

Principals' Arts Leadership (PAL)

Program Key Features

September 2010

**ArtsEd Washington
advances arts education through
leadership, partnership and
communication.**

ArtsEd
w a s h i n g t o n

Key Features of ArtsEd Washington's Principals' Arts Leadership Program for Elementary Schools

“The Arts – dance, music, theatre and visual arts –are basic and core subject areas, and are essential to the well-rounded education of the whole child.”

Randy Dorn,
Washington State
Superintendent of
Public Instruction,
March 2009

“Though its focus lies on the arts, the PAL program delivers results that extend far beyond the art, music, dance or drama classroom. PAL supports the principal's role as an innovative instructional leader.”

Gary Kipp,
Executive Director of
the Association of
Washington School
Principals

Program Purpose

The purpose of ArtsEd Washington's **Principals' Arts Leadership (PAL)** program is to increase the provision of high quality arts instruction in Washington State's educational system. PAL's goal is to build and support systemic change in public elementary schools so that all students can benefit from the proven and powerful role of arts learning in a complete education. The strategy for accomplishing this – and the linchpin of the PAL program – is to frame the school principal as the instructional leader in the arts. PAL is focused on creating change by guiding principals, teachers, schools, and districts as they grow and sustain arts instruction as an integral component of elementary school education.

PAL serves **principals** by supporting, inspiring, and focusing their interest in and commitment to student learning through the arts.

PAL serves **teachers** by connecting them with quality professional development and peer learning around arts instruction.

PAL serves **students** by ensuring their access to high quality, sequential arts instruction during the regular school day.

PAL serves **school districts** by providing resources to assist them in improving school instruction with the arts and connecting them to quality arts programs in the community.

PAL serves **state-wide arts education goals** by building and linking a coalition of school leaders who value arts education and who, through PAL, can develop the knowledge and ability to support and advance systemic change.

How PAL fits within the ArtsEd Washington Mission

ArtsEd Washington advances arts education through leadership, partnership, and communication.

This mission is carried forward by the PAL program. Through the PAL program, ArtsEd Washington partners directly with each school's leadership, helping to develop an ongoing annual plan for arts education in their school and providing the tools to implement and sustain arts programming that addresses state-mandated learning standards. PAL uses these tools - leadership, partnership, and communication - to build capacity within schools to deliver high quality arts instruction in a sustainable way and on a systemic level so that all children in our state will benefit.

Program Overview

PAL is a three-year program, with continued opportunities and support for alumni. Elementary school principals who are interested in having their schools participate in PAL complete an application in the spring to join the cohort entering the program the following fall.

“No other program holds the principal as its central focus, as the chief architect of the school’s arts plan, and strengthens his or her capacity to lead the arts as a core subject. ArtsEd Washington’s PAL program is unique in this important respect.”

Dick Deasy,
founding director
of the Arts Education
Partnership

“The most important thing I do is to give the teachers permission to spend time and energy on the arts. So many of them have felt that they can only spend time on reading, writing, and math and this program has helped them be more flexible.”

Doug Poage,
Principal, Carnation
Elementary School,
Riverview School
District

Once accepted into the program, the school makes a three year commitment to work with ArtsEd Washington to develop and commence implementation of an Arts Plan specific to its own goals and characteristics.

During the first year in PAL, the school convenes an Arts Team which includes the principal as instructional leader, several staff members, and community members (see below under *Pillars*). This team completes a School Arts Inventory to use as a baseline for analyzing its existing assets and gaps and then creating a customized Arts Plan. The goal of the Arts Plan is to provide a roadmap that will guide each school in improving and increasing its provision of arts education and aligning it with state learning standards.

Each subsequent year of the PAL program consists of opportunities and supports for principals and teachers to implement their Arts Plans, enhance their knowledge, skills, and leadership through professional development and peer networks, and access arts education information and resources for themselves and their schools. Alumni can avail of ongoing options in these same areas.

Pillars of the PAL Program

We have found the following five program components to be the structural pillars of successful school arts education programs:

- 1. The Principal.** The PAL program positions the principal as the key constituent and the instructional leader in the arts. The Arts Education Partnership’s 1999 study, *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, highlights the role of the principal as the primary instructional leader at the school level. The findings showed that principals create the expectations and climate within the school building, and their support for arts education is essential. **The foremost and non-negotiable tenet of PAL is its requirement of direct principal involvement.** PAL uniquely positions the principal as the central figure in advancement of arts learning.
- 2. The Arts Team.** The Arts Team should include leaders from within the school (teachers) and community (parents, artists, business and civic leaders) working together with the principal. Teacher participation in the planning process is essential, as they bring a classroom-based perspective to the table. And community involvement has been shown to be a key factor in the success of school-based arts programs. “The community assists in the teaching and learning activities of the faculty and students, mobilizes and supports arts education through political activity, uses school facilities as community arts venues and provides venues for faculty and student works and performances.”¹
- 3. The School Arts Plan.** In our research report, *Anchoring Arts Education*², principals identified the Arts Plan as the PAL program component that is most valuable to them as instructional leaders since it lays out the expectations of the school, for both the leadership and the staff, and formally establishes an agenda for positioning the arts as a core content area in the school’s curriculum. The Arts Plan is a living document that must be revised yearly to maintain sustainability. **Arts Plan Target Areas that are fundamental** include: Curriculum, Instruction, Assessment; Teacher Professional Development/Capacity Building; and Community Engagement.

1 <http://aep-arts.org/files/publications/GAARReport.pdf>, Gaining the Arts Advantage, President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities and Arts Education Partnership, 1999.

2 *Anchoring Arts Education: Principals Arts Leadership*, Claudia Bach and Annette de Soto, AdvisArts Consulting, 2009.

“The support for planning provided through PAL prodded us to think more critically and concretely about the next steps we would need to take to advance the arts in our school, and pushed us to further our commitments by writing them down.”

Susan Arbury,
Principal,
Southwood
Elementary,
Enumclaw School
District

“PAL helps the principal build a school culture where creativity and imagination are valued. It gives the principal an opportunity to build leadership capacity within the school. Most importantly, it supports the principal’s work to strengthen student achievement.”

Gary Kipp, Executive
Director, Association
of Washington
School Principals

- 4. Seed Money.** The promise of seed dollars to each participating school by ArtsEd Washington has proven to be an especially effective tool both in recruiting schools to the program and in keeping schools invested during the process. ArtsEd Washington offers each school \$1,000 upon completion of their Arts Plan to be used to implement elements of the Plan. These dollars are meant to be invested specifically in activities that will lead to sustainability – such as teacher training or consulting by a teaching artist, as opposed to consumable goods such as classroom art supplies. Principals have reported that the seed money has served as a catalyst for clarifying their schools’ arts priorities and, in many cases, has also served to leverage additional funding to support their growing arts programs.
- 5. Peer Networks.** Our research has shown that principals place a high value on PAL’s ability to create and support networking among peers. Peer networks are a stimulus to generating ideas around arts education, sharing experiences, and renewing energy and commitment. ArtsEd Washington conducts *Peer Forums* as a way to enable principals to gather together as a group to learn about best practices and connect with other principals who are on the same path. We also provide *Alumni Peer Coaching* to help provide the ongoing support needed to develop sustainability in school-based arts programming.

Program Stages

ArtsEd Washington has identified¹ four distinct stages that lead to PAL program success. Each school is unique and PAL is designed to be responsive to the context and conditions in each school. While there are core components common to all schools, there is great variety in the ways in which schools choose to move forward, and PAL is designed to be a flexible program, accommodating differences and limitations among schools. ArtsEd Washington continues to build on and refine these components as the program grows. The stages are:

Catalytic Spark. PAL identifies and fans the spark of leadership interest as the foundation for arts growth in a school. PAL does this by:

- Providing an opportunity for principals to examine how the arts can play an increased role in their school leadership.
- Developing workshops for principals and other instructional leaders to inform and ignite creative thinking.
- Providing individualized on-site support focused on capacity building and facilitation that engages the knowledge and expertise of the principal and members of the team.
- Creating a peer network and peer learning opportunities with ongoing workshops to sustain the spark, once ignited.

Dynamic Shared Leadership. PAL creates a framework for building and encouraging leadership around the arts in the school. PAL does this by:

- Supporting the recruitment of a School Arts Team, led by the principal, that includes teachers, other faculty, and community members who take “ownership” of the Arts Plan creation.
- Facilitating a site-based workshop that engages the Arts Team in determining vision, goals, and needs of their individual school.
- Providing opportunities for direct professional development to principals and arts leads to experience, and learn how to provide, standards-aligned arts in their schools.

¹ Anchoring Arts Education: Principals Arts Leadership, Claudia Bach and Annette de Soto, Advisarts Consulting, 2009.

“The PAL program has been helpful in identifying arts resources in our state. It has given us a venue through which we have explored various implementation strategies. PAL helped us inventory our own skills—an amazing process!! And then gave us the opportunity to really plan activities to support our dreams.”

Cyndi Evans,
Principal, Stafford
Elementary, Tacoma
School District

“As a principal, I was thinking “When will we ever get to the arts?”

We saw this opportunity and realized this was our chance.

ArtsEd Washington gave us the vehicle to get aligned and focused. Parents and visitors have commented that they feel a different energy when they walk through the halls.”

Doug Poage,
Carnation Elementary,
Riverview School
District

- Facilitating annual Arts Team sessions for each school, to nurture leadership, advance implementation, and support sustainable planning, renewing the focus on the provision of high quality arts teaching and learning.

Effective Systems and Tools. PAL helps schools identify, develop, and build systems and tools for arts knowledge, skills, and capacity. PAL does this by:

- Working with the Arts Team to complete an initial School Arts Inventory to clarify their current areas of arts instruction and provide a baseline for plan development.
- Providing and linking schools to high quality professional development workshops to increase teachers’ arts teaching skills, both onsite at the school and out in the community.
- Providing seed money to motivate action and strategically leverage other sources.
- Providing access to high quality, standards-aligned lessons and curriculum tools.
- Connecting schools with community arts organizations, teaching artists, resources, and funders to support and enhance their arts programs.
- Providing annual Progress Reports with follow up support to assist schools in realizing their goals and vision in the provision of comprehensive and sequential arts learning.

Sustainability. PAL works with schools to create approaches that will renew and expand interest and capacity for making the arts a sustainable and integral part of education in the classroom and beyond. PAL does this by:

- Emphasizing the need to build a school’s internal capacity to teach the arts throughout the program period so that they have the internal systems in place at the end of year three.
- Focusing each school’s Arts Team on specific exit strategies in their final year of PAL to assist with planning for the years ahead.
- Identifying opportunities where schools could seek support (financial and otherwise) for implementation of their school Arts Plans.
- Assisting schools in developing parent and community support for the arts in their school.
- Providing systemic opportunities for principals to network with peers and receive timely information on arts education topics and resources.
- Continuing to make ArtsEd Washington staff available to PAL alumni and connecting them with resources they may need in the years after program completion.

Program Components by Year

The first year sets the foundation for the three year program.

Year 1 components include:

1. School Arts Team recruited & trained
2. School Arts Inventory (baseline assessment) completed
3. Two Focused Conversations
Imagining the Future & Goal Setting
Action Planning
4. Workshops
Arts Team Workshop
Principal’s Peer Forum
5. Arts Plan drafted

Implementation of the Arts Plans begins in Year 2.

“With the myriad demands on administrative and teacher time, a program such as PAL functions as the lifeline that keeps the initiative to integrate the arts afloat. Without leadership support for implementing and sustaining the teaching of the arts, nothing lasting can be achieved.”

Susan Arbury,
Principal,
Southwood
Elementary,
Enumclaw School
District

“PAL reminded me that we shouldn’t make assumptions about what our students can do. Some of the students who have the most challenges at school – academics, behavioral and family issues – some of these kids really found their place through the arts and this has been fantastic for everyone to see this.”

Laura Ploudré,
Principal,
Parkwood
Elementary,
Shoreline School
District

Year 2 components include:

1. School Arts Progress Report completed
2. Seed money released
3. Two Facilitated Planning meetings
 Fall *Aspirations* meeting and Spring *Reflection* meeting
4. Workshops
 Individual onsite *Catalytic Spark* whole school workshop
 Grantwriting & fund development workshop
 Principals’ Peer Forum
5. Arts Plan Revised

In the third and final year of the program, the Arts Team looks further ahead and develops a plan for sustainability, while continuing with implementation.

Year 3 components include:

1. School Arts Progress Report completed
2. Two Facilitated Planning meetings
 Fall *Aspirations* meeting and Spring *Reflection* meeting
3. Workshops
 Individual onsite *Catalytic Spark* whole school workshop
 Grantwriting & fund development workshop
 Principal’s Peer Forum
4. Formal program support ends; School Arts Inventory (baseline assessment) repeated
5. Arts Plans serve as blueprints for each school’s implementation of instruction and will continue to evolve at the school level.

Alignment with Educational Standards in Washington State

The PAL program supports principals in addressing the arts in a way that builds school capacity and culture, is aligned with state learning standards, and is consistent with the state definition of basic education.¹

The attributes, capacities, and qualities emphasized and developed through participation in the PAL program align with the Washington State Office of Public Instruction’s **Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools**, a research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning. As the research identifies, high performing schools have: a clear & shared focus; high standards & expectations for all students; effective school leadership; high levels of collaboration & communication; curriculum, instruction & assessments aligned with state standards; frequent monitoring of learning & teaching; focused professional development; a supportive learning environment; and high levels of family & community involvement. Many districts are requesting or encouraging that schools focus on building these elements in their schools, making PAL an attractive vehicle for attaining these goals, since PAL participation has been shown to support the development of these characteristics. For more information visit <http://www.k12.wa.us/research/>.

PAL works with participating schools to assist them in meeting Washington State’s **Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs)** in dance, music, theater, and visual arts, as well as exploring ways that the arts can support EALRs in other subject areas. The Arts EALRs set out what students need to know and be able to accomplish and understand in the arts. Encouraging the alignment of arts instruction with these standards and instigating use of assessments helps to ensure that students will be provided with thoughtful and relevant arts instruction.

1 RCW 28A.150.210.

Evaluation and Impact

“Through the PAL program, our teachers have taken a leadership role in advancing the integration of arts in our school community. This has had a significant impact on student engagement in their classrooms, in the climate of the school in general, and, in their personal feeling of efficacy as teachers to meet the needs of all students.”

Amy Wright, Principal,
Stillwater Elementary,
Riverview School
District

“Every time I observe an integrated arts lesson in a classroom, I find our highest levels of student engagement. Whether it is readers’ theater or a visual art component to math, reading, or social studies, many of our students who struggle with behavior or engagement issues rise to the top and this carries over to the rest of their work.”

Mike Sellers,
Principal, Armin Jahr
Elementary,
Bremerton School
District

ArtsEd Washington undertook an extensive evaluation of the PAL program in 2009 as the program reached its fifth anniversary. Based on what was learned from the feedback of participants, ArtsEd Washington continues to improve and evolve the PAL program. Our program staff work with all participating principals and Arts Team members to gather data each year that will help schools track their progress and ensure that the program is responsive to the demonstrated and articulated needs of the individual schools. The PAL program is also evaluated as a whole annually, and over time.

Each year participating schools fill out a Progress Report that helps us measure changes in their schools and identify areas that may need improvement. We also ask alumni to share their progress two years after completing the formal program. All of this information helps us understand the impacts PAL is having on student learning, instructional staff, leadership, and the community. This in turn strengthens the program to better serve the schools. ArtsEd Washington tracks PAL’s impact as schools move from emerging to established arts education providers. Such change may include measures of staff participation, instructional time, family or community involvement, as well as levels of arts staffing or allocated budget. We impact, and therefore measure, the culture, commitment, and infrastructure of a school and its capacity to provide arts learning to all students, tracking over time how participating schools are increasing both their expectations around arts learning and the provision of arts instruction to all students. We look at how PAL participants identify change and growth in areas that support the comprehensive provision of arts learning including:

- School culture and learning climate
- Arts professional development for educators
- Student behavior and classroom management
- Student and teacher engagement

Program History

The PAL program was started by ArtsEd Washington in 2004 with support from The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as well as local government and corporate support. The program grew to serve 36 schools in four counties in Washington during its first six years. Principals and teams have been involved in workshops that support the implementation of arts programs and professional development that supports instruction in and through the arts. Over the past six years, participating PAL schools have successfully secured over \$200,000 in direct and indirect arts education funding to support their school-based arts education work.

In 2006 ArtsEd Washington, in partnership with Arts Impact (AI), was awarded funding from the U.S. Department of Education under their Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination program. This national program is intended to increase the amount of information regarding effective models for arts education that integrate the arts with standards-based education programs, and the AI/PAL program model explores the synergy and impact of professional development for teachers when combined with support for principals, and the intentional development of a school-wide plan and expectation for the arts. This grant, as well as ArtsEd Washington’s membership in the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, places the PAL program in a dynamic national context.

For a more complete history of the development of the PAL program, please visit ArtsEd Washington’s website at www.ArtsEdWashington.org

The Future of PAL

The future that the PAL program seeks to create includes:

- A growing cohort of principals who support learning in and through the arts
- Teachers who are confident teaching in and through the arts
- School districts that recognize that the arts are vital to student learning and the development of the “whole child”
- An education system in which the arts are recognized and implemented as a core subject area
- And most importantly, students whose creativity and creative potential is developed in the classroom every day through arts learning

PAL was designed with the goal that it would become a model program with the flexibility and potential to be replicated in schools and communities all across the state, and perhaps across the nation. The PAL program provides both the framework and the mechanics for creative educational improvement for students, educators, and their communities.

ArtsEd Washington is committed to increasing arts education for Washington State’s students, and PAL enables the pursuit of that goal in partnership with committed educators. The future of PAL lies in developing a **program replication model** that will enable more schools throughout the state and, eventually, the country, to gain the knowledge and experiences the program offers. Because ArtsEd Washington’s organizational mission, size, and scope limit its ability to deliver PAL services directly to every school and school district that could benefit from them, we are currently working to develop agency partnerships that will enable us to dramatically expand program accessibility and participation opportunities.

Support for PAL

Over the years the PAL program has received support from keystone national funders as well as local funders, both small and large. Funders include the US Department of Education, The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, 4Culture, Washington State Arts Commission, The Boeing Company, Washington Mutual, Greater Tacoma Community Foundation, Robert B. McMillen Foundation, and The Clowes Fund. In addition to financial support, the program receives important support in the form of referrals and knowledge-sharing among all our participants and alumni.

For more information please contact

Una McAlinden, Executive Director | una@artsedwashington.org

Alyssa Simmons, Program Coordinator | programs@artsedwashington.org

ArtsEd Washington, 158 Thomas Street, Seattle, WA 98109
Phone 206.441.4501 | Fax 206.441.3042

“As they develop into arts leaders, PAL participants are emerging as stronger, more dedicated, more effective principals. And, because the PAL model emphasizes shared leadership, these principals are building programs of success that can be sustained for years to come.”

Gary Kipp, Executive Director,
Association of Washington School
Principals

"The Kennedy Center supports this work because it engages the primary school leader and decision maker in planning arts programs. Few initiatives provide such a high level of sustained support for principals."

Barbara Shepherd, Director National
Partnerships, John F. Kennedy Center for
the Performing Arts

“ArtsEd Washington has stepped up to fill a critical void at the intersection of school leadership, parental and community participation, professional teaching organizations, corporate involvement and the political process.”

Charlie Rathbun, Director,
Arts Program, 4Culture

“Parents are increasingly able to articulate the benefits of the arts for their children. They see ways that the arts enhance their learning of academic subjects. They see the development of skills such as persistence, preparation and presentation. And, importantly, they see them developing a love of the arts!”

Jeff Newport, former principal
Rosa Parks Elementary
Lake Washington School District