

Voices From the Field III: Elementary School Principals Talk About ArtsBridge

As part of its ongoing research efforts to paint a robust portrait of the impacts of ArtsBridge programming on various stakeholder groups, the Center for Arts Research in Education (CARE) has been engaged in fieldwork designed to **solicit the perspectives of local principals and school administrators**. As part of this research, principals were asked to comment about the **intrinsic and cross-curricular value of the arts generally, and, more specifically, the effects of ArtsBridge on pupils, teachers, and the larger school community**. Comments by elementary principals particularly highlight the significance of the arts in **boosting achievement for traditionally underserved pupils and English Language Learners**, expound upon the abilities of ArtsBridge scholars, and underscore the importance of the arts as fundamental components of the core curricula.

“For our students, what I have seen (ArtsBridge) do is develop their language. They are much more aware of vocabulary and its meaning, and it relates back to their writing, their reading, and even mathematics and the sciences...and it’s enjoyable for them. Yesterday, I had a teacher share a story with me in that one of the parents had come up to her at Open House, and said that (the family) had gone out to a restaurant, and the kindergartner, literally five years old, pointed to a painting, and said, ‘I believe that is a VanGogh’...” –**Elementary School Principal**



“Cross-curricularly, the strongest area for our students is in English language development. About 95 percent of the (ArtsBridge) scholars deliver the information in English. So, even our newer students with limited English are learning vocabulary through a multi-sensory approach, which, theoretically is a much less stressful and more productive way of learning.” – **Elementary School Principal**

“To have students come from the University is very positive—that they see (the University students) engaged in an activity that they might want to go into...they suddenly realize, ‘I have a skill’ either artistically, or in drama, or performing, and it could be a subject area that they could continue studying once they get to the university. They see the students, and they say, ‘maybe I could be at the UC.’” – **Elementary School Principal**

“At this school, we have a high percentage of English Language Learners (ELLs)...and having to switch over from bilingual education to structured English immersion, we really have to give (the pupils) much more depth, and using the arts really helped make things easier. It put a picture to the words. Their language acquisition has increased, and they are much freer to express themselves, and it builds their self confidence as well.” – **Elementary School Principal**

“(The ArtsBridge scholars) work very well with the kids...it’s the way they carry themselves. My teachers enjoy having them in the classroom—they get along well with my teachers and work well with them. I like the way that they (the scholars) work with the kids...they are respectful of our students. The teachers are learning, the kids are having a great time—they don’t even know they are learning—and the scholars are learning too, from us.” – **Elementary School Principal**