

arts INfusion

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Department of Curriculum and Accountability

Shelby County Schools receives \$1 million dollar arts infusion grant

SCS will infuse art and music into reading and math classes in 17 schools

The Shelby County Schools Department of Curriculum and Accountability has been awarded a one million dollar grant from the U.S. Department of Education to infuse art and music teaching strategies into reading and math classes at 17 elementary and middle schools. Each year, schools across the country are selected to participate in the Professional Development for Arts Educators-Arts in Education program, also known as PDAE. These schools typically receive three year grants to implement professional development in economically disadvantaged schools.

Brad Foust, music teacher at Highland Oaks Elementary School, has been selected to facilitate the grant. Mr. Foust has substantial experience in teaching in an arts integrated setting, and his work in arts integration was featured in a March 2009 article in *The Commercial Appeal*.

Beginning in early 2010, four pilot schools will be selected to begin the arts infusion process. Initially, this will entail professional development sessions in arts infusion techniques, as well as attendance at a summer arts infusion conference. Participating classroom teachers, art and music teachers and an administrator from each school will be involved in the sessions. According to Oklahoma A+ Schools, a nationally recognized network of arts infused schools, collaboration is one of the pillars of a

successful arts infusion program. These sessions will give participants opportunities to work together in creating professional learning communities in the pilot schools. By the end of the grant period, teachers from all 17 elementary and middle schools will have received training in arts infusion.

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10 Lessons The Arts Teach

-The arts teach children to make good judgments about qualitative relationships. Unlike much of the curriculum in which correct answers and rules prevail, in the arts, it is judgment rather than rules that prevail.

-The arts teach children that problems can have more than one solution and that questions can have more than one answer.

-The arts celebrate multiple perspectives. One of their large lessons is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world.

-The arts teach children that in complex forms of problem-solving purposes are seldom fixed, but change with circumstance and opportunity. Learning in the arts requires the ability and willingness to surrender to the unanticipated possibilities of the work as it unfolds.

-The arts make vivid the fact that words do not, in their literal form or number, exhaust what we can know. The limits of our language do not define the limits of our cognition.

-The arts teach students that small differences can have large effects. The arts traffic in subtleties.

-The arts teach students to think through and within a material. All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

-The arts help children learn to say what cannot be said. When children are invited to disclose what a work of art helps them feel, they must reach into their poetic capacities to find the words that will do the job.

-The arts enable us to have experience we can have from no other source and through such experience to discover the range and variety of what we are capable of feeling.

-The arts' position in the school curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important.

Elliot Eisner. *Beyond Creating: The Place for Art in America's Schools*. Getty Center for Education in the Arts. 1985, p. 69.

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What is arts infusion?

Arts infusion is an approach to teaching that brings the arts into the regular classroom setting to inspire creativity and promote problem solving skills in non-arts subjects. While this concept may seem novel, it actually possesses a deep and rich history. The roots of arts infusion extend back to the early 20th century, when John Dewey called for a "correlated curriculum" in American schools. His groundbreaking book, *Art As Experience*, outlines the unique qualities the arts offer students in the process of learning. Arts infusion also finds inspiration in the work of educational pioneers Jerome Bruner (constructivism) and Howard Gardner (multiple intelligences). In an arts infused lesson, students use critical thinking skills to explore problems and construct real-world solutions. As stated in the book *Renaissance in the Classroom*, arts infusion is "a powerful vehicle to cross the boundaries of core subjects and arts concepts, affective and cognitive modes of expression, form and content, process and products, the self and the world."

SCS Arts Infusion Grant Details

- Arts infusion provides another way of looking at content strategies- students will show their learning through a variety of activities- students will show knowledge in more than one way
- The grant is designed to build the capacity of SCS to provide additional support to teachers and students through its arts integration program
- The grant will provide leverage to SCS's current arts curriculum and will create a comprehensive professional development program in arts education that will serve 17 schools
- The curriculum will address the integration of arts into language arts and math
- Participants will construct arts integrated lesson plans, particularly in the areas of language arts and math

Grant Goals

Goal 1: Design and implement a model PD arts education program for 17 SCS elementary and middle schools

Goal 2: Develop a high quality, comprehensive arts integration professional development curriculum that can be replicated in other settings

Goal 3: Show an increase in academic achievement in language arts and math with students who are directly impacted by this program