving academics, but well understand the importance of the arts in enlivening students’ experiences while offering alternative, experiential, hands-on learning approaches. The school has found that the Cultural Arts Program instills confidence in students; gives them the freedom to explore and work together; and teaches them respect (self, others, art resources), discipline and commitment. Stanton has learned the value of arts infusion and has hired a visual arts teacher, in spite of its small size, to carry on this program following the retirement of its originator. From the school’s perspective, “Art breathes life into our teaching.”

“We are so focused on the nuts and bolts of learning that we forget that the glue of it all is this - the arts. Once you reach their hearts and tap their creativity, you can teach the whole child.”

- Principal

Birney School

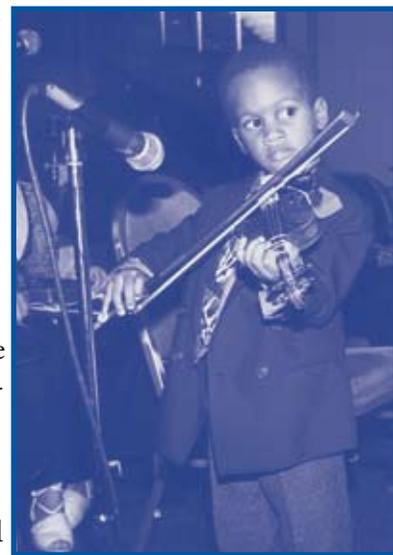
In 2005, Birney School expanded from a K-4 to a Pre-K-8 school and went through a year of serious change and transition. Teachers struggled with student behavior issues, especially with middle school children, and the principal felt it was particularly essential to reach these grades with the arts. She and Birney’s assistant principal shared their guiding question (which still persists) with regards to arts: “What can we do with what little money we have to develop arts partnerships, bring programs in the building, and how can we make connections to bring more resources into the school?”

By spring 2006, Birney had secured grant funding from Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership (PAEP) and the Picasso Project, and embarked on a multifaceted journey called “Harlem Comes to Birney” which targeted students in each grade. With help of resident artists, students learned Harlem social dances and tap dancing, painted historically anchored murals, and were exposed to a variety of arts mediums, cultural perspectives and the historical and cultural context of these arts traditions. Students from each grade traveled to Harlem, visited the Schoenberg museum, Studio Museum of Harlem and Apollo Theater, and ate at Spoonbread Strawberry Wine. And students brought Harlem back to Birney.

They created an annual performance night tradition for students and the community, and brought their Lindy Hop to competitions in the North Region. In 2006, this night included student performances, professional jazz musicians, activities, and information and refreshments for students and parents.

In 2007, less grant funding was available, but the assistant principal noted that the annual performance night tradition had become anchored at Birney: “This year can’t end now without an arts night.” While it had no arts teachers on staff yet, Birney continued arts explorations with support of Young Playwrights, Logan Family Center, Imani Records, and PAEP, presenting the mural “I am Large, I Contain Multitudes”, to express a message of diversity.

Birney used the arts to establish its new middle school culture along with several other school improvement initiatives. First, involvement in the Distributed Leadership Initiative at the University of Pennsylvania, the School District and Annenberg, built teacher capacity and leadership. Positive Behavior Supports (PBS), funded by the School District and supported by Devereux Center for Effective Schools, provided a structure for improved climate. The principal shared how these initiatives overlapped: “When the artists were coming, students knew that in order to have the artists in the classroom, they better be behaving. It encouraged the students to strive for better behavior.”



How did these initiatives affect individual students? According to the assistant principal one girl, who others recognized was clearly a very talented dancer, is now conscious of her talent after working with a professional tap artist. Another child knew he was a gifted drummer but did not have a thorough appreciation of what he could do. Students were empowered through school-based experiences to pursue performance opportunities outside of school, and some applied to Philadelphia arts magnet schools. Two of the playwrights now see themselves as writers. The school administration reported that some of these students had been the most difficult in terms of conduct but their behavior has changed as they became immersed in the arts.

Birney’s principal expressed a broad view: “There are a lot of economic issues in public schools - arts programs have always been the first to go. There needs to be a district-wide and worldwide consensus that [arts] have to be part of the core curriculum.”

“Art teachers are not ‘prep teachers’. When we refer to them this way, we demean the program and the educators who run these programs. Strong collaborations among teachers took place when we started thinking of the arts in relation to literacy and research skills.”

- Principal

Cooke and Grover Washington Middle Schools

One principal was able to help build an arts-rich culture at the Cooke Middle School (now Cooke Elementary) and transfer these lessons when he was re-assigned to the Grover Washington Middle School. Even though Cooke was located in a troubled neighborhood, the typical 1920s-era facility showed no sign of distress.

Hallways were notably clean and full of colorful student work. The former principal credits the maintenance of a quality arts program with eliminating a graffiti problem and building pride and respect among the students, as well as contributing to a low rate of serious incidents and high attendance.

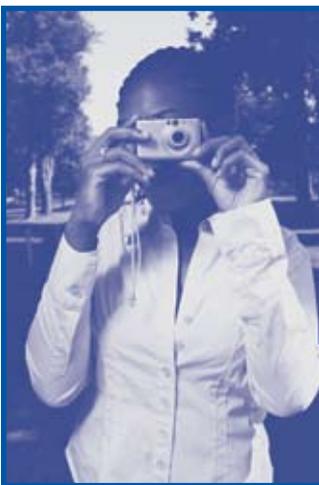
At one time all junior high schools guaranteed art and music instruction, along with shop and home economics, for all students. However, the shift to middle school in the mid-1980s changed the model, making it more difficult to maintain arts instruction as more emphasis was placed on purely academic subjects. With the new structure, new kinds of decisions had to be made. A librarian or a music teacher? A social studies or an art teacher? While some decisions were not easy, Cooke which had been a junior high up to the mid-1980s, never let go of its arts focus. In fact, the school developed outside partnerships with the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts and others to sustain arts programs.

At Cooke, the hallways became the school “art museum” with student work displayed in a professional manner, including information about the artist and the medium used. Having work displayed in the hallways was an honor for the kids and the hallways became places of respect. Art was used to give students a voice and ownership of their school.

Impressive student projects became a source of great pride for the entire school community and collaborative projects with major subject teachers became standard procedure.

The principal transferred this process of improving school community and climate through the arts to Grover Washington Middle School, where he assumed leadership in 2007: “We need to address the whole child and offer opportunities for different talents to emerge.

The arts offer an essential outlet for these talents.”



For the first time in many years Grover Washington now has two music teachers and one art teacher. The idea of student galleries, germinated at Cooke, has become three-dimensional and permanent in nature: two student-produced permanent installations are in the works and developing a sculpture garden in the schoolyard is under consideration. Arts are integrated into the culture of the school and its academics; arts teachers experience the same professional development as the other teachers. All incorporate the reading, writing and thinking

skills in their planning.

But Grover Washington’s continued arts focus has come with significant sacrifice: the principal eliminated some other school positions.

The goal at both schools has been to enliven the school curriculum through dynamic arts programs, engage students in taking ownership of their school environment and, as a result, improve long-term academic achievement. “We’re working at creating life-long learners, not just preparing for a single test. It’s an investment that pays off many times over. We’re saving kids’ lives.”

“On Friday, April 4 a few students had the opportunity to run up the Philadelphia Art Museum steps to visit the magnificent art of Frida Kahlo. It was an experience of a lifetime to be able to view through the eyes of Frida Kahlo... It makes me want to restart writing my poems again.”

- Student, 9th Grade

Parkway Peace and Social Justice High School

Since its inception as a themed high school, the small Parkway Peace and Social Justice High School was unable to afford either an art or music teacher. With student urging and staff cooperation, the school overcame challenges from roster-scheduling to funding. For several years a talented math teacher offered an elective art class, but this became problematic as the roster made it difficult to maintain the elective.

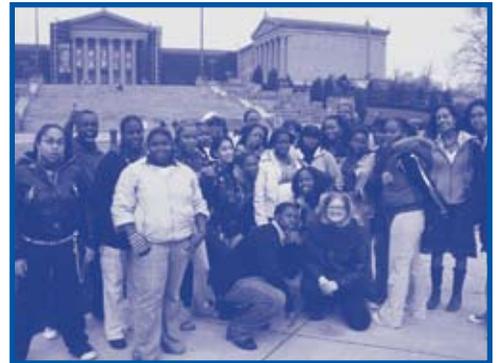
As the school was adopted by a number of outside partners interested in supporting its peace theme, successful grant requests helped fund a choir for one year. In 2008, a more inclusive cross-curricular arts initiative brought in guest poets and artists for a project focused on West African storytelling. This culminated in a special program that brought the whole school together for a program of West African art, dance, and stories.

The involvement of multiple classes, with teachers from various disciplines, encouraged both students and staff to think about the importance of connecting arts to the school's daily life. In addition, the school took advantage of free tickets available through the Philadelphia Museum of Art's Community Programs to take a group of students on a trip to see the Frida Kahlo exhibit.

Because of the 2008 School Reform Commission resolution mandating arts staffing at every school, Parkway Peace and Social Justice High School was able to hire a part-time art teacher in fall 2008. "Part-time" is not always an easy fit, especially in schools with tight rosters. Initially, the plan was to roster the position for a half day, sharing the staff member with another school. The alternative, scheduling a class for just two or three days a week, would create havoc on the small high school roster, which didn't have options for classes the other two or three days. However, the new teacher found real problems with splitting the day between two schools and asked for a three-day roster, giving her the opportunity to create more viable programs at each site.

Having seen the value of arts partnerships and connecting arts to the curriculum, a creative solution was proposed and agreed to by

other staff members who saw opportunity for a unique partnership and engagement of the arts across disciplines. A school-wide project to create a large mural representing the theme of the school on a new wall between the library and a social/eating space became the solution.



A number of teachers got together, brainstormed and saw the need for mural projects as a way to strengthen and unify the school, its partners and the community. Other teachers stepped forward to resolve the difficult rostering situation: the librarian took a class one day to do research on murals. A math teacher offered to take the group another day to "do the math" related to mural design and construction.

With a strong background in the Mural Arts Project, the art teacher has been able to create an important context for the mural and plans are taking shape to make it a whole school project. As the school has been working to realize its mission, bringing vitality to a theme that has great meaning in a city facing violence on a daily basis, the mural project has become an important avenue to help the school community define its role. While a part-time art teacher is not enough and the school is seeking outside grant money to increase its limited resources, the impact of the arts on student lives and their engagement in school has helped spur this school to meet the challenge of expanding this work.



Currents: Arts in Philadelphia Schools

As these examples show, arts can help positively change the culture of our schools. How do we expand from the above examples to reach all students and strengthen the notion of the arts as a necessary, vital part of the academic experience within the School District? Baseline data are being collected by the Arts for Children and Youth Initiative, that will provide a more accurate picture of arts staff in School District schools, community arts partnerships, and Out-of-School-Time arts programs connected to schools. While we wait on quantitative analysis of the situation, currents are guiding us in a pro-arts education direction in Philadelphia.

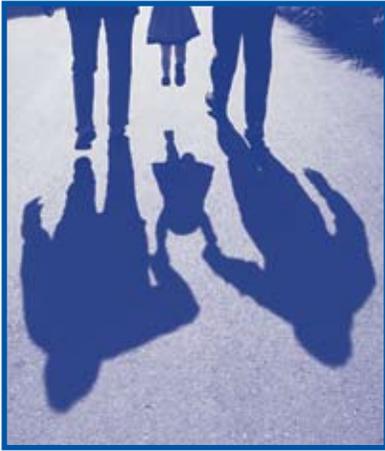
Citywide, Mayor Nutter has appointed nationally-known arts advocate Gary Steuer to head the new Office of Arts, Culture and Creative Economy, declaring “expanding arts education for young people” as one of the office’s chief tasks. Public and private forces have joined to form Arts for Children and Youth, a community-wide effort to bolster arts, culture and creativity for “the development and education of youth, the health of our families and neighborhoods, and the economic and civic well-being of the Philadelphia region.” This group created a ten-year vision that begins with a two-year focus on bolstering arts in Philadelphia schools and communities and expands within ten years to include children and youth ages three thru 21 in the entire Philadelphia region.

On a practical level, some common themes emerge from the leadership that have resulted in strong arts programs at schools that were recently arts-poor. These examples may help other principals currently trying to begin amplifying the arts at their schools.

Common Themes:

We found some common themes in these schools, they...

- Saw arts as integral, not ancillary to academic success
- Used the arts to address school goals of teaching life skills and improving school climate
- Tapped the interests and expertise of classroom or other subject teachers in arts areas
- Approached the arts through other academic areas
- Entrusted / encouraged teachers to apply for outside grant support
- Encouraged teachers to be flexible with scheduling and space in support of collaborative projects
- Sought and received support from outside arts organizations
- Sought and received support from community partnerships, local businesses and faith institutions
- Offered professional development to integrate arts with subject area teachers and topics
- Creatively combined in- and out-of-school-time learning opportunities
- Continued to advocate for more arts funding



The Road Ahead

There is no single road mapping out how a public school can expand and strengthen arts opportunities for its students. The contribution of arts to school climate and success over time is particularly important in a system with high staff and student mobility. Even when leadership changed, these schools were able to continue to build on their strong arts foundation.

While the School District has expressed full support of returning arts to schools, principals still feel the pressure of making Adequate Yearly Progress as their highest priority and have to deal with Catch 22-like decisions: Do we eliminate our librarian to hire a music teacher? Now that we've budgeted for a music teacher, what can we do with no supplies? What do we do while the slot is still unfilled?

Our schools need to be able to secure the resources they need to teach and learn. All stakeholders have a role to play in recognizing the creativity, engagement, improved climate, learning and thinking that robust exposure to the arts brings to our schools, our teachers and our students.

We need to continue to support more funding for public education in general and for arts education specifically. Collaborative efforts to gain and retain a larger pool of qualified arts teachers, to expand professional development in the arts for classroom teachers, to create connections among schools working to expand arts offerings, and to develop deeper partnerships among schools, community artists and arts organizations will bring us many steps ahead on our path.

The schools highlighted in this report stretched their resources and made sacrifices in order to offer engaging quality arts programs that enhanced the entire school community. There are many other schools doing the same; these examples should stimulate many more. We look forward to a school district that is able to support initiatives like these while maintaining appropriate faculty and resources in every school. The arts are an essential piece of every child's educational experience.

We hope to learn and appreciate more about the value of the arts in education
and in life as we continue...

To Explore and Create

To Enhance and Engage

To Stimulate New Collaborations

To Make Schools Safer and Better

Thanks

We thank the schools featured in this report who have worked hard to bring experiences in the arts to their students:

Overbrook Elementary School, 2032 N. 62nd Street
Michelle Hayes-Flores, Principal
Kathleen McCladdie, former Principal

Eugenio Maria de Hostos Charter School, 4322 N. 5th Street
Diane Garcia, CEO

Feltonville Intermediate School, 238 E. Wyoming Avenue
Nelson Reyes, Principal

General George Meade Elementary School, 1600 N. 18th Street
Frank Murphy, Principal

E. M. Stanton Elementary School, 1700 Christian Street
Diane Highsmith, Principal

Birney Elementary School, 900 Lindley Street
Andrea Ingram-Mayo, Principal

Jay Cooke Elementary School, 1300 Loudon Street
Judy Seibert-Burns, Principal
Gerald Branch, former Principal

Grover Washington Middle School, 201 E. Olney Avenue
Gerald Branch, Principal

Parkway Peace and Social Justice High School, 7500 Germantown Avenue
Ethyl McGee, Principal

We also express appreciation to the organizations that have supported anchoring the arts in these schools:

Clay Studio, Fleisher Art Museum, Musicopia, Overbrook Center for Environmental Education, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Philadelphia Arts in Education Partnership, Philadelphia Folk Lore Project, Philadelphia Museum of Art, Philadelphia Young Playwrights, Picasso Project, Spiral Q Puppet Theater, The Arts Initiative, William Penn Foundation

Acknowledgements

PCCY Funders

Advanta Corporation, Aetna Foundation, The Annenberg Foundation, The Barra Foundation, The Claneil Foundation, The Dolfinger-McMahon Foundation, Eagles Youth Partnership, The Samuel S. Fels Fund, John C. and Chara C. Haas Charitable Trust, Phoebe W. Haas Charitable Trust, The Hess Foundation, Independence Blue Cross, The Independence Foundation, Jewish Funds for Justice, Christian & Mary Lindback Foundation, The Lomax Family Foundation, The Christopher Ludwick Foundation, The Northwest Fund, The Pew Charitable Trusts, The Philadelphia Foundation, Philadelphia Youth Network, The Puffin Foundation, Ltd., The Elizabeth B. and Arthur E. Roswell Foundation, The Shefa Fund, The Paula Steinebach Trust, Target Stores, United Way of Southeastern Pennsylvania, Wachovia Foundation, Washington Mutual, William Penn Foundation

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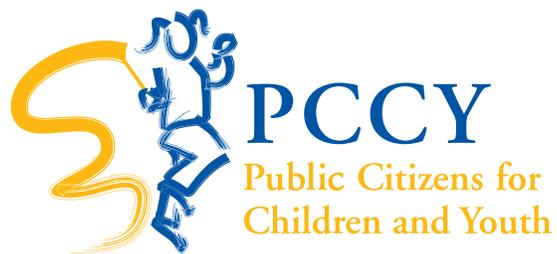
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Special Thanks

William Penn Foundation for funding this report



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