# SUSTAINING

# ARTS-INFUSED

# EDUCATION

A Study of Teacher Change

and Principal Leadership

Summary of Findings 2006–2010

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Research shows that more meaningful learning takes place when

the arts are infused into the teaching of core subjects. Personally

creating dialogue and acting out parts of a favorite book, or

personally choreographing a dance to communicate symmetry

creates emotional connection with what is being learned. When

content becomes personally relevant to students, it drives interest

and engagement. The arts build confident learners with a measure

of creativity and self-awareness invaluable in school and in life.\*

Teacher training and principal training

are two of the most important factors

in establishing and sustaining quality

arts education in schools. The Arts

Education Department of the Puget Sound

Educational Service District (PSESD) and

ArtsEd Washington share the mission

of increasing quality arts education

for all students through professional

development and training.

In 2006, the two organizations

launched Arts Impact/Arts Leadership,

a U.S. Department of Education funded

project to study the impact of longterm,

intensive teacher and principal

professional development in support of arts-infused teaching and learning. PSESD’s

Arts Impact was implemented both in tandem with ArtsEd Washington’s Principals’

Arts Leadership (PAL) program and independently to investigate teacher, student and

school-level outcomes.

ARTS IMPACT/ARTS

LEADERSHIP: INFUSING

ART INTO EDUCATION

\*Stevenson, L.M. & Deasy, R.J. (2005). Third Space: When learning matters.

Washington, DC: Arts Education Partnership.

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The Arts Education Department of

Puget Sound Educational Service District

(PSESD)—Arts Impact

Arts Impact began in 1999 under the

umbrella of the Cultural Council of Greater

Tacoma. It joined PSESD in 2002. This

successful two-year teacher-training model

is based on best practices for professional

development, builds personal artistic

confidence and fosters sustainable changes

in teaching practice. Teachers begin as

learners, experiencing the lessons they

will take back to students. Artist Mentors

then visit classrooms to model arts-infused

instruction and help teachers tailor their

lessons to their unique group of students

and classroom environment. Once teachers

feel confident, they teach arts-infused

lessons with their mentor present and then

graduate to teaching independently.

The ongoing feedback and encouragement

from mentors and peers—an essential aspect

of Arts Impact—cultivates a supportive

community, making sustainable professional

growth possible. At the end of the two-year

program, teachers have the knowledge and

skills to infuse visual and performing arts as

a routine part of classroom education while

meeting school and state standards.

ArtsEd Washington—Principals’

Arts Leadership (PAL)

ArtsEd Washington created the Principals’

Arts Leadership program in 2004 with

the goal of creating a more systemic

approach to arts teaching and learning.

Recognizing the school principal as the

instructional leader in the arts, PAL helps

principals become the catalytic spark for

school-wide arts education that is powerful

and sustainable.

PAL offers two years of support, providing

principals with the leadership skills and

tools to create an ongoing plan for arts

education. The program empowers principals

in their instructional leadership role to

effectively guide the expectations of

teachers as the arts plan is developed and

implemented. A school-wide Arts Team,

composed of the principal, teachers and

staff, crafts the School Arts Plan. Each

plan includes school-specific opportunities

for growth and pathways for the school to

offer high-quality arts instruction to their

students using existing and new resources.

A CREATIVE PARTNERSHIP

TO SUSTAIN QUALITY ARTS

EDUCATION

Two innovative arts education organizations partnered seeking to

maximize their individual impacts and test a model for integrating

and sustaining standards-based arts education in elementary

schools. Implemented together, Arts Impact and the Principals’ Arts

Leadership program provide a systemic approach resulting in a

sustained increase of quality arts education.

“There is joy back in the classroom. Teachers

are energized and excited about teaching again.

They are not as weighed down.”

—Principal of Larchmont Elementary School,

Tacoma School District

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A FOUR-YEAR

COMPARATIVE STUDY

2006-07

PAL

2006-07

Arts Impact

Project capacity building year. Selected schools, gathered baseline data,

developed curriculum, finalized evaluation tools.

Group A Schools:

Arts Impact/PAL

Group B Schools:

Arts Impact only

Group C Schools:

Control

Participants Principals, teachers and

students in 3rd, 4th and

5th grades

Teachers and students in

3rd, 4th and 5th grades

Teachers and students in

3rd, 4th and 5th grades

2007-08

PAL

School Arts Teams

established; School Arts

Plans begun; School

Arts Inventory baseline

data gathered.

School Arts Inventory

baseline data gathered.

School Arts Inventory

baseline data gathered.

2007-08

Arts Impact

51 hours of professional

development for teachers:

Summer Institute,

mentorship, PLCs, student

cultural study trips. Student

and teacher data gathered.

51 hours of professional

development for teachers:

Summer Institute,

mentorship, PLCs, student

cultural study trips. Student

and teacher data gathered.

Student and teacher

data gathered.

2008-09

PAL

Arts Team and peer

workshops; seed money

provided; principal

coaching; School Arts Plans

more fully developed.

2008-09

Arts Impact

51 hours of professional

development for teachers:

Summer Institute,

mentorship, PLCs, student

cultural study trips. Student

and teacher data gathered.

51 hours of professional

development for teachers:

Summer Institute,

mentorship, PLCs, student

cultural study trips. Student

and teacher data gathered.

Student and teacher

data gathered.

2009-10

PAL

Arts Team and peer

workshops; seed money

provided; principal

coaching; School Arts

Plans more fully developed.

Exit survey.

Exit survey. Exit survey.

2009-10

Arts Impact

Teachers implement

arts-infused project

curriculum independently;

PLCs; student cultural study

trips. Student and teacher

data gathered.

Teachers implement artsinfused

project curriculum

independently; PLCs;

student cultural study

trips. Student and teacher

data gathered.

Student and teacher

data gathered.

The intent of the project was to compare outcomes around student

learning, teacher practice and principal leadership across three

groups of schools. The design was quasi experimental with two

treatment groups and one control group.

Nine participating schools from Tacoma and Bethel school districts were randomly assigned

to one of three study groups and met two basic criteria:

. More than 35% of the student body qualified for free or reduced-price lunches.

. 3rd, 4th and 5th grade teachers and leaders were willing to participate.

Project Goals

. Strengthen standards-based arts instruction in the elementary school grades

through principal training, school-based planning, development of school arts

teams and sustainable infrastructure

. Improve the academic performance of elementary students.

. Improve teacher knowledge and practice to teach arts-infused concepts.

. Replicate the Arts Impact/Arts Leadership model locally and disseminate at state,

regional and national levels.

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Arts Impact is a comprehensive professional development program

that combines hands-on learning of art skills and knowledge;

training in concept-based learning, performance-based assessment,

and processes for responding to art and performances; and

classroom coaching and mentoring. Teachers receive 51 hours of

professional development each year for two years.

PAL helps schools put the following five components in place over

a three-year period, creating a foundation for successful schoolwide

arts education.

Arts Impact

Training Components

102 HOURS OF PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN ARTS EDUCATION

30-Hour Summer Institute

Teachers learn by doing. They participate

in dance, theater and visual arts lessons,

which they take directly back to the

classroom to use with their students.

11 Hours of Classroom Mentorship

Teachers are coached. Teachers are

paired with an Artist-Mentor who guides

them in teaching arts-infused lessons

effectively and independently.

10-12 Supplemental Workshops

Teachers expand arts knowledge

throughout the year. Teachers attend,

at minimum, two of these three-hour

workshops expanding on basic arts

knowledge and skills, building on what

is learned in the Summer Institute.

Professional Learning Communities

Teachers experience community. Twice a

year, teachers come together as a group

to share learning and teaching strategies

and identify practices that sustain arts

integration. In many cases, they continue

building this community on their own.

Cultural Study Trips

Each teacher takes their class to a

museum exhibition and a dance or

theater performance specifically designed

for student audiences. They learn how

to apply what children are learning in

the classroom to discussions about the

exhibit or performance. Teachers are

encouraged to lead cultural study trips

with their students after training.

Principals ’ Arts

Leadership Components

The Principal

Principals’ support for arts education is

essential. PAL positions the principal as the

program’s key advocate and supports his or

her role as the school’s instructional leader

in the arts. On-site coaching from peer

coaches, usually PAL alumni, helps cement

this leadership role and provides access to

insights and guidance from principals who

are succeeding in making the arts a core

part of instruction.

The Arts Team

Leadership is dynamic and shared. Each

school establishes an Arts Team that

includes teachers and community members

(parents, artists, business and civic leaders)

working with the principal. The team is

recruited at the beginning of the PAL

program and participates alongside the

principal in planning workshops. Together

they learn about key components of a

sustainable arts program, how to access

state and local resources and tools and

other topics. The Arts Team drives activities

and broader school engagement in support

of the School Arts Plan, helping secure

sustainability for the work.

The School Arts Plan

Schools need a pathway for change. The

School Arts Plan lays out a vision and

the expectations of the school, for both

the leadership and the staff, formally

positioning the arts as a core content

area in the school’s curriculum. Target

areas within the plan include curriculum,

instruction and assessment; teacher

professional development and capacity

building; and community engagement.

During the first year of the PAL program,

schools complete a baseline School Arts

Inventory identifying the school’s position

on the continuum of arts education and

providing a starting place for the vision

and planning process. Completing the

inventory annually serves to provide a

progress report capturing changes, strengths

and challenges and informing the annual

School Arts Plan revision.

Seed Money

Small investments have impact. Upon

completion of the Arts Plan, ArtsEd

Washington provides each school with

$1,000 to implement elements of the

plan that will increase school capacity to

teach the arts and lead to sustainability.

Relatively small investments can motivate

action, enhance access to training and

strengthen accountability.

Peer Networks

Principals need to talk to each other. ArtsEd

Washington conducts peer forums as a way

to enable principals to gather together as

a group to learn about best practices and

connect with other principals who are on

the same path. The peer networks formed

offer a venue to share ideas and renew

energy and commitment.

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One Teacher’s Path to

Making an Impact with Art

In 2006–07, Shelby O’Conner was in her first year of teaching 4th grade

at Larchmont Elementary School. When she heard the principal had

applied to be a part of the Arts Impact/Arts Leadership program, she

and the other teachers were blindly supportive of the idea. “We had

no clue.” Once the Arts Impact training began in the fall of 2007, her

teaching life began to change.

Shelby knew she would learn how to teach writing and

math through art, but she imagined drawings of stick

figures. She did not expect that theater and dance would

become central to many of her lessons. “Who knew to bring

theater into writing?” She found that acting out a story and

then writing about it created new meaning for the visual

learners who struggled to write—and she saw their writing

improve. Dancing out vocabulary words and math concepts

like angles and parallel lines has allowed her to reach a

whole new set of students. “This type of learning provides

success for all kids, especially those that struggle. It’s

learning, and they’re having fun!”

Arts Impact has been a transformative experience for both Shelby and her students. One

of her struggling students was in and out of foster care, and expressed anger and a lack of

confidence. Once Shelby began infusing art into her lessons, he blossomed and began to hit

all the learning criteria. One day during a math lesson incorporating visual art, he drew an

intricate architectural drawing, showing a great skill that no one would have discovered

without Arts Impact lessons. “He has peace and success. Those are the moments where I

think, ‘How could I survive without Arts Impact?’ It has been a life changing experience.”

Shelby appreciates the mentors who came to the classroom to coach her. “They gave

themselves and were so willing to help us infuse the arts in a way that worked for us

individually. They had the art part and we had the standards part. And we found a way to

bring them together.” Today, her kids are dancing, acting and drawing their way to math

and writing success.

Measuring impacts of professional development in the educational

environment requires a diverse set of approaches. PSESD and

ArtsEd Washington used a range of quantitative and qualitative

research tools throughout the study to assess the impacts of

their programs—from surveys and interviews to criteria-based

performance assessments of teachers and students.

The outcomes showed real progress toward meeting the project’s goals. The results

indicate that Arts Impact and PAL are not only building the teaching capacity of

educators but also enhancing student learning. Following are the study’s key findings:

Arts Impact successfully trains educators to teach the arts.

. Teachers in Group A and B schools demonstrated they were able to sustain arts

teaching independently. Teachers reported an average of 44.6 hours of artsinfused

teaching in their class during the school year while being coached by

their Artist-Mentor. In the last year of the study, although Artist-Mentors did

not enter the classroom, teachers reported spending nearly the equivalent time

on arts-infused lessons—43.2 hours.

. Learning assessments from the Summer Institutes show that teachers learned

arts concepts successfully and understood them in the same way their

instructors did.

. Teachers reported that Artist-Mentors provided invaluable and influential

coaching as they worked to incorporate arts as a regular element of

classroom teaching.

PROMISING TRENDS SHOW

ENHANCED TEACHER AND

STUDENT LEARNING

“It makes learning fun. When it’s fun, the kids

will buy into whatever you need to have them

buy into. And they’ll give themselves 100%, and

then their enthusiasm and confidence carries

over into other things.”

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2007–2008

2008–2009

Learning through the arts can enhance student learning of math and writing concepts.

Students learned math and writing concepts in two ways—through an art form and through

traditional math or writing assignments. For example, students working on parallel and

perpendicular lines would first learn the traditional math definition, then identify parallel

and perpendicular lines in a work of art, followed by creating a work of art that used parallel

and perpendicular lines. This was often followed by another math worksheet on parallel and

perpendicular lines. Each lesson resulted in an artwork, theater or dance performance.

Each student’s work was assessed using specific criteria that, if met, demonstrated the

student’s understanding of the concepts in the lesson. Across all lessons, grade levels and

disciplines, 85% of the students in Group A and B schools met between 80% and 100% of the

targeted criteria, showing they understood and demonstrated the criteria in their artwork

and performances. (See Chart 3) To place this in a familiar context, 85% of students received

an A or B on each lesson, a level of achievement that any teacher would be proud of. The

formative nature of performance-based assessments, as used in this study, does not allow for

direct comparison of their results to student results on state mandated year-end tests, which

are summative, testing all content learned in an entire year. Performance-based assessments

are ongoing, day-to-day measures of what a child knows and is able to do that provides a

clear picture of real student achievement to both the student and the teacher.

Professional development in the arts can improve teaching in all subject areas.

Teacher improvement was measured in two ways:

Autonomy Rubric for Teachers (A.R.T.)—Used by Arts Impact since 2002, this analytic rubric is

a tool for measuring levels of teacher performance. Eight different areas are evaluated, including

instructional, assessment and evaluation strategies. Artist-Mentors observe and score teachers

in their ability to teach arts-infused lessons on their own without help from the Artist-Mentor.

A scale of 1 to 4 is used, with each point on the scale correlating to specific skills or activities

observed, and where a 1 or 2 means a teacher is developing skills and a 3 or 4 means they are

proficient in those specific skills or activities. The highest level of teaching is equivalent to a 4.

This evaluation took place multiple times during the course of the study.

The STAR Protocol®—The Star Protocol is a framework in which Powerful Teaching and

Learning are composed of five essential elements: skills, knowledge, thinking, applications and

relationships. Participating teachers and students were observed during non-Arts Impact lessons

and rated on the presence of the five elements on a scale of 0 (not observable) to 4 (clearly

observable). An overall category synthesizes all the essential elements to indicate how well the

observed lesson aligns with Powerful Teaching and Learning.

Outcomes of these two evaluation tools indicate the Arts Impact professional development model

improves teaching across all disciplines. Results of the A.R.T. showed significant teacher growth

between the first and second years of training. The project objective was for 80% of teachers to

be proficient—scoring a 3 or 4 on the rubric—in all eight areas. In the first year, this objective

was met in only two of the eight areas. In the second year, the objective was met in all eight

areas. (See Chart 1)

These outcomes were corroborated by those of the STAR Protocol evaluation, which showed that

by the end of the project Arts Impact teachers were 8-20 percentage points higher than control

teachers in all essential elements of Powerful Teaching and Learning. In the overall category, Arts

Impact teachers scored 20 percent higher than control teachers. (See Chart 2)

Chart 1: Teachers Showed Growth in Autonomy Over Two Years Chart 2: Training in Arts Impact Improved Overall Teaching

Warm-Up

Sequencing

Pacing

Embedded Assessment

Classroom Management

Creative Original Response

Reflection

Criteria Focus

100%

90%

80%

70%

60%

50%

40%

30%

20%

10%

0%

Teaching and assessing skills

defined in the A.R.T. rubric

Percent of teachers in Group A & B schools

rated as proficient by Artist Mentors

72%

92%

56%

92%

72%

97%

72%

92%

78%

92%

58%

97%

89%

100%

91%

100%

82%

85%

85%

89%

88%

85%

88%

87%

84%

PROJECT OBJECTIVE

2007 2010

Percent of teachers meeting

STAR Protocol markers

of powerful teaching and

learning in general math and

literacy classroom lessons.

Group A & B Schools

Group C Schools (control)

Dance Arts

Theater Arts

Visual Arts

Chart 3: Teachers Were Successful on Their Own

2007–2008

Classroom Mentorship

2008-2009

Classroom Mentorship

2009-2010

Independent Teaching

Percent of students in Group A & B schools meeting targeted lesson criteria.

Teachers were supported with classroom mentors during the first two years.

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Arts leadership in the PAL program takes place in four

critical stages of development and implementation.

PAL was at an early stage of development at the outset of this study. While the program had

a clear framework for implementation, directors were open to making enhancements along

the way. A mid-stream evaluation looking at how arts leadership unfolds in PAL schools

identified four distinct stages of leadership development and program implementation. This

finding was unexpected and a pleasant surprise, as it informed updates to the program and

now provides a framework for evaluation. It is also an excellent diagnostic tool that can be

used to assess preparedness and tailor the PAL program to schools’ individual needs.

. Stage 1: Catalytic Spark—PAL takes root more effectively where the spark of

personal passion for the arts or a pedagogical belief in arts as an effective learning

tool exists among school leadership.

. Stage 2: Dynamic Shared Leadership—Principals and key teachers create an Arts

Team that plays an active role in encouraging interest and building participation

within the school community. Successful principals provide vision, participate in goal

setting, model by participating in arts activities and offer flexibility to teachers.

. Stage 3: Effective Systems and Tools—A range of systems and tools, including

professional development, are required to enhance arts skills and teaching capacity

and encourage participation. Professional development focused on technical teaching

skills and lesson plan development is fundamental to a school’s success.

. Stage 4: Sustainability—School-wide cultural change must take place for artsinfused

education to continue beyond the principal’s tenure. Broad engagement

of teachers and staff in planning and arts-infused lesson development appears to

encourage this kind of transformation.

PAL contributes to the sustainability of arts education.

The PAL program was assessed using a qualitative exit survey tracking achievement

in four areas:

. Dynamic Shared Leadership

. Effective Systems and Tools

. Sustainability

. Arts Integration

Group A, B and C schools all participated in the survey, with Group A demonstrating higher

achievement trends in the four areas. The survey outcomes and trends indicated that PAL:

. Successfully assists schools in creating the tools and systems that expand arts

teaching skills and knowledge

. Enhances teacher engagement and school-wide arts programming

. Helps principals and teachers build the infrastructure necessary for

arts-infused education

. Catalyzes school-wide cultural change necessary for sustainable arts programming

Additionally, the multi-year School Arts Plan created by each Group A school was

incorporated into overall school plans and submitted to the school district. This formality

contributes to the sustainability of arts education by holding schools accountable.

“I didn’t know how to look for congruent shapes.

But after Ms. Meredith came, I could spot out

congruent shapes. I didn’t get the meaning of the

word symmetry—after Ms. Debbie came I now

understand the word symmetry.”

—4th grade student

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The trends emerging from this study suggest further research

will be valuable. Project outcomes offer direction on program

implementation and reinforce prior studies showing that more

meaningful learning can take place through arts education.

Principals matter.

Previous studies have shown that principals set the climate and expectations in their

schools, and their support for arts education is essential to its integration in the

classroom. This study reinforces the important role of the school principal. When they

receive leadership training and other professional development, the environment for

arts education improves. Their leadership supports the work of teachers learning to

infuse arts into classroom instruction and leads to sustainable arts education.

A collaboratively developed Arts Plan helps schools keep their focus.

An Arts Plan keeps the arts visible and dynamic for a school. It is a valuable tool to

engage teachers and staff and to create buy in, setting the groundwork for culture

change that will sustain arts education once the principal moves on.

Arts-infused instruction gives teachers a new tool to reach students.

Arts-infused instruction gives teachers new strategies to reach students who struggle

with math and literacy. Learning in and through the arts is active and engages

students in school, a key factor for student success. Arts-infused learning reaches

children through all learning modalities—auditory, kinesthetic, tactile and visual.

Performance-based assessments offer a more

realistic and valuable picture of student achievement.

The current model for identifying educational success labels schools, teachers and

students as successful or failing based on one end-of-year assessment. Performancebased

assessments offer a more realistic and ongoing picture of student strengths and

weaknesses. The performance-based assessments used in Arts Impact, which offer clear

learning goals and evaluation criteria, help teachers engage students in their own

progress. This approach builds student confidence through daily successes and points

out what they need to work on to achieve greater success. Teachers receive immediate

feedback on the success or failure of individual students and the class as a whole,

providing direction on how to adjust instruction appropriately. It is an approach that, if

used more frequently and broadly across the curriculum, creates a portfolio of student

learning demonstrating the day-to-day ability of students to meet state standards.

Arts-infused instruction offers students access to learning

modalities that can open doors to understanding.

With purposeful arts-infused instruction, students find new ways to understand and

demonstrate arts, math and literacy concepts. The conceptual intersections of dance,

theater and visual arts with other subjects:

. Give students more opportunities to show their knowledge

. Provide new ways to communicate ideas

. Apply learning in multiple contexts

. Help students think critically

. Engage students in collaboration

. Nurture creativity

A quality professional development program can make all the difference.

A professional development program offering sufficient and intense training over a

several year period can build the arts knowledge and teaching confidence required for

effective arts-infused education. Long-term training and classroom support can change

the way teachers teach across all disciplines—potentially for the rest of their careers.

Quality leadership training of principals can set in motion changes that lead to a

school’s embrace and sustained implementation of arts-infused education.

WHAT DOES

IT ALL MEAN?

“Several kids said they did not want to go home.

One girl (pretty difficult) said that it was the

best art she ever made, other children were

complimenting each other on their work...’that

is so beautiful’...etc.”

—Arts Impact Mentor describing an

Arts Impact lesson for which she was present

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PSESD and ArtsEd Washington are actively working to bring Arts

Impact and PAL to schools outside of the Puget Sound area—in

combination and as independent programs. Both organizations are

working on replication models, and ArtsEd Washington is working

to expand PAL via a partnership with the Association of Washington

School Principals and a collaborative pre-service model with the

Arts Education Partnership’s Higher Education Working Group.

The Arts Impact Replication Model

PSESD has been working on an Arts Impact

replication model since 2008. During the

2008–09 and 2009–10 school years, three

sites—two Washington schools with local

community partners and one Educational

Service District—were engaged in a pilot

program to test replication. The pilot

program trained teaching artists and

program administrators, offered technical

assistance, and access to education

resources like curricula and evaluation tools.

Roosevelt Elementary School in Bellingham, in partnership with Allied Arts of Whatcom

County, replicated Arts Impact with the greatest degree of fidelity. The school was also

enrolled in the ArtsEd Washington PAL program. This—and a variety of factors such as

strong program administration, a supportive principal and faculty, experienced teaching

artists and an active arts community—contributed to its success.

Best Practices for Arts Impact Replication

Arts Impact is an intensive, long-term model that requires local staff and resources for

successful implementation and sustainability. Although every community replicating

Arts Impact will vary in its cultural, financial and educational resources, certain factors

can make the effort more successful. These include having:

. A strong program administrator with significant arts education background and

experience

. A fully engaged and supportive principal and faculty

. Whole-school participation

. Highly experienced teaching artists

. Support for the program at the district level

. The PAL program implemented in tandem

. Multiple funding sources

. A healthy arts and cultural community

Please contact us to learn how you can bring the inspiration of arts-infused learning

into your school!

ARTS-INFUSED EDUCATION:

COMING TO A

SCHOOL NEAR YOU

“I can honestly say this was the most detailed

piece of writing I have gotten from these

students all year! In fact, it is the most writing

they have produced all year!”

—3rd grade teacher at Birney Elementary, Tacoma School District

remarking about writing samples of her largely English Language

Learner class after participating in arts-infused lessons

Contact us to learn how you can bring the

inspiration of arts-infused learning into your school:

Arts Impact

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