# How Arts Education Impacts Underperforming Schools

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is leading critical efforts to bring arts education to the fore in school improvement efforts.

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This final evaluation report provides a description and analysis of program impacts in the pilot cohort of Turnaround Arts schools at the end of their second year, including summaries of: 1) the theory of action and program pillars, 2) the evaluation design and research questions, 3) program operation and implementation in the arts, and 4) outcomes and trends in school reform indicators and student achievement data.

Turnaround Arts sits within the larger context of the national school reform landscape in the United States. High levels of concern about the quality of public schooling have been consistent across the many "waves" or "phases" of school reform. In each of these eras of reform, it has become evident that improving outcomes in the lowest-performing schools is among the most significant challenges. These lowest-performing schools are characterized by high teacher and principal turnover, low levels of trust among adults, significant student disciplinary issues, and low attendance. They are disproportionately schools that serve low-income students of color.

As it became evident that these lowest-performing schools were not improving under a variety of school improvement strategies, the school reform landscape at the national, state, and district levels began to focus on new approaches, including the idea of turnaround schools.

At the federal level, several initiatives focused on the lowest-performing schools as a part of the broader strategy. These included the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, and the U.S. Department of Education's Race to the Top Initiative and the School Improvement Grants (SIG) program in 2009. SIGs are large, 3-year federal grants that target the bottom five percent of schools in each state. They are awarded competitively to states to be used in persistently low-performing schools. Schools are required to use one of four relatively prescriptive intervention models to receive the grants.

The premise of Turnaround Arts is that, used strategically within this context, arts education offerings can provide school leadership with powerful levers to support the turnaround process. In particular, the program focuses on improving school climate and culture, deepening instruction, and increasing student and parent engagement, as a pathway to improved academic achievement.

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates a positive impact of arts engagement on students,

teachers, and schools. Despite this evidence, the implementation of arts programming across the country is inequitably distributed and subject to elimination. This most often occurs in a context of limited resources and a focus on accountability and high stakes testing, especially in communities that serve low-income students.

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is leading critical efforts to bring arts education to the fore in school improvement efforts. Following recommendations in its landmark report, *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*, PCAH launched Turnaround Arts as a pilot program in April of 2012. Turnaround Arts is a public-private partnership that aims to test the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform.

Turnaround Arts is built upon the principle that successful use of high-quality arts education in school turnaround must mobilize a set of core assets or "pillars" to target broader school objectives. The Turnaround Arts pillars include a focus on: 1) principal leadership, 2) the strategic use of arts specialists, 3) non-arts classroom teachers integrating arts into core content, 4) the use of teaching artists and community organizations, 5) the engagement of the district, parents, and community, 6) strategic arts planning, 7) professional development, and 8) improvements to the school environment. Each of these pillars can be used as levers for broader school improvement, targeting challenges commonly experienced by chronically low-performing schools, such as low student engagement, negative perceptions of the school internally and externally, and low trust.

The Turnaround Arts schools selected for this program serve diverse populations, span the country, exist in urban and rural settings, and represent both traditional public and charter schools. All Turnaround Arts schools were recipients of School Improvement Grants (SIGs), and thus were in the lowest-performing five percent of their state. Schools were competitively selected from nomina-

tions solicited from state and municipal authorities, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education. As part of the Turnaround Arts program, all schools received intensive arts education resources and expertise, including professional development, school-wide strategic planning, principal coaching, partnerships with local arts education and cultural organizations, community engagement events, arts supplies, musical instruments, and the involvement of high-profile artists.

This report is the culmination of a two-year evaluation of Turnaround Arts, which was conducted via a pro-bono agreement with Booz Allen Hamilton. The purpose of the evaluation is to summarize the theory of action and programmatic approach to Turnaround Arts, to capture descriptive aspects of the use of the arts in school improvement, and to evaluate the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in these schools adds significant value to school-wide reform. The evaluation relies upon a broad set of data including school surveys, interviews and focus groups with school staff, classroom observations, and analysis of attendance, discipline, and student achievement data.

## Program Operation and Implementation

In discussing program operation and implementation, the report articulates the following findings:

**High prevalence of arts resources in Turnaround Arts schools.** Turnaround Arts schools have broad arts education programming not common in comparable high-poverty, low-performing schools. Students are being exposed to a variety of arts disciplines for a significant amount of time. Turnaround Arts schools also have a significant allocation of arts educators. Use of the arts is integrated intentionally into the overall school philosophy and improvement strategy.

**High prevalence of the use of the arts in non-arts classrooms.** Information collected on a log of teacher instructional practice and through classroom observations revealed a high prevalence of the use of the arts in non-arts classrooms, in connection with other subject matter content. While there were some teachers who did not report

arts use or were not observed using the arts in their classrooms, the vast majority of teachers were using the arts in their classroom practice.

**Intentional application of the pillars as a lever for school improvement.** When we look across Turnaround Arts schools, we saw a deep application of the pillars. Different Turnaround Arts schools focused intentionally on particular pillars as levers for school improvement.

**Evidence of strategic mobilization of the arts toward larger school improvement goals.** School leaders and teachers creatively mobilized the arts toward larger school improvement goals. In the second year of Turnaround Arts, leaders and teachers were better able to articulate the ways in which they were using the arts to improve school outcomes, and examples of this mobilization were evident.

## Program Impacts

The analysis of program impact drew upon a wide range of quantitative data, including standardized test data and other school improvement indicators (attendance, disciplinary action, and teacher perceptions). In discussing program impacts, the report articulates the following findings in terms of program impacts from 2011 to 2014:

**Math and reading proficiency increases.** *7 out of the 8 observed schools* improved their overall reading proficiency rates; *6 out of the 8 schools* improved their math proficiency rates; and every school improved in either reading or math. *3 of the schools* had double-digit point-gains in math proficiency rates, and *2 of the schools* had similar gains in reading proficiency rates.

**Average academic improvement overall.** On average, from 2011 to 2014, Turnaround Arts schools demonstrated a *22.55%* improvement in math proficiency rates and a *12.62%* improvement in reading proficiency rates.

**Higher rates of average improvement than comparable SIG schools.** Turnaround Arts schools had *significantly higher rates of average improvement in both math and reading* than the cohort of

analogous SIG schools in their districts and states, improving 6.35% more in math and 7.04% more in reading from 2011 to 2014.

**Higher rates of average improvement than school district comparisons.** As a group, Turnaround Arts schools also *improved proficiency at a faster rate than their school districts' average.*

**Attendance rate increases.** *4 out of 8 Turnaround Arts schools* improved their attendance rates significantly between 2011 and 2014. The average attendance rate at Turnaround Schools was 91.77% in 2014.

**Discipline reductions.** *5 of the 8 Turnaround Arts schools* demonstrated dramatic improvements in disciplinary actions, in out-of-school suspensions, in-school suspensions, and/or overall disciplinary actions.

**Relationships between implementation of Turnaround Arts and broader school improvement outcomes.** When we measured Turnaround Arts schools on a continuum of implementation around assets and inputs, we see that schools that were high on implementation of the arts also tended to have positive trends on broader school improvement indicators, with several exceptions. While further work is needed to refine the implementation continuum and understand these ratings relative to school improvement indicators, there are hopeful signs in this analysis.

As such, after two years of implementation in Turnaround Arts schools, there were many promising indicators about the potential of this work to positively influence student engagement, school culture, instructional practice, and school outcomes in the country's lowest-performing schools.

# INTRODUCTION

This final evaluation report examines Turnaround Arts schools at the end of their second year. It provides a summary of the theory of action, foundational pillars, evaluation design, research questions, and a description of program operation and implementation in Turnaround Arts schools. This report also includes a summary of outcomes and trends in school reform indicators and student achievement data in Turnaround Arts schools.

This introductory section has three goals: 1) to situate the Turnaround Arts initiative within the broader school reform and arts education landscape; 2) to briefly describe the eight Turnaround Arts schools; and 3) to provide an overview of the evaluation design and research questions.

## The National School Reform Context

Turnaround Arts sits within the larger context of the national school reform landscape in the United States. Education scholars have noted that the idea that schools need reforming is as old as public schooling in the United States.[1] High levels of concern with the quality of public schooling have been consistent across the many "waves" or "phases" of school reform, as politicians, parents, leaders, and members of the public recognize the power of education to level inequality and provide pathways to the future for all.[2]

Across these eras of school reform, policy makers and state, district, and school leaders have focused on credentialing, governance, local control, higher standards, school accountability, and much more. In each of these eras of reform, it has become evident that improving the lowest-performing schools is among the most significant challenges we face.[3] For instance, while Chicago's radical experiment in local control in the 1980s moved indicators in many schools, the bottom schools did not improve.[4] Similarly, while the creation of accountability systems that required more systematic and transparent use of standardized test scores pushed many districts and schools to improve their test scores, the lowest-performing schools continued to stagnate.[5] Alarmingly, a disproportionate number of these schools served the students who needed the strongest supports: low-income students of color.

1  Tyack and Cuban, 1995
2  Murphy, 1990
3  Payne, 2008
4  Bryk et al., 1993
5  Carnoy et al., 2003

Researchers, advocacy groups, and policy makers began to try to understand the characteristics of these lowest-performing schools. These schools were often situated in neighborhoods experiencing structural changes, such as depopulation, loss of jobs, and declining housing, often leading to cultural adaptation as communities struggled to survive.[6] The lives of students attending these schools were impacted by issues surrounding public housing and high levels of gang membership and violence in their neighborhoods.[7] The schools were characterized by poor leadership and less experienced teachers, with rapid turnover of both. These schools also had low levels of coherence or stability in their approach to educating students or institutionalizing a school improvement strategy. This high level of teacher and principal turnover and lack of sustained school strategy, coupled with change and instability in the surrounding community, led to schools with low levels of safety, high levels of disciplinary challenges, and chronically low attendance.[8]

As it became evident that the lowest-performing schools serving low-income students of color were not improving under a variety of school improvement strategies, the school reform landscape at the national, state, and district levels began to reflect new language and a set of revised approaches to targeting the lowest-performing schools. At the district level, the language of reconstituting schools emerged in the mid-1990s.[9] As districts experimented with early accountability systems, they created interventions, incentives, and sanctions for schools that were in the lowest performance group. Reconstitution generally followed a number of years of being at the lowest level of performance (on probation, for instance) with the district or state accountability system, with a variety of interventions to create opportunities to improve. [10]

At the federal level, there were several initiatives that targeted the lowest-performing schools as a part of their larger strategy. The first of these was

the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in the form of the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Among its provisions, NCLB outlined requirements for standardized testing across all students grades 3-8, demonstration of school progress toward proficiency for all students, and standardized test scores were disaggregated by subgroups to show achievement levels and trends by race, poverty, ethnicity, disability, and limited English proficiency. NCLB also articulated a set of required interventions if schools did not meet annual benchmarks toward proficiency, called Adequate Yearly Progress.

These ideas, evident in local policies focused on the idea of reconstituting or turning around schools, were more clearly articulated and codified in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 (ARRA). Among the many focal points of ARRA were a number of programs and initiatives that targeted educational improvement, including the Race to the Top Initiative (RTTT) and School Improvement Grants. RTTT was a federal strategy that engaged states in a competitive process for receiving federal funds. To be competitive for the money, states had to target particular focus areas, including teacher and leader quality and pathways, standards and assessments, and data systems. RTTT's six focus areas also included an explicit focus on turning around or intervening in the lowest-performing schools.

U.S. Department of Education School Improvement Grants (SIGs) target the bottom five percent of schools in each state. They are awarded competitively to states to be used in persistently low-performing schools. Schools are required to use one of four relatively prescriptive intervention models to receive the grants. Most schools have chosen either the "turnaround" model (the principal is replaced and no more than 50% of the staff are eligible to be rehired; the principal has autonomy to implement improvement strategies) or the "transformation" model (similar to turnaround, without the requirement to replace half the staff, but with a required rigorous staff evaluation system). SIG schools are monitored closely by district and state staff and are required to meet benchmarks to renew annual funding.

6  Wilson, 1995
7  Venkatesh, 2002
8  Bryk et al., 2010
9  Mintrop, 2004a
10 Mintrop, 2004b

There is still much to learn about how effective various approaches to turnaround have been. Early studies in some contexts have demonstrated significant improvement in turnaround schools from low achievement to average achievement, but it is yet to be seen whether these schools can be moved from average to high achievement.[11] At the same time, it is difficult to fully capture the effects of school turnaround given other changes that happen in tandem, such as shifts in the student population. Regardless, it is clear this focus on transforming the lowest-performing schools will continue, as we strive as a country to educate all students well.

## Arts Engagement as a Lever for School Transformation

The Turnaround Arts initiative sits within this larger context of the efforts to improve the lowest-performing schools. The eight pilot Turnaround Arts schools are public elementary and middle schools from within the SIG cohort, across the country. The initiative aims to use arts engagement as a lever for school transformation as a part of the larger turnaround strategy.

A growing body of research demonstrates the positive effects of arts engagement on students, teachers, and schools.

For students, studies illuminate a connection between arts engagement and student achievement, educational attainment, and a positive influence on students' social competencies.[12] In addition to emphasizing positive academic outcomes, researchers also emphasize long-term positive effects in professional outcomes and civic engagement.[13] Importantly, researchers emphasize that while arts education has positive benefits for all students, the beneficial impact on "at-risk children [is] even more pronounced."[14] As such, arts education is often cited as a strategy to engage disadvantaged

youth who struggle in traditional school settings.

For teachers, high-quality arts programming has also been linked to positive outcomes. These positive impacts include but are not limited to: increases in instructional innovation, increased collaboration, a broadened sense of student capabilities, and higher levels of job satisfaction.[15]

At the school level, arts education has been found to positively influence school climate, increasing student engagement, voice and sense of value, and teacher commitment.[16]

Despite this evidence, the implementation of arts programming across the country is far from systematic. Arts programs are inequitably distributed and are typically among the first to be eliminated in the current climate of budgetary shortfalls, accountability, and high stakes testing. Schools that serve low-income students in inner-city and rural areas incur a disproportionate share of this loss. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Education estimated that approximately six million students in public elementary and middle schools do not have arts or music classes.  An overwhelming majority of these student are in high-poverty schools.[17]

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) has been engaged as a leader in efforts to bring arts education to the fore in school initiatives and school improvement efforts.[18]

In 2011, PCAH published the landmark report *Reinvesting in Arts Education:  Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*, the first federal report in more than a decade to survey the challenges and opportunities in providing arts education to our nation's children. This report summarized over ten years of research illustrating the benefits of art education on academic achievement and student

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11   De la Torre et al., 2013

12   Arts Education Partnership

13   For example, Dr. James Catterall and Susan A. Dumais documented a correlation between arts-rich education and academic achievement, completion of high school and college, and involvement in volunteering, voting, and engagement with local or school politics. Catterall James S., Susan A. Dumais, and Gillian Hampden-Thompson, The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth: Findings from Four Longitudinal Studies, Research Report #55, National Endowment of Arts, Washington DC, March 2012

14   NGA Center for Best Practices, 2002

15   Burton, Horowitz and Abeles, 2000

16   DC Arts and Humanities Education Collaborative, 2011

17   IES, 2014

18   PCAH, an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues, works with federal agencies and the private sector to initiate and support key programs in the arts and the humanities, particularly in education. Members of PCAH include the heads of 12 federal agencies, serving in their official capacity and private individuals appointed by the President. Private members of the PCAH include notable artists, scholars, business people, and philanthropists.

engagement, and highlighting the "equity gap" of unequal access to arts education programs in high-poverty schools.

From the report's five recommendations came the pilot program Turnaround Arts, launched in April of 2012. Turnaround Arts is a public-private partnership[19] that aims to test the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform.

The premise of Turnaround Arts is that, used strategically within this context, arts education offerings can provide school leadership with powerful levers to support the turnaround process. In particular, the program focuses on improving school climate and culture, deepening instruction,

and increasing student and parent engagement, as a pathway to improved academic achievement.

While there are many strategies in the educational field focused on accelerating academic achievement, there are relatively few to help schools leaders address these other, foundational challenges to changing the direction of a school.

## Turnaround Arts Schools

The Turnaround Arts schools selected for this program serve diverse populations, span the country, exist in urban and rural settings, and represent both traditional public and charter public schools. They were all part of the larger pool of SIG grantees, and thus were in the lowest-performing five percent of their state. Schools were competitively selected from nominations solicited from state and municipal authorities, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education. Criteria for selection included evidence of strong school leadership and an engaged district, at least one full-time arts specialist on staff, and a commitment to arts education as an element of the school's turnaround strategy.

19  The founding partners in Turnaround Arts include the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the Herb Alpert Foundation, Crayola, NAMM Foundation, the Aspen Institute, the Arts Education Partnership, and Booz Allen Hamilton. Turnaround Arts is managed by Americans for the Arts, a national nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education.

| TA School 2013-2014 | Location | Grade Level | Race & Ethnicity | Enrollment | Free and Reduced Lunch |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy | New Orleans, LA | PK-8 | 99% African American 1% Other | 600 | 99% |
| Findley Elementary School | Des Moines, IA | PK-5 | 30% Caucasian 30% African American 30% Latino 10% Other | 325 | 94% |
| Lame Deer Middle School | Lame Deer, MT | 7, 8 | 99% American Indian 1% Other | 90 | 100% |
| Martin Luther King, Jr. School | Portland, OR | K-8 | 46% African American 32% Latino 10% Caucasian 2% Asian 10% Other | 331 | 90% |
| Noel Community Arts School | Denver, CO | 6, 7 | 58% Latino 32% African American 6% Other 4% Caucasian | 360 | 88% |
| Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School | Boston, MA | K-8 | 50% Latino 45% African American 2% Caucasian 1% Asian 2% Other | 857 | 100% |
| Roosevelt Elementary School | Bridgeport, CT | K-8 | 51% Latino 42% African American 4% Caucasian 2% Asian 1% Other | 590 | 100% |
| Savoy Elementary School | Washington, DC | PK-5 | 98% African American 2% Other | 408 | 92% |

## The Evaluation

The two-year evaluation of Turnaround Arts was conducted via a pro-bono agreement with Booz Allen Hamilton. It was led by a Principal Investigator from the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute, and supported by a Research Associate trained in evaluating arts integration. The purpose of the evaluation was both formative (capturing descriptive aspects of the use of high-quality and integrated arts education) and summative (intending to evaluate the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform). The table on the next page summarizes the research questions guiding the evaluation. Additional details about the evaluation design and data collection are available upon request.

These data collection tools and multiple methods enabled the evaluation team to explore the process and outcomes of the work of Turnaround Arts from multiple perspectives. These data were collected across year one and two of the evaluation:

- **Administrator interviews and teacher focus groups.** School site visits included conversations with principals and teachers about their work as a Turnaround Arts school.

- **Classroom observations.** The evaluation team completed classroom observations across all Turnaround Arts schools in a variety of classes, including classes led and co-led by classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists.

- **5 Essentials survey.** Urban Education Institute staff administered a survey which measures five leading indicators of school environment: 1) Effective Leaders, 2) Collaborative Teachers, 3) Supportive Environment, 4) Ambitious Instruction, and 5) Involved Families. Additional questions, termed the "Super 5E," asked for respondents' perceptions of the role of the arts in school change.

- **Questionnaire of administrators and teachers.** This questionnaire focused on budget, staffing, goals, and the role arts programming played in decisions around key organizational resources.

- **Teacher logs.** Teachers were asked to provide detailed information about their instructional practices, with a specific focus on the use of the arts in their classrooms.

- **Attendance data.** The evaluation team collected average daily attendance and truancy data, where available from state and/or district sources.

- **Discipline data.** The evaluation team collected various indicators of disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, out of school-suspension, and expulsions, where available.

- **Student achievement data.** The evaluation team collected a variety of student achievement data, including math and reading scores on standardized tests at the school and grade level, for both Turnaround Arts schools, as well as for comparison schools and cohorts.

| HYPOTHESIS: Strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform | | |
|---|---|---|
| **RESEARCH QUESTION 1** | **RESEARCH QUESTION 2** | **RESEARCH QUESTION 3** |
| What strategies and methods are used by Turnaround Arts schools to leverage elements of a high-quality and integrated arts program in overall school reforms? | What is the relationship between implementation of Turnaround Arts programming and improvement in school reform indicators? | How do Turnaround Arts schools compare to similar schools in their district and state on available outcomes data? |
| **Data Collection** | **Data Collection** | **Data Collection** |
| 1. Administrator interviews<br>2. Teacher focus groups<br>3. Classroom observations<br>4. 5 Essentials survey | 1. Questionnaire of school leaders and teachers<br>2. Administrator interviews<br>3. Teacher logs<br>4. Attendance data<br>5. Discipline data | 1. Student achievement data<br>2. Comparison data (school, district, cohort, state, etc.) |

# IMPLEMENTATION IN TURNAROUND ARTS SCHOOLS

From 2012 to 2014, Turnaround Arts schools made strides in using high-quality and integrated arts education to engage their students, improve school culture, and transform their schools as a part of their larger school improvement strategy. In this section, we apply a set of diverse lenses to describe and analyze the use of arts education in Turnaround Arts schools, aimed at: 1) describing the Turnaround Arts program pillars and theory of action, 2) providing an overview of arts education assets in Turnaround Arts schools, and 3) describing the use of the arts.

The purpose of this section is to both provide a description of the use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools, as well as to articulate the influence of the use of the arts on broader school improvement efforts.

## Turnaround Arts Pillars

Turnaround Arts is built on the principle that schools seeking to use the arts as part of a successful turnaround must: 1) build a high-quality arts education program with the following pillars as core assets, and 2) intentionally mobilize those assets to target larger school objectives. The Turnaround Arts pillars include:

1. **Principal** who is a leader and advocate for the arts program, both internally and externally, and drives its integration with larger school-wide strategy.

2. **Arts Specialists** on staff providing sequential, standards-based instruction during the school day on a frequent and regular basis to all students.

3. **Classroom Teachers** (non-arts) integrating arts into other core content instruction at

varying levels of depth, and collaborating and cross planning with arts educators.

4. **Teaching Artists and Community Arts Organizations** working regularly with students and teaching staff to enrich and enhance learning in alignment with school needs.

5. **District, parents, and community** who are supportive of, involved in, and engaged with the arts at school.

6. **Strategic Arts Planning** on an ongoing basis that includes a needs assessment, a Strategic Arts Plan, shared leadership, a communications strategy, connections between arts education resources and larger school challenges, and evaluation and assessment.

7. **Professional Development** in the arts and arts integration as an ongoing, regularly scheduled activity.

8. **School Environment** that celebrates creativity and artistic achievement, including performances and exhibitions by students, and physical spaces or displays.

Each school entered the program with a commitment to arts education and assets in some of these pillars. As a result of the program, school leadership at Turnaround Arts schools received intensive arts education resources and expertise to further develop these pillars and deploy them strategically to enhance and support broader school goals. Turnaround Arts supported professional development, facilitated partnerships with community arts education and cultural organizations, provided art supplies and musical instruments, and promoted community engagement events. The Turnaround Arts team worked closely with principals and arts team leaders over the first six months of the program to create an arts strategic plan for each school, and then assisted in implementation of the plan with high-profile artists, teacher training, summer conferences, and numerous on-site consultations. A critical emphasis in each school was placed on building arts leadership teams, consisting of both arts and non-arts educators, who helped guide the development and implementation of the program in the school, in close collaboration with the principal.

To support the Turnaround Arts work, a national staff was assembled with expertise in both the arts and school improvement. In 2012-13 and 2013-14, the Turnaround Arts team made multiple site visits to the eight schools, organized annual training conferences at the Aspen Institute for school teams, coordinated community events with high-profile artists as mentors at each school, and facilitated ongoing coaching and planning calls with school leaders and arts resource providers. Communication was ongoing, enabling the Turnaround Arts team to have a deep understanding of the plans of each Turnaround Arts school, as well as to identify the right resources and capacity to match with the unique context, approach, and needs of each school.

## Turnaround Arts Logic Model

The Turnaround Arts approach was built around a logic model about the strategic use of the arts as part of a larger school improvement strategy. The theory of action that follows builds upon the pillars, articulating the mechanisms and pathways of transformation across intermediate-, and long-term outcomes.

The logic model begins with "school inputs" representing financial investments, both those generated by the school and those provided by Turnaround Arts.

"School assets," also labeled as the Turnaround Arts "pillars," articulate the critical aspects of arts education and integration. The pillars are the focal point of the work of Turnaround Arts, both by school and PCAH staff. The pillars are levers to improve climate and culture which, in turn, influence and accelerate school improvement.

The orange arrow represents the way in which school assets and school inputs are strategically applied to specific turnaround goals.

The theory of action is that Turnaround Arts schools work to strategically mobilize their assets and use the arts as a part of a broader, coherent school improvement strategy. In the intermediate-term, impacts of the mobilization of assets and the pillars lead to positive changes in student engagement and the extent to which the school is organized for improvement. In turn, these positive developments translate into student achievement outcomes in the long-term.

The model also represents the feedback loops that are necessary for ongoing improvement and situates Turnaround Arts within a context of other school reform efforts.

**Turnaround Arts Logic Model**

| Other school reforms | | | | |

| SCHOOL INPUTS | SCHOOL ASSETS | Mobilization of Assets | INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES | LONG-TERM OUTCOMES |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Financial Investments**<br>▸ School and district funds<br>▸ Federal dollars<br>▸ Private grants<br>▸ In-kind donations<br><br>**Turnaround Arts Supports**<br>▸ Principal coaching<br>▸ Teacher training<br>▸ Community partnerships<br>▸ Artist involvement<br>▸ Musical instrucments<br>▸ Art supplies | **The Pillars**<br>▸ Principal as leader<br>▸ Arts Specialists<br>▸ Teaching Artists<br>▸ Classroom Teachers<br>▸ Strategic Planning<br>▸ Professional Development<br>▸ Commmunity Support<br>▸ School Environment | **Mobilization of Assets**<br><br>Strategic application of arts education assets to school-wide turnaround outcomest | **Student Engagement**<br>▸ Decreases in disciplinary action<br>▸ Increases in student attendance<br>▸ Decreased truancy<br>▸ Dynamic class participation<br><br>**School Organization for Improvement**<br>▸ Effective leaders<br>▸ Collaborative teachers<br>▸ Supportive environment<br>▸ Ambitious instruction<br>▸ Involved families | **Student Success**<br>▸ Improved reading and math scores on standardized tests, outperforming comparison schools<br>▸ Increased creativity, persistence and self-efficacy<br><br>**School Success**<br>▸ Exit from turnaround status |

**Changes in Turnaround Arts Program Design**

**Formative Feedback**

Analysis and reflection by schools, program staff, consultants, and the research team

## Strategic Application of the Arts

A key aspect of the theory of action of Turnaround Arts is the strategic application of the arts toward larger school improvement goals. For instance, a school might aim to use the arts to increase student engagement and interest in school, with an end goal of fostering academic growth and improvement. By the second year of Turnaround Arts, principals more clearly articulated the ways in which use of the arts was targeting and enhancing broader school improvement goals.

Here, we provide a few illustrations of the arts being used as a lever in overall school improvement from four Turnaround Arts schools:

### Enhancing student engagement

Orchard Garden's principal questioned the traditional approach to school turnaround that focuses on doubling efforts in math and English and introducing strict codes of conduct. How could the school more deeply engage students and increase student commitment as a lever to improve student outcomes? Orchard Gardens invested in the arts as a way of ensuring that the faculty offered a diverse and compelling curriculum that maximized learning opportunities for students. Instead of a narrowed curriculum geared to tested subjects, students at Orchard Gardens benefit from classes in all four disciplines that engage them through movement, music, and visual images. In addi-

tion, the principal acknowledged the discrepancy between the trouble adults often have sitting still and focusing during long meetings, and our expectations that young people should be able to sit for hours focused on narrow content areas. He articulated a different approach to long blocks of instruction: spend time learning math, then go practice trombone or sketch a still life, and return to math with a new mindset. At the same time teachers are working with one another to make authentic and explicit connections across the arts and other content areas, making each class more interesting. At Orchard Gardens, the arts are an avenue to engaging more deeply with students, which may, in turn, improve their academic outcomes.

### Unifying faculty and increasing collaboration

Findley's principal described how the faculty used to work very hard for students, but functioned in an isolated manner, with little collaboration. Bringing focused attention to implementing arts integration as an instructional approach through intensive professional development, teacher planning time, and significant trial and error, resulted in a school-wide adoption of a specific set of theater strategies and a regular practice of teacher collaboration (both one-on-one and in small grade level groups). What was necessary to transform Findley into an arts integration school simultaneously transformed a group of individual educators into a high-functioning learning community.

### Supporting school culture and classroom management

At Roosevelt, school leadership and teachers decided to encourage positive behavior by developing a universal school-wide vocabulary based on the arts. For example, when a teacher in any class asks for rest position (the neutral position musicians sit or stand in when not actively performing) in class, students know to put their writing utensils down and look at their teacher. The universal vocabulary is a tool to support improving school culture, classroom management, and discipline, a key focus for school improvement.

### Supporting parents to support their children

The Savoy Players, a student dance team at Savoy, rehearse dance during lunch and after school, and invest even more of their time leading up to frequent performances. This kind of rigorous arts experience was new for this group of students and new for their families as well. Parents regularly called the office expressing concerns about the time their children were devoting to the arts and the possibility that involvement with the Savoy Players could negatively impact academic achievement. And so began a multi-year dialogue between Savoy staff and the Savoy Players' families about the kinds of positive non-cognitive skills being instilled in students by their commitment to and participation in the arts, such as grit and perseverance. School leaders and teachers emphasized the skills built through committed participation, and the reciprocal benefits in terms of academics as well as other long-term outcomes. As such, at Savoy, the arts were used to engage parents in a conversation about building a broader set of skills that students need to be successful in school and in life.

## Uniform Practices in Turnaround Arts Schools

Implementation of the arts took on a unique character in each Turnaround Arts school as a result of variation in resources, priorities, and context. However, Turnaround Arts schools were asked to engage in a set of uniform practices in each year of the program. Each Turnaround Arts school was asked to commit to the actions summarized in the table below, as part of program participation.

### Year 1 Commitments (2012-13)

- Attend the Turnaround Arts Summer Retreat with principal and two teachers to begin strategic planning and a shared vision for the arts.

- Build an Arts Leadership Team of arts specialists, classroom teachers, and administrators.

- Create a Strategic Arts Plan.

- Deliver in-school arts instruction from arts educators to every child at least 45 minutes weekly.

- Maintain a minimum of one full-time arts specialist on staff and hire additional arts specialists, if possible.

- Provide key staff with professional development in arts integration and, when feasible, make this available to the entire teaching staff.

- Prioritize time within the larger school schedule for staff to collaborate, plan, and receive training in arts integration.

- Solicit minimum levels of arts integration from non-arts teachers in specific subjects, classes, or teacher groups.

- Examine how the arts are and can be used in their school on a regular basis, informally and formally, with the principal and staff.

- Create communications strategies around the arts to mobilize community and generate positive press.

- Develop a network and community of practice with other Turnaround Arts schools and staff to share ideas resources and problem solve.

- Cultivate relationships with local art organizations, museums, universities, and businesses to bring in teaching artists, provide professional development, and support arts activities.

- Increase opportunities for parents to be actively involved in arts events and programs.

- Establish annual events and performances for students to perform and exhibit their work.

- Beautify physical spaces with student work and color.

### Additional Year 2 Commitments (2013-14)

- Create an Arts Team Leader position.

- Deepen and strengthen strategic use of the arts to address key challenges at the school.

- Revise and expand the Strategic Arts Plan created in the first year.

- Increase expectations and minimum levels for classroom teachers to integrate the arts into their content and for arts specialists to integrate academic content into arts instruction.

- Increase amount of in-school arts instruction that students receive.

- Provide staff with high-quality professional development in arts integration techniques and explicitly connect them to desired academic outcomes and Common Core standards.

- Implement best practices to ensure residencies are high-quality and integrated into larger school or instructional objectives.

- Refine and promote external messages about the transformative impacts of the arts and related positive school developments.

- Communicate with their district and other educational stakeholders about positive developments within the school and the support they need to continue their work.

## An Overview of Instructional Assets in the Arts

Turnaround Arts schools were selected, in part, for their interest in putting the arts at the center of efforts to improve their schools. Over the course of the program, most schools materially increased the instructional assets (teachers, time, and teaching artists) that they provided to students. The following is a summary of the instructional assets in arts education across the eight schools at the close of the two-year implementation period:[20]

Turnaround Arts school leaders prioritized the offering of arts across a variety of disciplines in their schools, through the hiring of arts specialists on staff and through collaborations with art partners and teaching artists. Five of eight Turnaround Arts schools now have arts specialists on staff in three or more disciplines. The schools that do not have an arts specialist for a particular discipline strategically draw upon arts partners to offer those learning opportunities to students.

Additionally, more than half of the Turnaround Arts schools hired a part-time coordinator to support the arts program. This is typically a split position (e.g. in Denver, the assistant principal oversees arts integration; in Portland, a fifth grade teacher serves as a liaison between teachers and potential arts partners). Lame Deer also has two full-time culture teachers on staff to teach story-telling, beading, and drumming. Denver has media arts specialists and a creative writing teacher.

Students receive between 45 and 500 minutes per week of instructional time with an arts specialist. This varies by grade and school, but applies to every student, meaning that low-performing students are not pulled out for other interventions in lieu of arts instruction.

Instructional minutes taught by arts specialists are supplemented by teaching artist residencies during the school day, arts programming during the extended day, field trips, and performances/exhi-

bitions. Schools engaged a range of arts partners to make sure their students had access to these opportunities, with most schools working with three or more different partners.

In addition to providing student learning opportunities, arts organizations also provided important professional development opportunities to teachers, most often with a focus on arts integration, including workshops and side-by-side teaching. The professional development resulted in strong evidence of non-arts teachers including the arts as a part of their instruction. 63-100% of teachers at each school reported that they are integrating the arts in their classrooms. For five out of the eight schools, more than 80% of teachers reported including the arts in a least one lesson.

Turnaround Arts schools organized and mobilized an impressive set of arts education assets as a part of their work. Arts specialists and teaching artists spent intensive time directly with students, providing arts instruction, and collaborating with teachers to support the integration of arts in the classroom. The majority of non-arts teachers in each Turnaround Arts school used the arts in their classrooms in 2013-2014. The set of arts partnerships brought to bear in the schools represented a well-respected group of organizations devoted to providing supports, instruction, and services of the highest quality.

These arts assets are foundational to the implementation that is described in the section that follows. We build upon these descriptions of arts assets by illustrating the use of the arts in action in Turnaround Arts schools. As we do, we use the Turnaround Arts pillars as the organizing framework, providing insights into the ways in which schools mobilized the arts to reach key goals around the pillars as a lever for broader school change.

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20    The information in the summary table on page 15 has been aggregated school-wide. In many schools, art specialists serve particular grade levels, and minutes of instruction vary by grade and/or time of year. In these cases, the chart reflects the range over a school year and/or by grade level.

| Schools | Enrollment Spring 2014 | Arts Specialists on Staff [Full Time, Part Time] | Minutes Students Receive Weekly from Art Specialists | Art Partnerships | % of non-arts teachers integrating the arts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy** | 600 | 2 FT Visual Arts<br>1 FT Theater<br>1 PT Band | 250 | • Young Audiences<br>• Kid smART<br>• Batiste Family | 76% |
| **Findley Elementary School** | 325 | 1 FT General Music<br>1 FT Visual Arts<br>1 PT Arts Coordinator<br>1 PT Band<br>1 PT Strings | 160-210 | • Des Moines Performing Arts<br>• Focus Five Arts Integration<br>• Des Moines Art Center<br>• Des Moines Ballroom<br>• Metro Arts Alliance<br>• Grand View University<br>• Co'Motion Dance Company<br>• Gateway Dance Theater | 95% |
| **Lame Deer Middle School** | 90 | 1 PT General Music<br>1 PT Visual Arts<br>1 PT Media Arts<br>2 FT Northern Cheyenne Culture | 250 | • Highline Project Visual Arts<br>• Water Works Pottery<br>• Silk Road Ensemble<br>• Music therapist<br>• Shakespeare in the Schools | 63% |
| **Martin Luther King, Jr. School** | 331 | 1 PT Theater<br>1 PT Dance<br>1 PT Arts Coordinator | 45-225 | • Right Brain Initiative<br>• Portland Playhouse<br>• American Music Program<br>• Art-a-La-Carte<br>• VIBE<br>• Portland State University<br>• Portland Art Museum | 87% |
| **Noel Community Arts School** | 360 | 1 FT General Music<br>1 FT Band<br>1 FT Visual Arts<br>2 FT Media Arts<br>1 FT Creative writing<br>1 FT Dance<br>1 PT Arts integration Coordinator | 500 | • Think 360 Arts<br>• Red Line Gallery<br>• Cleo Parker Robinson Dance Company<br>• Black Actors Guild<br>• Molina Speaks<br>• Hakim Bellamy | 91% |
| **Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School** | 857 | 1 FT Music<br>2 FT Visual Arts<br>1 FT Theater<br>1 FT Dance | 220-385 | • Americore<br>• Silk Road Ensemble<br>• Boston Arts Academy | 78% |
| **Roosevelt Elementary School** | 590 | 1 FT Visual Arts<br>1 FT Dance<br>1 FT Music<br>1 FT Band<br>1 PT Strings<br>1 PT Theater<br>1 PT Arts Coordinator | 140-220 | • KEYS Music<br>• Hot Schools<br>• Back Country Jazz<br>• City Lights Art Gallery<br>• Neighborhood Studios<br>• Housatonic Museum of Art | 82% |
| **Savoy Elementary School** | 408 | 1 FT Music<br>1 PT Theater and Dance/Arts Coordinator<br>1 FT Visual Arts | 135-220 | • Washington Performing Arts<br>• Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts<br>• Imagination Stage/ Imagination Quest<br>• National Gallery of Art<br>• Smithsonian Anacostia Museum | 100% |

# PILLAR 1

## Describing and Characterizing Use of the Arts

We continue our discussion of the use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools by providing rich descriptions of the arts in action across the schools. We use the Turnaround Arts pillars as the organizing framework for these descriptions, both to explicate the pillars and to provide a window into the unique ways that Turnaround Arts schools drew upon the arts to improve their schools.

**Principal who is a leader and advocate for the arts program, both internally and externally, and drives its integration with larger school-wide strategy.**

Principals are critical players in using the arts as a strategy for improvement. A strong principal carries a clear vision and conviction for the arts and prioritizes the time and structures needed for implementation. Central to this vision of the arts are a clear vision of the skills and opportunities the arts offer students and ensuring consistency in arts programming and coherence with broader school goals. In developing arts across the school, principals provided high-quality professional development opportunities and collaboration time for their teachers on a regular, ongoing basis. Primary to this prioritization was the leveraging or creation of structures such as grade level planning, professional learning communities, and staff meetings to support the use of the arts. In addition, each Turnaround Arts principal created an Arts Leadership Team and identified an Arts Team Leader.

Principals were expected to be visible, vocal advocates for the arts, both externally and internally. The most exemplary principals were active participants and leaders of arts professional development, and worked hard to demonstrate their personal commitment to the arts, whether performing in the school musical or emceeing showcase performances. They spoke frequently to the community and media about the positive impact of the arts on students and the school. They were strategic in their efforts to publicly highlight student art accomplishments, shifting public perception of the schools, and providing the staff and students with a boost in morale.

## Leading by Conviction:
# Orchard Gardens

*In this vignette, we illustrate how Principal Andrew Bott of Orchard Gardens strategically focused school improvement efforts at the school around the use of the arts.*

Principal Andrew Bott's strong conviction about the arts was evident when, upon his appointment as principal of this struggling school on the outskirts of Boston, he made a daring decision:  he terminated most of the security staff, and used the funds to hire three additional art specialists. The result, when combined with existing arts staff, was an extensive arts program that spanned all four art disciplines. He then designed a schedule for the 600+ students that would first build foundational skills in all four art forms in the early grades, followed by specialization, mastery and choice for students in the later ones.

When approaching arts integration he took a collaborative, bottom-up approach. He chose to grow the arts in classrooms through a combination of teacher collaboration and demonstration. In addition to prioritizing frequent performances and showcase events that increased expectations around student engagement and potential, he met regularly with grade level teams and facilitated conversations among teachers about how to use the arts in their classrooms. He made space for the new arts specialists to collaborate individually with teachers, and also provided materials and training to support teachers. What resulted was a steady spread of arts integration, as evidenced by the development of an online WIKI page for teachers that facilitated and banked arts integration ideas.

As the arts staff and program gained traction, and test scores and discipline data began to improve, Principal Bott embraced opportunities to make the school's successes public. He created partnerships with prominent local arts and educational organizations, community leaders, and policy makers. He created an advisory committee comprised of community members. He also worked strategically and intentionally to shift public perception by opening the doors of the school to high quality arts performances and by developing students as spokespersons. Importantly, Principal Bott sought opportunities for students to continue their arts education beyond their time at Orchard Gardens, for instance by providing students with training in portfolio development that resulted in numerous student acceptances to the prestigious Boston Arts Academy.

# PILLAR 2

**Arts specialists on staff providing sequential, standards-based instruction during the school day on a frequent and regular basis to all students.**

The work of arts specialists is often regarded in schools as an "extra," something that is not essential to the education of students. In Turnaround Arts schools, in contrast, arts specialists are cast as important educators and central to school improvement efforts. This brings elevated expectations and new roles for art specialists.

Of primary importance is giving students equal access to arts specialists who offer high-quality, sequential arts instruction. Turnaround Arts Schools were expected to meet minimum requirements for arts instruction for all students—at least one period a week in their first year, and increased minutes or periods in the subsequent one. Most schools exceeded these expectations each year due to perceptions that art offerings were having a positive influence on student confidence, academic achievement, and engagement.

Arts specialists in these schools were held to high standards, a reality that was reinforced by their shift from a peripheral role to being central to the school's identity. Arts specialists generally embraced this opportunity with vigor—increasing visibility and the number of student performances or exhibitions they led and relishing their new role as both collaborator and advisor to classroom teachers seeking to integrate the arts. Arts specialists regularly serve on each school's Arts Leadership Team and are often vital to professional development and collaboration.

# Capturing the Work of Arts Specialists in Action:
# ReNEW

*This vignette illustrates the evolution of arts offerings and collaboration around the arts at ReNEW Cultural Arts Academy in New Orleans, Louisiana.*

In its first year of being a Turnaround Arts School, ReNEW was divided into three academies—a lower grades K-2 school, a middle grades 3-5 school, and an upper grades 6-8 school. The leader of the grades 3-5 school opted to hire two full-time arts specialists, one in visual arts and one in music, to work intensively with students. Arts programming for the K-2 and 6-8 grades was less routinized, often provided by teaching artists.

After a year of deep investment in training of the arts specialists and a focus on the Turnaround Arts pillars, the grades 3-5 exhibited significant growth in student outcomes and high levels of student satisfaction and engagement. Building upon this success, the lower school arts specialists expanded their reach to include grades K-2. At the same time, the middle school hired a theater teacher and a second part-time visual arts teacher. Teachers, when surveyed in the second year, strongly agreed that arts specialists were delivering high quality instruction. These successes have been augmented by the strategic use of teaching artists, providing students with foundational experiences in music and the visual arts in the early grades, and access to four arts disciplines and specialized experiences such as jazz band in upper elementary and middle school.

Arts specialists at ReNEW have worked intentionally to integrate the arts with other subjects in their offerings. The arts coordinator explains, "We just finished our Mardi Gras Parade. For Pre-K through third grade we looked at the ELA Read Aloud Standards, which for them also incorporates social studies or science, mostly science in the unit. We used what they were learning to infuse their crew themes, so they made costumes and masks and instruments that all related to their science in the ELA curriculum. For example, in our second grade classes, we're doing insects and plants, so they made instruments that sounded like insects or had three parts like insects do, or six legs like insects do."

# PILLAR 3

**Classroom Teachers (non-arts) collaborating and cross planning with arts educators and integrating arts into other core content instruction at varying levels of depth.**

The creation of a coherent, rigorous instructional approach is central to improving chronically low performing schools. Non-arts classroom teachers played a pivotal role in this aspect of program implementation. As a part of their instructional improvement strategy, Turnaround Arts schools focused on supporting classroom teachers in their use of arts integration as a tool to enrich and deepen instruction across all subjects, increase student engagement, and increase the rigor of their instruction.

However, integrating the arts in meaningful, accessible, and strategic ways can be challenging for teachers who are uncomfortable with the arts or unwilling to engage with new strategies. Classroom teachers were most successful when offered two strategic supports to arts integration—training and support in specific and highly useable arts-based teaching strategies, and the opportunity to work side-by-side with an art specialist or teaching artist. Schools that made time for training and collaboration between teachers and arts specialists/teaching artists were able to more intentionally and rapidly expand arts integration.

# Classroom Teachers Deepening Arts Integration:
# Noel Community Arts Schools

*In this vignette, we describe Noel Community Arts School's development of arts integration across their school, and the genesis of their first annual Think Show event, a spring school celebration highlighting arts integration across the school.*

Located in northeast Denver, Colorado, Noel Community Arts School had a young staff, a school-wide identity in the arts and teachers and leadership enthusiastic about arts integration. Early in implementation of Turnaround Arts, administrators proactively arranged schedules that made collaboration possible, scheduling prep periods so that groups of teachers could gather twice monthly in cross-curricular teams, each of which included at least one art specialist. The arts coordinator attended all meetings, bringing expertise to bear on arts integration.

With school schedules in place for collaboration, and whole staff professional development sessions in the arts underway, the Arts Leadership team looked for ways to introduce specific integration strategies. They found the right path in a collaboration with Think 360 Arts, a statewide arts organization with a well-developed model for teaching artist residencies that included co-planning and co-teaching. The school arranged for 11 four-week residencies in content classrooms, through the use of a $10,000 Turnaround Arts mini grant. The Arts Leadership Team used these residencies to drive arts integration school-wide, culminating in a "Think Show" in the spring that would feature students presenting an arts integrated project from every classroom.

Over the course of the year, arts integration became a part of the lifeblood of the school. Teachers worked with arts specialists to create arts integrated projects, like biographies of famous dancers with accompanying choreographed pieces, stories of superheroes based on the periodic elements, and paintings of macro and micro perspectives of nature to explore Earth Day themes. Teachers learned and applied arts-based strategies to lead students to deeper observations, inference, and support of their opinions. Teachers reflected on this work and the lessons learned, together.

In April, the culmination of a year's worth of work was evident. Halls were crowded with student work and accompanying artist statements, and classrooms were full of evidence of student thinking through the arts. The Think Show drew the largest community attendance to date at the school, as parents experienced the arts exhibits and performance assembly.

# Classroom Teacher Practice

One of the key focus areas for Turnaround Arts is classroom teachers integrating the arts into their instructional practice. Here, we consider the prevalence and depth of the use of the arts across all Turnaround Arts schools.

Information about the use of the arts by classroom teachers was collected through a teacher log survey and classroom observations. Three hundred and nineteen teachers completed the teacher log in the spring of 2014, representing a more than 90% participation rate from each school. Forty-three of the respondents were arts specialists (13%). This teacher log survey asked teachers to: 1) summarize their use of the arts in their classrooms, 2) provide a descriptive summary of particular lessons, and 3) respond to survey questions about their use of the arts.[21] In addition, classroom observations were conducted for a total of 41 classroom observations in the eight Turnaround Arts schools, which occurred between late February and April 2014.[22]

21  Of the non-arts specialists responding, 64% were returning teachers while 36% indicated they were teaching at the school for the first year. The vast majority of these teachers that were new to Turnaround Arts schools had no prior experience in using the arts in instruction.

22  The observations lasted an average of thirty minutes each. Classroom teachers taught most of the observed lessons (59%), followed by arts specialists (41%) and teaching artists (10%). 10% of the observed lessons were co-taught by an arts and non-arts teacher. The evaluators observed instruction relatively evenly across each grade level in the K-8 spectrum, ranging from two second grade observations to six eighth grade observations.

| Which of the following learning opportunities did you include in this lesson/activity? (Check all that apply) | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Answer Options** | **Response Percent** | **Response Count** |
| I taught at least one art skill (e.g., creating a dance using multiple levels) | 45.3% | 72 |
| I asked students to create/perform in an art discipline (e.g., students explored the various sounds they could make with xylophones) | 44.7% | 71 |
| I presented students with a professional work of art to observe (e.g., viewed a landscape, listened to recorded music) | 39.6% | 63 |
| I led a discussion analyzing a professional work of art | 24.5% | 39 |
| I introduced and encouraged students to use discipline-specific arts vocabulary (e.g., symmetry, shade, improvisation, harmony, etc.) | 28.9% | 46 |
| I prompted students to reflect on their art learning (e.g., in writing, during class discussion, peer critique, self-assessment, etc.) | 45.3% | 72 |
| Other (please specify) | | 8 |

The vast majority of those who completed the teachers log survey reported teaching the arts in their classroom, in connection with other non-arts subject matter content. 85% reported they had taught a lesson that included the arts during the 2013-14 school year and nearly 70% had used the arts in a lesson within two weeks prior to completing the teacher log. Only 15% of teachers reported they had not included the arts in their instruction. Classroom observations supported the self-reporting of teachers about their arts teaching practices. Most of the observed lessons included the arts (83%), with 71% including one art form and 12% including two art forms. The lessons that included the arts focused on visual arts (44%), music (32%), theater (24%), and dance (9%).

| Which of the following descriptions best captures this lesson/activity? | | |
|---|---|---|
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| Provided a break from their learning in other content areas during the arts lesson/activity | 5.7% | 9 |
| Made connections between the art and a theme in another content area | 35.2% | 56 |
| Made connections between the art and a specific knowledge set in another content area | 37.7% | 60 |
| Made connections between the art and a complex concept/big idea/enduring understanding in another content area | 21.4% | 34 |

Teachers generally reported using the arts as an opportunity to support student learning of another content area. Specifically, lessons made connections between the art and a theme in another content area (35%), between the art and a specific knowledge set in another content area (38%), and between the art and complex/big idea/enduring under-standing in another content area (21%). Only six percent of the lessons were described as serving as a break from learning in other content areas. Fewer than 30% of the teach-ers had an arts content expert help design the lesson.

Teachers identified a number of barriers to incorporating the arts into instructional practice. Teachers most frequently cited too many competing priorities at the school or district level (47%) and insufficient planning time for developing arts in the classroom (36%) as the top two barriers. Notably, 25% did not reporting experiencing any barriers to including the arts in their teaching practice.

Each category of barriers to including the arts in instruction dropped slightly between Year 1 to Year 2, and the number of teachers reporting no barriers increased slightly. The biggest change was that teachers were more likely to use an arts content expert in Year 2 to support their lesson design, compared to Year 1.

In Turnaround Arts schools, between 2012 and 2014, an increasing number of non-arts teachers began to use the arts in their classrooms. The vast majority of teachers across all schools reported they had used the arts during the school year, and most of them stated they had used the arts in their classroom in the previous two weeks. The data collected in the teachers log survey and through classroom observations provided evidence that the arts had become a key lever in the school improvement strategy of Turnaround Arts schools, and that barriers to their use decreased over time.

| What barriers interfere with your inclusion of the arts in your instruction? (Check all that apply) | | |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Answer Options | Response Percent | Response Count |
| I do not experience any barriers | 25% | 67 |
| Insufficient supplemental curriculum to support arts in the classroom | 19% | 52 |
| Insufficient access to art content experts if I want assistance integrating arts into lessons | 10% | 28 |
| Insufficient professional development to support arts in the classroom | 16% | 42 |
| Insufficient planning time for developing arts in the classroom | 36% | 97 |
| Insufficient materials that I need to provide arts in the classroom (e.g., paint, ink, clay, paper) | 21% | 57 |
| Too many competing priorities at the school or district level | 47% | 125 |
| I am uncomfortable teaching the arts | 6% | 16 |
| I do not think it is important to teach the arts | 0% | 1 |
| Other (please specify) | 12% | 33 |
| Answered Question | | 268 |

# PILLAR 4

**Teaching Artists and Community Art Organizations working regularly with students and teaching staff to enrich and enhance learning in alignment with school needs.**

Involving local artists and community arts organizations can serve to sustain and extend the development of a strong arts program. Teaching artists can offer students experience in diverse arts disciplines, model arts practices in classrooms and coach individual teachers in the integration of a particular art form, and educate teachers and students in career trajectories in the arts. When they engage in residencies that are weeks or months in duration, they often lead to a culminating celebration or performance in the school that welcomes the community, shifts internal and external perceptions of the school and students, and builds student engagement.

Local art organizations offered additional support in a multitude of ways, for instance by providing funding or advisement, engaging students in off-site art experiences, or delivering professional development to teachers.

# Partnership with The Right Brain Initiative:
## King

*In this vignette, we highlight the partnership between Martin Luther King, Jr. School, in Portland, Oregon, and The Right Brain Initiative, a local community organization that provides professional development and teaching artist residencies for Portland schools.*

King School is situated in the Alberta Arts District in Portland, Oregon. Prior to Turnaround Arts, however, few artists had stepped foot inside the building. For years, King had been poorly regarded in the neighborhood and across the city. Chronic low performance and low enrollment led residents in the increasingly gentrified neighborhood to seek other school options for their children.

When King became a Turnaround Arts School, it had an emergent vision in the arts, but few developed arts assets. The principal had elected to replace her physical education teacher with an African dance teacher, so all students were getting regular dance instruction. There was an after-school program that included some art offerings. But there was little else to build upon.

In the first year of Turnaround Arts, King Elementary created a partnership with The Right Brain Initiative, an organization committed to bringing the arts into Portland schools via artist residencies. They served as advisors, helping King to refine their arts goals and establish connections with local arts organizations.

In addition, The Right Brain Initiative developed an artist residency that would bring rich arts opportunities to students, and also improve the school's reputation. They selected Julie Keefe, a local photographer, who worked collaboratively with teachers and a Right Brain coach to align her photography project with current learning objectives at King. Together, King teachers and Julie designed a school-wide project where students would work over six weeks to learn photography concepts and skills, take portraits of each other and local residents in pairs, and write an accompanying statement. Each student created an art piece as part of Julie's larger "Hello Neighbor" project, displayed in school hallways and in the community more broadly. The local library displayed the student work and hosted an opening for the King community.

The project built a foundation for the arts across the school, contributing to positive relationships within the school and between the school and the community. Students stopped in halls to admire one another's work, and neighbors saw King students in a new light.

# PILLAR 5

**District, parents, and community who are supportive of, involved in, and engaged with the arts at school.**

In an effort to improve perceptions of the schools and to strengthen relationships and school culture, Turnaround Arts schools were encouraged to draw on district resources and support and to engage parents and the broader public through performances, annual events, and art exhibits in schools. Over time, with focused effort, noticeable progress was made in these areas.

District support of the arts was highly varied across Turnaround Arts schools. In cases where there was strong baseline support from district administrators, new arts staff was funded by district funds rather than through SIG funding, providing sustainable dollars for these positions. In other cases, SIG funding was used initially for staff with districts stepping in to fund positions upon the termination of SIG. Schools worked hard to garner district support, sharing their successes with key administrators, inviting them to join the school in art celebrations, and including them in visits from Turnaround Artists. Providing district administrators a first-hand look at what the arts were accomplishing was a key lever in building district support.

Turnaround Art Schools frequently began with a very low base of parent involvement. Interest in the arts varied from widespread parental approval to parents who were concerned that the arts would take away from academics. Many schools developed goals around parent involvement over the two years of the pro-

gram, working initially to get parents in the building for performances, open houses, or parent art nights and gradually expanding parent involvement to other aspects of the school.

Getting the community at large to shift its perception of the school and extend support was a gradual process. Schools that were strategic about building this asset took active steps to shift perception of the school. Public performances (flash mobs were the most frequent), displaying student work in public spaces, and building relationships with key local leaders were common practices. High profile Turnaround Artist involvement, a feature of the program, also played a useful role in getting the school positively noticed for its use of the arts.

## Family Arts Night as a Lever for Parent Engagement:
# Findley

*In this vignette, we illustrate a Turnaround Arts school in Des Moines, Iowa, that uses Family Arts Nights as a lever for the broader engagement and enrichment of parents.*

When Findley leaders organize Family Arts Night, they are thinking beyond education and engagement of parents around the arts; they are using the arts as a starting point to support parents more broadly. While parents are in the school, leaders, and teachers take the opportunity to provide parents with social services and to provide information about the school. Findley arranged for three of these family gatherings over the course of the school year in grade level clusters, each including dinner, student performance, and family art experiences.

In early March, the second and third grade teachers, music and visual arts specialists, and dance teaching artists collaboratively produced a family night at the school. The group committed a significant amount of planning time into designing a successful event and also used class time to rehearse and prepare the students. In preparation, visual arts teachers displayed second and third grade artwork in the auditorium with signs explaining the projects and what the students had learned.

As the event began, the auditorium was nearly full of parents and community members. Students entered the auditorium and arranged themselves on choir risers at the front of the room. After a call and response with the students—"Good evening Findley students!" "Good evening Mrs. Owen!"—the principal welcomed all of the families and let them know what was in store—a performance, an opportunity for family photos, dinner, and learning in the classroom. The music teacher then led students in singing several songs, followed by the Arts Coordinator, who explained the reasons for arts integration and her role on the staff.

The dance portion of the evening then ensued. The ballroom dance teaching artist took the stage and explained her work with students, having students demonstrate accordingly. She then asked parents to stand and participate, using their bodies to

change direction, create different levels and shapes, and then show symmetry and asymmetry. She followed this with a student performance of rhumba and swing dances, in which second grade teachers, the principal, and the music teacher also participated.

After the applause and thank you's, families left to take family photographs, pick up dinner (served by teachers and the principal), and eat in classrooms, where teachers took the opportunity to engage parents in math games and talk to parents about their children's curriculum.

In Des Moines, nearly 95% of teachers agreed or strongly agreed that Findley does a good job of encouraging parents/guardians/community involvement in the arts. Parent participation in fall teacher-parent conferences increased from 82% in 2012 to 98% in 2013.

# PILLAR 6

**Strategic Arts Planning** on an ongoing basis that included a needs assessment, a Strategic Arts Plan, shared leadership, a communications strategy, connections between arts education resources and larger school challenges, and evaluation and assessment.

Principals and other key leaders focused on strategic use of the arts as a foundation for transformation and school turnaround. As a part of the program, they were expected to develop a representative Arts Leadership Team that would work with staff to develop a Strategic Arts Plan. This plan captured their vision for their school arts program and contained "arts targets" with accompanying rationale to help focus efforts for the year. The Strategic Arts Plan was considered a "working document," subject to review and alteration as opportunities arose, and was thus revisited several times a year and revised accordingly.

Most important to developing these targets was a clear connection to broader school challenges and goals. Developing artistic skills was a key outcome, but each target was required to have a significant connection to the improvement of broader school outcomes.

Inherent to developing all arts assets was strategic use of staff, time, and financial resources. Schools also focused on communications, both internal and external, to garner support for the use of the arts, and for the work of the school as a whole.

# Using the Arts to Meet Cultural and Learing Needs:
## Lame Deer

*In this vignette, we provide an illustration of the strategic mobilization of the arts to celebrate and preserve culture and meet student needs. In this instance, teachers at Lame Deer used the arts to reinforce and celebrate Cheyenne culture and to meet the learning styles and needs of their students.*

As the Arts Leadership Team approached the development of a vision for the arts at their school, they focused on core challenges of their students around identity and esteem, and the scarcity of cultural support in the school. As Northern Cheyenne Indians growing up on a reservation in rural Montana, students are expected by their families to be stewards of their culture. There is also some tension between the school, which is governed by the state, and the Northern Cheyenne tribe. The arts were seen as an opportunity to ease these tensions.

Lame Deer's vision statement for the arts said much in few words, as is the style of the Northern Cheyenne: Create opportunities for students honoring the Northern Cheyenne philosophy that the Arts are intrinsic to life. Arts targets were balanced between expanding the perspective of students to the world beyond the reservation, and developing closer connections and expressions of the local culture at the school site.

The three targets that addressed developing the school as a cultural support for students were as follows:

- Community Connections / Tribal Ties– seek to build understanding and collaboration with parents, the community and the Northern Cheyenne Nation.

- Create a physical environment that is aesthetically reflective of student engagement in the arts.

- Classroom collaboration and arts integration.

There were multiple, tangible ways that these goals played out across the year. Tribal leaders became involved in the school as art leaders, particularly upon the occasion when the school's Turnaround Artists, The Silk Road Ensemble (SRE), came to town. SRE, a musical group led by Yo Yo Ma, celebrates native traditions in music. Accordingly, tribal leaders led a performance of native dances and traditional music for the

visiting artists in exchange for performances from SRE. It was the single highest parent attendance for an event at the school, with significant participation from important tribal elders.

In order to connect the students' school experience to their experience at home, school leaders and teachers intentionally draw and build upon Cheyenne culture in the art forms they choose. For instance, students take culture classes, where Cheyenne culture is celebrated and intentionally preserved and handed down to the next generation. In an observed session of culture class, students were working on two different forms of traditional Cheyenne beading. In another classroom, two students were working to create block presses; two other students were painting a tee pee that would be put up in a school ceremony.

Progress was made in developing the physical environment as well. Largely empty of student work when the program began, display cases were bought and student work displayed from art classes, regular classrooms, and the Northern Cheyenne culture classrooms.

In terms of learning needs, teachers acknowledged that the Cheyenne people are visually oriented and that this has implications for how their students may learn best. For example, when counting, adding, and subtracting, teachers talked about the importance of their students having manipulatives to count and combine, versus relying on Arabic numerals alone. Similarly, a teacher shared that her students are reluctant to communicate what they learned about a story in writing, but can successfully draw their thoughts as a starting point.

# PILLAR 7

**Professional Development in the arts and arts integration as an ongoing regularly scheduled activity.**

Improving instruction and integrating the arts in a turnaround school requires providing teachers with professional development. All Turnaround Arts schools increased their arts professional development with the goal of increasing instructional quality and connecting the arts to other content areas. Turnaround Arts schools also expanded their concept of professional development, extending it to include not only presentations to staff, but also collaborative planning, co-teaching, and peer observations.

In order provide new strategies and approaches to teachers, schools used a combination of external professional development support, on-staff specialists, and community organizations. All Turnaround Arts schools sent teams of teachers and administrators to the annual Turnaround Arts Leadership Conference, where they received a total of nine days of guidance and training from renowned national experts in arts education. Most schools also used their on-staff arts specialists to lead professional development as part of staff meetings or specially scheduled sessions.

The provision of individualized support to teachers was critical for the successful development and enactment of arts lessons in classrooms. Schools that excelled in developing arts integration used grade level planning periods, professional learning communities, and staff meetings to support teachers in implementation. They also provided an on-site part-time coach in arts integration (often an art specialist) who could model, observe, or co-teach and provide differentiated, customized support for teachers.

## Peer-Driven Professional Development:
# Roosevelt

*In this vignette, we provide an example of one school's approach to arts professional development.*

Roosevelt Elementary in Bridgeport, Connecticut had four different approaches to providing arts professional development to teachers. They had a strong partnership with HOT Schools, a statewide arts education initiative who trained key staff in arts integration and provided art integration coaches/teaching artists in most classrooms. They had a part-time art integration specialist to work in classrooms with teachers, and a schedule for collaboration that they used to develop arts-based instruction. And they had peer-driven professional development sessions for staff. Their approach to this last element was particularly rigorous.

At Roosevelt, a group of teachers became the center of professional development efforts around the arts. The school pioneered a vertical collaboration and integration model. They formed an expert group of arts and non-arts teachers, dubbed the Interdisciplinary Planning Team (IPT), all of whom had consistently taken advantage of supplementary arts integration professional development opportunities, in addition to those delivered to all staff. This team, which met monthly, was charged with raising the level of arts integration instruction throughout the school.

This team began by identifying compelling strategies that they believed could be used across grade levels and subject areas. As a group, they practiced and refined these strategies, then crafted sessions in which they regularly shared them with other teachers as part of staff meetings. Once presented, they offered differentiated support to teachers as needed to implement and try these strategies in their classrooms. Examples of this differentiated support include:

- A fourth grade teacher led her class in modeling how to use tableau (depicting a scene through still body positions) to analyze story structure for third to fifth grade classes and teachers. Students explained how tableau works and how it deepens their thinking – many teachers took note and asked the presenting teacher to model tableau in their classrooms to get them started.

- A second grade teacher demonstrated to her grade level partners how she uses thematically selected songs (i.e. "Let's Go Fly a Kite" for their weather unit) as a literacy source. Students practiced tracking, learned new vocabulary, practiced sight words, and learned musical concepts such as verse, music, and refrain. This inspired other second grade teachers, as well as kindergarten and first grade teachers, to incorporate music in a similar way in their classrooms.

- The visual arts teacher mastered Visual Thinking Strategies (a close arts-based observation strategy) as part of her teaching, then modeled it for third grade staff and students using an illustration in their language arts textbook. Teachers began applying this strategy regularly, finding it helpful to develop skills of inquiry and inference in their students.

The impact of this shared leadership model, and the individualized follow-up, was notable. Teachers who were initially skeptical of the use of the arts in their classroom were won over by the training and support provided by their peers. Teachers also noted that they were more successful when attempting the new arts integration approaches, reporting their students "got it" (the technique and corresponding learning) with high rates of satisfaction.

# PILLAR 8

**School Environment that celebrates creativity and artistic achievement, including performances and exhibitions by students, and physical spaces or displays.**

Turnaround Arts schools invested in a range of activities, events, and strategies designed to enhance the environment of their school through the arts. The objectives of this focus on enhancing the environment were to shift student and community perceptions of the school, boost morale of teachers and students, give rise to individual student voices and accomplishments to enhance self-esteem and mutual regard, and give meaning and purpose to artistic endeavors.

All schools developed some similar elements. All schools instituted and maintained multiple annual traditions of performance and exhibition, such as a spring school musicals, annual talent shows, winter student arts exhibits, or Halloween flash mobs. All schools received visits from high-profile Turnaround Artists, who worked with small groups of students, spoke with parents, and brought positive press and esteem to the school. Each school received positive media attention, including national and local print, television, and radio. All schools also beautified their schools through the arts in noticeable ways.

Each school also developed its own strategies for shifting the environment, or "feel," of the school. One school set up their marimba band to play in the lunchroom on a regular basis. Another held a weekly open mike to give students an opportunity to share new poems, songs, musical pieces, or monologues. Another held monthly student assemblies to allow classrooms or individuals to showcase arts and other accomplishments.

## Bringing Life to a School Environment:
## Savoy

*In this vignette, we describe how Savoy Elementary in Washington, DC, made gains in enhancing their environment through the arts.*

When Patrick Pope became principal of Savoy Elementary in early 2011, he inherited a relatively new building, with white, sterile walls that had remained untouched in the years since it opened. Savoy was also a chaotic environment—student behavior was unruly, and strong punitive systems had been in place for years.

Principal Pope chose to incorporate the arts into addressing both these aspects of the environment. He revised the schedule to start each morning with a school-wide "Morning Meeting" in which he and staff readied students for the day ahead through ritual, music, and a fostering of self-management. Providing a transition from the stresses of home, the students finish breakfast and then stand to focus their attention on what is needed in their classrooms to learn—Order, Purpose, and Re-spect—reminders of which are painted in bright, student-made banners against the windows. Carole Foster, the school's art coordinator and theater/dance teacher, leads the students in a daily call and response, or shared sing aloud. Parents linger against the walls, smiling and singing along. Occasionally, students perform for the gathered community. Students, their minds gathered, walk in neat rows off to classrooms to start their "work."

All of this takes place in a physically transformed environment. The "Color Is Life" campaign led by the visual arts teacher has resulted in halls, once uniformly white, now painted in bright solid colors of the students' choosing. "Color Is Life" banners hang throughout public spaces to echo this vibrancy, alongside a Turnaround Arts banner. Classical music plays in the principal's office throughout the day. Glass cases display pictures from visiting Turnaround Artists. A letter to Principal Pope from Mi-chelle Obama hangs in a white frame outside the glass case.

As you walk down the hall, one teacher introduces her students and asks them to de-scribe their work from a recent lesson on African masks. The students describe how symmetry works and is important for mask making.

The stairwells are decorated in Technicolor with fabric strips of all different colors, woven onto the grated railings, the results of an after-school student project led by the nearby Anacostia Museum. The visual arts teacher extended the project with a

unit on weaving and has detailed her students' work on a wall in the stairway landing. The display outlines the standards addressed, the essential question, and the objective reached.

Nearby display cases are filled with winter scenes—snowmen made out of paper plates, and trees with cotton balls on them. Also in the display case are explanations for the two-dimensional versus three-dimensional snowmen. The standards are, "Name and describe objects seen in the real world and in artwork. Identify two-dimensional shapes and three-dimensional forms of different sizes. Objective: by the end of the lesson students are able to demonstrate understanding of 2D shapes versus 3D forms, as well as the meaning of texture by creating one paper plate and one clay snowman." Overall, the impression upon entering and walking through the school is one of order, warmth, creativity, and learning.

## Drawing Conclusions about Implementation

From 2012 to 2014, Turnaround Arts schools strategically implemented the arts, building up and mobilizing a set of arts assets to do so. It was clear from our survey that Turnaround Arts schools have an extensive set of arts education programming that are not common in high-poverty, low-performing schools. Students are being exposed to a variety of arts disciplines for a significant amount of time. Turnaround Arts schools also have a significant allocation of arts educators. Use of the arts is integrated intentionally into the overall school philosophy and improvement strategy.

At the same time, the vast majority of non-arts classroom teachers made strides in using the arts in their classrooms as a part of their instruction. We saw that the breadth and depth of these efforts expanded from the first year of Turnaround Arts to the second.

Finally, when we look across Turnaround Arts schools, we saw a deep application of the pillars. Turnaround Arts schools focused intentionally on particular pillars as levers for school improvement. We also saw the strategic mobilization of the arts toward larger school improvement goals.

# PROGRAM IMPACTS: ANALYZING INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

In the previous section focused on program operation and implementation, we described the use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools, descriptively and analytically. In this section, we summarize program impacts through a consideration of: 1) standardized test scores, 2) school improvement indicators, 3) teacher perception data, and 4) the relationship between implementation of Turnaround Arts and broader school outcomes.

In the interim progress report, the evaluation team began tracking the progress of the Turnaround Arts schools from the 2011 to 2012 school year. Using data from 2011 as a baseline, this section of the report looks at trends in school improvement between the baseline (2011) and the current year (2014).[23]

### Standardized Test Data

The goal of Turnaround Arts is to use arts education as a lever in a school turnaround strategy, and contribute to improving student achievement outcomes. As Turnaround Arts was established in 2011, it is still early to assess the impact of the program on student outcomes. It is also challenging to isolate the effects of the use of the arts as a lever, given the many strategies that turnaround schools use to improve performance. However,

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23  Across 2011 to 2014, there are three data points that are missing across the eight schools. Noel Community Arts School (CO) was not in existence in 2011 and therefore is missing the 2011 data point. Lame Deer (MT) and Roosevelt (CT) were in states that piloted the Common Core State Standards assessments in 2014. Because these were pilot assessments, the states did not report data for 2014. As such, Lame Deer and Roosevelt are missing the 2014 data point.

**School High Achievement Spotlight**

**Savoy Elementary School [DC]**

- Savoy has improved math proficiency by *18.22 percentage points* since 2011, which is 9.75 points higher than its local school district, and 8.94 points higher than comparable DC schools that have received federal School Improvement Grants (SIGs).

- Savoy's 2014 math proficiency rate reflects a *120% improvement* from 2011.

- In reading proficiency, Savoy gained *10.60 percentage points* between 2011 and 2014, which is 7.17 points higher than its district, and 3 points higher than its SIG cohort.

- In 2014, *4 out of 5 educators surveyed* agreed that an increased arts focus increases ambition of instruction, and improves parent involvement in students' education.

it is still instructive to look at the performance of Turnaround Arts schools, particularly in comparison to similar schools.

In order to examine students' academic performance, the evaluation team examined (1) math proficiency rates and (2) reading proficiency rates.[24] This section of the report builds on *The Turnaround Arts Initiative Progress Report 2013*, by including data for the 2013 to 2014 school year.

In addition, this section also compares Turnaround Arts schools to other schools in their states that receive federal School Improvement Grants (SIGs), and to their school districts as a whole, wherever possible. SIG-recipient schools are analogous to Turnaround Arts schools in that they have to be consistently low-performing schools in order to qualify to receive these designated federal grants, thus serving as a good cohort for comparison.[25]

When analyzing achievement data, it is useful to observe trends through two different lenses. The first is to analyze how many ***percentage points*** a school has gained in terms of math and reading proficiency year-over-year (e.g. if a school has a 70% proficiency rate in 2011, and 80% in 2014, it has gained 10 percentage points). The second is to look at what this gain means in terms of **percentage improvement** for that particular school (e.g. from the previous example, the gain of 10 points constitutes a 14% improvement from 2011 to 2014). It is important to make this distinction since "point gain" accurately shows the difference in proficiency rates between 2011 and 2014, and "percentage improvement" explains what this gain means in terms of a school's improvement in relation to its starting point in 2011.[26]

Early examination of both math and reading proficiency rates demonstrates promising improvement of students' academic performance among Turnaround Arts schools:[27]

- 7 out of the 8 observed schools improved their reading proficiency rates between 2011 and 2014;

- 6 out of the 8 schools improved their math proficiency rates between 2011 and 2014;

- Of the 8 Turnaround Arts schools, 3 had double-digit point-gains for math proficiency rates, and 2 had similar gains in reading proficiency rates;

- On average, the 8 Turnaround Arts schools have demonstrated a 22.55% improvement in math proficiency between 2011 and 2014, and a 12.62% improvement in reading proficiency. [28]

## Specifically:

**Savoy (DC):** Savoy improved its math proficiency rates by 120.53% between 2011 and 2014, and reading proficiency rates by 52.22%;

**Findley (IA):** Findley saw a rise in math proficiency rates by 17.17% between 2011 and 2014, and an improvement in reading proficiency rates by 3.43%;

**ReNEW (LA):** ReNEW experienced an increase in math proficiency rates by 28.57% between 2011 and 2014, and a rise in reading proficiency rates of 2.50%;

**Orchard Gardens (MA):** Orchard Gardens experienced a rise in math proficiency of 15.14%, and an improvement in reading proficiency rates of 9.33%;

**MLK (OR):** Although MLK experienced a decline in math proficiency rates by 33.68% between 2011 and 2014, it experienced a gain in reading proficiency rate of 41.03%;

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24   Proficiency rates are described as the percentage of students who meet or exceed the state's proficiency threshold.

25   SIG schools were selected for comparison from (1) the districts of the Turnaround Arts schools, or (2) from the state of the Turnaround Arts Schools, in cases where a certain school district has fewer than two SIG schools.

26   Considering achievement scores over time is of critical importance to understanding progress for three reasons. First, we may see some unevenness year-to-year because of error inherent in standardized testing. Second, it is common in schools that are implementing new practices to see a dip in achievement as students and teachers adjust to the new approach. Finally, particularly in schools like these, there is high student mobility, and so schools are not testing exactly the same students year-to-year. Given these realities, looking at several years of data enables an opportunity to understand trends over time.

27   It is important to note that two Turnaround Arts schools, Findley and Orchard Gardens, exited turnaround status in the second year of the program due to increased level of student achievement.

28   2011 to 2014 data was available for five of the Turnaround Arts schools. For the remainder (Noel, Lame Deer, and Roosevelt), available data was used for the estimation of the overall average performance of Turnaround Arts schools
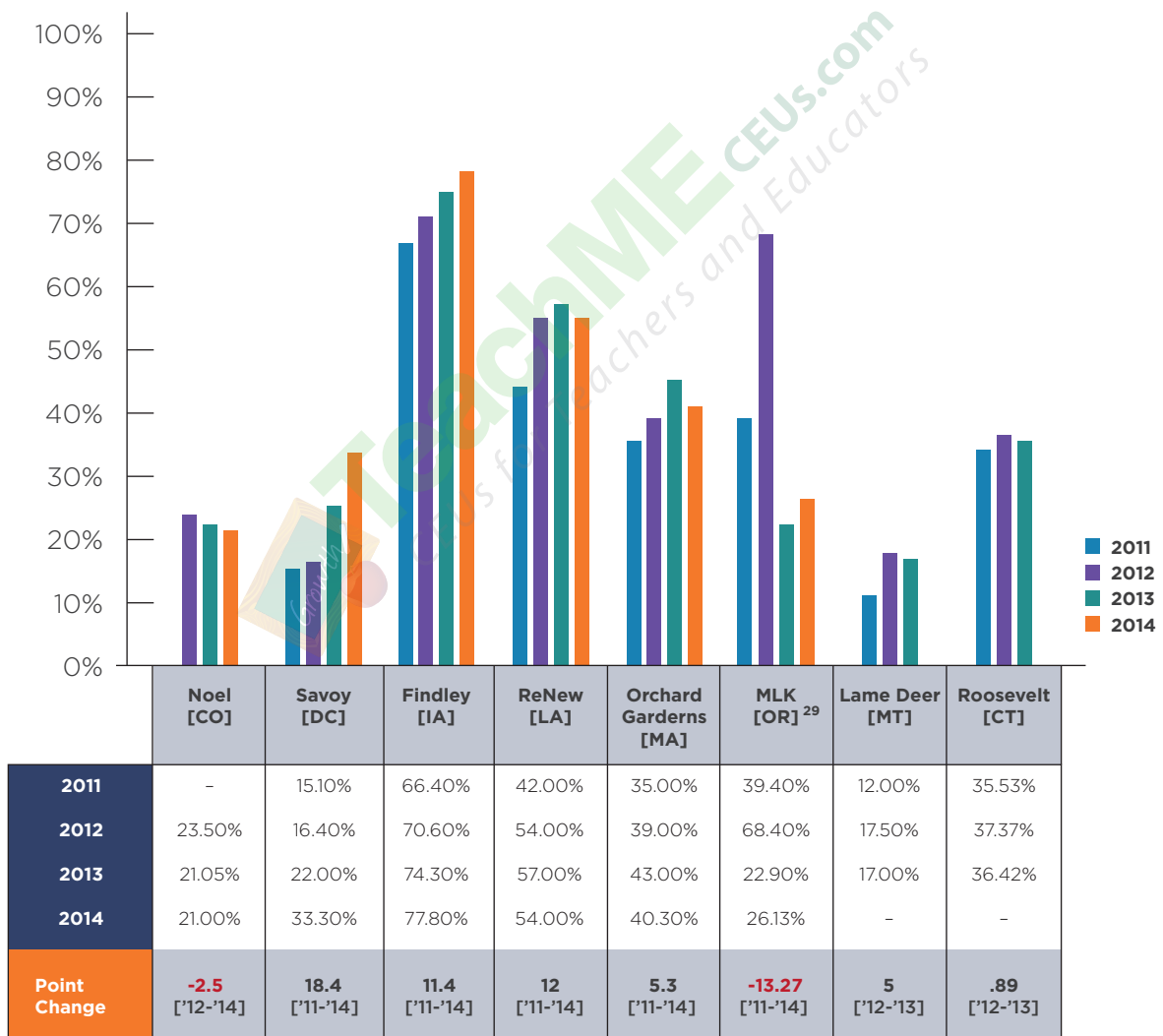
**Lame Deer (MT):** Lame Deer improved math proficiency rates by 41.67% between 2011 and 2013, and experienced a decline in reading proficiency rates by 22.37%;

**Roosevelt (CT):** Roosevelt gained a modest 2.5% in math proficiency between 2011 and 2013, and a larger gain of 21.78% in reading proficiency during this time;

**Noel (CO):** Although Noel experienced a drop in reading proficiency rates by 10.64% between 2012 and 2014, its reading proficiency rates remained largely unchanged.
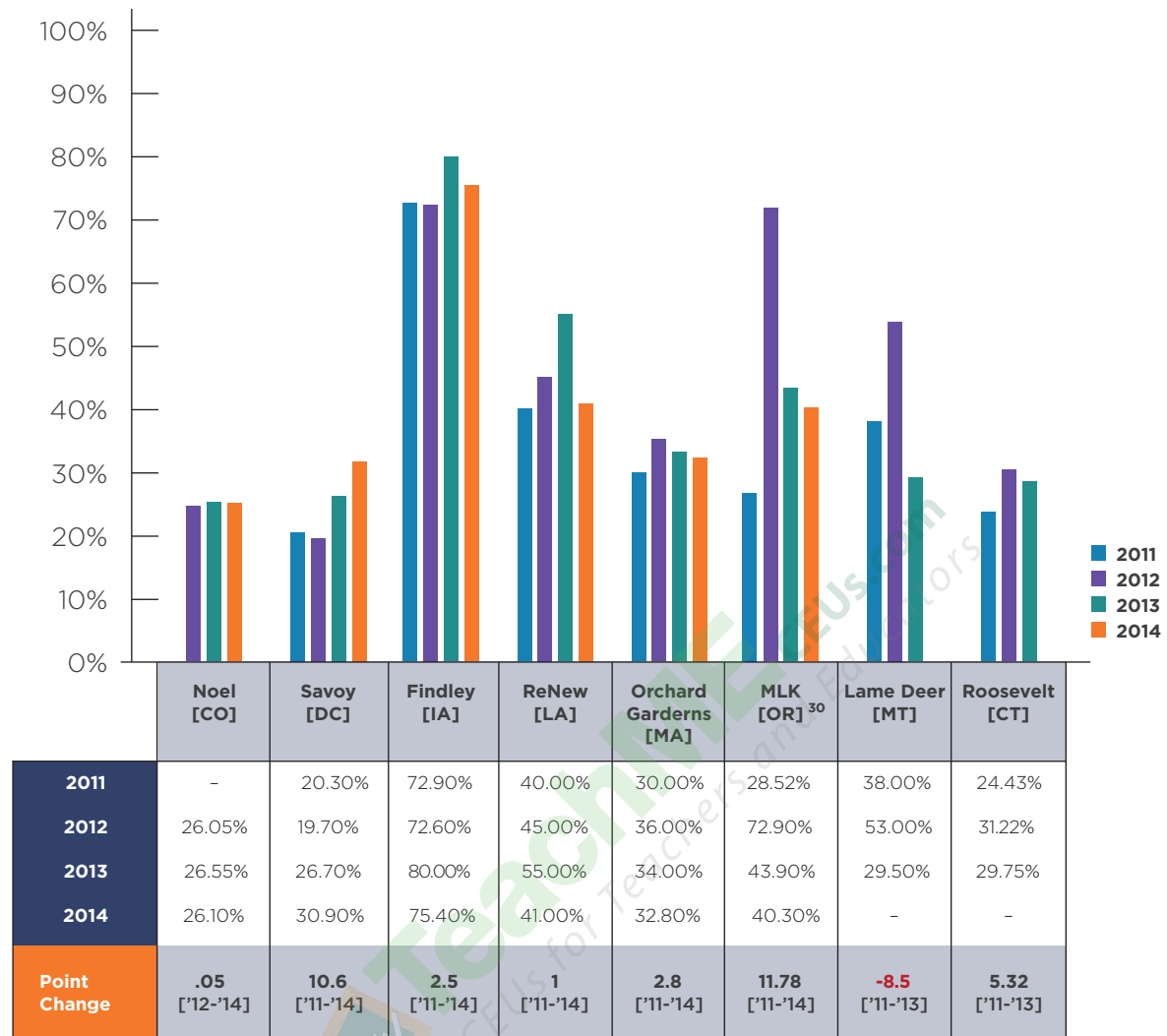
Figure 1 illustrates the math proficiency rates in each year from 2011 and 2014 at the eight Turnaround Arts schools, and Figure 2 illustrates the proficiency rates in reading across those same years.

**Figure 1:** Math Proficiency of Turnaround Arts Schools



| | Noel [CO] | Savoy [DC] | Findley [IA] | ReNew [LA] | Orchard Garderns [MA] | MLK [OR] 29 | Lame Deer [MT] | Roosevelt [CT] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2011** | – | 15.10% | 66.40% | 42.00% | 35.00% | 39.40% | 12.00% | 35.53% |
| **2012** | 23.50% | 16.40% | 70.60% | 54.00% | 39.00% | 68.40% | 17.50% | 37.37% |
| **2013** | 21.05% | 22.00% | 74.30% | 57.00% | 43.00% | 22.90% | 17.00% | 36.42% |
| **2014** | 21.00% | 33.30% | 77.80% | 54.00% | 40.30% | 26.13% | – | – |
| **Point Change** | -2.5 ['12-'14] | 18.4 ['11-'14] | 11.4 ['11-'14] | 12 ['11-'14] | 5.3 ['11-'14] | -13.27 ['11-'14] | 5 ['12-'13] | .89 ['12-'13] |

29  For King School (OR), aberrations in 2012 data were questioned by the Portland Public School District, and an investigation into testing practices was conducted. As a result of this investigation, achievement scores were not excluded or changed in official reporting, but testing practices at the school were modified.

**Figure 2:** Reading Proficiency at Turnaround Arts Schools



| | Noel [CO] | Savoy [DC] | Findley [IA] | ReNew [LA] | Orchard Garderns [MA] | MLK [OR] [30] | Lame Deer [MT] | Roosevelt [CT] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 2011 | – | 20.30% | 72.90% | 40.00% | 30.00% | 28.52% | 38.00% | 24.43% |
| 2012 | 26.05% | 19.70% | 72.60% | 45.00% | 36.00% | 72.90% | 53.00% | 31.22% |
| 2013 | 26.55% | 26.70% | 80.00% | 55.00% | 34.00% | 43.90% | 29.50% | 29.75% |
| 2014 | 26.10% | 30.90% | 75.40% | 41.00% | 32.80% | 40.30% | – | – |
| Point Change | .05 ['12-'14] | 10.6 ['11-'14] | 2.5 ['11-'14] | 1 ['11-'14] | 2.8 ['11-'14] | 11.78 ['11-'14] | -8.5 ['11-'13] | 5.32 ['11-'13] |

30   See footnote 29

## School High Achievement
# Spotlight

## Findley Elementary School [IA]

- Findley has improved math proficiency by *11.40 percentage points* since 2011, which is 7.50 points higher than its school district.

- In reading proficiency, Findley gained *2.50 percentage points* between 2011 and 2014.

- *This is remarkable* considering that its school district's overall reading proficiency *decreased by 5 points.*

- *100% of educators surveyed* at Findley agreed that the arts contributed to heightened ambition of instruction, and overall improvement of the school environment.

## Contextualizing Achievement Results

Turnaround Arts schools demonstrated significant improvement in students' academic performance when looking at the quantitative data. However, year-over-year scores alone cannot completely capture the performance of the schools. As such, the evaluation team compared the Turnaround Arts schools' performance to that of SIG cohorts and school districts. For the purposes of this comparison, the Turnaround Arts schools are considered as one group, and comparable SIG or district school groups are collectively considered as another.

The comparison cohort of SIG schools were selected because they were in the same districts (or states, if fewer than two SIG schools were available within the same district) as Turnaround Arts schools. Comparing the two groups provides

context for how well the Turnaround Arts schools have performed against a group of schools that are similar to them in many respects, particularly low performance. On average, Turnaround Arts schools improved more in both reading and math than the group of comparable SIG schools from their districts and/or states.

For further comparison, the Turnaround Arts schools have been compared to the aggregate of their school districts as well. Wherever possible, the team has carefully applied rigor to the statistical analysis based on available data.[31]

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31   Prior to conducting analyses, statistical tests were conducted to ensure equal variances of samples in order to compare means and proportions. Wherever necessary, "average" quantities were calculated by taking into account weighted averages, in order to increase the resolution of any calculation.

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## Comparing against SIG-recipient schools

| **Turnaround Arts schools on average had a higher rate of improvement** in both math and reading than the cohort of analogous SIG schools between 2011 and 2014 | **Turnaround Arts schools** improved math proficiency by **22.55%** which is **6.35 points** higher than the comparable SIG schools improvement rate | **Turnaround Arts schools** improved reading proficiency by **12.62%** which is **7.04 points** higher than the comparable SIG schools improvement rate |

## Comparing against school districts

| **Turnaround Arts schools on average had a higher rate of improvement** in both math and reading than the average of their school districts between 2011 and 2014 | **Turnaround Arts schools** improved math proficiency by **2.42 POINTS** more than the average school district improvement rate | **Turnaround Arts schools** improved reading proficiency by **4.70 POINTS** more than the average school district improvement rate |

## School Improvement Indicators

In addition to analyzing math and reading proficiency rates, the team examined a variety of school improvement indicators, including: 1) student attendance, 2) student discipline, and 3) perception of educators and specialists on the impact of arts programming on student engagement and commitment. When observed alongside academic achievement data, these indicators provide a more holistic view of each school's performance and engagement in the Turnaround Arts program.

**Attendance**

First, the evaluation team considered daily attendance rates reported by each of the Turnaround Arts schools. If students are more engaged in school because of the arts programming, attendance rates may rise, marking higher levels of student engagement.

As evidenced by Figure 3 below, we can see that Turnaround Arts schools generally demonstrated consistently good attendance. Based on the data below, the evaluation team can make a few statements which indicate overall improvement in attendance:
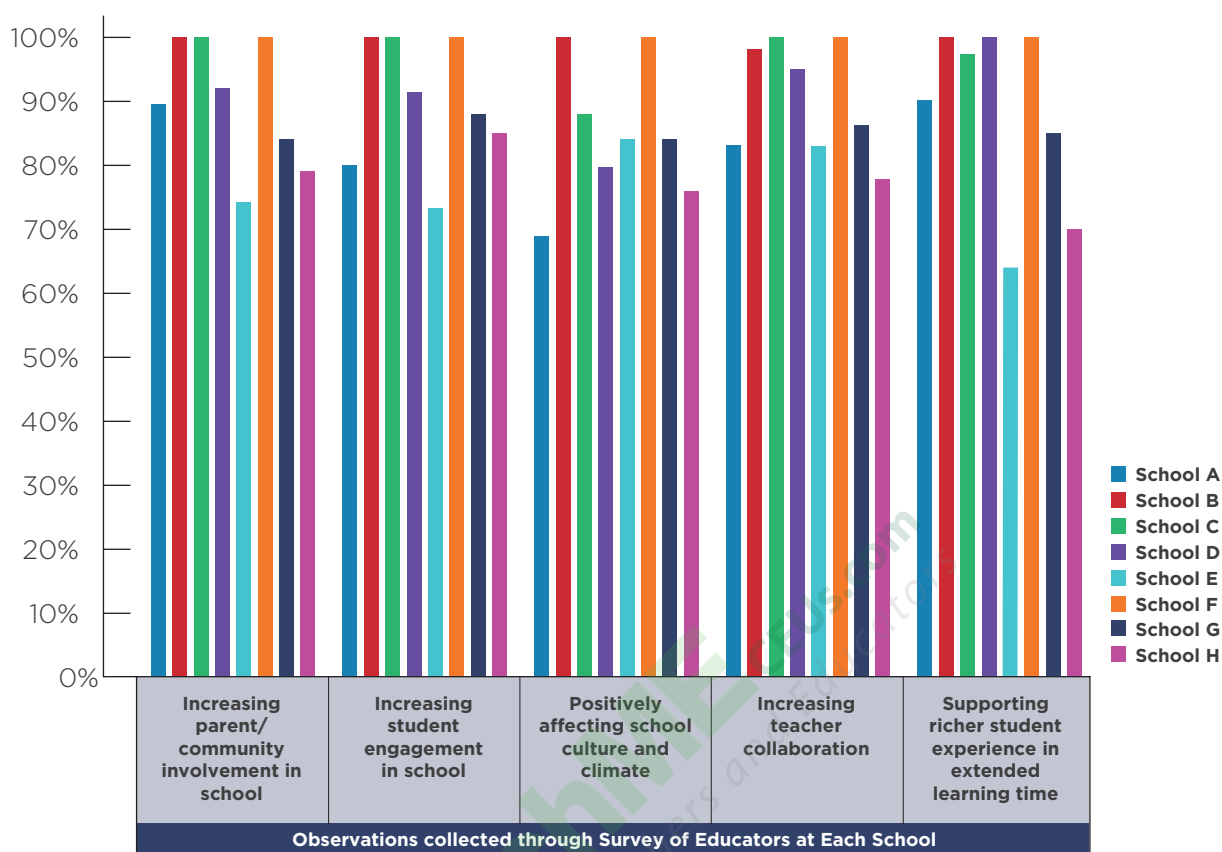
- 4 of the 8 Turnaround Arts schools, Findley (IA), Orchard Gardens (MA), King School (OR), and Roosevelt (CT), noticeably improved their attendance rates between 2011 and 2014;

- The average attendance rate among Turnaround Arts schools in 2014 was 91.77%.

*Perception of Impact on Engagement.* In addition to analyzing attendance data, the evaluation team also reviewed the data from surveyed educators and leaders at each Turnaround Arts school in order to capture the perception of program impact on

**Figure 3:** Summary of Attendance Data



| | Noel [CO] | Savoy [DC] | Findley [IA] | ReNew [LA] | Orchard Garderns [MA] | MLK [OR] | Lame Deer [MT] | Roosevelt [CT] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **2011** | – | 91.72% | 94.70% | 90.10% | 92.00% | 94.70% | 83.92% | 91.60% |
| **2012** | 91.54% | 90.76% | 95.22% | 87.60% | 95.13% | 93.90% | 80.19% | 90.94% |
| **2013** | 91.08% | 90.99% | 95.10% | 86.80% | 94.80% | 94.00% | 78.13% | 93.23% |
| **2014** | 88.28% | 91.11% | 96.16% | 89.04% | 95.10% | 98.60% | 81.98% | 93.87% |

**Figure 4:** Perceptions of Contribution of Arts to Engagement



a variety of dimensions. The majority of survey respondents agreed that the Turnaround Arts program had positively influenced their school, with 70-100% of educators responding that the arts had helped increase parent, student, and teacher engagement in the school and in instruction. The survey results have been summarized in Figure 4 above.

**Discipline**

Discipline is often a challenge in chronically low-performing schools, and therefore the evaluation team also analyzed discipline data. The hypothesis here is that instances of disciplinary action may begin to decline in frequency if student engagement and interest increases. In conducting data analysis, the evaluation team also looked at perceptions of educators who were surveyed on the impact of arts programming on in- and out-of-class disciplinary actions.

*Expulsions, in- and out of- school suspensions.* Data on expulsions and suspensions help identify the patterns of disciplinary incidents at Turnaround Arts schools. The evaluation team studied data spanning 2011 to 2014 for five of the schools. For the remainder, the team had access to data from 2012 to 2014. Five of the eight Turnaround Arts schools showed signs of improvement, as outlined below:

- Findley (IA) reduced out-of-school suspensions by 57.14% between 2011 and 2014, and disciplinary referrals to school authorities overall by 35.10%;

- ReNEW (LA) reduced suspensions overall by 51.32%, with in-school suspensions being reduced by 81.13%, between 2011 and 2014;

- Orchard Gardens (MA) had no reported expulsions in 2014, and between 2011 and 2014 reduced suspensions overall by 85.90%;

- MLK (OR) reduced both in- and out of- school suspensions by 70% between 2011 and 2014;

- Roosevelt (CT) has not experienced a change in in-school suspensions or expulsions, but out-of-school suspensions fell by 18.14% between 2012 and 2014.

The discipline data from the remaining three schools showed less variation in the results:

- For both Savoy (DC) and Lame Deer (MT), expulsion and suspension data remained unchanged between 2011 and 2014;

- Noel Community Arts School (CO) did not experience a change in in-school suspensions, but out-of-school suspensions rose sharply by 130% between 2011 and 2014.

*Perception of Impact on Behavior.* Based on the 2014 survey data, over 75% of teachers and school leaders in every school agreed that using the arts in classrooms reduced the number of disturbances within the classroom and kept students on task longer. This suggests a heightened level of attentiveness in the classroom from students, which in turn could signal that students are excited about their classes. The survey results are summarized in Figure 5.

## Exploring the Relationship between Implementation and School Improvement

In the section focused on program implementation, we addressed research question 1, which focuses on the descriptive elements of the use of the arts as a part of a larger turnaround strategy. This descriptive aspect included both a summary of the assets

**Figure 5:** Perceptions of Impact of Arts Programming on Discipline
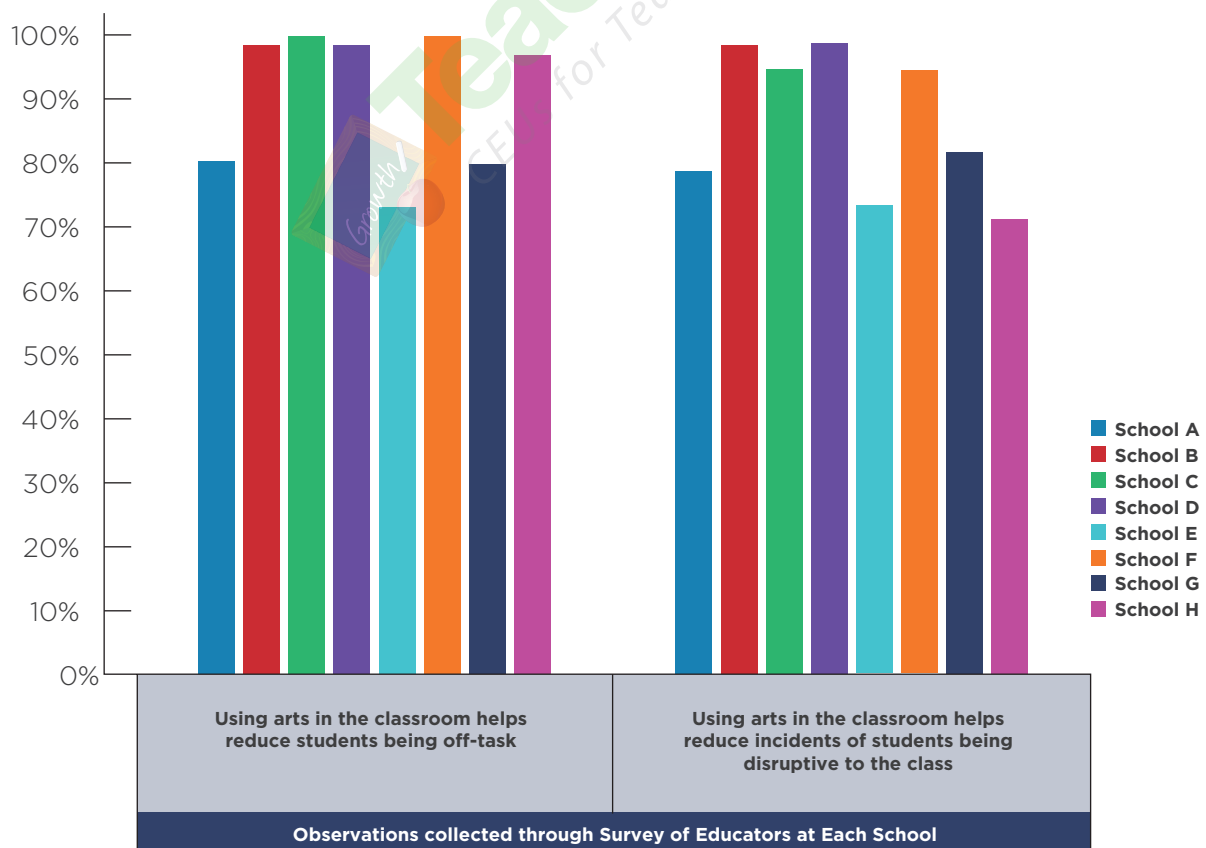
used in arts education as well as illustrations that captured and brought to life the use of the arts around the Turnaround Arts pillars. To this point, in the section focused on program impacts, we have focused on research question 3, considering results and trends in achievement and school improvement indicators, contextualized by comparisons with a SIG cohort and district averages.

Here, we briefly consider research question 2: What is the relationship between the implementation of Turnaround Arts programming and improvement in school reform indicators?

Addressing this question requires gathering and analyzing data on two different dimensions: first, capturing and describing the character of implementation of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools, and second, considering trends in implementation alongside trends in broader school outcomes.

To attend to the first dimension, we constructed an implementation continuum, using the inputs and assets (pillars) as a starting point. To do so, we defined a set of data sources to capture a description of implementation around each input and asset. For each, we aimed to have multiple indicators in order to accurately characterize each school on each input or asset. For each input or asset, we used available data to place the school on a continuum of: 1) not in place; beginning, 2) developing area, 3) approaching full implementation, and 4) strong support; full implementation. The data sources that were used to describe the level of support or implementation in each input or asset are summarized in the table on the following page.

| Pillar | Data source |
|---|---|
| **Principal as Leader** | • Role in strategic planning/arts leadership team work<br>• Sets clear expectations for arts integration & PD, observes arts instruction<br>• Sets up schedule to support arts instruction and planning<br>• Includes relevant context—first year principal, new to school, district obstacles or factors |
| **Arts Content Experts – Enumeration** | • Number of arts specialists and teaching artists<br>• Ratio of staff/student<br>• Art disciplines offered<br>• Grades served/instructional minutes<br>• Increase over time |
| **Arts Content Experts [32] – Change Agents** | • Align instruction to non-arts curriculum<br>• Planning time with classroom teachers<br>• Leadership roles<br>• Instructional quality as perceived by classroom teachers |
| **Classroom Teachers** | • % of classroom teachers who integrate the arts<br>• Barriers to integration |
| **Strategic Planning** | • Key players included in creation<br>• Revisited/revised year-to-year<br>• Shared with faculty; teachers share awareness of plan during focus groups and Super 5E<br>• Guides implementation |
| **Professional Development** | • Range of opportunities (outside workshops, coaching, peer-to-peer, observation, planning time)<br>• Attendance requirements (pockets of teachers, mandatory, etc.)<br>• Teacher perception of PD meeting their needs to support the arts (focus groups + Super 5E) |
| **Community Support** | • Community attendance/participation as reported by principals and teachers<br>• Range of community partners (# of partners and range of roles they play to support TAI)<br>• Teacher perception of how well school encourages parents/community involvement in the arts (Super 5E)<br>• District support |
| **School Environment** | • Behavior in hallways<br>• Use of public spaces<br>• Presence of professional art in building<br>• Displays of student work<br>    • How is it displayed (Tacked to wall? Matted? Framed?)?<br>    • Presence of standards addressed/process/learning opportunity described<br>•Student performances and exhibitions |

32  Please note that the way in which arts specialists and teaching artists are described in the implementation continuum scoring criteria are slightly different from the original conceptualization of the pillars. In the pillars, arts specialists and teaching artists are described separately. In the implementation continuum, we group arts specialists and teaching artists together and focus on the quality and quantity of their work in schools. We made this decision given the available data and the purpose of the analysis in the implementation continuum.

## Characterizing Implementation

The table below summarizes the continuum of implementation categories across the eight Turnaround Arts schools.[33] It should be noted that Turnaround Arts schools did not escape the challenges endemic to low performing schools in general, which affected consistent implementation. Three schools experienced principal turnover during the two years of our evaluation (Lame Deer, King, and ReNEW). Two underwent transitions to new superintendents in the middle of the program (Bridgeport and Lame Deer), and several grappled with higher than average challenges at the district level, particularly in the areas of administrative support and flexibility. These contexts are taken into account in the rating for the corresponding category.

33  School by school evaluation of each category was based on documentation and site visits. Additional information and more detailed notes are available upon request.

| | Roosevelt [CT] | Lame Deer [MT] | Savoy [DC] | Findley [IA] | Orchard Gardens [MA] | ReNew [LA] | MLK [OR] | Noel [CO] |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **School inputs – financial investments** | | | | | | | | |
| **School and district funds** | ⊙ | ◎ | No Data | ⊙ | ◎ | ⊙ | ⊙ | ● |
| **Federal dollars** | ◎ | ⊙ | ⊙ | ◎ | ⊙ | ○ | ● | ⊙ |
| **Private grants** | ◎ | ◎ | No Data | ○ | ◎ | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ |
| **In-kind donations** | ○ | ⊙ | No Data | ○ | ○ | ⊙ | ○ | ○ |
| **School assets (the pillars)** | | | | | | | | |
| **Principal as Leader** | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ | ● | ● | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ |
| **Content Experts: Enumeration** | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ | ◎ | ● | ◎ | ⊙ | ● |
| **Content Experts: Change Agents** | ◎ | ○ | ⊙ | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ | ○ | ◎ |
| **Classroom Teachers** | ◎ | ○ | ◎ | ◎ | ◎ | ⊙ | ⊙ | ◎ |
| **Strategic Planning** | ◎ | ⊙ | ⊙ | ● | ⊙ | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ |
| **Professional Development** | ◎ | ○ | ○ | ● | ⊙ | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ |
| **Community Support** | ◎ | ○ | ◎ | ● | ◎ | ⊙ | ◎ | ⊙ |
| **School Environment** | ◎ | ⊙ | ● | ● | ● | ○ | ⊙ | ◎ |

○ = not in place; beginning    ⊙ = developing area

◎ = approaching full implementation    ● = strong support; full implementation

**Considering the Relationship between Implementation and Achievement**

Here, we consider the link between levels of implementation, as defined by categories on the implementation continuum, and improvements in achievement. Do schools that had high levels of implementation also demonstrate growth in student achievement and improvements in discipline and attendance? Our takeaways from this analysis are as follows:

- There is some evidence of similar patterns. Schools that had high levels of implementation also generally demonstrated improvement in school outcomes. Savoy, Findley, Orchard Gardens, Roosevelt, and ReNEW all demonstrated relatively strong implementation. They also showed positive outcomes in the areas of academic scores, attendance, and discipline, with some variances. Similarly, schools that had lower levels of implementation also performed more poorly on outcomes.

- There are some exceptions to these patterns. For instance, Noel Community Arts School had high levels of implementation but did not demonstrate strong improvements in student achievement and improvement outcomes.

- Further consideration is needed of the relationship between implementation of the arts and student achievement and school improvement. Even though students in every school improved in at least one tested academic area (reading or math), different schools demonstrated different levels of improvement in academic and reform indicators than others. Comparing levels of implementation to the four quantitative data categories tracked in this evaluation (reading, math, discipline, and attendance) reveals three groups of schools and one exception: 1) schools with the highest levels of implementation who saw improvement across all four data categories (Roosevelt, Orchard Gardens, and Findley), 2) schools with mixed implementation who saw improvement in several categories (Savoy, King, and ReNEW), and 3) schools with low implementation and lower improvement (Lame Deer).

Noel Community Arts School is the exception with a relatively high implementation level but no strong improvements in the data categories.

When considering the three schools that are in the highest category in terms of both school improvement and implementation, we see Turnaround Arts at its best. In Orchard Gardens, Roosevelt, and Findley, school leaders successfully targeted the pillars and mobilized the arts as a lever in their larger school improvement strategy, and were given flexibility and support by their districts to do so. The tight coupling of the use of the arts to key priorities such as improving school culture, engaging students and parents, and creating more rigorous instruction, led to success in these contexts. The intentional integration of the arts into the school improvement strategy demonstrates that arts education, rather than being an add-on or taking key resources away from academic endeavors, can be used effectively as a coherent part of a broader school improvement strategy.

Considering schools that are in the lower category of school improvement, different stories are apparent. For Lame Deer, we see challenges across all measures of both implementation of Turnaround Arts and outcome measures. (This is also the only school that changed both the principal and superintendent in the 2nd year of the program.) For Noel Community Arts School, the application of the arts demonstrated high levels of implementation and commitment that does not seem to be manifesting itself in the outcomes tracked by this evaluation.

Further work on the methodological approach to consider implementation and broader school outcomes might explore the following areas:

- There are questions about the timing of capturing the characteristics of implementation relative to student achievement outcomes. Given the short duration of the study (two years), will we see improvements in school performance indicators over time that would parallel full implementation of the arts where we do not currently see it?

- There are additional refinements that could be made to the implementation continuum itself.

    **For Instance**
    Are there other data sources that should be considered for any of the inputs or assets?

    Should the input and asset categories be broken down into subcategories? For instance, in considering leadership in the school, we may want to broaden beyond the principal.

    Should certain assets or inputs be weighted? For example, we might weight principal leadership more heavily than school environment.

    Should we consider change over time in the strength of the implementation of the arts, rather than using a single point in time when comparing trends in implementation to trends in school improvement indicators? It may be that the rate of change in aspects of arts implementation might relate to the likelihood of broader school change in school improvement indicators.

There is much opportunity for further study in these and other areas to further explicate the relationship between capturing measures of the implementation of the arts and school improvement outcomes.

## Drawing Conclusions about Program Impacts

Analysis of data on program impacts reveals positive progress in Turnaround Arts schools. In the majority of Turnaround Arts schools, achievement gains were evident in both math and reading. When these gains were contextualized through average comparisons with comparable SIG-funded schools, the cohort of Turnaround Arts schools outperformed their SIG cohorts. They also collectively outperformed their district counterparts. Half of Turnaround Arts schools improved their attendance rates while the majority experienced reductions in disciplinary actions. Importantly, while we see significant progress in indicators of student achievement, attendance, and discipline, we also see evidence of positive perceptions of teachers in regards to the impact of the Turnaround Arts program, particularly in the areas of improvements in student and community engagement, and overall improvement of the school environment. While Turnaround Arts schools continue to have work ahead, there is evidence of improvement and significant progress across the majority of schools.

# CONCLUSION

Turnaround Arts is the first federal program to bring arts education to bear on efforts to turnaround schools. It aims to test the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to overall school improvement efforts. The program is built on the premise that arts education offerings in particular provide school leadership with powerful levers to improve school climate and culture, as well as to increase student and parent engagement, which can ultimately contribute to successful reform efforts.

In their second year, leaders and teachers in Turnaround Arts schools continued to immerse themselves in using the arts to transform their schools. Turnaround Arts schools built upon the foundation of a set of core focus areas and drew on a set of rich resources provided by Turnaround Arts staff. Turnaround Arts schools deepened arts programming by: building infrastructure in leadership and governance; creating unique opportunities for arts professional development; harnessing the expertise and talent of arts specialists and teaching artists; engaging parents and the broader community; and working to improve the culture and climate of their schools with the arts. Leaders and teachers in each Turnaround Arts school worked to do this given their unique context and needs, taking into consideration the history and experience of the use of arts education in the past, the unique contextual factors around the school, and the goals and trajectory of school improvement efforts associated with the broader turnaround effort.

Our look into Turnaround Arts schools revealed the unique uses of high-quality and integrated arts education in each school. We highlighted these diverse and unique approaches to illustrate the varied ways Turnaround Arts schools used the arts as levers in broader school improvement efforts and saw that several common themes emerged.

First, it was evident that Turnaround Arts schools in general have a much broader and deeper selection of arts education programming than one would expect from comparable high-poverty, low-performing schools. There are a wide variety of disciplines represented, many minutes of school day instruction in the arts, and a higher-than-average allocation of arts educators in these schools. More resources and intentionality are used in incorporating the arts into the overall philosophy of the school, as opposed to treating it as enrichment or an add-on.

Second, a majority of teachers across all Turnaround Arts schools worked to integrate the arts into their classroom instruction. We saw an increase in the number and percentage of teachers who reported using the arts. We also saw a decrease in the reporting of barriers to the use of the arts in the classroom.

Third, it was clear that school leaders and teachers increased the strategic use of the arts to target broader school improvement. The arts were used to build student engagement, to increase attendance, to build parent understandings and buy in, to build student non-cognitive skills, and to meet student learning needs.

Fourth, our analysis of the relationship of the level of implementation of Turnaround Arts and broader school outcomes showed some promising correlations. Generally, we saw a pattern in which schools that were higher on the implementation continuum also showed greater improvement in terms of school improvement indicators. There is still much work to be done in this area, both to refine the implementation continuum indicators and to better understand these relationships, but preliminary analysis demonstrates both hopeful correlations and promising methodological approaches to capturing and measuring implementation of the arts.

This final report also reported on program impact indicators in attendance, discipline, and student achievement. For the majority of schools in Turnaround Arts, there was strong evidence of school improvement in these indicators. For several schools, these improvements were particularly notable. Comparison to comparable schools at the district and SIG levels showed that, on average, Turnaround Arts schools outperformed these groups.

In sum, at the conclusion of the evaluation, we see positive signs of program success relative to the research questions that guided this study. We found evidence of significant change in the depth and breadth of the use of the arts, and intentional efforts to build infrastructure, capacity, and high quality staff to bring the arts to bear in Turnaround Arts schools in deep ways. We saw leaders who have learned to strategically use the arts toward broader school goals. And we found a majority of schools have made substantial improvements academically. These are hopeful findings as Turnaround Arts expands its reach across the country.

"This document was developed from the public domain document: Final Evaluation Report: Turnaround Arts Initiative – President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH)."