

Snapshots

RESEARCH ROUNDUP

A Path to Arts Education

New guide offers 12 steps to boost schoolwide arts education

Learning in—and through—the arts helps develop the essential knowledge, skills, and creative capacities that students need to succeed, according to “What School Leaders Can Do to Increase Arts Education,” a new guide from the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), a national coalition of more than 100 educational, arts, cultural, government, business, and philanthropic organizations. This guide was developed in partnership with NAESP.

To increase arts education in their schools, principals must articulate a schoolwide commitment to arts learning. This requires four steps:

1. **Articulate clear goals.** Under the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), districts must conduct a needs assessment to identify areas where improvement is needed to support a well-rounded education, using opportunity-to-learn standards to identify gaps in arts education.
2. **Identify the arts in the budget.** Establish a line item for the arts

to align educational goals and student learning needs.

3. **Engage parents.** Parents are often willing to do more when actively engaged in school life. Use the PTA’s ArtsEd Leader’s Guide to “engage more families in school decision-making, such as improvements to programs, practices, and policies.”
4. **Support a schoolwide arts learning community.** School principals can reinforce a commitment to the arts by establishing themes, sharing arts-related articles, and honoring students’ artistic achievements.

Principals can also take four steps to create an arts-rich learning environment:

1. **Bring the arts into daily classroom instruction.** Arts

integration shows positive effects from closing achievement gaps among elementary math students to improving language acquisition among English-language learners.

2. **Provide arts-based professional development.** Research shows that incorporating the arts into curricula increases teacher engagement and satisfaction in schools with significant numbers of economically disadvantaged students.
3. **Incorporate the arts into staffing and hiring decisions.** When recruiting new educators, develop job descriptions that require arts coursework or experience in arts integration. Make the arts part of classroom observations, teacher discussions, and evaluation.
4. **Involve the local arts community.** Ask professional artists from cultural institutions or the community to play a role in providing workshops, consultations, and assessment techniques, and in developing curricular materials.



MYTWOCENTS

How do you let staff know you appreciate what they do for students?



AMBER TEAMANN (@8AMBER8): I find out their work “love languages” and make sure I meet those needs as I see them! [I] connect with as many as I can on social media, so I have better understanding of the “whole person” to support [them] as completely as possible!




STEPHANIE LANDIS (@SLLANDIS95): For Christmas, I gave the faculty room a makeover—new curtains, bulletin boards, a corner cart of PD books, and a Keurig. I paid for it myself—no school funds.

Fast Fact: 62 percent of principals indicate that the number of assistant principals assigned to their building is not enough to ensure effective school leadership that meets the needs of all students.

Source: "The Pre-K–8 School Leader in 2018: A 10-Year Study," NAESP 2018.

Finally, principals must examine use of time and resources through a third four-step process:

1. **Reallocate resources.** To expand access to the arts, consider dedicating building funds to arts education or increasing class sizes to free up resources for arts teacher positions.
2. **Tap Title I and II funds.** Schools can use ESSA funding to improve the education program of the entire school, including in-school, afterschool, and summer programs that engage arts-focused learning.
3. **Adjust schedules and repurpose space.** Provide an opportunity for arts teachers to meet with teachers of other subjects to address the school's educational goals and student learning needs.
4. **Use afterschool time.** Integrate the arts with other subjects in afterschool learning to reinforce in-school learning or as an incubator to explore new teaching strategies.

Visit the AEP website, www.aep-arts.org, for additional resources. 

Developing Young Mentors

The benefits of near-peer leadership at the elementary level

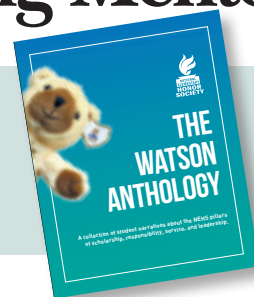
When the student becomes the teacher, a whole new world of learning opens. Near-peer mentoring, in which a student provides advice and insights to a protégé who's one or two years younger, is a wonderful opportunity for students to grow and learn together.

Benefits to Older Students

- **Developing leadership skills.** Student mentors feel empowered when they see themselves as role models. With younger students looking up to them, they take on the responsibility to provide a stellar example.
- **Increased self-esteem.** When younger students ask questions and request advice, student mentors can build their confidence through meaningful engagement.

Benefits to Younger Students

- **Increased motivation.** Some students can fly under the radar. With a near-peer mentor, each child can receive individual attention that inspires them to participate more in class.
- **Relatable insights.** Student mentors might be young, but they



have great wisdom to impart, since they have experienced some of the same challenges as their mentees recently. They can also be more approachable than a teacher or principal.

Watson: A Resource for Near-Peer Learning and Leadership

Complement near-peer learning in your classrooms—or get started with it—by making *The Watson Anthology* part of your curriculum. This unique resource from the National Elementary Honor Society (NEHS) is a collection of student-created narratives chronicling the adventures of the cherished NEHS mascot, Watson the bear. Each story is aligned with one of NEHS' membership "pillars"—scholarship, responsibility, service, and leadership.

These engaging stories make wonderful read-aloud pieces for students, and they spark meaningful conversation following each exercise. Available exclusively to NEHS-affiliated schools, the anthology is based on lesson plans aligned with English Language Arts standards, as well as age-appropriate standards from the American School Counselor Association.

Help your school sustain a culture of achievement by becoming an affiliate of NEHS and bringing this tradition of excellence to your students.

Visit www.nehs.org/start-a-chapter to take the first step. 



LESLIE KAPUCHUCK (@LKAPUCHUCK): By highlighting **SPECIFIC** things as often as possible! Treats and praise are great, but it's important to highlight examples of how they are making a difference for students—authentic, relevant learning experiences, building relationships, giving students voice and choice, etc.



DICK BAKER (@DBAKER1480): You promote their work, you care about each of them, you know and ask about their families, and you nominate them for recognition when appropriate.