SOUTH ARTS

Southeast Center for EDUCATION IN THE ARTS

THE UNIVERSITY of TENNESSEE UT CHATTANOOGA

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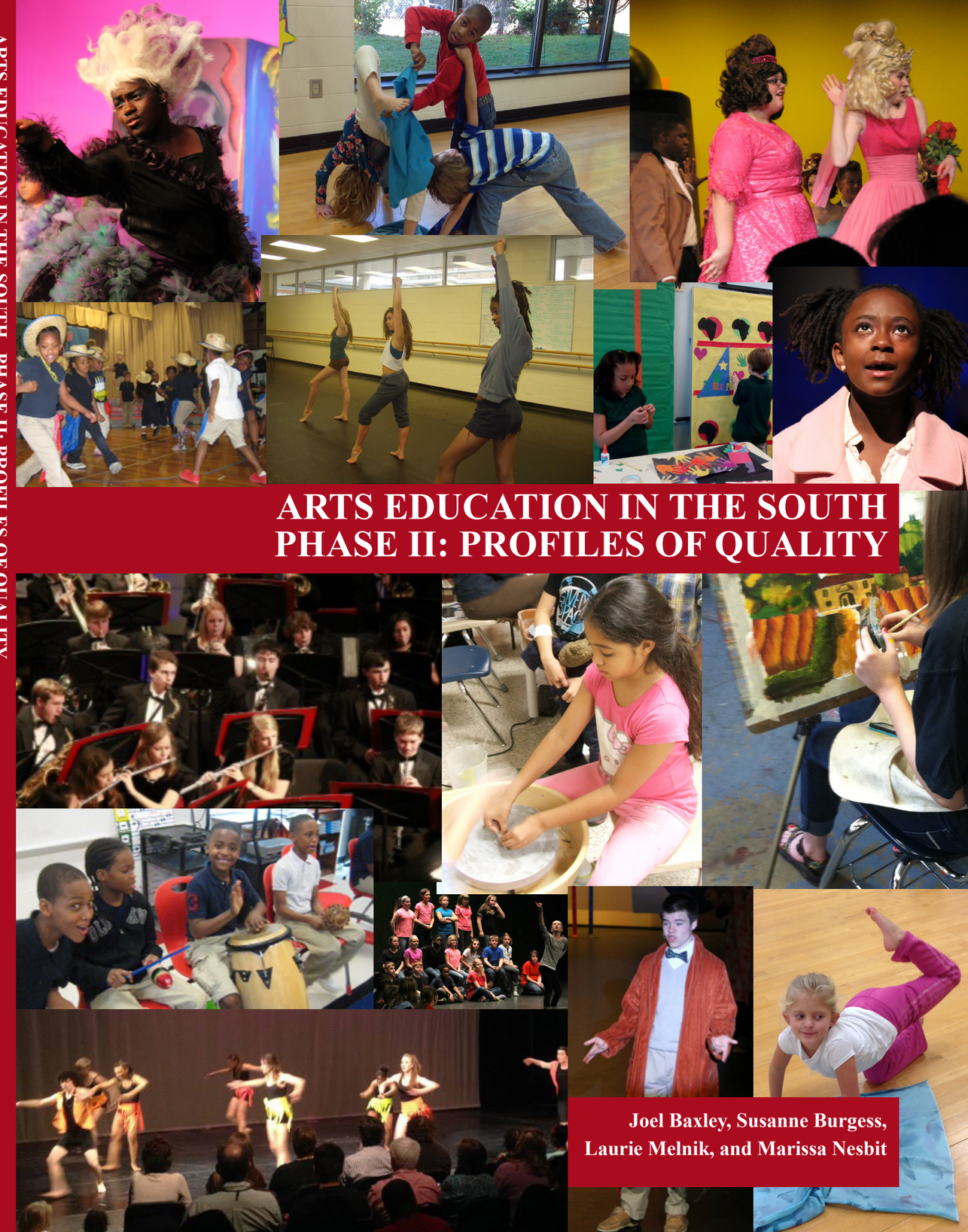
ARTS EDUCATION IN THE SOUTH PHASE II: PROFILES OF QUALITY



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Joel Baxley, Susanne Burgess, Laurie Melnik, and Marissa Nesbit

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Executive Summary

In response to the need for regionally relevant data about access and quality in arts education, South Arts initiated a two-part study in its constituent states. Arts Education in the South, Phase I: Public School Data and Principal Perspectives summarizes the results of surveys distributed to approximately 15,000 principals in K-12 public schools throughout the southeast region. These surveys asked school administrators to respond to questions about access to arts instruction, arts instructor qualifications, resources and partners in arts education, principal perspectives on arts education, and general school data.

For this second phase of the inquiry, South Arts partnered with the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts (SCEA) to develop and implement a series of case studies of dance, drama, music, and visual art programs in K-12 public schools. Exemplary programs were studied in order to provide high quality models and insight for policy development in the region. The question driving this phase of the research was **"What are the traits of quality in-school arts education programs in the South?"**

State arts councils/commissions in the region were invited to nominate programs from their schools that have been, for a variety of reasons, described as high quality. 31 nominations were submitted to SCEA from seven states: Alabama, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. SCEA and South Arts chose programs for inclusion in the study to represent the best diversity possible based on the following considerations:

- **Geography** – At least one program chosen from each participating state and showing dispersal throughout the southeastern region.
- **Art Form** – At least two programs were sought in each of the four art forms (dance, music, theatre, and visual art).
- **Grade Level** – Programs were sought representing students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- **School Focus** – The research team considered school programs with a traditional school environment and those identified as having an arts focus (magnets, charters, etc.).

Nine programs were selected for analysis:

- **Dance**
  Pine Street Academy, Spartanburg, SC
  Northwest School of the Arts, Charlotte, NC
- **Drama**
  Bradley Academy, Murfreesboro, TN
  Owensboro High School, Owensboro, KY
- **Music**
  Casey Elementary, Jackson, MS
  Wando High School, Mt. Pleasant, SC
- **Visual Art**
  Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary, North Charleston, SC
  Drew Charter School, Atlanta, GA
  Bob Jones High School, Madison, AL

To dig deeper into how quality appears in these programs, we adapted the issues addressed in Phase I. For Phase II, the issues we used as lenses for our examination of each site were access, teacher quality, resources, assessment, school culture, and curriculum. Case studies of participating sites were developed through an analysis of publicly available documents and artifacts, observations of instruction by SCEA researchers and local observers, in-depth interviews with stakeholders (including arts specialists, administrators, students, parents, non-arts teachers, and community partners), and focus groups of stakeholders.
Our comparative analysis across programs yielded findings that we categorized into four answers to our research question:

Among high quality in-school arts education programs in the South…

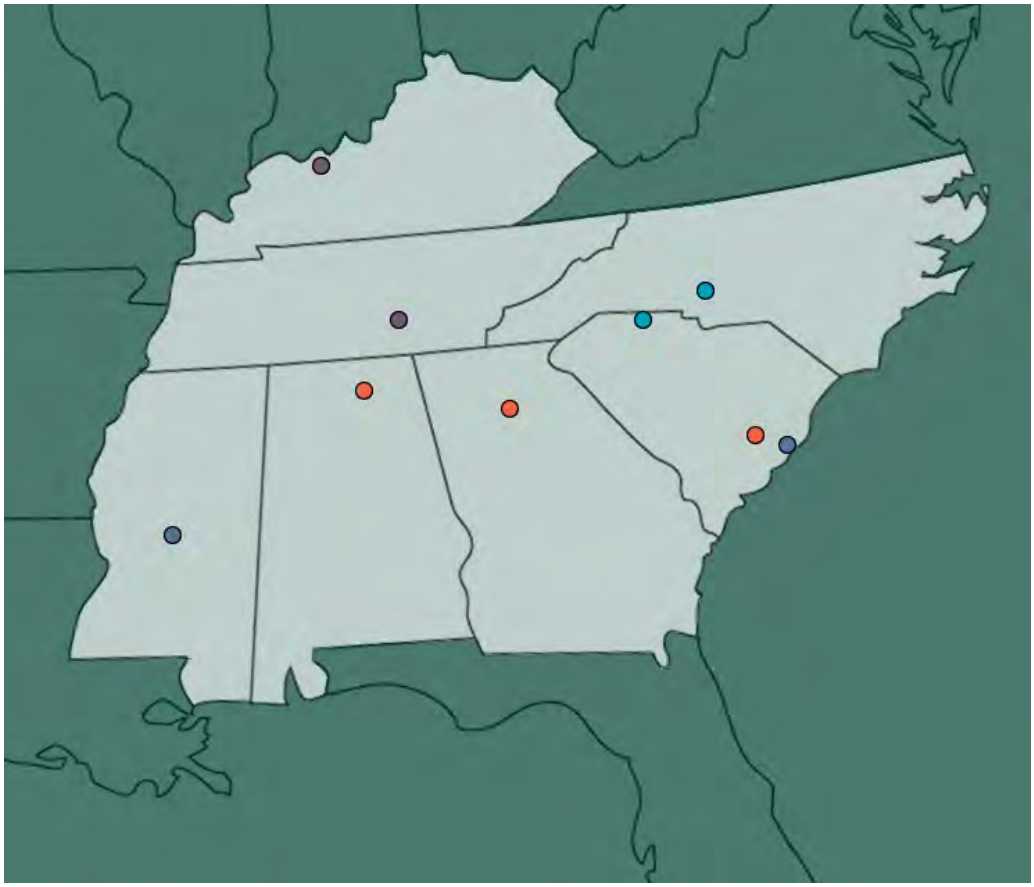
1. Relationships matter. Among the programs studied, we found welcoming affective environments in classrooms, strong collaborative cultures among faculties, students, and administration, and strong connections to the community.

2. The arts are part of a shared vision/mission. There is diversity of visions and missions among the programs we examined, but within each there is a common understanding of the purpose of the arts program and strong support for that purpose among the teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders who lead the work.

3. The arts *are* core. The arts have long been described as core curriculum in name, but appear so less often in practice. Among these programs, there is strong evidence that the arts are

regarded as worthy of the same time and attention that other content areas receive. That includes clearly articulated curricula, authentic assessments, and strong pedagogy in the art form.

4. Students experience the working worlds of artists. The programs at these schools not only provide knowledge and skill in the arts, but also expose students to the practice and working world of professionals who use those skills outside the school.



1. Quality in Context

Introduction

The arts provide students with modes of thinking and acting that build vital capacities for thought and behavior. The fields of dance, drama, music, and visual art have been valued for their impact on student learning as measured in other content areas. Access to arts education has been associated with increases in achievement, higher graduation rates, and college attendance—particularly for students in more difficult socio-economic contexts (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). In the last several years, writers like Eisner (2002) and Hetland, Winner, Veneema, and Sheridan (2007) have drawn attention to intrinsic benefits students gain from the arts themselves apart from contact with other content areas. They identify capacities like reflecting, thinking through a medium, and saying what cannot be said in words as skills that are developed in arts classes in ways that they are not developed elsewhere. In his introductory letter for the 2011 President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities report *Reinvesting in Arts Education,* Secretary Arne Duncan wrote that the skills built in the arts are "essential" and that arts education is "more important than ever" (PCAH, 2011).

National studies of access and quality in arts education in the United States (Parsad, Spiegelman, & Coopersmith, 2012; PCAH, 2011; Seidel, 2009) have provided a broad picture of arts education for American children. However, as the President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities (PCAH, 2011) report points out, there is a dearth of data related to the availability of arts education at the state and local levels. Some state and local studies have provided information about their students and schools (Cirillo & Morrison, 2012; Horn, 2005; Runyard, 2001; Sikes, 2007; Stubbs, 2010). But more is needed to create a current, in-depth understanding of the state of arts education in the region. In 2012, South Arts initiated an inquiry into the current status of access to and quality of arts education in the region. They collected quantitative data through surveys sent to approximately 15,000 principals in K-12 public schools throughout all nine constituent states[1]. These surveys asked about issues of access, quality, resources and partnerships, decision maker perspectives on obstacles and improvements, and demographics.

As this study was in progress, South Arts' board and staff determined that the development of an understanding of access and quality in arts education in the region would be improved by adding a qualitative second phase to the study. In response to the identified need for locally relevant information about quality arts programs in schools, South Arts contracted with the Southeast Center for Education in the Arts (SCEA) to develop this second phase to the study of arts education in the South. Where the first phase collected wide responses to questions that provided valuable quantifiable information, the second phase was crafted

to provide close-up, qualitative accounts of dance, drama, music, and visual art programs in schools in the region that could put a face on the data. Where the survey study asked "What's going on in arts education in the South?" this series of case studies asked "What does it look like when it's going well?"

The issue of quality was addressed at the national level in the Project Zero report *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* (Seidel, 2009). The drive of that study was to describe how quality should be defined based on an examination of literature and a series of case studies. The writers of this study describe the issue of quality in education as a challenging one. "Quality is often a moving target – what counts as quality in one context or at one particular moment in time may seem quite inadequate at another time or place…" (p. 5) In their conclusions, the authors called for further studies that provide "close-up pictures of excellent practice across arts education contexts" (p. 87). The aim of this study is to provide such pictures for South Arts' constituency to further the advancement of quality among the diverse teachers, programs, and students in the region.

Purpose

The question driving this research is "**What are the traits of quality in-school arts education programs in the South?**" Arthur Efland (2002) described the arts as "ill structured domains" whose complexity and irregularity of content require them to be understood not from above, but from within. What each art form is, how it works, and how it can be categorized and taught, is developed from an assembly of individual cases (pp. 87-8). In this qualitative phase of the research, the team sought to build a picture of quality in arts education programs from within by assembling case studies of dance, drama, music, and visual art education programs in K-12 public schools that are recognized as exemplary in their states. It is not the intent of this study to exclusively identify the *only* quality programs or even to rank the programs chosen for case study as the *best* in each state, but rather to collect examples of work in each art form in schools where quality has been found.

Research Design

This study employed a multiple-site case study design (Yin, 2009). Given the short time frame and the etic issues applied to the study, this research falls into what Stake (1995) calls an instrumental case study model—one where the focus is not broadly on an individual case, but on issues embedded within cases. The etic issues applied in this study were drawn from the Phase I survey study[2]. The Phase I survey looked at access to arts instruction, arts instructor qualifications, resources and partners in arts education, principal perspectives on arts education, and general school data. For Phase II, the research team identified the following as issues of concern related to quality in arts education: student access to arts education, use of and decisions about resources, teacher quality, methods of assessment, and school

culture (Richerme, 2012; Seidel, 2009). Later, in the process of examining nominated schools and initial artifacts, the research team decided to add the development and articulation of curriculum as a separate issue, taken from the discussion of teacher quality.

Selection of Arts Education Programs

In the summer of 2013, the arts councils/commissions of South Arts' nine member states were invited to nominate K-12 public school arts programs in dance, music, drama and visual art that they and their professional colleagues at the state level deemed to be of high quality. For the purposes of this study, an arts education program refers to the instruction of one art form consistently delivered within the structure of a given school and embedded in the school day. Extracurricular instruction was taken into consideration regarding students' access to the arts in the context of each program, but such instruction or activities were not the focus of this case study. In selecting nominations, state personnel were asked to give priority to programs that met the following criteria:

- Arts instruction is available at all grade levels in the school.
- There is sequential and ongoing instruction in the art form.
- The art form curriculum is aligned with state/national standards.
- Student outcomes in the art form are measured and indicate success.
- Physical facilities meet the needs of the program.
- Arts instructors are consulted regarding the allocation of resources for personnel and consumables.
- Arts resources and partnerships outside the school are embedded into the program.
- The program has strong administrative and community support.

Seven states chose to participate: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. They submitted a total of 31 nominations. South Arts personnel and the SCEA research team considered the available nominations and chose nine programs to find the best possible diversity among the following considerations:

- **Geography** – At least one program chosen from each participating state and showing dispersal throughout the southeastern region.
- **Art Form** – At least two programs were sought in each of the four art forms (dance, music, drama, and visual art).
- **Grade Level** – Programs were sought representing students at the elementary, middle, and high school levels.
- **School Focus** – The research team considered school programs with a traditional school environment and those that identified themselves as having an arts focus (magnets, charters, etc.).

SCEA researchers consulted with state arts councils and colleagues in state departments

of education and professional associations about nominations. Schools and districts were sent requests for participation. In the fall of 2013, nine programs were confirmed for participation:

- **Dance**
  Pine Street Academy, Spartanburg, SC
  Northwest School of the Arts, Charlotte, NC
- **Drama**
  Bradley Academy-An Arts Integrated School, Murfreesboro, TN
  Owensboro High School, Owensboro, KY
- **Music**
  Casey Elementary, Jackson, MS
  Wando High School, Mt. Pleasant, SC
- **Visual Art**
  Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary, North Charleston, SC
  Drew Charter School, Atlanta, GA
  Bob Jones High School, Madison, AL

Data Collection

As each school confirmed participation, the research team collected data from each site in the form of artifacts, classroom observations, and interviews with individuals and groups representing a variety of stakeholders. The research team arranged for site visits to each participating program to conduct observations and interviews. Site visits were conducted between September of 2013 and February of 2014.

Artifact Analysis

In the summer and fall of 2013, we gathered publicly available information on the selected school programs and requested documents or other artifacts that administrators or teachers at the school site recommended as significant. Artifacts included web pages, schedules, curriculum documents, course catalogs, newspaper articles, and photographs. Initial analysis of the artifacts began as soon as they were received. Themes that emerged from

the initial analysis were noted and discussed as part of the preparation for interviews and observations that occurred during site visits. The body of artifacts also grew during site visits as stakeholders contributed new material.

Observations

There were two rounds of instructional observation at each site. A member of the SCEA research team with expertise in the art form represented by the participating program conducted the first observation, and an artist or educator with prior experience of the program was recruited to conduct the second. Each observation followed a common protocol. All observers were trained in the use of the protocol prior to their observations. Field notes from each observation were collected for analysis

Interviews

During site visits, SCEA researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with arts specialists, administrators, and other significant stakeholders such as students, teachers, parents, and community partners. Follow-up interviews were conducted after site visits via phone. Some interviews were conducted as focus groups. Individual and group interviews targeted the areas identified from South Arts' initial survey and the research team's review of the literature—access, resources, teacher quality, assessment, school culture, and arts curriculum—but groups were allowed to also pursue topics of their own interest related to the arts program under investigation. Each interview was transcribed for analysis.

Data Analysis

It is impossible in the short time during which this study was conducted (May 2013 to May 2014) for all the practical, historical, and contextual complexities of each program to be revealed. Stake (1995) identified case studies like these as "instrumental." The information gathered about each site serves a purpose beyond only the understanding of the complex realities of the individual case. In this study, the pre-identified issues (what Stake called "etic" issues) were adapted from the issues found in the Phase I research—access, resources, teacher quality—and from a review of existing literature on quality school arts programs—assessment, school culture, and arts curriculum (Richerme, 2012; Seidel, 2009). Instruments for interviews and observations were developed around these etic issues, viewing them as a "start list" (Miles, 1994, p. 58) for coding during and after the collection process.

The analysis of case study data began during the collection process (Flick, 2009; Stake, 1995) as observers made notes about what they noticed and as artifacts were collected and organized. Notes from observations and artifact analyses and transcripts of interviews and focus groups were collected and coded following a constant comparative process. Members of the SCEA research team independently identified emergent themes from the body of data. The team then compared and synthesized the themes from independent examination as one set for group discussion.

The team described significant issues and themes that emerged from each program, as well as the themes that appeared across sites based on art form and grade level. In section 2 of this report, each program is described with some information about its physical and/or demographic context followed by a summary of issues that emerged from the analysis of the data from that site alone. In section 3, cross-case themes arising across states, age levels, and art forms are discussed. In the final section, we draw some conclusions and make recommendations for future research.

2. Case Study Findings

Dance
at Pine Street Elementary School

Spartanburg, South Carolina

Marissa Nesbit, East Carolina University

Pine Street Elementary School in Spartanburg, SC reaches students in grades K-5 in an engaging, nurturing environment focused on quality education across the arts. All students attend classes in dance, drama, music, and visual art each week; additional after-school arts activities are available as well. For the past five years the school has adopted an arts infusion model where classroom teachers integrate the arts with other school subjects. In addition, the school has substantial connections with community partners, hosting an annual artists-in-residence week and taking field trips to multiple performances and exhibits each year.

The school serves a neighborhood attendance zone and is also open to students throughout the district whose families apply to send them through the school choice program. Pine Street has an outstanding reputation in the community, consistently receiving ratings of "Excellent" from the South Carolina Department of Education; it is a much-desired school for both families and teachers. Administrators report that they do not do any deliberate recruiting, yet receive high numbers of applications through school choice. Parents report that being in the Pine Street attendance zone is a factor in their consideration of where to purchase a home. Teachers want to come to Pine Street and stay once they are hired; nearly 90% of teachers return from the previous year[3].

Pine Street has an enrollment of 674 students for the 2013-14 school year[4]. Approximately 25% of students are served in the gifted and talented program and 9% are identified as having disabilities.[5] 31% of students receive free or reduced lunch; the ethnic/racial makeup of the students includes 22.7% who identify as African American, 70% who identify as Caucasian, 2% who identify as Hispanic, 2.3% who identify as Asian, and 3% who identify in other ways[6].

Access

All students at Pine Street participate in weekly lessons with a highly qualified dance educator, Ms. Susan Woodham. Students in grades K, 1, and 2 have 30-minute dance lessons; students in 3, 4, and 5 have 40 minutes. Fourth and fifth grade students who demonstrate interest in dance through an open audition process are able to participate in the Pine Street Dance Ensemble, a group that meets once per week for an hour after school for modern dance classes and rehearsals; this group also performs at special events. The dance curriculum is aligned with the South Carolina Academic Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts (Rex, 2010).

The dance classes meet in a dedicated dance studio space of approximately 25 ft. by 40 ft. that includes mirrors along one wall and a flat wood floor (once sprung, but the subflooring has not been maintained). A digital stereo system is used for playing recorded

music, and a digital projector has been recently added to facilitate sharing videos and presentations. A separate closet is used to store props, costumes, and other teaching materials. Colorful posters line the studio walls, showing images of dancers and choreographers and listing design principles, dance elements, and encouraging slogans. Windows look out on to the school courtyard, and the overall feel of the space is bright and welcoming, reflecting the climate of the school as a whole.

Teacher Quality

Ms. Woodham is the only dance educator at Pine Street. She has been teaching at this school for 14 years, and the dance program's current success is largely due to both her teaching practices within her dance lessons as well as her engagement in the school's larger arts program. Ms. Woodham, a former Teacher of the Year at Pine Street and recipient of the 2000 South Carolina Dance Educator of the Year award, is universally appreciated by students and faculty alike, who credit her deep knowledge of dance and arts integration pedagogy, her connections with community arts programs, her substantial work outside of the classroom to ensure continued grant funding for the arts program, and her collegiality as a willing collaborator with teachers throughout the school. Students, in particular, spoke about how Ms. Woodham provides positive, encouraging feedback and supports their creativity:

> *"She's awesome, amazing, creative, unique. She always has her own styles and knows exactly what to say when you think you can't do it. She'll always say, 'That's not a word you want to say. That's never the right word. You have to tell yourself, I can do it.' She's awesome."*
> *–3rd-5th Grade Student*

Ms. Woodham has integrated substantial content knowledge and pedagogical knowledge in her teaching. With a significant background in ballet and modern dance, she brings knowledge of the art form into her teaching through her demonstrations of dance movements—which students often find inspiring—as well as her references to professional dancers and choreographers. Ms. Woodham has taught dance in a variety of settings outside of the school, including lessons with a local ballet company, worked as an artist-in-residence, and served on multiple boards and committees for dance education. She is also a deeply curious educator who holds herself to high standards and desires to continue learning and improving; as a result, the curriculum she has created has changed over time and undoubtedly will continue to change as she explores new approaches with her students. She seeks out professional development opportunities and challenges herself to find ways to improve and respond to both student needs and larger educational trends, through projects such as integrating motif writing (dance symbols) into her lessons and taking on an action research project concerned with improving students' abilities to

respond in writing to dance.

The concern and encouragement Ms. Woodham shows to her students extends to her colleagues as well; several teachers commented on her willingness to share ideas and resources with them and to collaborate on integrated lesson plans. Teachers with limited dance backgrounds found her nurturing support to be critical to their ability to try out teaching strategies that incorporated dance and movement. It is apparent that Ms. Woodham is not only a leader in her classroom, but also a leader across the campus.

Observing the dance classes at Pine Street, one is struck by the sense of purposeful joy with which both the students and their teacher approach the work. Students come to their weekly dance lesson with their homeroom class, so each dance class includes a mix of girls and boys, students with disabilities and those labeled as gifted, students whose home language is English and those who are English language learners, students who readily embrace dance and those whose comfort is perhaps greater in another art form. After removing their shoes, students come to a circle where they begin a warm-up with Ms. Woodham. This centering ritual is repeated in every class and serves to welcome the students to dance and set the tone for the work to come. Once in her class, everyone is a dancer, and everyone is expected to contribute.

Students clearly enjoy their dance classes, as evidenced by the enthusiasm with which they speak about their experiences and engage in their lessons. However, when we asked about their dance classes, students rarely described the lessons as merely "fun." Instead, students spoke to the cognitive and physical challenges that are part of their curriculum:

"When you go into the circle you get your brain flowing to dance." "You need to get your body focused for dancing." --K-2nd Grade Student

"She's going to make you go out of your comfort box and make things big." —3rd-5th Grade Student

Students repeatedly described their own progress in dance, both the small accomplishments they made in individual lessons in areas such as balance, flexibility, and memory, as well as the progress they made through their years at Pine Street as their dances became increasingly creative and complex.

Parents, too, described their students' progress in dance and across all of the arts. Confidence, in particular, is an area where we noted students' engagement. Similarly, students are expected to take ownership of their work, both during individual class sessions and over the course of the program. Showings of work in dance, like in all the performing arts, offer the opportunity for students to demonstrate their learning, but these performances also require students to take responsibility for what they can do. Dance can be enjoyable, but it is also hard work; this is evident in the way students, parents, and teachers talk about the program.

Curriculum

Flexibility, adaptability, and creativity

are the hallmarks in both the design and the content of the dance curriculum, which emphasizes the development of physical movement skills as only one part of a well-rounded, comprehensive set of learning experiences for students. The curriculum is centered on students creating, performing, and responding to dance, and it includes a strong emphasis on engagement in the creative process as opposed to focus solely on performance products, consistent with the South Carolina Academic Standards for the Visual and Performing Arts. As the only dance educator in the school, Susan Woodham is able to construct the curriculum in response to her own interests, student and school needs, and available resources such as visiting artists or public performances that the school attends.

She simultaneously keeps a long-range vision of the knowledge and skills that students should develop over their time in the program along with short-term adaptations and adjustments that keep her work fresh and relevant, letting the curriculum "ebb and flow and morph into different things."

As a result, students take ownership of their own work, recognizing that they cannot simply make up movements without consideration of how their efforts address the goal of a particular project. Ms. Woodham frequently has students work in small groups to compose and perform dances based on a particular prompt, such as sharing weight with a partner or arranging dance symbols into a sequence. Criteria for their work are posted and discussed prior to beginning an assignment, and then students review these criteria when they watch and discuss one another's work.

The lessons and topics for each grade level within the dance curriculum cycle through increasingly sophisticated encounters with similar concepts. Because Ms. Woodham teaches all grade levels in the school, preparing entirely different lessons for each grade level would be time consuming and impractical. Additionally, because students have dance only once per week, they need to encounter each concept repeatedly throughout their elementary education. Thus, Ms. Woodham has similar lesson plans for grades K-2 and for 3-5. At the lowest grade in each cluster, students are just being introduced to a dance concept, with clear demonstrations and substantial teacher-led instruction. When students revisit that same concept in subsequent years, they are able to recall and review what they know from the past; both their cognitive and physical development allows for increasing difficulty. For example, kindergarteners are introduced to motif writing, a set of symbols that stand for dance concepts. Together with Ms. Woodham, they arrange these symbols on the board and move through a sequence together. When students encounter this lesson unit in first grade, they activate their prior knowledge, taking it a step further to work independently to arrange and interpret symbols with a partner. At second grade, the students are able to use more symbols, creating and performing a longer dance with less teacher involvement. By scaffolding the dance instruction in this way, Ms. Woodham has built a curriculum that invokes novelty with the support of repetition,

a strategy that keeps students engaged and allows them to really develop their learning of the art form over time.

Ms. Woodham's teaching also supports flexible thinking and creative problem-solving, encouraging students to understand that mistakes are opportunities for growth. For example, a young student, in explaining how she knew if she was doing good work in dance, said,

> ***"Its like a dancer trips and it wasn't part of his dance, and he lands in a good shape, it will just make the dance better if he falls in a better shape."***
> ***—K-2nd Grade Student***

Creativity and originality are clearly valued here; when discussing work, students are praised by their teacher and peers for their individual style and the creative choices they bring to a work. By referring to established criteria for students' dance projects, Ms. Woodham gives clear boundaries and students understand that "anything goes" is not an option; similarly, students cannot simply repeat popular moves they have seen elsewhere:

> ***"If your teacher tells you to make a shape, it can't be like jazz hands! Don't make it cliché, make it new. Make it yours."***
> ***—3rd-5th Grade Student***

The dance curriculum at Pine Street reflects a sincere commitment to creative inquiry through both the concepts presented and the process that students engage in.

Assessment

Because Ms. Woodham teaches every student in the school, documented assessment regarding each student's progress in dance is limited to general grades of E (Excellent), S (Satisfactory), and N (Needs Improvement) on quarterly report cards; these grades are largely based on participation and contributions to the class in the form of positive behavior and engagement in all activities. In addition, Ms. Woodham uses an iPad-based software system for giving positive marks to students along with her verbal commendations for good work or behavior.

Less documented but more in-depth formative, qualitative verbal feedback to students about their work is embedded in every lesson. Ms. Woodham uses a process of Four-Step Critique adapted from McCutchen (2006): describe, interpret, analyze, and evaluate dance works; students are familiar with this process and understand that after they show work, they can expect to receive feedback from both their teacher and their peers.

> ***"After you dance, the teacher gives you some advice. Or if you did well, she would ask the audience what [the performers] did well. If they answer it correctly, you know you did well, because they know what you did."***
> ***—3rd-5th Grade Student***

This approach, then, shifts the focus of assessment from solely a teacher-determined grading of student's efforts to a process whereby students understand that one function of dance as an art form is to communicate; the effectiveness of their work is, in part, determined by how well they communicated to others. This approach prompts students to take their work seriously even though it looks different than in other classes:

> ***"That's one reason kids like to come to my room, too. They know that they don't have to look at a piece of paper to get a grade. You know you're getting a grade, but you're not sitting there reading. They're participating, they're engaged." —Dance Teacher***

To facilitate this type of formative assessment in dance, Ms. Woodham has created a very language-rich environment in the dance studio. Although the 30-40 minute weekly lessons do not allow for many student writing activities within the dance studio, the use of oral language and substantial vocabulary is highly emphasized, with talking by both teacher and students woven throughout the movement activities that make up the dance class. Posters above the mirrors define several principles of design, such as contrast, variety, repetition, unity, and transition. Ms. Woodham guides the students to think about these ideas prior to beginning work on their dance composition and returns their attention to these principles when they discuss one another's work. Other charts on the walls describe the elements of dance, giving definitions and images to reinforce these ideas. When Ms. Woodham presents the instructions for a dance assignment, she directs students' attention to a large poster listing the criteria for the assignment. Students read the criteria out loud, discussing what it means, for instance, to include appropriate transitions in between movements. While some of the vocabulary, such as the principles of design, might be considered overly difficult for the youngest students, all students are exposed to the idea that dance can be described and discussed through oral and written language and they develop this skill throughout their time in elementary school.

That language use is woven throughout the dance experience is perhaps most evident when listening to students talk about their learning in dance. While in class, students would regularly reference the principles of design when discussing their dances; initially, this was with Ms. Woodham's prompting at the start of the lessons as she would guide their attention to the task, but in discussing performances many students used terms like "transition" or "contrast" to frame their remarks without prompting. While the overall positive climate at Pine Street and especially in the dance room clearly encourages students to praise one another's efforts, it is not enough in dance to simply say something was "good;" the teacher prompts students to always back up their comments with evidence. When students

restrictions on students' movement, Pine Street places emphasis on behavior that will support students' development of the skills necessary to engage as artists and scholars in projects that matter to them and the community. This carries over into the dance classroom, where Ms. Woodham's clear expectations and smooth classroom management allow students the freedom to experiment and make choices supported by procedures that reinforce the desired behaviors without limiting creativity. Wall space in the dance classroom is given over to language-rich reminders of choreographic principles and the four-step critique process along with inspiring posters of dancers; no list of classroom rules is posted anywhere. Instead, rules and expectations are embedded into the process of dancing together.

Ms. Woodham skillfully anticipates moments that might challenge students' ability to make the strong choices she expects and pre-emptively addresses them by offering reminders and demonstrations of what is expected. When necessary, she will ask a student to sit out in order to redirect behavior, but she also knows that students,

spoke about their learning in a focus group, many were able to clearly articulate what they had done because they had substantial practice talking about dance woven throughout their experiences of moving and dancing together. Students learn that body movement is one among many intersecting avenues for creating and expressing meaning.

School Culture

The overall climate at Pine Street is peaceful and respectful, with little evidence of disruptive student conduct impeding the process of teaching and learning. The school has an emphasis on making "strong choices," with many teachers emphasizing the "Actor's Toolbox"[7] of being "calm, focused, and balanced" that was presented by drama education consultants. Unlike schools that require constant reinforcement of rules through posted signs, teacher directives, and

in particular those with behavior challenges, need the opportunities for movement that dance provides, so she tries use these time-outs sparingly. Ms. Woodham adjusts her teaching and lesson plans as needed to accommodate student needs and the energy of any given class, providing more or less structure for a lesson and adjusting the balance between teacher-directed and student-led activities to accomplish her objectives. This speaks to both the advanced pedagogical skill that Ms. Woodham brings to the dance program as well as the overall climate focused on purposeful engagement in the arts and academics.

While the quality dance education that students access at Pine Street is certainly centered in Susan Woodham's classroom, it operates within an arts-rich school culture that makes such quality possible. Upon entering the building, one is greeted with abundant signs communicating that the arts are woven throughout the fabric of life in the school. Stained glass artwork created by students with a visiting artist frames the entrance, proudly proclaiming the role that visual art, music, drama, dance, and creative writing have within the school. Colorful bulletin board displays showcase student work, testimonials, and photographs of students in class, rehearsals, and performances.

Pine Street has long been an arts school, beginning with the South Carolina Arts in the Basic Curriculum designation in 1989 and continuing with the Kennedy Center Arts School of Distinction Award. More recently, in response to a district push for every school to designate a particular focus, Principal Anne Chapman Jeter decided to delve more deeply into the arts, seeking out research and support for building the arts curriculum as the focus for the school. School leaders chose the term "arts infusion" to describe the level of deep and purposeful integration between the arts and other subject areas that the school strives for. Partnerships with the Peace Center for the Performing Arts in Greenville, SC and Focus Five, the arts education consulting group founded by teaching artist Sean Layne, provide support for the school's programs, particularly the regular professional development in arts infusion for Pine Street's teachers. The professional development

aspect is critical to both the school's identity and sense of purpose as well as the teachers' ability to develop high-quality arts infused lessons. Teachers throughout the school regularly attend workshops by professional teaching artists and education consultants and are expected to create, document, and share arts-infused lessons informed by this professional development. When teachers speak about this work, they convey a sense of excitement in their own learning and the projects they are able to do with their students. Because students have such substantial access to standards-based, sequential learning in each art form through their lessons with arts specialists, classroom teachers are able to build on this as they guide students to make sophisticated connections between the arts and math, language arts, science, and social studies. While the expectations placed upon the teachers here are perhaps greater than they might be at other schools, particularly with regard to the creative innovation they must bring to their own lesson planning, positions at Pine Street are nonetheless coveted throughout the city; teachers want to be here.

Beyond the classroom-based arts education and arts infusion lessons that occur daily, students, parents, and teachers referenced many school-wide events that establish and reinforce the identity of Pine Street as an arts school. A large musical is staged every year, and a part is created for every student who auditions. Teachers and parents assist with building sets and creating costumes, and many look forward to this event every year as a moment for bringing together the entire school community and celebrating the students' accomplishments. An arts residency week is scheduled annually, where guest artists, funded by grants that the school receives, teach daily lessons to each grade level; the week culminates in a shared arts evening for students and families. Field trips to performances of local and touring shows at the Chapman Cultural Center are a regular feature on the school calendar as well. Although these events are special and clearly valued by teachers, students, and families, they are not out of the ordinary; making space for the arts, adjusting schedules for performances and guest artists, going to teacher workshops, or stopping in to another classroom to see a showing of student work are, in fact, business as usual at Pine Street.

While the tangible products of the arts program, such as the finished artwork on regular display and the annual school-wide musical, offer clear indicators that the arts are celebrated here, what is perhaps most telling are the efforts made by teachers to showcase the learning process that goes into making the artwork. Along a large ramped hallway in the center of the school are displayed long bulletin boards where teachers document their recent projects. Unlike typical school displays that show finished work, the curated "ramp displays," as administrators refer to them, take the viewer through the start-to-finish process, with brief statements of a project's curriculum standards in the arts and non-arts content areas, objectives, and learning activities accompanied

by classroom photographs, student artwork, samples of students' writing, and, in one case, embedded QR codes allowing a viewer to access video of students' short drama performances on a smartphone. A visitor is able to see that the artwork didn't appear solely because of students' talents, but instead gains an insight into the incredible work that teachers and students put into researching, problem-solving, rehearsing, and developing their work. Parents comment that they enjoy seeing these displays when they visit the school, and students on their way between classes will pause to look and read about what those in another grade level are doing.

The arts are inseparable from Pine Street's focus on excellence. Administrators talk about their concern with deepening the arts infusion work in the same breath as they describe the data tracking system in place for monitoring the progress of each student through the necessary exams. Parents describe the nurturing environment that Pine Street provides but also commend the clear discipline that encourages students to behave appropriately at school. Communication and dedication appears consistent across teachers, administrators, and parents, creating an environment where the arts can thrive because children can thrive.

Resources and challenges

The excellent educational program and abundant arts opportunities offered at Pine Street require substantial support, and indeed, the school does access funding beyond that typically available to many public schools. The school receives funding from the South Carolina State Department of Education Arts Curriculum Innovation Grant Distinguished Arts Program[8], which requires that recipients implement a standards-based curriculum in all four arts areas: dance, drama, music, and visual art, and from the South Carolina

Arts Commission through the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Advancement Grants program[9]. The school also receives support from the Pine Street Foundation, an organization started by parents, grandparents, and other supporters that offers funding directly to Pine Street teachers to enable them to continue the excellent arts programming the school is known for. The grants that Pine Street receives are critical to its ability to offer the programming at the level it does; the drama teacher's position, field trips, guest artist residencies, and the teachers' professional development workshops are all funded through these grants.

It is important to recognize that these grants do not simply flow to the school but are the result of substantial hard work on the part of administrators, teachers, and parents. Susan Woodham, the dance educator, takes on significant responsibilities beyond her teaching assignment in preparing the annual applications and reports associated with these large grants. Now that the school has seen the results that are possible through the arts program, the staff remains committed to seeking out grants to continue this work. Nevertheless, funding is not guaranteed. Though the exceptionally committed administration and faculty, supportive parents, and dedicated Foundation are firmly established and will be able to sustain some elements of the arts program through any cuts to funding from the grant sources, the program as a whole does rely on these outside sources.

While the work done at Pine Street, and the excellent dance program in particular, appears well-supported, challenges remain. Most significantly is the fact that the dance program is staffed entirely by one educator. While other arts areas in the school, such as music, employ multiple educators, Ms. Woodham is charged with teaching every student in the school. Her teaching schedule is at capacity, and though she is willing and eager to collaborate with other educators, her own teaching schedule prevents her from being able to do any co-planning or co-teaching during the school day, a significant obstacle to further development of the arts infusion program. Ms. Woodham also, as noted above, is partly responsible for the documentation associated with the school's substantial grant funding. She regularly works outside of the school day to accomplish all she does in support of both the dance program and the larger arts program at the school. Colleagues and parents, who recognize her significant dedication and tireless work, make note of her efforts. Within the context of the larger arts program, Ms. Woodham is solely responsible for having built the dance component on the foundation of earlier dance educators at the school. While the residency projects, performances, and field trips are key parts of the school-wide arts program, the core of the dance component resides in the day-to-day teaching that Ms. Woodham engages in with her students. Her curriculum is very much hers and this must be recognized, for if she were removed from the equation, dance at Pine Street may look radically different.

Dance
at Northwest School of the Arts

Charlotte, North Carolina

Marissa Nesbit, East Carolina University

The Northwest School of the Arts in Charlotte, NC is a magnet school serving students in grades 6-12 who have a serious interest in the arts. Students are admitted to the school in specific majors chosen from among the many art form concentrations within dance, music, drama, and visual art. In addition to an academic course load following the North Carolina Standard Course of Study, students enroll in multiple arts courses taught by certified arts education content specialists. The arts programs prepare students for college level study or professional careers in the arts upon graduation. Exhibitions and performances are at a high caliber, and the school is recognized for producing professional-quality theatrical productions.

Students from across Mecklenburg County gain admission to Northwest through a two-step procedure: audition and lottery. Students must first audition for admittance to their chosen major, demonstrating basic competence for their grade level in the selected art form. Those who pass the audition are then entered into a lottery for available seats in each class. Some families choose Northwest for their children due to its high academic ranking—the school boasts the highest graduation rate for high schools in the county—while others specifically desire the social environment and creative and technical training that the school's arts focus makes possible.

Northwest has an enrollment of 541 students in the high school (grades 9-12) and 443 students in the middle school (grades 6-8) for the 2013-14 school year[10]. The school serves a diverse array of students from across the county. Nearly half of the students receive free or reduced lunch; the ethnic/racial distribution is largely white (42%) and African-American (45%), with smaller percentages of Hispanic and Asian students and those identifying in other categories[11].

Dance at Northwest School of the Arts

The dance program at Northwest was chosen as the focus for this research project. With four dance educators (three full-time and one half-time) serving the middle and high school campus, Northwest has one of the largest and most comprehensive public school dance programs in the state.

Although Northwest is a 6th-12th grade school, it is organized into separate middle and high school programs with little mixing between students at the different levels during

class and extracurricular activities. At the middle school level, dance majors enroll in classes primarily by grade level. At the high school level, students have more flexibility in regards to their enrollment in dance classes. Within the dance major, students can concentrate in ballet or modern dance, taking four courses in their area of concentration and two in the other area over their four years; many take additional courses beyond that. In addition to the required ballet and modern classes, students may take pointe, tap, and jazz in high school as well. The dance classes follow the structure of Beginning, Intermediate, Proficient, and Advanced levels as put forth in the North Carolina Essential Standards for Dance; however, unlike typical high school dance programs, the classes at Northwest are more specific than general dance courses and the Standards are adapted to the specific requirements of the dance form addressed in each course. Due to faculty availability, transportation limitations, and students' frequent participation in dance activities outside of school, the activities within the dance program are contained primarily within the school day. Classes are scheduled in 90-minute blocks meeting on alternate days; the majority of rehearsals for school performances take place within these class times. Performances of works created in classes are presented each semester in evening concerts.

Four faculty members teach in the dance program: Amelia Binford, Brian Winn, Chandra McCloud-Glover, and Dominique Willis. Ms. Binford, Mr. Winn, and Mrs. McCloud-Glover all teach both middle and high school classes; Ms. Willis, who is only employed half-time, teaches only high school classes. The school has two large dance studios housed in one building and a third studio located in a separate building. Dance flooring is installed in the studios, though it is worn: the marley (floor surface covering) in one studio is coming loose, and the sub-floor in the two upstairs studios is no longer adequately sprung for dance. Ballet barres are installed along the walls, and additional portable barres are used in some classes. Each studio has a small sound

system for playing music through the teachers' iPods. Dressing facilities are located adjacent to each studio, and students are expected to wear appropriate dance attire and shoes to each class. Teachers' offices are located in separate small rooms off of each studio. The school also has arranged to use studio space at an off-site facility, the Music Factory; students are bussed to and from that location for some of the ballet classes.

The school has an auditorium, though the small size of the stage makes it completely unsuitable for dance performances. A large black box theater is shared with the other performing arts areas on campus; the dance program uses this space only for performances but is unable to access it for instructional use on a regular basis. The black box provides a large performing space and appropriate technical production capabilities for dance, however, seating is limited. Currently the school is scheduled for upgrades funded by a recent school bond and the plans include a renovation to the performance space.

In analyzing the information collected about the dance program at Northwest, a complex and dynamic picture emerged of a group of teachers and students deeply committed to their work in dance. In considering the research question "What are the features of a quality arts education program?" several important aspects of Northwest's dance program merit discussion. The heart of the program is the teachers and students, and in particular, the intense, respectful, and meaningful relationships they create and sustain with one another through their shared dance endeavors. Access to the dance program is through an audition and lottery process, which limits participation to those who truly desire to study in this environment and creates a unique and demanding school culture. Once part of the school, students adopt a significant artist identity, shaped, in part, by the diverse and committed artistic practices they see modeled by the faculty. The ongoing development of their skills and knowledge in dance is formed by a comprehensive curriculum of classes in multiple dance forms where meaningful assessment is woven throughout. Perhaps because of the intensity with which the dancers value their work, limited resources often provoke frustration as students see their teachers try to maximize available resources and opportunities. The overwhelming dedication of everyone on Northwest's campus to supporting students' artistic development, fostering a strong and accepting community, and promoting excellence across academic and creative pursuits contributes to making this a school where quality thrives even in challenging circumstances.

Relationships

"Relationships here are the key."

The arts coordinator at the school states this upfront when introducing a visitor to the unique culture that thrives at Northwest. He continues:

"The structure of this school, and the way that students come to us, creates an environment in which those relationships are ready to be made...the way they see their dance teachers affects very much how they choose to perform in class."

Walking through the hallways at Northwest as students are changing classes, one would not guess that the school holds nearly a thousand students; it has the feel of a much smaller campus. Teachers greet students by name as they pass by. "See you in rehearsal" is a common refrain as students hug one another before heading off separate ways. Because they work together so closely creating and rehearsing dances, teachers get to know their students; more importantly, they are able to foster a sense of community where relationships thrive both in and out of class.

Many students attend Northwest for the full seven years; over that time, they get to know their dance teachers quite well and for many, this sustained encounter with professional, caring, and inspiring teachers contributes to the high quality education they receive. Students describe a trusting, personal relationship in dance class:

"Developing that personal relationship with the teachers, they also recognize our learning styles and our abilities and what helps us and what doesn't, and who is going to be comfortable with [hands on corrections] and who's not."
—High School Student

Students look up to their teachers and explain that teachers model the kinds of collegial relationships that are important in any arts field that relies on collaboration the way dance does.

"There's a really good sense of respect among the dancers themselves. The teachers set an example for it—all four of our teachers have a pretty good working relationship... and we see that...At a regular high school, where dance is just an elective, I wouldn't talk to a freshman if I saw them in the hallway because I'm a senior... but I love [freshman student]! It's great. We have a really good relationship when we are together."
—High School Student

While positive relationships between individual students and teachers are likely to be found in most successful schools, the quality arts curriculum at Northwest places these individual relationships into a larger context where a school-wide culture of caring and acceptance can flourish. Repeatedly, administrators, students, teachers, and parents express gratitude for the school culture, where students are encouraged to "be themselves" to an extent not always possible for adolescents

in traditional schools. While the school has adopted a pro-caring approach to discipline, it is daily engagement in the arts as both subject and process that enables individual and community relationships within the school to thrive.

> ***"I think that a lot of what we do in our classes, teaching the kids to be...open to interpretation and looking at art from new perspectives—that they integrate that info their daily lives, personal lives...and our kids aren't just accepting. They embrace differences. They embrace diversity...Intellectually, they're being pushed to look beyond stereotypes, beyond just what's visible to the naked eye."***
> ***—Dance Educator***

Access

At Northwest, students enrolled as dance majors are able to access significant dance experiences not available to students at traditional schools in the area. The dance opportunities available at Northwest are greater in both the amount of time spent dancing and the depth and variety of instruction. At typical middle schools in the county, students are able to take dance during the school day, but the courses are one semester in duration. At Northwest, middle schoolers' dance classes last the full year. At the high school level, students are able to enroll in multiple dance classes that are each designated with a particular dance form—ballet, modern, jazz, tap, and pointe. With the exception of the musical theatre majors, who also enroll in some dance classes, the dance courses at Northwest are limited to only those students who have been accepted as dance majors.

In many communities, this level of pre-professional dance training is only available through private dance studios, and tuition costs families thousands of dollars per year. For some students at Northwest, being able to take their dance classes during the school day in such an immersive environment alleviates a significant financial burden on their families.

Other students continue to supplement their in-school dance training at Northwest with additional classes and performing opportunities at local dance studios or through the school affiliated with the professional ballet company in Charlotte.

Regardless of whether they also dance outside of school, it is apparent that dance students at Northwest *want* to be there. Students and their families must go through several steps to enroll, and stay enrolled, at Northwest. All students are required to pass an audition, demonstrating the required skills for their grade level; those who pass the audition are entered into a lottery for the available seats in each class. While students can enter Northwest at any grade, the typical entry points are 6th and 9th grade. Rising 6th graders participate in a more basic audition that involves showing a self-choreographed solo and basic movement activities. The 9th grade audition—which is required for all students, including those who have completed middle school at Northwest—calls for participation in ballet and modern dance classes where prospective students are evaluated on their technique. The dance educators at Northwest report that the majority of 8th grade dance students who have completed three years of dance at the school and demonstrate progress and commitment to the program are able to pass the audition and continue on in the high school program; however, the audition process does serve to establish the seriousness of the program and ensure full commitment and dedication from the students.

In addition to the students' own aspiration to study at Northwest, the desire of their parents is also a huge factor impacting access to this school and its arts programs. Parents have a range of reasons for selecting Northwest for their children: the availability of the dance program, the supportive and nurturing environment, the emphasis on creativity throughout the school, and the solid academic foundation are among the traits that parents seek out. Some parents explain that, when choosing where their child would attend middle or high school, Northwest was the only viable option they had. One parent describes anxiously waiting by the mailbox to learn if her child had a place at Northwest:

> ***"I was just keeping my fingers crossed because if she hadn't made it in, she would just go to her home school, which is also a fine school but not what I wanted for her, and not what she wanted." —Parent***

Another parent continues, expressing gratitude and commitment to the school:

"It's a family. Once you're here, it would be heartbreaking to leave. A diverse group of people, different ideas, all encompassing, all inclusive. It's a wonderful school...I would not have her anywhere else in the world. —Parent

Although the families do not pay tuition or fees for their students to attend Northwest, it nonetheless demands significant sacrifices for many. The school draws students from throughout Mecklenburg County, which encompasses 546 square miles. Transportation is only provided through a shuttle system, and for many students, the drive to a shuttle stop would take as long or longer than the drive to school. Parents describe instead adjusting their work schedules—including turning down shifts—to be able to transport their students across the county to attend this school. They describe this as a significant hardship, but, due to their strong feelings about the importance of their children accessing what Northwest offers, they willingly make these adjustments. Students also make sacrifices to attend Northwest; most significantly, the school offers no athletics or marching band program, and due to the bell schedule, students cannot participate in these activities at another school while attending Northwest. The school provides access to high quality dance education experiences for those who are willing and able to make the substantial effort to become part of the school.

Artist identity

Every student at Northwest is enrolled as a "major" in at least one art form, contributing to a strong sense of artist identity across the program. Students do not simply take a dance class; they *are* dancers.

"I'm passionate about my art... We love to dance and that's where we use most of our time in school—for our art." —High School Student

The high school students, in particular, convey a sense of seriousness and purpose when speaking about their dance studies. Many intend to study dance in college and pursue an eventual career as a performer, choreographer, or dance teacher, and the dancers are eager for a broad range of experiences that will support their goals.

"I think performances are a super important part for us, just because that is what all of our training is for. They're training us to have careers as dancers. The experience of being on stage and performing is one of the most important things." —High School Student

While the students enroll at Northwest with the intention of a specific major in dance, it is the daily process of teaching and learning, facilitated by the professional dance educators, that enables students to develop their artist identity. This identity is clearly modeled and

reinforced by the four dance teachers, most of whom continue their own artistic work outside of their teaching roles by taking classes, performing, and choreographing with different companies in North Carolina. Students might encounter Ms. Willis at the barre next to them in an evening ballet class, or they might see Mr. Winn on stage performing in a professional concert. The dance teachers all regularly pepper their lessons with stories and advice from their own performing experiences, reinforcing what it means to be an artist.

> ***"Ms. Binford is somebody who is so excited about jazz and her personality is what she teaches. So I feel like that resemblance of their love and passion for what they teach is also something that helps us learn a lot. If they weren't into it, they wouldn't teach us anything; It wouldn't transmit."***
> ***—High School Student***

Students regularly describe the personalities of their teachers as influential; most significantly, they commend the diversity of the dance faculty as a whole. The four dance educators at Northwest have incredibly different dance backgrounds, past experiences, and teaching styles, and this diversity is a major asset to the program. When asked about determining teacher quality, an administrator explained:

> ***"I think it's more than just one high quality teacher. It's the program. Because each of those teachers have different strengths, so they're able to play to those strengths. You have people with a stronger studio base, so their focus is more along the lines of studio training. And then you've got teachers that are pulling in more of the creative choreography part, so they're allowing that freedom..."***
> ***–District Administrator***

The dance educators take their work as artist and educators seriously, and this contributes significantly to the high quality of the program as a whole:

> ***"We have a responsibility as dancers...we're not teaching to a test right now. We have that flexibility to challenge the students or push the limitations in terms of the material that we're doing with our kids... that we're challenging ourselves. We're pushing ourselves as hard. We're able to step outside of the box and do a little bit more."***
> ***—Dance Educator***

The artist identity of the teachers is apparent throughout their work; whether it is Mrs. McCloud-Glover letting her students struggle through a choreography assignment in order to realize that adjustments are part of the creative

process, or Ms. Willis weaving in stories of a ballet choreographer as she asks students to compare and contrast different artists' work, the emphasis on engaging fully in the practice of *being* an artist pervades everything that happens in the Northwest dance classes.

Meaningful assessment

The dance program at Northwest offers a comprehensive curriculum including performance skills and dance technique, choreography, dance history, current artists, and anatomy. In many classes, dance topics are tied to Common Core reading and writing as well. Although students at times wish they could spend all of their time dancing, they also recognize the value of learning dimensions of dance beyond technique and performance training.

> ***"In tap, we learned a lot of history, because it's a misconception of arts schools. They think we just dance, but actually, we really are deeply rooted in history and how it came about. In tap, we're talking about how tap came about and slavery and how it came to be a big type of dance we do now."***
>
> ***—High School Student***

Such a comprehensive curriculum requires comprehensive assessments, and the dance teachers and students at Northwest devote a significant amount of attention to evaluating their work and seeking ways of improvement.

Assessments in dance at Northwest are multi-faceted and designed with the outcomes of a particular class or project in mind. Students' grades are determined by not only their regular participation in class (an area that is specifically limited in how much it can account for a student's final grade), but also their mastery of movement skills and their performance on written papers and tests. For many projects, such as group choreography assignments, teachers have developed specific rubrics that they use to evaluate students' work. They will use these rubrics in class for live performances and also will apply these rubrics to videotaped performances, allowing more time for review and comments on students' work. In Mrs. McCloud-Glover's class, the students are involved in developing the rubric as they are challenged to think about the aspects of a particular dance that are important to assess.

The process of assessment in dance at Northwest clearly contributes to the high quality of the program, especially because of the way that students are involved in the assessment process. Grades and qualitative feedback are communicated regularly to students, who learn to value this information. In fact, dance students *want* feedback and express the desire for more frequent, individual corrections, especially in the large middle school classes.

> ***"What's helping me learn is how they give us really good corrections."***
>
> ***—Middle School Student***

"...there's only one person and so many kids. Its hard to look at one person and look at all the others. Some kids struggle because they think they're doing right but they're really doing wrong in their technique."
—Middle School Student

Part of the dance educators' job, of course, is helping the students take ownership of their own learning by self-assessing their personal progress and becoming less dependent on teachers for corrections. The dance faculty all include some form of self-assessment in their classes, asking students to evaluate themselves according to an assignment or progress rubric and explain their rating. More importantly, the process of self-assessment and correction has become embedded in the way that many students approach their work in general. This was especially apparent in Mr. Winn's Intermediate Modern class, a large group of 40 high school students with varying levels of skill. As the students took turns moving across the floor in a traveling movement phrase, several immediately returned to the beginning to take a second turn, having identified something in their own performance that they wished to correct. By making assessment an embedded part of the teaching and learning process, the dance educators at Northwest have succeeded in enabling their students to learn how to learn in dance—a skill just as important as learning technique or choreography.

Maximizing available resources

While the work being done by the teachers, students, and administrators at Northwest is of very high quality, significant obstacles remain which impact the further growth and development of the program. Although the school as three dance studios for classes, space remains a challenge. One studio, in particular, is rather small, and this small space, combined with an especially large class size, mean that middle school students are cramped together when standing at the barre and are unable to do large traveling movements in class. While the school as a whole has classroom technology resources, the dance studios are not similarly equipped, making it difficult for teachers to seamlessly integrate video and online technology into their dance classes. Performance space presents another challenge, as seating is limited in the black box performance area. Dance concerts always sell out, and some friends and family members are turned away when coming to see their students perform. Parents and teachers recognize that the most meaningful advocacy strategy for a program like Northwest's will be to let the work speak for itself—but opportunities to invite district administrators, business leaders, donors, and community members to performances are restricted. Recent news indicating that funding from a successful school bond vote will be allocated towards construction projects at the school—including a more suitable performance space—has staff and students optimistic that this situation will improve in the near future.

Class sizes also present difficulty. One of the outstanding features of Northwest's program is that they are able to offer truly leveled classes for the students. Whereas in other schools the "advanced" class is simply those who have taken one or two prior semesters, at Northwest, "advanced" is just that—a class limited to the students who have mastered the form at the previous levels. Depending on the class, this may mean that only 12 or 15 students are ready to enroll in a given semester. For the juniors and seniors who take these classes, the opportunity to be given truly challenging material is a hallmark of this quality program. Yet, because teacher allotment to the school is based on the school's enrollment as a whole, additional dance teaching positions are not available; some of the other classes, particularly in the middle school and the lower levels of high school, can have over 40 students enrolled.

Nevertheless, the dedication of the teachers and students means that they will persist and do quality work despite these obstacles. As one student explained,

"Our teachers do very well at really taking every single little thing we have to the max."
—High School Student

Teachers have developed classroom management techniques to help students move more fully in limited space and have students gather in their offices to watch and discuss videos. They seek out field trips to introduce students to professional companies and college dance programs. Students highly value the guest artists and performance opportunities they do have, devoting their full energy to these experiences. They respect one another and do the best they can to move safely around each other in crowded classes. Parents drive lengthy round trips to bring their children to this highly sought-after school, and then stay late organizing events and fundraisers through the PTO or booster clubs. Most significantly, the attitude of the Northwest teachers towards maximizing all available opportunities, combined with the practice of teaching students to learn how to learn, means that this quality program will continue to perpetuate its own success.

Drama
at Bradley Academy

Murfreesboro, Tennessee

Laurie Melnik, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

Bradley Academy is a K-6 school serving approximately 370 students in the Murfreesboro City system. It serves a diverse high-needs population, offering an arts integration focus that includes instruction in vocal and instrumental music, visual art, and drama. It is the only school in the Murfreesboro City system to have a K-6 drama program. Approximately 88% of students at Bradley are identified as economically disadvantaged—significantly higher than district and state percentages[12]. They have faced shifts in student demographics over the past decade. The Hispanic student population at Bradley Academy has doubled in that time. According to the Tennessee State Report Card, approximately 18% of Bradley's student population in 2003 was Hispanic. In 2013, the Hispanic student population at Bradley academy is around 36%. The school now has the highest Hispanic student population in the district. 29% of the students are English learners. Bradley is a zone and choice school, taking students from an identified zone and some who apply from other zones in the district. It strives to serve every student interested in attending the school, and at the moment, it can accommodate all choice students. However, Murfreesboro City Schools is rezoning, which may impact the number of choice students Bradley Academy can accept.

At the turn of the 21st century, stakeholders reevaluated the school's mission and vision. They faced declining student numbers and needed to develop a plan that would attract people to Bradley Academy. The principal at the time had visited an arts-integrated school that served a similar community and suggested that Bradley consider that as a school focus. After much discussion and research, stakeholders approved a proposal to transition Bradley's core instructional model to arts integration. Among the changes that this decision brought about were new facilities to accommodate a comprehensive arts program and funding for a full-time drama specialist. Today, the arts are a source of pride for Bradley Academy. Their model has led them to become part of Tennessee's Value Plus Schools[13] program.

At Bradley, the arts are taught as distinct disciplines and as part of an integrated program. Classroom teachers collaborate with arts specialists to design and deliver interdisciplinary units of study. The arts are taught in isolation, but opportunities to integrate arts and non-arts disciplines are highly encouraged. Bradley Academy teachers recognize the value of arts integration and strive to provide authentic arts learning experiences in both the grade-level teachers' and arts specialists' classrooms.

Description of the Program

The drama program is a source of pride for Bradley Academy. It has developed a reputation for high quality work. Directed by Mrs. Allison Isom, the drama program has a standards-based and sequential curriculum where students develop knowledge, skills, and understandings framed around the elements of drama. During the week, students in grades K-6 rotate to 45-minute classes in each art form. Students also experience the arts through arts-integrated units of study developed and delivered in collaboration between classroom teachers and arts specialists. In addition to the in-school drama program, students in grades 3-6 can participate in Bradley Academy Musical Theatre, an audition-based after-school program.

Access

One of the goals of the drama program at Bradley Academy is to provide opportunities to students whose life situations might make exposure to and experiences in drama unlikely. As a Title 1 School, approximately 88% of the student population at Bradley Academy comes from underserved communities. Each child at Bradley has the opportunity embedded in the school day to learn and engage in drama. If a student is interested in the after-school opportunities provided by the program, the school finds a way to make it happen. No child is turned away from any opportunity because of personal circumstances.

"Opportunity is defined in a similar framework that I as a middle-class parent make sure that my kid gets every academic opportunity--I watch their home work and make

sure if they are struggling in something the teacher just has to contact me and I make sure my kid gets the assistance they need. If my child showed advanced physicality, I might pay for Tae Kwon Do for him, which I did because I noticed the potential and was able to provide that kind of support for my child. For me, opportunity makes a difference. I send my kids to camp. The kids here don't have that kind of opportunity. My kids have the vocabulary of two college-educated parents. The kids here don't have that. And that is the biggest determinant of academic success. It has nothing to do with IQ. It has to do with opportunities." – Administrator

Beyond Bradley, opportunities for drama instruction are limited. As part of the Murfreesboro City Schools district, Bradley Academy is the only elementary school to offer a drama program. Middle and High Schools are part of a separate system, the Rutherford County School District. Students stay at Bradley Academy through 6th grade. Options for studying drama in grades 7-12 remain limited. Currently, no feeder school exists for Bradley Academy students.

Assessment

At Bradley, the arts are considered core curriculum. Time is a precious commodity due to the increased emphasis on standardized

testing. It is not considered acceptable to find release from "real" school in "trivial" artsy activities. Maximizing the instructional potential of each minute is a strong undercurrent at Bradley Academy. Mrs. Isom utilizes a curriculum map, which helps her focus on instructional goals. She uses a backward planning approach.

"When I look at Bloom's [Taxonomy], I try to reach a higher level understanding, but it really helps me think of what I am actually teaching or need to be teaching so we can reach lesson goals." –Drama Specialist

Ongoing embedded assessments assist students in practicing drama skills, knowledge, and understanding. In Kindergarten, Mrs. Isom guided a whole class activity where students were cued to recall parts of a story that was just read aloud. According to Mrs. Isom it is very important to make sure students acquire important knowledge and skills before moving forward. Checking on mastery of specific skills and knowledge is especially important for more open-ended work where students get to explore options and create on their own. Performance task assessments are used in the drama program to see into the multifaceted work in which students engage. Through performance task assessments, Bradley Academy students are encouraged to respond in multiple ways and demonstrate expected skills, knowledge, and understandings in drama.

"We get a lot of rubrics. It's 1,2,3,4. You have something to work for. I like getting 4's, but I don't always get them. Sometimes we get opportunities to practice more and get a higher score, but you have to work for it. You don't just get numbers for anything." –Student

"Like this one time, I wasn't projecting and couldn't be heard. I got a lower number there because I needed to do better on that. But I wasn't sad because I knew that when I did it. The next time I did a scene, I projected more and got a better score. It made me feel good to see my hard work paying off." –Student

"In my class, we have a rubric, like for our monologues, we have a guide for giving each other feedback and helping us get better. Like being memorized or showing more emotions or making certain choices with your voice and making sense of your character. Looking for clues. Ms. Isom helps us and gives lots of chances to practice." –Student

Curriculum

Mrs. Isom has a fully articulated curriculum with unit plans and a portfolio of student work. The curriculum includes a series of unit plans that address both informal and formal processes of drama and theatre. Each unit focuses on specific learning objectives in drama and connects with what they are learning in their grade level classrooms. For example, fourth grade students practiced scriptwriting skills through writing from a character's point of view traveling in the Trail of Tears. Students were required to consider what they knew about the Trail of Tears, which was reviewed in the context of the drama class but taught in the grade-level classrooms. As students practiced skills and knowledge in drama they also had the opportunity to reinforce understandings from other content areas.

"She has helped me read better. There are a lot of lines to memorize. When I came here in 5th grade, I couldn't read very well because of dyslexia. Now people don't realize I have that. Before I came here, I was mean and not very nice. When I came here, I was in drama and able to get my emotions out, but in a good way." –Student

"Essentially we're able to take arts content and non-arts content and meld them together in a lesson where a natural connection has been made. In drama, a lot of my stuff connects with language arts and social studies. I'll talk to the teachers and see what their students are struggling with or something being pushed really hard for the TCAP, and I try to find content that will relate with what I do in a drama and see if it fits

naturally. Meaning, it's a real drama lesson. Not just using drama but actually teaching drama." –Drama Specialist

"I know how to read something and what emotions to use because of punctuation and other clues. Sometimes lines will tell you how to say it, but sometimes you have to figure out on your own." –Student

Grade-level teachers shared their appreciation for how the drama curriculum deepens students' understanding across content areas.

"A lot of them have become more fluent and are able to read with expression. That has helped many students perform better on reading. The quietest child can be the most dramatic. You see a different side of the child between the classroom and drama class. Last year, my kids were working on a script and Ms. Isom gave me feedback about how they were struggling. I was able to take that feedback and help my kids better read a script and infer meaning from dialogue. You know that is great feedback for me because I see the value of what she is teaching and how it reinforces similar skillsets across content areas." –Classroom Teacher

"With our play last year, Ms. Isom decided to take My Lost Little Valentine and developed a unit from it. We were able to give her feedback on the unit and reinforce the non-arts content. I feel like this year, we had a hard time with unity and team work, and I knew they learned a lot about this in drama so I was able to go to Ms. Isom and get some help. It's nice when you know your content area well and how we can support student needs because we know our students well, too." –Classroom Teacher

Teacher Quality

Mrs. Isom is a highly qualified drama educator and a reflective practitioner. She received a degree in Theatre Education and had access to mentors who assisted her as she navigated the spectrum between process- and production-centered work. She designed a standards-based and sequential curriculum in a school district where prior knowledge in elementary drama was not present. Mrs. Isom has received accolades including teacher of the year, write-ups in local newspapers, and invitations to share the work at Bradley at the Tennessee Art Commission's annual CREATE conference.

"Performances were very new to the students. They didn't know what an audition was and I had to spend a lot of time preparing the students for this. Where we are now didn't happen overnight. I also wanted to make sure that the after-school productions didn't take over my curriculum. There is a difference and both serve different purposes. The students know two sides of me- educator me and director me and they know and understand the difference." –Drama Specialist

"In class she is teaching drama. In rehearsal, it's more about the performance- glitter, sets, and costumes. You get a little of that in class but a lot more of that after school. It's different because she is teaching you how to perform, but it's not the same kind performing like after school. We don't rehearse for a play in class. We learn how to act." –Student

While confident in her background and expertise in theatre, she enters her work knowing that creating an effective curriculum is an ongoing process that never ends. Mrs. Isom revisits her curriculum and makes adjustments based on student needs. Throughout the site visit, Mrs. Isom shared specific examples of student work and milestones during her process of creating a learner-centered curriculum at Bradley Academy.

"She has a big idea about the program and knows how everything connects and prepares us. It just all makes sense. It doesn't just happen." –Student

Mrs. Isom has a strong rapport among faculty and students. Throughout interviews and focus groups, she was described as *caring*, *passionate*, and *talented*. Alumni and parents frequently mentioned how she was like another mother to the students and made sure they were getting the support they needed.

School Culture

Many families choose Bradley Academy because of its reputation as a caring learning environment. The school has a vision for helping all students succeed, realizing their academic potential. When the current principal came to Bradley, the school had many students with behavioral issues. Administrators and teachers at Bradley wanted students to be able to *self-motivate* and *self-regulate*, but this was difficult given a lack of curricular support. The current principal worked hard to help the faculty develop a comprehensive curriculum that not only supported student needs but also reflected the school culture. Drama is important to the school culture

because Bradley Academy believes it helps students overcome obstacles and become better communicators. Many students commented about why the drama program was important to them.

"Drama inspires us to get out of our comfort zone. Lots of students, not just me, used to not talk very much. Drama has helped me not be shy and get out of my shell." –Student

"It has helped me a lot. I was so shy and scared and now I can't stop talking. I went from a snail who never leaves it shell to someone who isn't afraid anymore." –Student

Multiple stakeholders recognized the arts as being a central piece to the school's overall mission, but those who have been with the school since before the time of the current leadership had difficulty describing what this meant. Few of the current faculty and staff were with Bradley when they first implemented the arts integration model, and were able to describe transitions that occurred over the past 25 years. The biggest transition was getting everyone on the same page and invested in the school's new mission and vision. Over

the last 10 years, the biggest hurdle that many described was cultivating leadership and buy-in on the district level.

> *"I think with Dr. Fowler [Bradley's Principal]... I appreciate how she focuses on the big picture and she is increasing visibility. The school district is giving us support for transportation for the drama program. That was a huge help! I know Dr. Fowler attends the show and I know our superintendent attends as well." –Parent*

> *"Leadership has high expectations in the arts. And they have those expectations regardless of background – so just because you have those circumstances doesn't mean you can't have high expectations. It doesn't mean that when you grow up you still have to be in those circumstances. The children get it because they see that we believe in them and if the kids see that we believe in them regardless of what outside people might say – then they are willing to try and do their best. They realize what they can do here." –Classroom Teacher*

The arts receive strong support from the school's administration. The current principal is the first leader at Bradley who has prior experience in schools with arts integration programs. Faculty described her first year at the school as focused on clarifying the difference between arts infusion and arts integration. The principal also evaluated the arts programs and made sure they had a strong foundation in curriculum, assessment, and teacher quality. She reinforced the importance of isolated instruction in the arts during the school day, expanded after-school opportunities in the arts, and ensured quality educators were guiding the arts programs.

The school community at Bradley takes great pride in its high quality arts experiences. In regard to the drama program, students, parents, alumni, and school faculty often highlighted what students learn and accomplish. In interviews and focus groups, many commented that the drama program does more than just put on great productions. It provides students opportunities to do the work of real artists.

> *"Our children really respond to them. They write their stories and draw. That's how they learn... more hands-on, you know make something and then talk about it. And it's also helped my older one not be shy. She's still quiet, but she has a lot more confidence. It's not just on stage that she can talk in front of people. She can*

start a conversation and really communicate with people." –Parent

"My daughter is working on making better eye contact. She is working on that a lot as she rehearses her character, but we're practicing this outside of drama, too. My other daughter is learning about leadership. She is the lead role but she is learning how to be a role model and to be a part of an ensemble." –Parent

Resources

Conversations about resources at Bradley inevitably turned to a need for more. Stakeholders are pleased with the quality of work their students do an the learning they receive, but would like to see more options made available in the opportunities for quality drama instruction beyond Bradley Academy and identify a desire for expanded working space for drama instruction and performance.

When students leave Bradley Academy they not only enter a new school but also become a part of different school system where there are little or no opportunities to participate in drama. Many parents and alumni expressed concerns for the limited opportunities available to them in the arts and miss being a part of Bradley's program.

"It's a different school system once they enter middle school. All middle and high school are in the county system. It's two completely different systems. That is why the partnership with the Center for the Arts was important. That is the option." –Administrator

"I kept my daughter here for 6th grade because there isn't a middle school that does this at least not like this." –Parent

"It's not the same anywhere else. My middle school has drama, but it's after school and taught by the math teacher. I'm glad they have it, but it's not the same, especially when I learned so much here." — Bradley Academy Alum

"I don't want to say that the middle school and high schools in the county are bad, but it is a completely different experience. I kept my daughter here for 6th grade because I wanted her to experience what she loved as she could. We weren't even zoned for the school anymore, and I still sent my daughter here. It was so hard for her to leave here, but I am glad for Center for the Arts. There, she gets to continue her love for drama." –Parent

When Bradley Academy became an arts school, an expansion was added to the building that provided art form classrooms and studios. While classroom space does accommodate teaching and learning in the arts, there are not enough resources to support student performances. When asked what the program needed, almost everyone mentioned that Bradley Academy could use its own theatre. As one grade level teacher emphasized, having access to their own theatre space would provide teachers and students access to a laboratory where students can practice what they are learning in the real-world environment.

"Looking at this from the perspective [of a parent], I have seen programs done a lot more resources and sponsorships and parental involvement. But the kids here, they consistently step up to the plate in the midst of personal struggles and shine and have the opportunity to push through. I have seen this blossom in other parts of their lives and see this carry with them when they leave here." –Parent

"Our own theatre. There are so many things that could be real-world applicable... to have a facility where you can practice things like design, sound, and lights.. but it's on our campus. If we had a facility that we had control over... I think the program would be stronger. It's not that the facility is needed for the program to exist, but the opportunity for students to really live and learn in a theatre space is needed." –Classroom Teacher

The drama program has struggled over the past few years to find adequate space that supports young student actors. Spaces used in the past either were not cost effective

or too large for the school's productions. The school is in great need of performance facilities, but rather than wait for the resources to make it happen, Bradley Academy took a creative approach. Through collaborating with Murfreesboro's Center for the Arts, Bradley Academy is able to access a theatre space for their drama program. The Center for the Arts has a strong reputation in the community for putting on professional-quality work, which has not only expanded Bradley's access to resources but also strengthened the school's reputation.

> ***"Center for the Arts has helped. People come to see our shows more because Center for the Arts has a good reputation. People come to see us because they know we're talented. People see us now" –Student***

> ***"A lot of people learn about Bradley Academy because they come see shows at the Center just because it's a show at the Center and people like them." –Student***

The partnership between Bradley Academy and the Center for the Arts was described as a major milestone during interviews and focus groups. Before partnering with the Center for the Arts, the school struggled with visibility in the community and district support for the drama program was lacking. Simultaneously, the Center for the Arts wanted to expand their education programs and increase access to drama for K-12 students. The partnership, described as serendipitous, came at a good time

when school leadership at Bradley Academy was strong and could go to the district to advocate for the school. The biggest challenge in making the partnership work was providing transportation for students between Bradley Academy and the Center for the Arts during after-school hours. The district supported the partnership and funded transportation, which many stakeholders described as a major accomplishment and a sign that district support for the arts is getting better.

> *"I think this year we had people that came to Bradley after seeing a show there. It's been a really positive for us, and helping us get out there. It's a huge deal. We have a large Hispanic community. People are not afraid to come to the Center for the Arts. Some people don't want to come to Bradley because of the area. So it increased awareness of the school and changed some perceptions." –Parent*

Summary

Bradley Academy, the only school in its district with an elementary drama program, offers student opportunities to both develop drama skills and perform. Mrs. Isom facilitates drama learning experiences that help students develop characters with expressive voices and movement and reinforces inferential and interpretive skills. Students transfer learned skills and knowledge to other content areas where classroom teachers have observed improved communication skills. In addition to drama classes, students enjoy opportunities to perform in Bradley Academy Musical Theatre, an after-school drama program. Mrs. Isom carefully distinguishes between the drama classroom and after-school rehearsals. As a result, stakeholders understand the purpose of isolated instruction in drama and how students are able to take what they have learned and apply it to a performance opportunity.

Drama
at Owensboro High School

Owensboro, Kentucky

Laurie Melnik, University of Tennessee, Chattanooga

Owensboro High School (OHS) is a public 9-12 school in Owensboro, Kentucky that serves approximately 1,056 students. The only high school in Owensboro Public Schools, OHS is a Title I School where approximately 70% of students receive free or reduced lunch.[14] The mission of OHS states, "we commit to nurture and challenge each student toward reaching maximum potential and achieving success in an ever-changing world" (www.owensboro.k12.ky.us). OHS serves a diverse student population with varying needs, aptitudes, and abilities.

Description of the Program

The school has a longstanding arts program that receives significant support at the district level and from the Owensboro community. All art forms are fully supported at the school and across the district. The district's goal is to develop a comprehensive K-12 curriculum that supports the whole child, which includes programs in visual art, drama, music, and dance. The drama program at OHS, also known as the Rose Curtain Players, is the oldest high school drama program in the state of Kentucky. The Rose Curtain Players has been in existence for approximately 90 years and has a long tradition of community support. The initial vision of the Rose Curtain Players was to increase opportunities for students to create and perform theatre in the Owensboro community.

Today, the Rose Curtain Players offers students multiple opportunities to participate in play development, productions, and community projects. Carolyn Greer directs the program. Two additional faculty members have assisted in expanding the drama program at the middle school level. The curriculum consists of a series of sequential classes in which students develop and perform characters in both informal and formal presentations. Each course includes a public performance that serves as an assessment task embedded in the drama curriculum. Courses are offered yearly and scheduled in 90-minute increments as part of the A/B block schedule at the high school. Courses include:

- Drama I - An introductory course all students must complete when entering the program. Students are introduced to acting, design, and theatre management and apply what they have learned in a culminating performance task, which includes a public performance of a selected play.
- Production Basics - Students further

practice and apply skills and knowledge introduced in the Drama I class. Performance task assessments include developing a one-act each semester that is performed for the community.

- Advanced Theatre - A performance-based course, which includes one-act and full-length plays where students take full responsibility for all aspects of the production. Interested students must audition for this course and must have completed prerequisite courses.

Production opportunities include one-acts performed for the community, participating in Kentucky Theatre Association's (KTA) one-act festival, and preparing events for Kentucky Thespians. Rubrics that are used for these events are also utilized in the classroom as a way to help prepare students and give them feedback about their work. The purpose of participating in these events is to provide an opportunity for OHS students to see the work of their peers and get feedback from other practitioners and theatre professionals. OHS has received recognition for their quality productions on multiple levels including receiving top honors at the Southeastern Theatre Conference's High School Theatre Festival and being invited to perform at the American High School Theatre Festival as a part of the Edinburgh Fringe Festival.

Access

When a student enters kindergarten in Owensboro Public Schools, the school district begins a journey with the child and strives to develop the whole child through

their comprehensive K-12 curriculum. A vital component of this curriculum is to ensure that all students have access to high-quality programs in the arts. As a community, Owensboro strongly supports the arts because they bring people from diverse backgrounds together and teach life skills. During interviews and focus groups, many commented that the purpose of the drama program is not to prepare for a profession in theatre but to develop skills that are going to help people succeed.

Throughout a student's K-12 career in Owensboro, he or she has access to multiple opportunities in the arts. At the high school level, school leaders attribute much of their success at increasing access to the arts to how courses are scheduled. OHS has utilized an A/B block schedule for the past 10 years. During interviews, many school leaders described the schedule as a key factor in ensuring that students have options and the flexibility to pursue interests. In drama, students can take multiple courses and stay active in the drama program throughout their entire high school career.

> *"Whenever someone talks to me about changing the schedule, I tell them that it would kill our arts program. That's usually all I have to say because nobody wants to kill the arts program." –Administrator*

> *"If you want your arts classes to have priority over AP classes, they work with you and don't make you feel bad because they really want you to be in classes you want to take, especially the ones that you give priority." –Student*

The district holds an annual fine arts festival at the RiverPark Center[15] where all students have the opportunity to either experience or perform works across all four art forms. The district is proud of the fine arts festival because it impacts every child and family across the Owensboro community. Housing the event at the RiverPark Center means that every child has the opportunity to share their work on a professional stage and that every family, regardless of circumstances, can attend an event at the center each year. When students enter high school, many of them have already been exposed to drama through the fine arts festival, which contributes to interest and participation in the Rose Curtain Players.

> *"Going to the RiverPark Center does two things, 1) it gives students who might never have another chance to perform on a stage of that quality a chance to perform. And they get that chance throughout their educational career with us 13 times; 2) It gives parents, who might never get a chance, an opportunity to go. Parents who could never*

afford a ticket to anything at the RiverPark Center, but they can come and see their children perform and see the entire five nights of everything free." –OPS School Board Member

The fine arts festival impacts the drama program because it gives visibility to student work. It lets potential students see what they can be a part of. Students who have seen the performances or had a family member participate in them want to become Rose Curtain Players.

Curriculum

The national standards in theatre education and a curriculum map of essential drama knowledge and skills inform the drama program's instruction. A detailed curriculum is developed on an ongoing basis. It is tailored towards student needs and centered on culminating performance projects. This allows flexibility in the drama program so that a blending between performance and learning can occur. The curriculum is organized as a series of project-based units. Drama teachers spend a lot of time at the beginning of each unit teaching relevant drama skills, knowledge, and understandings. All students must understand the elements of drama before applying them, but in each unit, certain drama skills and processes are highlighted more than others depending on the culminating performance task assessment. In the technical theatre course, a collaborative approach is used where the course is co-taught by director Carolyn Greer and a visual art specialist from OHS.

"As far as the technical theatre course, it is a collaborative approach. In my own courses in visual art, I tend to use a more systematic approach. Now at the beginning of the technical theatre course, it is more systematic because there are things we have to teach regardless of the projects that the students will be working on." –Visual Art Specialist

Students frequently commented that what they were learning in drama courses not only prepared them for performances, but also helped them engage as actor, designer, director, critic, and playwright. As students take more advanced courses, they

as a production. The productions selected for them are not selected because I want to do them – they are selected because they fit the student."
–Drama Specialist

take on more responsibility for a production. Shared decision-making between students and teachers was highly evident during classroom observations. In every class, students entered ready to work on a task, and while each class had different expectations, all of them embraced a learner-centered approach where the teacher worked alongside students to complete tasks. Alumni reinforced this when they described a nice blend between being a drama student at OHS and also being a professional collaborating on a production. Across interviews and focus groups, stakeholders said the program did not feel like high school. Students said they tended to forget they were high school students because their teachers treated them like professionals who were part of an ensemble.

"The curriculum is designed project-to-project – meaning we develop a project task based on the students' needs and as we design the project we also work on the needs ...

"One of her biggest gifts is picking the perfect script. There are many shows that she has selected that I wasn't necessarily excited about. Not that I didn't like it, it was just not something I would have picked up and read. Then after the show is cast and we start rehearsing, I always have this moment where I realize that she chose a script that suits us well. She knows her students and she knows scripts."
–Student

Assessment

Assessment is ongoing and embedded throughout the entire drama program. OHS expects drama learning to occur in the classroom. All arts specialists develop a portfolio of their work for the purpose of participating in the state's arts and humanities program review and as a way to reinforce teaching and learning across all four art

forms. Portfolios include an overview of the program with samples of student work from each course. Drama learning is assessed through rubrics that are tailored to projects but also align with criteria developed by the Educational Theatre Association (ETA), which has been playing an active role in developing National Common Core State Standards in drama. ETA also oversees rubrics developed for high school thespian festivals, which many theatre specialists use in the secondary drama classroom.

In all drama courses, students are assessed on performances they develop. These include scenes, monologues, and parts performed for either one-acts or full-length plays. Every time a student shares her or his work they receive written and verbal feedback from teachers and peers. Students share their work twice and are graded on their second performance where emphasis is placed on how well feedback was utilized and incorporated in their final sharing. This ensures that letter grades represent each student's personal ability in meeting course expectations.

Mrs. Greer carefully pointed out that attending thespian festivals does not become the curriculum but enhances it by providing students multiple opportunities to get feedback. She emphasized developing assessments that align with instruction and that she encourages ongoing feedback of student work from both class instructors and peers.

"You know, I get really frustrated when I go to festivals and it's all about the teacher. It's not about the kids. It's not about what the kids are learning. So knowing that about myself- I really emphasize the learning. I am teaching my kids about theatre- theatre as a profession, theatre as an art form, and theatre as a life skill. The evidence of what I am teaching- I hope resonates in my students."
–Drama Specialist

"Last year, she made us observe a second grade class because some of us were playing characters that were

that age. It was a lot of fun observing them. We learned that we were playing them too young and that they really talk very mature. They were very eloquent. But they were saying it in a younger voice. It was fun seeing what we were doing wrong and how we could correct it." –Student

Teacher Quality

Mrs. Greer is a highly qualified drama specialist with certification in theatre education. She has strong rapport with the students and is highly respected. She was hired before the state of Kentucky dissolved certification in theatre and speech in 1993. While music and visual art certification stayed in place, the lack of certification in theatre and speech interferes with schools' ability to attract and hire highly qualified drama specialists. When Owensboro Public Schools searched for a middle school drama specialist, it was difficult for them to find someone with the qualifications needed, and they ended up hiring an educator that had been teaching out of state. This could impact the drama program at OHS should their current director ever move or retire.

Teacher quality at OHS is about striking a balance between having an understanding of the curriculum and connecting with the students. Interviewees recognized that a large part of Mrs. Greer's success was due to her connection with the students. Mrs. Greer enters the work from a student-centered perspective and develops curriculum and instruction that supports student needs and celebrates what they bring to the table. Across

all interviews and focus groups, Mrs. Greer was described as being *caring, nurturing,* and *a true collaborator.*

> ***"She stays right with them. If they are here late, she is with them. If they have to be here early, she is there. She's just remarkable. She is modeling the behaviors that she is expecting. I really appreciate that." –Parent***

School Culture

Owensboro Public Schools attributes a lot of their success in providing high quality arts programs to maintaining a shared vision and being consistent with their support. Strong support for the drama program is deeply rooted in traditions that stem from the Rose Curtain Players' long history. The 90-year history of the Rose Curtain Players remains a strong source of pride for both OHS and the surrounding community. The drama program's wide generational span fosters a school and community culture that deeply supports their work. During the site visit, we had an opportunity to meet with many community members who were Rose Curtain Players when they attended OHS. Today they serve on the school board, manage the RiverPark Center, direct the Theatre Workshop of Owensboro, and actively support the arts, even if they work in another field or discipline. This legacy means a lot to the community.

> ***"My dad was a Rose Curtain Player. It's been around a long time, and I don't think other drama programs have that kind of history or tradition that we do." –Student***

The school culture was consistently described as being supportive of all students. This highly resonated for the drama program that aims to work with anybody and everybody. If the program were only for an elite few, it would not sustain. OHS is a culture where in order for something to sustain it has to benefit everybody.

> ***"I think a lot of comprehensive high schools that I have seen and are around nowadays have difficulty truly engaging kids into the culture and the schools are so unhealthy from the***

standpoint that they are cliquey or so unlike the world we live in in some respects. Over there, though, the diversity is so up-rated and tolerance is part of the strength and the arts programs are really great ways for the kids to experience that and the creativity is a big part of that I think."
–District Administrator

"When you walk down the hallways, you don't just see sports but groups in the arts and going back for decades. If you build on that tradition, if you honor the past and take with it the good things that there are and continually work on upgrading, it becomes a part of the culture."
–Administrator

Resources

One of the biggest impacts of the school district's shared vision for the arts is how resources are distributed. For example, OPS arts specialists are funded by the school board and are not part of each school's site-based budget. This ensures that if leadership transitions occur at the school level, then support for the arts is sustained.

"The board funds the physical education teachers, band director, music teachers, the drama teachers, and the fine arts district coordinator because that is not a site-based decision. It is a board decision, which then has to respond to the community and that was intentional."
–OPS School Board Member

The fine arts coordinator plays an instrumental role in making sure that all of the arts program have what they need. The position was developed 15 years ago when the need arose to develop a K-12 curriculum across art forms. The person who originated the fine arts coordinator position was described as being a "renaissance woman" who was able to accomplish a lot for the community. One major contribution deemed her "crowning

glory" was the expansion and renovation of the fine arts facilities at OHS.

"There has been a history here of making sure things are taken care of. Some years are stronger than others, but if you are consistent with what you're trying to do with a program and stick with a good sense of business—this is what it takes to support 170 drama students, 100 kids in the band, and 170 kids in the choir—this is what really takes to support these people and if you can approach it from that standpoint they will respond and be able to use the funds in a very responsible way and not be wasteful." –Administrator

Recent renovation and expansion at OHS added a black box theatre and scene shop, built off of the current performance space. Other additions included practice rooms with modified acoustic options, a Weinger music library, dance studios, and visual art studios. The facilities have increased the awareness of the arts programs at OHS, but it remains important to realize that the programs were in place before the expansion and renovation occurred. The school district's ability to come up with the resources needed for the expansion grew from their ability to make decisions that reinforced their vision while being patient with the outcome. Expanding the facilities was not an overnight endeavor. It took many years of strategic decision making in order to make it happen.

"The growth has been consistent from top to bottom. Take the facilities. That came later, but we had an effective program without the facilities. The program was here first and the facilities came later." –Music Specialist

"A lot of students from other schools want to come here because they want to use it. It's made our high school explode, but it's important to know that we had the program first before we had the facilities. Getting the facilities shows our community that we really care about our program and believe

in it to invest the resources we did. It reinforces the value of the program, which I think was important to our community, but what I love is that we didn't need the facilities for our community to value it... the program was here first." –Parent

Summary

Owensboro High School has a long history of supporting the arts, especially their drama program, which is about to celebrate its 90th birthday. The community's strong support stems from a collective understanding and value of the skills and knowledge students acquire through drama. The emphasis placed on arts teaching and learning has helped the drama program and all other art forms to be considered core curriculum. Support for the arts from the school district and the surrounding community is evident in the recent arts facility expansion. As the drama program continues to grow, it remains a pillar of community pride. While some OHS alumni have pursued professions in the arts, many have moved into other areas, but recognize how drama helped them develop skills as effective communicators, collaborators, and creative thinkers.

"Many of us might not major in theatre, but that doesn't mean we don't value it. If anything, we'll be better because we experienced and studied drama and we know that. We really know that." –Student

"Now that I have been here for awhile, there is a new generation of alumni who were Rose Curtain Players with me and they come back to support the current students in the program. I now have students who have gone and graduated, got married and moved back and found jobs here. Some are even teaching here. So there is this community that not only experienced the Rose Curtain players but also understands what we're teaching. The support is not just for what we do but for what we're teaching." –OHS Drama Specialist

Music
at Casey Elementary

Jackson, Mississippi

Susanne Burgess, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Casey Elementary is a zoned neighborhood school in Jackson, Mississippi, serving 368 K-5 students. It is one of the highest-performing elementary schools in the Jackson Public School district. Designated a 'STAR – Grade A Arts Access School', Casey has participated in the Mississippi Arts Commission's Whole Schools Initiative[16] since 1999, and achieved 'Model Whole Schools' status in 2005. As a 'Model' school, Casey meets criteria to serve others as an exemplar in arts integration, hosting professional development for others in the state seeking to improve student outcomes through the arts. Out-of-zone transfer students account for roughly 85% of the student population. 'Exceptional arts programming' is cited as the reason for their requests. In this Title I school 58% of the student body receives free or reduced lunches.

All students participate in 50-minutes of music instruction weekly, and many students avail themselves of additional music programming such as guitar and strings class. These choice courses are offered by community teaching artists and are available to any interested student – 2nd through 5th grade. As an 'Arts Integration School' Casey prides itself in both the quality of arts experiences it offers students, and the quantity of arts opportunities students have. Although this analysis focuses on music-specific traits, the overall philosophy of implementing the arts across the curriculum is pervasive.

The analysis of this program yielded two important themes. First, a shared vision for music education among all stakeholders brings a unity of purpose to the musical engagement for students at Casey. The community at large expressed the importance of arts integration as the underlying philosophy grounding the students' musical experiences. Casey's reputation for success was another overarching theme present through multiple interviews and observations. Stakeholders from both within the school (teachers and students), and outside of the school (parents and community members) reported a high regard for maintaining and growing the reputation for success that Casey enjoys. When students were asked to describe their music program in one word, their responses reflected this stellar reputation: *extraordinary, exciting, amazing,* and *magnificent!*

> ***"We often worry that we are idealized more than we should be. We are proud of our accomplishments, but we are aware that we're not perfect. It's always a battle fighting against everything else to keep the arts alive. We are able to do this work in spite of everything else." –Fine Arts Coordinator***

School culture

There is a strong bond between stakeholders through the shared vision of arts integration at Casey Elementary School.

The positive reputation for student academic success is anecdotally linked to the philosophy and practice of arts integration across all stakeholders. Parents seek this school for their children because of its reputation for academic achievement and plentiful arts engagement for students.

> *"Since this is a magnet, plenty of kids have to register, and sign up. Parents are more involved because of the hoops they jump through to get [their children] here - and keep them here." –Parent*

The reputation for success at Casey is a significant contributor to this school culture. The strong community of teachers is evident through the low turnover rates in personnel and the support they enjoy in ongoing professional development through the Mississippi Arts Commission and their affiliations with Millsaps College.

> *"There is a strong community of teachers here. We work together well - we care about and support each other" –Fine Arts Coordinator*

Arts Curriculum

While participation in music is considered critical to the success of Casey students, an articulated curriculum with outcome expectations at each grade level was not present. The observed instruction addressed national music standards and engaged students in developmentally appropriate musical tasks, however, based on the brevity of our observations, conclusions regarding the implementation of a sequential music curriculum could not be made.

> *"Mrs. Davis teaches us how to describe music, and how it makes us feel. Right now, we're learning how to listen carefully and describe what we hear." –4th Grade Student*

Parents noted anecdotally that their students were learning to read music, and that through arts-integrated projects students were often engaged in music making. The school principal articulated the shared vision of the Casey philosophy toward music education this way:

> *"We are not an 'arts for arts sake' school – our students use the arts to demonstrate their learning in academic subjects. We [the teachers] use the arts to enhance our academic program. We feel that every child needs exposure to the arts, but the objectives are focused on the academic work." –Administrator*

Casey's reputation for supporting academically successful students is anecdotally aligned with their participation in a variety of musical activities. The third grade program, Commotion in the Ocean, was a vivid example

"My children have made positive progress in their grades because of the rich arts access here." –Parent

The rich musical environment that stakeholders describe is another factor in Casey's reputation for success.

of a musical performance presented as a culmination of a study of habitats. Parents were delighted to describe their students' engagement in this event, but did not articulate the expectation for musical learning from it. A well-executed and successful performance was the musical expectation articulated by students, teachers, and administrators.

Access to arts instruction

Through the shared vision of arts integration, all students have a wide range of access to musical engagement in their classrooms, and all students at Casey experience general music class weekly. Choice programs like guitar and strings are also available to everyone for a minimal fee. Scholarships are available through PTA to students with limited finances. Both parents and students attribute academic success to the rich arts environment at Casey.

"In the mornings we all listen to music. When we have tests our teacher plays classical music to help us concentrate. We listen to music all the time in our classroom. I tell my friends that our music program helps you learn. You can use music to learn other stuff" –5th Grade Student

School administrators reported that Casey's rich arts access is a key factor in maintaining their reputation for high quality education.

Assessment of arts learning

At Casey, musical learning is anecdotally assessed through student performances. In line with the shared vision of arts integration, music is often the modality through which non-art learning is measured.

"Arts assessment has been a challenge for us. We know our students have multiple ways of showing us what they know. Unfortunately, the only way that counts – accountability wise – is to bubble in the right answer on a multiple-choice test. Our primary focus is not artistic performance. We don't want our students to ever feel that their participation [in music] is going to be graded. Our arts teachers aren't so much about mastering an arts objective – [in arts integration] the assessment is about the non-art content. You can just hear that it's good. Arts are a tool for measuring academics." –Administrator

There is no expectation for assessment of musical learning, nor is there a system in place through which assessments can be scaffolded. Student grades in music reflect behavior and participation.

"Usually assessment looks like application. We do recorders and some Orff. We also practice reading notation. I just watch them. Accidental assessment happens the most" –Music Specialist

The reputation for success that Casey enjoys is grounded in the academic progress of their students and the availability of a wide range of arts experiences for them. The quality and frequency of musical performances contribute to Casey's reputation for success; however, without the assessment of targeted

student outcomes in music, musical

performances simply contribute to the wide range of arts experiences so plentiful for Casey students.

Teacher quality

The music specialist at Casey is a highly qualified and experienced music teacher. She demonstrates a wide range of instructional skills, varied pedagogical approaches, and a highly affective personal relationship with her students. Her lessons are standards-based, and employ a rich variety of musical genres and styles. Literacy has an implicit position in the music classroom, and every lesson plan includes a story, or is related to a book.

> *"The state mandates that all teachers are 'reading teachers first'. Our arts specialists work with classroom teachers to provide additional support in reading" –Administrator*

Because the state has mandated an uninterrupted 90-minute literacy block every morning, Mrs. Davis supports this reading initiative in partnership with a classroom teacher. This is another way that the shared vision of arts integration is implemented at Casey.

Significant to Casey's reputation for success are the highly qualified faculty. "Most classroom teachers have arts backgrounds, and some include dual certification. Positions don't become available here very often - and teachers that come generally stay. Most teachers have National Board Certification or Masters' degrees" (4th Grade Classroom Teacher). There is also a positive and collaborative culture amongst this faculty that contributes to its reputation for success.

> *"Mrs. Davis is a good collaborator - she makes an effort to align her curriculum with others'. She goes out of her way to help us connect music activities with those we're implementing in our classrooms. We are clueless*

about arts assessment. She goes above and beyond. She is the perfect package: she is gifted at music and also has the teaching aspect - pedagogy and management."
–Classroom Teacher

Resources

The support of the Mississippi Arts Commission through their Whole Schools Initiative is a crucial resource in the shared vision for arts integration so critical to Casey's success. Stakeholders repeatedly identified the ongoing professional development and personnel support as critical to Casey's success. Additionally, partnerships were frequently mentioned as important financial and personnel resources.

"Visiting artists and members of the neighborhood church are crucial to broadening the students' education. They [the church] donated keyboards to us and they bring their bell choir over to perform for the kids" –Fine Arts Coordinator

Stakeholders were quick to mention the supportive administrators at Casey, and acknowledge their role in facilitating classroom successes. The PTA also plays an important role in providing parent volunteers, facilitating fund raising, and soliciting sponsorships to broaden the reach of this successful school. Casey's reputation for success is supported and promoted through all of these resources, and continues to strive for excellence through the efforts of many.

Conclusion

The strong, shared vision for arts integration among stakeholders at Casey Elementary School has significant impact on their musical success. Musical engagement is apparent in every classroom, and musical performances address learning outcomes in a wide variety of subject areas. Casey's reputation as an arts-rich environment also contributes to the ongoing efforts of all stakeholders to maintain and grow this active music program.

Music
at Wando High School

Mt. Pleasant, South Carolina

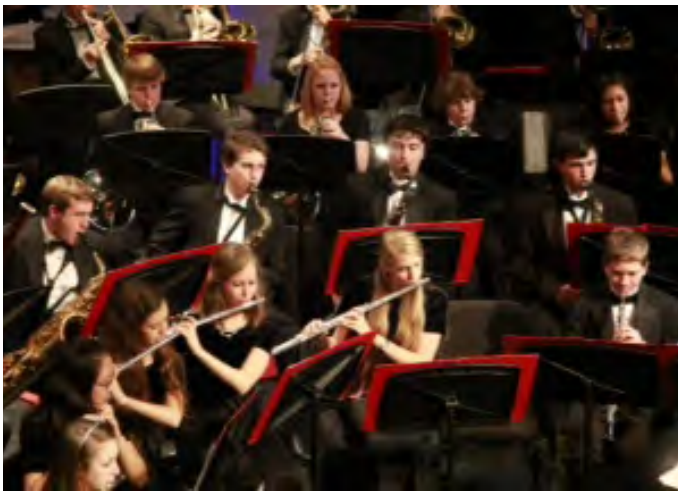
Susanne Burgess, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Wando High School accommodates over 3,700 students in a suburban community near Charleston, South Carolina. A large public high school within the Charleston County school system, this high-achieving college preparatory high school attracts families and students from far and wide. College acceptance rates exceed 90%. Over 200 faculty members serve students with interests diverging from bioengineering and interior design to studio art and music.

The rigorous music program at Wando serves more than 400 students and holds multiple prestigious awards, boasts accomplished faculty, embraces community support, and maintains an active and highly affective music community within the broader school. Students report high expectations and heavy time commitments, but the most frequently reported reasons for participation in the music program at Wando are the personal attention and mentorships they enjoy with their teachers.

> ***"Our teachers do a good job of teaching, but mostly they do a good job connecting with us. It's hard not to make good music when you get this kind of leadership and guidance. Our teachers treat us with respect – they trust us to get the job done" –Band Student***

The analysis that follows endeavors to contextualize this extraordinary community of learners in hopes others might draw from their experience and practice to strengthen music education programs across the Southeast. Our analysis of observation notes and interviews yielded three important themes. First, relationships matter. All stakeholders repeatedly commented on their sense of community, their feelings of acceptance and success, and the importance of their personal contributions to the success of the music programs at Wando. Second, students come first. The structure of decision-making amongst



administrators, parents, students and teachers put the whole student at the center of the process – academic goals, interpersonal needs, social context, and overall wellbeing were equally positioned to make the best decisions for the individual student as well as the collective communities at this large school.

Third, shared governance and responsibility is evident across all stakeholders. This teaching and learning community demonstrates strong ownership of its programs and goals and an authentic effort to keep learning relevant, governance transparent, and expectations high. Each of the six focus areas in this study has been examined through the lenses of these three themes.

School culture

The community of Mt. Pleasant is well-educated and affluent. Education is valued and the arts represent a significant presence in the community at large. These values spill over into the school community and provide a firm grounding for the relationships, activities, and structure of the music program at Wando. There is evidence of a strong school culture in the way stakeholders identify strong relationships and speak often of community support through volunteers, corporate financial sponsorships, and concert attendees.

> *"The level of stakeholder support is critical. Community affluence and education influences us. The toughest part is keeping this support active" –Administrator*

The importance of relationships at Wando is a key factor in developing and maintaining a strong culture among the musical communities and across the entire school. Students and teachers spoke of the fluidity between 'schools' and the overall nurturing culture apparent at Wando.

> *"It's about creating a culture. Program momentum relies on established culture, the routine of the curriculum, and the teachers and students all working together." –Music Faculty*

The priority of meeting student needs is another way the strong school culture is expressed. Every student and his/her parents engage in yearly individual counseling to determine progress and goals and to evaluate the curriculum through the needs students express.

> *"Students are at the center of our decision-making. The schedule is generated based on student requests – not what teachers can teach, or where their certification is – but on student requests. Music courses are open to everyone; some require auditions, but there is room for everyone to participate" –Administrator*

Strong leadership has played a significant part in the rich school culture established at Wando. Stakeholders repeatedly acknowledged principal Lucy Beckham as the linchpin of

their strength and success. Her participant-oriented management style and visionary leadership set a tone for success among all stakeholders. Faculty, parents, and students are included in the visioning of school improvement, and the arts are present as an equal among all subjects and decisions relevant to school governance.

> *"The arts are just an integral part of our school" –Administrator*

Curriculum

Time and a highly qualified faculty have contributed to the extensive and excellent music curriculum at Wando High School and scheduling innovations have been a significant contributor to the expansion of the curriculum through the development of new courses. Teachers shared similar approaches to music instruction, and expressed the importance of an explicit curriculum - one that is grounded in fundamentals and assessed both individually and corporately.

> *"We are building their musical toolboxes to allow students to transfer skills and concepts no matter what the repertoire – and it happens more quickly than it would were you to teach skill-for-skill." –Band Director*

In every ensemble rehearsal observed for this study, more time was spent on fundamentals than on repertoire. Sight reading, improvisation, attention to technique, and musicianship were hallmarks of every music class and ensemble rehearsal contributing to these findings.

The six-member music faculty enjoys a complementary working environment and demonstrates collegiality, flexibility, and shared goals for the music students at Wando. This close-knit team works together to maintain high standards, effective instructional techniques, and open communication with one another, their students, and parents. The mentorship of new faculty was identified as a priority among both seasoned and newly hired teachers.

> *"Instructors are committed to excellence. Younger teachers are chosen to complement the skills and strengths of seasoned teachers. They have chosen their 'right-out-of-college' colleagues well, and are confident that they can raise them up in excellence" –Fine Arts Coordinator*

An ensemble-based teaching repertoire becomes the curriculum, and the music faculty selects pieces carefully, based on individual and corporate student needs. Individual student

musicianship is a priority among all six music teachers, and even though the band and choral programs each support over 200 students the faculty makes it a priority to know where students stand individually.

> *"It's important to see the sequence of the big picture – to develop a target of layered instruction that builds success and confidence. Every year we expect more of our students, so the curriculum is always spiraling. In ability-based ensembles, we have to be aware of individual students' abilities and needs" –Music Faculty*

The curriculum for each ensemble is made evident through the teachers' attention to fundamental skills and through the repertoire chosen for each group. Students understand what is required of them and share the responsibility for success through their preparation. Note learning and individual mastery of repertoire is the responsibility of each student so that ensemble rehearsal time can be spent making music and refining the nuance of performance. Students understand this expectation and rise to meet it.

> *"Macro-micro-macro rehearsals and whole-part-whole rehearsals have taught me to practice until I'm successful. I've gained persistence, determination, refinement, and a 'never give up' attitude that carries over into my other academic subjects" –Student*

Access to arts instruction

All students at Wando High School have access to music instruction through the leveled ensembles in band, chorus, and orchestra. The state requires one arts credit for graduation so courses that are suitable to 'non-majors' are part of the curriculum. The steel drum ensemble attracts beginners from a wide range of majors, and ensembles in each area of musical performance audition students from across the school population. Access is accomplished in this large community through scheduling variance. Operating through block scheduling, A and B days, and a structure for year-long, semester-long, and quarterly courses, students have a wide range of opportunity to explore many courses in multiple content areas.

Students are drawn to the music department through targeted recruitment, a highly affective teaching staff, and a long-standing reputation for excellence. There is an overarching value

of interpersonal relationships among the students and between students and teachers.

> *"What we're doing musically is important, but our character is more important. Mr. Rush always tells us, "The type of musician you become is not as important as the type of person you become." They [the teachers] get to know us on a personal level. We all take care of each other, and our teachers promote that" –Student*

Access to the music programs at Wando is very much student-driven. Through their yearly counseling and scheduling sessions, students can request courses that may not already be available. The staff responds to these requests, and new courses are piloted and refined or dropped in response to student needs.

All stakeholders participate in making the music programs at Wando accessible to all students. The parent booster clubs facilitate access to Wando music programs through many scholarships and sponsorships made available to students for whom the large financial commitment of participation is a barrier. Band students pay upwards of $800.00 per year, and chorus and orchestra students are likewise required to make substantial financial commitments. "It's the best money you'll ever spend. For the amount of instruction they get, the fees are worth it" (Band parent). Principal Beckham is also an active voice where financial support is critical to the inclusion of more students in the music programs at Wando.

Assessment

Ongoing formative assessments were evident in all ensemble rehearsals and music classrooms. Teachers were explicit about goals, expectations, and student outcomes in their directions and in the way they responded to students' efforts. Individual as well as ensemble assessments are experienced with some frequency, offering students multiple opportunities for improvement. Digital media provided personal feedback for instrumentalists, and vocalists experienced frequent opportunities to sing alone and in small groups. Music assessments for band, choir, and orchestra are designed to align with state standards and the South Carolina All-State ensemble auditions. Each music student at Wando experiences a jury at the end of each school year.

> *"The reason Wando is such an exemplar is that these teachers know curriculum and assessment" –Administrator*

A climate of excellence is evident in the rehearsal process when directors coach students toward explicit outcomes. The student-to-student collaboration and teacher-student exchanges are musically rich and focused. Rehearsal pacing is brisk and students are provoked to think before they play or sing. Immediate feedback offers students spiraled instruction that is explicit, prompting the players and singers themselves to problem-solve and suggest solutions.

Student assessment is made clear through

the immediate feedback of electronic media such as Smart Music, the 'friendly' chair seating that rewards student progress.

> *"Kids need to know the purpose of each exercise, and our feedback must be purposeful. They need time to develop and understand the vocabulary. Outcome-based instruction must be evident" –Music Faculty*

In choral rehearsals, students stand to sing alone when sight-reading passages from the board. Peers on either side of the singer stand with their vocal colleague to support them, and provide the security of singing among friends. This is a literal example of "students at the center of instruction."

Shared governance and responsibility has an impact on arts assessment at Wando. Teachers and students make this evident in the way they talk about their musical progress, and demonstrate commitment to a strong work ethic. Students are self-regulated and demonstrate professional behavior in rehearsals. Teachers are well-prepared to begin on time, use rehearsal time effectively, and make transparent their goals for each rehearsal. The shared responsibilities of teaching and learning contribute significantly to the transparent assessment occurring daily in these classrooms.

> *"Instead of trying to play with a bunch of other people – we're trying to make music." –Music Faculty*

Teacher quality

Stakeholders repeatedly identified five key criteria evident among their high-quality music faculty: excellent content preparation, visionary leadership, flexibility, collaboration, and dedication to hard work. "The level of instruction here is very strong. This is like a college program. They encourage private lessons and set high standards" (Parent – Band Boosters). Teacher quality is a school-wide priority, and expectations extend to all arts faculty as well as teachers of non-arts content.

> *"Teacher quality is most important: music skills, interpersonal skills to communicate with all stakeholders, selling and marketing the program, understanding the entire community, the*

ability to see the big picture. That list would be the same for teachers of any subject" –Administrator

Trust and collegiality were significant traits stakeholders also identified as important.

"There is a great deal of trust between student and teacher. Students and parents know that these kids are going to be equipped to be successful" –Parent

"Hire the best teachers. Listen to them and trust their decisions. Give them flexibility and a schedule that promotes their best work. We've got high quality, dedicated people who put in lots and lots of hours" –Administrator

Relationships were, again, important in the expression of teacher quality at Wando. Administrators and parents acknowledged the teachers' passion for the work, and for the students.

"The teachers are passionate about music and it spills over to the kids. When you watch the performance of the marching band [at a football game] you can tell it's about the music – not just the performance on the field" –Parent

Scott Rush, Director of Bands, identified the importance of relationships in the element of teacher quality when he said, "They don't care how much you know until they know how much you care." The goals of this faculty clearly extend beyond musicianship and programming, to making a lasting impact on each of the students they encounter.

"[The teachers] are extremely concerned with the quality of student they turn out not just as musicians, but also as people. They talk about it every day, in every class. It's about the quality of the whole student - if they learn a little music along the way, everybody wins." –Parent

"They get to know us on a personal level. I think I will have a relationship with my music teachers even after I'm gone from Wando. My academic teachers don't reach out this way. Everyone gets to grow. We all take care of each other-our teachers promote that." –Student

The musical growth of the students they encounter is a high priority among these music teachers. Beyond performance preparation and product-focus, they emphasize building students' skills, deepening individual and corporate musicianship, growing independent music-makers, and developing a culture of lifelong artists. These goals are shared among

the music faculty, and communicated to students and parents regularly.

> *"When you perform, its about you – but when you teach, its about them" –Music Faculty*

> *"It's necessary for faculty to communicate with one another and to be flexible toward the needs across departments. There has to be a give and take and an understanding of the bigger picture with students' best interest in mind" –Administrator*

The music faculty shares leadership as well as ownership of these stellar programs. In these large ensemble rehearsals, it is common for multiple teachers to be present – coaching in small sections, supporting individual players and singers, or just observing from the back of the room so that colleagues can collaborate and support one another. Students understand these collegial circumstances and emulate them amongst their peers.

> *"There is a supportive team here. Scott realizes that we spend so many hours here that we've got to be comfortable. We enjoy down time at lunch as colleagues" –Music Faculty*

Resources

As is too often the case, district support for the music program at Wando is very limited. Beyond teacher salaries, district funding represents only about 3.5% of their total need. Operating expenses, equipment, and transportation needs must be locally supplemented. Parent Booster clubs (Band, Choir, and Orchestra) along with corporate and business partners draw community support in both financial and human capacity to meet the needs of these extraordinary programs. All stakeholders were quick to point out that financial resources, while important, were not considered as critical to the success of these programs as the affective support afforded through community involvement and the high value the arts enjoy within the whole community.

> *"When thinking about school resources, money isn't the first thought. The school is a resource; administrators and faculty; the community; the parents; boosters – all of these are our interpersonal resources" –Music Faculty*

> *"The Harmony Fundraising program brings in funds in various ways from the community: advertising, concert tickets, and program acknowledgments. The project is run by parents and is supported through the community. This resource brings in much more than just money - our community is critical. They take personal pride in these programs. It's*

good for everybody - parents and students like their positive reputation in the community and the process feeds itself." –Music Faculty

The importance of relationships contributed significantly to the manner in which stakeholders identified the impact of resources on these music programs. In particular, strong and stable administrative support was acknowledged as a key resource in their success.

"Committed principals are critical. Administrative support has to undergird everything. Ms. Beckham is an amazing leader. She has worked hard over the years to bring in the best people" –Administrator

"The message comes from the top. Lucy is very involved in scheduling - she is a passionate proponent of the arts. She hires great people and allows them to do their thing. She would like us to get as many kids involved in the arts as possible. High value about arts education is the message. There is an understanding from the top that if students are involved in the arts its an incredible positive" –Music Faculty

Students are very aware of the plentiful resources available to them through this music program. Many of them reported earning the money to participate, or soliciting sponsorships to supplement their own financial investment. Beyond money, students identified their teachers as the single most important resource of their programs. Administrators and parents echoed that sentiment and identified the power of their community support as invaluable.

"There are high expectations from our community – this school has always been successful, and I think a big part of that is parent involvement" –Parent

Shared governance is also apparent in the way this school community works together to identify and utilize resources. Communication is critical and a shared vision of where the school is going permeates all participants, observers, and stakeholders.

Conclusion

The music program at Wando High School is an exemplar of quality arts education because the community works together to create an atmosphere of excellence that promotes strong relationships; shared governance, responsibility, and ownership; and student outcomes at the core of all decision-making. This large, suburban high school demonstrates an authentic effort to keep learning relevant, governance transparent, and expectations high.

Visual Art
at Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary

North Charleston, South Carolina

Joel Baxley, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary School is a large public elementary school that serves over 800 pre-K through fifth grade students in North Charleston, South Carolina. It is a Title I school, serving a high-needs population. Approximately 80% of the student body is on free or reduced lunch. According to records published by the school district, the poverty rate has grown from 48% in 2000 to 82% in 2013. They are an arts focus school. Instruction is provided in music, dance, theater, and visual art by certified instructors each week. At Windsor Hill, that arts focus is arts infusion—aimed at providing intentional integrated instruction across disciplinary lines. They have received honors from the South Carolina Arts Commission's Arts in the Basic Curriculum (ABC) program and the Kennedy Center for excellence in arts education.

At Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary, two competent, organized young women work with each other to develop and implement instruction in visual art for all students. They also collaborate with non-arts classroom teachers to design and implement interdisciplinary lessons. The teaching of visual art in isolation and as part of interdisciplinary work receives strong support from the administration at the school and district level. In the Dorchester Two School District, a Fine Arts Director's office coordinates efforts in the visual and performing arts between schools.

Access

All students at Windsor Hill receive dedicated instruction in visual art. Students take classes in two and three-dimensional art in a five-day rotation with other arts classes (vocal and instrumental music, dance, and theater). Students work with a visual art teacher for five consecutive days on a project before moving on to another teacher for the next rotation. Seeing the same group for five days in a row mitigates the limitations of shorter classes at the elementary level. It allows each art teacher to work through larger projects without long breaks between. It also helps with storage issues. In schools where the art teacher has only one day each week with a group, a single project can stretch over a month and incomplete works of an entire grade level must be stored in either the art room or the homeroom class until the work is completed.

With this rotation, storage is only necessary for one group per grade level. This rotation structure has been set for arts programs in the elementary schools across the district.

> *"It's nice having the full week."*
> *–Art Teacher*

> *"They're in there long enough to get something done, but there's still a sense of newness when they come back."*
> *–Art Teacher*

Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary has two art teachers, each with her own dedicated visual art classroom. This is the rule rather than the exception in the Dorchester Two district. Each elementary school there has at least two and sometimes more instructors in visual art. At Windsor Hill, the teachers have specialized their instruction. Elise Stuck teaches Two Dimensional (2D) Art and Erica Harper teaches Three Dimensional (3D) Art. Every grade level sees each of the art teachers for two quarters. A given group will have 2D with Ms. Stuck for two quarters, then switch at semester and have Ms. Harper for 3D in the same time slot each day. The dedicated spaces allow the teachers to make efficient use of materials and allow for set up and clean up routines conducive to sculptural or pictorial work as needed. Having two teachers on staff also gives students access to more diversity in teaching styles and personalities in art instruction.

> *"To have the option of having 2D art and 3D art in an elementary school is powerful."*
> *–Classroom Teacher*

In addition to the dedicated visual art times, each visual art teacher has times during her week set aside for what the school calls "arts infusions." These are collaborations between classroom teachers and arts specialists in which instruction targets learning goals in both the art form and a non-arts content area. Classroom teachers and the fine arts team work together to identify potential connections at the beginning of the year and grade level teams or individual teachers sign up with the arts specialist to work with them during the available times on the schedule. As classroom teachers become familiar with some projects, they may also choose to implement them on their own in the classroom to allow them to try new ideas with the arts specialists.

> *"The thing that sets it [Windsor Hill] apart is the focus on infusion. They are working constantly to have that infusion happen for the students."*
> *–District Fine Arts Director*

Most students in the Windsor Hill community have difficulty gaining access to arts instruction outside the school day. There are museums and galleries in the Charleston area, but parents' work schedules and the cost of transportation limit access to those resources. Likewise, outside art classes are often expensive and difficult for families to accommodate. Occasionally, Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper do take their time to offer visual

art classes as part of the extended day programming at school. Most recently, Ms. Stuck offered a digital photography class and Ms. Harper offered one in ceramics. For these classes, students in the extended day program only have to sign up to attend. The art teachers also sponsor an art club called the Art Corps for fourth and fifth graders that is joined by audition. This small group (currently 12 students) meets about twice a month on early release days.

Beyond their time at Windsor Hill, students in the Dorchester Two district have opportunities to pursue further study in visual art. Each middle and high school in the district has visual art instruction. Additionally, there is a visual and performing arts magnet school, Rollings Middle, which is accessible to any student in the district by audition. Prior to Windsor Hill taking on its arts focus, few students from its community pursued the audition process. As with outside arts classes, parents found it difficult to find ways to take their children to the auditions. The number of students from Windsor Hill attending Rollings has risen over the years. However, there is still a need to continually educate parents that there is no cost to them or need for transportation in order for their children to attend the school. It is often simply not considered as an option. One function that the Art Corps group has

served is to give the art teachers time to help prepare students who wish to audition in visual art. At the high school level, diversified courses in visual art are available at both of the high schools in the district that Windsor Hill students might attend. Courses are offered in drawing, painting, sculpture, ceramics, photography, 2D design, and media arts.

Parents receive information about their children's work in visual art through the school's newsletter, through emails, phone calls, and through the children and the work they bring home. Student work is regularly exhibited in and out of the school. There are displays of student work in the lobby area and in the halls around the school that the art teachers change out regularly. Work from infusion projects is displayed as well in the hallways and in classrooms. Student work appears often at monthly PTA events. There is an annual arts gala that includes an exhibition of student artwork. Teachers take student work to the local fair and occasionally submit work to regional competitions that the district keeps the department apprised of.

Resources

The visual art teachers at Windsor Hill are given the time, space, and materials to carry out instruction in a variety of media for a large number of students. The two art rooms are

spacious. The 3D room is large, with access to the outside. The 2D room is somewhat smaller. It is an adaptation of a regular classroom from the building's original design, but contains a sink and it has cabinets, shelves and a drying rack for storage. The 2D room has a smart board with a ceiling-mounted projector linked to a laptop on the nearby teacher desk. The 3D room does not have a ceiling-mounted projector (the room has vaulted ceilings that would make such an installation difficult). However, the teacher does have a projector and laptop to use for presentations to the class. The 3D room has a kiln for ceramic projects and shelving and storage areas.

In interviews, students, teachers, administrators, and art specialists all said that materials for the work in visual art at Windsor Hill was readily available. Art teachers submit lists of needs to the district fine arts director who makes purchases. In addition to the supplies for the visual art teachers, the art teachers helped create a collection of supplies available to classroom teachers for use in their arts infusion lessons. In addition to supplying materials, Larry Barnfield, the district fine arts director, identified a supply of resources his office has available for teachers' use including books, videos, and other materials.

"I know Mr. Barnfield has our back if we need supplies."
–Art Teacher

The district office and the school administration have also provided opportunities in professional development for the visual arts staff and for the faculty at Windsor Hill as a whole. Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper have had the opportunity to attend state and national conferences of the National Art Education Association. They have attended and presented at the South Carolina Alliance for Arts Education's Integration conference. Since the initiation of the arts infusion focus at Windsor Hill, the district fine arts director and the school principal have created and invited learning opportunities in arts-integrated instruction. The district office regularly provides small-scale, ongoing conversations with the fine arts team and teachers who need assistance. Ms. Bodison, the principal, brought in consultant Claudia Cornett for an extended period to work with her staff. The administrators identified ongoing learning in arts infusion as a continual challenge they face as the school's programming moves forward.

"Intentional professional development was a challenge going forward."
–Administrator
"Our arts teachers are wonderful and brilliant, but they need to grow too!"
–Administrator

School Culture

The Windsor Hill community including parents, teachers, administrators, and district administration, support the work of all their arts team including Ms. Harper and Ms. Stuck. Parents attend school events and exhibits.

They bring their children to them often when transportation is difficult for the family. Classroom teachers recognize the learning that occurs for their students in Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper's classrooms. Teachers are very complimentary of the work the art teachers do and speak enthusiastically of the opportunities they have had to collaborate with each of them.

"I have parents who walk to parent events." –Administrator

"They will be more willing to take risks. Open to creating. Not just doing things the same way." –Classroom Teacher

Collaboration is very evident between the visual art teachers and between the arts and non-arts staff at Windsor Hill. This collaboration is structurally supported by the school's administration. At the beginning of the year, before students arrive, the fine arts team has an opportunity to meet with each grade level to begin identifying collaborative opportunities for the upcoming year. Each team works with the arts specialists to identify times and means through which to accomplish the tasks they set. The school's administration has opened times in the specialists' schedules to implement collaborative efforts without taking away from their time teaching the art form. The development of lessons occurs informally throughout the year as the arts teachers are able to communicate with the classroom teachers. Sometimes the collaboration takes the form of offering resources or suggestions. Other times it involves team teaching with a classroom teacher.

"It's like a big triangle. Them to us, us to the students, them to the students." –Classroom Teacher

"The very first teacher work days we had in the school year, there was time to do a sort of roundtable with the arts teachers." –Classroom Teacher

The collaboration is not only evident between arts and non-arts teachers. The visual art teachers work regularly with other members of the school's fine arts team. They plan events together and collaborate on performances and exhibits. They have identified integrated instruction opportunities between art forms like Ms. Harper's work with the dance specialist to use student dancers working with body socks as models for gestural sculptures. The collaboration is especially evident between the two visual art teachers who work together constantly to reflect and revise their curriculum.

"It's nice to have people to collaborate with at any moment." –Art Teacher

"Having two art teachers there was immediate support within my curriculum." –Art Teacher

The school and district level administration see the value of visual art instruction on its own and as part of an arts infusion model.

They have set aside instructional time for visual art content in isolation and provided opportunities in the schedule for collaborative instruction to take place with classroom teachers. They have sought out and provided professional development opportunities not only for the whole staff in arts infusion, but for the visual art specialists, allowing them to communicate with the field of visual art education and their colleagues in the community. The art teachers both spoke of feeling very comfortable approaching Ms. Bodison or Mr. Barnfield with their thoughts or suggestions about their work.

"Ms. Bodison is very open to new ideas, so we can email her and ask what do you think about doing this?" –Art Teacher

One of the greatest assets of the program is their representation by a district level fine arts director. Mr. Barnfield speaks on the arts specialists' behalf with administrators at the school and district level. He provides material support and professional development for the fine arts team. He assists with professional development for the faculty at Windsor Hill in pursuit of their arts infusion focus. Through Mr. Barnfield's office, the art teachers have access to the field and a sense of support beyond the building from those who understand the arts from within.

"Whenever we need him, he's here to provide support, give input." –Administrator

"He is our advocate. Our cheerleader." –Administrator

Curriculum

The visual art teachers at Windsor Hill have a primary responsibility to meet the requirements of the South Carolina standards in visual art for K-5. They target the skills and media identified in the standards, but Ms. Harper and Ms. Stuck choose the timing and methods for their instruction. At Windsor Hill, the visual art team has chosen to divide their responsibilities into a 2D and 3D focus. In each section, the teacher addresses media and skills that they classify under those categories. Both teachers emphasize the creative process (posted in both rooms as: Brainstorm, Begin to Create, Revise, Finalize, and Share) and the elements and principles of design. The principal keeps a bulletin board in the office hallway on which the arts team (including the media specialist and the P.E. teacher) has posted the units for the quarter. The visual art teachers include information for each unit about the elements and principles to be addressed, the media and techniques that will be used, the subject matter for the project, and vocabulary that will be introduced.

"Students show up for fine arts time and we're expecting for those 40 minutes to be focused on the visual arts standards. And they are. That's the core of what they're teaching." –Administrator

This year, the visual art teachers decided together to expand their efforts on cultural context by calling the year Around the World. Each unit focuses on something drawn from a particular culture: kente cloth, manga, sumi painting, Oaxacan animal sculptures, etc.

"We learned stuff about social studies at the same time. Like we learned about Japan, Mexico." –Student

"I think it gives them a context. More of a basis for why people make this." –Art Teacher

Teacher Quality

The two art teachers at Windsor Hill provide an organized working environment with a warm affective climate. They differentiate instructional methods and feedback for a variety of student needs. They encourage independent, higher-order thinking in their students. And they work in collaboration with one another, their colleagues on the arts team, and the non-arts classroom teachers.

Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper cultivate a welcoming, structured environment where students engage with the teacher and one another through practiced routines. The shorter classes and younger students necessitate a more organized approach and the teachers have managed to have that organization without losing the open opportunities for creative thinking that the work in visual art can provide. The rooms are colorful and inviting. They are well organized with tables in an L or U pattern that allows the teacher to move easily among working students. There is an open carpeted area in each room in front of the screen where children can gather for discussions or demonstrations. The walls are covered in postings that contain classroom rules, art vocabulary, and the creative process along with reproductions of art and samples of student work. Each teacher communicates clearly and calmly with the class. Along with routines for involving students in set up and cleanup of the room, the teachers use rhymes and movements as mnemonic devices for procedures and as classroom management devices.

"They encourage me." –Student

"As a fine arts teacher you have one of the hardest jobs at the school. You have 800 children rotating through. And those kids want you to know them just like their math teacher does. And they do a great job of building those relationships." (Administrator)

"I love my kids." –Art Teacher

"They have incredible classroom management skills. Both of them do. The students are fully engaged. The procedures have been practiced. The kids know what to do, how to put things up, where things go. We've been in there before when it looks

like chaos and they'll say, You have five minutes! and it will be clean in five minutes." –Classroom Teacher

The art teachers at Windsor Hill employ a variety of teaching strategies. During observed classes, both teachers began with whole group discussion and review of past work then transitioned into group or individual work on the tasks at hand. Each spent a good portion of the class time working her way among students conferring with each about his or her work, offering feedback and prompting with questions. Occasionally, when issues were noticed with multiple students, the teacher drew the group's attention back together for a discussion or short demonstration. During one class, the teacher stopped them working and had the students walk among their classmates' work discussing how some of them had accomplished the goals for the day.

"She tells me how to help them—how to fix them, to make them perfectly." –Student

"One of the things that Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper really do well is focusing on the process. As opposed to the end result that kids walk out with and everyone looks good." –Administrator

Each of the art teachers at Windsor Hill demonstrates proficiency with a variety of media and an understanding of how to differentiate processes among age levels so that

the work is appropriate for the grade level in the room. Each is certified in visual art and has a bachelor's degree in Art or Art Education. Ms. Stuck has a Master of Arts in Teaching Visual Art K-12. The two have created and exhibited their own work in the past and view themselves as artists.

The visual art teachers at Windsor Hill are reflective collaborators. They are in constant discussion with one another about the curriculum, their students and how they are delivering instruction. They have an excellent working relationship.

"The two of them work really well together."
–Classroom Teacher

"They are such good friends. They just spend a great deal of time thinking about how they're going to deliver instruction."
–Administrator

"We're always coming up with lessons, like coming in and saying I have this idea, but something's not working."
–Art Teacher

As part of their work in the arts infusion model, the two also collaborate frequently and effectively with the classroom teachers and the other arts teachers. They make an effort to be aware of what their students are learning in other subjects so that they can contextualize their work in visual art better and do a better job identifying potential connection points for arts infusion lessons.

"So when we ask for an infusion with them, they work hard to make sure they understand our content."
–Classroom Teacher

"If I don't understand something, I can go to either of them for help."
–Classroom Teacher

Assessment

There is a balance of formative and summative assessment in visual art classes at Windsor Hill, but the emphasis is clearly on the formative. Students receive grades that are in part a representation of behavior and participation based on the school's SOAR model (Safety, Organization, Achievement, and Respect). Ms. Harper and Ms. Stuck do employ rubrics for student work and clearly describe the criteria they are looking for in the products the learners produce. There are quizzes that are used occasionally for the assessment of vocabulary with some grade levels. This year, that has been achieved partially through the use of a passport booklet that students carry to each art class. The book contains pages on each country they will visit in their studies and calls on the student to identify cultural and art vocabulary introduced in each place along with the art processes that were used (media and techniques), and subject matter.

Formative assessment is accomplished primarily as part of the process of individual teacher conferences with students as the

teacher moves through the room from student to student as they work. The teacher looks at students' work, asks questions about it, and calls on the student to consider next steps or revisions to the work. This process takes up most of the teacher's time during the time students have their hands on materials.

The students also participate in self and peer assessments. One form this takes is an informal critique. Students go on gallery walks where they move around the space looking at their classmates' work. The teacher asks them to look for certain things—scoring lines, geometric shapes, etc.—based on the goals for the day's work. She then asks the class to discuss what they see in the work of their classmates.

Conclusion

At Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary, an interdisciplinary model is strong because the individual disciplines are well taught. Time and effort is spent on arts content in isolation, better preparing students for the collaborative efforts that the administration has provided opportunities for in the structure of the school day through the arts infusion program. At Windsor Hill, skilled, reflective art teachers work with a collaborative staff in a supportive culture.

Art and Design
in the primary and elementary academies
at Charles R. Drew Charter School
Atlanta, Georgia

Joel Baxley, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Charles R. Drew Charter School is a public charter that opened in Atlanta, Georgia in 2000. It began with 240 students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Since then, the school has expanded its constituency to serve over 1,200 students in Pre-K through ninth grade. The school is located in the East Lake neighborhood in the city of Atlanta where it has been a strong part of the revitalization of that community. They are a Title I school, serving a student body with a 68% free and reduced lunch rate. Next year the school will open a second campus for its growing high school. Drew was named Georgia Charter School of the Year in 2013 and the elementary and middle school programs have been ranked very highly on Georgia's College and Career Ready Performance Index. The school has ongoing partnerships with a variety of organizations including Atlanta Public Schools, the Center for Civic Engagement at Oglethorpe University, the Center for Teaching at The Westminster Schools, Children's Healthcare of Atlanta, Georgia State University School of Music, the Georgia Institute of Technology's Center for Education Integrating Science, Mathematics, and Computing, and the Rollins Center for Language and Learning at the Atlanta Speech School.

Drew has adopted a STEAM focus, adding Arts to the STEM model (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics). In their current charter contract, they have also identified problem-based learning as an emphasis. The school has been held up as a model of STEAM in practice by the STEM to STEAM Initiative of the Rhode Island School of Design (RISD). According to the RISD profile on Drew, their approach to STEAM has four guiding principles:

- An interdisciplinary program integrating the five areas of science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics
- Inquiry-based instructional program with real world context
- Emphasis on design and problem-solving leading to applications
- Child-centered, community-based school focusing on science, technology, engineering, arts, and mathematics (Marland, 2014)

Elementary visual art instruction at Drew is multifaceted and supported by at three specialists, non-arts teachers, and artists from partner organizations. K-5 students receive

dedicated instruction in visual art from two art teachers: Renee Ruffin and Collins Anderson, but they also learn and apply visual art skills and ideas in Engineering Design, a class taught by Courtney Bryant, a qualified art educator. Students and teachers refer to the learning process in visual art at Drew as "hands on." The teachers cultivate a working environment in which students think and act as designers and artists. The language of the elements and principles of design and the creative process is shared among these contexts.

The art program is resourceful in its navigation of a complex schedule in a growing school. The teachers are flexible in their classroom practice, their acquisition of needed materials, collaboration with colleagues, and the development of partnerships with artists and institutions in the community.

Access to Visual Art Instruction

Students at Drew receive instruction in visual art and design primarily in the two art classes and the Engineering Design class. The art classes focus on traditional art media and take primary responsibility for the fulfillment of state and national standards in visual art. The Engineering Design class provides students with a variety of practical problem-solving experiences, but the work is guided by the elements and principles of design and a creative design cycle. The program has also partnered with teaching artists for larger collaborative projects like the courtyard sculpture facilitated by outdoor sculptor Jeff Mather.

Growing numbers of students and a large number of rotational classes like visual art and engineering result in a complex schedule. This reality is seen as both a challenge and an opportunity. Drew has grown considerably since its establishment in 2000, and the school continues to attract students to its program. Visual Art and Engineering Design are classified as enrichment classes. The school has many of them, including Visual Art, General Music, Chorus, Orchestra, Band, Dance, PE, Golf, Swimming, Engineering Design, Technology and Robotics. Accommodating all of these options, particularly for growing numbers of students in the lower grades, means that visual art instruction happens in the context of an irregular schedule. School administrators

have worked to give students access to all of these opportunities, and this structure is constantly under review and revision. At Drew, the art teachers meet with kindergarten and first grade for 35 minutes each day. They see each class in a rotation of five to seven weeks. Most K-1 classes, then, take visual art twice in the year, once with each of the school's two visual art teachers. One kindergarten and one first grade class have only one visual art rotation and two kindergarten classes have three. The Engineering Design class, where Mrs. Bryant applies the creative process and the elements and principles of design, meets on the same rotation. Second and third grade students meet with enrichment teachers on a quarterly basis for the same amount of time each day. Fourth and fifth grades operate on an A/B rotation with longer classes. So these students meet with the art teachers for an hour and fifteen minutes every other day.

Beginning in second grade, students may be pulled from Visual Art instruction for performing arts classes that run for the entire year. In second and third grades chorus and dance run for the year, and in fourth and fifth grades, chorus, dance, band, and orchestra take students for the whole year. Therefore, the class sizes in fourth and fifth grades for both visual art teachers and the engineering classes tend to be small. In classroom observations, classes ranged from six to ten students in fourth and fifth grades. The teachers are conflicted over the absence of some of the students in older grades, but see the smaller classes as an opportunity for closer attention and more of the "hands on" work that such closer attention allows. Mrs. Bryant worked with one such small class to construct a large sculptural egg display in front of the school to advertise an upcoming egg drop competition. The smaller group allowed her to safely and effectively coach 5th graders in their use of drills and a miter saw to construct a wooden base and assemble the PVC pipe and large plastic hemispheres that comprised the eight-foot construction.

Resources

The art and design classes at Drew Charter School are well provided for in terms of space and supplies. Art classes occur in two rooms on the upper floor of the building. Each is an adequate space for the size classes observed, with natural light from windows. The engineering design class occurs in a very spacious room on the lower floor with a

storage room and added space for tools and materials. In all three rooms, the teachers have posted art vocabulary including the elements and principles of design and charts of design processes.

> *"Nice large room ...lots of southern exposure natural light." –Teaching Artist*

While the school provides basic materials, each teacher has pursued outside partnerships and funding to support efforts in art and design. They have made use of resources like Donors Choose[17] and local benefactors. Ms. Anderson and Mrs. Ruffin have obtained needed technology for their classrooms. Mrs. Ruffin acquired computers and a printer-scanner for the program. Ms. Anderson obtained the donation of a smart board and used Donors Choose to fund the creation of a cart of materials called a tranquility cart that other teachers can check out for use with their students. Mrs. Bryant's engineering design class operates with tools supplemented by donations and grant funding including a 3D printer.

> *"She and I get together and go through the [supply list] from last year." –Art Teacher*

> *"We have not ever been told how much we can or can't." –Art Teacher*

> *"We get it. We may not get it the next day, ...but we'll get it eventually." –Art Teacher*

The art teachers at Drew have been supported through professional development targeted at their discipline. They have been able to attend the National Art Education Association convention for the past three years. The school sent the arts team to a conference sponsored by Harvard's Project Zero. The teachers have been able to obtain support for workshops that they identify in addition to opportunities the school provides, like the workshops they have attended as part of Drew's partnership with the Center for Teaching with the Westminster Schools in Atlanta.

> *"We take quite a few workshops together." –Art Teacher*

Teacher Quality

The art and design teachers at Drew Charter School are qualified educators with Art and Art Education degrees and experience teaching visual art. They each bring valuable skills and experience to the program. Mrs. Ruffin is an active artist who continues to exhibit her own work. Ms. Anderson is widely travelled and has led professional development in visual art for her colleagues. Mrs. Bryant has published about earlier work as an art teacher in *Art Education,* the journal of the National Art Education Association.

All three are flexible, resourceful educators who collaborate with each other, with teachers of other content areas, and members of the community. The art teachers regularly share materials and ideas about instruction. They work together to identify supply needs for each year. Mrs. Ruffin and Ms. Anderson assist with the *Designorama* event coordinated by Mrs. Bryant. They have all taken part in larger projects involving artists from partner institutions. As classroom teachers prepared projects for a PBL (Project-Based Learning) event, the art and engineering teachers collaborated on the construction of a miniature installation. Students designed and constructed a ski lodge consisting of a mountain with trees and a working ski lift. In January and February, Mrs. Bryant worked with sculptor Jeff Mather on the construction of an outdoor "Tinker Yard." Mrs. Ruffin and Ms. Anderson collaborate on regular exhibits of student work. During my visit, they assembled a large display intended for an upcoming PTA meeting. They used a built-in glass display area and took delight in discussing the different approaches they had each taken to the creative challenge of putting together African-themed display panels using student work.

> *"I would say they have to be flexible. Willing to learn or have some knowledge of the context of all grade levels."*
> *–Classroom Teacher*

At Drew, students are engaged in the cognitive, social, and practical material processes of creation. Art students are asked not only to make quality products, but also to be able to talk about the processes they've engaged in and how others have used them before.

> ***"We learned about artists like Pablo Picasso and other famous artists that used collage and bright colors and contrast."***
> ***–5th Grade Student***

> ***"The children explain the work. Mrs. Ruffin and Ms. Anderson sit back and the children lead the art exhibition."***
> ***–Classroom Teacher***

> ***"We see different kinds of things that we don't even know yet. She shows us. We look."***
> ***–1st Grade Student***

Ms. Anderson had fifth graders work together to redesign the school's logo for inclusion on a pennant. Mrs. Ruffin's students

created mixed media collages influenced by the works of Picasso and Romare Bearden. In the "Tinker Yard" project, first graders were called on to assist in digging postholes and removing dirt to prepare for the installation of outdoor interactive sculptures that they had helped design with Mrs. Bryant and Mr. Mather.

Teachers and students at Drew praised the visual art teachers for their attention to the individual child. This description is borne out in observations. Each teacher employed a variety of teaching strategies in her classes. Each provided a level of freedom or structure appropriate for the age group she worked with. In her fifth grade class, Ms. Anderson had her students craft short written responses to clay masks they had recently completed as part of a project with a visiting artist. She provided clear criteria to the whole group, and then spent time in discussion with them as they looked together at the pieces, still drying on a table. She gave the students time to work, coaching one or two in process. Then she had each student share his or her writing with the class. Students were comfortable with the process. The ease with which they entered the sharing suggested that they had done this before. Ms. Anderson paraphrased points from each student's writing and used some of the responses as opportunities to assess understanding of vocabulary and provide clarification for the class.

Mrs. Ruffin also coached and mentored a first grade class, but provided the younger children more structured routines. She provided very clear instructions for a drawing

task to the whole class, and then spent time in individual consultation with students as they worked. She occasionally highlighted interesting ideas in students' work for the class. She provided a short time for students to share their work, showing drawings to the class and describing each. Like Ms. Anderson with the older students, Mrs. Ruffin paraphrased students' words, validating their responses and sometimes clarifying them for the class. Both teachers employed clear routines for cleanup, a vital component for short classes with young children.

In Mrs. Bryant's work with her older engineering students, she gave them more independent tasks with coaching and supervision. The group working on the outdoor egg display was shown how to use the tools to create and assemble components, and the teacher stepped back and let them do the work. She stepped in to maintain safety or assist with a problem, but she moved them toward more independent work.

"The biggest thing is that they teach to the individual child."
–Classroom Teacher

"We'll move through one part then she'll take us to the next part when we get it. She'll say things three times till we get it." –5th Grade Student

Curriculum

The art and design teachers at Drew have developed curricula that look to state and national standards in visual art as a starting point. The art teachers took on the challenge of developing their own curricula. Each teacher has a set of projects in which they engage each grade level based on the needs they have identified for their students. Ms. Anderson described a process of working back from her experiences teaching older students at the high school level and the lessons she's learned from her students at Drew. Mrs. Ruffin identified training in Discipline Based Art Education (DBAE) some years ago as a foundation for her approach. They look on the art curriculum as a thing under constant revision. They have had to learn to negotiate the demands of the visual art standards with the realities of the schedule and the desire to collaborate with non-arts colleagues.

"There's a lot of freedom. We're lucky we can try out new things and if something doesn't work, throw it out."
–Art Teacher

The engineering design class had to be built from the ground up. There were no state standards for engineering at the elementary level. So Mrs. Bryant crafted her curriculum by looking to entry-level high school expectations for the Engineering Pathway in Georgia's state standards. Students are guided through projects that emphasize two and three dimensional design, particularly sculptural construction processes. Students are given the opportunity to use tools of increasing complexity.

In visual art classes, students experience a range of media and processes. Works on display and student interviews indicate the use of paint, collage, clay, graphic design, and drawing media. The children understand an emphasis on drawing from direct observation and the vocabulary of the elements and principles of design.

"You could look out the window at real trees and see how they look and make it just like them. You could draw branches, put leafs on them."
–1st Grade Student

"We've learned different colors and how to mix them, definitions and how to draw things." –5th Grade Student

"As far as the art curriculum itself is concerned, I like my students to have a large art vocabulary. That's very important to me."
–Art Teacher

Assessment

Art and Design teachers at Drew use a variety of tools to assess student learning. They use quizzes and critiques, and they employ criteria that students have to apply to their projects. The most evident kind of assessment that occurs is informal, formative assessment given as part of the process of coaching student artists.

The teachers give quizzes over vocabulary and call on students to use vocabulary accurately. In self-assessment writing, Ms. Anderson requires students to use words

from a word wall of relevant vocabulary. Mrs. Ruffin gives students pretests at the beginning of rotations with a given class to gauge their level of skill before entering into new projects. These pretests involve creating drawings and talking about their work.

> ***"When they talk about it I get to see, when I question them, their level of knowledge in terms of art vocabulary."***
> ***–Art Teacher***

The method of assessment seen most often in the visual art classrooms is informal and formative. The teachers constantly moved among working students and offered probing questions, reminded students of task criteria, and asked for their opinions about their work thus far. They were responsive to students' questions, and their observations of student needs informed their adjustment of instruction. In one instance, Ms. Anderson called a few students together to demonstrate a technique. She didn't call on everyone, just the few whose work indicated a need. In interviews, students talked about Mrs. Ruffin or Ms. Anderson coming by and talking to them about their work or offering corrections or suggestions.

> ***"I get to see how they use crayons, how they use the pencils, and based on what they do with those things I have an idea of what experiences they've had or have not had."***
> ***–Art Teacher***

School Culture

The culture at Drew is busy. A variety of in and out of school activities in arts and non-arts content were a near constant during the site visit. Art and design (and the arts in general) are a strong component of the culture and identity of the elementary school at Drew Charter. The art and design teachers have taken leadership roles by hosting events that highlight the role of art and design in the

world outside of school and that showcase the role of creative work in the lives of the Drew community. The "hands on" art and design program at Drew presents an opportunity to understand and develop a specific, practical understanding of what a STEAM school is.

The arts are an evident part of school life for students and teachers in the elementary school at Drew. In addition to visual art, there are classes offered in vocal music, instrumental music, and dance. There are visible displays of students' work created in the art classes and work created with non-arts teachers. Teachers, students, and administrators spoke with pride of student work, particularly noting the outdoor sculptural work that was recently created in the courtyard. Teachers and students in separate interviews referred to the culture of the school as "interwoven" or "flowing together". They perceived the arts to be part of an integrated whole rather than something off to the side.

> ***"It really is organic ....they get the whole picture."***
> ***–Classroom Teacher***

> ***"I think everything flows together in the school."***
> ***–5th Grade Student***

The art and design teachers have taken a leadership role in two events that show students the place of art and design in the world around them. Mrs. Bryant coordinates an event called *Designorama* that invites working designers and artists to demonstrate and discuss their work for the Drew community. Mrs. Ruffin and Ms. Anderson have assisted

in that effort by helping to contact artists and craftspeople for the event. The focus of art exhibits sponsored by schools is typically to highlight the work of students. While such showings occur on campus regularly, Mrs. Ruffin began an annual exhibit that emphasized art as a part of the lives of the Drew community. This event, called "Soaring," invited teachers and parents to submit artwork for display in a gallery space. Drew families and members of the community attended the exhibit each year. The event has been supported by the other art forms at the school through musical performances by members of the Drew community willing to share their talents. Art is validated in this exhibit as a valuable part of life in the world outside of school. Administrators, teachers, and parents displayed their drawings, paintings, photographs, and other work beside artwork by the art teachers and artists from the community.

Arts advocates faced with the popularity

of the STEM movement in education have proposed the integration (or perhaps *re*-integration) of the arts into this problem-based model. This integration of the creative process and functional design thinking has been called STEAM. Acronyms in education can quickly become little more than jargon (Bequette, 2012), but there is merit in its use in Drew's employment of isolated visual art instruction and dedicated time to the application of aesthetic thinking as part of the design process. In visual art classes and in the engineering design class, students are challenged to learn with and through material (Eisner, 2002). They see a spectrum of creative effort from the purely functional, to the purely aesthetic, and the abundant opportunities between.

> *"I want to be an artist when I grow up. An artist is a person who really likes art and they have all the things that you can use. It's different kinds of artists, you know? There's artists that do sculpture, artists that draw in books, and artists that paint and use markers."*
> *–1st Grade Student*

> *"STEAM means you put your hands onto all the stuff."*
> *–5th Grade Student*

Conclusion

At Drew Charter School, students receive instruction in visual art as a fine art and as a way of thinking. The vision of a STEAM curriculum is evident in the design thinking that permeates several of the instructional contexts at this school, but in particular the art rooms and the Engineering Design class. The administration and teachers at Drew work together to provide learners with opportunities to make art and solve design problems, and students are introduced to members of the Atlanta community who apply those skills in their professional lives.

Visual Art
at Bob Jones High School

Madison, Alabama

Joel Baxley, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

Bob Jones High School is a fairly large 9-12 public high school located in Madison, Alabama, a suburban community near Huntsville in the north of the state. It serves approximately 1,850 students with a faculty of 98 teachers. The school has been recognized for its high levels of achievement. The graduation rate is over 90% and over 70% of its students go on to college.

The visual art program at Bob Jones is a source of particular pride for the school and the community of Madison. With only a few teachers, the students have produced work that has been consistently recognized in the state and nationally. In 2007 and 2008, the head of the art department at Bob Jones was awarded the Golden Apple Teacher award by the Scholastic Art and Writing competition for the most student awards. Students continue to submit portfolios to that competition and others each year and continue to be recognized. Bob Jones art students have received scholarships to prestigious visual arts programs around the country.

The art department at Bob Jones High School continues a history of skillful, dedicated visual art teachers who have served as mentors for their students and champions for the program. The following profile looks through six lenses: access to arts instruction, school culture, resources, curriculum, assessment of student learning in the arts, and teacher quality.

Access to Visual Art Instruction

Visual art courses are made available to all students at Bob Jones. Courses are listed in the catalog that is provided to all students prior to registration. The largest numbers of students attend the Art I course. Many of these do so in part to fulfill the fine arts graduation requirement set by the state, but many go on to attend the other available courses (Art II, III, and IV and Advanced Art). There is a recommended fee for participating students of $25, but that fee is waived for students who are unable to pay. The visual art courses are electives, and the number of offerings available each year depends upon the number of students enrolling.

Students are drawn to the program primarily by the visibility of high quality student work. Bob Jones art students exhibit regularly in the community. Each fall, the school has a booth at the Madison Street Festival, and each spring, students' artwork is

shown at Panoply, an arts festival in nearby Huntsville. Parents and children from the Madison area see this work. Most notably, the school hosts exhibits on its campus regularly. In particular, they host an arts day at Bob Jones High School in which students from all schools in the area are invited to submit work for show. At these events, elementary and middle school students and their parents have the opportunity to see what the high school program is doing. Senior Advanced Art students at Bob Jones are given their own exhibit area at these events.

> *"I would come and see the art and say, these walls! The seniors have these walls! I want a wall!" –Student*

School Culture

The community in Madison is supportive of the arts programs in its schools. The Madison Street Festival, run by the local arts council, raises funds that contribute to the visual and performing arts programs. Crowds turn out for the art shows on the Bob Jones campus that consist not only of the families of exhibiting students, but members of the surrounding community.

The school community at Bob Jones High School is proud of the success of its visual art program. The school board and other public officials have recognized art students who have received awards or scholarships for their work. The school administration recognizes and supports the efforts of teachers and students in visual art.

> *"I'm in awe of the students and what they do. They create." –Administrator*

> *"The kids talk about us, and the teachers talk. Teachers know that we have a good program." –Art Teacher*

This recognition of the visual art program in the school community has grown over several years through continual advocacy on the part of the teaching staff. The program has come to be recognized through a ground level effort on the part of dedicated teachers who showed the community what could be accomplished. Even now, the teachers not only work to show the students what they can do, but to continually show the community what they have done.

While finding the time and space for collaboration in a public high school schedule is challenging, the staff at Bob Jones demonstrates an interest and willingness to collaborate across subject area lines. The school produces a literary magazine, *The Eclectic,* each year. The magazine collects prose, poetry, visual art, and comics created by Bob Jones students. The school publishes a print version of the magazine as well as an online version that adds student-created animation and video. In addition to the inclusion of artwork submitted by students, the editor of the magazine approached the visual art department to ask for one student each year to create artwork to be used for the section divisions within the magazine.

The art department participated in

efforts with the engineering teacher to foster collaborative efforts between art and engineering students to consider not only the functionality of a design solution, but the aesthetics of the product as well. The art department invited a group of professors from the art and engineering departments at the University of Alabama to come and discuss the need for artistic thinking in engineering and the decision they had made to require drawing classes from their majors. In February of 2014, several of the arts and non-arts staff chose to participate in a series of optional experiences on Fridays led by different teachers inspired by the artistic and scientific works of Leonardo Da Vinci. As an optional design task, the librarian called on the art honor society to help her create new book jackets for some of the books in the library.

Resources

The art department at Bob Jones has produced award winning student work through the intentional, resourceful, creative use of limited resources. Visual art classes at Bob Jones are held in two dedicated rooms along the hallway leading toward the auditorium and one of the gymnasiums. The rooms are relatively large with high ceilings and windows on one wall. Large worktables occupy most of the central space in each room. Cabinets and storage are on one end of each room with

Art I class. But the availability of the image was limited given the size of the screen. She called on her students who had smart phones or other devices available to bring up the same image, making the image more accessible to students around the room.

a small sink. A short hallway links the rooms. This contains access to rooms that serve as storage spaces for supplies. Each room also has a small office space, which in fact acts as more storage for art supplies. The rooms are cluttered, but the clutter consists of work in progress and the paraphernalia of ongoing still life drawings in each space. Tables provide ample workspace for many projects, but it does become more problematic when students require easels or larger working areas.

Technology is evident, but limited. Each art room has one computer linked to a CRT television and a printer. The computers have Internet access and each teacher uses it as an instructional tool in class. Mrs. Lakso used the computer as a station for small groups of students to view online tutorials produced by a colleague. Mrs. Norton brought up images of artwork for students to respond to for her

One thing that is surprising about the Bob Jones program given the high quality of the students' work is that there are only two visual art teachers currently on staff: Robin Lakso and Jennifer Norton. These two are responsible for all students taking Art I, II, III, IV, and Advanced Art. There had been a third position, but it was moved to a new high school that recently opened in Madison to

accommodate the fast-growing population. This shift created a challenge in that the schedule would not fit all the courses needed with just these two teachers. They chose to give up their planning time for this year in order to maintain the Advanced Art program.

Students and teachers generally describe the supplies they have as ample for what they need to do. Students recognized the privilege of working in a program that gives them access to these materials. Students in art classes pay a $25 fee that provides most of the funding the department receives. The supplies visible during site visits were mostly drawing and painting materials. The teachers and students have demonstrated resourcefulness in their use of recycled and available materials. Teachers and advanced art students described using wood, cardboard, and found objects as part of their work out of interest, but also out of necessity. To their credit, teachers spoke of that reality as an opportunity for creative thinking.

"If you don't have it, they'll get it, or it's buried back in a closet somewhere." –Student

Curriculum

The visual art curriculum at Bob Jones starts with the end in mind. The aim of the program is clearly to prepare students to enter a competitive college art program. The art teachers pay attention to state standards and expectations, but they see them as a base from which to build rather than as the bar for which to aim.

"What we're doing now is focused on getting into college."
–Advanced Art Student

In 2002-3, Melissa Hughey, then Bob Jones art department head, was asked to work with

the system's art teachers to develop a K-12 alignment of the visual art curriculum. The process they worked through began not with kindergarten, but with the high school. Each level determined the skills and knowledge that the level before it had to prepare for. That top-down structure is still evident in the visual art course structure.

There are five courses available in visual art: Art I, Art II, Art III, Art IV, and Advanced Art. The course content proceeds from skill-based tasks with very specific criteria to open-ended challenges to create works that demonstrate a personal approach by the student artist. Courses are not broken down by medium. Multiple media are addressed in each course. There is an emphasis on two-dimensional work, but some sculpture is part of the available instruction. These limitations are due in part to the small staff available and the limitations of the schedule. Art I is an introductory course that introduces the elements and principles of design and in which students spend the majority of their time on drawing projects that emphasize structure, perspective, proportion, and value. In Art II, skills from Art I are expanded and developed, with a greater focus on color media. In Art III, students are challenged with more open-ended tasks that call on them to respond to a topic, theme or idea. Art IV emphasizes the development of a personal style and calls on the student to choose areas of focus or emphasis. Finally, the Advanced Art course is described as an "accelerated portfolio preparation course for students focusing on art as a career." It is focused entirely on the production of bodies of work that can be submitted to chosen regional and national competitions and for scholarship opportunities. At this level, projects are student-driven with coaching and assistance from the instructor.

Assessment

Formative assessment is embedded throughout the work of the visual art teachers at Bob Jones. The creation of artwork in the studio environment is open to an ongoing conversation about the process between teachers and students. The greatest part of the visual art teachers' time is spent looking at and talking about student work in progress. The instructional choices within each classroom are guided by this informal assessment of student progress. Formative assessment is also embedded in the design of projects for lower level courses. In the Art I classes, small tasks had to be completed by the student and approved by the teacher before the student could move on to more complex challenges.

Students are continually encouraged to assess themselves and one another. There is a climate of mutual support and critique in the visual art classrooms, particularly in the upper level classes. Students were seen to stop as they traveled to get supplies and talk with a classmate about his or her work. In one class, a student completed her painting ahead of the rest of the class and spent the remaining time watching a classmate work through hers, offering advice or asking questions. Students turn to one another and ask for feedback.

Advanced students described looking to one another for inspiration, advice, and friendly competition.

Summative assessments occur through the final completion of projects based on criteria established at the beginning. Formal critiques are part of the process, but are more likely to appear in upper level classes. Neither the visual art teachers nor students emphasized grades when discussing the assessment of student work. More important to both groups was feedback toward making good work. The portfolios produced by Advanced Art students for the Scholastic Art Competition and for college applications serve as a kind of capstone project for demonstrating the skills each student has acquired. Additionally, Advanced Art students are expected to create a display of their work under teacher supervision for the art show held on campus each spring.

Teacher Quality

"They have it down. They do it right. It's instruction at its best" –Administrator

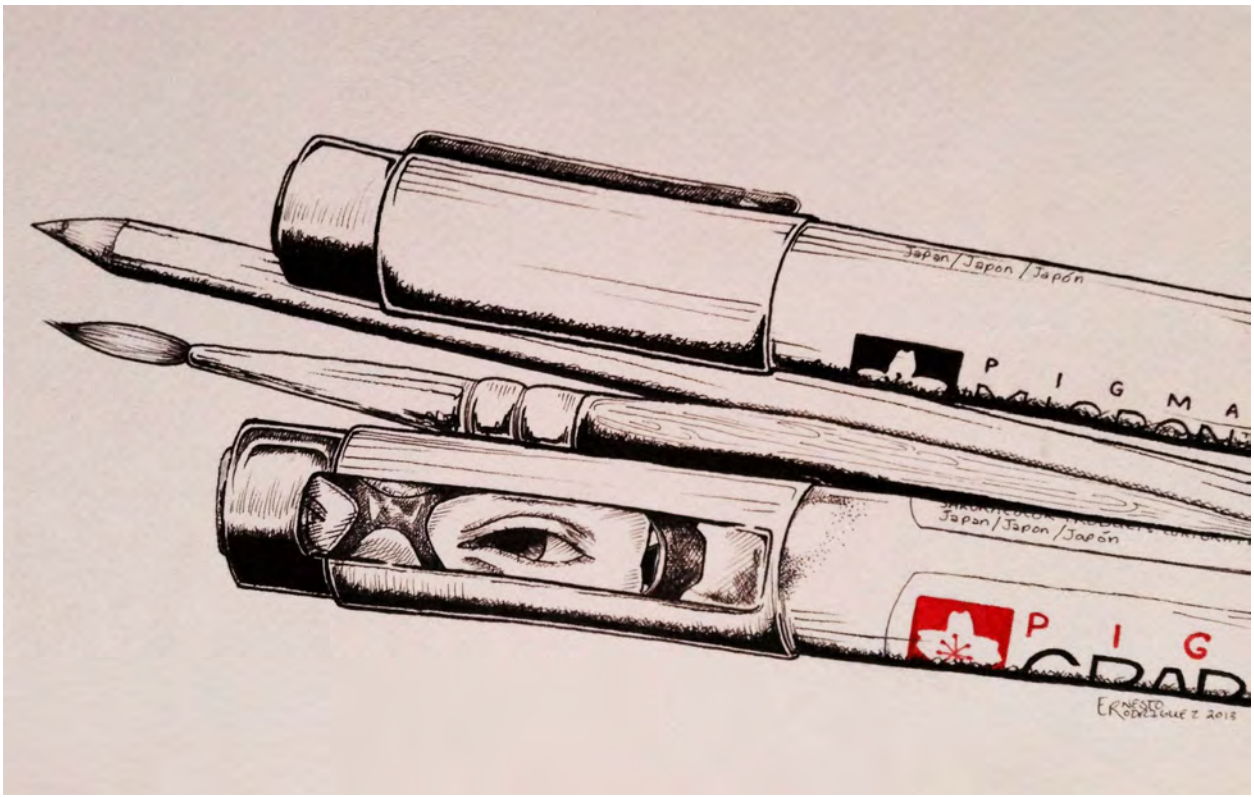
The art teachers at Bob Jones are skilled facilitators of a working studio environment. They provide differentiated levels of structure and feedback based on the needs of the course and the student. They foster a warm, informal affective atmosphere in the classroom. And they push students toward the level of work needed to pursue collegiate and professional ambitions.

There is a level of freedom in making choices about work that grows with the skill level of the student. Tasks are more structured in Art I, which focuses on drawing and two-dimensional design. They continue to build skill in color, painting, and other media, as they move toward the Advanced course which centers on individual portfolio development. In lower level classes, the students work through short, structured assignments that move students toward a larger task. For instance, an Art I portrait project began with sketches of individual facial features followed by studies of facial measurements before

individual consultations with students who were working at various points on the task at hand. Classes were seen working on two or three different projects, some students ahead of others in a sequence of tasks. Mrs. Lakso and Mrs. Norton both moved around the space, looking at each student's work in progress and offering prompting questions or suggestions based on the work thus far. That feedback took different forms. In some cases, it was simply a prompting question or a reminder in passing—"Measure first. If you don't, it will get you in trouble." Or she might notice a few students having a similar issue and call a small group together for a short demonstration. In one class, Mrs. Norton gathered several students together at one table to demonstrate drawing noses while the rest of the class continued working. Teachers referenced completed student work which hangs around the room. They also employed a computer linked to a CRT television to access

the student completed a large-scale portrait drawing. In higher-level classes, tasks are more open-ended, calling on students to pursue individually originated projects that employ the skills they built in earlier instruction. Advanced students described a task in which they were told to make a work that showed how others perceive them.

Neither of the two teachers was observed to spend much time at all lecturing or talking to the whole class. Whole class speech was limited to taking roll, making announcements, and occasionally drawing student attention to a conversation or resource that might be beneficial to the group. The majority of the teachers' time was spent rotating through the class in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tutorials on different components of the task at hand.

In both classrooms, the students feel comfortable, particularly the upper level students who've spent more time with Mrs. Lakso and Mrs. Norton. The art teachers build a warm, informal working environment in which students who are working have the freedom to focus and interact about their work. Disciplinary redirections happened as needed, but were not often necessary.

"It's not very restrictive. The teacher is friendly." –Student

"The students just seem so relaxed." –Teacher

It should also be noted that Mrs. Norton and Mrs. Lakso work very well together. Conversations occurred between them throughout the day during observations. Other staff, students, and the art teachers themselves noted how well they are able to collaborate. They work together to continue to revise and develop their program of courses. They offer feedback to one another's students. In one course this year, the two of them are team teaching a group of higher level students. The two teachers at Bob Jones also talk frequently with the art teacher at the new high school. They share tutorials and ideas through an online system called SOPHIA.

"They get along really, really well." –Student

"They help each other out." –Student

A student pursuing visual art through all the available courses at Bob Jones is led toward a very clear end: the development of a college level portfolio. The portfolios that students develop are aimed at the entry expectations of colleges and universities. Non-arts teachers, administrators, and students all describe the work the department has done to bring university professors from Auburn, the University of Alabama, and other institutions. They seek out portfolio reviews with college art departments. They work with students to look at what colleges are requesting for inclusion within applicants' portfolios.

"[Mrs. Lakso and Mrs. Norton] ...seem very focused. If they want a scholarship, they know how to direct the kids to get the maximum for what they can get. I've always been impressed with how much they work to get kids scholarships to where they want to go." –Teacher

The art teachers at Bob Jones High School are dedicated to their work. They spend long hours after school preparing student work for exhibit, transporting work to shows and competitions, and preparing materials for an entire art program run by two people. They have given up their planning time to maintain the students' opportunity for an Advanced Art course. Both teachers show concern for the growth and development of the students in their care.

"There's a piece of me in each of my kids' pieces." –Art Teacher

"She cares about each individual child" –Teacher

"If you don't try, she tries harder." –Student

Conclusion

The visual art program at Bob Jones High School is driven to guide students toward success as artists. The program sets its sights on the expectations of entrance portfolios at high-level art university art programs. The program operates as successfully as it does because of its dedicated, skilled teachers. The art teachers at BJHS operate working studio spaces for students to enter and excel at being artists.

3. Cross-Case Analysis

Each of the programs we examined had its own personality, its own strengths, and its own needs. However, some themes emerged in our analysis of the data across cases. Issues of leadership and collaboration and the position of the arts within the school and the relationship of the arts program to the world outside of school were indicated frequently among participating sites, and the way that these issues manifested themselves at each site led us to categorize multiple ideas into four broad findings:

In in-school arts education programs identified as high quality in the South…

- Relationships matter.
- The arts program is part of a shared vision.
- The arts *are* core.
- Students experience the working worlds of artists.

1. Relationships Matter.

All stakeholders in these quality programs repeatedly identified a sense of community, feelings of acceptance and accomplishment, and the importance of their personal contributions to the success of the arts programs in which they participated. Pride in these programs was a thread wound throughout every interview and observation among the many stakeholders participating in this study.

Teachers spoke often about administrative support at both the school and district levels, and principals often identified strong district support for the arts programs at their schools. A key trait across all programs is effective onsite management and shared decision making between stakeholders.

> *"Whenever we need [our district administrator], he's here to provide support, give input. He is our advocate–our cheerleader"*
> *–School Administrator*

Administrators were also quick to acknowledge the importance of teacher-student relationships among their staffs:

> *"As a fine arts teacher you have one of the hardest jobs at the school. You have 800 children rotating through your classrooms each week, and those kids want you to know them just like their math teacher does. And they [the arts teachers] do a great job of building those relationships"*
> *–School Administrator*

The importance of collegial relationships is likewise evident through the implementation of diverse collaborative projects and teacher flexibility in scheduling, particularly regarding the give-and-take required to accommodate students with multiple arts interests and engagement.

> *"It's about creating a culture. Program momentum relies on established culture, the*

routine of the curriculum, and the teachers and students all working together"
–High School Band Teacher

Students repeatedly identified the power of a relationship-oriented focus in their descriptions of these rich programs.

"We've kind of grown up with all these [dance] teachers. That's another thing that helps me learn a lot."
–High School Student

All observers noted evidence of strong positive affect in teacher-to-student as well as student-to-student interactions.

What we're doing musically is important, but our character is more important. [Our teacher] always tells us, 'The type of musician you become is not as important as the type of person you become.' Our teachers get to know us on a personal level. We all take care of each other, and our teachers promote that."
–High School Band Student

Community partnerships are another relationship-based quality factor in these programs. Stakeholders spoke about the importance of maintaining and growing quality programs and their desire to honor the high reputation enjoyed in their communities. In each participating school, stakeholders explained the positive impact of financial resources accessed through corporate sponsorships, parents' fund-raising, and a myriad of out-of-district financial supports. Volunteer efforts also represent a significant part of community partnerships contributing to program quality. Parents, community members, students, and teachers all described the generous contributions of time on tasks ranging from transportation and dry cleaning to food preparation and chaperoning for out-of-town exhibits and performances.

"Our volunteers are a crucial part of broadening our students' education. Visiting artists and community members contribute to our program in a number of ways."
–Arts Coordinator

Strong relationships across communities are critical. Maintaining an active and visible

presence for the process and products of arts education is vital for the growth and maintenance of these quality programs. Arts teachers, parent support groups, and students actively promoted the work of teachers and students in their communities.

> *"[Our fundraising] program brings in funds in various ways from the community: advertising, concert tickets, program acknowledgments. That is run by parents and is supported throughout the community. This resource brings in much more than just money - the community is critical. They take personal pride in these programs. It's good for everybody - parents and students like their positive reputation in the community and the process feeds itself."*
> *–High School Band Director*

In summary, a key trait in quality arts education programs is the critical affective importance of building, nurturing, and maintaining collaborative relationships among all stakeholders. The following implications may serve as a summary to guide the development of future programs.

Implications

- Positive reinforcement and explicit communication acknowledging the strengths and diverse contributions of all stakeholders results in community pride, a rich work ethic, and the promotion of a culture of success.
- Administrative support reflects respect for onsite decision-making and a participant-oriented leadership style.
- Collegial relationships are built on a foundation of shared goals, administrative support, and day-to-day flexibility.
- Attention toward student growth goes beyond arts knowledge and skills, but endeavors to reach the whole child through a teacher-parent-community triad of support.
- The maintenance and growth of quality arts programs requires greater fiscal and personnel resources than are typically available through standard public education, thus the engagement of community partners must address both fiscal and personnel requirements.

2. The Arts Are Part of a Shared Vision/Mission.

Stakeholders in these programs identified a shared vision or mission in their descriptions of their quality arts education programs. Seidel et al. (2009) noted that arts programs serve multiple purposes, sometimes simultaneously. These shared visions are not the same across all cases, but within each context there is a strong common understanding of the purpose of the arts program as part of the school setting. Shared visions are supported by strong leadership, made visible to the school and the community, and maintained through the tenacity of a variety of stakeholders who champion the work.

Strong leadership

Strong leadership goes beyond administrative support. Many programs addressed in this study benefit from multiple stakeholders as leaders, including administrators, teachers, students, parents, and community members. Strong leadership cultivates buy-in at the administrative level and among faculty, parents, and the community at large. At Wando High School, for example, the administration identifies student needs as the driving force behind decisions in all content areas including the arts:

> *"Students are the center of our decision-making. The schedule is generated based on student requests." –Wando High School Administrator*

Throughout the case studies, we noted strong leadership that set high standards for arts learning as part of the mission of the school. At Windsor Hill Elementary, strong support from district and school level administration provides flexibility and security for the visual art teachers to develop their instruction. Leaders give a sense of purpose to everyone involved in the program.

> *"Leadership has high expectations in the arts." –Bradley Academy Classroom Teacher*

> *"I make my vision very clear for this school… to make this a worldwide, known institution for the performing and visual arts in education." –Northwest School of the Arts Administrator*

Visibility

All of the programs studied have cultivated reputations for good work, and stakeholders repeatedly commented on the high visibility of students' work in their communities. The leaders of these programs, notably the arts teachers, reach out to share their vision for student learning in the art form through community events, competitions, performances, and exhibits. Bob Jones High School participates every year in the Scholastic Art and Writing program. One reason for this participation is the scholarship money and attention it can bring to participating

students, but more importantly, participation offers the opportunity to highlight honors and awards for Bob Jones art students to the school administration, school board, and other civic leaders in the Madison community. This constant stepping forward by the program has helped cultivate a sense of pride in the art program among the community.

The architectural spaces of the school campuses reflect the strong presence of the arts every day through both the dedicated physical facilities such as dance studios, music practice rooms, and art studios and through temporary and permanent displays highlighting students' arts learning. Purposefully curated displays at Pine Street feature arrangements of lesson descriptions, photographs of students in arts classes, and samples of students work to tell the stories of different curricular units. Large colorful murals permanently installed at Northwest School of the Arts beautifully convey the place that visual art, music, dance, and drama have as central to the school's mission.

The leaders in these programs also share the vision of quality arts learning through events within the school context. Casey, Bradley, Drew, and Windsor Hill all described performances and exhibits at the schools for parents at PTA meetings or special events. These smaller events are no less important in the role they play communicating the vision for quality student work among the school community.

> *"Constant Activities. Every year, the art department has like this family night. They have staff, parents, kids, exhibit art. But they also have performance art. People do poetry. Somebody might sing, and they'll have some artwork exhibited." –Drew Charter School Administrator*

Tenacity

Across all of the arts programs, many students demonstrate significant personal passion for their arts work, driven in part by the strong models their teachers provide. These arts educators have dedicated years—decades, in many cases—to the study and practice of their art form, and in speaking about their work many evidenced a strong personal, creative, or spiritual drive motivating their engagement in teaching.

> *"I knew I could combine dance and academics and get them to think deeply and become—Oh! I just dream for them to be these awesome people! And now I'm working toward community service and let's give this back...I love what I do! I love it!" –Northwest School of the Arts Dance Educator*

This love for the arts, for their students, and for the process of teaching and learning is indeed powerful, and in many cases provides support and resolve as teachers weather a multitude of changes impacting their work.

Change is the only constant and leadership is a process of navigating change (Barker, 2002). Stakeholders in the quality arts programs included in this study have a shared vision and never lose sight of it. Across cases, we saw how programs persevered during moments of uncertainty. In national and local school policy, the arts tend to be one of the first areas to receive budget cuts (Remer, 2010; Seidel et al., 2009). The amount of available financial support ranges among these programs; some are in affluent communities while others serve more economically disadvantaged populations, but all have had to find ways to adapt to changing circumstances and limited resources. Stakeholders in programs with a shared vision and mission spoke directly about this, reflecting how they did not lose sight of their purpose and persevered through challenges.

"We are proud of our accomplishments, but we are aware that we're not perfect. It's always a battle fighting against everything else to keep the arts alive. We are able to do this work in spite of everything else." –Casey Elementary Fine Arts Coordinator

"I have seen programs with a lot more resources and sponsorships and parental involvement. But the kids here, they consistently step up to the plate in the midst of personal struggles and shine and have the opportunity to push through. I have seen this blossom in other parts of their lives and see this carry with them when they leave here." –Bradley Academy Parent

In these programs, stakeholders often take on the role of champion, sticking to a belief in the importance of and future of the arts program, defending its value when necessary. For some schools, that champion is a district or school level arts coordinator, a teacher, or an administrator who acquires resources, writes grants, or finds valuable research to support advocacy or aid instruction. Sometimes they do this without specific district or school level support in place. At Bob Jones High School, the art teachers make contact with universities, coordinate competitions, arrange and set up community exhibits, and make the administration and the community aware of students who have won honors for their work. At Owensboro High School and at Windsor Hill Elementary, the district level arts coordinators champion their arts teachers' programs with administrators and the public.

"Whenever we need him, he's here to provide support, give input." –Windsor Hill Administrator

"There has been a history here of making sure things are taken care of. Some years are stronger than others, but if you

are consistent with what you're trying to do … they will respond and be able to use the funds in a very responsible way and not be wasteful." –Owensboro Fine Arts Coordinator

Implications

- Arts programs should be thoughtfully included in conversations around the mission and vision of the school. Arts teachers should be represented on leadership or school improvement committees.
- Arts teachers need the time and support to arrange and market exhibits and performances.
- Practices should be consistent with vision and mission statements. Students understand the mission and vision of a school not primarily through explicitly stated placards on a wall, but through the practice of its teachers and administrators (Eisner, 2002).
- Because many arts educators are motivated by personal passion and strongly held beliefs consistent with missions of their schools, they—like many educators--will often repeatedly go above and beyond the duties outlined in their employment contracts. Care must be taken to recognize the appropriate limitations of arts teachers' time and energy, respecting their desire for quality work while avoiding the very real possibility that their strong passions and motivations may lead to burnout.

3. The Arts *are* Core.

Core curriculum refers to content that is considered essential for all students. In 2001, art and music were included among the subjects listed in the No Child Left Behind Act as "core academic subjects." In implementation, however, the arts have not always been treated as essential (Chapman, 2005). In quality arts education programs in the South, the arts are core curriculum not only in word, but also in practice. They are planned according to state and national standards, scaffolded across grade levels, and purposefully connected to other disciplines. In programs that consider the arts as core, arts

instruction is not relegated to an extracurricular option; rather, the arts are perceived as an important part of the whole curriculum. At Owensboro High School, stakeholders described the drama program as contributing to a comprehensive education that supports the whole child. Wando High School has a similar approach as evident by the music program's high expectations and its shared vision for each student to achieve excellence in the arts. Windsor Hill Arts Infused Elementary School students receive dedicated instruction in visual art apart from scheduled time for interdisciplinary lessons. Where the arts are core, we saw authentic assessment, a clearly articulated curriculum, and strong pedagogy.

Authentic Assessment

In authentic assessments, learners demonstrate their skills and understandings through performance tasks that approach the practice of a given discipline in the world (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998). Such tasks are employed for student assessment throughout these sites. Teachers and students engaged in artistic work consistent with the practices of the art form in the world outside of school. The drama specialist at Owensboro frequently described assessment tasks as an opportunity for students to solve problems as actor, designer, or director. When students work on a project, the expectations include criteria in the art form and expected behaviors such as level of participation or being able to work as a group. Owensboro drama students do not receive grades just for completing a task and assessments focus on the student's growth in arts learning. At Northwest School of the Arts, students are critiqued and corrected in the studio setting in exactly the same way they would be as professionals. They are held to high performance standards and expected to engage in choreographic thinking as part of their program of study.

Assessing arts learning strengthens and supports the place of arts education programs by focusing on skills, knowledge, and understanding that can only be taught in artistic disciplines. Wando High School's music program includes individual and ensemble assessments, which provides students with multiple opportunities to receive feedback and reinforce musical understandings. During both classroom instruction and rehearsals, students demonstrate professional behaviors while practicing musical skills and knowledge in a developmentally appropriate context. Windsor Hill art students participate in gallery walks that introduce the collegial atmosphere of critique that is cultivated further at the high school level at institutions like Bob Jones High School.

> *"Kids need to know the purpose of each exercise, and our feedback must be purposeful. They need time to develop and understand the vocabulary. Outcome-based instruction must be evident."*
> *–Wando High School Music Faculty*

"Instead of trying to play with a bunch of other people- we're trying to make music." –Wando High School Music Faculty

At Bradley Academy, assessments are designed to reflect the work of actors developing a character. While the assessment tasks are developmentally appropriate for elementary students, the children are nonetheless engaged in a professional context. For example, as Bradley Academy 4th grade students prepared a monologue they made vocal choices based on textual evidence, which is how an actor works with a script in developing a character. The feedback students receive reinforces expectations and does not merely reward them for participation. When arts are at the core, assessments focus on the growth of arts learning:

"We have a guide for giving each other feedback and helping us get better. … Ms. Isom helps us and gives lots of chances to practice." –Bradley Academy Student

A Clearly Articulated Curriculum

A quality curriculum is well articulated, standards-based, and sequential, and such curricula are present in many of the quality arts programs. The arts are given dedicated instructional time even in programs that provided interdisciplinary opportunities in non-arts classrooms. At Windsor Hill, all students receive dedicated instruction in the arts as well as interdisciplinary instruction in grade-level classrooms. Bradley Academy and Pine Street Academy have similar approaches where arts integration is as a core instructional model, but such integrated instruction does not replace dedicated instruction in the arts. For example, at Windsor Hill, Casey Elementary, Pine Street Academy, and Bradley Academy students attend art form-specific classes as a part of their weekly schedule. In these classes, arts specialists have curricula based on state and national arts standards. Similarly, at Drew Charter School, the STEAM model does not replace the study of art with a focus on design thinking. Rather, the study of visual art maintains its own identity within that broader structure, sitting alongside the abundance of other subjects students explore.

"Students show up for fine arts time and we're expecting for those 40 minutes to be focused on the visual arts standards. And they are. That's the core of what they're teaching." –Windsor Hill Elementary Administrator

Programs emphasizing a comprehensive education that includes the arts also have clearly articulated curricula. Owensboro High School frames its curriculum around a series of project-based units that are standards-based and align with the state of Kentucky's core content for Arts and Humanities. Arts faculty have developed a curriculum map which is used as a living document that changes based

on student needs. The visual art curriculum at Bob Jones High School is designed with the end in mind. Similar to Owensboro, Bob Jones offers a series of sequential courses that build specific art form skills and knowledge: in Art I & II, students are introduced to and explore the elements and principles of design. Later courses call on them to apply these skills through increasingly independent projects.

Pedagogy

Quality arts education programs where the arts are core curriculum have faculty with backgrounds and expertise in art form pedagogy. We observed arts educators who are masters at their craft but also understand how to design and deliver arts instruction. They routinely facilitate opportunities for students to present and perform their work while emphasizing arts learning outcomes; furthermore, they speak about their work reflectively, revealing the layers of preparation and pedagogical study that drive their choices. For example, the visual arts teachers at Bob Jones High School facilitate quality arts learning experiences in a studio environment, spending most of their time as coaches and consultants for students' ongoing work. Bradley Academy's drama specialist distinguishes the drama classroom from play rehearsals, which reinforced drama skills and knowledge that need to be taught in order to prepare students for performance opportunities.

"In class she is teaching drama. In rehearsal, it's more about the performance- glitter, sets, and costumes. You get a little of that in class but a lot more of that after school. It's different because she is teaching you how to perform, but it's not the same kind of performing like after school. We don't rehearse for a play in class. We learn how to act."
–Bradley Academy Student

Arts educators also bring extensive content knowledge and teaching experiences to their programs. The Pine Street Elementary dance educator, recognized as a South Carolina Dance Educator of the Year, has taught dance in a variety of setting and brings extensive content knowledge and pedagogical understanding into her teaching. The art and design teachers at Drew Charter School bring diverse skillsets to the program and are very active in their fields; the engineering design teacher there has published in the journal of the National Art Education Association. Teachers are very dedicated to their profession as evident by the extra hours spent beyond teaching in the classroom to help students prepare for a performance or exhibit.

"She stays right with them. If they are here late, she is with them. If they have to be here early, she is there. She's just remarkable. She is modeling the behaviors that she is expecting. I really appreciate that." –Owensboro High School Parent

Arts educators in quality programs focused on process over product. They are reflective—flexible in their approach and willing to make adjustments to their curriculum. At Owensboro, the drama specialist's reflective practice allows the program to fully embrace a project-based approach. Projects shift based on student needs, which requires the drama specialist to think through possible adjustments. The arts educators focused on process spend time with students as facilitators, guiding students through the development of work rather than simply covering information.

"One of the things that Ms. Stuck and Ms. Harper really do well is focusing on the process, as opposed to the end result that kids walk out with and everyone looks good." –Windsor Hill Elementary Administrator

Implications

- Quality arts education does not exist on the periphery. It aligns with the school's curriculum.
- Programs that identify arts integration are strong when dedicated instruction in the arts is strong.
- Where the arts are treated as core curriculum, the methods of assessment are consistent with the disciplines. Artistic work is assessed through artistic

work.

- Meaningful and ongoing professional development in the arts, embedded into teachers' work at their schools, is essential to the development and maintenance of strong arts programs.

4. Students experience the working worlds of artists.

In the programs we examined, across art forms and age levels, arts teachers construct learning environments where students are given the opportunity not only to make art, but also to learn to *be artists.* Lave & Wenger (1991) describe the growth of the learner as more than the delivery of content and highlight the need for an awareness of the learner's appropriation of the social context of a given practice. In *Studio Thinking,* one of the habits of mind the writers attribute to an education in visual art is "Understanding Art Worlds," which they define as learning about the historical and current practice of art, and "Learning to interact as an artist with other artists and within the broader society" (Hetland, Winner, Veeneema, & Sheridan, 2007, p. 6) At Pine Street Elementary, children learn to enter into the dance space with a warm-up ritual and understand its importance for their bodies. At Wando High School, young musicians meet high expectations to enter rehearsals as opportunities to shape music rather than simply to learn it. At Windsor Hill Elementary, Ms. Harper and Ms. Stuck cultivate a structured, organized workspace that students help to maintain.

"They're really learning how to be a functioning dancer. How to take class and how to be able to do that and dance with one another." –Northwest School of the Arts Dance Teacher

"Instead of trying to play with a bunch of other people – we're trying to make music." –Wando High School Music Teacher

The arts programs we examined tend to emphasize process over product. While teachers effectively use summative assessments that employ rigorous criteria, the better part of teachers' and students' attention is on the work in progress. Formative assessments are embedded in all that teachers and students do together. The teacher takes on the role of facilitator, setting parameters for student work through prompting, provoking, and questioning. In visual art classes across grade levels, teachers spent at least half their time or more in what Hetland, et al. (2007) refer to as "students at work."

"They are masters at providing formative assessment to their kids and differentiating instruction." –Bob Jones High School Administrator

"The feedback that they give is pushing them to the next level." –Windsor Hill Elementary Administrator

"[Our ballet teacher] treats it as if we are professionals...so if we don't do something right, she'll give us the correction, but she doesn't just let it go." —Northwest High School Student

As part of this process-oriented work, students are called on to think like artists, designers, musicians, dancers, and actors. They are also called on to speak and write in these disciplinary roles through lessons that emphasize appropriate vocabulary in each art form.

"I like my students to have a large art vocabulary. That's very important to me." –Drew Charter School Art Teacher

Ms. Woodham at Pine Street Academy cultivates an environment rich in oral and written language in which students apply dance vocabulary during the critical analysis of the works they see and create; students learn to readily move across unique forms of representation. Similar applications of language unfold in other schools as well.

"Mrs. Davis teaches us how to describe music, and how it makes us feel. Right now, we're learning how to listen carefully and describe what we hear." –Casey Elementary Student

"The children explain the work. Mrs. Ruffin and Ms. Anderson sit back and the children lead the exhibition." –Drew Charter School Classroom Teacher

Students come into contact with professional work through varied encounters. When possible, classes take field trips to see performances or visit galleries, but the educators at these schools also make an effort to bring active professionals into the school. Pine Street has a firmly established artist-in-residence program, with multiple artists providing daily lessons during a much-anticipated Arts Week each year. At Drew, the *Designorama* event brings in professionals in fields like graphic design and architecture to talk about their work with students. The school also brought artists in as collaborators on outdoor sculpture projects in which the students were engaged in the design and construction of each work. Dance teachers at Pine Street Academy and Northwest School of the Arts include video viewing of professional work as part of their instruction. At Bob Jones High School, the visual art teachers have brought in professors from regional university art departments for portfolio reviews and for wider lectures that in one case involved a collaborative discussion with professors in visual art and engineering.

Students, particularly those at the high school level, strongly identify as pre-professionals in their chosen arts forms, frequently indicating their desire to participate in the practices of professionals in the field. Dancers at Northwest discussed the importance of auditioning for outside performances

with community or professional companies, referenced their individual participation in various summer dance intensives, and expressed the desire for more networking opportunities with professional artists.

The artistic process defined in the upcoming revision of the national standards in the arts is Create, Perform, Respond, Connect[18]. Implicit in this process is that students not only make works of art, but also learn to share their work through productions, exhibitions, discussions, and documentary projects in both formal and informal settings. Student dancers, actors, and musicians perform their work for large and small audiences while visual art students have the opportunity to see their work published and exhibited. At Bob Jones High School, Advanced Art students are prompted to create exhibits of their own work, and their creations are also published in print via the school's publication *The Eclectic.* At Pine Street, photographs chronicling the rehearsal and performance process of recent productions adorn colorful bulletin boards alongside displays of students' paintings, drawings, and collages.

The artistic process functions as a cycle within these dynamic arts education environments, with performances and exhibits functioning as catalysts for discussion and further learning. A class sharing of short dance studies in Beginning Modern Dance at Northwest prompted a burst of raised hands as students were eager to comment on what they had seen and ask questions of the performers.

Implications

- Quality working environments in the arts don't necessarily look like quality working environments in other fields. Patterns of work and classroom activity in quality arts classrooms may not look like those in high quality math or language arts classes.
- While appropriate classroom facilities are essential to quality education in dance, drama, music, and visual arts, the working environment extends beyond the classroom or studio walls. Functional performance and exhibition spaces, opportunities for interaction with guest artists, and participation in field trips to arts settings are vital for students to become part of the working world of artists.
- Administrators responsible for evaluating teachers in the arts should be made aware of the expectations for a working environment in each art form.
- Student work should be taken seriously at all age levels. A work of art is not complete until it is seen and discussed. The process of presentation and performance are part of the learning.
- Students and teachers should find ways to interact with a variety of professionals in their disciplines.

4. Conclusions & Recommendations

Limitations of this study

This study is descriptive in nature. It seeks to create a picture of what "high quality" arts education programs in the South look like. We did not evaluate the programs prior to inclusion in this study with a priori criteria, but worked from an assumption that programs nominated represented what regional stakeholders held to be "high quality." As such, our role on campuses (respecting the generous access that schools provided to us) was explicitly not evaluative. As researchers, we strove to bracket aside our own standards for quality and instead document what was happening at programs determined by others to have earned the designation "quality." Had our task included program evaluation, we may have looked more closely toward potentially problematic areas within curriculum, pedagogy, assessment, and art form practice, offering a critical discussion. Such was not the intent of this particular study.

Additionally, this study was not intended to build a statistical sample of school programs, but rather to identify information-rich cases for in-depth study (Patton, 1990). As such, these cases are not intended to demonstrate what *all* arts programs in southern schools are like. Rather, it is understood that these accounts provide a narrative description of quality in practice. Neither should it be assumed that the programs selected were chosen because they were better than all other programs in each state, for we know that many other commendable programs exist in each state. The nine sites selected represent at least one program in each state with a wide dispersal across the region and at least two programs in each art form. All grades are represented, but the representation of the middle grades is weaker than elementary and high school. Two middle school programs were chosen for inclusion, but were unable to participate. Grades 6-8 are represented by the dance program at Northwest School of the Arts, a 6-12 program, and Bradley Academy, an elementary school whose program extends through grade 6.

Recommendations for further research

These case studies provide a regional picture of the places and people that form the context of quality arts instruction. If we allow that the arts are disciplines understood through the building of individual cases like law and medicine (Efland, 2002), then these pictures should not be seen as a final authority, but the beginning of a conversation. Where we narrowed the focus from a national view to a regional one, further studies should look closely at cases in a single state or district or cases that represent a single feature, such as school type, size, or context.

Challenges, opportunities, constraints, and affordances within one art form can differ markedly from those found in other arts disciplines. The cross case analysis in this study considered those issues that arose across all art forms and grade levels. This leaves room for questions that probe the concerns of each art form. Questions of quality in music, drama, dance, or visual art alone are interesting and we considered them in our analysis, but

such questions were beyond the scope of this inquiry. As arts education in the region is probed further, we encourage researchers to compare dance, music, drama, or visual art programs with one another to uncover those issues unique to each discipline.

Conclusion

Other explorations of quality arts education have sought to establish standards by which quality should be measured. The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities report on the Turnaround Arts Initiative (Stoelinga, 2013) identifies principles by which arts programs in the context of the Turnaround initiative should be judged. In *The Qualities of Quality* (Seidel, 2009), the authors not only looked at case studies of arts education in practice, but examined the literature and talked with experts to consider the field prescriptively. Other groups have published lists of quality traits and standards for arts education programs (Lehman, 1994; Rushlow, 1999; Stoelinga, 2013). The intention of this research was to look at quality from the ground up—we sought to investigate what quality looks like in practice.

Our findings across cases align with many of the issues indicated by earlier research and policy. Standards and policy statements often indicate the need for strong supportive principals, collaborative work, and community partnerships. Our findings about these issues do not disagree but seek to contextualize those ideas. For instance, where we found strong support from administrators, we also found the role of leader and champion for these programs to be shared among multiple stakeholders including the principal, but also the arts teachers, district personnel, parents, and community organizations.

We found strong evidence of collaboration between arts teachers and non-arts teachers but discovered also a broader network of relationships that sustained each program. Those networks took on a different character at each site. In addition to strong collegial relationships between teachers, we found relationships with community organizations that were more than occasional visits by artists in residence. These relationships provided schools with physical resources that allowed teachers and students to exceed the limitations of their buildings and classrooms. They also provided experiences that expanded learners' engagement with each art form.

One aspect of leadership is the persistent work of arts teachers and their supporters to make their programs visible. That sort of marketing process is one that seems a particular challenge for teachers in the arts. Quality lists and standards call for school environments that welcome exhibitions and performances (Lehman, 1994; Rushlow, 1999; Stoelinga, 2013), but it is the diligence of dedicated instructors and their supporters that makes those exhibitions and performances happen.

To recap our findings: in high quality in-school arts education programs in the South, relationships matter; the arts are a part of a shared vision and mission; the arts are core—

an essential part of the school's community and day-to-day function; and students experience the working worlds of artists. As examinations of quality arts programs in this region go forward, we do not insist on one specific prescription for quality. The personality of each program must be worked out in the context of the values and needs of each community. We suggest the following questions to focus further inquiry:

Relationships – What sort of support network for the program exists among teachers, administrators, and other stakeholders? What opportunities are there in the community to meet the needs of the program and overcome challenges? Who are the champions for the program?

Shared Vision/Mission – What is the belief among arts specialists, non-arts teachers, administrators, students, and other stakeholders about the purpose of arts education? How are those beliefs evident in instructional and administrative practice? To what extent are arts teachers a part of decision making processes that impact the program?

The Arts are Core – To what extent are the arts a part of the overall planning processes and daily practices for the school? How does arts assessment impact overall student achievement? Are the instructional practices and environments in the arts consistent with the needs of each art form?

Working Worlds of Artists – In what ways do students come into contact with professionals who use the knowledge and skills of the arts in their work? What partnerships does the school have to bring professionals in or to take students to professional environments? At the high school level, how are students introduced to the expectations for entering arts fields in higher education or professional practice?

Artists and teachers each struggle with quality in the practice of their respective crafts. How much more then, those whose craft is to teach an art form? There should never be an end to the pursuit of and struggle with questions of quality. We hope that the findings we have put forward here and the issues we found among these quality programs can contribute to higher and better and deeper thinking among the practitioners and decision makers responsible for implementing high quality arts education in this region and around the country.

Endnotes

1 South Arts' constituent states are Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee.

2 For the full Phase I report, go to www.southarts.org

3 As reported in South Carolina Department of Education. Pine Street Elementary School Annual Report Card 2013. http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/2013/elem/c/e4207082.pdf

4 As reported by principal.

5 As reported in South Carolina Department of Education. Pine Street Elementary School Annual Report Card 2013. http://ed.sc.gov/data/report-cards/2013/elem/c/e4207082.pdf

6 As reported by principal.

7 From Sean Layne and Focus Five Arts Integration consulting. See http://educationcloset.com/2013/05/31/actors-toolbox-script/

8 See Arts Curriculuar Innovation Grants: http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/62/Arts_Curricular_Innovation_Grants.cfm

9 See South Carolina Arts Commission http://ed.sc.gov/agency/programs-services/62/Arts_Curricular_Innovation_Grants.cfm

10 As reported on the school's website: http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/northwestHS/Pages/AboutOurSchool.aspx

11 As reported on the school's website: http://schools.cms.k12.nc.us/northwestHS/Pages/AboutOurSchool.aspx

12 As reported in Tennessee Department of Education. Bradley Academy- An Arts Integrated School Annual Report Card 2013 available at https://www.tn.gov/education/reportcard/2013.shtml

13 https://www.tn.gov/arts/vp_about.htm

14 As reported in Kentucky Department of Education. Owensboro High School Annual Report Card 2012-2013 available at http://applications.education.ky.gov/SRC/Default.aspx

15 http://riverparkcenter.com

16 http://www.mswholeschools.org

17 http://www.donorschoose.org

18 The revised standards are due for release in June of 2014. Information about the standards and their development can be found at http://nccas.wikispaces.com

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APPENDICES

A. Personnel and Acknowledgements

B. Instruments

- Interview Guides
- Observation Protocol

C. State Arts Standards

A. Personnel and Acknowledgements

The Southeast Center for Education in the Arts

The Southeast Center for Education in the Arts is an outreach organization housed at the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. SCEA was founded in 1987 through a partnership between the Getty Center, the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, and the State of Tennessee for the purpose of research and training in arts education. SCEA's mission is to strengthen and deepen arts-rich curriculum and instruction in a variety of interdisciplinary learning environments.

For more information about the Southeast Center, visit www.utc.edu/scea

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South Arts

South Arts, a nonprofit regional arts organization, was founded in 1975 to build on the South's unique heritage and enhance the public value of the arts. South Arts' work responds to the arts environment and cultural trends with a regional perspective. South Arts offers an annual portfolio of activities designed to address the role of the arts in impacting the issues important to our region, and to link the South with the nation and the world through the arts. Its mission: South Arts strengthens the South through advancing excellence in the arts, connecting the arts to key state and national policies, and nurturing a vibrant quality of life.

Located in Atlanta, Georgia, the ten-employee nonprofit organization provides a broad portfolio of programs and services for arts organizations in its nine-state region. South Arts works in partnership with the state arts agencies of Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee. South Arts is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts, member states, foundations, businesses and individuals.

For more information about South Arts, visit www.southarts.org

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ART WORKS. | National Endowment for the Arts arts.gov

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B. Instruments

1. Interview Guides for Semi-structured Interviews

1. Access

What steps are taken at the administrative, site, or personal level to attract students to your arts programs?

What steps are in place that guide students into arts classes? [Are they sequential, auditioned/open, repeatable?]

2. Teacher Quality

How would you describe the skills, knowledge, and preparation demonstrated by the arts faculty at this school? [Explicit example, please.]

What evidence of teacher quality is demonstrated regularly by the arts teaching faculty?

3. Assessment

How is student learning in the art form demonstrated?

Through what means are programmatic assessments made?

4. Resources

What steps are in place to support resource acquisition?

What obstacles or challenges to the work impact student opportunity to learn?

5. School Culture

Describe the arts community at your school.
How are the arts embedded in this school culture?

6. Curriculum

How is course content developed in this art form at your school?

In what ways do performances or showings reflect student growth?

7. Other

2. Interview items for student focus groups

1. Access

How much time do you spend in [art form] classes each week?

Do you think you have enough time in [art form]?

Are there opportunities for [art form] classes after school? If so, how do students get involved in them?

How do your parents find out what's going on in the [art form] program?

2. Teacher Quality

How do your teachers work together?

Tell me about _____ what is he/she like as a teacher?

How does your teacher guide your learning in [art form]?

3. Assessment

Tell me about what you're learning in [art form]?

How do you know how well you're doing?

How does your teacher give you feedback?

How does teacher feedback affect your work?

4. Resources

Do you have everything you need for your work in [art form]?

Does your teacher have what she/he needs?

What do you wish your [art form] program had?

5. School Culture

Describe the arts community at your school.

How is the importance of [art form] made evident at your school?

If you were to recommend the [art form] program at your school to a friend, what would you say?

6. Curriculum

How does your teacher choose what you will do as part of the [art form] program here?

What does instruction in your [art form] class have to do with the productions, performances or exhibits that your school puts out for parents and the community?

7. Other

What else would you like me to know about your [art form] program?

3. Observation Protocol

Note for observers:
The purpose of this study is to examine this program in terms of the following:
***Access** to arts instruction, **teacher quality**, methods of **assessment**, **resources**, **school culture**, and the quality of the arts **curriculum**. Consider these as you take notes during the observation time.*

1. Learning Environment – [Before Class]

Describe the physical environment where learning occurs. Note the arrangement of the room and availability of resources. Attach photos and/or include sketches in your notes.

2. Observer Notes

Describe below the behaviors of students and teachers during the lesson.
Record what is happening, taking particular note of teacher-to-student and student-to-student interactions. Make note of the time for each observation.

Consider behaviors like:

<u>Teacher</u>
Talking or Telling
Listening & Responding
Monitoring & Mentoring
Other
<u>Student</u>
Attention & Engagement
Peer Interactions or Collaboration
Inquiring & Problem Solving

3. Observer Reflections
In your responses, please consider and identify specific examples of access, teacher quality, arts assessment, resources, school culture, and arts curriculum.

Access
How prepared did the students appear to be for the task(s) you observed?

Teacher Quality
What did you notice about student-teacher interactions?

In particular, how did the teacher differentiate instruction among students?

Methods of Assessment
What did you notice about how student learning in the art form was formatively and/or summatively assessed?

School Culture
What did you notice about the affective environment in the classroom (how students relate to and engage with one another, how the teacher fosters a community of learners, and how instructional practices promote positive student affect)?

Resources
What obstacles or challenges to the work did you notice and how did the teachers & students work through them?

How did the physical environment affect learning?

How did interruptions to instruction affect learning?

What questions are you left with?

4. Deconstruction Interview with Teacher

Spend about 15-30 minutes with the teacher, apart from the students, to discuss what was observed. You may address questions that arose for you during observation. Use the following items as suggestions, but please feel free to include questions you have generated that may be of use in developing this study of access, teacher quality, assessment, resources, school culture, and arts curriculum.

Tell me how the work you've done so far has led up to what I saw today.

What will happen next?

How do you feel about the work today?

Tell me about _____ ---refer to specific events or students in the instruction you witnessed. Ask for elaboration on what you observed.

C. State Standards in Arts Education

Each participating state has its own set of standards in the visual and performing arts. Links to each are provided below.

Alabama
http://web.alsde.edu/home/Sections/SectionDocuments.aspx?SectionID=54&Subsection=1

Georgia
https://www.georgiastandards.org/standards/pages/browsestandards/finearts.aspx

Kentucky
http://education.ky.gov/curriculum/arts/Pages/Arts-and-Humanities---Curriculum-Documents.aspx

Mississippi
http://www.mde.k12.ms.us/curriculum-and-instruction/visual-and-performing-arts

North Carolina
http://www.ncpublicschools.org/curriculum/artsed/scos/

South Carolina
http://ed.sc.gov/agency/se/Instructional-Practices-and-Evaluations/VisualandPerformingArts.cfm

Tennessee
http://www.tennessee.gov/education/ci/arts/