

Project Abstract: The Center for Arts Education – Arts Engage Initiative

The Arts Engage Initiative (AEI) is conceived to implement a sustainable, replicable and fully accountable standards-based model for arts education that effectively improves educator practice, prepares New York City students to succeed in school and life, and addresses experience, achievement and research gaps in middle school education.

Building on CAE's past AEMDD programs and research findings, AEI will investigate how students' artistic work combines with arts-integrated studies to develop capacities of learning that align with the Common Core State Standards and proposed National Core Arts Standards. To this end, AEI will document and analyze teaching and learning at the classroom level, where teams of classroom teachers, arts specialists and teaching artists will collaborate with CAE's project staff to implement "arts *plus* arts integration" units of study that ensure *equal* emphasis on artistic and academic learning.

(The project hypothesis is that arts *plus* arts integration studies will form the foundational basis of literacies that will, in turn, predict higher levels of academic achievement, social-emotional development, and improved school culture.) Research methods employed by researchers at The Center for Music in Education will be adapted to investigate the efficacy and impact of AEI's principles and practices as cohorts of sixth grade students progress through middle school. Salient features of the AEI project are described in terms of:

1) Educator Outcomes: Professional training based on collaborative, action research methods results in improved pedagogical practices, the development of teaching artists, arts specialists and classroom teachers as effective documentation and curriculum specialists, and of coaches to provide sustained expert guidance for school teams at every phase of the project.

- 2) Student Learning Outcomes: AEI teaching practices produce authentic evidence of arts, arts-integrated and academic learning and social-emotional development.
- 3) School Community Outcomes: Sustained program implementation transforms urban middle schools into arts-rich learning communities characterized by equity, engagement and excellence in conjunction with improved school leadership and increased parent involvement.
- 4) Inter-related Research Outcomes: Multivariate research identifies causal links among multiple program outcomes and statistically significant improvements in overall student performance in comparison with control schools.
- 5) Institutional Outcome: CAE, as the initiator of this project, assumes a leadership role in action and experimental research-based arts program development and dissemination

Applicable Priorities

Priority 1: As indicated in the evaluation plan, outcomes of interest will be measured repeatedly across control and treatment schools to provide valid and reliable evidence of improved project design, strategies, practices, and implementation.

Priority 2: AEI is supported by CAE's quasi-experimental SASI studies, correlational research with strong statistical controls as recognized by artsedresearch.com., and findings from the PAIR study (see evaluation plan).

Priority 3: Chosen at random, participating schools will be selected from a pool that includes "persistently low achieving schools".

Priority 4: AEI will employ digital tools and technology to improve educator practice and within units of study for students.

D. Numbers served: AEI will serve directly 3-4 New York City Title 1 public middle schools, 1,500+ students and 50+ educators.