

CHANGING TENNESSEE SCHOOLS THROUGH

**ARTS
INTEGRATION**

value
plus

THE TENNESSEE ARTS COMMISSION'S VALUE PLUS SCHOOLS INITIATIVE



Value Plus Schools

*An Arts Integration Initiative of the
Tennessee Arts Commission's Arts Education Program*

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Tennessee Arts Commission

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The U.S. Department of Education *Arts Education
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Tennessee General Assembly

Tennessee Arts Commission

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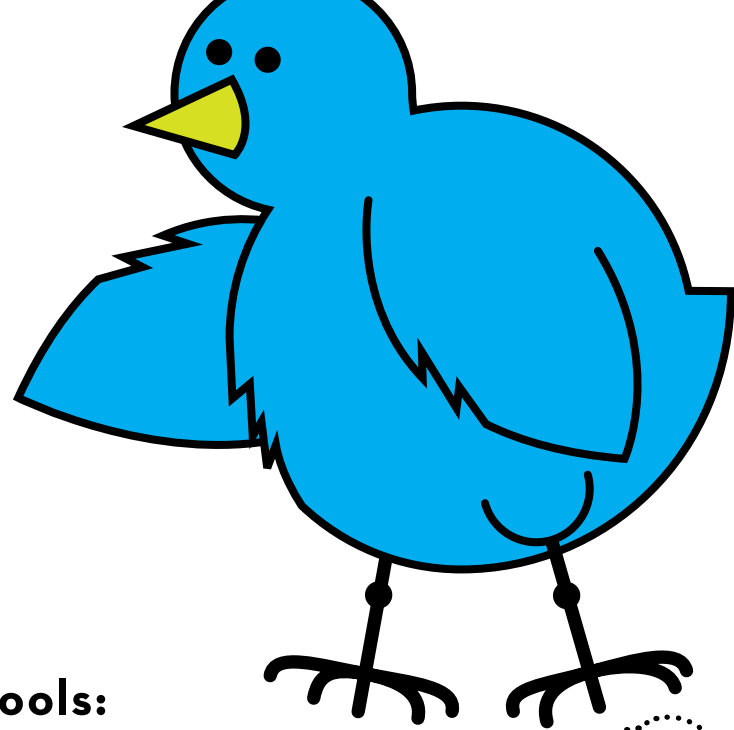
Design by Lydia Light

"When a school embraces the arts as central to academics, the entire culture of the school changes. Everyone - students, teachers, and parents- can feel and see the difference."

- Roy Miller, Principal, Mooreland Heights Elementary

The Value Plus Schools Initiative is a groundbreaking program for education in Tennessee. Emphasizing **arts integration**, in which dance, music, visual art, theatre and creative writing are primary pathways to learning, students and teachers in Value Plus Schools benefit from a curriculum rich in creativity, problem-solving, imagination and teamwork. **The arts are academic subjects** and recognized by the *Elementary and Secondary Education Act* as core to the curriculum. While Value Plus Schools integrate the arts into other subjects, the arts are also taught as core stand-alone subjects, **affording students the opportunity to learn both in and through the arts.**

In Value Plus Schools, both core arts instruction and arts integration are based on state and/or national curriculum standards, **allowing both students and teachers to strengthen higher order thinking skills**; express and understand ideas and emotions; and make connections to the real world.



Participating Schools:

BRADLEY ACADEMY

Murfreesboro, TN
Murfreesboro City School District
Principal: Chad Fletcher
Value Plus Leader: Cheryl Harris

COVINGTON INTEGRATED ARTS ACADEMY

Covington, TN
Tipton County School District
Principal: Jan. O. Sanford
Value Plus Leader: Dr. Bonnie Wright

DICKSON ELEMENTARY

Dickson, TN
Dickson County School District
Principal: Eve Larkins
Value Plus Leader: Mandy Roche

HUNTINGDON PRIMARY

Huntingdon, TN
Huntingdon Special School District
Principal: Alan Eubanks
Value Plus Leader: Kelli Postlethwait

MOORELAND HEIGHTS ELEMENTARY

Knoxville, TN
Knox County School District
Principal: Roy Miller
Value Plus Leader: Brandi Self

OAK GROVE ELEMENTARY

Cleveland, TN
Bradley County School District
Principal: Ted Bryson
Value Plus Leader: Fredda Burton

BEGINNINGS

The Tennessee Arts Commission's Value Plus Schools Initiative first took root as a recommendation from a statewide arts education needs assessment conducted from 2004-2005 by Dawn M. Ellis and Associates. *Ready, Set, Grow: Cultivating Arts Education Reform* revealed through surveys, focus groups, town hall meetings and personal interviews, an overwhelming desire to improve and strengthen Tennessee's public schools through a comprehensive arts integration initiative. Needs assessment participants cited the Tennessee Arts Commission as the prime agency to lead such an endeavor.

In developing Value Plus Schools, the Commission researched arts integration models developed by other state agencies including *Arts in the Basic Curriculum* (South Carolina) and *Whole Schools* (Mississippi), as well as expansive multi-state models such as *A+ Schools* (North Carolina). Both the successes and challenges of each program were explored.

In designing Value Plus, the Commission sought to create a program that was adaptable for both rural and urban schools, socio-economic issues, and the variances of each school district. The desired outcome was that any school wishing to adopt arts integration as a focus would find Value Plus a realistic and sustainable alternative.

In examining the research conducted on other arts integration models, the Commission focused on **three critical factors needed for success:**

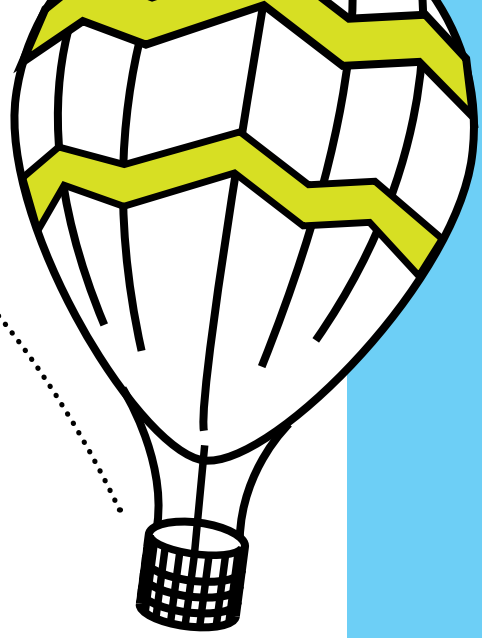
- (1) Flexibility: Value Plus had to be adaptable to each school's academic and social needs as well as district mandates.
- (2) Replicability: Value Plus had to be comprehensive yet manageable, integrating seamlessly with the numerous other programs and requirements schools are expected to implement.
- (3) Sustainability: Value Plus had to be a realistic option for schools in terms of the funding and personnel needed to be effective.

LAUNCHING VALUE PLUS

In Fall 2006, the Commission rolled out the Value Plus Schools initiative as a five-year pilot program in six Title I elementary schools. The six schools were situated statewide and represented an equal distribution of urban and rural. In western Tennessee, the two rural schools were Covington Academy (K-8) in Covington and Huntingdon Primary (K-3) in Huntingdon. Middle Tennessee had one urban school, Bradley Academy (K-6) in Murfreesboro and one rural, Dickson Elementary (K-5) in Dickson. East Tennessee also had one urban and rural; Mooreland Heights Elementary (K-5) in Knoxville and Oak Grove Elementary (K-5) in Cleveland.

All schools were required to maintain a minimum free and reduced lunch rate of 50%. Most ranged between 75%-93%.

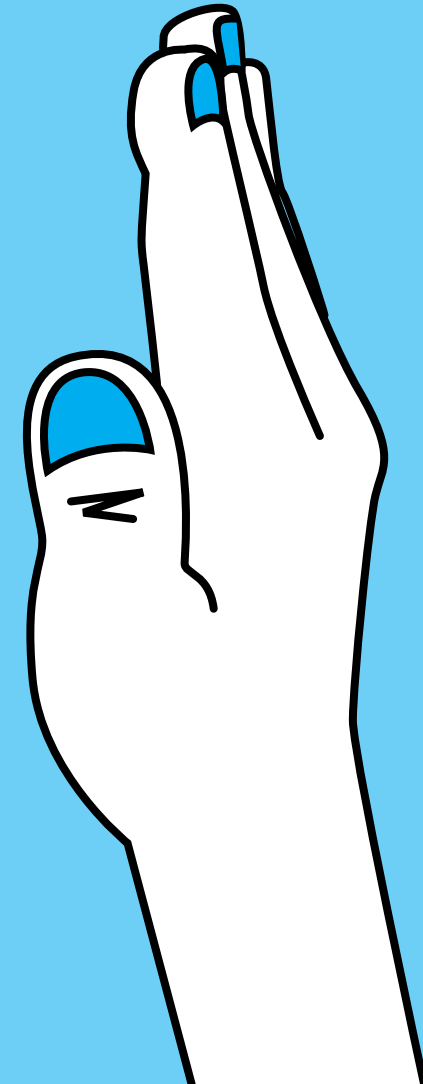
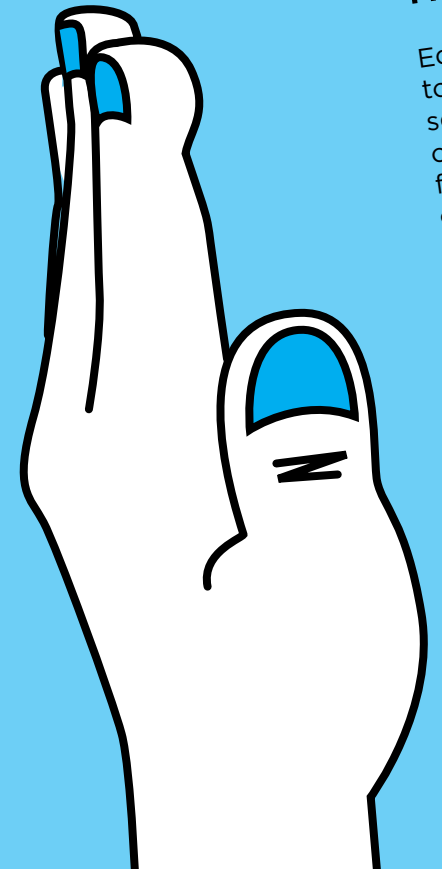
“The arts have made our school stronger. They help our learners both academically and emotionally, especially our students who struggle with other factors such as poverty, a lack of family support and other needs.”
- Jan O. Sanford, Principal, Covington Integrated Arts Academy



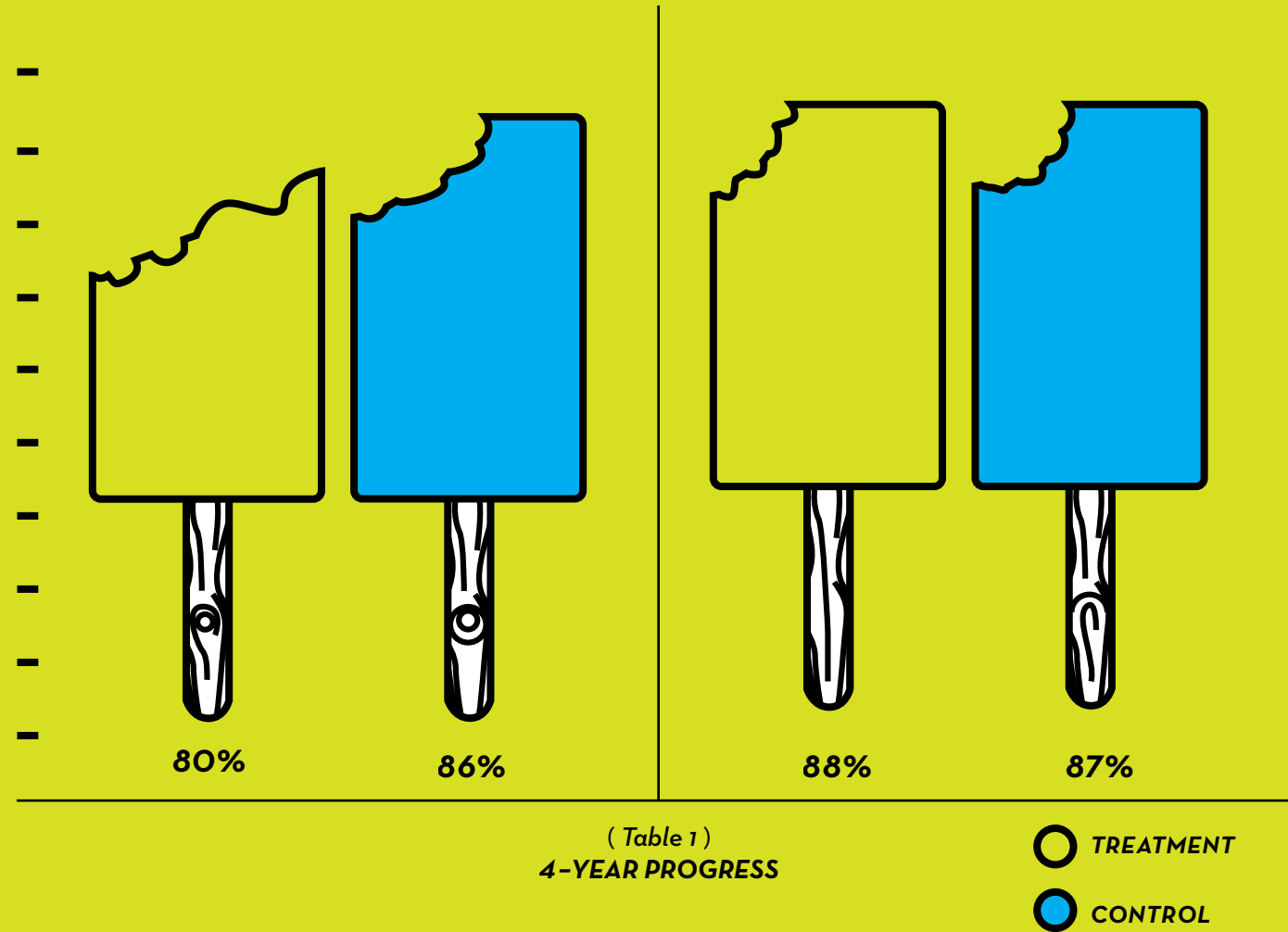
MEASURING EFFECTIVENESS

Edvantia Inc. was contracted by the Tennessee Arts Commission to conduct a four-year evaluation of the Value Plus program. Four separate surveys were used as well as self-assessment checklists, classroom observation rubrics, and focus groups to gather data for program evaluation. All the instruments, except for the focus group protocol, were developed by Commission staff and vetted by evaluators. Evaluators provided technical advice to the staff regarding the appropriateness of the questions and response scales as required. In addition to the above-mentioned instruments, Value Plus and comparison school student achievement data were used to evaluate program effectiveness.

- Throughout the four-year project, Value Plus participants included:
- Ten thousand four hundred (10,400) students grades Pre K-8 (average of 2600 per year)
 - One thousand eighty (1080) teachers (average of 270 per year)
 - Fifty-six administrators (average of 14 per year)



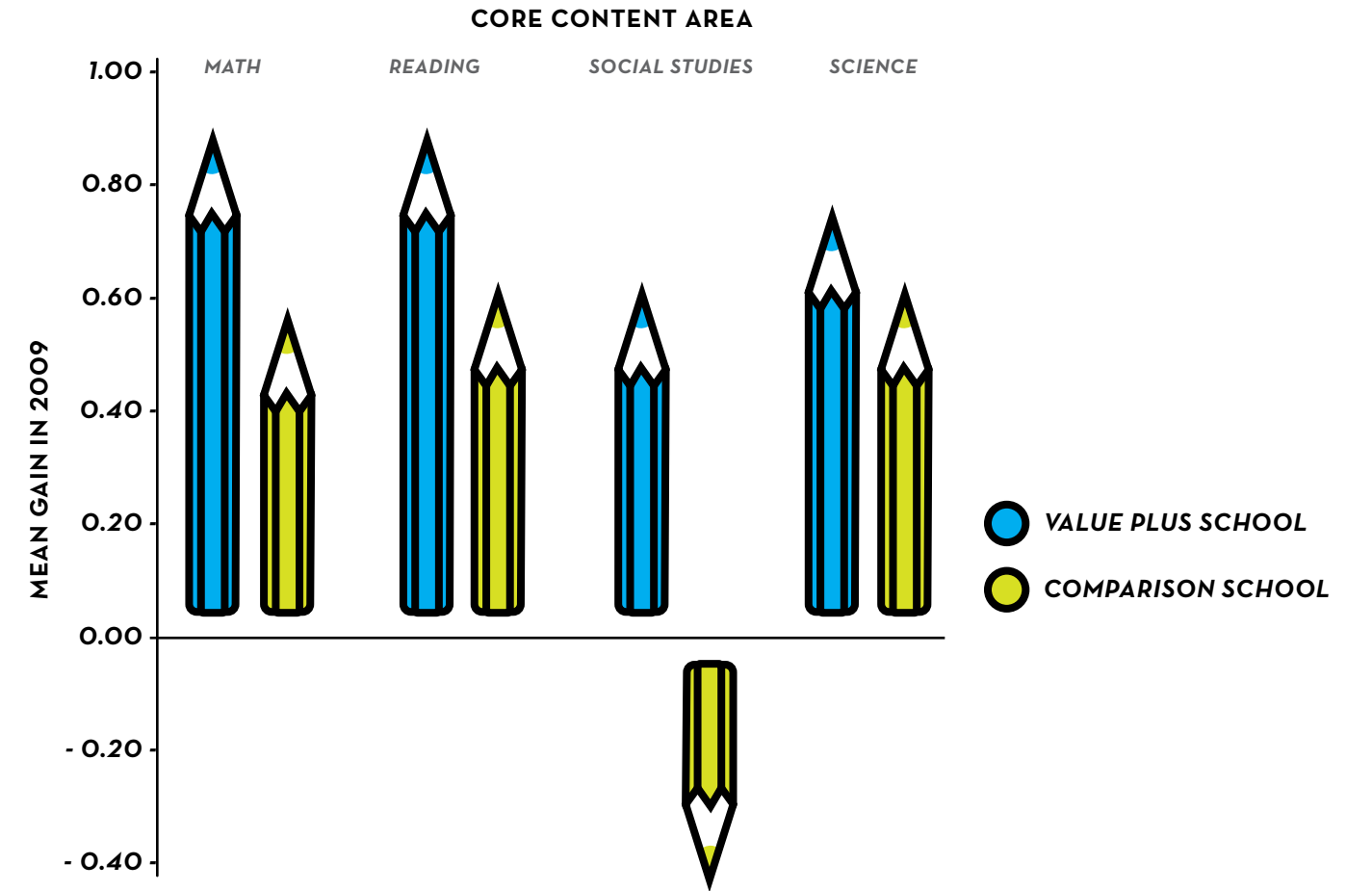
WHAT WE LEARNED



STUDENT ACHIEVEMENT

In 2006, when the program began, students in the six Value Plus Schools collectively averaged 79.6% proficient and advanced in math, reading/language arts, social studies and science as opposed to 86.1% in comparison schools. **After four years, Value Plus students closed the achievement gap, with 88% proficient and advanced while comparison students showed only a 1% gain, at 87%.**

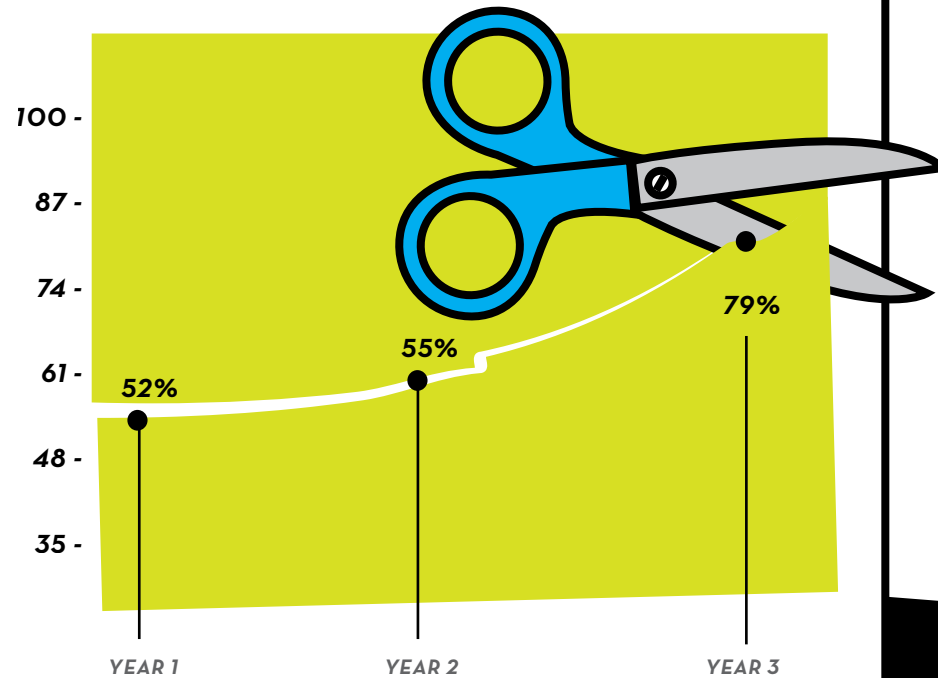
The table above demonstrates this progress.



Despite having higher numbers of students on free/reduced lunch, Value Plus Schools made greater academic gains over the four year period than comparison schools in all four content areas: math, science, reading/language arts and social studies. The percentages of students who were economically disadvantaged were higher for Value Plus Schools (78% on average) than the comparison schools (61% on average). National research demonstrates that schools with a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students tend to perform lower on standardized tests. This is significant in that Value Plus schools performed higher than comparison schools despite having greater numbers of students on free and reduced lunch. *The table above demonstrates this progress.*

SIDEBAR STORY: SPECIAL EDUCATION

In one school, Special Education teachers found arts integration to be highly effective in helping students understand math concepts and procedures. These teachers reported using the arts to teach math at least three times per week and, in some cases, every day of the week. Students in these special education classes experienced significant academic growth, with math scores increasing from 52% proficient and advanced to 79% over a three-year period.



PRINCIPALS
ARE KEY
TO SUCCESS

Principal participation emerged as integral and critical to the success of each Value Plus School. For the Value Plus Schools who demonstrated significant progress, that success can be directly linked to principal leadership and influence. Student achievement was much higher in schools where the principal was actively involved in implementing the Value Plus program. In schools where the principal made Value Plus a priority, teachers showed greater progress in teaching high quality arts integrated lessons with more frequency.

WIDE SCALE PARTICIPATION

As a whole school model, Value Plus has successfully demonstrated how comprehensive reform can occur when entire school faculties are actively working toward a common goal. One of the common barriers exhibited by similar models was large-scale participation on the part of classroom teachers. Other models compensated teachers for participation or provided incentives, leading to sustainability issues. To combat this, Value Plus project directors established a mandate for schools from the outset that **75% or more of the full-time teaching faculty had to actively participate in all aspects of the program**. This included professional development as well as arts integrated classroom instruction. All six of the Value Plus Schools exceeded the 75% participation rate.

In four schools, 100% of the teaching faculty participated for the duration of the pilot phase program, including Special Education, Title I, ELL, Technology, Library, Guidance and other resource teachers. The two remaining schools had a 98% and 95% participation rate respectively, due to some resource teachers choosing not to participate.

To monitor participation, teachers were required to teach a minimum of one arts integrated lesson per week in Year One and the first part of Year Two, with the remaining project period requiring **two arts integrated lessons per week** be taught. Arts integrated instruction was documented through Assessment Checklists and master calendars in which teachers recorded when their weekly lesson(s) would be taught. Most principals also conducted “drop-in” visits to ensure that teachers were actually implementing instruction. **In Value Plus Schools where 90% or more of the faculty reported teaching a minimum of two arts integrated lessons per week, student achievement increased.**

COLLABORATIVE PLANNING

Arts integration is only possible when schools purposely create time in the schedule for classroom teachers and arts specialists to collaborate on lessons and units. **Over the four year period, collaborative planning time between arts specialists and classroom teachers increased from 7% to 71%.**

Value Plus Schools addressed collaboration in unique ways with some schools rotating arts specialists weekly through planning periods while others used release time for in-depth monthly collaboration. Some Value Plus schools placed greater emphasis on collaboration than others, enforcing and monitoring planning time. Those Value Plus Schools who established strict expectations for collaboration demonstrated **higher levels of academic achievement** than other Value Plus Schools who did not enforce or monitor collaborative planning.

"Arts integration changed the way I teach. It changed the way I think about teaching, and it changed the way my students learn."

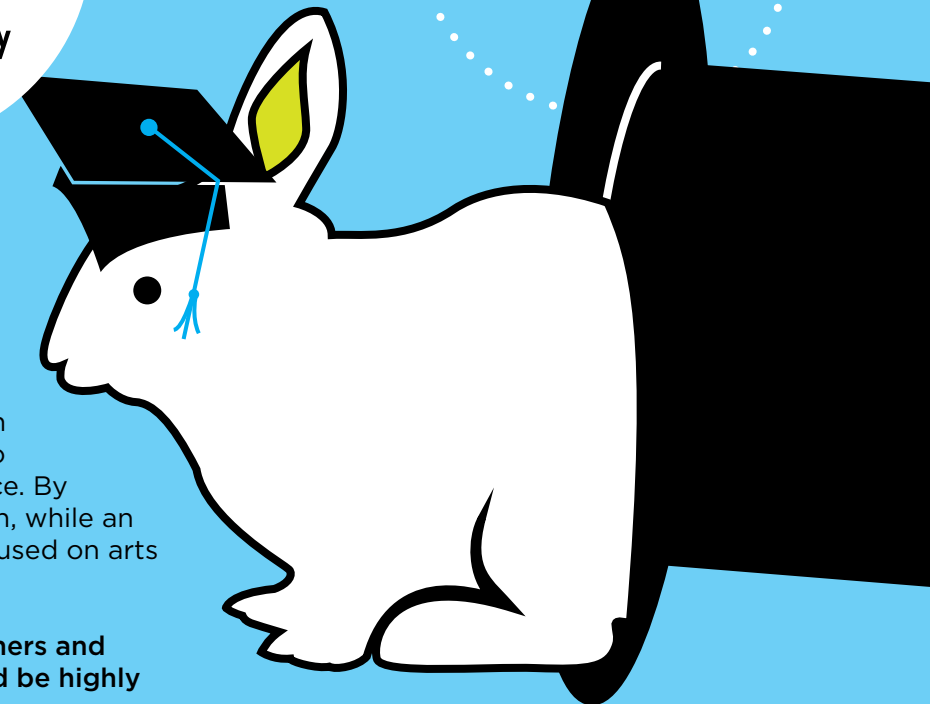
- Brandi Self, 5th Grade Teacher, Mooreland Heights Elementary

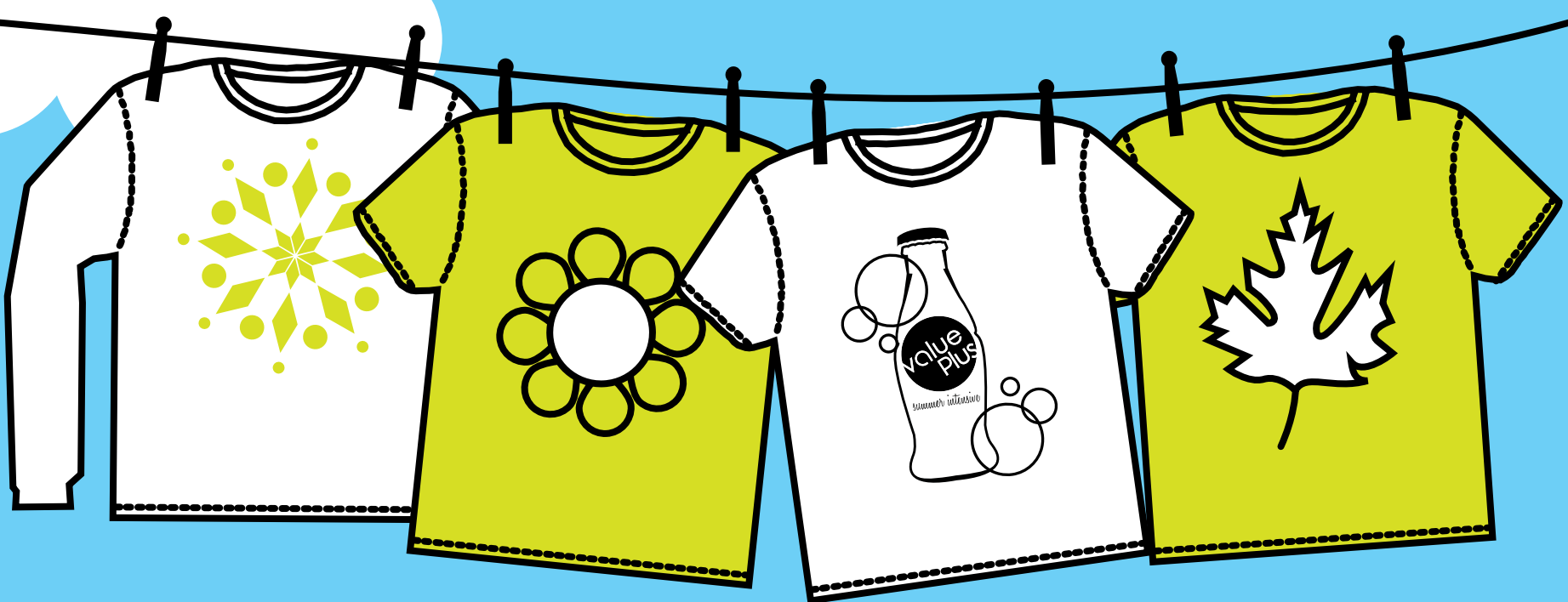
CHANGING PERCEPTIONS

When first introduced to the idea of arts integration, only 3% of classroom teachers reported receiving some instruction as part of their pre-service training. 91% reported receiving no information or training in arts integration as part of pre-service. By contrast, 83% of arts specialists had received some instruction, while an additional 18% reported having had a college level course focused on arts integration.

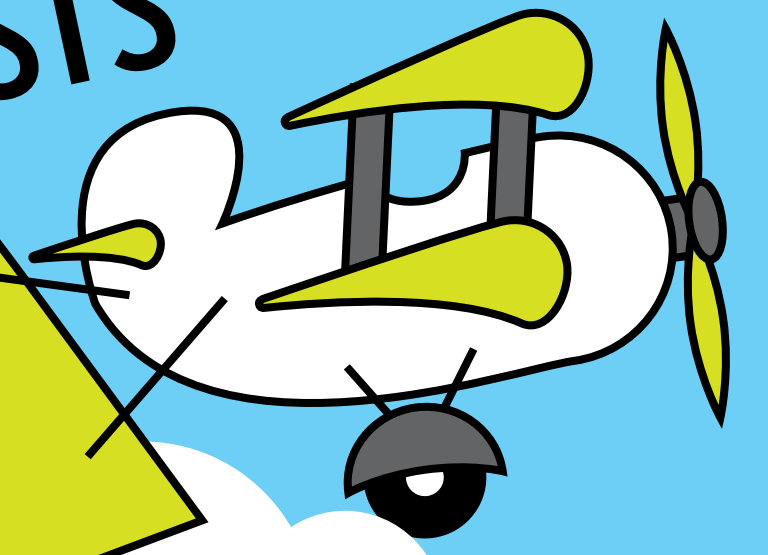
When Value Plus was first implemented in 2006, **19% of teachers and 40% of principals strongly agreed that arts integration would be highly effective at improving student achievement.** *In 2010 when the program concluded, 97% of teachers and 100% of principals strongly agreed that arts integration had a profound impact on student achievement.*

Prior to becoming involved with Value Plus, arts specialists felt relegated to the sidelines of their schools, citing little interaction with classroom teachers and a general lack of awareness among school faculty about the power of the arts on student learning. Only 25% of arts specialists felt that classroom teachers understood and valued their contribution to the curriculum. By the end of the pilot phase in 2010, that increased to 100%. Supporting this perception, in 2006, only 17% of classroom teachers felt strongly that arts specialists were vital contributors to the school faculty. In 2010, that increased to 97%.





TEACHING ARTISTS



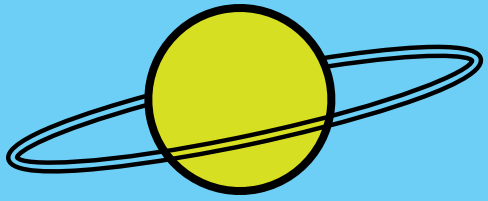
Teaching artists conducted residencies and provided professional development to Value Plus Schools throughout the pilot phase. Value Plus residencies provided classroom teachers and arts specialists with unique opportunities to collaborate and team-teach alongside professional teaching artists. Prior to becoming involved with Value Plus, only one pilot school had utilized artist residencies.

At the end of the pilot phase, students in Value Plus Schools received 1,766 visits by teaching artists, a 90% increase in the number of artist residencies hosted by schools. Value Plus Schools also benefitted from attending 518 cultural field trips.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Professional development for Value Plus Schools was year-round, culminating in a four-day Summer Intensive in which the six schools trained together. Additional professional development activities included strategic planning, curriculum workshops and annual leadership academies for principals and Value Plus Leaders. Each school worked with Value Plus staff to design their own professional development based on their school's greatest academic needs.

To bolster participation, professional development throughout the year was done on-site at each school and scheduled during mandated district in-services in which all faculty were required to attend.



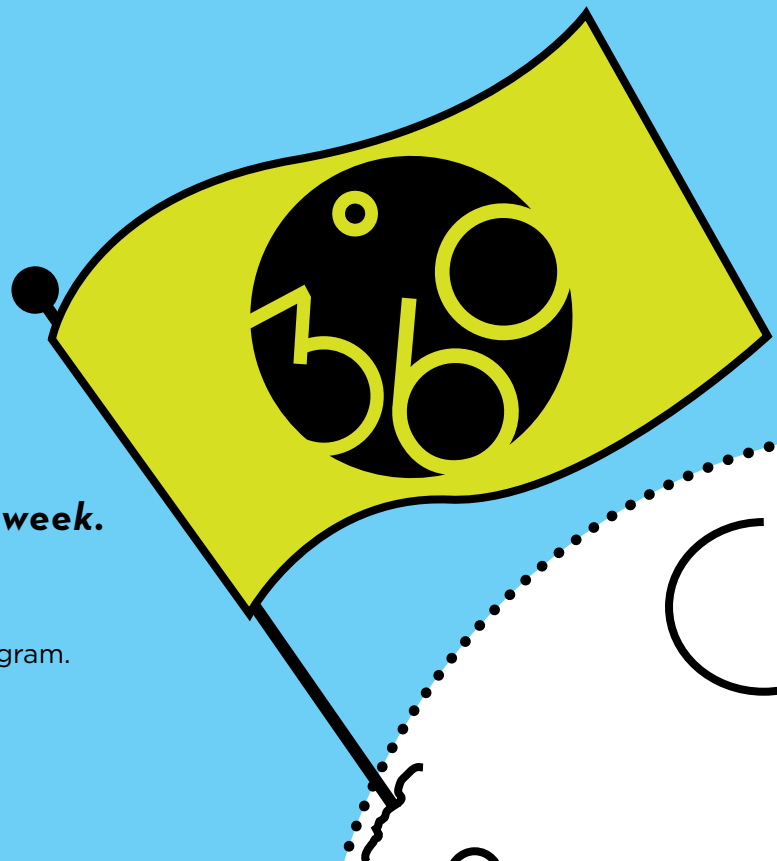
Value Plus Schools...

made **greater academic gains** than comparison schools.

had higher numbers of economically disadvantaged students but still **outperformed comparison schools** on standardized tests.

experienced higher academic achievement when teachers taught at least **two arts integrated lessons per week**.

experienced **higher academic achievement** when principals were actively involved in implementing the program.



Looking Toward the Future

Although the pilot phase of Value Plus Schools ended in May 2010, the Tennessee Arts Commission continues to provide funding, artist residencies, professional development and other support to continue the program. *In July 2010, the Commission was honored to become the only state arts agency - and one of only a handful of organizations - to ever be awarded the prestigious Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant from the U.S. Department of Education a second time.*

The \$1,062,000 grant is being used for the development of **Arts360°**, a district model in Knox County. *The Tennessee Arts Commission's Arts360° initiative brings teachers full-circle, as learners, collaborators, facilitators, and reflectors, in order to improve instruction and impact student achievement by making arts-based and arts integrated learning a critical component of every child's educational experience.* Arts360° includes year-round professional development and mentoring structured around inquiry-based reflection strategies to deepen and improve collaboration among generalist teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists.

The experiences and lessons learned through Value Plus greatly impacted the design and implementation of Arts360°.

Dear TAC,

Thank you for drama and dance. I love school now and monsters. When I grow up, I'm going to be an artist or a professional baseball player.

Your friend,

Kevin
Kindergarten, Bradley
Academy

Dear Tennessee Arts Commission,

I like having the arts in our school. It is scientifically proven that if one makes learning fun, one remembers what one is learning. That's why my teachers teach us math through paintings and music. We learn it better and that's good for me because I suck at math.

Best Wishes,

Rickie, 3rd grader
Huntingdon Primary School

Dear Arts people,

The drumming class is one of the most fun things to do at school. When I hit the drum, it vibrates and it makes me feel happy. We learn about vibration is science too. I especially love the drama classes. The acting in front of people has helped me raise my courage. The arts field trips are good too. They help me see throughout the whole world.

Your future artist,

Keisha, 3rd grader
Covington Integrated Arts Academy

Dear Arts Commission,

Creative arts is not just time to relax in this school, it is a time to become better thinkers. We learn art and other subjects at the same time. When artists come to our school, it is exciting to know a real live artist. The string quartet was amazing to listen to. It is a shame that very few people do not appreciate that but many children do in this school. You are the cause of these great memories. These are my thoughts on my school.

Sincerely,

Brittney, 4th Grader
Covington Integrated Arts Academy

Dear Arts Commission,

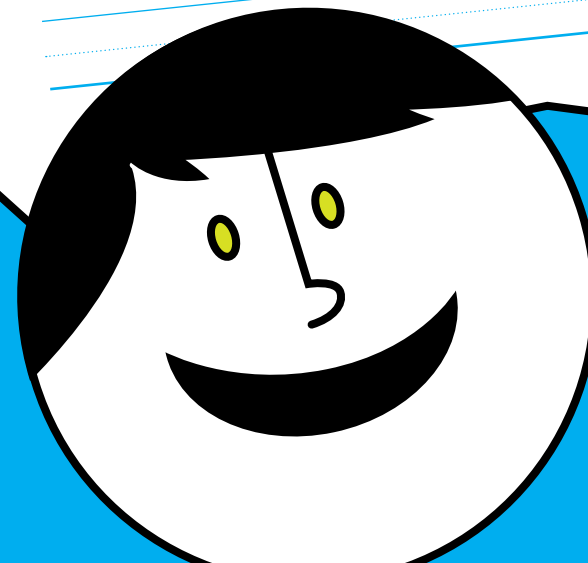
One of the things I like most about Value Plus is the pottery. It helped me learn a lot about 3-D sculpture and Southwest Native Americans. The teaching artist, Annamaria, was a real artist. I also liked learning about Mondrian and how he used math when he painted. I never thought about math and painting before. But my absolute favorite thing was the explorer sculptures. I'm a real sucker for clay. I would highly appreciate it if you could give our middle school Value Plus because that's where I'm going next year.

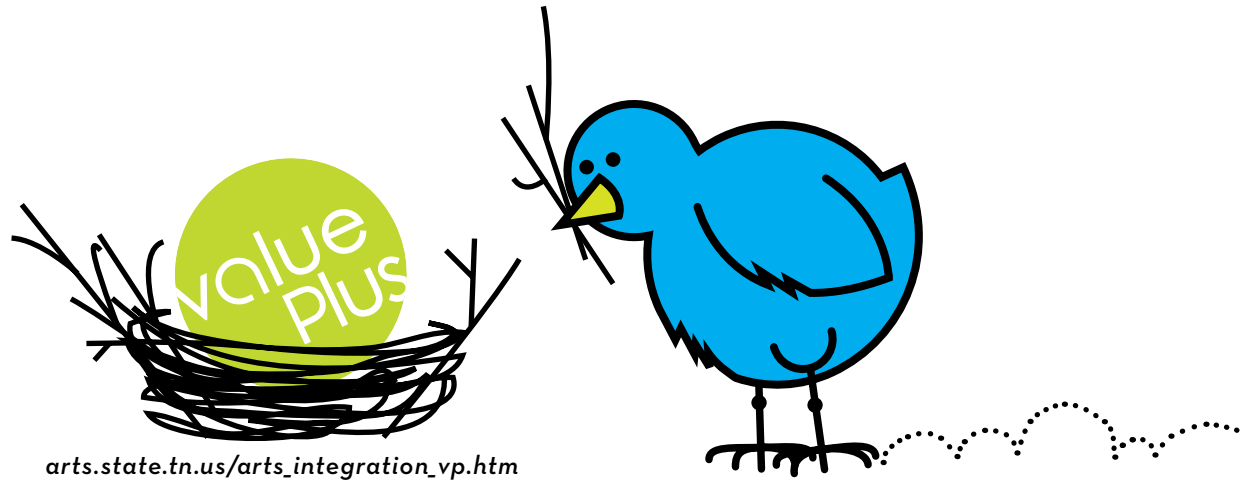
Sincerely,

Hunter, 5th grader
Mooreland Heights Elementary

In Their Own Words:

What Students Think About Arts Integration





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