



TURNAROUND ARTS INITIATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT **2013**



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This interim progress report provides a look at Turnaround Arts schools in their first year, including: 1) a summary of the evaluation design and research questions, 2) a preliminary description of strategies used to introduce the arts in Turnaround Arts schools and 3) a summary of school reform indicators and student achievement data at baseline in Turnaround Arts schools.

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates a positive impact of arts engagement on students, especially in the early grades. This same research describes both short- and long-term positive influences on students, especially for disadvantaged youth. Yet despite this evidence, the implementation of arts programming across the country is inequitably distributed and subject to elimination, especially in communities that serve low-income students.

At the same time, significant resources and attention are being focused on improving the country's lowest performing schools. Districts, states and the federal government are designing, advocating for and implementing diverse strategies that range from mayoral takeover of school districts, to school closures, to increasingly rigorous teacher quality evaluations to improve our nation's lowest performing schools.

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

The Turnaround Arts schools are part of a larger cohort of School Improvement Grant (SIG) schools or turnaround schools, designated as among the bottom five percent of schools in their states. The premise of Turnaround Arts is that arts education offerings provide school leadership with particularly powerful levers in the area of improving school climate and culture as well as increasing student and parent engagement, which can ultimately contribute to improved academic achievement and successful reform efforts.

Turnaround Arts works on the principle that schools seeking to use the arts as part of a successful turnaround must build a high-quality arts education program with a set of shared focus areas, or “pillars” as core assets and intentionally mobilize those assets to target larger school objectives. The Turnaround Arts Pillars include a focus on: 1) principal leadership, 2) the strategic use of arts specialists, 3) non-arts classroom teachers integrating arts into core content, 4) the use of teaching artists and community organizations, 5) the engagement of the district, parents and community, 6) strategic arts planning, 7) professional development and 8) improvements to the school environment. Each of these pillars is seen as an avenue to combat specific chronic issues of low-performing schools, such as student engagement, negative perceptions of the school internally and externally, relationships across the school and other aspects of school culture, as levers toward broader school improvement.

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

In this first year of existence, there were many ways in which the Turnaround Arts schools saw positive change as a result of being a part of this initiative. Schools became fundamentally more attractive places for students, with positive perceptions of teachers and students and increased external visibility for innovation using the arts. Students and staff were provided with rich resources and support to use the arts as a part of their broader school improvement strategy. At the same time, several common themes emerged across school sites, which reveal both shared successes and areas for future focus.

- 1 INTEGRATION OF ARTS IN NON-ARTS CLASSROOMS.** There is evidence that most teachers in Turnaround Arts schools worked to integrate arts into their classroom instruction. Many teachers who were asked to fill out a descriptive log of their practice reported they had made meaningful attempts at integrating the arts into their instruction. Nearly 78 percent of teachers who were surveyed responded that they had either used or were planning to use the arts in their instruction.
- 2 PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, ARTS SPECIALISTS, TEACHING ARTISTS.** School leaders and teachers were uniformly excited about and satisfied with arts specialists and the professional development opportunities they had received around the arts. Professional development opportunities in the arts received positive reviews and the work of arts specialists and teaching artists were perceived as making worthwhile contributions to school improvement efforts.
- 3 ENHANCING PHYSICAL SPACES.** There were clear efforts across all Turnaround Arts schools to enhance the attractiveness of school buildings with student art and improvements to the physical space, to create opportunities for parents and the community to attend student performances and exhibits, and to build a more positive climate internal and external to the school. Teachers and principals felt nearly uniformly positive about these efforts.
- 4 THE NEED FOR MORE PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT.** Many teachers considered themselves to be novices in the use of the arts in their classrooms. While they appreciated the professional development and supports they had received from arts specialists and teaching artists, they expressed a need for even more support. They wanted to see examples of arts integration lessons and additional opportunities to learn techniques to use the arts effectively in their classrooms.
- 5 TIME AS A BARRIER.** Time was noted nearly without exception, as a challenge. Time for planning with arts specialists and teaching artists or grade level peers was limited in busy school days. Time to do arts activities that required extended time or several periods created challenges. And time spent on arts was sometimes considered to be time spent not focusing on other subject areas, in the minds of teachers.
- 6 COMPETING PRIORITIES.** In the context of public schools, especially schools in the midst of turnaround, teachers and leaders found themselves confronted with many expectations and requirements, some of which they perceived to represent conflicting priorities or approaches to the use of the arts. In particular, other district initiatives and the pressure to emphasize standardized test preparation were perceived as particularly relevant and pressing. Teachers and leaders talked about the need to create a sustained effort and focus to ensure use of the arts remained central over time.

This interim progress report also includes baseline data in attendance, discipline and student achievement. Early indicators of school climate and student achievement show a picture of schools that are working hard to improve, and in some cases early positive shifts. The majority of Turnaround Arts schools increased their average daily attendance, while three decreased. Similarly, the majority of Turnaround Arts schools also showed positive shifts across all measures of discipline, while three had more mixed patterns around discipline indicators.

Examining the baseline data between 2011 and 2013 in terms of academic achievement, all but one of Turnaround Arts schools improved their overall scores in math, and all but one improved their overall scores in reading. All Turnaround Arts schools improved their scores in either reading or math. When comparing the growth in student achievement to SIG schools in their state or district, five out of seven Turnaround Arts schools had higher growth in reading while three had higher growth in math. These improvements, while positive, must be contextualized by noting that the majority of these schools are still very low achieving and that it is too early to try to draw connections between the use of the arts and student achievement growth.

At the same time, participants were generally positive about their efforts to include high-quality and integrated arts education as a part of their overall efforts to transform their schools. There was general consensus among teachers, school leaders, and arts specialists that though use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools has been uneven and emergent, it has already had a positive impact on the school environment, demonstrated in higher levels of student engagement, focus and collaboration; improved self-esteem; better behavior and fewer referrals.

As such, in this first year of the existence of Turnaround Arts schools, there were many hopeful signs about the potential of this work to positively influence student experience, student engagement, school culture, and school outcomes.

All Turnaround Arts schools improved their scores in either reading or math.





1 INTRODUCTION

This interim progress report examines Turnaround Arts schools in their first year. It provides a summary of the evaluation design, research questions, and a preliminary description of the strategies used to introduce the arts in Turnaround Arts schools. This report also includes a summary of school reform indicators and student achievement baseline data in Turnaround Arts schools.

A growing body of research demonstrates the positive effect of arts engagement on students. These studies illuminate a connection between arts engagement and student achievement, especially in the early grades, and a long-term positive influence on students' social competencies, educational attainment and civic engagement.¹

Importantly, these studies illustrate that while arts education can have positive benefits for all students, the beneficial impact on “at-risk children [is] even more pronounced.”² As such, arts education is often cited as a strategy to engage disadvantaged youth who struggle in traditional school settings.

Yet despite this evidence, the implementation of arts programming across the country is far from systematic. Arts programs are inequitably distributed and are typically among the first to be eliminated in the current climate of budgetary shortfalls and standardized testing. Schools that serve low-income students of color in inner-city and rural areas incur a disproportionate share of this loss. A recent report by the U.S. Department of Education estimated that over six million students in public elementary and middle schools do not have arts or music classes, an overwhelming majority of which are in high-poverty schools.³

Concurrently, the educational field is focusing a significant amount of resources and policy attention on the problem of how to change the trajectory of the country's lowest performing schools. Districts, states and the federal government are designing, advocating for and implementing diverse strategies that range from mayoral takeover of school districts, to school closures, to increasingly rigorous teacher quality evaluations to improve our nation's lowest performing schools.

A substantial body of evidence demonstrates a positive impact of arts engagement on students, especially in the early grades.

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

2 NGA Center for Best Practices, 2002.

3 IES, 2014.



The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) has been engaged as a leader in efforts to bring arts education to the fore in school initiatives and school improvement efforts.⁴ In 2011, PCAH published the landmark report *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America’s Future Through Creative Schools*, the first federal report in more than a decade to survey the challenges and opportunities in providing arts education to our nation’s children. This report summarized over ten years of research illustrating the benefits of art education on academic achievement and student

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

From the Report’s five recommendations came the pilot program Turnaround Arts, launched in April 2012. Turnaround Arts is a public-private partnership⁵ that aims to test the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform. The premise of Turnaround Arts is that arts education offerings provide school leadership with particularly powerful levers in the area of improving school climate and culture as well as increasing student and parent engagement, which can ultimately contribute to improved academic achievement and successful reform efforts. While there are many strategies in the educational field focused on accelerating academic achievement, there are relatively few to help schools leaders address these other, foundational, challenges to changing the direction of a school.

The eight Turnaround Arts schools are public elementary and middle schools in the lowest-achieving five percent of their states that are receiving School Improvement Grants (SIGs) through the U.S. Department of Education. SIGs are awarded competitively to persistently low-performing schools in each state based on plans

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

5 The partners in Turnaround Arts include the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the Herb Alpert Foundation, Crayola, NAMM Foundation, the Aspen Institute and Booz Allen Hamilton. Turnaround Arts is managed by Americans for the Arts, a national nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education.

TABLE 1 Turnaround Arts Schools

TURNAROUND ARTS SCHOOL	LOCATION	GRADE LEVEL	RACE & ETHNICITY	ENROLLMENT	FREE AND REDUCED LUNCH
ReNew Cultural Arts Academy	New Orleans, LA	PK-8	93% African American 1% Latino 6% Other	625	92%
Findley Elementary School	Des Moines, IA	PK-5	38% Caucasian 26% African American 20% Latino	328	100%
Lame Deer Middle School	Lame Deer, MT	7, 8	99% American Indian 1% Other	63	98%
Martin Luther King, Jr. School	Portland, OR	K-8	51% African American 32% Latino 9% Caucasian 7% Other	312	79%
Noel Community Arts School	Denver, CO	6, 7	59% Latino 33% African American 8% Other	240	93%
Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School	Boston, MA	K-8	56% Latino 42% African American 2% Asian	820	100%
Roosevelt Elementary School	Bridgeport, CT	K-8	54% Latino 41% African American 5% Other	538	100%
Savoy Elementary School	Washington, D.C.	PK-5	99% African American 1% Other	357	99%

for rapid improvement using one of four relatively prescriptive intervention models. Most schools have chosen either the “turnaround” model (the principal is replaced and no more than 50 percent of the staff are eligible to be rehired; the principal has autonomy to implement improvement strategies) or the “transformation” model (similar to turnaround without the requirement to replace half the staff but with a required rigorous staff evaluation system). SIG schools track and report progress on a continual basis, typically monitored closely by district and state staff; schools are required to meet benchmarks to renew annual funding.

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

TURNAROUND ARTS PROGRAM

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

1. **PRINCIPAL** who is a leader and advocate for the arts program, both internally and externally, and drives its integration with larger school-wide strategy.
2. **ARTS SPECIALISTS** on staff providing sequential, standards-based instruction during the school day on a frequent and regular basis to all students.
3. **CLASSROOM TEACHERS** (non-arts) integrating arts into other core content instruction at varying levels of depth, and collaborating and cross planning with arts educators.
4. **TEACHING ARTISTS AND COMMUNITY ART ORGANIZATIONS** working regularly with students and teaching staff to enrich and enhance learning in alignment with school needs.
5. **DISTRICT, PARENTS AND COMMUNITY** who are supportive of, involved in and engaged with the arts at school.
6. **STRATEGIC ARTS PLANNING** on an ongoing basis that included a needs assessment, a Strategic Arts Plan, shared leadership, a communications strategy, connections between arts education resources and larger school challenges and evaluation and assessment.
7. **PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT** in the arts and arts integration as an ongoing regularly scheduled activity.
8. **SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT** that celebrates creativity and artistic achievement, including performances and exhibitions by students, and physical spaces or displays.

Each school entered the program with a commitment to arts education and assets in some of these pillars. As a result of the program, school leadership at Turnaround Arts schools is receiving intensive arts education resources and expertise to further develop and utilize these assets and deploy them strategically to enhance and support broader school goals. Turnaround Arts supports professional development, facilitates partnerships with community arts education and cultural organizations, provides art supplies and musical instruments, and promotes community engagement events. The Turnaround Arts team worked closely with principals and arts team leaders over the first six months of the program to create an arts strategic plan for each school. The team now assists in implementation of the plan with high-profile artists, teacher training, summer conferences and numerous on-site consultations.

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





2 THE EVALUATION

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

HYPOTHESIS

Strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform.

TABLE 2 Research Questions

RESEARCH QUESTION 1	RESEARCH QUESTION 2	RESEARCH QUESTION 3
What strategies and methods are used by Turnaround Arts schools to leverage elements of a high-quality and integrated arts program in overall school reforms?	What is the relationship between implementation of Turnaround Arts programming and improvement in school reform indicators?	How do Turnaround Arts treatment schools compare to similar schools in their district and state on available outcomes data?
DATA COLLECTION	DATA COLLECTION	DATA COLLECTION
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administrator interviews 2. Teacher focus groups 3. Classroom observations 4. 5Essentials survey 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Questionnaire of school leaders and teachers 2. Administrator interviews 3. Teacher logs 4. Attendance data 5. Discipline data 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student achievement data 2. Comparison data (school, district, cohort, state, etc.)

These data collection tools and multiple methods enable the evaluation team to explore the process and outcomes of the work of Turnaround Arts from several perspectives:

1. **ADMINISTRATOR INTERVIEWS AND TEACHER FOCUS GROUPS.** School site visits included conversations with principals and teachers about their work as a Turnaround Arts school.
2. **CLASSROOM OBSERVATIONS.** The evaluation team completed 38 classroom observations in total, including classes led and co-led by classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists.
3. **ESSENTIALS SURVEY.** Urban Education Institute staff administered a survey which measures five leading indicators of school environment: 1) Effective Leaders, 2) Collaborative Teachers, 3) Supportive Environment, 4) Ambitious Instruction and 5) Involved Families.
4. **QUESTIONNAIRE OF ADMINISTRATORS AND TEACHERS.** This questionnaire focused on budget, staffing, goals, and the role arts programming played in decisions around key organizational resources.
5. **TEACHER LOGS.** Teachers were asked to provide detailed information about their instructional practices, with a specific focus on the use of the arts in their classrooms.⁶
6. **ATTENDANCE DATA.** The evaluation team collected from state and/or district sources average daily attendance and truancy data, where available.
7. **DISCIPLINE DATA.** The evaluation team collected various indicators of disciplinary action, including in-school suspension, out of school-suspension, and expulsions, where available.
8. **STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT DATA.** The evaluation team collected a variety of student achievement data, including math and reading scores on standardized tests at the school and grade level, for both Turnaround Arts schools, as well as for comparison schools and cohorts.

This report begins with a descriptive consideration of the work underway in Turnaround Arts schools in 2012–13, using the pillars as the organizing framework (research question 1). It then considers school reform indicators (research question 2) and student achievement outcomes at baseline (research question 3).

⁶ It is important to note that the sample for the administration of this log of teacher instructional practice was relatively small (168 teachers total). In addition, the percentage of participating teachers was uneven across schools, which means we do not have a clear picture of use of arts lessons in classrooms in some schools.



3 A LOOK INSIDE TURNAROUND
ARTS SCHOOLS

Schools given turnaround status across the country were designated as such based on a set of criteria that placed them in the lowest performing and lowest functioning schools in the country. These schools battle a variety of challenges, including low confidence of the communities around them, disengaged students, demoralized teaching staff, chronically low student achievement, and perceptions of dysfunction and disorganization. In 2012-13, Turnaround Arts schools made strides to use high-quality and integrated arts education to engage their students, improve school culture, and lay the foundation to transform their schools as a part of their larger school improvement strategy.

DESCRIBING AND CHARACTERIZING USE OF THE ARTS

This section provides a window into the use of arts education in Turnaround Arts schools. The goal is not to provide an exhaustive or evaluative picture of all aspects of use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools, but rather to provide illustrations and highlights of the work underway as well as teacher and administrator perceptions of the work.

PILLAR 1

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

Leadership is a critical component in improving schools that are chronically low performing. In Turnaround Arts schools, principals worked to draw upon the arts as a part of their larger improvement strategy to lay the foundation for school transformation through a variety of mechanisms. Turnaround Arts schools were chosen, in part, because of their strength in school leadership and the principal's willingness to include high-quality and integrated arts education as a part of their school improvement strategy. Turnaround Arts principals used a variety of approaches to build the foundation to improve their schools, drawing upon the arts as a lever.

- ▶ In Boston, the principal reallocated school funding for a large security staff to hire arts specialists.
- ▶ In Bridgeport, the principal structured the school schedule around weekly arts leadership team meetings and installed a large mural with the definition of arts integration in the school entry at the beginning of the year.

- ▶ In Portland, the principal worked with the city to rid an adjoining office space of a county juvenile program and make space for local arts organizations and a university arts and equity program.
- ▶ In Washington, D.C., the principal negotiated a district exemption from a portion of mandatory professional development sessions and used that time for staff training in arts integration.
- ▶ Several Turnaround Arts principals (often with their staff) visited other exemplary art schools to exchange ideas and build understanding of the full potential of the arts.

Leadership is a critical component in improving schools that are chronically low performing.

In the majority of schools, teachers indicated that principals were emphasizing a focus on the arts, and drawing a connection between the arts and improving baseline conditions in school culture and climate that would help to transform the school. Teachers indicated that, at times, principal bandwidth and a lack of sustained focus on the arts work was a barrier. Many of them recognized that this lack of focus was likely because principals were busy with a multitude of complex issues inherent in the work of transforming the school.

PILLAR 2

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

Turnaround Arts schools were asked to provide arts instruction to students in a regular and high-quality way and set a minimum such that all students would receive at least one arts period per week. Most Turnaround Arts schools exceeded the minimum of one arts period a week and/or increased this amount as the program progressed. Turnaround Arts schools used a variety of approaches to offer ongoing arts instruction to all students.

Staffing and schedules also shifted in these schools to reflect a focus on increasing the amount and quality of arts education programming available to students. Five of the eight Turnaround Arts schools used operating or discretionary district funds to hire additional arts specialists. Other examples include:



- ▶ In Portland, the school combined their part-time allocations for a physical education instructor and an arts position to hire a full-time arts specialist in African Dance whose instruction to all grade levels met the Physical Education (PE) requirement and gave all students a foundation in dance.
- ▶ In Boston, the school set a minimum of 240 minutes per week of arts education offerings for students K-8, with an emphasis on exposing students to all disciplines through grade 5, and providing specialization of 5-7 hours per week in two disciplines in grades 6-8.
- ▶ In New Orleans, the school used funding for extended day learning to add a daily arts period elective for middle school students while also adding school-day classes in art (PreK-8) and music (PreK-5).

PILLAR 3

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

The creation of a coherent, rigorous instructional approach is critical to improving chronically low-performing schools. As a part of their instructional improvement strategy, Turnaround Arts schools focused on using arts integration as a tool to en-

rich and deepen instruction across all subjects. Arts specialists were used to support this focus in a variety of ways. In addition to teaching sequential, standards-based arts classes, this included supporting non-arts teachers in arts integration and leading professional development sessions. One or more arts specialists in all Turn-around Arts schools led on-site professional development, many focused on training teachers to use the arts in classrooms.

Other examples include:

- ▶ In Des Moines, an art specialist oversaw arts team and arts programming schedule, splitting her time between visual arts instruction and acting as a part time arts coordinator.
- ▶ In Lame Deer, Washington, D.C. and New Orleans, art specialists piloted new initiatives with small groups of teachers and then shared them with the rest of the staff.
- ▶ In Denver, the principal built collaborative consultancy between art specialists and classroom teachers into regular weekly schedule.

Teachers were generally positive about the potential of arts specialists to contribute to the arts education focus, and expressed their belief that this was a foundational element of school improvement efforts. The main barrier perceived by teachers to the work of arts specialists was time. Teachers pointed to a lack of planning time available during the school day to either plan with arts specialists or to debrief activities of the arts specialists after they occurred.

Principals in Turnaround Arts schools were encouraged to set baselines for the frequency of arts integration instruction in non-arts classrooms. Their approaches to generating buy-in from the other teachers took many forms, including:

- ▶ In Bridgeport, administrators required a minimum of one arts integrated-unit per quarter from each teacher and published strong examples in an internal arts integration library.
- ▶ In Portland, teachers added arts integration into their International Baccalaureate planners to make arts integration an ongoing and required practice.
- ▶ In Des Moines, all teachers were trained in the tableau technique, a theater strategy, in partnership with a Kennedy Center affiliate organization, resulting in every classroom teacher using it throughout the year.

- ▶ In Lame Deer, middle school science students created props, choreographed a dance, and incorporated music to depict the lifecycle of a silkworm, then performed the piece for other students and staff.

Most non-arts teachers who filled out instructional practice logs as a part of the evaluation reported attempting arts in their classroom. Specifically, when asked how many lessons they had taught in the last two weeks that included the arts, just under half of the teachers were in the 2-5 lessons range and 8 percent of teachers indicated including the arts in more than 10 lessons. Only 22 percent indicated no arts instruction at all and of that group of teachers, 60 percent then indicated that they either had included the arts in the past two months or were going to prior to the end of the school year.

Teachers primarily described themselves as beginners in using the arts in their classrooms. Prior to Turnaround Arts, most teachers reported having no experience teaching dance (78 percent), theatre (73 percent), music (72 percent) and visual arts (65 percent). They saw this lack of experience as a barrier to using arts in their classroom in a high-quality way. Teachers also saw the rigidity of the regular school day as a challenge to engaging in longer, project-based arts integration lessons.

PILLAR 4

Teaching artists and community art organizations working regularly with students and teaching staff to enrich and enhance learning in alignment with school needs.

The Turnaround Arts approach encouraged schools to draw upon external resources to bring rich arts experiences to the school, through teaching artists and community partnerships. These efforts were seen as central to shifting the negative perceptions of these chronically low-achieving schools and connecting them to their community. In addition, accessing teaching artists and community arts organizations allowed Turnaround Arts schools to increase capacity in the school to use the arts in compelling ways. The schools drew upon these resources in a variety of ways. For instance:

- ▶ All Turnaround Arts schools engaged additional teaching artists independently or through community organizations.
- ▶ In Des Moines, the school worked with local partners to provide residencies with a local artist to each grade level, multiple visits to museums and theaters, and whole staff training in arts integration.

- ▶ In Washington, D.C., the principal used teaching artists to support an intensive 3-hour literacy block each morning, called the “I-Schedule” — students were rotated in 45 minute periods out of literary instruction into dance or music classes, reducing class size, allowing for differentiated instruction and increasing the amount of arts they received each day.
- ▶ In Boston, the school brought in teaching artists from Community Music Center Boston to instruct small groups of music students in specialized sessions throughout the year.

Perceptions of the contribution of and the success of drawing upon teaching artists and community partnerships varied across the schools. Across most schools, teachers appreciated the opportunity for students and staff to see accomplished and famous professionals in the arts in their schools. They felt these experiences enriched students and teachers and enhanced school culture. There were more mixed perceptions of teaching artists teaching classes within schools. For partnerships in which the teaching artists had experience or training in working in classrooms, teachers felt positively about the student experiences. In addition, some teachers reported they benefitted from the opportunity to observe high-quality use of the arts that they could take into their own arts lessons. On the other hand, teachers reported that for teaching artists with no formal teaching experience, classroom management was sometimes an issue, which detracted from the effectiveness of the arts work.

Across most schools, teachers appreciated the opportunity for students and staff to see accomplished and famous professionals in the arts in their schools. They felt these experiences enriched students and teachers and enhanced school culture.

PILLAR 5

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

In an effort to improve perceptions of the schools and to strengthen relationships and school culture, Turnaround Arts schools were encouraged to engage the parents and the broader public through performances, annual events and art exhibits in schools. They also used community organizations as robust partners in pro-

gramming, resulting in deeper connections to cultural organizations and institutions in their city. For instance:

- ▶ In Bridgeport, the school began the tradition of an annual school musical, involving parents, students and school board members to assist with set building, props and costumes and bringing in hundreds of parents and community members for the performances.
- ▶ In Denver, parents were recruited to be part of the school's Arts Steering Committee, which oversees strategic planning and goal setting for the school in the arts.
- ▶ In Boston, an arts committee was formed as part of the school's governing board with representatives from many local arts organizations to help with fundraising, decision making and arts program development.

Principals and teachers alike talked about the potential for using student art learning and productions/performances as an incentive for parents to attend school events. While there was strong consensus that parent and community involvement were essential to the initiative's ultimate success, teachers and principals reported that they put more effort into designing and implementing arts integration in the classroom and arts classes for students during the first implementation year. Regardless of how much effort had been made to engage families to date, all educators indicated that parents were strongly supportive of the arts initiatives.



Districts were seen in some instances by teachers and principals as being a difficult partner in the work of using the arts to support school improvement. Teachers and principals talked about the pressures of implementing multiple district initiatives simultaneously, many of which were perceived to conflict with or to take time away from the arts focus. In addition, teachers had a perception that as testing periods approach, they receive conflicting messages about how they should best allocate their instructional minutes, with an emphasis on test preparation.

PILLAR 6

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

Principals and other key leaders focused on strategic use of the arts as a foundation for transformation and school turnaround. As a part of their work, they focused on strategic arts planning, largely through governance, and creative use of staffing and school schedules. Examples of common strategies to draw upon the arts to lay the foundation for larger transformation and school improvement include:

- ▶ All Turnaround Arts principals created Arts Leadership teams with staff and administrators - often including parents, non-arts teachers and students.
- ▶ Principal and leadership teams drafted Strategic Arts Plans over the first six months of the first year of the program, and then revised them at the end of the year.
- ▶ Turnaround Arts school leadership and arts team leaders communicated on a monthly basis with their Turnaround Arts school counterparts to share strategies and assessment around the arts and larger instructional or school goals.

When surveyed, the majority of principals responded affirmatively to questions as to whether the arts were a core part of the school mission statement, improvement plan and website. All principals indicated that their school either had or was in the process of creating a written plan for implementing arts education at the school.

PILLAR 7

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

Improving instruction and integrating the arts in a turnaround school requires providing teachers with professional development. The schools invested in different and varied approaches to professional development, with the goal of increasing instructional quality and creating opportunities for collaboration and cross-curricular connections. To achieve this, schools used a combination of outside professional



development support, on-staff specialists and community organizations. All Turnaround Arts schools sent teams of teachers and administrators to the Turnaround Arts Leadership Conferences, where they received a total of nine days of guidance and training from renowned national experts in arts education. Most schools used their on-staff arts specialists to lead professional development as part of staff meetings or specially scheduled sessions. In addition to these common experiences, Turnaround Arts schools provided a variety of professional development options for teachers, drawing upon diverse and dynamic sources.

For instance:

- ▶ Turnaround Arts schools in Portland, Denver and Bridgeport took advantage of their local arts education organizations (The Right Brain Initiative, Arts 360, and Hot Schools, respectively), sending teams of staff to local trainings and then hiring teaching artists from those organizations to work in the schools.
- ▶ Schools in New Orleans and Portland brought in a national expert in arts integration and the Common Core State Standards to provide on-site whole staff training.
- ▶ All Turnaround Arts schools received on-site professional development in visual arts integration from regional teams sent by Turnaround Arts partner Crayola.

Prior to the 2012-2013 school year, approximately 25 percent of surveyed teachers had participated in some kind of professional development in each of the art disciplines. Principal and teacher feedback on Turnaround Arts professional development opportunities was overwhelmingly positive, particularly regarding the Crayola workshops. Nearly without exception, across sites, teachers and principals were energized by and excited about the rich professional development opportunities they had received in the arts.

Teachers consistently identified the need for more professional development to support more successful use of the arts in the classroom. Specifically, teachers described a variety of professional development opportunities that they thought would be helpful, including illustrations of high-quality arts integration, assistance with planning and instruction as well as more peer-to-peer learning opportunities.

PILLAR 8

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

Turnaround Arts schools invested in a range of strategies designed to directly target student and community perceptions of the school, and to boost morale and well-being. All schools received visits from high-profile Turnaround Artists, who worked with small groups of students, spoke with parents and brought positive press and esteem to the school. Each school received positive media attention, including national and local print, television and radio; for some it was the first time they had been portrayed positively in the press in recent memory. Additionally, some schools engaged in beautification and other morale-building activities. For instance:

- ▶ In Denver, the school moved locations and started the new school year with a makeover event at the new facility, with a local graffiti artist leading a large-scale mural project and community performances to celebrate the arts as a strategy for making a fresh start.
- ▶ In Bridgeport, the school moved from a dilapidated building to a transitional space on the University of Bridgeport campus where they established The Chuck Close gallery at the entrance of the school to display exceptional examples of student art.
- ▶ In Boston, the school put on twice-a-year student performances that were so well attended by community that multiple performances had to be scheduled.
- ▶ In Washington D.C., the school began a tradition of starting the day with a school-wide Morning Meeting where students sing, use percussion and commit to productive and respectful behaviors for the day.
- ▶ In New Orleans, grades 3-5 held assemblies monthly where students came together to share their arts learning in “Shine Time.”

Principals across Turnaround Arts schools generally agreed that arts programming holds the potential to influence and improve important aspects of school culture and organization. This appraisal appears to be shared by a majority the staff — in response to the evaluation team survey, 77-100 percent of teachers and administrators at each school site indicated that elements of arts programming help foster a supportive environment in the school.



4 A LOOK AT BASELINE INDICATORS OF SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT

In the previous section, this report describes the areas and activities of focus for Turnaround Arts schools, providing illustrations of the significant efforts made by teachers and leaders to use arts education as a cornerstone of broader improvement efforts. Turnaround Arts schools engaged in arts education as a pathway to improving important aspects of school climate — with the ultimate goal of improving student achievement outcomes. This section briefly summarizes early data from research question 2, which considers indicators of school reform (attendance and discipline) and research question 3, which considers student achievement outcomes.⁷

Turnaround Arts schools were selected, in part, because of their use of strategies in arts education that were documented during the selection process during the 2011–12 school year. They were formally designated as Turnaround Arts schools and received additional supports and resources in 2012-13. As such, for the examination of each data source, this report uses, to the extent possible, two years of data from 2011 to 2013. Where there are exceptions to this time span, this report notes the missing information and reasons for the lack of data.

SCHOOL REFORM INDICATORS

To measure school improvement, the evaluation team examined three school reform indicators: 1) student attendance, 2) student discipline and 3) perceptions of teachers, school leaders and arts specialists of the impact of arts activities on student commitment and engagement. These indicators are all related to the broader category of school climate.

Attendance

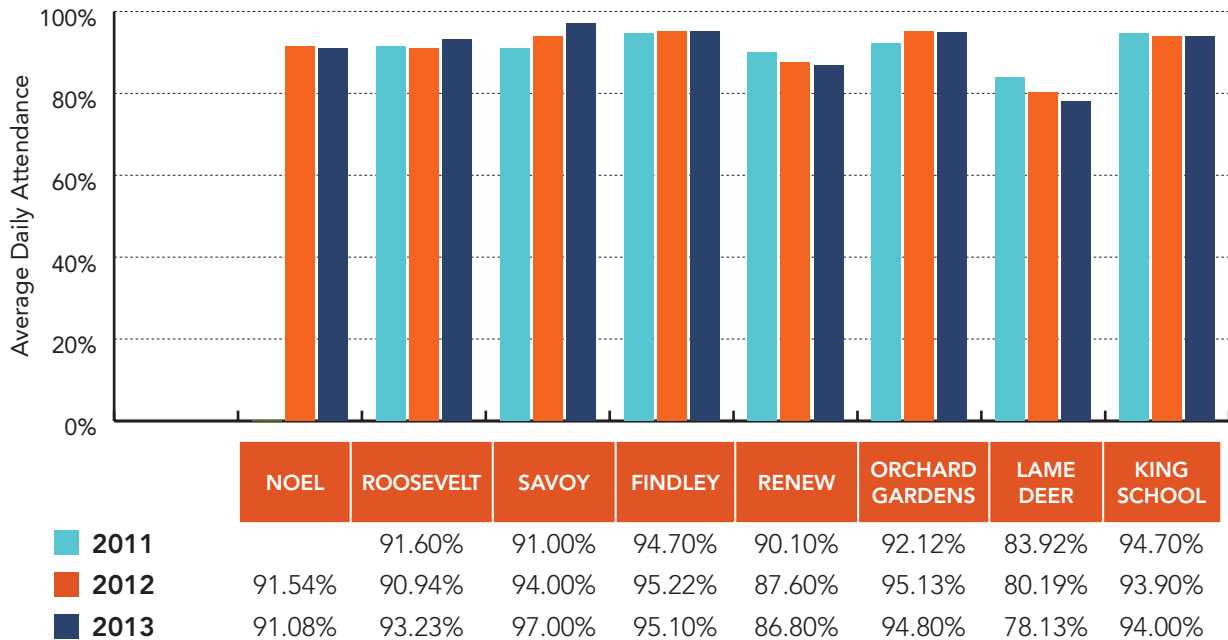
First, the evaluation team considered student attendance, drawing upon daily attendance rates reported by Turnaround Arts schools, and perceptions of school staff of the influence of use of high quality and integrated arts education on student attendance and engagement. If students are more engaged and excited by their school experiences, the evaluation team expected, over time, to see average attendance reflect an increased desire or willingness to be in school.

In terms of average daily attendance, four of seven⁸ schools increased their average attendance rates between 2011 and 2013. These increases ranged from .4 percent to 6 percent. Three schools declined in attendance rates between 3.5 percent and 5.8 percent.

⁷ Given the short duration of the designation of and resources associated with Turnaround Arts schools and the evaluation, we understand this to be a preliminary consideration at baseline. Importantly, the summaries are of directional patterns in the data, not measuring and assessing the statistical significance of the growth or decline. More detailed analysis will be forthcoming, in the 2014 report.

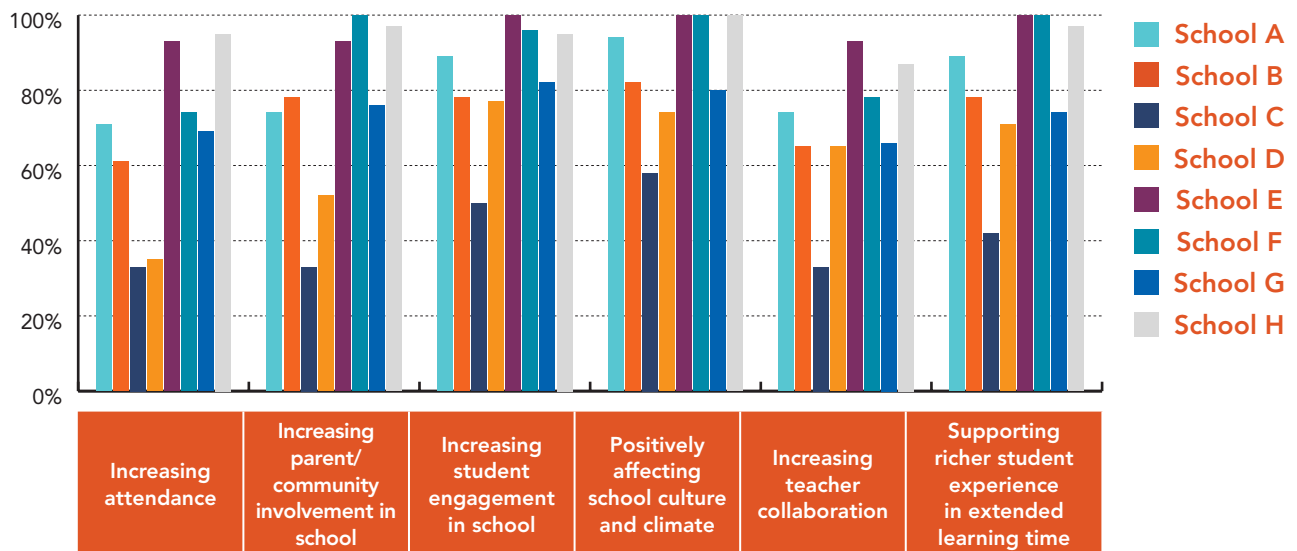
⁸ Noel did not exist in 2011.

FIGURE 1 Summary of Attendance Data



PERCEPTION DATA ON ARTS PROGRAMMING AND STUDENT, TEACHER AND PARENT ENGAGEMENT. In addition to collecting and analyzing attendance data, the evaluation team also administered a survey that gathered the perception of teachers, leaders and other staff in Turnaround Arts schools about the extent to which arts programming improved student engagement — through improvements in attendance, but also in increased parent engagement, student engagement, culture and climate, teacher collaboration and enriching student experiences. In at least six of eight Turnaround Arts schools, the majority of respondents agreed that arts programming contributed to school improvement in these areas. Figure 2 summarizes these survey results.

FIGURE 2 Perceptions of Contribution of Arts Programming to Attendance and Engagement



DISCIPLINE

Discipline is a significant challenge in chronically low-performing schools. As such, another important school reform indicator is discipline data. If teachers are capturing student imaginations and engaging them in interesting and relevant content, the evaluation team expected to see disciplinary action go down. Here, as in the exploration of attendance above, the evaluation team consider two forms of data. The first is reported incidences of expulsions and in- and out of school- suspensions. The second are perceptions of school staff about the extent to which arts programming reduces the number of student disciplinary issues.

EXPULSIONS, IN- AND OUT-OF-SCHOOL SUSPENSIONS. Data summarizing recorded instances of expulsions, and in- and out-of-school suspensions allow us to consider the pattern of disciplinary action in Turnaround Arts schools. The evaluation team has data between 2011-2013 for five schools, and for the other three, we have data only for 2012-2013. In the timeframe for which we have data, five of the eight schools had positive shifts and three had more mixed results. Regarding positive results:

- ▶ In Savoy Elementary School, suspensions decreased 69 percent from 2011 to 2013.
- ▶ At Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School, total disciplinary actions (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion) decreased by 79 percent between 2011 and 2013.
- ▶ At Lame Deer Middle School, total disciplinary actions (in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, expulsion) decreased by 15 percent between 2011 and 2013.
- ▶ At Roosevelt Elementary School, total suspensions (in-school and out-of-school) declined by 28 percent between 2012 and 2013.
- ▶ Findley Elementary School decreased out of school suspensions 50 percent more than the district average and office referrals 19 percent more than the district average between 2012 and 2013.

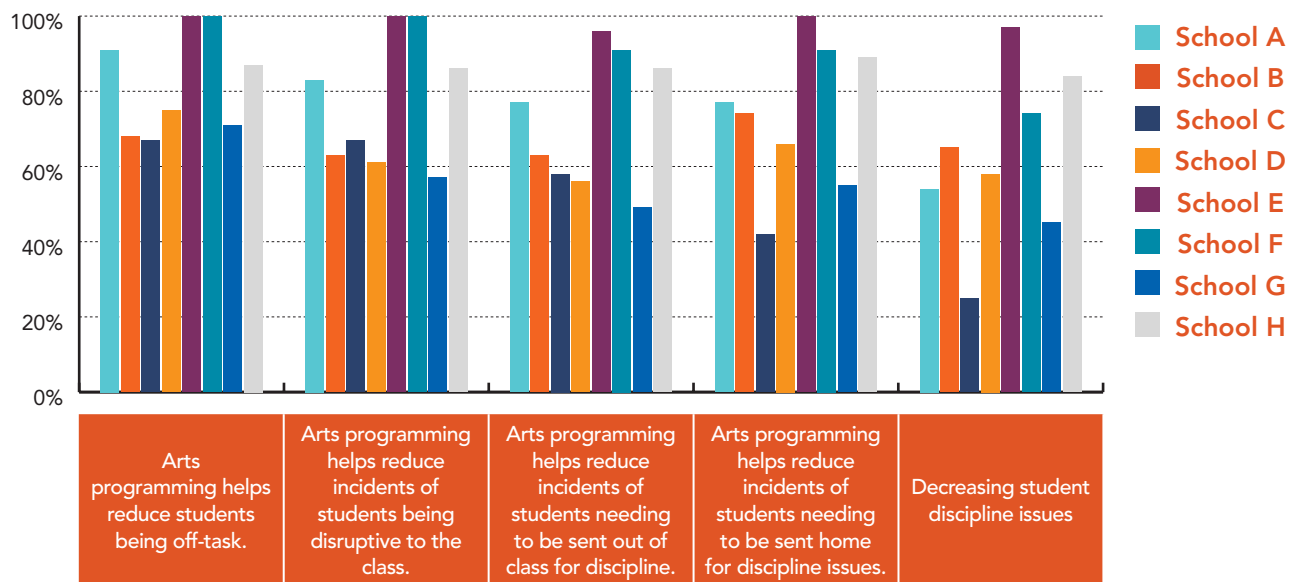
For the three remaining schools for which we saw more mixed results:

- ▶ At Martin Luther King, Jr. School, there were positive and negative shifts in discipline. From 2011-2013 expulsions and in-school suspensions decreased slightly, while out-of-school suspensions increased.
- ▶ Noel Community Arts School similarly saw mixed patterns in discipline data between 2012-2013, with a slight decrease in in-school suspensions and an increase in out-of-school suspensions.

- ▶ At ReNew Cultural Arts Academy, there was a significant increase in total suspensions 2012-2013 (20 percent) while in-school suspensions decreased by 4 percent.

Perception data on arts programming and discipline. Similar to the information summarized above about the perception of Turnaround Arts staff about the influence of arts programming on attendance and engagement, the evaluation team gathered perception data from Turnaround Arts teachers, leaders and other staff about the extent to which the use of high-quality and integrated arts education improved discipline. In each of these areas, in six of eight Turnaround Arts schools, the majority of respondents agreed that arts programming contributed to decreases in disciplinary problems, often by a very large margin. Figure 3 summarizes these survey results.

FIGURE 3 Perceptions of Impact of Arts Programming on Discipline



Standardized Test Data

The goal of the Turnaround Arts initiative is to contribute in important respects to a school improvement model that improves student achievement outcomes. Given what we know about the general trajectory of the path to school improvement, we know it may take time to see increases in standardized test scores. As such, it is too early to describe these data as trends or to speculate that there are causal links between Turnaround Arts and student achievement. That being said, we see early positive shifts in student achievement in some Turnaround Arts schools.⁹

⁹ It is important to note that in this report, we consider patterns in the data without testing for statistical significance.

We consider two trends here: 1) the percentage of students who are proficient in math and reading over time in Turnaround Arts schools, and 2) comparisons of percentage of students who are proficient in math and reading in Turnaround Arts schools with a cohort of schools in the district who are also receiving federal SIGs. This comparison group provides a window into how progress on student achievement indicators in Turnaround Arts schools compare to other schools identified by the federal government as consistently low-performing and thus eligible for implementation of a turnaround strategy for school improvement.¹⁰



Student proficiency data was used to examine shifts in student achievement in Turnaround Arts schools. Here, as in previous analyses, the evaluation team considers shifts between 2011 and 2013. First, we consider the shift in the percentage of students who are proficient in Turnaround Arts schools in math and reading. Early examination of math and reading proficiency in Turnaround Arts schools reveal positive shifts in the majority of schools:

- ▶ In all but one (six of seven¹¹) Turnaround Arts schools for which we have data, there were increases in the percent of students proficient in math between 2011 and 2013.
- ▶ In all but one (six of seven) of Turnaround Arts schools for which we have data, the percent of students proficient in reading increased between 2011 and 2013.
- ▶ In five of the seven Turnaround Arts schools for which we have data, gains were over 5 percent between 2011 and 2013.

¹⁰ The comparison schools were selected because they are in the same district as Turnaround Arts schools and are designated as SIG schools. The comparison schools were not matched using statistical methods to control for systematic differences in student population, prior test score history, etc.

¹¹ Noel Community Arts School did not exist in 2010–11.

The following figures provide summary data for these preliminary findings.

FIGURE 4 Math Proficiency in Turnaround Arts Schools

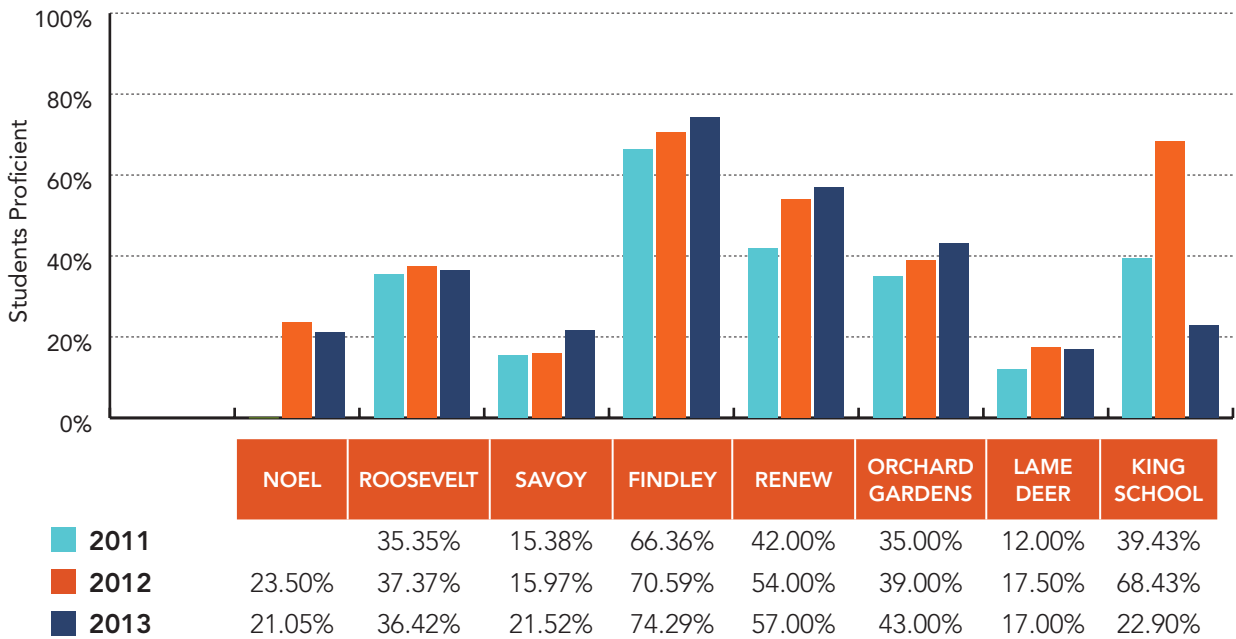
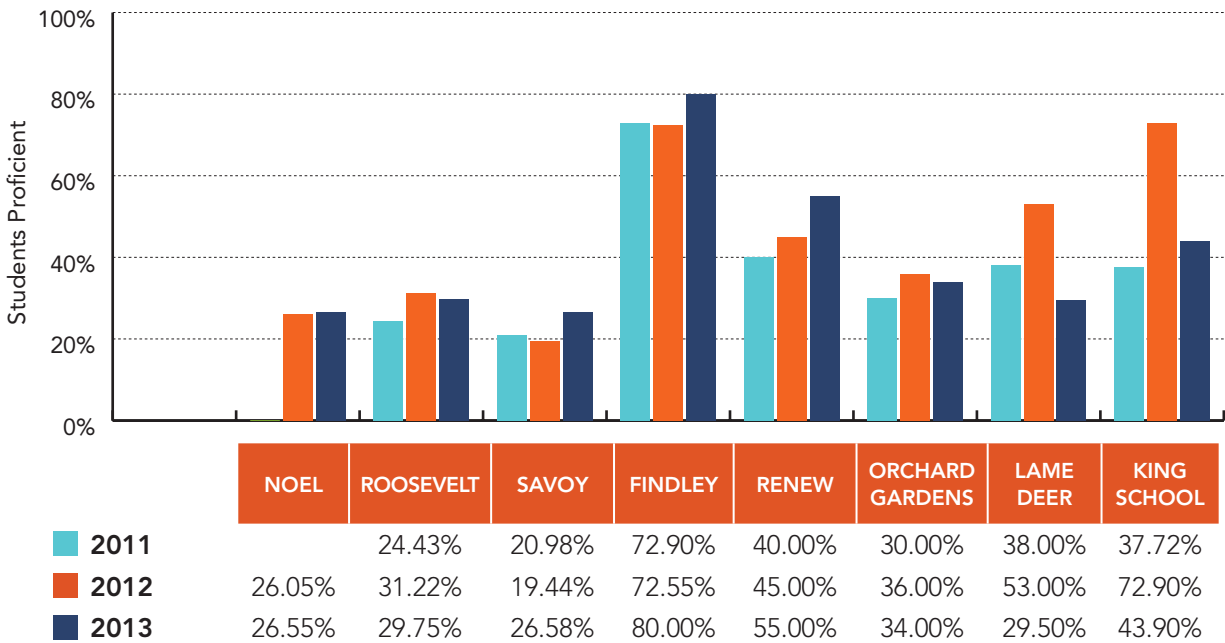
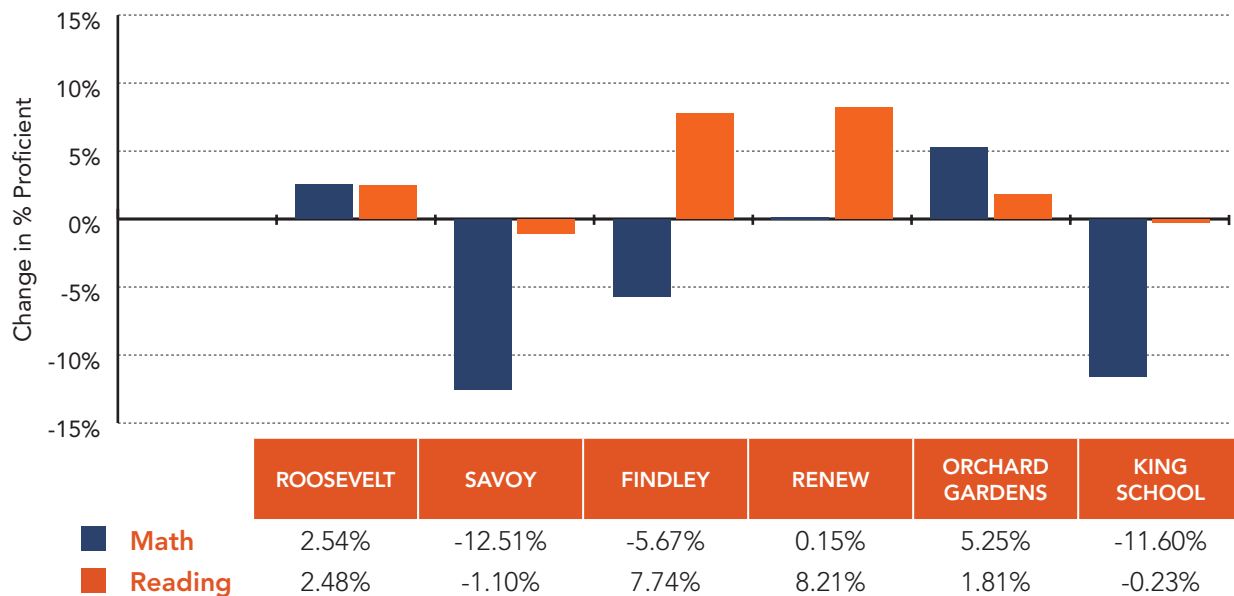


FIGURE 5 Reading Proficiency in Turnaround Arts Schools



To contextualize this achievement growth, we compare Turnaround Arts school increases in percent proficient to a comparison group of other schools in their district that are receiving federal SIGs (i.e., SIG schools). This comparison group provides a window into how Turnaround Arts schools are progressing in academic

FIGURE 6 Turnaround Arts Schools Growth in Reading and Math Compared to SIG Growth



achievement as compared to other schools identified as starting out in the lowest-performing 5 percent of their state and following common broad reform structures required by the federal grant, but without the Turnaround Arts program.¹²

The comparison schools were selected because they are in the same district (or state, if less than two SIG schools were available within the same district) as Turnaround Arts schools and are designated as SIG schools. The comparison schools were not matched using statistical methods to control for systematic differences in student population, prior test score history, etc.

- ▶ Four out of six¹³ Turnaround Arts schools had higher growth than SIG schools in their state or district in standardized tests in reading.
- ▶ Three out of six Turnaround Arts schools for which data were available had higher growth than comparable SIG schools in their state or district in standardized tests in math.
- ▶ Noel Community Arts School is not represented here, as it was not in existence in 2011. But comparing just 2012-2013 scores, Noel had higher growth in reading, and lower growth in math than other SIG schools in the same school district.

¹² The comparison schools were selected because they are in the same district (or state, if less than two SIG schools were available within the same district) as Turnaround Arts schools and are designated as SIG schools. The comparison schools were not matched using statistical methods to control for systematic differences in student population, prior test score history, etc.

¹³ Two Turnaround Arts schools were not subject to evaluation in this area because they do not have any comparable SIG schools in their state or district or because they were not in existence in 2011.



5 CONCLUSION

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

Leaders and teachers in Turnaround Arts schools immersed themselves in efforts to use high-quality arts education as a part of overall effort to transform their schools, and integrated these efforts within the larger reform framework required by their U.S. Department of Education SIG grants.

Against a backdrop of shared core focus areas and drawing on a set of rich resources provided by Turnaround Arts staff, these schools created targeted efforts to deepen arts programming by: building infrastructure in leadership and governance; creating unique opportunities for arts professional development; harnessing the expertise and talent of arts specialists and teaching artists; engaging parents and the broader community, and working to improve the culture and climate of their schools with the arts. Leaders and teachers in each Turnaround Arts school worked to do this given their unique context and needs, taking into consideration the history and experience of the use of arts education in the past, the unique contextual factors around the school, and the goals and trajectory of school improvement efforts associated with the broader turnaround effort.

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

First, it was evident that most teachers in Turnaround Arts schools worked to integrate arts into their classroom instruction. Second, it was clear that school leaders and teachers were excited about and satisfied with arts specialists, teaching artists and the professional development opportunities they had received around the arts and were recognized as making a worthwhile contribution to

Our look into Turnaround Arts schools reveals the unique uses of high-quality and integrated arts education in each school.

school improvement efforts. Third, there were clear efforts across all Turnaround Arts schools to enhance the attractiveness of school buildings with student art and improvements to the physical space, to create opportunities for parents and the community to attend student performances and exhibits and to build a more positive climate internal and external to the school.

In this first year of the existence of Turnaround Arts schools, there were many ways in which all of the schools saw positive change as a result of being a part of this initiative.

Finally, there were consistent barriers and challenges to the use of high-quality and integrated arts education identified in Turnaround Arts schools. These included the need for continued development of teacher expertise in the arts, time, and the need for continued prioritization and focus on the arts. Lack of time was noted nearly without exception as a challenge: time for planning with arts specialists and teaching artists or grade level peers and time to do arts activities that required extended time or multiple class periods. Time spent on arts was sometimes considered to be time spent not focusing on other subject areas, in the minds of teachers.

Conflicting priorities were also seen as a challenge, both in terms of competing initiatives within the school, or conflicting priorities in the district. Teachers and leaders talked about the need to create a sustained effort and focus to ensure use of the arts remained central over time.

This interim progress report also includes baseline data in attendance, discipline and student achievement. Early indicators of school climate and student achievement depict a picture of schools that are working hard to improve, and in some cases, showing early positive shifts.

In sum, in this first year of the existence of Turnaround Arts schools, there were many ways in which all of the schools saw positive change as a result of being a part of this initiative. Schools became fundamentally more attractive places for students, with positive perceptions of teachers and students and increased external visibility for innovation using the arts. Students and staff were provided with rich resources and support to use the arts as a part of their broader school improvement strategy. Parents and community members were drawn into the schools in large numbers.

Participants were generally positive about their efforts to include high-quality and integrated arts education as a part of their overall efforts to transform their schools. There was general consensus among teachers, school leaders and arts specialists that though use of the arts in Turnaround Arts schools has been uneven and emergent, it has already had a positive impact on school environment – demonstrated in higher levels of student engagement, focus and collaboration; improved self-esteem; better behavior and fewer referrals. Early consideration of attendance, discipline and student achievement data show indicators of these positive shifts. At the same time, much work remains to be done, as Turnaround Arts schools strive to move their schools to levels of higher performance and sustained, measureable improvement.

This snapshot is intended to be a picture of implementation strategies and early data, without drawing conclusions or making distinctions between levels of implementation and outcomes. In the final report, the evaluation team intends to focus on examining the relationship between the depth, intensity and consistency of the use of the arts and the trajectory toward school improvement. In addition, we will examine these emergent shifts in more detail, digging deeper into student achievement outcomes and comparison data, and collecting additional perception data to chart the trajectory of Turnaround Arts schools as they move through a second year of a focus on using high-quality and integrated arts integration to transform their schools.



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