
ARTS FOR LEARNING

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

In 2010, the Beaverton School District entered into a partnership with Young Audiences Oregon/SW Washington, Young Audiences National, University of Washington and WestEd to secure an Investing in Innovation (i3) grant to bring the Arts for Learning (A4L) Lessons Project to Beaverton teachers and students. Funded by the U.S. Department of Education, as well as community partners and supporters, the grant is a 5-year project that began in the 2010-11 school year when 16 schools were randomly chosen to begin the pilot with professional development and implementation of 3 spring units.

The project goals below are in alignment with the District goals of supporting the Full Option Graduate Profile, the District Strategic Plan, and Teaching Learning's College and Career Readiness (CCR) Framework. The goals are to:

- **Close the achievement gaps in reading:** Reduce achievement gaps for ELL students, students with disabilities, economically disadvantaged students, and ethnic/racial minority students.
- **Increase the percent of elementary students meeting or exceeding benchmarks for Beaverton School District's College and Career Readiness (CCR) in literacy:** Increase the percent of students meeting the CCR Benchmark standards.
- **Increase 4th grade students' writing performance:** Increase the percent of 4th grade students meeting the state writing achievement standards.

The common framework in all Arts for Learning Units, grounded in learning science of *How People Learn* (HPL), utilizes carefully selected arts integration techniques that naturally enhance, or "leverage", students literacy learning. Studies on the A4L lessons, dating back to 2006, have found that A4L students achieved greater gains in literacy skills and understanding than comparison students. High levels of interest and engagement have consistently been reported in research findings and anecdotally throughout years one and two of the project in Beaverton.

Creating "High-quality empowered teaching staff" as part of the strategic plan, the Arts for Learning Lessons Project delivers ongoing professional development in the area of arts and literacy integration. In order to successfully implement a fall and spring unit, each teacher in the 16 schools at grades 3, 4, and 5 receives a total of 20 hours of professional development. In addition to full day unit training, the 20 hours includes four 90-minute sessions, occurring mid-implementation, where teams meet in grade level teams in their schools facilitated by the unit trainers (either Allison Tigard, Young Audiences A4L Program Manager or Rebecca Carney, A4L TOSA). In these professional learning communities (Strategy 3 of the CCR Framework), teachers are able to look at student work and collaborate on improvement strategies for differentiating instruction according to the needs of their students. Also discussed and reinforced is the use of effective instructional practices embedded in the arts integration

The Beaverton School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups. It is the policy of the Beaverton School District that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment.

methods throughout the units. Teachers find that these strategies transfer across content areas and apply well beyond the A4L unit implementation.

Years 3 and 4 of the project will focus on strengthening teacher practice and deepen student learning through the continuation of the professional learning communities. Each year, the feedback from teachers on the professional development and the unit implementation is used to make revisions and improvements to the content and materials for the following year both in Beaverton and nationally, as this development grant has implications at a national level. In Year 5, Beaverton will scale up to all 33 elementary schools, involving up to 350 teachers and approximately 10,500 students.

The sixteen schools currently implementing Arts for Learning Lessons are: Beaver Acres, Bethany, Chehalem, Cooper Mountain, Findley, Fir Grove, Kinnaman, McKay, McKinley, Nancy Ryles, Raleigh Park, Ridgewood, Rock Creek, Springville, Terra Linda, and William Walker.

To see an overview of the six A4L Units, read more details from the grant itself, or follow the quarterly updates from A4L partners, please visit:

<http://www.beaverton.k12.or.us/home/departments/instruction/arts-for-learning/>

RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the School Board receive the above as a report item.