

# Report to the State of Minnesota and the Minnesota Legislature

Perpich Center for Arts Education

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*Status of projects supported by funds from  
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## Legacy Initiative Background

As the state agency dedicated to K-12 arts education since 1985, the Perpich Center for Arts Education has the expertise, tools, and infrastructure to design and provide innovative and effective programs to meet the learning needs of students and teachers statewide. The Center is comprised of an arts high school, outreach initiatives, and a state arts education library. More information about the Perpich Center can be found at <http://www.pcae.k12.mn.us/>

In November 2008, Minnesota voters approved a constitutional amendment that created a dedicated sales tax to fund work related to clean water, land, habitat, parks, trails, arts, and cultural heritage. In 2009, a Senate sub-committee on arts education tasked the Perpich Center for Arts Education with designing and implementing two high quality educational projects using Arts and Cultural Heritage funds: the *Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers (PAINT)* and the *Arts Education in Minnesota Schools Research Project*. The *Arts Education in Minnesota Schools Research Project*<sup>1</sup> concluded in 2012. Due to initial successes, the Minnesota Legislature asked the Perpich Center to continue to expand its *Arts Integration Network of Teachers* in rural Minnesota for two successive biennia, including the 2013-2014 biennial session, with an appropriation of \$1.5 million for those two years.

The following chart indicates the budget categories for this project and use of funds from July 1, 2013 through June 30, 2015.

<b>Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers Fiscal Years 2014-2015 Activity</b>	<b>Budgeted Funds</b>
Program Development and Delivery; Technology Integration	\$ 303,000
Lakes Country Region: Teacher Professional Development, Network of Teachers and Implementation at School Sites (FY 2014 only)	\$ 72,000
Southeast Region: Teacher Professional Development, Network of Teachers and Implementation at School Sites	\$ 483,000
Northeast Region: Teacher Professional Development, Network of Teachers and Implementation at School Sites (FY 2015 only)	\$ 270,000
Arts-Integrated Secondary Course Initiative: Teacher Professional Development, Network of Teachers and Course Planning (FY 2015 only)	\$ 140,000
Curriculum Documentation, Project Dissemination and Accountability	\$ 192,000
Legacy Project Administration	\$ 40,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$ 1,500,000</b>

<sup>1</sup> [http://www.pcae.k12.mn.us/index.php?section=outreach\\_publications\\_survey](http://www.pcae.k12.mn.us/index.php?section=outreach_publications_survey)

## Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers

### Overview and Goals

Recent research and evaluation shows that arts education produces multiple and sustained positive impacts on student learning, including cognitive, social and emotional impacts.<sup>2</sup> Based on this research, a report from the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities<sup>3</sup> has proposed five actions to clarify the role of arts education in a comprehensive education appropriate for all students:

1. Collaborate to build and demonstrate connections among different educators
2. Develop the field of arts integration
3. Expand the role of teaching artists in partnership with arts specialist and classroom teachers
4. Reinforce the place of the arts in K-12 education at the local, state and federal levels
5. Expand access to practical tools for educators to measure student learning resulting from the arts

Consistent with these actions, the Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers engages teacher collaboration across subjects, and helps expand the use of arts integration as a strategy for increasing student learning and engagement. It catalyzes opportunities for teaching artists and other community experts to add immediate educational value, and to build future school and teacher capacity through K-12 teacher professional development and funding for teacher teams to develop and document curriculum. The project is regionally based with a focus on rural Minnesota schools. In 2014, networks are active in Lakes Country (west central Minnesota) and the southeast. Schools have also been selected through a competitive application process for a new network in the northeast and for a statewide network of secondary schools working to develop whole courses based on arts integration. Through this arts integration project, the Perpich Center is providing a vision and demonstrating what can be possible in education reform and improvement.

The project defines *arts integration* as a strategy involving teaching the content and processes of two or more subject areas, including the arts, in combination to increase and deepen student learning, inquiry and engagement. With arts integration at the center, the Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers aims to reach the following project goals:

**Goal 1:** Increase the capacity of teachers to design, implement, and assess collaborative arts integration in Minnesota schools, and the capacity of administrators to support this instructional strategy.

**Goal 2:** Improve standards-based student learning through collaborative arts integration, a strategy used by teachers and supported by administrators.

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<sup>2</sup> Arts Education Partnership (2015). <http://www.aep-arts.org/research-policy/> retrieved January 2015.

<sup>3</sup> President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (2011). *Reinvesting in arts education: Winning America's future through creative schools*. [www.pcah.gov](http://www.pcah.gov).

Our strategies for reaching these goals include:

- Professional development for teachers and administrators on standards-based collaborative arts integration; aligned curriculum, instruction and evaluation; and technology tools
- Leveraging technology for professional development and dissemination of teacher and student learning and examples

**Project components include:**

**Professional Development and Facilitation:** Teacher professional development is one of the best investments that can be made for increasing student achievement and engagement<sup>4</sup>. Arts Integration Network teachers work together to plan, teach, and assess integrated lessons that are student-centered and standards-based. Supported by Perpich facilitators, teams of three to eight teachers build skills as they plan and teach units of study that integrate the arts (dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts) with other subjects such as social studies, math, English language arts, and science.

- Teachers in the network use inquiry to expand thinking on arts integration and their own practice. They learn strategies for:
  - o Integrating the arts with other content areas in meaningful, engaging ways;
  - o Aligning standards, learning goals, and assessments; and
  - o Reflecting on and learning from student work.
- **Professional development components:**
  - o Multi-day workshops during summers;
  - o Three one-day network meetings in the region with other school teams throughout the school year, each preceded by online learning modules;
  - o Coaching meetings with Perpich facilitators on-site and online.

*What we're doing in Perpich is so relevant. We can use it. For instance, in our school . . . we are supposed to unpack standards. The Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers has walked us through it. They are so organized and clear. I don't know how they come up with it. Why did we spin our wheels doing this before?  
- Teacher, 2013-14*

**Professional Network, Online and In-Person:** Building bridges across disciplines involves tearing down silos and finding exciting and important connections between content areas, within school teams, and across regions. Together, throughout the program, school teams:

- o Share expertise,
  - o Solve problems,
  - o Give and get feedback,
  - o Brainstorm instructional strategies,
  - o Reflect on lessons, and
  - o Celebrate successes.
- **Networking with other teachers in two different spaces:** in person at workshops and meetings,

*We are trying to do something different this year with Perpich. The kids are grasping the content far better than they did when we taught that standard before Perpich."  
- Teacher, 2013-14*

<sup>4</sup> Marzano, R.J. (2003). *What works in school: Translating research into action*. Alexandria: ASCD.

and online in a learning community and through learning modules.

**Documentation and Technology:** School teams contribute to the big picture of arts integration in Minnesota by digitally documenting and sharing their exemplary unit plans, practices, and samples of student work.

Featured on the project website, there is documentation that in its first four years (2010-2014) the Perpich Arts Integration Network of Teachers has positively impacted the learning of more than 6,400 students in the Lakes Country and Southeast regions. Nearly 200 teachers in the arts and in other content areas have engaged in professional development leading to intentional, collaborative planning and teaching of arts-integrated curriculum based on the Minnesota Academic Standards. The year 2014 has seen the continuation and expansion of critical aspects of Perpich Center professional development initiatives leading to impact on teacher growth and student learning and engagement in participating schools as described below.

## Results 2013-14: Teacher and Student Learning

The following is an overview of impact of the project in 2013-14, based on documentation and analysis completed by the project's external evaluators, George Noblit, Dick Corbett, Bruce Wilson, and Alison LaGarry. Findings about the project's progress toward its goals are from the evaluators' final report for the 2013-14 project year, *Teacher and Student Learning in the Perpich Arts Integration Project 2013-14*, resulting from data gathered in both the Lakes Country and Southeast regions. These results not only help Perpich staff define and measure impact, but also improve the project design and implementation. The 2012-2014, two-year report can be found on the project website:

<http://artsintegration.perpich.mn.gov/>

### Students

Evaluators found, “**students in arts-integrated lessons are 4.4 times more likely to be highly thoughtful and highly engaged than in regular classroom instruction**” (Noblit et al. 2014 p. 3). Synthesizing their evaluations of teacher development and student learning in the project, evaluators stated that, “the Perpich Arts Integration Project increased teacher capacity in such a way so as to lead to instruction that engendered high levels of student engagement and thoughtfulness as well as relatively high performance overall” (Noblit et al, 2014 p. 6). Evaluators found that to a great extent, students learned what was intended through arts integration, in all content areas involved. Importantly, though, the way they arrived at that point differed from the typical classroom experience, both in terms of engagement and degree of thoughtfulness and rigor.

### *Increases in student engagement and thoughtfulness*

The evaluation team observed 58 classroom lessons in participating schools taught during the 2013-14 academic year. Some lessons were part of an arts-integrated unit, some were not; some lessons involved the arts, and some did not. Evaluators observed that 97% of lessons involving the arts showed students highly engaged, up from 92% in the 2012-13 academic year. While the level of student engagement in non-arts classes remained at 53%. Significantly, 70% of lessons involving the arts showed



students being highly thoughtful, or acting rigorously, a 14% increase from the 2012-13 school year. While student thoughtfulness observed in non-arts classrooms rose from 32% to 38%, a 6% increase.

In contrast to these increases in observed levels of student engagement and thoughtful behaviors, 62% of surveyed students involved with arts integration through the project reported that they would like to learn via arts integration more often, down from 75% in 2012-13. These declines are the result of changes in student opinions about their units among middle and high school students, and warrant further examination in the 2014-15 project year. Even so, a gratifying majority of students across all grade levels regarded their arts integrated units favorably.

Evaluation of the 2013-14 project year provided detail to explain a 2012-2013 project year finding, “That data show that students’ opportunities to participate actively in a range of ways broadened in the Perpich units . . . Students quite simply got to be more active, . . .” (Noblit et al, 2013). In the most recent year, researchers surveyed teachers about the presence of nine activities that educators and researchers often agree strengthen instruction. Eight of these activities were represented in integrated instruction at levels that were statistically significant. These instructional benefits may help explain why arts integration allows struggling students to flourish.



### Teachers

The project evaluation for 2012-13 highlighted five areas of great improvement in teacher capacity: creating arts-integrated units; aligning work to benchmarks; knowledge of arts integration; collaboration with colleagues, and in making modifications to instruction based on student work, and suggested that teachers, “gained considerable facility with collaboration (not only with colleagues but also with Perpich staff), the Minnesota system of standards and benchmarks, and arts integration” (p. 13). The 2013-14 project evaluation discovered many of the same improvements as well as a “distinguishable cumulative effect, perceived by teachers, from being involved with Perpich over a longer period of time” (Noblit et al, 2014, p11).

### Sustaining the Learning

With the goal of strengthening understanding of project sustainability, evaluators surveyed teachers to probe the intersection between nine professional actions teachers determined would be important to sustain arts integration in the future, and those they determined were most likely to be sustained. They found strong alignment between the two. The top five professional actions in order of those most likely to be sustained included:

- 1) Collaborating with colleagues
- 2) Aligning learning goals, assessments, and evaluative criteria to benchmarks

*We are learning to work as a team. It is getting easier. We have always struggled with communication in the past. . . . I like how we now have time to reflect on what we have done. . . . We are learning from each other by switching classes and observing each other. We are better teachers for having done this. . . . We are now on the same page and it is great for kids.*  
- Teacher, 2013-14

- 3) Creating arts integrated units
- 4) Reflecting on student work
- 5) Making modifications to teaching or instruction that responds to examination of student work

Evaluators provided new detail about the process for looking at student work introduced by the project leaders and specifically, the development of teacher facilitators of the process. They observed “an increase in confidence among teacher facilitators . . . One facilitator opened the sessions specifically stating, ‘My job is to push you and prod you to dig deeper’” (Noblit et al, 2014, p18). Evaluators referred to these interrogations as *responding by questioning*, a way to point to specific evidence of learning, and to adapt successful learning experiences for other learners and subjects.



The Perpich Center continues to value the work of external evaluators to gather and analyze data in order to understand the impact of our work on students, teachers, and administrators in the field of arts integration. The Center is dedicated to building evidence and research on the impact of arts integration as an important contribution to education reform.

### Regional Network Snapshot: Lakes Country, Year 4

As the first region selected to be a part of this project, the Lakes Country network has been active since the 2010-11 school year. In the fourth year of the project (academic year 2013-14), 26 teachers at six schools in the Lakes Country region (Clay, Becker, Wilkin, Otter Tail, Traverse, Grant, Douglas, Stevens, and Pope counties) designed arts-integrated learning experiences for a total of 420 students:

- Breckenridge High School, 9-12
- Lake Park Audubon Elementary School, K-6
- New York Mills Secondary School, 7-12
- Osakis Elementary School, K-6
- Pelican Rapids Elementary School, K-4
- Rothsay Elementary and Secondary School, K-12

*I appreciated the variety of resources to explore the Common Core and the ability to complete the activities when I had time during the 2 weeks the module was active.*  
- Teacher, 2013-14

Arts integrated units in the 2013-14 academic year involved: visual arts, music, media arts, theater, dance, history, social studies, science, math, geography, English and language arts, family and consumer sciences, and technology.

Over the course of four years, Lakes Country teachers engaged in arts experiences with Perpich Center media arts professionals, a local native American visual artist, and artists from The Center for the Arts in Fergus Falls. Teachers designed learning experiences drawing on experts that included: a nationally known author and illustrator, a local professional photographer, a calligraphy expert, a drumming corp, and a local puppeteer. Teachers also utilized local resources at the Prairie Wetland Learning Center in Fergus Falls, Maplewood State Park, and the Trollwood Performing Arts School.



### Shift to online professional development and regional collaboration

In this final year of Lakes Country participation, project staff used technology as a vehicle for teachers to learn from and collaborate with peers in their region. Teachers engaged in fewer face-to-face workshop convenings and coaching sessions with Perpich staff. Instead, coaching was conducted via Skype, or WebEx. As teacher teams planned arts integrated units, they collaborated with each other for feedback on their units instead of relying on Perpich coaches, by using online tools such as Google docs.



Additionally, teachers participated in online professional development through multifaceted, two-week, learning modules focused on the intersection of arts integration and the Common Core English Language Arts standards as well as Twenty-First Century skills. Teachers accessed video and online materials and participated in discussions through a private community part of the arts integration project website. Eighty percent of participants found the online learning environment to be an effective vehicle for their personal professional development.

### **Regional Network Snapshot: Southeast, Year 2**

The Southeast regional network began activity in the 2012-13 school year, and has expanded in its second year to involve 61 participants in 13 schools in the southeast region (Dodge, Fillmore, Freeborn, Goodhue, Houston, Mower, Olmstead, Steele, Wabasha and Winona counties). During these two years 3327 students have experienced arts-integrated units of instruction, 1810 during 2013-14, at these school sites:

- Alden Conger Elementary School, Alden, K-6
- John Adams Middle School, Rochester, 6-8
- La Crescent Middle School, La Crescent, 6-8
- La Crescent High School, La Crescent, 9-12
- LeRoy-Ostrander Secondary School, LeRoy, 6-12
- Mabel Canton School, Mabel, K-12
- McKinley Elementary School, Owatonna, 6-12
- Plainview-Elgin-Millville Upper Elementary, Elgin, 4-6
- Plainview-Elgin-Millville High School, Plainview, 9-12
- Sibley Elementary School, Albert Lea, K-5
- Southland Middle and High School, Adams, 6-12
- Southland Elementary School, Adams, K-5
- Triton Public Schools, Dodge Center, K-12

*We have five different styles, philosophies and comfort levels, but we have been able to use the units to play to our strengths.*  
- Teacher, 2013-14

Arts integrated units in the 2013-14 academic year involved: visual arts, media arts, dance, theater, social studies, English language arts, Spanish, science, math, engineering and technology.

Experiential learning was modeled for teachers using community resources and experts including: Heart of the Beast Puppet Theater, Cowles Center for Dance and Minnesota Center for Book Arts. As a result, teachers designed units that made use of community resources and experts, such as: local historical museums, art museums, Ojibwe and Dakota cultural representatives, community elders, and a variety of artists working with spoken word, photography and two and three-dimensional visual arts media. Identifying and interacting with community resources to extend learning outside the classroom walls is a key arts integration benefit to be continued in the final year of Southeast network activity, 2014-2015.

#### New blended learning opportunities explored through website

The project website has afforded new opportunities to extend professional development beyond regular face-to-face workshops in the Southeast region. Project staff experimented with blended learning opportunities for teachers to engage in learning and discussion before the winter workshop on the community side of the website. Teachers viewed an online video related to the upcoming workshop and discussed implications of the illustrated strategy for their classrooms.

#### *Principals Network*

In the second year, Principal's in the southeast met twice, an October meeting in Rochester, and again in Golden Valley at the culminating June project meeting. Though southeast principals met by themselves in October, their June meeting also included the Lakes Country principals. These convenings of principals were intended to help school leaders understand current research about the impact of arts integration on students, teachers and schools, and to use these findings as lenses for recognizing the impact of standards-based, collaborative arts integration in their own classrooms and school communities. Based on their understanding of local project impacts, principals were encouraged to set strategic goals for sustaining important benefits during the final year of project activity (2014-15) and beyond.

*I just think there is so much teacher learning going on . . . I mean, unpacking the standards and then, [asking each other] how are we going to assess this? . . . It's just great staff development for the teachers. . . The students were very engaged, very active in that setting . . .*  
- Principal, 2013-14

The goals were met through:

Presentation of current research on the impact of arts integration on students, teachers and schools focusing on reports from President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, IBM 2010 Global CEO Survey, and research by Robert J. Sternberg.

Tool for guiding principals to better understand their arts integration teams and guiding observations for the impact of arts integration in classroom units, school, and teacher practice.

Collective discussions with other administrators to identify positive change in their students, school and teachers, and strategies for sustaining the goals of the Perpich Center for Arts Integration project.

Summarizing "themes" of the 2013-14 administrator's conversations could include the principals remarking on:

- Teacher enthusiasm for co-teaching and cross-disciplinary work with real world application,
- Student engagement and motivation, punctuated with stories about student's who were struggling in a class and finding success,
- Local community involvement and attendance at performances/open houses, and
- Opening the classroom walls with invited residencies, field trips and technology.

### **Technology: Online Learning and Project Dissemination**

Technology for online collaboration and learning is developing quickly. Project staff is continually investigating tools and testing them as assets for teacher professional learning throughout the project. In the fall of 2013, the project implemented a Cadre of Digital Learners, engaging teachers from Southeast and Lakes Country networks to test contemporary tools and strategies for online professional development and networking. Cadre teachers experimented with social bookmarking, blogging, Voicethread, and online webinars and discussion to further their learning and understanding of arts integration. In December, 2013, teachers did a session to share their learning at the annual TIES Educational Technology Conference in Minneapolis.

The project's website<sup>5</sup>, launched in the fall of 2013, has helped advance several project goals. It serves as a growing database of arts integration resources developed through the project, including more than thirty arts integrated units developed by project teachers. The website also houses professional development materials and strategies for arts integration that were developed over the past several years of the project. In addition, the project produced a video case study highlighting Plainview-Elgin, Millville High School students' learning through an arts integration unit taught in their World History class. This case study video was added to the expanding video library on the project website.

During the past year, project staff continued exploring ways to meet with teachers virtually. Video conferencing tools, such as Skype, Google hangouts, and Webex, were employed to facilitate coaching conversations with (and reduce travel to) rural teams. Variables such as internet speed,

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<sup>5</sup> <http://artsintegration.perpich.mn.gov/>

access to web cameras, and required logins continued to be challenges to successful web conferencing.

### **Technology: Next steps for 2014-15**

Encouraging results with blended learning in Southeast during 2013-2014 has led project staff to integrate online blended learning as an integral part of professional development in the newly launched Northeast network. Teachers in Northeast will be actively engaged in online discussions in the private section of the project website focusing on professional topics current to the project such as collaboration, backward planning, and learning from student work.

The project website will be expanding in 2014-15 to include blogging in the community side of the website. Northeast teachers will be reflecting on their learning by writing and sharing personal blogs and responding to their peers' postings.

Project staff is also exploring ways to keep participants connected through a more interactive and responsive public side to the website, as well as through a Facebook group specific to the project.

Research and experimentation in 2013-14 around web conferencing has proven valuable for identifying a tool that will address some of the variables discussed above. The project will use a new web conferencing interface that allows for all project staff to have individual online conferencing centers that affords a great deal of flexibility for layout and content. Project conveners will have a static IP address to access the web conference that will remain the same throughout the year. The conferencing tool is entirely browser based and does not require additional logins or downloads. Initial efforts with this tool have proven very successful.

### **2014-15: New Developments and Project Expansion**

With the goal of extending project learning to deepen understanding and application of arts integration, in the spring of 2014 participating sites were selected for two new networks that will begin in the 2014-15 school year. Sites were identified in the northeast for a 51-teacher network. A competitive application process resulted in the selection of these sites (Aitkin, Carlton, Cass, Itasca, Lake, St Louis counties):

- Bigfork Schools
- Cromwell Wright Schools
- Deer River High Schools
- Ely Secondary School
- Hill City Schools
- Nashwauk-Keewatin High School
- Proctor Public Schools

- Cloquet Public Schools
- Silver Bay Schools

Secondary school sites were also identified for a statewide network of 14 teachers at 5 schools. A competitive application process resulted in the selection of these sites (Anoka, Carver, Hennepin, Mower and Ramsey counties):

- Southwest Metro High School
- Anoka Middle School for the Arts
- Fairview High School Roseville
- Anoka High School
- Southland High School

Both new networks began work in August, 2014, at three-day summer institutes, and are currently developing plans for arts-integrated curriculum with Perpich project facilitation and support.

### **In Conclusion**

The Perpich Arts Integration Project is effectively meeting its goals to increase teacher capacity as collaborative designers of arts integrated instruction and to increase the thoughtfulness and engagement of student learning across content areas. The likelihood of lessons being both highly engaging and thoughtful increased from 2.5 times more likely in 2013, to 4.4 times more likely in 2014. “. . . it is clear that the percentage of arts integrated lessons that are both highly thoughtful and highly engaging has increased over the two-year period. . . . teachers are getting better at designing lessons that invite students to exhibit these traits” (Noblit et al. 2014 p. 24). Evaluators also report a good match between resources, strategies and project results: “Participants appeared to need the level of resources expended on them, and were able to use these new resources to continue to build capacity. . . . All the available evidence indicated that a combination of workshops, face-to-face consultations, teacher team meetings, and numerous informal communications was eminently sufficient for the task” (Noblit et al. 2014 p. 35).

### **Perpich Legacy Project Advisory Group**

To ensure transparency and broad public participation in the Perpich Center’s Legacy projects, the Perpich Center has an advisory group of volunteers knowledgeable about the arts and education. They represent arts education professional service organizations, elementary and secondary school leadership organizations, the Minnesota Legislature, regional Service Cooperatives, the Minnesota Department of Education, and arts education and teacher preparation programs at major Minnesota colleges and universities. In 2014, this group assembled April 25.

### **About the Perpich Center for Arts Education**

Perpich Center for Arts Education is a state agency that serves all school districts in Minnesota. Created in 1985 by the state legislature, Perpich seeks to advance K-12 education throughout Minnesota by

teaching in and through the arts. Perpich provides expertise in professional development for educators, research, curriculum and standards development in arts education. The center also includes the Perpich Arts High School, a public, residential program for grades 11 and 12, and the Perpich state library, which serves the high school and all Minnesota arts educators and teaching artists.

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