

MINNESOTA

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM – SP₃

Minnesota has been selected, after applying on a competitive basis, to be one of ten (10) pilot states to participate in Americans for the Arts' comprehensive national campaign to advance arts education, the [State Policy Pilot Program](#) (SP₃).

The Minnesota SP₃ Team plans to use the three-year pilot program to assist schools across the state in developing policies and practices that support teacher evaluation in the arts (music, visual arts, dance, theatre and media arts). The SP₃ Leadership Team intends to unite members of professional arts education organizations, the Department of Education, the Perpich Center for Arts Education, and others. These partnerships will aid in creation of a statewide source of information and knowledge, and provide assistance in pulling together data, developing a new level of networking, and facilitating policies and plans for evaluating art teachers. In addition, this Team intends to coordinate resources and approaches that will assist school districts to prepare for the 2016 review of the Minnesota K-12 Academic Standards in the Arts.



Effective teacher evaluation improves key aspects of student learning and success [credit: Perpich Center for Arts Education]

Over the past decade, Minnesota has established policies that support the availability, quality and achievement of arts education. Academic standards in the arts were updated in 2008 and went into effect in 2009. Coursework in the arts is required for higher education admission. In 2011, a statute requiring the evaluation of all teachers (including art and music teachers) was passed into law and its authority continues. It represents the bipartisan interest of Minnesota lawmakers in education accountability.

The legislative path through which this statute became law and the text of the statute itself are transparently available online in the SP₃ feature of the Perpich Center. See Statute 122A.40 and Statute 122A.41 at http://www.mcae.k12.mn.us/index.php?section=outreach_statewide_sp3.

The reason the Minnesota SP₃ Team chose to focus on studying the landscape for teacher evaluation and providing assistance to arts teachers and principals to implement this policy is because of the tremendous impact that systematic teacher evaluation has on the meaning and usefulness of learning. The statute provides that “to develop, improve, and support qualified teachers and effective teaching practices and improve student learning and success,” all teachers must be reviewed in a cycle that includes “an individual growth and development plan, a peer review process, the opportunity to participate in a professional learning community..., and at least one summative evaluation performed by a qualified and trained evaluator such as a school administrator.”



Administrators and teachers sharpen their judgment of what exemplary arts instruction looks like [credits: Perpich Center for Arts Education]

The statute also provides that the school board and “the exclusive representative of the teachers in the district” should agree to an annual teacher evaluation and peer review process; if they do not agree, then a state-designed process proceeds by default. The agreed-upon process “must include having trained observers serve as peer coaches or having teachers participate in professional learning communities,” and “must include an option for teachers to develop and present a portfolio demonstrating evidence of reflection and professional growth, which can “include teachers' own performance assessment based on student work samples and examples of teachers' work, which

may include video among other activities for the summative evaluation.” The evaluation “must use data from valid and reliable assessments aligned to state and local academic standards and must use state and local measures of student growth and literacy that may include value-added models or student learning goals to determine 35 percent of teacher evaluation results.” It also “must use longitudinal data on student engagement and connection and other student outcome measures explicitly aligned with the elements of curriculum for which teachers are responsible, including academic literacy, oral academic language, and achievement of English learners.”

What guides the MN SP₃ Team in their decisions about how to invest resources in activities is the reality that interpretation and implementation of teacher and learning evaluation is under local control. This means that summative evaluation will be the responsibility of principals and administrators who may not have arts education expertise. Because of this, there is great need at the local level for administrator and teacher professional development related to evaluation, for encouraged dialogue between administrators and teachers, and for the availability of materials and model processes.



SP3 meets with Karol Gates, Colorado Arts Content Specialist [credit: Perpich Center for Arts Education]

It is important to note that indicators of good teaching practice can vary greatly from subject to subject, making evaluation of an unfamiliar curriculum extremely challenging to an administrator. The “look fors” in a science, math, physical education and arts discipline class can be very different. What, an administrator might wonder, makes effective teaching when instructions from teachers are given with a baton or from a body in motion or for the operation of stage equipment? What an evaluator ought to be looking for as indicators of effective teaching when observing a class learning to solve a math problem or describe the deductive structure of a paragraph

might vary greatly from what an evaluator ought to be looking for in a class rehearsing a play or analyzing their subjective responses to the objective content of a painting. Might a band director be evaluated according to an administrator’s favorite interpretation of “The Star-Spangled Banner” or preference of one march over another?

In order to determine priorities, the SP₃ Team administered surveys to teachers and to principals designed to elicit the ways they believed the quality and benefits of teacher evaluations could be improved. Teachers expressed interest in help with student growth goals in order to have confidence that what comes out of assessments will be useful. They were interested in what good teacher practice and instruction should look like, in determining more opportunities for peer observation, in more regional networking, and in more experience with principal-teacher evaluation.

The teacher survey was administered in June 2015 by the Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement of the University of Minnesota. It is available at:

http://perpich.mn.gov/files/CAREI_Final_Teacher_Survey_Report_to_Pam_July_2.pdf.

Findings included:

- More than 80% of the 1,042 teachers who completed polling were tenured.
- Polled teachers perceived at least 87% of their schools have begun to implement new teacher evaluation systems.
- More than 90% of districts/schools make use of student growth/student learning goals.
- Less than a quarter of teachers found the task of designing a student growth goal with pre-teaching and post-teaching assessments difficult.
- Although a plurality of respondents agreed that the process of measuring student growth helped improve their practice, almost a third of respondents were neutral about the process, and almost 20% thought the process did not improve their practice.
- Re professional growth goals – 90% developed them – 30% felt neutral or found the task difficult – 60% had to align them with a district/school goal.

- Process of developing a professional growth goal helped improve my practice – 16% disagree, over a third were neutral.
- Professional learning community – 90% are a part of one.
- Arts teacher peer reviewer is an arts specialist less than ¼ of the time.
- Less than 40% have observed other arts specialist teachers, about the same % as were offered sub coverage.
- Of teachers who have been observed by a summative evaluator under the new system, about 40% were neutral and 10% negative on whether it had improved their practice.
- About 30% said they networked professionally online and 75% said they would if they had the opportunity.

The Center also completed a survey of principals. Principals expressed interest in learning how best to help arts teachers set appropriate learning goals. They also wanted to provide useful feedback to teachers about their instruction and what professional development would benefit them.

Guided by the surveys, the SP3 Team has initiated several activities:

- Karol Gates, currently Interim Director of Standards and Instructional Support at the Colorado Department of Education, was invited to come to MN to share her experience developing evaluation resources for teachers and principals. Colorado began implementation of their teacher evaluation process about 5 years ago when Gates was the Department of Education arts specialist. She met with the MN SP3 Team for several hours about what she learned while developing their processes and resources. The following day she facilitated a workshop with people from the field, including higher education, arts educators, professional arts education organizations and school administrators. This was the first public SP3 convening of educators interested in arts teacher development and evaluation.
- Three summer workshops entitled *Supporting Effective Teacher Development and Evaluation (TDE) for Arts Educators: What evidence is considered in arts classrooms?* have been scheduled for St. Cloud, Rochester and Fergus Falls. They will focus on how arts teachers, principals and instructional coaches can work together in their local teacher development and evaluation (TDE) process to improve instruction and student outcomes.

Defining/Describing Instructional Effectiveness in the Arts

- What does it mean to be artistically literate: creating, performing/presenting, responding?
 - How can teachers and principals use academic standards for students and their local standards for effective practice (e.g., local TDE rubric) to:
 - Reflect on and assess educator practices,
 - Create improvement goals for teachers and students
 - Identify and strengthen instruction, assessment and curriculum?

Observing and Evaluating Effective Arts Instruction

- What can observers look for as evidence that students are using the artistic processes to meet arts standards?
- How can observers provide feedback that is specific, evidence-based and focused to support teacher growth?

Workshop facilitators will include RoAnne Elliott, Wendy Barden, Jeremy Holien and Tyler Livingston. The SP3 Team has been expanded from 6 to 10 members to include expertise helpful in designing and operating the summer workshops.

- RoAnne Elliott, former Director of Curriculum and Instruction for Mounds View Public Schools, in addition to being one of the summer workshop facilitators with special experience working with principals, has been contracted to prepare an evaluation website resource. She is collecting examples of effective school district practices for teacher evaluation that might be useful to other districts as they implement the requirements of the Minnesota statute.

SP3 resources have been used to pay for the principals' study, to cover operating expenses for the Team, to bring Karol Gates from Colorado, to pay a substitute that enabled Kris Holsen, president of Arts Educators of Minnesota, to participate in SP3 work, and to pay a staff person to work on the summer workshops.

Prior to the SP3 initiative, in 2012, the Minnesota Arts Education Research Project produced a report entitled *Building a Legacy: Arts Education for All Minnesota Students*. (Survey available online: http://perpich.mn.gov/files/MN_Survey_FINAL.pdf) This survey was the first time the Perpich Center had collected detailed information from each school about implementation of the Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts K-12. The Minnesota Arts Education Survey is part of the Perpich Center's *Arts Education in Minnesota Schools Research Project* funded by the Minnesota Legislature through its Arts and Cultural Heritage Fund. The Perpich Center contracted with *Quadrant Arts Education Research*, a national research and evaluation firm with significant experience in the construction of state-level surveys about arts education to implement the Minnesota Arts Education Survey. This project provided schools, policy makers, and community leaders with an analysis of arts education while at the same time providing schools and communities with tools and resources to strengthen student learning in and through the arts.

Findings that raised concerns included:

- While access to an arts programs is nearly universal (99% of schools), less than half of all middle and high schools and only 28% of elementary schools provided access to all art forms
- Assessment of student skills and knowledge is mostly driven by teacher-developed assessments with fewer than 3 in 10 schools reporting district developed assessments in the arts.
- Less than half of all high schools included the arts in School Improvement Plans.
- 75% of schools reported having no arts coordinator in their school or district.
- Nearly 2/3 of schools spent less than \$10 per pupil per year for arts instructional materials. At the elementary level, the per-pupil arts spending is only 2 cents per day.
- While 46% of all schools report using arts integration as a teaching strategy, only 15% reported using this strategy on a regular basis. 67% of schools indicate a desire to introduce or increase arts integration.

Recommendations included:

- The Perpich Center for Arts Education collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Education to produce an annual report on the status and condition of arts education in all Minnesota Schools.
- Student and teacher performance in arts education should be measured; low-performing schools should be identified and assisted.
- The Perpich Center for Arts Education should continue to collaborate with the Minnesota Department of Education to improve the capacity of school districts and individual schools to implement a comprehensive, standards-based, sequential arts education based on state standards.
- Arts spending should be reported for every public school, a 5% of budget goal for arts education should be promoted, student participation fees should be removed, model schools should be identified.
- Each school and district include arts education in strategic plans to ensure arts programs at the school level meet the Minnesota Academic Standards in the Arts.

In addition, the research team created an "arts education index" comprised of measures related to the availability, resources and quality of arts education provided by schools and districts. High index levels correlated significantly with school performance on the Focus Rating (part of the Minnesota's Multiple Measurement Rating or MMR), in Title 1 status with regard to meeting Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and in GRAD reading scores.

For more information and to participate in Minnesota SP3 activities, please contact:

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Americans for the Arts' State Policy Pilot Program (SP3)

A three-year, 50-state initiative with a 10-state pilot component, the State Policy Pilot Program is meant to influence the implementation of federal mandates and programs around arts education at the state level, expand support for arts education policy and funding, and impact local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Through a set of data collection efforts, state-level capacity building, and the convening of a network for knowledge sharing and collective action, the State Policy Pilot Program will strengthen arts education nationally by improving state policy.

For more information, visit: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3.