

# **Anchoring Arts Education: Principals' Arts Leadership**

**An Evaluation of ArtsEd Washington's Elementary School Program**

**May 2009**

**Report by Claudia Bach and Annette de Soto  
AdvisArts Consulting, Seattle**

**advisarts**  
consulting



**ArtsEd**  
w a s h i n g t o n

Supported in part with a grant from the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, with additional support from 4Culture and The Robert B. McMillen Foundation.



ArtsEd Washington is a member of the  
Kennedy Center Alliances for Arts Education Network

**ArtsEd Washington**

*Advancing Arts Education Through Leadership, Partnership, & Communication*

<http://www.ArtsEdWashington.org> 206 441 4501

Report prepared by Claudia Bach and Annette de Soto, AdvisArts Consulting  
[www.advisarts.com](http://www.advisarts.com) 7702 14<sup>th</sup> Avenue NW, Seattle, WA 98117 206.915.0192

# **Anchoring Arts Education: Principals’ Arts Leadership**

## An Evaluation of ArtsEd Washington’s Elementary School Program

### **Table of Contents**

Executive Summary	i
Introduction and Background	1
Evaluation Scope and Methodology	3
Key Findings	4
Diagram – PAL Stages in Effective Implementation	5
Findings on the Four Stages of Implementation	6
Findings on PAL Components most Valued by Participants	12
Findings on Impact on Students and the Community	13
Best Practices from Five PAL Schools	15
Diagram – The ArtsEd Washington PAL Model: Factors Influencing Impact	23
Recommendations	
Section 1: Recommendations for Arts Ed Washington’s PAL Program	24
Section 2: Recommendations for Elementary Schools Participating in PAL	28
Next Steps and Conclusion	31
Participating Schools and Principals	33
Acknowledgements	34

### **Appendices**

Appendix A:	Principal Interview Findings
Appendix B:	Arts Team Interview Findings
Appendix C:	Interview Protocols
Appendix D:	Overview of the Principals’ Arts Leadership Program, January 2009 by Una McAlinden, Executive Director, ArtsEd Washington
Appendix E:	History of the Principals’ Arts Leadership Program, January 2009 by Una McAlinden, Executive Director, ArtsEd Washington

# Executive Summary

## Introduction and Background

The Principals' Arts Leadership (PAL) program was created by ArtsEd Washington in 2004 to inform and support elementary school teams, led by principals, in the development and implementation of school arts plans to increase arts education. Each school's plan was intended to build on and reflect the unique pathway appropriate to that school's characteristics and community, using existing and new resources.

Since its inception PAL has worked with more than 40 schools, 36 of which have either completed or are still active in the program. PAL schools participate for three core years: During Year 1, schools concentrate on Planning; Year 2 focuses on Implementation; and Year 3 is devoted to devising strategies that will lead to Sustainability. Thereafter school team members become Alumni, with opportunities to remain active in aspects of the PAL program.

How well is PAL achieving what ArtsEd WA set out to do? Was there a transformation experienced by the individuals and schools participating in PAL? What lessons could be learned for improving PAL and for replicating the program in schools and school districts statewide, or beyond? The approaching five year anniversary of the program prompted the desire to assess and evaluate the PAL program to answer these questions and to gain a clearer picture of the underlying aspects of transformation that might be at work for those involved.

The evaluation was focused on sixteen schools that had completed or were about to complete the full three year PAL cycle. One-on-one interviews were conducted on-site with the school principal as well as an on-site interview with members of each school's arts team. The interviews were confidential with all responses non-attributed. Five of these school's principals also participated in additional follow-up phone interviews with the researchers to explore best practices. In total, more than 70 individuals participated in interviews. A four person Evaluation Work Group was formed of Board and community members to advise the ArtsEd WA staff and the consultants throughout the evaluation process.

## Key Findings on the Four Stages of Implementation

The research process identified four critical stages of development and implementation in ArtsEd Washington PAL schools that are experienced more or less sequentially with some revisiting of stages along the way as the program matures and evolves. The Findings reflect the information provided by principals and team members on their experiences and knowledge of the PAL program.

### Stage 1: Catalytic Spark

The PAL process is built on connecting with or igniting a catalytic spark in a school's leadership. This is the first step and a critical component present in all successful PAL schools. Where principals and key staff members have a personal passion for the arts, and sometimes a significant pedagogical interest and belief in the arts as an effective learning tool, PAL takes root most effectively.

## **Stage 2: Dynamic Shared Leadership**

The second stage is dependent on propelling interest and empowered involvement within a school. This is characterized by the development of an Arts Team where the principal is joined by several key staff members in taking an active role in encouraging interest and building participation within the school community. Successful principals provide a clear vision, take part in developing goals, model risk taking through publicly joining in arts activities, offer flexibility to teachers and pursue fundraising opportunities to support additional arts program requirements. Arts Teams with dynamic single or shared leadership that organize regular planning meetings, and drive activities, lesson plan development and opportunities for incremental growth had the strongest impact and potential for sustainability.

## **Stage 3: Effective Systems and Tools**

A wide range of systems and tools are employed by schools to enhance arts knowledge, skills and capacity, encourage school wide participation and promote community support for arts education. Professional development that provided technical teaching skills and lesson plan development were cited by all schools as fundamental to their success. Many of the most successful methods are explored in greater detail in the report section, *Best Practices from Five PAL Schools*.

## **Stage 4: Sustainability**

Though the principal is frequently the initial driver of the PAL program, a sustainable commitment to arts education requires that school wide cultural change take place in order to continue this commitment beyond the principal's tenure. Schools that distributed planning and integrated lesson development amongst a wider range of teachers and staff members appeared most able to encourage this kind of transformation. In addition, the wider distribution of responsibilities tended to have a multiplier effect as these staff members reached out to volunteers, parents and community members who could advocate for arts education at the school, district and state levels. Schools that are moving towards a cycle of renewing and expanding interest and knowledge are building the strongest base for sustainability.

## **Findings on PAL Components most Valued by Participants**

Principals and Arts Team members were asked to identify existing components of the PAL program that they felt were most valuable to them.

1. **School Arts Plan** -- The development of the School Arts Plan is the most valuable component to participants. It was noted as a difficult but extremely valuable process.
2. **Seed Money** -- The second most valued component is PAL's Seed Money program which is used by schools as a catalyst for clarifying arts priorities and needs and is often a strong incentive to exploring the program initially.
3. The third component considered most valuable differs for principals and Arts Teams.  
**Peer Networks** -- Principals place strong value on PAL's ability to create and support networking among peers.  
**Training and Professional Development** -- Arts Teams highly value PAL's ability to connect their school to training opportunities, the vital link to implementation.

## Impact on Students and the Community

The majority of teachers and principals reported a number of visible positive areas of impact they attribute to the school's increased arts education activities. It must be noted that the evaluation did not include data collection with students or representatives of the community. Teachers especially observed that arts education activities (whether stand alone arts instruction or arts integrated with other curriculum subjects) had a high level of engagement for all students and were particularly helpful for students who did not participate fully in other classroom activities. Teachers also reported decreased behavioral issues in the classroom. Several schools reported that their arts focus had a unifying impact, allowing *all* students to participate equally – regardless of their physical, academic or emotional capacities.

Schools also reported increased community involvement as a result of their arts focus: increased turnout from parents and relatives at performances and arts events; increased ability to recruit more volunteers to help in the classrooms with arts related projects; increased outreach to PTAs, district staff and local businesses and artists related to their arts program needs. This had the effect of broadening their reach into the communities they served.

## Best Practices from Five ArtsEd WA PAL Schools

The interview process revealed that some PAL schools had greater success than others building strong and integrated or infused arts programs. Five method areas were selected as primary indicators of well-engaged PAL elementary schools. Subsequently, five principals in schools demonstrating strong arts leadership and leadership focus were asked to share their school's experiences regarding these methods. These five schools represent a range of populations and conditions: from a school reporting more than 70% free and reduced lunch eligibility to a school reporting less than 5% eligibility; schools in rural, suburban and more urban areas; a brand new school, a recently reopened school and long-established schools.

**METHOD 1 - Creating and maintaining leadership and leadership focus:** Schools with the most active programs have active principals and one or more teachers willing and able to lead others in expanding the role of arts.

**METHOD 2 – Maintaining internal staff focus:** Even with the best leadership from a principal, the teachers carry the weight of expanding the arts in the classroom. Schools that have active arts programs have a wide range of teachers involved in planning and implementing arts goals. Moreover, the most successful schools are those that have the entire staff involved in at least some aspects of arts programming.

**METHOD 3 – Annual arts events and programs:** Many of the schools hold annual arts events or regular programs to focus attention and celebrate their expanding arts programs. Benefits of these programs include increased participation by all teachers and students, encouraging involvement from parents and community members and greater visibility for arts education at the District level.

**METHOD 4 – Identifying human resources for the arts:** Many of the schools with successful arts programs are creative in their use of human resources within their school, parent and surrounding communities.

**METHOD 5 – Securing on-site professional arts staff:** Various ways of addressing arts staffing is reflected by these five schools: some have made a clear commitment to the importance of having such staff and others have forged ahead without such staff.

## **Recommendations for ArtsEd Washington’s Principals’ Arts Leadership Program**

This section focuses on recommendations directed to the leadership of PAL to help shape the future of the program.

### **Recommendation 1: Create stronger methods and tools to assess readiness for participation in PAL and to ensure that first year PAL schools are at a similar starting point.**

The research indicates that schools entering the program with some element of *Catalytic Spark* and some capacity for *Dynamic Shared Leadership* are much more likely to make effective use of and strong progress with the PAL program.

### **Recommendation 2: Retain and strengthen the Arts Plan component of PAL.**

The Arts Plan is a fundamental touchstone of the PAL program. While many principals and arts team leads note that it was often frustrating to develop this tool, they almost universally find it to be of significant value in creating a pathway to change.

### **Recommendation 3: Maintain or expand PAL’s Seed Money component.**

Seed money provided by PAL is a powerful catalyst for participating schools. Relatively small sums of money are able to motivate action, enhance access to training and funding resources and strengthen accountability.

### **Recommendation 4: Strengthen experiential arts training/professional development opportunities for PAL participants.**

The critical link to implementation is the opportunity for strong training to build skills and confidence and stimulate enthusiasm for principals and teachers alike. Schools benefit most when all teachers, and other staff, participate.

### **Recommendation 5: Provide more tools and guidance related to arts resource development for those principals and schools that want or need them.**

Methods, tools and systems that are proven best practices for PAL schools can be documented.

### **Recommendation 6: Retain ArtsEd WA’s flexibility in addressing each school’s needs while increasing clarity and effectiveness of PAL systems and framework.**

Codify PAL systems, frameworks and evaluation in ways that are informative for potential, current, and past PAL participants as well as others in the fields of arts and education.

### **Recommendation 7: Identify tools and methods to assist alumni schools with sustainability.**

The transition period after completing the three year PAL program is a vulnerable time that warrants attention and resources from ArtsEd WA in support of the long term program vision.

## **Recommendations for Elementary Schools Participating in ArtsEd WA’s Principals’ Arts Leadership Program**

This section provides recommendations directed to elementary schools participating in PAL. Many of the recommendations are also applicable to any elementary school that seeks to strengthen the arts in their school.

### **Recommendation 1: Clarify the principal’s commitment to the role of arts in education, in the school and in the PAL program.**

Schools experiencing the greatest success with PAL are those in which the principal has developed and clarified his or her pedagogical thinking as well as interest and passion for the arts.

**Recommendation 2: Ensure that the work of the arts in the school is broadly shared and supported.**

The principal is a key player but cannot create change alone. A core of individuals who work with the principal on the PAL program is critical.

**Recommendation 3: Create and use methods, tools and systems that keep the arts focus visible and dynamic for the school.**

Identify and strengthen the school's distinctive approach to imbed the arts in a more sustainable way in the school community, using the school's Arts Plan to guide the efforts.

**Recommendation 4: Ensure that arts endeavors in the school are celebrated and supported within and beyond the walls of the school.**

Identify ways to celebrate students' artistic efforts and accomplishments within the classroom, the school, the district and in the community.

## **Next Steps and Conclusion**

The completion of this evaluation process is the beginning of another phase to shape the work that lies ahead for ArtsEd WA and for others engaged in the field of arts education. Next steps are outlined here as a point of departure for putting what has been learned to work.

**Share what has been learned** with the following constituencies: the Principals and Arts Teams who generously participated in the research; other PAL schools in all phases of participation; partners and supporters of PAL and ArtsEd WA in Washington State and nationally; and colleagues in the field of arts education.

**Undertake a PAL planning process**, within the context of ArtsEd WA's larger strategic outlook and planning, as soon as possible. Consider creating a Planning Work Group to review and prioritize the recommendations in this report for short and long term implementation or consideration.

**Develop evaluation tools, methods and timelines** to build on what has emerged through this process. This evaluation offers the opportunity for ArtsEd WA to revise and streamline its ongoing efforts to gather data and to regularly assess and evaluate PAL.

PAL is well positioned to continue to work hand in hand with elementary schools that are ready and willing to move forward with the arts in their school. Despite the larger economic challenges and the complexities of the public school environment there is much from which to take heart. Principals, working in partnership with Arts Teams, teaching staff and supporters, can anchor the arts in new and increasingly meaningful ways within their learning communities. PAL plays important roles as a resource provider, support system, and a source of inspiration for schools ready to gain the benefits of stronger arts programs.

## Introduction and Background

The Principals' Arts Leadership (PAL) program was created by ArtsEd Washington in 2004 to inform and support elementary school teams, led by principals, in the development and implementation of school arts plans to increase arts education in those schools. The program was developed with the belief that effective plans must reflect each individual school's characteristics, community, and opportunities for growth. The plan should identify the unique pathway for that school to offer high quality instruction to their students in four fundamental arts disciplines — dance, music, theater and visual arts — using existing and new resources.

The original intention was to help principal-led school teams create an arts plan. An additional need emerged as ArtsEd WA started to work with schools in the planning process. Schools expressed a desire for additional support to implement their arts plans and so ArtsEd WA revised the program's structure to work with school teams over a three year period to develop and commence implementation of their plans. ArtsEd WA also sought to create a peer network of principals as instructional leaders in the arts, supporting each other in this work. This new goal was based on the belief that a cadre of principals who have experienced success in arts education will do more to influence other principals than anything else.

Since its inception PAL has worked with over 40 schools, 36 of which have either completed or are still active in the program. How well is PAL achieving what ArtsEd WA set out to do? Was there a transformation experienced by the individuals and schools participating in PAL? What lessons could be learned for improving PAL and for replicating the program in schools and school districts statewide, or beyond? The approaching five year anniversary of the program prompted the desire to assess and evaluate the PAL program to answer these questions.

ArtsEd WA received support from The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Robert B. McMillen Foundation and 4Culture to permit them to undertake an evaluation process. In November 2008 ArtsEd WA began to shape the evaluation project and by the start of 2009 had hired AdvisArts Consulting to undertake the evaluation. The evaluation was focused on sixteen schools that had completed or were about to complete the full three year program.

### Elements and History of the Principals' Arts Leadership Program

Participating schools engage with PAL for three core years, with opportunities to continue that relationship upon completion of the formal program. During Year 1, schools concentrate on Planning; Year 2 focuses on Implementation; and Year 3 is devoted to devising strategies that will lead to Sustainability. As schools create plans in Year 1, they become eligible for ongoing support and assistance to implement and strengthen their plans in Years 2 and 3. After completion of three years in the program, school teams become Alumni and remain active in the Principals Network. (A full description of the PAL program can be found as Appendix D).

Prior to 2003 ArtsEd WA's work had been focused mainly on an annual teacher professional development summer program. The Board was aware that the advent of No Child Left Behind and diminishing school arts funding meant that they needed to be intentional, strategic and find the right points of leverage to serve out their mission and create change to advance arts education systemically. In 2003 the Board suspended programming and undertook strategic planning, recommitting to the organization's mission and choosing to focus on elementary school principals as a priority focus area. This shift was influenced in large part by the

research of Dick Deasy, then director of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), that highlighted the critical role of the school principal in creating sustainable arts education in schools. (See Appendix E for information on AEP's *Gaining the Arts Advantage* and additional information on the history of the PAL program.)

With a newly invigorated focus and a new Executive Director in place, ArtsEd WA worked with a Board advisory group to develop a program framework built around the creation of individual school plans to teach the arts. The conversation also included a number of key partners including the Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), 4Culture, Washington State Arts Commission (WSAC) and Washington Alliance for Better Schools.

Today PAL works with schools in all phases of the program across four counties in Western Washington and receives inquiries from other parts of Washington State and around the country. Various elements of the program have evolved and changed since inception, but the core concepts continue to drive PAL.

In 2008 The BERC Group was asked to conduct a limited-scope assessment of the PAL program's early outcomes based on focus groups with participating principals. That August 2008 report provided preliminary evaluation findings that focused on identifying indicators of the program's effectiveness, impact and replicability. These findings provided an initial set of indicators which helped to create the foundation for AdvisArts' 2009 evaluation process. AdvisArts worked with ArtsEd WA staff to define an evaluation process that would provide a more extensive and nuanced understanding of PAL's impact and potential.

## Scope and Methodology

The leadership of ArtsEd WA was interested not only in what was working with PAL but also in gaining a clearer picture of the underlying aspects of transformation that might be at work for the individuals and schools involved. With five years of the program completed, they were also hoping to gain new insights regarding the PAL framework and methods and implications for future program expansion or replication.

It was determined that qualitative rather than quantitative research methods would be most likely to yield the kind of information desired. Seventeen schools that had recently completed or were about to complete the three year PAL cycle were identified. Of these seventeen schools, sixteen fully participated in the evaluation process. This included one-on-one interviews with the school principal as well as an on-site interview with members of each school's arts team. The interviews were confidential with all responses non-attributed. Five of these schools' principals also participated in additional follow-up phone interviews with the researchers to explore best practices. In total, more than 70 individuals participated in interviews. These follow-up interviews are attributed, with permission from the participants. (A listing of the sixteen participating schools and their principals can be found on page 32.)

The initial start up phase included the creation of a four person Evaluation Work Group of Board and community members to advise the ArtsEd WA staff and the consultants. (Please see page 33 for information on the participants of the Evaluation Work Group.) This group provided input on the final research design as well as feedback on findings throughout the process.

The sixteen schools were initially contacted by ArtsEd WA's Executive Director to confirm willingness to participate. The PAL Program Manager then worked directly with the schools to set up on-site visits for the consultants' interviews. During the site visit one consultant met with the principal for up to an hour followed by a similar session with available members of the school's arts team. The arts team sessions ranged in size from two to nine participants. The interview protocol used for these sessions is included as Appendix C. The results of these interviews were compiled into two documents: Principal Interview Findings (Appendix A) and Arts Team Interview Findings (Appendix B).

Upon review of these preliminary findings with the Evaluation Work Group it became apparent that there would be value in looking more deeply at the methods, tools and systems that were being used at schools indicating strong success in achieving PAL's overall goals. Six schools were selected for follow up interviews of which five were able to accommodate the request for a telephone meeting to explore best practices and experiences with the principal. These five schools are noted in the list on page 15, and the interview protocol for these telephone interviews is included in Appendix C. The results of this inquiry are synthesized in the section of this report, Best Practices from Five ArtsEd PAL Schools, starting on page 15.

The consultants drafted Key Findings and preliminary Recommendations along with two graphic representations of the emerging PAL process for review with the Evaluation Working Group. Input from the Work Group led to further refinement and to the final versions included in this report. Wherever possible, the consultants have sought to give a sense of the context, conditions and environmental dimensions that influence the work and outcomes of PAL.

## Key Findings

Key findings were developed by the consultants based on thirty-two in person interviews (sixteen principals and sixteen Arts Teams) as well as five follow up telephone interviews to further investigate methods and best practices with selected schools. All interviews were conducted with staff from schools that were either in their third year or had recently completed the ArtsEd WA PAL program. More than 75 individuals participated in interviews. More detailed information on the interview process can be found in the Methodology section, and the full summary of the interviews are included as Appendix C, *Principal Interview Findings* and Addenda D, *Arts Team Interview Findings*.

The research process identified four critical stages of development in an ArtsEd Washington PAL school's involvement and implementation of the program (see Diagram 1). These stages are experienced more or less sequentially with some revisiting of stages along the way as the program matures and evolves. Additional research was conducted regarding methods, tools and systems that contribute to success.

Key Findings are organized here to reflect the four identified stages as well as components most highly valued by participants, and findings on best practice methods. The Findings are based on the information provided by the principals and team members interviewed. It should be kept in mind that this reflects their experience and knowledge of the PAL program, providing a window into the "real world" experience of PAL. This Key Findings section includes the following:

### **Findings on the Four Stages of Implementation**

- Stage 1: Catalytic Spark
- Stage 2: Dynamic Shared Leadership
- Stage 3: Effective Systems and Tools
- Stage 4: Sustainability

### **Findings on PAL Program Components most Valued by Participants**

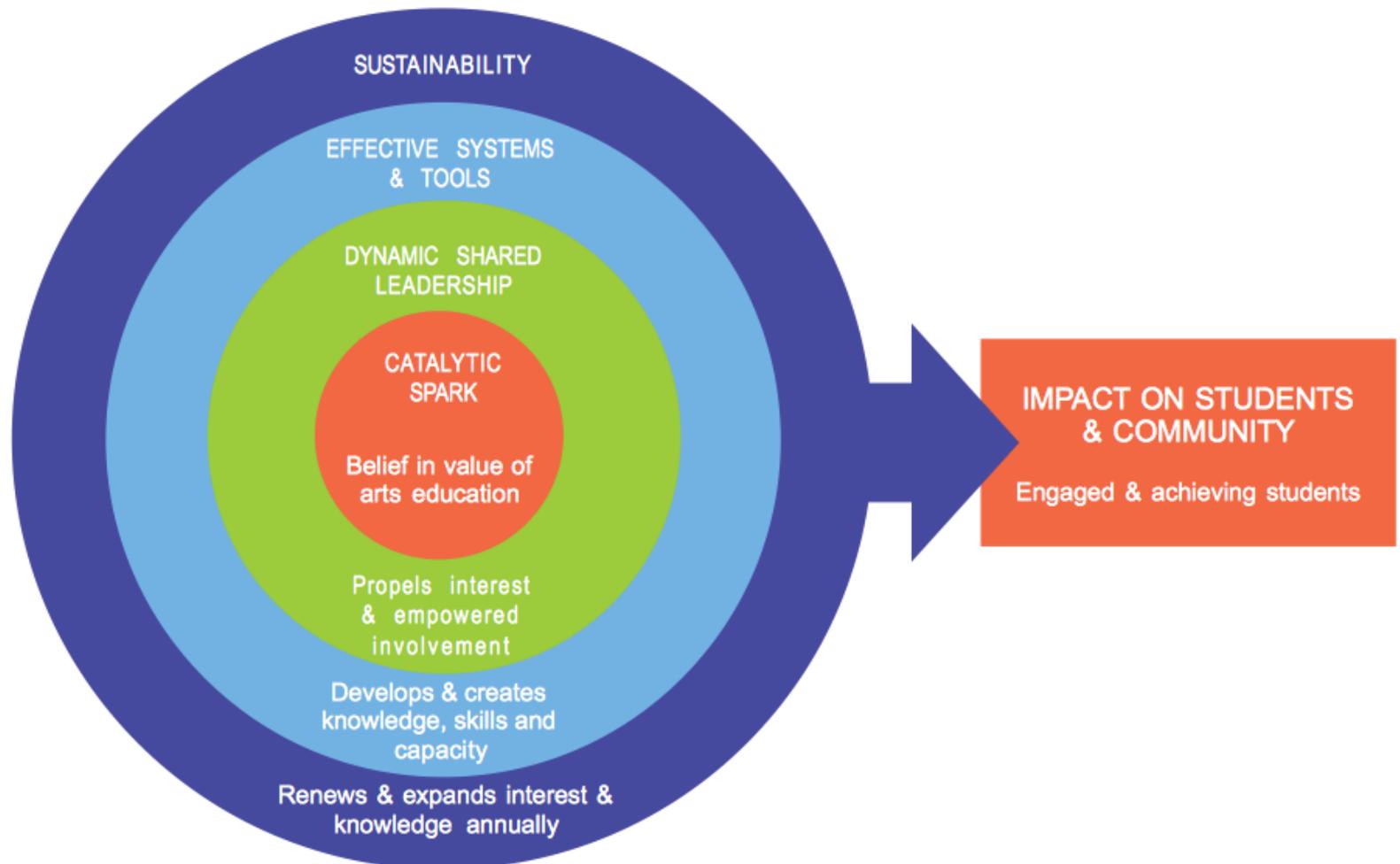
### **Findings on Impact on Students and the Community**

The diagram on the next page, **Stages in Effective Implementation**, provides an overview as well as a framework for the Key Findings. It identifies the four primary stages in implementing PAL which lead to successful impact on students and the community.

The section following the Key Findings, **Best Practices from Five ArtsEd Washington PAL Schools**, provides information that adds an additional dimension to some of the Key Findings. This is followed by a diagram, **The ArtsEd Washington PAL Model: Factors Influencing Impact** (on page 23) which serves as a graphic summary directly related to the findings.

# ArtsEd Washington Principals' Arts Leadership Program

## STAGES IN EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION



## Findings on the Four Stages of Implementation

### Stage 1: Catalytic Spark

The PAL process is built on connecting with or igniting a catalytic spark in a school's leadership. This is the first step and a critical component present in all successful PAL schools. Where principals and key staff members have a personal passion for the arts, and sometimes a significant pedagogical interest and belief in the arts as an effective learning tool, PAL takes root most effectively.

#### Indicators of success:

Stage 1 is most closely tied to a **principal's or teacher's educational history and personal experience with the arts**. The most successful schools had principals *and* staff members who had a passion for the arts and were willing to increase the opportunities for arts in the classroom regardless of financial or bureaucratic challenges along the way. Less successful schools had frequently experienced leadership transitions where the new leaders did not have a strong personal connection to the arts.

A belief in the **educational benefits and value of arts programming for all students** also was a significant aspect of their interest and allowed them to share their educational commitment to the arts with others. For some schools ArtsEd Washington served as a critical catalyst, **providing them with research, peer examples and data that supported the impact of arts education in academic achievement**. These schools reported that it was this data that enabled them to share their passion with other instructors and ignite interest in increasing their use of the arts.

In addition to their personal commitment to the arts, staff members cited **initial interactions and workshops with ArtsEd WA as having a re-igniting effect**. Before connecting with PAL, their passion may have ebbed due to administrative obstacles or they felt alone in their commitment to Arts Education. Meeting other educators and hearing about successes at other schools reinforced their interest and gave them the courage and hope to increase the arts within their own schools.

#### Representative stories and examples:

More than one principal related the importance of the arts in keeping them in school when they were young. More traditional academic subjects were not of interest to them at the time and they felt that the arts were what kept them in school and permitted them to engage and succeed in the educational system. *"The arts turned me around and got me excited about school again. I was able to finish high school and go on to college because of that. The fact that I'm now an educator is largely due to the arts."*

Other principals and teachers spoke of the importance of having educational opportunities that all students could participate in – regardless of capacity or ability. For them, the arts were the one chance that many of their students had to join in with other students as equals or to excel.

Numerous stories were told of students who were the most challenged or had the most discipline problems completely turning around when it came time to take part in arts related lessons and activities. *“You can reach kids through the arts that you can’t reach any other way”* was a frequently voiced observation.

### **How PAL participants experience ArtsEd Washington support of this stage:**

As mentioned earlier, staff members frequently cited **their initial ArtsEd WA planning workshops** as having a lasting effect on their **belief that the arts were vital to education** and that their **school could actually accomplish this program**.

ArtsEd WA’s role in **connecting schools to peer networks and peer learning opportunities** is critical for many schools as was ongoing access to workshops for skill development. These continuing education workshops allowed other team members to experience this same “spark” that the initial planning team members encountered when they first joined PAL.

**Creating a wider public base of support for the arts** was also an important factor for many schools and ArtsEd WA’s activities in **public education and advocacy** were cited by more than a few. They saw these activities as a crucial support and tool for encouraging their own staff members and parent community to support the arts. **Research and data from ArtsEd WA** enabled principals and staff members to “tell the story” of why the arts were important, and in many cases successfully increase funding as well, to kindle the flame for their arts initiatives.

## **Stage 2: Dynamic Shared Leadership**

**The second stage is dependent on propelling interest and empowered involvement within a school. This is characterized by the development of an Arts Team where the principal is joined by several key staff members in taking an active role in encouraging interest and building participation within the school community. Successful principals provide a clear vision, take part in developing goals, model risk taking through publicly joining in arts activities, offer flexibility to teachers and pursue fundraising opportunities to support additional arts program requirements. Arts Teams with dynamic single or shared leadership that organize regular planning meetings, and drive activities, lesson plan development and opportunities for incremental growth had the strongest impact and potential for sustainability.**

### **Indicators of success:**

The principal is the primary driver of success in the PAL program. Successful schools were marked by principals with a “can do” attitude. These **principals actively participated in development of the PAL School Arts Plan** with other staff and **held staff members accountable to these goals**. They understood the importance of serving as the **“arts cheerleader”** and joined arts activities and publicly took creative risks to encourage risk taking by other staff members. While principals provided the overarching vision, successful leaders also gave wide latitude as to how the arts goals were implemented in the classrooms **allowing teachers to find the best fit for their skills and capacity**. Finally, principals who exhibited a

**creative approach to asset and budget management and who actively pursued funding opportunities** for the arts were a profound support for their schools and their Arts Teams.

Arts Teams were found to be of prime importance at this stage. Teams that were led by a dynamic and **engaged leader** (often a music teacher or other arts-connected staff member) **with several active core members** were the most successful at developing and implementing working school arts plans, realistic timelines and encouraging wide spread school participation. Teams that **met regularly and were given authority, autonomy and funding** appeared to engender the most respect from teachers throughout the school. Teams with fewer members struggled to carry out all of the planning and lesson development activities necessary to implement school wide arts programming and to maintain momentum. Teams that **offered fun, hands-on skill building opportunities** for teaching staff and volunteers appeared to increase arts programming with more depth and breadth. Those who **developed connections with PTAs, arts councils and other community resources** were able to encourage wider volunteer engagement, funding and community support of increased arts programs. Lastly, teams that were able **to identify small learning steps and build confidence in teaching staff with less arts experience** achieved the most long term growth and support for increased arts programming amongst school staff.

#### **Representative stories and examples:**

Teacher after teacher highlighted the importance of their principals “giving them permission” to focus on the arts. This “permission” ranged from setting school wide arts programming goals and flexible classroom teaching time to planning time set aside for lesson development.

*“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 been told they can only spend time on reading, writing and math and this program has helped them be more flexible.”*

*“Without (the principal’s) cheerleading and support— and ability to figure out the budget side— this couldn’t happen.”*

Teams also spoke of the importance of developing lesson plans together that other teachers could follow. Creating and demonstrating lessons that teachers of various skill levels could use was especially important and more than one Arts Team related stories of how teachers who were worried about their skill level or capacity came around once they experienced the lessons and fun first-hand.

*“Just giving us time to focus on the arts is so critical. Knowing that the principal supports your efforts is a real help.”*

*“Arts stuff is really contagious.”*

#### **How PAL participants experience ArtsEd Washington support of this stage:**

Connecting schools to workshops that offer opportunities for school wide participation was highlighted by a number of schools as was the importance of building peer networks with other more experienced PAL schools.

Additionally, regional approaches that connected the district and several schools together in the process helped to create shared strengths among principals and Arts Teams and led one district to create a shared professional arts staff position.

The creation of Arts Teams is mandated as part of PAL participation while each school interprets the team structure in its own manner.

The development and annual review of the Arts Plan spurred by PAL is often a locus of shared leadership, as is planning related to PAL seed money, in some cases.

### Stage 3: Effective Systems and Tools

**A wide range of systems and tools were employed by schools to enhance arts knowledge, skills and capacity, encourage school wide participation and promote community support for arts education. Professional development that provided technical teaching skills and lesson plan development were cited by all schools as fundamental to their success. Many of the most successful methods are explored in greater detail in the section *Best Practices from Five PAL Schools* (page 15.)**

#### Indicators of success:

Schools that were able to provide **intensive technical professional development opportunities** for teachers cited this training as a critical component of their success. Currently, Arts Impact is the primary provider of this training and numerous teachers reported this training as being highly effective. In particular, teachers related that the training provided them with technical skills and vocabulary that built their confidence teaching arts in their classrooms as well as **integrated lesson plans connected to current school, district and state learning requirements and objectives.**

Participating in professional development training and other arts education workshops also enabled teachers to **discover how all students benefit from participation in the arts.** This encouraged many teachers to increase arts education opportunities in their classrooms as part of their **commitment to teaching the “whole child.”** They also noted how this increased their appreciation for the contributions of students who might not excel in traditional academics.

Other ways to build capacity reach far beyond teacher training. Systems and tools that supported success ranged from methods used to maintain internal focus for staff to the creation of annual arts events or programs, and in some cases developing ways to increase staffing for the arts. For additional systems and tools, please see ***Best Practices from Five PAL Schools*** (page15.)

#### Representative stories and examples:

Many schools told stories of teachers who were resistant or even hostile towards arts in the classroom turning around after participating in arts workshops and activities. Teachers with little experience in the arts voiced fear or anxiety about “looking foolish in front of 10 year olds.” Others were skeptical of how “wasting time with art projects” could assist students with their

basic academic challenges. After joining in hand-on arts lessons (often only because they were required to), these teachers were the ones still working on projects at the back of the room or protesting when they had to stop their projects and move on to other staff meeting agenda items.

*“The Arts Impact trainings gave our staff a vocabulary and lesson plans they could use in the classrooms right away. They helped to build confidence in our teachers, even those who had no interest or experience with the arts.”*

*“I have students who can’t seem to succeed academically. But the arts bring a smile to their faces and let them participate alongside their classmates.”*

*“Many of the children with behavioral problems in my classroom are especially drawn to the arts. It seems to give them an opportunity to express themselves in ways more traditional subjects don’t.”*

### **How PAL participants experience ArtsEd Washington support of this stage:**

Principals and teachers alike were grateful for the role ArtsEd WA played in encouraging them to seek out professional development and for connecting them to Arts Impact or other providers. Many schools mentioned the initial seed money ArtsEd WA provided as the catalyst that allowed them to bring arts workshops to their schools and begin engaging their entire staff.

ArtsEd WA also played a significant role in connecting many schools to local artists, art councils and other community resources. Schools that were able to take advantage of these connections trended toward a greater breadth and depth of arts programming and opportunities.

The Arts Plan often provides a roadmap for developing systems and tools, assisting schools with integrating their arts programming with other core academic subjects (math, reading, and writing) and identifying approaches for including arts education in those subjects.

## **Stage 4: Sustainability**

**Though the principal is frequently the initial driver of the PAL program, a sustainable commitment to arts education requires that school wide cultural change take place in order to continue this commitment beyond the principal’s tenure. Schools that distributed planning and integrated lesson development amongst a wider range of teachers and staff members appeared most able to encourage this kind of transformation. In addition, the wider distribution of responsibilities tended to have a multiplier effect as these staff members reached out to volunteers, parents and community members who could advocate for arts education at the school, district and state levels. Schools that are moving towards a cycle of renewing and expanding interest and knowledge are building the strongest base for sustainability.**

### Indicators of success:

Schools on the path toward a sustainable program displayed active and integrated arts programming. Arts Plans and other planning **connected the arts to other academic learning objectives** and teachers, parents and volunteers were kept abreast of how the arts were being integrated across the curriculum.

School wide arts themes and community wide events also contributed to **raising the level of awareness of the importance of arts education throughout the school community**. In addition, these activities increased opportunities to bring parents, district and community leaders into the classrooms to experience hands-on art activities directly. Many school staff members observed increased parental support, volunteer hours and PTA funding for arts education following these events.

Including as many teachers as possible in arts education professional development opportunities and in arts planning offered not only greater skill levels and capacity amongst the teaching staff but also **ensured that skilled leaders would remain in place** as staff retired or moved on to other opportunities. Additionally, more than one school reported the trend toward **increased creative risk taking** following teacher training. Teachers experienced firsthand the value of trying a variety of teaching techniques that were frequently extended to lessons outside of the arts. Teachers tied this directly to their involvement with arts education and related that it improved their teaching in areas across the curriculum.

Lastly, principals and staff members who developed and maintained **a wide variety of community and district connections** were better situated to take advantage of funding and programming opportunities as they arose and built a community network of support for the arts.

### Representative stories and examples:

Many schools spoke of the excitement and energy that developed around the school as they prepared for school and community wide arts events. Parents who had not visited classrooms previously showed up to see their children's performances and art work. As one teacher remarked *"Even if your child does well on a math test, it's just a number. You don't really see your child in that number. But when they paint a picture, you begin to see a little bit of how they view the world and that's really exciting. Parents can come in and recognize their child's personality in their art work. No one recognizes a math test."*

Teachers also related stories of how teachers and students alike were more willing to take risks and explore new activities and ideas. Previously staid teachers led dance exercises for their classrooms and one PE teacher observed that her school's participation in the arts had a dramatic effect in her classroom. Through the arts, the students had learned that there was not just one right way to get to a solution. They had become used to viewing one another's work and discussing it together. And "failing" wasn't in the arts vocabulary. If you didn't like what you created, you just created something else. So now, when she taught a new physical exercise or sport, everyone seemed to come forward to try it out. Previously she had many students who would hang back; afraid they would fail or look stupid. Now she was having trouble keeping up with all of them. This, she recounted, was a good problem to have.

## **How PAL participants experience ArtsEd Washington support of this stage:**

As was stated previously, the connections that ArtsEd WA made with Arts Impact and other training resources were invaluable to participating schools.

Many schools also took advantage of ArtsEd WA's advocacy resources to educate parent, district and community leaders about the benefits of arts education. Opportunities to network with like-minded colleagues through ArtsEd WA established new supportive relationships for some principals that they hope to continue.

Some schools voiced questions and concerns about what happens when their formal three year PAL relationship ends. A formal option for participation by alumni schools in workshops, ongoing mentoring and peer network development was requested by several participants.

## **Findings on PAL Components most Valued by Participants**

As part of the interview process both principals and Arts Team members were asked to identify components of the PAL program that they felt were most valuable to them. The results on those components that rose to the top in providing value are described here.

### **1. School Arts Plan**

The development of the School Arts Plan is the most valuable component to participants—both principals and Arts Teams. It was noted as a difficult but extremely valuable process. Most often its successful completion was aided by skilled coaching and encouragement—as well as a certain amount of pressure—from ArtsEd WA. Starting and moving forward in developing the Arts Plan is a significant undertaking and represents a major commitment from the school. Completion is a major milestone.

### **2. Seed Money**

The second most valued component is PAL's Seed Money program. This is used by schools as a catalyst for clarifying arts priorities and needs and is often a strong incentive to exploring the program initially. The money is most often used or leveraged to support training workshops. The process required for planning for Seed Money engages schools in identifying arts training and funding resources. Reporting on its use enhances accountability.

### **3. The third component considered most valuable differs for principals and Arts Teams.**

#### **Peer Networks**

Principals place strong value on PAL's ability to create and support networking among peers. This is an important source of support and provides opportunities to connect with principals on the same path. Peer networks are a stimulus to generating ideas around arts education, sharing experiences and renewing energy and commitment.

#### **Training and Professional Development**

For Arts Teams, PAL's ability to provide or connect their school to training opportunities is

paramount. They see this as a vital link to implementation. They express that in-depth, rigorous professional development with usable technical skills, as well as ongoing mentorship with skilled teaching artists, is of critical value. Seed Money plays an important role in making such training possible.

The findings on the value of PAL program components are consistent with other aspects of the Key Findings.

## **Impact on Students and the Community**

The findings detailed through the four identified Stages provide a way to understand how schools move forward with PAL. These efforts are focused on achieving outcomes that directly benefit students, and by extension, the larger community. The ultimate goal in each school is engaged and achieving students. The consultants heard many indications of such impact on students and the school community during the research. Key findings in this area are noted here. It must be kept in mind, however, that these findings are based solely on information gathered through the interviews with principals and arts team members. The consultants did not speak directly to students or representatives of the community.

The majority of teachers and principals reported a number of visible positive outcomes in student participation and behavior linked to the school's increased arts education activities. Teachers especially observed that arts education activities (whether stand alone arts instruction or arts integrated with other curriculum subjects) had a high level of engagement for all students and were particularly helpful for students who did not participate fully in other classroom activities. Staff members indicated that students who were not able to perform as well academically seemed to "perk up" when arts activities were planned and that arts instruction provided a level playing field where all students were asked to try something new.

Teachers also reported decreased behavioral issues in the classroom and significantly marked decreases in behavioral problems with specific students. Many teachers related cases of students with challenges at home or in school who were able to express themselves through art activities and the positive effect this had on their classroom attention and behaviors.

In addition to the impact on students in the classroom, several schools reported that their focus on the arts had brought the school together as a whole. Focusing on similar projects or even school wide themes provided a unifying focus and allowed *all* students to participate equally – regardless of their physical, academic or emotional capacities.

Finally, schools reported increased community involvement as a result of their arts focus. Teachers saw increased turnout from parents and relatives at performances and arts events and schools were able to recruit more volunteers to help in the classrooms with arts related projects. Schools increased their outreach to PTAs, district staff and local businesses and artists as a result of their increased arts program needs and this had the effect of broadening their reach into the communities they served.

## Representative stories and examples:

In addition to the numerous stories of students whose behavior and classroom attention saw dramatic improvements, several teachers related examples of students who had begun to think differently about all of their subjects thanks to the increased arts programming in their schools. In one classroom, where teachers had been especially devoted to integrating arts with other core academic subjects, the students began coming up with new ideas to connect their arts lessons with other academic subjects. Discussions during math became opportunities for students to observe patterns similar to those they had been studying in their formal art lessons. And reading stories and poetry offered students the chance to discuss meter and rhythms that they had been practicing in their music lessons. The teacher remarked that these connections should have been obvious to her but that she hadn't even thought of raising them as she was so focused on getting to the next subject of the day due to time constraints. It was the students who began making these connections for themselves and she happily observed that they were all a lot smarter than many of us might think.

Other schools experienced transformative cultural change and exchange at their school thanks to their engagement with PAL. One school had a history of two separate populations (Native and non-Native) without much interaction inside or outside of school. The school invited respected local Native artists to lead canoe carving and story pole carving for a school wide project. Parents, teachers and students all had multiple opportunities for engagement and interaction during the project – some working hands-on with Native artists to produce the art work, some volunteering in the community to obtain funds. At the completion of the project, school staff members reported increased interaction among their student and parent populations and community wide pride at the public art they had created together.

Lastly, due to increased funding demands for art projects, many schools reached out to local businesses for support. One local business (a local coffee shop) provided monetary support and then requested to display student art work once a quarter. Soon, customer interest and demand grew to the point where the school is now able to rotate their student art work every two weeks. Teachers reported that students are thrilled to have their work displayed in such a public location and a local artist now volunteers at the school after seeing the art displayed.

*“We found talents we didn’t know we had at our school when we started focusing on the arts – parents who were working artists and who could help us with our work, teachers and staff who are amazing artists themselves.”*

*“Parents like the opportunity to see the individuality that is expressed through the arts. It’s not like a math test where your answer is either right or wrong. The arts give them a chance to recognize their child’s special talents or different way of seeing the world.”*

*“Our teachers and our students are much happier now. Everyone looks forward to our arts days and we’ve seen a decrease in behavioral problems in the classrooms now that students have different ways to “shine”.”*

*“If you let them explore and learn a bit on their own, you realize that these kids are a lot smarter than most of us ever give them credit for.”*

## Best Practices from Five ArtsEd WA PAL Schools

The interview process revealed that some PAL schools had greater success than others building strong and integrated or infused arts programs. Five methods were determined to warrant deeper examination at schools that exhibited strong levels of arts activity as a way to gain a clearer picture of best practices. The methods were selected by the consultants and the Evaluation Work Group based on the preliminary findings from the 32 onsite interviews.

Five method areas were selected as primary indicators of well-engaged PAL elementary schools. These were schools reflecting a strong and growing role for arts in the academic and creative lives of the school community.

1. Methods for **creating and maintaining leadership and leadership focus.**
2. Methods for **maintaining internal staff focus.**
3. Methods related to **annual arts events and programs.**
4. Methods for **identifying relevant human resources for the arts.**
5. Methods of **securing on-site professional arts staff.**

Five schools were selected as having strong indicators related to leadership and leadership focus (#1) and one or more of the other methods. The consultants followed up by telephone with the principals at each of these schools and in two cases, the principal was joined by the Arts Team lead for the phone conversation. (See Appendix C for the interview protocol.) These schools agreed to share their experiences and their responses are attributed (with the initials indicated) to their particular school, when appropriate.

1. Carnation Elementary, Carnation (Riverview School District, King County) – CA
2. Cherry Valley Elementary, Duvall (Riverview School District, King County) – CV
3. Rosa Parks Elementary, Redmond (Lake Washington School District, King County) – RP
4. Southwood Elementary, Enumclaw (Enumclaw School District, King County) –SO
5. Stafford Elementary, Tacoma (Tacoma Public Schools, Pierce County) – ST

A sixth school, Rocky Ridge Elementary in the Bethel School District was also identified but was unable to participate due to timing conflicts. It should be noted that while these schools were selected for greater study, other exemplary programs, tools or systems exist at other schools included in the evaluation process. The selected schools, however, provide useful examples of best practices in creating a strong or growing arts identity and approach. It is also important to note that the five schools represent a range of populations and conditions: from a school reporting more than 70% free and reduced lunch eligibility to a school reporting less than 5% eligibility; schools in rural, suburban and more urban areas; a brand new school, a recently reopened school and long-established schools.

## Findings on Best Practices

Each of the five identified methods is explored here through the examples of the five selected schools. In addition to the methods examined, the interviewees also shared thoughts related to sustainability of programs in their schools and those are presented here as a sixth section.

Many methods were noted by more than one school. Methods that are specifically attributed to a school are noted as such by the school's initials in parenthesis.

### **METHOD 1 - Creating and maintaining leadership and leadership focus**

Principals and Arts Team leaders were unanimous that leadership was the make or break element of a successful arts program. Schools with the most active programs have active principals and one or more teachers willing and able to lead others in expanding the role of arts in their schools. Topics explored in these discussions included building an effective Arts Team, taking advantage of or building peer networks, the value of regional arts education, training for staff members, key elements of district-based collaborations and ways to keep participants inspired.

- **The principal sets the stage** – Make the role of the arts in the school clear and consistent, through the principal's words and actions.
  - Articulate your arts focus to teachers being hired and families sending their children to the school. (CA,RP, ST)
  - Make sure the arts have a strong and knowledgeable representative on the Building Leadership Team. (CV)
  - Principals that model arts exploration outside of their own comfort zone, and do so with an attitude of fun and joy, see others follow. Jump right in and get your hands dirty doing an art project, or try dancing or acting in a school play. Showing that you don't need to have talent or skill to benefit, enjoy and learn from arts experiences is a powerful leadership tool. (CA,RP,ST)
  - Have clearly articulated arts goals in your School Improvement or annual plan.
- **Build a strong "knowledge base" and case** – research and clarify your own rationale for the arts in education and then share that clearly and broadly with your staff. For one principal the work of Eric Jensen (*Arts with the Brain in Mind*) proved particularly useful. For another, it is the work of Lucy Calkins. (RP, SO)
- **Keep your antenna tuned** – Notice opportunities in the community, local libraries, the district or in your school that you can build on or align with to gain momentum.
- **Work with the district administration or with other schools** in the district to create a shared and supportive journey (CA, CV) **or forge ahead as a school-based effort.** (RP, ST)
- **Create opportunities for ongoing training and networking** – Providing intensive professional development teacher training courses was fundamental for most schools. In addition, teachers and Arts Teams benefited from ongoing professional development workshops (whether through ArtsEd WA, WSAC, arts organization or others) and the opportunity to share classroom strategies, grant proposals and curriculum development ideas with colleagues who had gone through similar challenges.
- **Prioritize funding for the Arts and be flexible and creative when looking for funding** – Devote as many unallocated resources to Arts programs as possible. Some schools managed to fund on-

site arts staff positions by cobbling together funds from a variety of sources and pooling their funds with other schools in the district.

- **Be connected to your local municipal arts agency –**
  - Be involved by taking a term on a committee. Even though it is hard to find the time you will learn a great deal and identify information and resources that can build access, funding and opportunities for your school. (SO)
  - Invite a representative to be part of your school Arts Team and make use of your relationship to build partnerships. (CA, CV)
- **Take your “story” beyond your staff –** Make sure parents, local businesses, the district, and the media know about your arts focus and your activities. Understand the value of communication and coverage in building momentum, school pride, recognition and support.
- **Identify and empower arts “leads” and Arts Teams –** Once the principal has set the tone and the climate, it is critical to have one individual or a strong collaborative team that leads the arts in the school.
  - Several schools have designated arts specialist staff positions as arts leads who serve as resources to all teachers as well as teach, and provide ongoing attention and spark for arts learning. (CA, CV, RP)
  - Whoever leads must have some “political capital” to be effective –must be seen as knowledgeable, have organizational capacity, and able to build energy and success.
  - Align parent volunteers with school improvement goals and Arts Team plans so that they can be effective supporters and docents. (CA)
  - Make the Arts Team an official committee or cadre so that they have the same level of authority and influence as other subject committees. (CA, CV)
  - Teams that meet regularly stay focused and effective. Some teams meet 4 to 5 times a year, others meet monthly, others more irregularly, and some more frequently as major activities are underway.
  - Support the initiative and creative thinking of the Art Team to experiment or tackle new projects or initiatives.

#### **METHOD 2 – Maintaining internal staff focus**

Even with the best leadership from a principal, the teachers carry the weight of expanding the arts in the classroom. Schools that have active arts programs have a wide range of teachers involved in planning and implementing arts goals. And the most successful schools are those that have the entire staff involved in at least some aspects of arts programming. The use of staff meetings, staff involvement in planning, encouragement of full staff participation and other staff related activities were explored in this section.

- **Model and encourage a learning culture regarding arts in education –** Share books and articles and provide a time and place (and expectation) for teachers to talk about what they read and how it can have a positive impact on student learning.
  - In Southwood this has evolved into a Book Study group that meets once a week and is now teacher initiated. (SO)
- **Use staff meetings to reinforce your arts commitment and direction –**
  - Have experienced teachers share and/or demonstrate arts lessons or skills.
  - Include hands on arts activities for staff so that they can experience the fun and challenge of the arts.

- Devote time to discussing a relevant book or article. (SO)
- Talk about the arts at every staff meeting. (RP)
- Highlight specific teachers with specific arts successes. (ST)
- Include arts trainings or prep at staff meetings at strategic points in the year. (CA, CV)
- **Use instructional days to reinforce your arts commitment and direction –**
  - Encourage teachers to participate in arts options for training.
  - Give your Arts Team half day planning time. (CA)
  - Create all-school or all-staff on site training opportunities. At Stafford, one professional development day is exclusively devoted to arts training. (CA, RP, ST)
- **Use teacher-to-teacher mentoring –** Create opportunities for more arts-experienced teachers to mentor less arts-experienced or less confident teachers for arts lessons. Encourage and provide opportunity for teachers to see each other teach arts.
- **Develop a sequential curriculum plan for your school or district –** Southwood committed themselves to building resources for all their teachers by having their Arts Impact -trained teachers develop month-by-month sequential learning plans for K-2 and 3-5 which are now available for all their teachers, and others in their district. Their intention is to set a school wide minimum for each teacher to utilize these lesson plans. (SO)
- **Cross-pollinate and encourage sharing informal arts thinking and exploratory arts experiences**
  - Southwood has shifted their schedule so teachers have a 40 minute lunch period together that allows for informal meeting time, often used by Arts Team. (SO)
  - Stafford's Arts Team creates (and the principal participates in) staff social activities related to the arts, such as a glass cutting party after school, to prep for all school or classroom art projects. (ST)
  - Carnation hosts on-site workshops and mini arts retreats so that teachers experience the fun and creativity of arts education directly. (CA)
  - At Rosa Parks, all staff were invited to participate in a tap dancing class (and 75% did participate) as a fun, bonding and personal arts growth experience. Such activities are set at convenient times of day so teachers and staff can participate as easily as possible. (RP)
- **Consider school wide arts themes –** School wide arts themes can coordinate the focus each quarter culminating in a gallery night where work is highlighted. The themes provide accountability while providing flexibility and latitude as to how the themes are incorporated in the classrooms. (CA, CV)
- **Invite and encourage teacher participation, but don't push too hard –**
  - Invitation is ultimately more successful than directives in increasing participation and ownership of arts. Letting teachers make their own commitment means they often go far beyond what might have been asked of them. Give time for watching before joining in.
  - Provide opportunities for small steps by teachers, and acknowledge and encourage, before being overly directive.
- **Keep the arts a regular part of school life and celebrate arts activities –**
  - Use your physical space to showcase and celebrate arts activities and accomplishments by hallway and showcase displays.
  - Frequent all-school assemblies provide low-key opportunities for any class to present a song, poem, tableau, etc to the rest of the school and encourage classes to create arts presentations. (RP)

- **Communicate and “market” internally and externally –**
  - Use the principal’s and/or school’s newsletter to talk about and celebrate arts in the life of the school community.
  - Be pro-active with your local media about arts activities and programs at your school.
  - Look for opportunities for your school to partner in the arts in the larger community, such as art walks, district wide arts events, library events, etc.
  - Always include some arts element in the principal’s weekly bulletin to teachers. (ST)

### **METHOD 3 – Annual arts events and programs**

Many of the schools hold annual arts events or regular programs to focus attention and celebrate their expanding arts programs. Benefits of these programs include increased participation by all teachers and students, encouraging involvement from parents and community members and greater exposure at the District level for arts education.

- **Annual arts festivals –** Such events bring together the school and the larger community and underscore the arts commitment and accomplishments. They also serve as a driver for teachers and students. Examples include:
  - Arts Fest at Stafford is a school wide June event bringing together visual arts, performances and literary activities. (ST)
  - Artastic Day at Carnation is a day/evening celebration where students create work during the day and are joined by their families in the evening for interactive family workshops, art displays and performances. (CA)
  - June Arts Night at Rosa Parks presents drama performances, singers, drummers and more. (RP)
  - District-wide arts exhibitions or performance festivals that the school participates in by sending student work or performers.
- **Annual arts immersion day for students and teachers –**
  - Arts Alive at Cherry Valley is a one day program providing workshops with local artists. Each student and teacher selects a morning and an afternoon workshop to participate in. Artists are paid through a combination of PTA and local arts commission funds. (CV)
- **Performances during and outside of the school day –**
  - Regular musical performances to which parents are invited.
  - Drama productions done by each class annually. (RP)
  - School-based drama productions: fall show, community production and spring drama that involve multiple grade levels, and sometimes outside community or artist participants. (RP)
  - Weeklong residencies by drama and performance troupes. (CA)
- **Student participation in larger community events –**
  - Having the school choir sing at community holiday events, local Farmers Market, or having student work at the local art walk or book fair. (CV)
- **Including or emphasizing arts in extended day or special programs –**
  - Stafford includes arts options in its before-school Homework Club and in its 5<sup>th</sup> grade Masterminds program for at risk students, merging math and art two days a week. (ST)

#### **METHOD 4 – Identifying human resources for the arts**

Many of the schools with successful arts programs are creative in their use of human resources within their school, parent and surrounding communities. Methods for identifying these resources ranged from teacher talent inventories to open calls for volunteers in community newsletters and bulletin boards.

- **Using the creation of the Arts Team as a way to identify arts interest** – The invitation to work on the Arts Team in some schools identified key players both among staff and in the community. (CA, CV, ST)
- **Scope out and invite appropriate new hires** – Several schools looked for individuals whose teaching approach, vision and skills would work well with the school’s arts focus.
- **Full staff survey of arts skills, interests and comfort** –
  - Several schools used the PAL survey and at Stafford this was extended to prime the pump by seeking to identify “everyone’s secret gifts” using curiosity about each other’s interests and strengths as a way to identify opportunities and create a climate of respect and partnership in arts. (CA, ST)
- **School-related volunteer resources** –
  - PTA support for funding arts programs.
  - PTA hands-on involvement in arts events and activities.
  - Art Docent programs – an ongoing program with a volunteer parent or staff member as coordinator. (CA, ST)
  - Other parent involvement, often by parents with arts experience –once the school’s intent or need was made clear there are often parents who step forward.
  - If parent volunteers are solicited the school needs to be able to follow up and utilize.
- **Community volunteer resources** –
  - Rosa Parks created a relationship with a private dance studio which has grown into a cadre of high-school dance student volunteers, including one who is doing her senior project with the school. (RP)
  - Stafford has a list of “Community Partners” from the business and larger community that is recognized and acknowledged whenever possible. This is particularly important for them since their low-income parent community is not able to provide much volunteerism or funding.

#### **METHOD 5 – Securing on-site professional arts staff**

A recurrent question faced by schools is the importance and potential of securing on-site professional arts staff. Various ways of addressing arts staffing is reflected by these five schools: some have made a clear commitment to the importance of having such staff and others have forged ahead without such staff. Some of the schools have placed staffing in a central role in their arts program goals and design, making adjustments or accommodations to accomplish or plan for that. Others have moved forward with standard arts staffing provided by their district and have addressed the issue in other ways.

- **Maximizing and expanding the role and position of the school’s music teacher** –
  - The role of Cherry Valley’s full time music teacher has been expanded to take on the leadership of the Arts Team. Funding (a modest supplement to the position’s base salary) for the leadership role comes from the use of the school’s district contract allocation, and this use was decided on by the Building Leadership Team. This decision

both empowers and clarifies the value that the school is placing on the arts in their school. (CV)

- At Stafford the full time music teacher is a district-funded position, but has expanded the role to include more dance and drama. (ST)
- **Creating a full or part time arts position by reallocation of funding –**
  - Rosa Parks has a full time drama teacher who is also the staff developer for arts for the whole school. This has proven to be a lynchpin position and complements the full-time music teacher position, greatly expanding the arts capacity of all teachers and students. The position is funded by a reallocation of funding related to class size at the 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup>/3<sup>rd</sup> grade levels. Teachers and parents are aware that they may have somewhat larger classes at those grade levels due to this allocation. (RP)
  - Carnation developed their on-site arts position by allocating non-designated donations and grant awards to this position. As these funds grew over time, they were able to expand the reach of this position, gaining visibility and now funding at the district level for a portion of this position. (CA)
- **Coordinating with the district arts specialist or coordinator–** Having an on-site designated arts lead permits more efficient coordination with the district arts staff (if such staff exists), since such district-wide positions have limited time at each school.
- **Using classroom teachers with arts skills –**
  - At Southwood, four classroom teachers with music skills (ranging from highly skilled to just the fundamentals) lead the Magic Strings Suzuki-based program as a part of their regular classroom positions. They do not rely on the district music teacher or other specialist for this program. (SO)
  - At Stafford a number of classroom teachers share their arts knowledge, including a Title One teacher who is a ceramicist and who has been able to advance their ceramics program for the whole school. (ST)
  - One school took district funds they were eligible for that could have been used for extra staffing and redirected towards arts supplies to support their existing teaching staff's initiatives and efforts.
- **Using parents with arts skills –**
  - One school has hired an artist/parent as a teaching aid, and she has extended her commitment to include arts, beyond her teaching aid duties.

### **Ensuring sustainability**

In each interview the topic of how to sustain arts programming over time was explored. School leaders are clear that they do not want these programs to be too dependent on one leader or a few key teachers. Ongoing developments in teaching and testing requirements and district and state funding shifts meant that arts programming might not continue without significant community support and advocacy. Methods for ensuring sustainability were discussed and each school is finding ways to approach the idea of continuity.

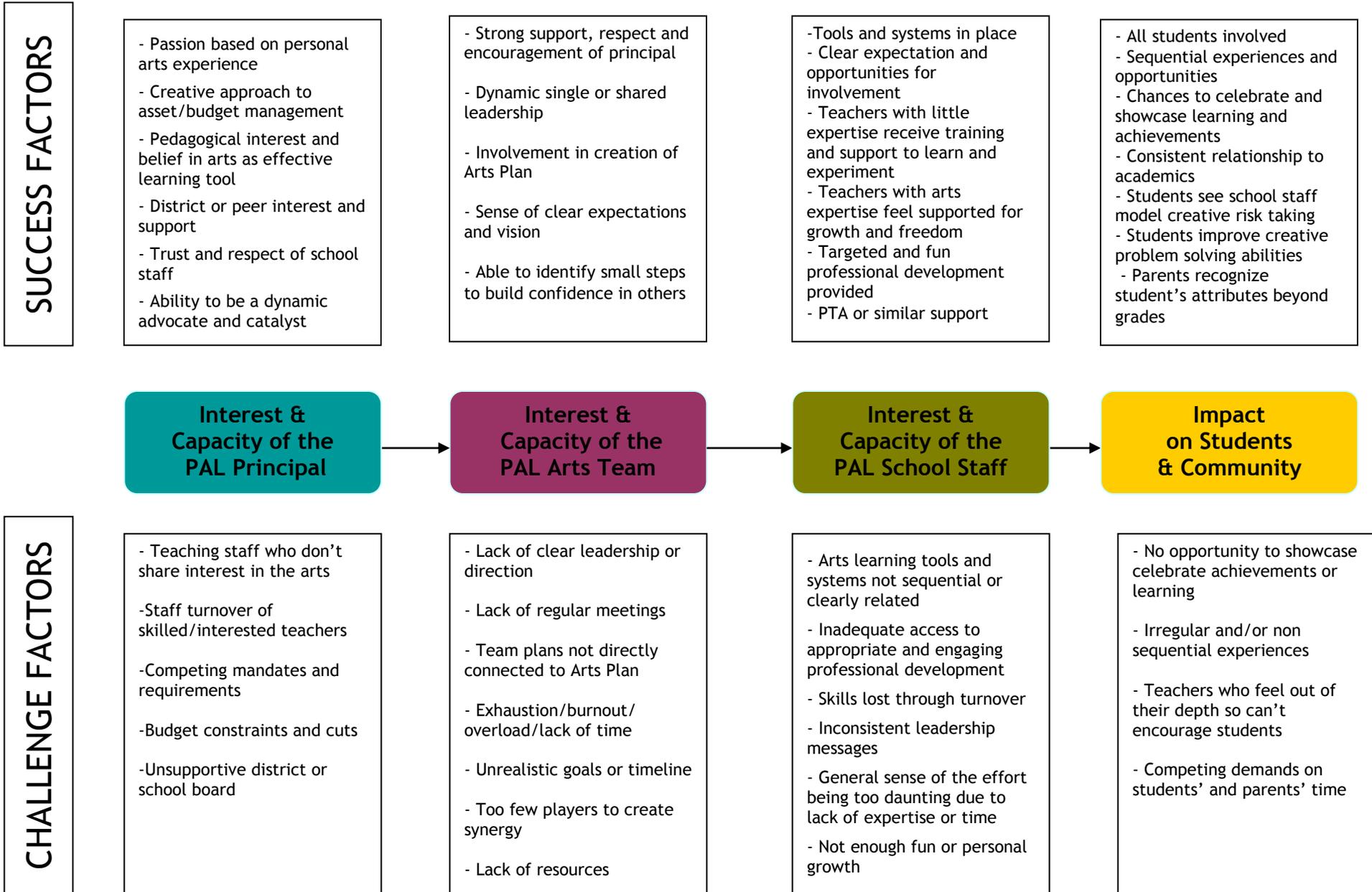
- **Build a school culture that supports the value of arts in ALL students' educations –** If the community sees the value of the arts, they will insist that the arts continue at their school. This

will impact principal and school staff hiring and will create a self sustaining pressure at the District level to maintain or increase arts programming.

- **Keeping the value of the arts highlighted for the school’s teachers, the district administration, and parents ensures support –**
  - Solutions can always be found if the commitment is there.
  - Develop speaking points that underscore value and outcome of arts learning, but don’t neglect to talk about math and science. (RP)
- **Building and maintaining relationships is key –**
  - Making parents and the community welcome at successful arts events builds advocacy and support.
  - Strong relationship with an active PTA is helpful.
  - Partnerships and connections in the community such as arts councils or commissions are important as is having student art visible in the community.
  - Keeping the community informed through the local media, either directly from the school or via the district. (CV, ST)
- **Focusing on teachers and building their arts capacity –** Teaching staff is a more long term, sustainable resource than volunteers so it is worth investing in building their knowledge base.
- **Providing a sequential curriculum with lesson plans –** Providing materials and resources that can be used school wide and last beyond the knowledge of specific individuals. (CA, SO)
- **Money helps move things faster, but the fundamental impact on students is what imbeds in the school community.**
- **Institute and improve ways to track outcomes –**
  - Consider how we can ask the students what the impact of the arts has been on them. Hearing from students may provide a powerful tool for sustaining support.
  - Gather data that supports outcomes and share that information. Schools are looking for ways to contribute to this but cannot take on the development of a collection structure.
  - Using Washington State’s Classroom Based Performance Assessments (CBPAs) has given teachers accountability measurements and training lessons often have embedded assessments that help teachers track student progress, but it takes school wide implementation and support to utilize.
- **The principal can lead the conversation but for true sustainability the staff must make and set the priorities –** If teachers are not deeply engaged with how the arts improve their teaching outcomes and experiences they will not make that commitment over time. If they are committed they will come up with creative ideas for how to allocate resources.

# The ArtsEd Washington's Principals' Arts Leadership Model (PAL)

## FACTORS INFLUENCING IMPACT



# Recommendations

The evaluation process identified and explored aspects of transformation experienced by participating individuals and schools to better inform continuation and replication of the Principals' Art Leadership (PAL) program. The research provided many insights that can shape the future work of ArtsEd WA's PAL program. The research also provided information on how schools can maximize their experience with the PAL program.

The consultants' recommendations are organized into two sections to take advantage of the full range of information gathered:

**Section 1. Recommendations for ArtsEd Washington regarding the Principals' Arts Leadership program.** This section is focused on recommendations directed to the leadership of PAL to help shape the future of the program.

**Section 2. Recommendations for elementary schools participating in PAL, to increase the impact of the PAL program in their school.** This section provides recommendations directed to elementary schools participating in PAL. Many of the recommendations are also applicable to any elementary school seeking to strengthen the arts in their school.

## Section 1

### Recommendations for ArtsEd Washington's Principals' Arts Leadership program

Seven consultant recommendations are identified in this area with possible strategies noted below each recommendation. Note that the order of the recommendations reflects the chronology of PAL program stages and does not imply priority.

#### Recommendation 1

**Create stronger methods and tools to assess readiness for participation in PAL and to ensure that first year PAL schools are at a similar starting point.**

The research indicates that schools entering the program with some element of *Catalytic Spark* (Stage 1) and some capacity for *Dynamic Shared Leadership* (Stage 2) are much more likely to make effective use and strong progress with the PAL program. Such schools are also most likely to be strong contributors as part of peer networks within their districts and with the PAL cohort. ArtsEd WA is likely to benefit from assessing the relative value of serving a smaller number of schools that are ready to deepen their skills and commitment against the benefits of serving a greater breadth of schools that may not be able to take full advantage of the program.

### Possible strategies:

- a. Create a readiness assessment tool to help inform potential participants of the stages and elements that lead to success and that can help ArtsEd WA determine whether a school is likely to be a good match with the program, at this time.
- b. For schools that are ready to join the program, develop an Arts Education Statement template that helps the principal to articulate their Stage 1 thinking and that asks guiding questions for them to prepare to build an effective Stage 2 team.
- c. For schools that do not appear to be ready for full PAL participation, develop a one year program that provides the school's principal and an arts lead with a few strategic opportunities to expand their pedagogical knowledge related to arts education and to have dynamic hands-on arts experiences. This might culminate with them developing an Arts Education Statement for their school as part of their application for joining the full three year PAL program.

### Recommendation 2

#### **Retain and strengthen the Arts Plan component of PAL.**

The Arts Plan is a fundamental touchstone of the PAL program. While many principals and arts leads note that it was often frustrating to develop this tool, they almost universally find it to be of significant value in creating a pathway to change. A strong Arts Plan, if developed and referred to as a road map by both principal and the Arts Team, is an effective contributor to success.

### Possible strategies:

- a. Arts Plan development can be improved by using ArtsEd WA staff as coaches to ensure quality control and consistency during plan creation in the 1<sup>st</sup> year and with an annual plan review in subsequent years. Having a staff person serve in this coaching capacity appears to be the most likely way to provide a uniform level of support and strengthen the connection to the PAL program.
- b. Arts Plan implementation is likely to benefit from coaching based on a formalized system of peer-to-peer principal mentorship. One way to accomplish this would be to identify 3<sup>rd</sup> year PAL principals who are making good progress and match them as peer-to-peer mentors with a 1<sup>st</sup> year principal. The 3<sup>rd</sup> year principal would serve as the coach in Arts Plan implementation for the 1<sup>st</sup> year principal. If possible, the 3<sup>rd</sup> year principal could continue to serve as the mentor for their first alumni year (4<sup>th</sup> year) so as to retain the relationship through a second year. Such peer-to-peer mentoring could take place at PAL workshops or other required events, or even by phone, and would ensure that alumni principals stay connected for a 4<sup>th</sup> year and focused on use of Arts Plans. Costs currently allocated to contract coaches could be redirected to schools as a recruiting incentive for participating peer mentor principals.
- c. Create a framework or set of guidelines for the Arts Plan that indicates the value of a strong link between the Arts Plan and the Arts Team. Schools in which the Arts Plan's development and the responsibility for its implementation are shared between the principal and arts leads or teams are the most effective.
- d. For schools that may want more help with developing their Arts Plan, consider identifying at least three consultants to refer to schools. To be on the referral list the consultants should be vetted by PAL as being highly qualified and familiar with the PAL program. If schools are

interested in such assistance they would need to find the funding to pay for such services outside of the PAL program, though PAL Seed Money might be part of that funding.

### Recommendation 3

#### **Maintain or expand PAL's Seed Money component.**

Seed money provided by PAL is a powerful catalyst for participating schools. Relatively small sums of money are able to motivate action, enhance access to training and funding resources and strengthen accountability. For 1<sup>st</sup> year schools it is important in motivating participation in the program and in subsequent years it permits school arts leaders to leverage these funds for strategic support from within or beyond the school community, via PTAs, area businesses, grants or other sources. The access to even modest amounts at key moments in the process is a driver for action. PAL seed money is particularly effective in enabling arts training.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Require a match or partial match for funds in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> year of PAL to encourage leveraging of funding and development of access to other sources of support. We would not recommend requiring a match in year one schools since it adds another barrier to participation.
- b. Consider a tiered system for access to funds with higher levels of funding available to schools with more participation in trainings or workshops.
- c. Provide forms for simple but timely reporting of use of funds to ArtsEd WA.

### Recommendation 4

#### **Strengthen experiential arts training/professional development opportunities for PAL participants.**

The critical link to implementation and the core of Stage 3 and Stage 4 is the opportunity for strong training to build skills and confidence and stimulate enthusiasm for principals and teachers alike. Schools in which all teachers, and other staff, participated as a whole school appear to benefit the most – a synergistic level of energy and interest is built. Training that provides rigor and in-depth experiences with technical skills is the most valuable in advancing PAL's goals. Professional development that builds an ongoing relationship or mentorship between a school's staff and a skilled teaching artist is also highly valued. ArtsEd WA may wish to consider whether ArtsEd WA should be a primary provider of such services or is a conduit or contractor to vetted professional development training.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Provide each PAL school with at least one on-site, all staff experiential arts training for each year of participation.
- b. Provide schools with access to vetted high quality providers, whether ArtsEd WA providers or via other providers. This may be a referral or matchmaking function.
- c. Encourage principals to model engagement and creative risk taking by being a full participant in any hands on arts training.
- d. Address realities of geographic distance by having regional workshops or meetings with a maximum travel time of close to one hour.
- e. Create incentives based on the number of teachers participating from one school. Incentives could include entitling the school to apply for larger Seed Money grants, receiving a box of art supplies, or reducing the cost per participant from that school if a minimum number attend.

## Recommendation 5

### **Provide more tools and guidance related to arts resource development for those principals and schools that want or need them.**

The PAL program accommodates schools in a wide range of situations: Some schools have staff with significant arts background while other may be embarking on PAL with little or no relevant experience. Methods, tools and systems that are proven best practices for PAL schools can be documented to assist other PAL schools and expand ArtsEd WA's value to these schools.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Provide guidance on using the initial inventory process as a way to build interest and ownership of the arts focus, and to develop a more robust understanding of staff and volunteer resources. Create more PAL support for principals in inventorying skills within the school and the community.
- b. Consider how PAL staff may be able to enhance connections to local arts resources for each school's leadership. All PAL schools can benefit from having bridges built or strengthened to relevant arts councils or commissions, or arts organizations or businesses in their community. This could be part of a first year assignment or an element of the inventory process.
- c. Create a series of tool boxes for PAL schools on proven activities and programs that build on the lessons learned by other PAL schools. This might include a tool box on arts festivals, or one on all-school arts themes or projects, as well as effective ways to share arts stories with the media or how to build partnerships and support with local businesses.
- d. Offer lesson plan examples by grade level that are related to the Washington State EALRs and related tools for assessment.
- e. Develop a list of vetted arts Teaching Artists and assemblies so that schools can more easily identify high quality programs that integrate with PAL trainings. Providers of such services might be contracted to provide services to PAL schools for a favorable rate, based on assurance of a minimum number of contracts, or could explore other ways to mitigate costs.

## Recommendation 6

### **Retain ArtsEd WA's flexibility in addressing each school's needs while increasing clarity and effectiveness of PAL systems and framework.**

PAL has developed a proven approach to enhancing arts education within elementary schools. It is useful to codify PAL systems and framework in ways that are informative for potential, current, and past PAL participants as well as others in the fields of arts and education. It is also important to develop evaluation tools that can track progress and continue to guide PAL for its continuing evolution. Communication and evaluation are two critical areas for the future of the program.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Provide PAL information materials that offer a simple and clear picture of the PAL process.
- b. Develop clear outcome goals for the PAL program and develop measures based on the four PAL Stages identified in this study.
- c. Develop evaluation tools that are well aligned with PAL's identified Stages and program components and are easy to complete and administer to all participants on an annual basis. Minimize the number of evaluation requests a principal must respond to, and ensure that any evaluation results in a report they can access.

- d. Consider developing an alumni evaluation tool to develop longitudinal data at year 5, and possibly beyond.
- e. Share PAL program evaluation outcomes with current and past participants. This builds a broader and more informed constituency and can assist participants in refining their thinking and approach. Potentially, each school principal and Arts Team could track their progress over the course of the three years in the program (and beyond) related to the four PAL stages.
- f. Keep email and other communication with principals and teachers brief and to the point.

### Recommendation 7

#### **Identify tools and methods to assist alumni schools with Stage 4 Sustainability.**

The long term value of PAL is effecting sustainable change in the individuals and schools involved so that there is impact on students and communities. Strong schools and engaged students are highly valued community assets. The transition period after completing the three year PAL program is a vulnerable time when competing needs can overwhelm good intentions. This period warrants some attention and resources from ArtsEd WA in support of the long term program vision.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Keep alumni principals connected to ArtsEd WA. This might include the strategy noted in 1.2.b. above regarding using alumni principals as coaches for their 4<sup>th</sup> year. Other strategies might center on peer networking opportunities, trainings or targeted meetings or conference calls, or other mechanisms to maintain relationships with and among PAL alumni principals.
- b. Develop tools for keeping the conversation going within a school regarding use and updating of the Arts Plan. This seems especially important for the two years following completion of the program.

Enhance direct ongoing communication from ArtsEd WA with all principals and teachers who have been touched during a school's three years in the program. This might be adding individual teachers to ArtsEd WA email lists or providing a semi annual PAL newsletter highlighting some successes or ideas that have occurred in participating or alumni schools in that year, or other tools that support continuity and new idea generation and appreciation.

## **Section 2**

### **Recommendations for elementary schools participating in ArtsEd Washington's Principals' Arts Leadership program**

Four consultant recommendations are identified in this area with possible strategies noted below each recommendation. Note that the order of recommendations follows the stages of PAL participation and does not reflect prioritization.

#### Recommendation 1

#### **Clarify the principal's commitment to the role of arts in education, in the school and in the PAL program.**

Principals are the cornerstone of a successful PAL initiative for any school. Schools experiencing the greatest success with PAL are those schools in which the principal has developed his or her pedagogical thinking as well as interest and passion for the role of the arts in education and for the

school. When these elements are in place there is the ability to move forward with greater clarity and purpose in all aspects of the initiative.

Possible strategies *for the principal*:

- a. Develop a personal statement regarding your thinking on “why arts?” in education and use that as a basis for sharing your approach with teachers, parents and students.
- b. Model the example of creative risk taking and fun by participating in arts training and programs and underscoring that the arts experience is not about talent but about learning and exploration—and enjoyment.
- c. Be willing and able to tell the story of the arts for the school with clarity and enthusiasm and to look for opportunities to do so as a strong voice within the school, at the district level and with the local media.
- d. Examine hiring as a method for supporting the school’s arts commitment.
- e. Examine the school’s operational components to consider whether changes in scheduling, budgeting etc might better support the arts commitment.

Recommendation 2

**Ensure that the work of the arts in the school is broadly shared and supported.**

The principal is a key player but cannot create change alone. A core of individuals who work with the principal on the PAL program is critical. This is the method by which the teaching staff, and hence all students, are reached. Interest and support from the majority of the teaching staff is a powerful tool, when possible. There is even greater success when the broader school community of parents and volunteers is engaged.

Possible strategies:

- a. Build an effective Arts Team that meets regularly. Consider including those besides teachers – other interested staff or community members. Teams with a committed and respected lead or co-leads are often the most able to stimulate action. Bring together enough people on the team to ensure continuity and to accommodate fluctuating availability.
- b. Involve the Arts Team in the creation and annual review of the school’s Arts Plan and in setting the plans for the year.
- c. Provide at least some on-site in-school arts training and experiences annually for all staff (teachers and all instructional staff—and others too.) When staff feel they’ve been given knowledge and tools they are most likely to be engaged.
- d. Work to make sure as much of the school as possible is on board with the arts initiative. Check in regularly on confidence and comfort and seek to course-correct.
- e. Identify and build on existing school staff and volunteer resources and knowledge. Many individuals (teachers, staff and parents) are engaged in some form of the arts in their lives such as singing in a choir or quilting or photography. Finding ways to celebrate and use these artistic aspects in a school community can be very powerful.
- f. Work with the PTA or similar entities to build awareness, support and excitement about arts activities and impact on student lives. Look for ways to engage volunteers in the arts.

### Recommendation 3

#### **Create and use methods, tools and systems that keep the arts focus visible and dynamic for the school.**

Each school has its own culture and approach that works for that community. Certain methods, tools and systems appear to be useful across the differences of individual schools, though they are developed to reflect the unique character of the specific school. Identifying and strengthening such approaches can imbed the arts in a more sustainable way in the school community. Use the school's Arts Plan as a road map to guide your efforts.

#### Possible strategies:

- a. Integrate some aspect of the arts into every, or most, staff meetings in some way.
- b. Consider an annual focus (geographic region, academic subject, artistic discipline) and/or an annual arts event and find ways the whole school can participate. Even modest steps are valuable if successful.
- c. Develop a strategic approach regarding arts curriculum and assessment that is clear and bolstered by support for implementation across the school. This might identify how the arts are to be integrated into core subject areas, specific subject areas only, at certain grade levels or other approaches.
- d. Explore how the school will address the issue of sequential arts learning, examining opportunities that build throughout a school year and across grade levels.
- e. Make the arts physically evident in the building environment. Displaying the arts provides visual energy and evidence of student accomplishments and school commitment to the arts while enhancing the surroundings.

### Recommendation 4

#### **Ensure that arts endeavors in the school are celebrated and supported within and beyond the walls of the school.**

Identify ways to celebrate students' artistic efforts and accomplishments within the classroom, the school, the district and in the community. Finding ways to take the school's arts focus beyond the school is also part of building a sustainable level of support and creating lasting change.

#### Possible strategies:

- Make sure to have events that acknowledge and celebrate the work of students and classes.
- Consider how to align the school's arts focus with current School Board areas of focus or other external conditions.
- Work collaboratively with relevant district personnel or community arts partners to build the school's arts program.
- Use internal communication tools like newsletters and electronic notices to highlight the arts.
- Use the local media to shine the spotlight on the school through the arts. Stories about students and the arts are often a valuable tool in building internal pride as well as broadening interest and support. These human interest stories are also frequently of interest to the media.
- Use Seed Money to leverage matches from PTA or community sources such as businesses or grants to build connections to multiple source of support. Acknowledge such support at every opportunity.

## Next Steps and Conclusion

The PAL program began in 2004 premised on the anchoring role of principals in strengthening elementary school arts development. This evaluation process has confirmed that PAL is built on an effectual concept with a valuable foundation. The role of the principal remains paramount, but ongoing success requires a set of conditions. When these conditions are further supported by the opportunities provided by PAL it propels forward motion despite the many potential roadblocks that our schools confront, now more than ever.

The Key Findings in this report provide a lens through which to examine the abundant strengths and also the weaknesses in the PAL program. We have a new and clearer understanding of the Four Stages of Implementation which make up the PAL process, as well as the factors that influence impact as schools move forward. The Best Practices section offers a picture of some successful methods, tools and systems that are in use and currently yielding good results in a variety of elementary school settings. All of this information has led to a series of Recommendations: seven that provide direction for the leadership of PAL and ArtsEd Washington; and four that provide food for thought for PAL schools as well as other schools.

The completion of this evaluation process is the beginning of another phase. The information gathered provides many new insights that can shape the work that lies ahead for ArtsEd WA and for others engaged in the field of arts education. Next steps are outlined here as a point of departure for putting what has been learned to work.

**Share what has been learned.** The PAL program has had an impact on principals, teachers, student and school communities. ArtsEd WA now has a document that can be used to share what has been learned. This report can be used in full, in part, or as the basis for the development of more targeted materials. It is suggested that ArtsEd WA consider ways to share the information with the following constituencies:

- The Principals and Arts Teams who generously participated in the research.
- Other PAL schools in all phases of participation.
- Partners and supporters of PAL and ArtsEd WA in Washington State and nationally.
- Colleagues and funders in the field of arts education.

Dissemination of the information should be timely with efforts focused on the next three to six months.

**Undertake a PAL planning process.** PAL now has specific recommendations to consider against a new and more vibrant picture of the program. The next year is an optimal time to undertake program planning and implement changes to strengthen PAL. Such planning should occur within the context of ArtsEd WA's larger strategic outlook and planning. Some changes for PAL can be implemented quickly with little structural impact—fine tuning rather than radical change. Other changes require significant examination in light of future plans for PAL, ArtsEd WA and in relationship to the larger economic and educational environments. Elements of planning to consider include:

- Creation of a Planning Work Group which might be the continuation of the Evaluation Work Group with some reconfiguration, or a standing or ad hoc committee or task force of the Board. The Evaluation Work Group benefited from the perspectives of members beyond the ArtsEd WA Board and staff and such voices would be of continued value in any future

planning groups. The Planning Work Group should include those with significant experience (as well as inclination) in planning.

- Review and prioritization of the recommendations in this report for short and long term implementation or consideration. Short term changes should be identified with a timeline of no more than twelve months, and with clarification of any that require policy level review by the Board. Long term planning should include identification of areas for deeper investigation or that require examination within the larger ArtsEd WA planning framework. One such area might be the role of seed money within PAL and an exploration of possible ways to maintain the power of this element while minimizing the complexity and issues of essentially re-granting funds. Another is the issue of PAL program growth or replication.

**Develop evaluation tools, methods and timelines to build on what has emerged through this process.** ArtsEd WA has consistently attempted to collect data related to the PAL program. Much of this data has been in formats that have made it challenging to analyze or compare over time, and may not have been optimally aligned with program goals. This evaluation process offers the opportunity for ArtsEd WA to reconsider and streamline its ongoing efforts to gather data and to regularly assess and evaluate the PAL program. Some steps towards this include:

- Identify key measures that align with desired outcomes of the PAL program.
- Develop simple and consistent ways to gather information from participants that are completed on a regular basis.
- Clarify internal ArtsEd WA methods for administering data collection and analyzing data.
- Develop efficient and sustainable ways for storing and accessing data that can permit review over time and facilitate longitudinal analysis.
- Share and report back to participants and constituents what has been learned at least annually.
- Identify a clear cycle for review of PAL data to inform program and ArtsEd WA planning.
- Consider how evaluation may, at some point, also seek data from students, parents or the community in PAL schools.

PAL is well positioned to continue to work hand in hand with elementary schools that are ready and willing to move forward with the arts in their school. Despite the larger economic challenges and the complexities of the public school environment there is much from which to take heart. Principals, working in partnership with Arts Teams, teaching staff and supporters, can anchor the arts in new and increasingly meaningful ways within their learning communities. PAL plays important roles as a resource provider, support system, and a source of inspiration for schools ready to gain the benefits of stronger arts programs.

## Participating Schools and Principals

Principals and Arts Team members participated in the evaluation process from the following sixteen schools. \* *Denotes Principals who participated in follow-up interviews on best practices and method.*

Alki Elementary, Seattle, Seattle Public Schools, King County  
Joanne Hill, Principal

Armin Jahr Elementary, Bremerton, Bremerton School District, Kitsap County  
Michael Sellers, Principal

Carnation Elementary, Carnation, Riverview School District, King County  
Doug Poage, Principal \*

Cherry Valley Elementary, Duvall, Riverview School District, King County  
Darcy Becker, Principal \*

Evergreen Elementary, Spanaway, Bethel School District, Pierce County  
Brad Graham, Principal

Richard Gordon Elementary, Kingston, North Kitsap School District, Kitsap County  
Claudia Alves, Principal

Parkwood Elementary, Shoreline, Shoreline School District, King County  
Laura Ploudré, Principal

Redmond Elementary, Redmond, Lake Washington School District, King County  
Janice Heid, Principal

Rocky Ridge Elementary, Graham, Bethel School District, Pierce County  
Leita Earl and Ellen Eddy, Principals

Rosa Parks Elementary, Redmond, Lake Washington School District, King County  
Jeff Newport, Principal \*

Salter's Point Elementary, Steilacoom, Steilacoom Historical School District, Pierce County  
Nilsa Sotomayor, Principal

Southwood Elementary, Enumclaw, Enumclaw School District, King County  
Susan Arbury, Principal \*

Helen B. Stafford Elementary, Tacoma, Tacoma Public Schools, Pierce County  
Cynthia Evans, Principal \*

Stillwater Elementary, Carnation, Riverview School District, King County  
Amy Wright, Principal

Sunnyslope Elementary, Port Orchard, South Kitsap School District, Kitsap County  
Bob Leslie, Principal

David Wolfle Elementary, Kingston, North Kitsap School District, Kitsap County  
Ben Degnin, Principal

## Acknowledgements

**Special thanks to the more than seventy Principals and Arts Team members at the sixteen schools who participated in the evaluation process** (see page 33.) Their willingness to share their journey of arts education and PAL was invaluable. Their graciousness in giving of their time for the interviews was a testament to their dedication and commitment, and is an inspiration.

**Thank you to the members of the Evaluation Work Group whose insights and perspectives helped to guide and shape this effort.**

**Kristen Corning Bedford**, Director of Community Programs  
The Greater Tacoma Community Foundation

**Andrea Allen**, Vice President, ArtsEd Washington Board of Directors  
Director of Education & Audience Development, Seattle Repertory Theatre

**Stephen Elliott**, Theatre Manager, Meydenbauer Center, Bellevue  
Arts Advisory Committee, 4Culture, 2003-2008

**Michael L. Merrin**, Principal  
Elk Plain School of Choice, Bethel School District

**Many thanks to ArtsEd Washington Staff Una McAlinden, Executive Director, and Erin Guest, Program Manager.** Without their support and assistance this project would not have been possible. Students, teachers, principals and communities benefit from their hard work and energy on behalf of arts education.

**ArtsEd WA received support for the evaluation process from:**

**The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts**

**The Robert B. McMillen Foundation**

**4Culture**