THE RIGHT BRAIN INITIATIVE

PROGRESS REPORT

GREAT WORK!

NEW DIRECTIONS

- USE SHARPENED MIND
- SELECT WISELY
- MAKE YOUR MARK
- EX.

A B C
Welcome to an exciting new chapter in teaching and learning. The Right Brain Initiative has just completed its pilot year and we are already seeing the measurable impact on learning that high quality arts experiences in our schools can achieve. The Right Brain Initiative is focused on integrating the community’s arts and cultural resources into the education of every K-8 student in Portland area school districts. That is a mighty goal, and one that is worthy of aggressive pursuit.

From decades of research we know that in schools with a strong arts climate, teachers and students benefit (Burton, Horowitz, & Abeles, July, 1999). Students are better able to express concepts, use their ideas, free their imaginations, and take risks in learning. Their teachers demonstrate more interest in their work, are more likely to become involved in professional development, and are more likely to be innovative in their teaching. The arts are not only disciplines to be studied, but they are also an essential language for the study of other core curricula.

I am frequently asked to explain the value for arts in education. Frankly, it’s tiresome to continually have to defend this need. When one looks at the history of education, the study of the arts has consistently been a vital element in defining an intellectually balanced curriculum. The Greeks recognized it; the early developers of American public schools recognized it; and parents continue to recognize it! Now, let’s provide this opportunity – no – this right for all our children.

Carol R. Smith, Ed. D.  
Chair, Governing Committee  
The Right Brain Initiative
II. THE RIGHT BRAIN INITIATIVE

After visiting schools, hearing about real-life student experiences and talking with teachers and principals about the exciting learning connections being made, it’s hard to remember that less than a year ago the program model of The Right Brain Initiative was only a figment of our imagination, a dream so to speak. In that time, scores of teachers, artists and community volunteers have rolled up their sleeves and opened their minds to the possibilities of what local artists can offer classrooms across the region. Over the past two years, we’ve engaged over 250 educators, artists, philanthropists, elected officials and “average citizens” in the visioning, planning and implementation processes of launching this effort…an effort to provide ALL elementary (K-8) students in the tri-county area with meaningful arts experiences that connect to other learning. That’s not to say that the arts, in and of themselves, are less important. It’s not either/or, but yes/and! This report shares some of our achievements, findings and many of the ahas! Thank you to our collaborators, contributors, funders and believers. You made our first steps possible.

2008-09 PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS

Gresham-Barlow School District
- East Orient (K-5)
- Hollydale (K-5)

Hillsboro School District
- Free Orchards (K-6)
- Jackson (K-6)
- Lincoln Street (K-6)
- Quatama (K-6)

North Clackamas School District
- Ardenwald (K-6)
- Concord (K-6)
- Oak Grove (K-6)
- Spring Mountain (K-6)
- Sunnyside (K-6)
- View Acres (K-6)

Portland Public Schools
- Glencoe (K-5)
- Hayhurst (K-8)
- James John (K-5)
- Markham (K-5)
- Rigler (K-7)
- Sitton (K-5)
- Whitman (K-5)
- Woodlawn (P-8)

Purpose Statement

To achieve a measurable impact on learning by integrating the community’s arts and cultural resources into the education of every K-8 student in the Portland metropolitan region’s school districts.

Four project goals have been developed for the initial phase of The Right Brain Initiative:

Integration
Teachers, artists, arts specialists and other members of the school community will work together as partners to integrate arts education and other core curriculum areas.

Equity
All students will have access to quality experiences in multiple art forms.

Arts Processes
Students will create and perform/exhibit works of art and reflect upon works of art created by themselves and others.

Written and Oral Expression
Arts education will support the development of student writing and oral expression skills across the curriculum.
III. RESEARCH FINDINGS

Working with staff from participating districts, as well as a volunteer assessment committee and outside consultants, The Right Brain Initiative honed its focus on literacy through the arts and gathered baseline data about the state of the arts in schools.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS INCLUDED:

- A survey of teachers in participating schools to identify the skills they already had and the areas in which they needed and wanted professional development to support their work.
- A poll of all K-8 principals to determine existing arts resources such as staffing, planning time, facilities and funding.

LITERACY  DIAGRAM 3.1

The majority of classroom teachers who will be working on arts integration teach multiple subjects, including English Language Arts.

- 63% of responding teachers who cover all academic subjects
- 26% of responding teachers who focus on reading or literacy or English Language Arts

* Therefore, literacy is an appropriate focus for The Right Brain Initiative.

STAFFING  DIAGRAM 3.2

Of the 20 schools participating:

A. 9 have full-time music specialists
B. 7 have part-time music specialists
C. 1 has a part-time visual art specialist
D. 3 have no arts specialists

* 0 have dance or drama specialists

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A Rigler student proudly shares her puppet created in a residency with faces of Fey Theatre exploring story and character development.

Photo courtesy Rigler Elementary
Teachers expressed a high level of interest in the arts...

...but report less preparation for arts integration.

Teachers rank high quality arts integration training as their top priority for professional development through The Right Brain Initiative.

**INTEREST**

Teachers expressed a high level of interest in the arts...

**PREPARATION**

...but report less preparation for arts integration.

**PRIORITIES**

Teachers rank high quality arts integration training as their top priority for professional development through The Right Brain Initiative.

1. **DEVELOP** a strong framework to guide the planning of residencies and other experiences that bring together the arts and literacy learning in effective ways. This work should include the thorough documentation of a set of examples from each year of the Initiative.

2. **INCREASE** the professional support for arts integration. This could take a number of forms: increasing full-time arts specialist positions, training for Right Brain facilitators, providing coordinated training for classroom teachers in formats that teachers value (cross-visitation and summer courses), and developing a corps of skilled family and community volunteers.

3. **COLLABORATE** with an evaluation partner who can help the Initiative and school districts track the effectiveness of their shared investments at the district, school, and student levels.

4. **MAKE** the collection of basic information like teacher/school surveys an integral part of schools’ participation in the Initiative. This will allow tracking of a number of systemic effects that may be associated with the Initiative (e.g., FTE in the arts, numbers of teachers who receive additional training in arts integration, etc.).
IV. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

"Arts integration is an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject area and meets evolving objectives in both." (see diagram 4.1, right)

—The John F. Kennedy Center, September 2008

Building on this definition, The Right Brain Initiative has developed a three-pronged approach to arts integration, focusing on enhanced forms of literacy: reading, writing, listening, speaking, and other modes of communication through the visual and performing arts. Through hands-on exercises, 70 teachers, 20 principals and 50 artists experienced both arts learning and arts integrated learning in two days of professional development during the 2008-09 school year. With their right brains fully engaged, all participants learned to connect the arts and literacy and focused on the artistic processes of creating, presenting, reflecting/responding and understanding the arts as text.

### WHAT PEOPLE ARE SAYING

"High-powered and thought provoking...started internal discussions for us as an organization that are needed."

—Artist participating in Right Brain professional development

"This confirmed my belief that we need to teach the whole child."

—Teacher participating in Right Brain professional development

### NOTE

All participants in Right Brain professional development rated their experience a 4 or 5 (on a scale of 1-5, 5 being highest).
V. 2008-09 SCHOOL PROJECTS

HILLSBORO SCHOOL DISTRICT

Free Orchards (K-6)

Students: 453
Teachers: 26

Using the theme, “creatures who live in the orchard,” all students worked with Young Audiences’ Annie Stecker and connected poetry, descriptive and informative writing skills to the creation of a ceramic mural for their new school.

Lincoln Street (K-6)

Students: 574
Teachers: 33

Muralist Rodolfo Serna helped address the learning goals of written reflection and narrative through a school-wide residency and provided a colorful addition to the hallway of this new school.

Oake Grove (K-6)

Students: 559
Teachers: 23

A wide range of art experiences helped meet learning goals for all grade levels:

- K-1 students learned geometry skills through dramatic movement with Noah Martin.
- 2-3 graders constructed puppets with Young Audiences’ Bruce Orr of Mudeye Puppet Company to learn about fiction writing.
- 4th grade students studied Oregon history and historical fiction writing with Young Audiences’ ceramic artist Annie Stecker.
- 5th grade students worked with Young Audiences’ Mark Steering to collaborate on a script about The Underground Railroad and perform their work.
- 6th graders developed circus skills with Young Audiences’ Albert Alter while learning about scientific inquiry and writing skills.

North Clackamas School District

Ardenwald (K-6)

Students: 264
Teachers: 10

4th through 6th grade students participated in a drama residency with Young Audiences’ Bernie Duffy that explored the character traits of respect and inclusiveness, important to the school community in light of an upcoming merger with another school.

Concord (K-6)

Students: 329
Teachers: 11

All students participated in a residency with photographers Julie Keeffe and Tyler Kohlhoff that integrated their new-found skills as photographers with poetry, metaphor and personification.

Spring Mountain (K-6)

Students: 554
Teachers: 21

All students participated in a residency with Young Audiences’ Dance Like the Stars.

Portland Public Schools

Glencoe (K-5)

Students: 499
Teachers: 31

Studying diverse cultures through drumming provided a school-wide focus:
- K-1 students worked with Obo Addy of Homowo African Arts and Cultures and shared their knowledge through discussion and writing.
- Ancient Latin American cultures were introduced to 2nd & 3rd graders by Young Audiences’ Gerardo Calderon, while learning the history and culture of drums and communicating their understanding through expository writing.
- 4th and 5th grade students explored the themes of pride, respect and diversity through drumming, poetry and reflective writing with Portland Taiko.

Hayhurst (K-8)

Students: 351
Teachers: 21

Photographer Julie Keeffe offered K-5th grade students a new experience in...
Joy Theatre. Working with 1st and 2nd graders, Young Audiences’ Annie Stecker provided connections to their science unit on insects and habitat through the creation of a ceramic mural while 3rd grade students wrote short stories to learn about setting, plot, character development and the importance of revision in a residency with writer Mark Pomeroy.

K and 5th grade students learned about story elements, character development and adaptation in a puppetry performance residency with Tears of Joy Theatre. Working with 1st and 2nd graders, Young Audiences’ Annie Stecker provided connections to their science unit on insects and habitat through the creation of a ceramic mural while 3rd grade students wrote short stories to learn about setting, plot, character development and the importance of revision in a residency with writer Mark Pomeroy.

All students studied puppetry with Tears of Joy Theatre focusing on writing learning goals of character development, compare/contrast, dialogue and expository writing.

Muralist Rodolfo Serna worked with 3rd and 4th grade students, providing connections to their History of Portland and Native American units of study. 5th – 7th grade students participated in a dance residency with BodyVox’s Renee Adams, linked to expressive writing skills and units on Physics and the Solar System.

Young Audiences’ Margaret Snow Benét worked school-wide, connecting visual arts concepts such as line, color, pattern and repetition to social studies units on self, Portland history and the environment.

Four different artists helped meet learning goals for all grade levels including:
- Kindergarteners used clay to express their ideas while working with an artist from the Portland Children’s Museum.
- 1st and 2nd graders learned about story elements, character development and adaptation through a puppetry performance residency with Tears of Joy Theatre.
- 3rd and 4th graders learned about story elements, character development and adaptation through a puppetry performance residency with Tears of Joy Theatre.

DIAGRAM 5.2

Over 9,000 students and 486 teachers in 20 schools across four districts participated in arts integrated learning. Artists with experience teaching in K-8 classroom settings and proof of artistic quality provided many options for meeting learning goals identified by schools. Following is a snapshot of the choices made by teachers.
In its first year, The Right Brain Initiative laid important foundations for longer range evaluation of its impact on teaching and learning by:

- developing a set of qualitative measures designed to examine student outcomes
- collecting samples of student work across a sample of diverse students
- conducting "imagination interviews" in which a sample of students were documented recounting the creative processes they used while creating their work.
- designing sessions at a summer institute for an initial scoring of student work for the purpose of identifying the program's current strengths and needs.

The findings from these activities will provide the evidence for planning to make the most effective use of resources in the 2009-10 school year.

"The educational excellence challenge of this century is to organize learning for innovation. The equity challenge is to guarantee that gender, economic status, race, and native language cease to predict who will invent a vaccine, write a prize-winning play, or engineer a major breakthrough in technology."

-Dr. Dennie Palmer Wolf
More than Measuring: Program Evaluation as an Opportunity to Build the Capacity of Communities
VII. 2008-09 CONTRIBUTIONS

PUBLIC
- City of Portland
- Multnomah County
- Clackamas County
- Hillsboro Arts and Culture Council

PRIVATE
- Collins Foundation*
- James & Marion Miller Foundation*
- The Harold and Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation*
- PGE Foundation
- US Bank Foundation
- The Oregon Community Foundation
- Spirit Mountain Community Fund
- Bank of America
- The Standard
- Genentech
- * 3-year grants

SCHOOL DISTRICTS
- Gresham-Barlow
- Hillsboro
- North Clackamas
- Portland Public Schools

IN-KIND
- North
- Portland Center for the Performing Arts
- Tonkon Torp
- Magaurn Video Media
- Heathman Hotel
- Lazerquick

Diagram 7.2

PUBLIC SUPPORT
FROM 4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
($113 PER STUDENT)

$233,000

IN KIND CONTRIBUTIONS
- PRIVATE SECTOR

$65,000

PRIVATE SECTOR
- CORPORATION SUPPORT

$225,000

PUBLIC OTHER EARNED REVENUE

$2,750

PUBLIC SUPPORT
FROM 4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
($113 PER STUDENT)

$130,500

IN K IND CONTRIBUTIONS
- PRIVATE SECTOR

$65,000

PRIVATE SECTOR
- CORPORATION SUPPORT

$225,000

PUBLIC OTHER EARNED REVENUE

$2,750

PUBLIC SUPPORT
FROM 4 SCHOOL DISTRICTS
($113 PER STUDENT)

$130,500

IN K IND CONTRIBUTIONS
- PRIVATE SECTOR

$65,000

PRIVATE SECTOR
- CORPORATION SUPPORT

$225,000

PUBLIC OTHER EARNED REVENUE

$2,750

PRIVATE SECTOR
- CORPORATION SUPPORT

$25,000

TOTAL SECURED:
$681,250 / 100% OF BUDGET
AS OF JANUARY 2009
Managing Partner
Regional Arts & Culture Council (RACC); RACC is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit arts organization and the local arts agency for Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington counties. Through vision, leadership and service, RACC works to integrate arts and culture in all aspects of community life.

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