

Partnering Arts, Communities & Education (PACE):
2015-2016 Project Report
Executive Summary



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INTRODUCTION

Arts education is going through a period of unprecedented change (Sabol, 2013). Schools are faced with demands from the public, government, and business that have created a climate of urgency about education and preparing students to be productive members of society. In order to meet such demands, schools have placed ever-increasing emphasis on a narrow curriculum with increasingly limited opportunities to learn. Increasingly, educational programming in the arts has been reduced or eliminated in some schools. The urgent need for quality education in the arts has never been greater. Some

suggest that the future of the United States is linked to how well it can reap the benefits that arts education provides (Eisner, 1998; Florida, 2002, 2005; Friedman, 2006; Pink, 2006).

Establishment of the Partnering Arts, Communities, and Education (PACE) program represents a means through which uniting the arts, communities, and education can occur in order to enrich the lives of children and all citizens as they grow and assume their positions as informed adults in all walks of life in Indiana. The PACE program holds significant potential for making positive impacts on the educational foundations of citizens of Indiana and for making long-term contributions to the health, growth, and vitality of the state of Indiana.

The PACE program is a clearly articulated approach to arts learning that includes established goals for arts education in Indiana. The PACE program is clearly detailed by the Indiana Arts Commission in its program description:

The Indiana Arts Commission created the Partnering Arts, Communities & Education (PACE) program in 2014. PACE is an arts education program developed to establish long-term, in-depth, and sustainable partnerships between elementary schools with high poverty/low performing populations and arts organizations to impact student growth and achievement through extended arts and literacy experiences. In the PACE program, arts organizations utilize highly qualified teaching artists to work with first through fifth grade students in an identified partnership school. They collaboratively develop a specialized curriculum focused on one arts discipline: dance, music, theatre or visual arts (Indiana Arts Commission, 2014).

The PACE program is intended to assist elementary schools, artists, and arts organizations in establishing long-term, in-depth, and sustainable partnerships for the purpose of impacting student growth and achievement through extended and connected arts and literacy experiences.

Schools interested in participating in the PACE program submitted proposals that were reviewed by the IAC. Four elementary schools were selected to receive funding for the 2015-2016 school year. Selected schools and participating community arts organizations included the Madison Primary Center and the South Bend Civic Theatre, the McKinley Primary Center and the Robinson Community Learning Center at the University of Notre Dame, the Meadows Elementary School and the Indiana State University's Community School of the Arts, and the Pine Elementary School and Young Audiences Indiana, Inc. Arts educators, classroom teachers, teaching artists, and administration in the schools worked closely to create curriculum and to implement assessments for their programs.

Data from the PACE program were collected by the four participating schools during the 2015-2016 academic year. Complete data sets from each of the schools were provided to the principal investigator by the Indiana Arts Commission for analysis. In order to measure the outcomes of the PACE program, six independent measures were created by members of the IAC and the principal investigator. The instruments were designed to measure progress toward accomplishing the goals set forth for the PACE program. Each of the measures was implemented by the teachers and artists with students from two to three times over the academic year, depending on which instrument was used. Multiple implementations of assessments were conducted at intervals in order to gather data needed to track the effect of

instruction, changes in student learning, and growth over time from their involvement in the PACE program.

The measures included discipline specific content related to dance, music, theatre, or visual arts; however, the themes and structures of the measures were replicated in all measures to enable cross-discipline comparisons of data produced by the measures. A total of six instruments were developed to gather information about the PACE program. These instruments included (1) the *PACE Student Survey* designed to measure student general awareness about and understanding of the arts, (2) the *PACE Student Knowledge Assessment* designed to measure students' knowledge about specific arts disciplines, (3) the *PACE Artist Assessment of Individual Student Skills* which measures students' demonstrations of specific skills, materials, and processes used in arts activities, (4) the *PACE Student Attitude During Arts Activities* instrument that measures students' attitudes about participation and engagement in arts learning, (5) the *Student Writing Samples Rubric* which is used to evaluate students' literacy and writing development in relation to arts learning, and finally (6) the *PACE Parent Survey*, which measures parents' opinions about their students' engagement in arts learning and their general attitudes about the value of having an arts education. Piloting schools selected appropriate versions of the assessments listed above with the arts discipline content that matched the arts discipline on which their individual schools focused.

All identifying information about participating students was removed from data and coded in order to protect the identities and privacy rights of all students. Data sets provided to the principal investigator for analysis had no identifying information about subjects. Data

collected from each of the four participating schools were analyzed separately and then combined to provide an aggregated overview of the impact of the PACE program across the four schools in the study. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize aggregated findings for the variables being studied for the four PACE schools. A total of 333 students were included in the program at the four participating schools.

Findings in the report are clustered into the following groups including students' general interest in the art form they are studying, discipline specific knowledge, discipline specific skills, student attitudes about the arts, student writing skills about the arts, and parent attitudes related to arts learning and arts engagement by their children.

DISCUSSION

The PACE program is a comprehensive program for providing an integrated approach to arts education and literacy development in elementary schools. The program included input from arts educators, classroom teachers, artists, and administrators in the schools conducting PACE programs. The program included six assessments that addressed students' general knowledge of the arts, discipline specific knowledge, discipline specific skills, student attitudes about the arts, students writing about the arts, and parents of PACE students' attitudes about the impact of the arts and the PACE program on their child's development and education related to the arts.

In the full report, summaries of data for each of these measures were provided. Aggregated statistics were included in order to provide summary markers for understanding how well the PACE program functioned relative to the goals of the program and to determine the overall impact the PACE program had on students learning and attitudes toward the arts. The following includes a brief discussion of the findings for each of the six assessments and consideration of the impact the PACE program has had on student achievement and learning in the arts.

Student Survey of General Arts Knowledge

An instrument was created for measuring students' general knowledge of the arts. In surveying students' general knowledge about the arts, it was clear from the findings on the instrument that they:

- (1) like to be engaged in arts learning;
- (2) want to learn more about the arts;
- (3) feel as if they could be an artist in one of the arts;
- (4) feel like an artist in one of the arts;
- (5) want to become an artist in one of the arts;
- (6) like learning about the arts with their friends or classmates;
- (7) like to demonstrate their arts learning for other people; and
- (8) think learning about the arts is an important part of school.

Responses for these items showed positive development when measured over time with the single exception on the item in which they were asked whether they want to become a better artist in an art form. Responses for this item, although highly positive showed a slight decrease from the initial assessment (2.59) to the assessment conducted for this item later in the program (2.56). These findings collectively support the conclusion that students in PACE programs felt positively about their engagement with arts education and in the PACE programs their schools provided. They also suggest that students' general knowledge of the arts and learning in the PACE program was positive and included increases in scores in seven of eight items included on the student survey assessment.

In surveying parental attitudes about their child's involvement in the PACE program, parent responses differed on some items (See discussion of Parent Survey below). Several items on the Parent Survey (See Appendix F) were matched with items included on the Student Survey of general arts knowledge. Comparisons of findings for these two instruments reveal numbers of areas in which student findings differ from those of parents PACE program students. Parents suggested that their children's interest in learning more about art declined from the fall to the spring, while results from the students' survey related to this topic showed an increase in the interest in making or learning in the arts. Students also showed increased positive responses when asked about whether they could see themselves as artists, actors or dancers, while parents' responses for this same item showed decreases in positive responses from the fall to spring assessments. Finally, when asked whether learning about the arts is an important part of school, students' responses were favorable and increased (.10 points) from

the fall assessment to the spring assessment. Parents' responses on this item declined significantly from the fall assessment (2.75) to the spring assessment (1.82).

Student Knowledge Survey

Students' discipline specific knowledge of the arts was assessed using an instrument that included eight items. Separate instruments were created for each discipline (See Appendix B.); however, items included on all instruments included similar content and focuses related to students' discipline specific knowledge. The second half of the instrument contained items designed to measure students' understanding of discipline specific vocabulary related to the arts discipline focus of the school.

Findings from the instruments suggest that student knowledge about what dance, theatre, and art are increased over time in three schools, but decreased in a single school. In all four schools, students' ability to name some different kinds of art, dance, and theatre increased from the fall to the spring assessment. Students' knowledge of where they could go to see artwork, dancers, and theatre increased over the academic year. In all four schools, students' knowledge of where or when they have seen artwork, dance performances, and theater increased from the fall to spring semester. Students' knowledge of whether actors, artists, and dancers can be young, older or both improved in all schools and over time. Students' knowledge of whether actors, artists, or dancers can be male, female, or both increased in three of the four schools and decreased slightly in one of the schools from the fall to spring assessments. Students' knowledge of whether people engage in the arts for enjoyment and/or as a job to earn money increased from the fall to spring assessments. Students' ability to name

well-known actors artists and dancers improved in three of four schools with one school's score decreasing by .02 of a point from fall to spring. Findings related to improvement in students' knowledge of vocabulary specific to the arts discipline included in the PACE program at their school, demonstrated that students' vocabulary knowledge increased in three of four schools and decreased in one school by .08 of a point from fall to spring assessments.

These findings suggest that the PACE program collectively contributed to improving students' discipline specific knowledge in all schools with minor decreases in two schools on two of eight items. Individual school vocabulary assessments included significant increases in acquisition of arts vocabulary. A single school demonstrated decreases in vocabulary acquisition and understanding for six of twelve terms which produced an overall decrease in knowledge of vocabulary for that school. Findings from the Student Knowledge survey suggest that the PACE program has contributed to students' knowledge of the arts and acquisition of arts specific vocabulary to significant degrees in nearly all of its schools.

Student Skills Survey

Student skills related to the site specific discipline being studied at PACE schools were assessed using an instrument that included six items. Three of the items were included questions that could be applied to all three of the arts disciplines being taught at PACE schools. Three additional items were included. These items enabled the artists and teachers at the schools to identify skills related to the arts discipline and lesson plans that would be taught in the schools. The assessments were implemented three times through the school year.

The first item assessed the basic skill levels of students at the beginning of the school year. Findings for this item over the year suggest that all four schools' student skill levels related to the arts discipline at their school increased. One school (Madison) showed a significant increase of 1.28 points from the fall to the mid-year assessment which was followed by increases of .89 and .84 at Pine and McKinley respectively. Combined increases of average scores of .82 points from the fall to spring measurements for this item suggest that student basic skills in the arts disciplines of their school increased over time.

The second skill related item assessed students' demonstration of effective applications of practices, tools, or materials in the creative process. Findings for this item suggest that students' skills in this area increased in all schools and across each implementation.

The third skill that represents students' understanding and application of sequences and/or processes for creating a work in the art discipline also showed improvement during the year. With the exception of a single school (McKinley) that produced a modest decrease in scores for this item (.02 points), each of the other schools demonstrated increases in the use of sequences and processes for creating work in the arts.

Increases in student skill development as described in these three assessment items suggest that PACE students made progress in developing essential arts related skills. The remaining three items that included site specific and discipline specific skills identified by the artists and teachers in participating PACE schools produced positive trends in the development of those skills as well. One school (Madison) increased its average by 1.43 points from fall to spring for skill number six, which was the largest single increase among all schools and

identified skills measured in PACE schools. In combining skills development scores for all schools and for all skills, findings from the six items on the skills assessment suggest that the PACE program was instrumental in contributing to arts skills development among students in the programs.

Student Attitudes Survey

Students' existing attitudes and the ongoing formation and development of positive attitudes toward the arts are important for creating motivation to continue learning in the arts in school and for encouraging continuous engagement with the arts throughout adulthood. The measurement of student attitudes related to participation, engagement, and development of self-esteem and confidence are significant for evaluating the performance and overall impact of the PACE program among its students.

Scores for attitudes related to participation, engagement, and development of self-esteem and confidence in each of the PACE school demonstrated positive attitude formation for all three of these concerns. These findings suggest that the PACE program contributed to creating and developing positive attitudes toward the arts and may be influential in maintaining supportive positive attitudes toward the arts throughout adulthood among participating students.

Student Writing Samples Survey

A principal focus of the PACE program was on the development of linkages between literacy and the arts. The central question of whether education in the arts contributes to literacy development among participating PACE students was explored. Summaries of findings

among the participating PACE schools revealed a number of areas in which positive gains were demonstrated. Among all PACE schools positive net gains were produced for the key literacy elements of ideas and content, organization, and writing conventions and the sub criteria identified to measure the impact of these key elements for developing literacy produced positive gains. These findings are encouraging and suggest that continuing participation in the PACE program through arts education and literacy integration may over time provide conclusive evidence of a positive relationship between the PACE program and literacy development among children. Findings for these assessments provide some intriguing evidence that there may be positive relationships between literacy and the arts. It must be acknowledged that some of the scores on student writing samples represented minimal gains; however, the fact remains that increases were produced on all items. Furthermore, sample sizes and the limited numbers of schools and classrooms that participated in the PACE program does not provide conclusive evidence that the PACE program contributes to literacy development or that linking literacy to arts education contributes to learning in the arts. More extensive testing of these hypotheses is required before irrefutable conclusions can be made about whether the PACE program positively contributes to literacy development.

Parent Survey

Attitudes of parents of children in the PACE program were measured. Data were submitted from only two PACE schools. Because data were not provided from all four PACE schools, it is not possible to make generalizations about parent attitudes regarding their child's participation in the PACE program. However, there is a benefit from an examination of the

findings from the two schools that submitted Parent Survey data. Combined findings for the two participating PACE schools on the nine items included on the Parent Survey are troubling in that they included decreases in parent's' attitudes on all nine items. These findings are skewed due to strength of the negative scores provided from one of the schools for the spring assessments on all nine items. These results included decreases in scores for all items from 2.10 to .13

Findings on all items of the Parent Survey from Meadows included increases in attitudes for five of nine items, no change in scores on one item from the fall to spring assessment, and the remaining three items demonstrating decreases in scores. Findings for Pine suggest that parents' attitudes declined on all nine items on the survey. The scope of findings for this school suggest that further investigation or follow-up surveys of parents regarding these questions is warranted in order to identify the reasons these declines occurred. Such an investigation may reveal areas in which the PACE program at that school may be improved or restructured to enhance student learning in the arts discipline at that school. Findings from this school also may provide a basis for checking program revisions at the other PACE schools as well.

A summary of the combined findings about parents' attitudes follows. Combined findings from these two schools suggest that students share information about their arts activities at home. However, results from one school for this item demonstrated an increase for this item and one school demonstrated a marked decrease (1.84 points) from the fall to spring assessments. Parents also felt that their child's enjoyment of learning about the arts decreased from fall to spring assessments with one school remaining at the same level for both

assessments and one school decreasing its score by 1.90 points. When asked if their child believes they can be an artist both schools demonstrated decreases in combined scores. Parents did not feel as if their children liked doing art or dance at home or in other places; however, one school demonstrated a decrease of only .02 of a point while, the other school produced a decrease of 2.10 points which was the largest drop in scores for this assessment. The third highest decrease in scores was produced by one schools for the item that asked whether parents believed learning about art and dance is an important part of school. One school's score decreased by only .01 of a point, while the other school's score decreased by 1.87 points on this item. Similar results were produced for the item that asked parents whether they believe that learning in the arts will help their child learn in other school subjects. The overall average decreased from fall to spring assessments by .88 points, but the score from one school dropped by 1.93 points while the score form the other school rose by .18 points from the fall to spring assessment. When asked whether the arts can be a job or source of employment, both schools demonstrated decreases in scores with one decreasing by .04 of a point and the other decreasing by 1.57 points. Parents;' attitude regarding whether they attend special arts related events with their children showed a combined decrease in scores, but one school demonstrated an increase of .41 points, while the other school's score decreased by 2.13 points. This decrease was the highest for this school's assessment results. Finally, when asked whether people living in their community should know about the PACE activities, parents showed the smallest decline in responses with a decrease of only .02 points. One school showed an increase of .08 points in scores for this item while the other school produced a decrease of .13 points which was the smallest decrease among scores for this school.

Results from the parent survey suggest conflicting results with one school experiencing consistent decreases and the other experiencing decreases in only a few areas while producing increases in all others. Understanding parent perceptions of their child's learning is a powerful indicator of support parents may be willing to provide for future PACE involvement and for arts education programming generally. It may be possible to address the apparent decreases in parent attitudes by increasing communications between the schools, the teachers and artists in the PACE program and parents, and through more publicity within the school community about the arts activities and curriculum at the participating PACE schools.

In summary, findings from the six assessments conducted among students, teachers, artists and parents involved in the PACE program produced numbers of positive indicators that the PACE program is contributing to the arts education of students in the program. In three of the four schools, positive increases were experienced across the academic year. Data do not provide an explanation of why one of the schools performed at a decreased level on numbers of measures. It is advisable to conduct further investigation of factors that may have contributed to the negative performance of this school so that steps can be taken to address any situations or conditions that have contributed to producing these negative performances. Once adjustments are made to the program, additional assessments will be needed to determine the level of effectiveness any changes made to the school's program contributed to improving student performances at that school.

The bulk of findings for the six assessments suggest that the PACE program is positively influencing student learning in the arts and that literacy development also may be positively

influenced by its integration with arts education as provided through the PACE program in the participating schools during the 2015-2016 school year.

CONCLUSION

The arts have been a part of the development of humankind since the earliest of times. The role the arts play in the daily lives of all people cannot be ignored or denied. In order to understand the increasingly complex nature of the world, an education in the arts is more vital and important than at any time in human history. Living in the contemporary age demands that all people be educated in the uses of skills and thinking processes the arts are based upon. The arts provide the essential links to what makes people human. The arts provide the common language that supersedes time, space, class, and culture. The arts are at the center of what makes human being who we are.

In order to fully utilize the benefits of the arts in understanding our place in the world and to support our contributions to it, a sound comprehensive education in the arts is essential. Such an education not only leads to benefits for all humankind, but perhaps more importantly an education in the arts provides the tools and habits of mind that provide meaning and substance to the lives of every person that has been the benefactor of having received a balanced education in the arts.

The PACE program has provided glimpses of what focused education in the arts could provide over time. Data demonstrated growth and a positive impact on the education and

attitudes of young people involved in the program. Continuation of the program and further development of it holds strong potential for enhancing the development of an educated population that is literate in the arts.

The PACE program also is positioned to contribute to literacy development of students engaged in the program. With expansion and development of the PACE program, the Indiana Arts Commission will position itself as an institution that has enabled the citizens of Indiana to pursue their individual potentials and to enjoy aspects of their lives that is functionally denied to all who have not received the finest quality of arts education the PACE program is working to provide for everyone.

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