



John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Excellence in Arts Education Award

Nomination Questions/Responses for Carnation Elementary School, WA

1. Please provide a brief description of how arts education is an essential component of your school's curriculum. Are the arts integrated with several subject areas or taught as specific subjects? Which classes are taught during the school day and which after school (indicate beside the class name whether the class is taught during school or before/after school)? Please provide a LIST of classes indicating how frequently they are taught per week or month. Also indicate which classes are regular or electives.

At Carnation Elementary School, we believe the arts are an integral and essential component of student learning and child development. We strive to provide an arts enriched curriculum into every subject and component of learning.

"Children learn through doing and are motivated by being actively engaged in their learning. I have always believed that the arts are the closest extension of natural childhood play and creativity. Rather than stifling this natural curiosity and creativity by our school structure, we strive to nurture it and help it grow." (Doug Poage, Principal)

Over the past five (5) years, we have transformed not only what we teach but how we teach at Carnation Elementary School, working hard to find better ways to engage students in hands-on, minds-on learning. Beginning with a thorough audit of our arts program, we formed a Creative Arts Team and developed a comprehensive Arts School Improvement Plan (SIP) - (through our work with the Principal Arts Leadership Program – PAL). Through this process we have implemented systemic change in how we deliver instruction, select and train our teachers, and how we utilize our local community resources in the arts, to enhance student learning. Currently, 88% of our classroom teachers (PK-5) have had at least 2 years of intensive arts instruction training through the Arts Impact Program or our district's replica program, the Riverview Arts Teacher Training Program (RATT). Teachers have had ongoing professional development in methods of using visual arts, dance, theatre, and music in the classroom and they actively deliver this integrated instruction on a daily basis in their classrooms.

Another part of our Arts SIP was to develop a school-wide arts curricular focus with school-wide arts themes. Initially, these themes started with a focus on only visual arts, but since then it has evolved to include all areas of the arts. We begin each school year with a "**Self-Portraits**" theme and each grade level selects a unique medium for students to illustrate their own reflection or self-image.

The second theme is "**Portraits of Carnation**," a community theme. During this theme each classroom takes a different approach to capture our community (be it, school community, local community, Puget Sound Community, animal community, etc.). Some examples of classroom arts projects include community walks where students take pictures of the various buildings and landmarks in our neighborhood and then try to recreate them in visual art. Another class has

done the same, but with the signs in Carnation (see sample pictures). Still other classes focus on visual representations of the Snoqualmie Native American Tribes or farms in the rural area of the community.

"Portraits of our World" is the theme where classes study and replicate the art and culture of various continents of study. Each grade level studies a different continental area in the world and the arts of that culture. For instance, 1st grade classes study Australia and Aboriginal arts and design their own didgeridoo.

The final school-wide theme is **"Portraits of Science & Nature."** During this theme classes study and represent various forms in nature and science in art. For example, some students study cellular biology and create cell drawings in colored pencil and paint. Another class studies natural art and creates beautiful patterns and weavings using all natural materials.

In addition to arts infused learning, we also employ a full time music/band teacher, a part time orchestra teacher, a part time integrated arts teacher (visual arts and theatre) and we hire a local dance teacher to teach supplemental classes in dance both during the school day as well as for after school enrichment classes (through the PTSA). Each year our PE teacher also teaches all 4th & 5th grade students an American Folk Dance unit and the music teacher incorporates movement exercises, theatre, and dance (including the Brain Dance) into his class lessons and school programs. As a result of these school reform efforts Carnation Elementary students all receive instruction in all areas of the arts.

Our school PTSA has also sponsored a wide range of arts-related clubs or activities in their after school enrichment program over the past five years. Classes have included: ballet, hip-hop, ceramics, drawing, painting, drama club, Cascade Community Theatre Elementary & Middle School Drama, band, and orchestra. Since we are located in rural King County, parents are thrilled to have these programs offered right here in our community so they do not have to travel to the city for these opportunities.

Please include information on the roles and numbers of arts specialists in the following format:

Total numbers of Arts Teachers in the School

	Number Employed Full-time	Number Employed Part-time
Dance	0	1
Music	1	0
Theatre	0	1
Visual Arts	0	1

2. Explain how the nominated program creates and uses creative approaches to learning and provides appropriate learning environments for teaching the arts.

We believe that children need multiple methods, modalities, and approaches to learning concepts and skills in school. Statistics show that since the implementation of NCLB in 2002, 44% of school districts in the nation report narrowing their curriculum by cutting arts programs to focus more on "the basics" of reading and math in order to pass state assessments required by NCLB (Diane Ravitch, *Life & Death of the American School System*). Unfortunately, the era of high stakes testing and accountability has taken its toll on American schools and our children. By taking away the opportunity for our children to creatively learn through the arts, the drop out rates have skyrocketed in the US and student test scores have actually flattened out rather than substantially increased. (National Center for Education Statistics, Achievement Gaps, USDOE, 2009)

"Lack of attention to history, science, and the arts detracts from the quality of education, the quality of children's lives, the quality of daily life in school, and even performance on the tests." (Ravitch).

Believing that the arts are an essential and vital part of developing both sides of the brain to support the "whole" child in education, we have taken the approach that if used creatively, the arts can be used as a tool to reach and teach more students. For instance, most elementary school children are visual or kinesthetic learners. In other words they learn better by seeing or doing not just hearing. Therefore, by using a hands-on arts infused approach to learning about math and science children will grasp the scientific process and understand better. Rather than just teaching science from a text book, if a child has the opportunity to act out the water cycle through drama and movement, he/she is far more likely to remember the concepts and most importantly change their behaviors at home affecting the environment. In addition, most classes at Carnation have learned the skills of scientific drawing. They keep unit notebooks or journals for each topic they study in science and have learned to create detailed scientific drawing by using visual arts concepts.

Another example is when Carnation third and fourth grade teachers developed lessons to use dance/creative movement and music to teach concepts of geometry using stretch bands (see documentation pictures on CD). Students choreographed musical/dance presentations for their classmates, demonstrating their understanding of various geometric shapes, flips, slides, turns, etc. As a result of using this bodily kinesthetic approach to math (as well as others), student achievement scores in Math (specifically in the area of geometry) have increased by nearly 29% points over the past five years. Students no longer fear learning geometry because they more fully grasp the concepts and can in turn apply that experience to their paper and pencil lessons and tests.

5th graders demonstrate their understanding of geometric shapes, lines, and angles in math by taking an end-of-unit performance assessment (created by Principal Doug Poage) using the abstract modern artwork of Wassily Kandinsky. In this assessment, students must demonstrate their understanding of a variety of geometric concepts in a balanced watercolor composition. They are not only evaluated for their understanding of the math concepts but also their art concepts, such as line, shape, color and composition.

Also, during our annual school-wide theme, "**Portraits of Science & Nature**," third graders learn about the life-cycle and development of a plant. Each child, while growing his/her own plant, is taught visual arts concepts such as how to identify and draw interior and exterior contour lines. As a result, they are learning both an art concept as well as having a far better understanding of how to identify, draw, and label the scientific parts of a plant. Another grade level might do the same type of thing when dissecting a squid or worm and yet another might learn about various lines when studying insects. (Please see examples of our "Portraits of Science & Nature" arts integration in CD evidence).

3. Please give specific examples of the opportunities provided for parental involvement in the educational lives of their children through hands-on, creative arts-based activities.

At Carnation Elementary School parents and local community members play an integral role in our arts program. Each classroom, PK-5, has a trained parent/community art docent volunteer who co-teaches standards based art lessons at least once each month in every class. These volunteers are coordinated by our building arts coordinator and have received extensive training (along with our teachers) in Arts Impact (replica) lessons. It is a true partnership between the art docent and the classroom teachers. Ultimately, the teacher is responsible for teaching and evaluating student progress on the skills and concepts in the arts using our adopted visual arts curriculum, *Art in the Classroom*. The art docent, however, co-plans the lesson with the teacher and helps support the teacher by gathering and preparing materials and supplies, co-teaching the lesson, cleaning up after the lesson, and installing and displaying the artwork in the school or community.

In addition to the Art Docent Program, the Carnation PTSA sponsors and runs our After School Enrichment Program. This program is coordinated and supervised by PTSA volunteers who find local artists in each area of the arts to teach lessons to our students throughout the school year. These classes are well attended by our students, and in turn, it is a win-win situation for the local artists and their local businesses. Often times a student will start out taking an after school workshop in dance, for instance, and then will go on to register for other classes at the local dance studio.

Another aspect of our arts program at Carnation Elementary is our use of local artist mentors in our school to collaborate with classroom teachers in the areas of visual arts, dance, and theatre. These professional artists have been trained (through RATT or Arts Impact) to be artist mentors and how to effectively collaborate and integrate the arts into lessons and units that teachers are using in their curriculum.

One such teacher is **Rachel Blockus**, owner and teacher at Duvall Performing Arts (Duvall) has been a teaching artist partner with us at Carnation for the past five years. Rachel started out teaching after school ballet classes in our program and offering dance workshops at our annual Artastic Day Arts Celebration. Her classes were so well received we asked Rachel to begin teaching more classes for all students in the school and eventually we "adopted" her as our dance mentor artists with our RATT Program. The past year she has mentored nearly 15 teachers in the district to help them learn to integrate dance and creative movement into their classroom curriculum. In addition, Rachel has choreographed student and staff performances and community theatre shows at the school. As a result, Rachel's local dance studio is flourishing and our Carnation students are learning to **LOVE** dance!

Finally, each year at Carnation we celebrate **Arts in Education Week** in May by having a community-wide arts celebration we call **Artastic Day!** This is when our Creative Arts Team coordinates having local artists and high school arts students come to the school and teach workshops in each area of the arts for a full day of arts! Our students, parents, community and staff value this opportunity to celebrate our arts and culture together each year. We have had workshops in theatre, pantomime, stage makeup, ballet, hip hop, drawing, painting, printmaking, African Dance, drumming, and much more. This program has been going on for the past five years and grows each year.

4. How does this program provide students opportunities for learning about other cultures through the arts?

Each year, Carnation Elementary School has four school-wide arts themes (as previously described). One of those themes is “**Portraits of our World.**” Each grade level, as a part of their social studies curriculum, studies a different world continent or region. This practice is done at each grade level in every class throughout the school with the following cultural units: Kindergarten-World Communities; First-Australia; Second-South America; Third-Africa; Fourth-Asia; & Fifth-Europe. As a part of that study we integrate the arts into each unit and most grade levels end with some type of culminating event or performance.

At the first grade level, for example, classes study the culture of Australia. During this unit students learn about and create aboriginal art and learn about the traditional music and dances of Australia. One local grandparent comes in each year with a real didgeridoo and plays it for the students while they play their hand-made didgeridoo along with. That evening, the music teacher and classroom teachers collaborate to perform Australian music and dance during their Corroboree and have their Aboriginal artwork and artifacts on display. Some classes even have cultural food to share.

Last year, we had a very special treat when our fourth grades studied the Indian (Asian) Culture. We had local artists along with a staff member of this culture come in and work with our 4th graders to learn traditional dance and music of India. For their culminating performance they shared their talents in music, dance, and art with the entire school and community. (See picture documentation on CD).

5. How does this program link arts education to the community and provide community connections that offer students diverse experiences beyond the classroom? Describe community arts events that come into the school, as well as events outside the school that students attend.

As described above, we have a variety of community connections through the arts at Carnation Elementary School. These connections include our: After School Enrichment Clubs/Workshops with local artists, annual Artastic Day Celebration during Arts in Education Week, as well as our coordinated Art Docent Program with parent/community volunteers.

One other way that we have coordinated our school with community arts is by aligning our school field trips and assemblies for each grade level. At Carnation Elementary, by the time a student has completed all 6 grade levels, K-5, he/she will have experienced professional arts performances in each of the arts areas (Music-Instrumental/vocal; Dance; Drama; and Visual Arts). To help us better coordinate our efforts grade level PLC's worked to align our field trips to fit with grade level curriculum.

The field trip alignment includes:

Kindergarten	Dance
First Grade	Music (Theatre)
Second Grade	Theatre
Third Grade	Visual & Music
Fourth Grade	Dance & Instrumental Music
Fifth Grade	Visual & Orchestra Music

This grade level arts alignment allows all of our students, some of whom come from rural families who cannot afford to attend expensive professional arts performances in the city, the opportunity to see professional performances in the arts. Teachers often try to correlate their annual arts field trip experience with classroom thematic units of study, such as a cultural celebration. For instance, last year the 3rd grade classes visited the Seattle Art Museum to view the African Art Cultural exhibit. Another time, the 3rd graders invited a special guest from Zimbabwe Arts Project to share in their classes and then they replicated the African story quilts at the local Millers Community/Arts Center. In addition, they raised nearly \$2,000 for the Zimbabwean Arts Project which goes directly to the African women who made the story quilts. This year, 4th grade classes attended the "World of Dance" show in Seattle and learned about various dance forms and traditions around the world.

In addition to the coordinated school field trips, we also coordinate our school assemblies brought into the school so that each of these 4 arts areas are shared each year. Recent examples of these performances include, Liberian Drumming & Storytelling, Miguel & Carlos Mexican Music and Storytelling, Native American dance and drumming, Flamenco Latino Dancing, and Book It Theatre. Again, by better coordinating and aligning our assemblies in a purposeful manner, students are exposed to quality arts performances which in turn man encourage their participation in the arts.

6. Please provide whatever academic ranking(s) is/are available that serves as testimony to how your students are achieving in comparison to other students in the district, state, and nation. Please be specific. The comparison of your students to others in your state is of particular interest. Also, please include information about your enrollment and the demographics of your school.

**Student Demographic Information
@ Carnation Elementary School –
OSPI Data**

Enrollment		
October 2009 Student Count		432
May 2010 Student Count		432
Gender (October 2009)		
Male	215	49.8%
Female	217	50.2%
Race/Ethnicity (October 2009)		
American Indian/Alaskan Native	6	1.4%
Asian	20	4.6%
Pacific Islander	10	2.3%
Asian/Pacific Islander	30	6.9%
Black	6	1.4%
Hispanic	69	16.0%
White	321	74.3%
Special Programs		
Free or Reduced-Price Meals (May 2010)	105	24.3%
Special Education (May 2010)	64	14.8%
Transitional Bilingual (May 2010)	26	6.0%
Migrant (May 2010)	0	0.0%
Section 504 (May 2010)	5	1.2%
Foster Care (May 2010)	0	0.0%
Other Information (more info)		
Unexcused Absence Rate (2009-10)	19	0.0%

Student Academic Achievement Trend Data

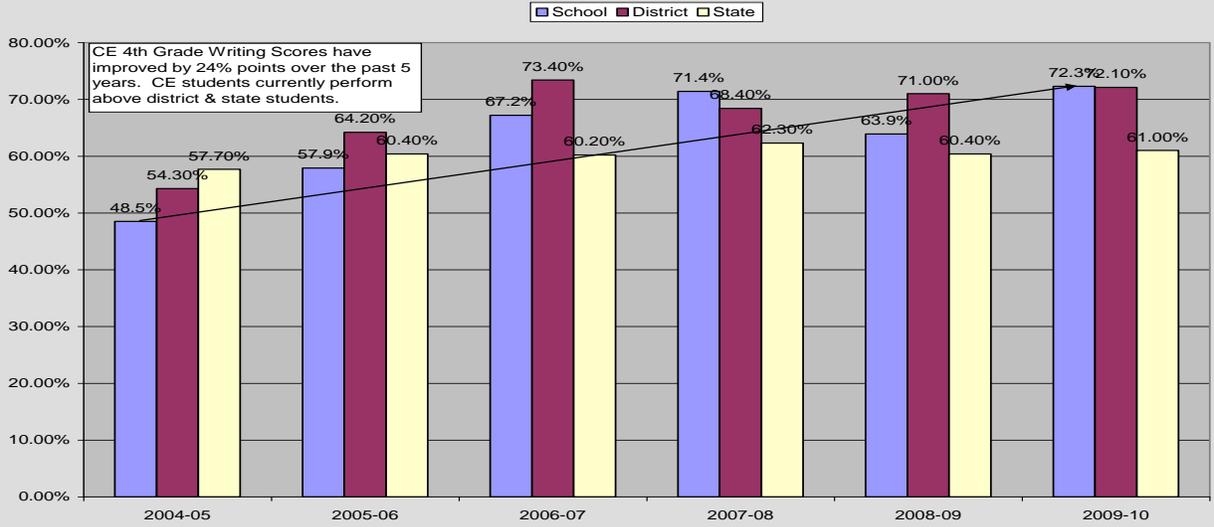
In 2010, Carnation Elementary School was honored to receive the *School of Distinction Award* for Academic Improvement in Reading & Math from the Center for Educational Effectiveness and Phi Delta Kaplan. This award was given to only the top 5% of schools in Washington State for demonstrating academic improvement over the past five (5) years.

During that time, Carnation students have shown impressive academic improvement in all academic areas (reading, writing, math). In addition, during the past 5 years student behavior has improved (even though we have used the same school discipline model for the past 10 years) and office discipline referrals have significantly decreased. While this impressive academic and student conduct improvement is a result of hard work by our staff in a variety of ways, it is interesting that it also correlates to our efforts in developing our School Arts Plan and training the majority of our teachers in arts integration teaching methods during the past 5 years.

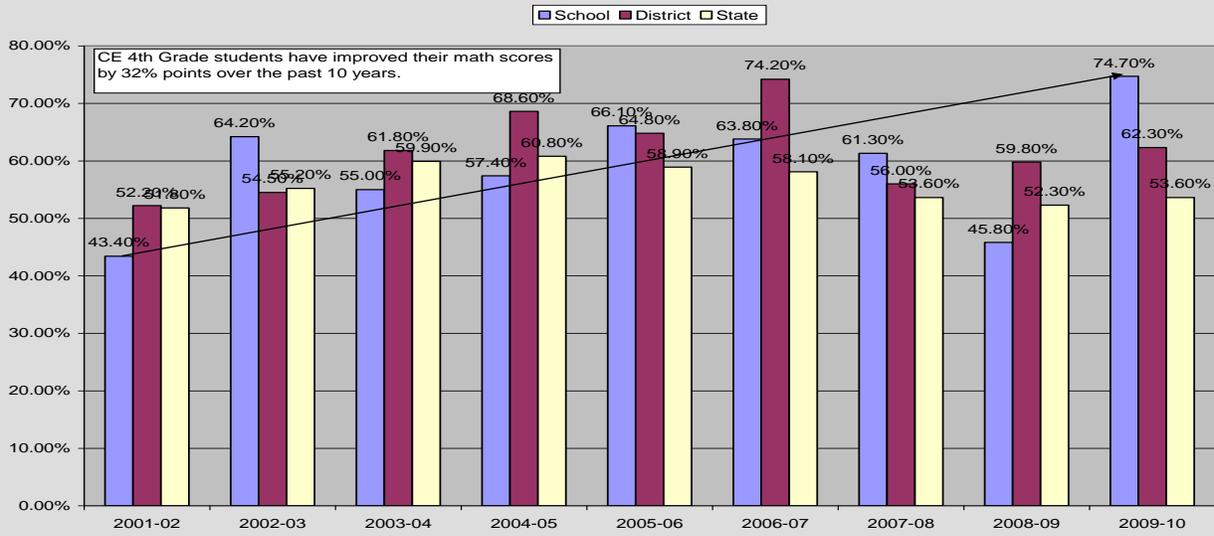
Fast Facts:

- Nearly 80% of all 3rd-4th-5th graders meet standard in Reading – nearly 16 pts. higher than state avgs.
- 24% increase in 4th grade Writing (5 years) over 10% higher than state avgs.
- 32% increase in 4th grade Math (10 years).
- In 2010, 4th graders scored over 20% higher than state avgs. in Math.
- 77% of 3rd graders meet standard in Math (5 year avg.) over 10 pts. higher than state averages.
- 86% decrease in school office discipline referrals over the past 5 years.
- Improved school attendance rates.

CE 4th Grade Writing Trends



CE 4th Grade Math Trends



CE School Discipline Office Referrals

