



Turnaround Arts Initiative **Summary of Key Findings**



TURNAROUND: ARTS
creating success in schools

The Evaluation

The two-year evaluation of Turnaround Arts was conducted by Booz Allen Hamilton. It was led by a Principal Investigator from the University of Chicago Urban Education Institute and supported by a Research Associate trained in evaluating arts integration. The evaluation captured descriptive aspects of the use of high-quality and integrated arts education and analyzed outcome data to understand the impact of the use of the arts as a part of school turnaround. The evaluation drew upon diverse data including surveys, classroom observation, interviews, focus groups, document review, and analysis of student achievement, discipline and attendance data.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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Turnaround Arts Initiative

Summary of Key Findings

In 2014, the Turnaround Arts initiative completed an evaluation report covering two years of program implementation. The final report provides a description and analysis of program impacts in the pilot cohort of 8 Turnaround Arts schools by the end of their second year. This includes summaries of program operation and implementation practices and outcomes in school reform indicators and student achievement data. In this brief, we provide an overview of key findings from the broader evaluation report. The full report can be found at: pcah.gov.



Background

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 program sits within the larger context of the national school reform landscape in the United States, in which it has become evident that improving outcomes in the lowest-performing schools is among the most significant challenges we face. These lowest-performing schools are characterized by high teacher and principal turnover, low levels of trust among adults, significant disciplinary issues, and low attendance. They are disproportionately schools that serve low-income students of color.

The premise of Turnaround Arts is that, used strategically within this context, arts education offerings can provide school leadership with powerful levers to support the turnaround process. In particular, the program focuses on improving school climate and culture, deepening instruction, and increasing student and parent engagement, as a pathway to improved academic achievement.

As part of the Turnaround Arts program, all schools received intensive arts education resources and expertise, including professional development, school-wide strategic planning, principal coaching, partnerships with local arts education and cultural organizations, community engagement events, arts supplies, musical instruments, and the involvement of high-profile artists.



Arts education offerings can provide school leadership with powerful levers to support the turnaround process.

Turnaround Arts Schools

Turnaround Arts schools serve diverse populations, span the country, exist in urban and rural settings, and represent both traditional public and charter schools. All Turnaround Arts schools were part of a larger pool of schools receiving School Improvement Grants (SIG), large 3-year federal grants that target the bottom five percent of schools in each state and mandate relatively prescriptive intervention models. Schools were competitively selected from nominations solicited from state and municipal authorities, in coordination with the U.S. Department of Education.



1

ReNew Cultural Arts Academy

New Orleans, LA

Grade Level PK-8

Race and Ethnicity
99% African American
1% Other

Enrollment 600

Free and Reduced Lunch 99%

2

Findley Elementary School

Des Moines, IA

Grade Level PK-5

Race and Ethnicity
30% Caucasian
30% African American
30% Latino
10% Other

Enrollment 325

Free and Reduced Lunch 94%

3

Lame Deer Middle School

Lame Deer, MT

Grade Level 7, 8

Race and Ethnicity
99% American Indian
1% Other

Enrollment 90

Free and Reduced Lunch 100%

4

Martin Luther King, Jr. School

Portland, OR

Grade Level K-8

Race and Ethnicity
46% African American
32% Latino
10% Caucasian
2% Asian
10% Other

Enrollment 331

Free and Reduced Lunch 90%

5

Noel Community Arts

Denver, CO

Grade Level 6, 7

Race and Ethnicity
58% Latino
32% African American
6% Other
4% Caucasian

Enrollment 360

Free and Reduced Lunch 88%

6

Orchard Gardens K-8 Pilot School

Boston, MA

Grade Level K-8

Race and Ethnicity
50% Latino
45% African American
2% Caucasian
1% Asian
2% Other

Enrollment 857

Free and Reduced Lunch 100%

7

Roosevelt Elementary School

Bridgeport, CT

Grade Level K-8

Race and Ethnicity
51% Latino
42% African American
4% Caucasian
2% Asian
1% Other

Enrollment 590

Free and Reduced Lunch 100%

8

Savoy Elementary School

Washington, DC

Grade Level PK-5

Race and Ethnicity
98% African American
2% Other

Enrollment 408

Free and Reduced Lunch 92%

The Turnaround Arts Pillars

Turnaround Arts is built 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 pillars are described below:

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.

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 received intensive arts education resources and expertise to further develop these pillars and deploy them strategically to enhance and support broader school goals.

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.

FINDINGS

Program Implementation

The evaluation report provides a snapshot of the strategic mobilization of the pillars and the use of the arts in classrooms. The report articulates the following findings:

» **High prevalence of arts resources in Turnaround Arts schools.**

Turnaround Arts schools have a broad spread of arts education programming that is not common in comparable high-poverty, low-performing schools. Students are being exposed to a variety of arts disciplines for a significant amount of time.

» **High prevalence of the use of the arts in non-arts classrooms.**

Information collected on a log of teacher instructional practice and through classroom observations revealed a high prevalence of the use of the arts in non-arts classrooms, in connection with other subject matter content.

» **Intentional development of the pillars as a lever for school improvement.**

Looking across Turnaround Arts schools, there was evidence of deep application of the pillars. Different Turnaround Arts schools focused intentionally on particular pillars as levers for school improvement.

» **Evidence of strategic mobilization of the arts toward larger school improvement goals.**

School leaders and teachers creatively mobilized the arts toward larger school improvement goals. Leaders and teachers were able to articulate the ways in which they were using the arts to improve school outcomes, and examples of this mobilization were evident.

» **Relationships between implementation of Turnaround Arts and broader school improvement outcomes.**

Schools that exhibited higher levels of implementation of arts education generally had higher levels of school improvement on other indicators.

Teacher Practice in Arts Integration

The vast majority of those who completed the teacher log survey reported teaching the arts in their classroom in connection with other non-arts subject matter content. Eighty-five percent reported they had taught a lesson that included the arts during the 2013-14 school year, and nearly 70 percent had used the arts in a lesson within two weeks prior to completing the teacher log. Only 15 percent of teachers reported they had not included the arts in their instruction.



85%

**of all teachers at
Turnaround Arts
schools report
integrating the
arts in their
classrooms over
the school year.**

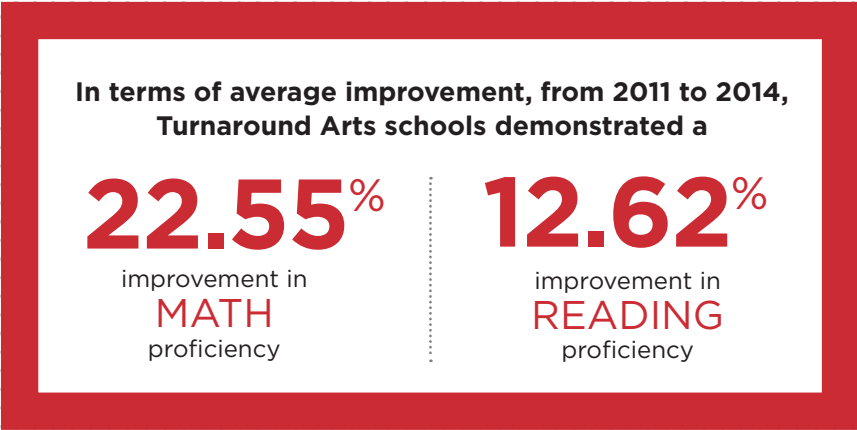
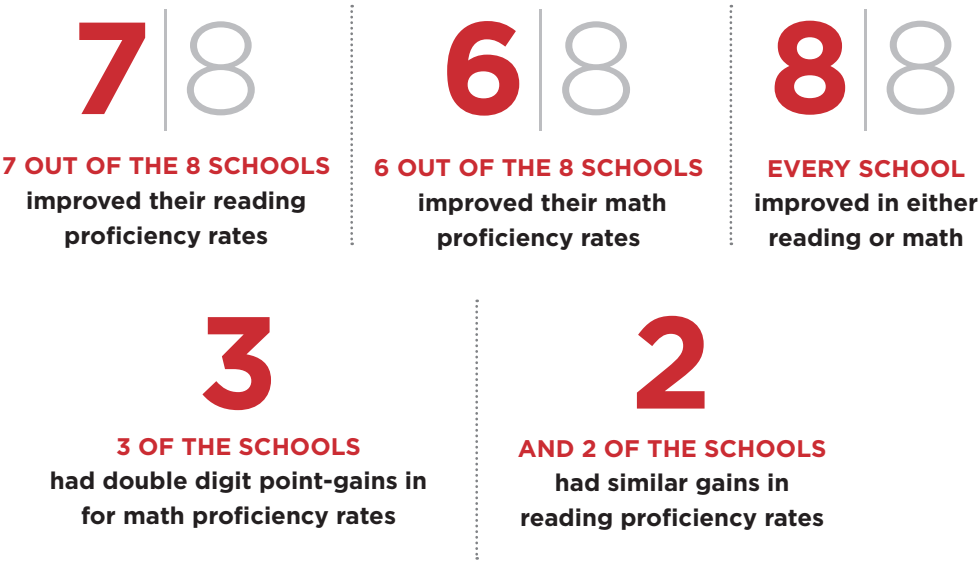
FINDINGS

Program Impact

To measure program impact of Turnaround Arts, the evaluation team drew upon a wide range of data, including standardized test data and other school improvement indicators (attendance, disciplinary action, and teacher perceptions). In this section, we summarize high-level findings from the final evaluation report.

Student Achievement

Between 2011 and 2014, Turnaround Arts schools demonstrated significant progress in student achievement. Although not all schools progressed at the same rate across both math and reading proficiency, most Turnaround Arts schools made substantial improvement:¹



¹Across 2011-2014, there are 3 data points that are missing across the 8 schools. One was not in existence in 2011 and therefore is missing the 2011 data point. Two were in states that piloted the Common Core State Standards assessments in 2014. Because these were pilot assessments, the states did not report out data for 2014. For these 3 schools all available years of data were used.

Findley Elementary School (IA)

- » Findley has improved math proficiency by 11.40 percentage points since 2011, which is 7.50 points higher than its school district.
- » In reading proficiency, Findley gained 2.50 percentage points between 2011 and 2014.
- » This is remarkable considering that its school district's overall reading proficiency decreased by 5 points.
- » 100% of educators surveyed at Findley agreed that the arts contributed to heightened ambition of instruction and overall improvement of the school environment.

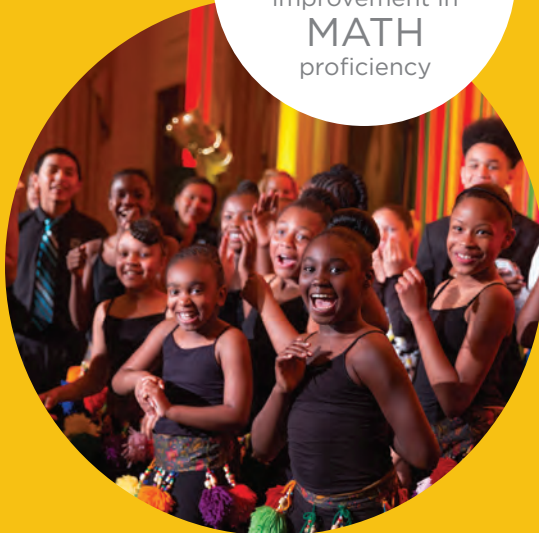


Reading scores
IMPROVED
as district reading
scores decreased

School Achievement Spotlights

120%

improvement in
MATH
proficiency



Savoy Elementary School (DC)

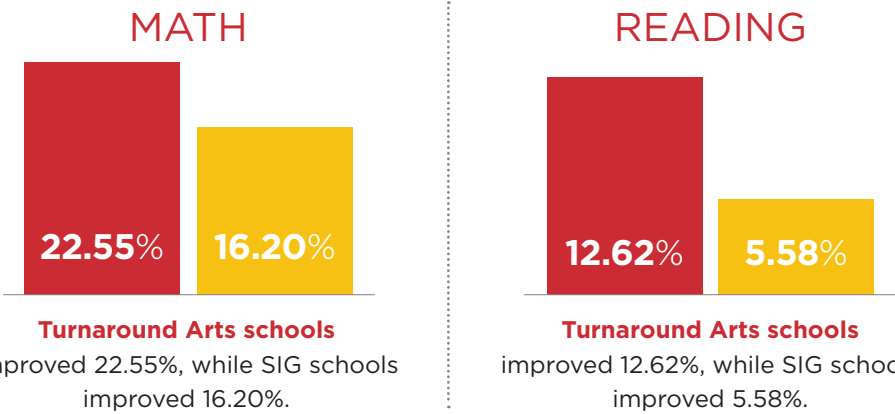
- » Savoy has improved math proficiency by 18.22 percentage points since 2011, which is 9.75 points higher than its local school district and 8.94 points higher than comparable DC schools that have received federal School Improvement Grants.
- » Savoy's 2014 math proficiency rate reflects a 120% improvement from 2011.
- » In reading proficiency, Savoy gained 10.60 percentage points between 2011 and 2014, which is 7.17 points higher than its district, and 3 points higher than its SIG cohort.
- » In 2014, 4 out of 5 educators surveyed agreed that an increased arts focus increases ambition of instruction and improves parent involvement in students' education.

Comparison Groups

In addition, the evaluation team compared Turnaround Arts schools to other schools in their states that receive federal School Improvement Grants (SIG).² The evaluation found that on average Turnaround Arts schools have higher rates of improvement in both math and reading than comparable SIG schools and district schools, as illustrated below:

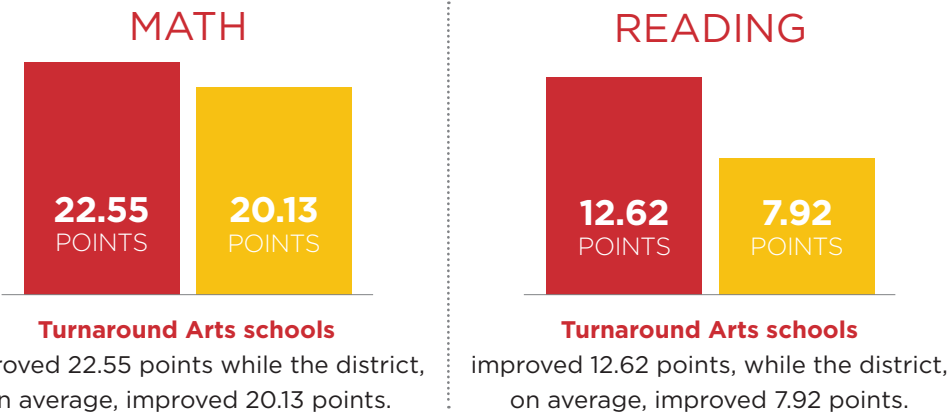
Comparing against SIG-recipient Schools

Turnaround Arts schools on average had higher rates of improvement in both math and reading than the cohort of analogous SIG schools between 2011 and 2014.



Comparing against School Districts

Turnaround Arts schools on average had a higher rate of improvement in both math and reading than the average of their school districts between 2011 and 2014.



² SIG schools were selected for comparison from (1) the districts of the Turnaround Arts schools, or (2) from the state of the Turnaround Arts schools, in the case that a certain school district has fewer than 2 SIG schools.

A photograph of a female teacher with blonde hair, wearing a blue and purple patterned shirt, leaning over a desk. She is smiling and looking at a piece of white paper. A young Black girl with braided hair, wearing a green polo shirt and a blue and white star-patterned hair tie, is sitting at the desk. She is holding a green marker and smiling. On the desk, there is a string of colorful beads (yellow, blue, and white) and some papers. The background is slightly blurred, showing shelves with various items.

**Turnaround
Arts schools
outperformed
comparable SIG
schools in both math
and reading from
2011-2014.**

School Reform Indicators

The evaluation team also analyzed attendance rates and disciplinary data from each of the Turnaround Arts schools. In addition, teachers at each school were surveyed regarding their perception of the impact of the Turnaround Arts program. For many of the schools, it was apparent that attendance and/or discipline were both improving over time. For instance:

Attendance

» Half of the Turnaround Arts schools improved their attendance rates significantly between 2011 and 2014, with an average attendance rate of 91.77%

**AVERAGE
ATTENDANCE RATE**

91.77%



**For many of
the schools, it was
apparent that
attendance and/or
discipline were
both improving
over time.**

Discipline

» More than half of Turnaround Arts schools dramatically reduced in-school and out-of-school suspensions. For example:

NEW ORLEANS LA:

51.32%
overall suspension reduction

81.13%
in-school suspension reduction
between 2011 and 2014

DES MOINES IA:

57.14%
out-of-school suspension reduction
between 2011 and 2014

35.10%
overall reduction
in disciplinary referrals

BOSTON MA:

0
reported expulsions in 2014

85.90%
overall suspension reduction
between 2011 and 2014

PORTLAND OR:

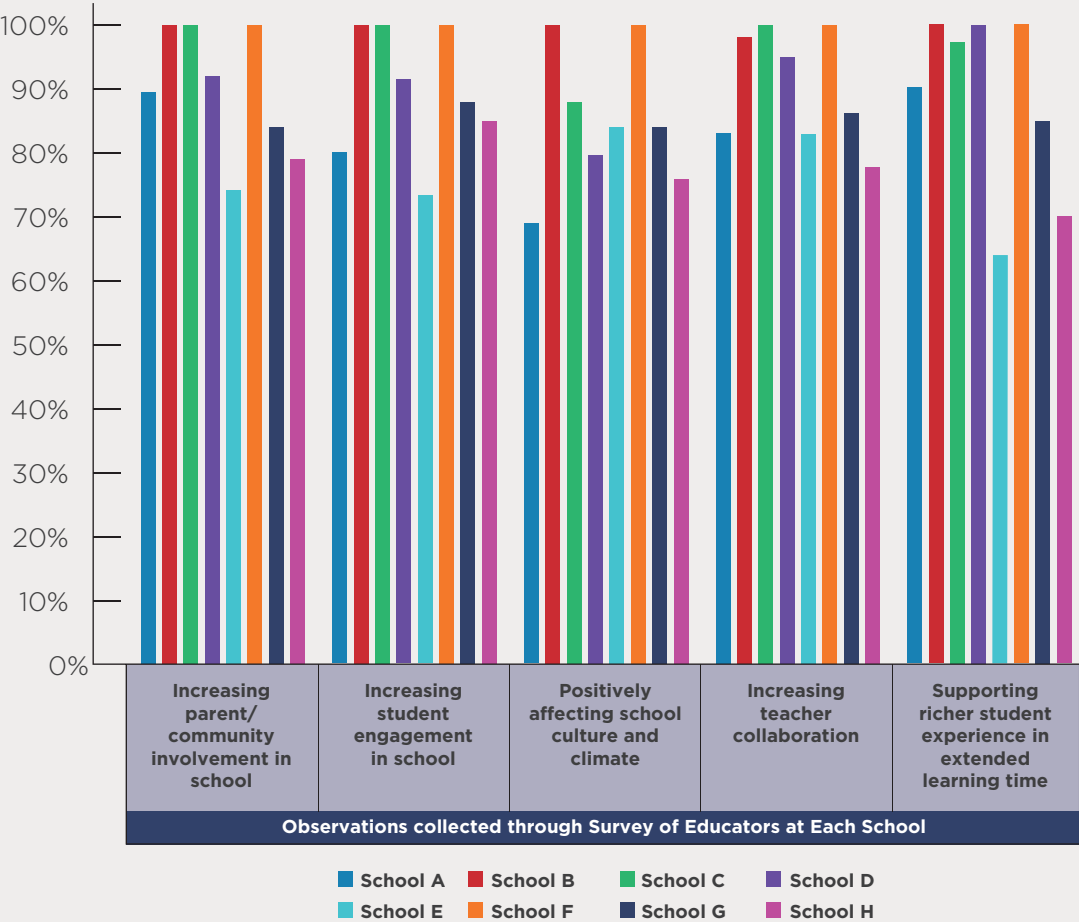
70%
reduction in both in- and
out-of-school suspensions
between 2011 and 2014



Teacher Perceptions

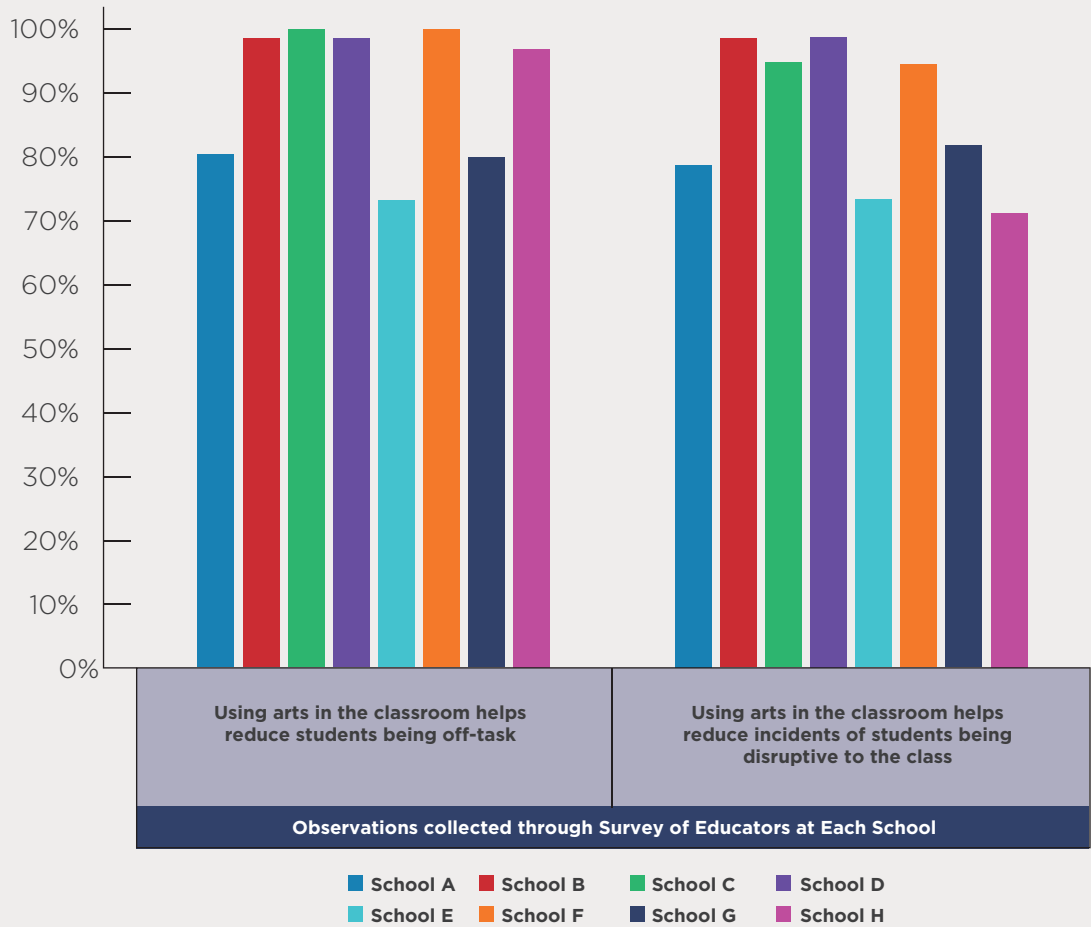
The majority of survey respondents agreed that the Turnaround Arts program was having a positive influence on their school in terms of parent and student engagement, collaboration among teachers, and overall enhancement of the educational experience.

Perceptions of Impact of Arts Programming on Engagement and School Culture





Perceptions of Impact of Arts Programming on Discipline



Conclusion

Turnaround Arts marks the first federal effort to support the use of arts education in the targeted improvement of some of America's lowest performing schools. The program is built on the premise that arts education offerings provide school leadership with powerful tools to improve school climate and culture, as well as increase student and parent engagement, which can ultimately contribute to improvements in student outcomes.

At the conclusion of the evaluation, researchers saw numerous positive outcomes that suggest program success. They found evidence of significant change in the depth and breadth of the use of the arts and intentional efforts to build infrastructure, capacity and high quality staff to bring the arts to bear in Turnaround Arts schools in deep ways. They saw leaders who had learned to strategically use the arts toward broader school goals. And they found a majority of schools that made substantial improvements in student achievement and school reform indicators, outperforming comparable schools and their own school districts. These are hopeful findings as more educators and policymakers explore using the arts to positively influence student engagement, school culture, instructional practice, and school outcomes in the country's lowest-performing schools.



About PCAH

The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. The Committee works with government agencies and the private sector to initiate and support key programs in the arts and the humanities, particularly in education. Members of PCAH include federal officials and presidentially-appointed private individuals.

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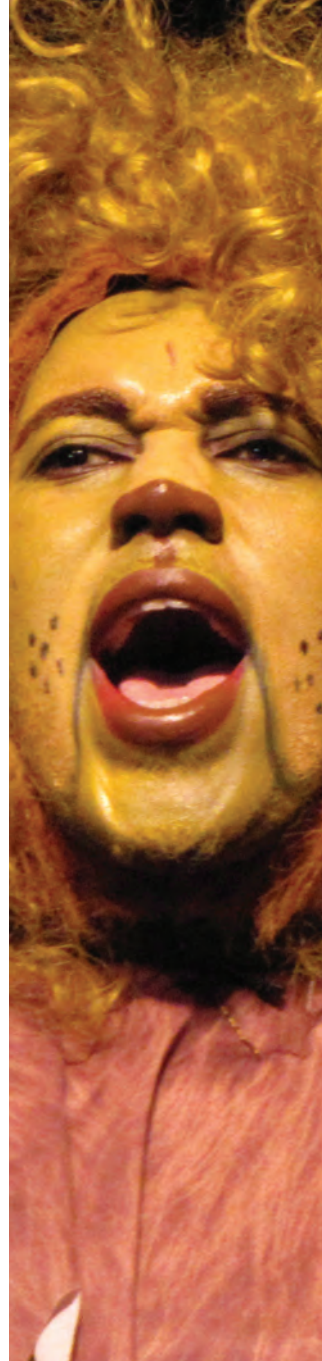
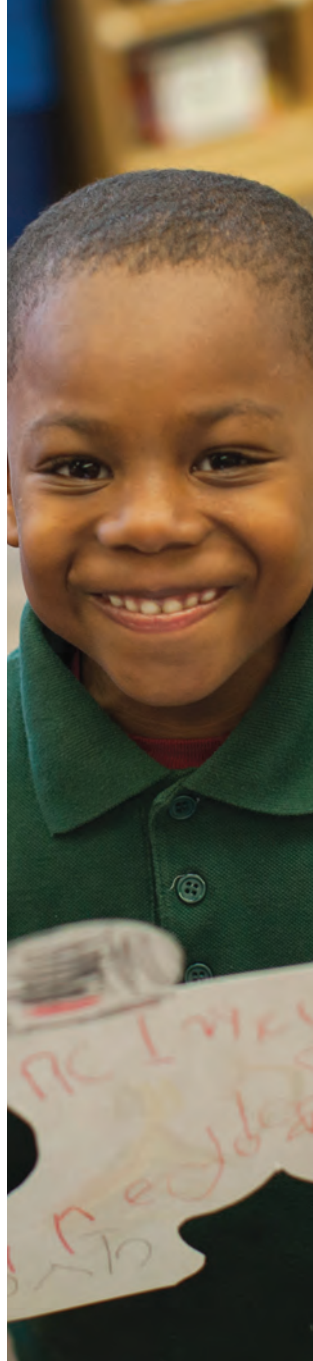
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