

THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP IN DEVELOPING A SUCCESSFUL
ARTS INTEGRATION SCHOOL: A MULTI – SITE CASE STUDY
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to attempt to close the gap in literature on the role of leadership in developing quality arts integration schools by examining three existing schools in the Minneapolis and surrounding regions which infuse or emphasize arts programs. A second and more practical purpose is to inform the development of similar arts integration charter schools within rural counties of Minnesota. School and program leaders in three schools were interviewed in the effort to gain a clear understanding of leadership skills required to open such a school, and the types of challenges they encountered as schools were developing and during initial years of operation. The two specific research questions that guided the study are:

1. In terms of organizational leadership, what does it take to start and maintain a successful arts integration school?
2. What are the types of challenges that leaders engaged in starting an arts integration school face?

Based on the quantity and type of data collected, and in light of the research questions and intended use of the data, it was determined that a holistic approach to data analysis (Handcock & Algazzine, 2011) would be the most appropriate. This approach would allow the researcher to draw conclusions based on the text as a whole; focusing on emerging themes and issues rather than on individual personalities. The research questions focus on leadership skills and steps taken by educational program leaders in order to overcome issues as they develop arts integration schools or programs. This case study does not therefore highlight specific schools or leaders, but rather seeks to identify

and understand generalizable skills, steps, issues and strategies that can be understood and then transferred into a new setting as the process of developing arts integration schools is replicated. The intended use of the data is to understand and incorporate principals and insights from those who have “walked the walk,” a phrase that was used by several interviewees at different sites and who occupied different roles within the schools.

After a review of the findings (acquired from interviews and documents) numerous times (in light of the research questions) and with prolonged reflection; three central themes or categories of leadership skills or program components (which are derived from leadership skills) emerged resulting in information – supported themes (Hancock & Algozzine, 2011). The three central themes or categories are; 1. The development and adherence to a clear mission, vision and school goals; 2. Development of an effective and continuous professional development program; and 3. The ability to communicate effectively.

The first chapter of this study provides the reader with an introduction into the topic at hand and prior research related to the research questions. Chapter two provides an overall description of the methods used to investigate the questions. The third chapter contains an in-depth description of the three school sites visited for the purpose of gathering data. Chapters four and five provide an in-depth analysis of the data as well as specific recommendations for further study

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Chapter 1

Introduction and Literature Review

It is difficult to argue the point that we are living in one of the most transformative ages in human history in terms of how we do business, how communication and learning occur, and how we prepare ourselves and our students for the future needs of our changing world (Houle & Cobb, 2011). That said, leading educational change is a critical 21st century role and involves the development of school programs designed to address rapid changes in technology and global economies by ensuring that students develop much needed skills of problem solving, critical thinking, creativity, innovation and collaboration or teamwork (Trilling & Fadel, 2009). At the same time, school programs must continue to address specific and measurable state academic standards in ways that align with various learning styles and interests of students. Educational programs must be comprehensive, interesting, rewarding and engaging to all students, regardless of cultural and religious beliefs, socio-economic backgrounds, social and personal interests and political views. As Siemens (2004) states, isolated facts and formulae no longer take on meaning and relevance until learners discover what these tools can do for them.

Over the past several decades, knowledge gained through research and field studies have revolutionized our understanding of how people learn and the specific conditions that facilitate learning most effectively. As a result, collections of teaching and organizational methods often referred to as “best practices” have been derived from principles of multiple intelligence theory, behavioral and cognitive science (Glasser, 1988; Gardner, 1993; Bruner, 1990; Wolf, M., Crosson, A. & Resnick, L. (2006), which address differences in student learning modalities, cognitive strengths or intelligence, and

cognitive levels (National Research Council, 2000). In spite of the abundance of research however, poor student achievement and high dropout rates, particularly among students of color and lower socioeconomic status, has remained relatively consistent (Bridgeland, J., Dilulio, J., & Morison, K. (2006). In The Civic Enterprise report Silent Epidemic, (2006) Bridgeland, Dilulio, and Morison point out that each year almost one third of all public high school students – and nearly one half of all African Americans, Hispanics and Native Americans-fail to graduate from public high school with their class. The report describes the primary reason that nearly half of the young adults gave for dropping out of school was that classes were “uninteresting” and that students reported being bored and disengaged in school. The report suggests the need for school programs and curriculum that are more engaging to all students. In other words, curriculum that takes into account the interests and motivating factors of students and then integrates or weaves these factors into standards based learning in creative ways.

Other recent literature & studies on learning have confirmed the need for authentic learning, that which focuses on real-world, complex problems and their solutions using a hands-on approach, as critical considerations in reshaping learning outcomes to meet 21st century workforce needs (Trilling & Fadel, 2009; Jacobs, 2010. Houle & Cobb (2011), describe the typical American school as an institution “out of sync” with the needs of our workforce. They argue that many of our schools are not teaching the skills and knowledge required to enable students to be successful in a fundamentally changing world. For example, recent national assessments found that only 41% of white, 16% of black and 18% of Hispanic students were proficient in writing, a skill that has been identified as high demand to businesses and higher education. At the same time, older

students in high school often become “dangerously disengaged” with school curriculum as typical K-12 classrooms have become outdated and incompatible with the experiences common to students engaged daily with social interaction media of Facebook, Google and a wide range of other commonly used tools (Friedman, 2007). Other experts in the field of education have pointed out that traditional dominant educational establishments “stifle” the conditions essential to creative development and to the challenges we face including; cultural understanding, communication, collaboration, and problem solving. Houle & Cobb, (2011) argue that traditional schools often operate on outdated economic assumptions about labor markets, and demand for university degrees, and intellectual assumptions shaped by specific ideas regarding academic intelligence, while disregarding equally important skill sets of innovation and creativity. The common theme of the aforementioned educational leaders and authors is the urgent need for curriculum and school programs that are transformative, designed to encourage and develop innate sense of creativity in children. This includes programs that are community centric (local and global), emphasizing collaboration, critical thinking, and context along with academic content, (Houle & Cobb, 2011) and those that emphasize the need for flexibility in a rapidly changing society and world.

Study Design & Purpose

The research design for this investigation is a qualitative exploratory case study (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011) focusing on the unique challenges faced by arts integration school leaders. This case study research attempts to add to the literature on the role of leadership in developing quality arts integration schools by examining three existing arts integration school programs in the Minneapolis and surrounding regions.

School and program leaders in each of these three schools were interviewed in the effort to gain a clear understanding of what types of challenges they encountered when developing and operating arts integrated K-12 schools, and specifically, how those challenges were confronted and addressed. Document analysis was also conducted including a review of historical documents surrounding the initial school or program development process, board minutes, strategic plans, school report cards, course and program descriptions, enrollment and other statistical data that was available for review. The study sought to understand specifically how these leaders address challenges and how they promote the school programs successfully.

Addressing these questions is important because of growing evidence and consensus among leaders in not only education, but in business, architecture and among the general public, for the need of schools to expand beyond the focus on basic areas, such as writing, math and reading. Expanding the focus to address 21st century skills will help to ensure that students will thrive in the new age by acquiring new sets of thinking and communication skills, fostering curiosity and imagination, and knowing how to access and analyze information (Houle & Cobb, 2011; Trilling & Fadel, 2009). A second and more practical use of the information gained through this case study research will also be to inform decisions regarding the future development of arts-integration schools within the rural regions of central Minnesota.

Using the arts as a tool for increasing student engagement

This study considered arts integration schools as one curricular option, offering students higher levels of engagement. (Goldberg, 1997) Because of the abundant prior research findings linking the use of art integrated curriculum and sustained involvement

in art programs with increased student engagement levels and the development of enhanced cognitive skills (Catterall, 2002; Goldberg & Bossenmeyer, 1998; Conley, 2007; Deasy, 2002; Schiller, 2008; Ingram & Seashore, 2003), a reasonable assumption can be made that student engagement levels will be elevated when learning activities are integrated with various art forms. An example of this type of learning could result from students who are asked to research a scientific topic, or academic standard and develop a public service announcement using elements of art education such as media animation, photography, literary arts and elements of theater. The final product of each art-integrated lesson would necessitate involved student discussions, evaluations, processing, explaining and arguing points in order for academic standards to be accurately represented by student-developed creative art pieces. Arts advocates argue that this type of integration requires student engagement in learning activities and the development and use of higher-order thinking skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation (Catterall, 2002). Integrating arts into other academic disciplines can therefore help students experience concepts rather than simply discussing or reading about them.

Research findings have also emerged over the past two decades relating the arts in public schools with student academic and social achievement (Murfee, E. (1997); Fiske (1999); Deasy, 2002; Catterall, 2002). Many of these studies found clear associations between student prolonged engagement in various arts programs with the development of critical “21st Century” skills identified as necessary for success in high school, college readiness, future careers and social interactions (Conley, 2007). Such skills include critical thinking, focused perception, analysis, elaboration, creativity and collaboration skills, many of which can contribute to student active engagement and to what has been

describes as the forging of concrete connections in learning (Wolf, Crosson, & Resnick, 2006). There is also evidence to suggest that learning in the arts has a positive impact on student learning in other domains, which they describe as constellations or complex webs of influence (Fiske, 1999).

Developing and leading an effective school program is challenging work to say the least. Educational leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to student learning (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson, & Wahlstrom 2004). A review of literature in education and organizational management highlights several groups or categories of leadership capacities that are required in operating successful schools. Many issues and challenges that can and do arise at the school level can generally be addressed using leadership capacities that fall into one of three basic categories, those of; setting directions, developing people, and redesigning the organization (Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004). Generally speaking, when confronted with challenges and potential barriers, which can arise from various sources, leadership capacities can influence the level of success achieved. These barriers include considerable opposition from within the organization and the local community in the form of political opposition, culture & resistance from existing organization staff (Kruse & Louis, 2009; Reeves, 2009; Kahn, Cross & Parker, 2003; Murnane & Levy, 1996), and from without the organization in terms of funding and financial obstacles, particularly when budgets are stretched. For example, many schools have sharply reduced the number of arts teaching positions and the time available during the school day for arts courses due to the costs of high stakes testing preparation required by No Child Left Behind. (Bodilly, Augustine and Zakaras, 2008). New or existing

educational leaders may also encounter “organizational inertia” or resistance to change and behavior patterns described by Kahn, Cross and Parker (2001) as “conscious and unconscious struggles related to power and influence.” Resistance to change is a common behavior pattern, which if not addressed effectively, can often hinder or paralyze change efforts.

While literature and research surrounding organizational change certainly exists, there is a clear gap in research, of exploratory studies designed to understand the specific issues surrounding the development and sustaining of a successful arts integration school from a leadership standpoint.

Research Questions

There were two primary questions of interest for this study:

1. In terms of organizational leadership, what does it take to start and maintain a successful arts integration school?
2. What are the types of challenges faced by leaders engaged in starting an arts integration school and how are those challenges addressed?

Definition of Terms

1. Arts integration – an approach to teaching in which students construct and demonstrate understanding through an art form. Students engage in a creative process which connects an art form and another subject and meets evolving objectives in both (The Kennedy Center CETA, 2010).
2. Expert thinking involves the ability to identify and solve problems for which there is no routine solution. This requires pattern recognition and metacognition.
According to employers, the most important skills in new hires include teamwork,

critical thinking/reasoning, assembling/organizing information, and innovative thinking/creativity (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

3. Complex or specialized communication - includes explaining and persuading the audience, gaining trust, negotiating, and building understanding. Experts believe that in addition to essential core academic curriculum, (i.e., reading, writing, mathematics, history, language) today's competencies must include the ability to "get things done" using more advanced and complex sets of competencies which go beyond being technically competent. demonstrate ethics and integrity, and work well with others (Trilling & Fadel, 2009).
4. Authentic learning – typically associated with real-world, problem solving activities, which include role-playing, problem-based activities, case studies, and participation in virtual communities. The focus of authentic learning is not to teach a specific topic, (i.e. science), but rather, this design uses a multi-disciplinary approach to address real world problems and skills such as addressing water shortages, designing and running a business, or solving a crime (Lombardi, 2007).
5. Data Driven Instruction and Inquiry (DDI)- is a precise and systematic approach to improving student learning throughout the year. The inquiry cycle of data-driven instruction includes assessment, analysis, and action, and is a key framework for school-wide support of all student success. (Bambrick-Santoyo, 2010)
6. Scaffolding – is the provision of sufficient support to promote learning when concepts and skills are being first introduced to students. Instructional scaffolding

is a learning process designed to promote a deeper level of learning. Scaffolding is the support given during the learning process which is tailored to the needs of the student with the intention of helping the student achieve his/her learning goals (Sawyer, 2006).

7. Thematic Analysis – is a strategy for analyzing data which is often preferred by novice researchers. For this study, each new piece of information was examined repeatedly in light of the two research questions in order to construct a tentative answer to the questions. The tentative answers were then organized into well supported themes which were identified and categorized in a table (1.0). Under each theme, the data was further sub-categorized into the tangible elements that make up each identified theme. In its most basic form, a theme is a simple sentence- a string of words with a subject and a predicate. (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011)

The field study paper is organized as follows. In Chapter two, I provide an introduction to the literature and describe the design and methods used in the study. Chapter two provides a description of the methods used in conducting the field study, along with a description of the sample, and a discussion of the trustworthiness of the findings and factors, which strengthen and limit implications. In Chapter three I describe the setting in which the study was conducted. Chapter four provides an in depth description of the findings and in Chapter five an overall summary.

Throughout the findings, direct quotations from interviewees are used to assist in describing responses and provide the reader with a sense of direct contact with the data through the transcribed word for word responses. Each quote from interviewees

is followed by a subscript, which identifies the position making the quote along with the school setting, in which the position (interviewee) is associated.

Chapter 2

Methods

I chose a qualitative case study research approach in exploring the topic at hand for several reasons. Qualitative research attempts to explore a host of factors that may be influencing a situation (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011) and is also useful if little is known about a topic. This study aligned well with the qualitative case study approach in that it sought to understand, rather than simply identify, multiple factors influencing the development of arts integration schools. This approach also allowed me to spend a considerable amount of time with interviewees within their work environments. This immersion within arts integration schools allowed me to gain a more in-depth insight into the issues being investigated primarily from the participants' perspective.

This case study research was carried out at three different school sites during the fall of 2013. At each site, four individuals were interviewed and each interview lasted approximately 35 minutes. At each school site, at least one teacher was interviewed, along with a program leader, administrator, and someone who functions at the board level. All of the interviews were conducted in the privacy of the participant's respective office or area of choosing and at dates and times of each participant's choosing.

The three case studies were conducted to determine trends and commonalities of challenges faced by arts school leaders as well as the responses carried out as a result of such challenges. These individuals were interviewed using a standardized, open-ended method (Turner, 2010). Interview questions were pre-determined, as described in the

interview guide, and follow up questions were used in order to probe more deeply into specific topics of interest (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011). All responses to questions were recorded and later transcribed by the researcher. Data was also gathered from a thorough document review, including documents related to the initial development of the school program, policy handbooks, board minutes, website review, and other relevant available data.

All interviewees volunteered to participate and each individual brought a unique perspective to the interview questions being asked and to the two research questions. Two of the school sites were charter schools, which focus on arts education as one major component of the program. The third site was a magnet arts infused “school within a school” (11) program developed for the purpose of encouraging desegregation of students of color-addressing a state statute. This clear distinction in design and purpose between the two charter schools and the one district school was evident in some of the issues and challenges faced. For example, when discussing the initial startup phase for each of the charter schools, founding developers went through a process similar to that of starting a business. Many decisions were made around funds availability, in one case, resulting in a forced late start for the school due to bussing conflicts with the local school district. In contrast, the arts magnet (district) school seemed to be in a position of having all of the necessary funding. The initial questions for this group were centered on how to use the funds in order to comply with the desegregation mandate. Clearly there were less financial concerns (initially) at the district school.

Prior to gathering data, all participants were provided with an informed consent statement, which detailed the study purpose, data confidentiality, the risks and the

benefits for the participant, and contact information for the researcher and university advisor (see Appendix B). The statements were signed by each of the participants, along with the researcher, and a copy was provided to each participant.

Data Collection & Analysis

This study relied on two sources of data; interviews and an analysis of relevant documents. Interviews were the most important sources of information, gathered using a semi-structured format.

In developing relevant interview questions for this study, a specific process was followed which considered the areas of charter school governance and management deemed essential by the federal government when developing a charter school. This process and rationale is described below.

The federal government makes available, for new and developing charter schools, competitive start up assistance grants of up to \$220,000 to be used for curriculum, salaries, lease of equipment, advertising, planning, program design, and the initial implementation of new high-performing charter schools. New school developers are required to complete detailed applications fully describing how the intended program will be designed and operated. These program components, which are evaluated by state level evaluation teams, include an overview of the following school functions: a. governance and management; b. marketing and outreach; c. community involvement; d. financial management, and; e. educational program/accountability goals. To increase the relevance of questions asked during this case study research, interview questions were developed in light of these essential topics, which have been identified as critical components by the Federal Government in order to validate charter school startup funding.

This study relied on qualitative data that is rich, personalized (Mason, 2002) and gathered by conducting in depth interviews with school leaders. Qualitative interview data provided insight into school leaders' "lived experience" (Marshall & Rossman, 2006). Semi-structured interviews allowed me to gather information specific to the research questions while providing the flexibility for follow up questions (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011). Data was recorded using an audio taping device and examined using inductive analysis to identify, after repeated examination, important themes, patterns, and interrelationships (Johnson & Christensen, 2004). Draft copies of survey instruments are included in the appendices section below.

Relevant documents and archival information were examined at each school site, including; those circulated during the school or program development phase, school newsletters, policy handbooks, documents related to school vision and mission development, website information, reports, and several other items that added to the data base (Yin, 1994).

Analysis of Interview Data

I began reviewing the interview portion of the data by listening to the audio recordings of each interview several times and then transcribing the responses to the interview questions on a word document. The responses to each interview question were grouped together so that all responses to a specific question could be easily compared and contrasted with those made by others. As I listened to the audio of interviews and transcribed relevant statements from each of the respondents, I color coded the statements to represent which school site the statements originated from. Working from this document containing combined color coded responses to each interview question, I then

began comparing and analyzing the data making note of words, terms, themes, and ideas that appeared repeatedly at each of the three sites. After recording the key words and key comments from each of the interviews, I then developed table 1.0, containing three major categories/themes and associated sub-categories by which the analysis of data was organized.

The color-coded statements were later integrated into the analysis of the findings-the names of individuals are not used. Instead, respondents are often referred to as “leader,” “interviewee,” or “teacher.” This approach to identifying the individual, or source of data, is consistent to the holistic approach to analysis used in this research. Each quote is, however; accompanied by a subscript which identifies the individual and the school site at which the statement was given. Often during the process of writing the analysis content it became necessary to return to the audio of the data in order to listen to components several times for clarity. I took these steps to ensure that what I was describing in my analysis was accurate and that I had accurately understood the statements being made in light of the research questions and other statements made by the interviewee. As the original transcripts were used within my analysis report, the statements were deleted from the original word document and then pasted into a second document entitled “discarded used statements.” This procedure was conducted in order to minimize redundancy in the report. The document “discarded used statements” was saved with the original color codes attached. Eventually, after all of the original statements of significance were somehow used or incorporated into the analysis report, I went through a secondary similar process of listening to the audio recording of each interview and documenting any significant statements that may have been overlooked or statements that illuminated

various analysis sections after these sections were written. These statements may not have seemed “significant” until after the full report, containing topics of interest that developed over the time of the analysis was synthesized.

Analysis of Documents

The analysis of documents is a commonly used method in case study research. (Handcock & Algazzine, 2011) A variety of relevant documents were therefore collected from each site and used in combination with interview data for the purpose of answering the two research questions. This purpose for document analysis was accomplished primarily through supporting and validating other data (triangulation) and for the purpose of adding specific and factual data that may not have emerged during interviews. For example, on occasion, interviewees provided general timelines or dates of events, but may not have been able to recall specifics; i.e., the month and year of an event occurring or details of policies or events such as a fundraising event. Document reviews allowed me to validate information and gather specific details if the information was relevant to answering the research questions. Documents collected include:

- Contracts between the charter schools and their authorizers
- Parent information packets
- Website review
- Student handbooks
- Board minutes
- Current and archived newsletters
- School report cards and annual reports

Prior to collecting documents for this study, I developed a short list of questions to determine the validity and authenticity of each piece of information. (Handcock & Algazine, 2011)

- What sources are available that can be used to provide answers to my research question?
- What type of answers (i.e., literal or interpretive) will be available if the documents are used?
- How will information be selected from all that is available?
- How will documents be represented as answers to research questions?

Document analysis was conducted by repeatedly reviewing all available sources acquired prior to conducting interviews (i.e., website, program descriptions, board minutes) and those acquired during or after the interviews were conducted. The latter source includes items such as copies of emails and newsletters sent to stakeholders prior to and during the development stages and an executive report of the proposed arts infused program.

Study Sample

A total of 12 interviews were conducted for this research. Four individuals from each school were interviewed, including at least one board member along with at least one teacher, one administrator, and one person occupying a role(s) of curriculum coordinator/coach and/or program leader. Two board members were interviewed by phone and one board member was interviewed in person off site. Interviews with teachers lasted approximately 35 minutes as they (teachers) spent prep time meeting with me. Meetings with principals, program leaders, and board members tended to last longer as

non-teaching schedules permitted some individuals to continue with discussions beyond the recorded interview time when specific questions were being asked. At each site, I was given a tour of the facility. I had previously visited the classrooms of School C to observe teaching and learning within an arts infused (AI) chemistry and general science class. The specific interview times along with classroom observations amounted to approximately 14 hours of direct communication with those being interviewed.

Trustworthiness/Validity Criteria

To increase the level of validity of the case study findings, several strategies were incorporated (Handcock & Algozzine, 2011), including; a. prolonged engagement; b. confirming report findings with those examined; c. gathering data from two sources (interviews and document reviews), and; d. articulating any personal biases along with steps taken by the researcher to mitigate potential effects. In addition, a thorough, well-documented and systematic analysis of data was completed to organize, compare, and validate interpretations. Data analysis techniques used included coding data from interviews under headings that capture the theoretical properties of that category.

a. Prolonged engagement

In light of the scope of this case study research and the research questions being asked, I believe a sufficient amount of time was spent at each site learning the culture and speaking with a range of individuals. The interview questions were straight forward and politically neutral allowing me to approach the interviewees from the perspective of a student wanting to learn about processes that the school founders and leaders went through in order to achieve success.

b. Confirming report findings with those examined

After analyzing the data from each interview and after a thorough review of available documentation, three main themes emerged and were recorded (see table #1.0). These three themes facilitated the development of specific findings which were then organized and detailed under specific sub-headings for each theme. In order to increase the validity of these findings, the data was confirmed by sharing the findings with each individual interviewed. This confirmation process was completed on January 15, 2014, via an email sent to each individual participant (appendix C). Participants were asked to respond to the email within one week (by January 22, 2014, or sooner).

To solicit feedback from participants in a manner that preserved the privacy of others who were interviewed, I shared the findings in a format, which identified the statements made by the individual only. This format allowed the interviewee to read through the findings and to be able to easily identify his or her personal contributions which were identified by the use of quotation marks and a specific number assigned to that individual. So for example, a teacher at School A was identified by the number 3. This teacher received a copy of the research findings and was only aware of the number that he had been assigned, (the number 3). As he read through the findings, he could identify which quotes he contributed and therefore judge the accuracy of his quotes as well as my interpretation of the data he supplied.

Each individual received the same summary with the knowledge of his or her assigned number only, whereby each contributor was able to know which quotes he or she contributed and verify the accuracy of their quotes in light of the whole analysis of the data. Any objections to the quotes supplied by an individual along with his or her comments could then be incorporated into the data.

c. Gathering data from two sources

As described in the section “Analyzing and Categorizing the Research Findings,” data used to answer the research questions were gathered from two sources; personal interviews and a review of documentation. This information is categorized in Table 1.1 and referenced throughout the findings. Data gathered through document review was used, to not only verify other sources, but also to obtain detailed information that may not have been revealed or recalled by the interviewees during interviews. For example, during interviews, specific dates and names of groups or the spelling of names of individuals could not always be recalled. Reviewing data allowed me to retrieve factual details in addition to retrieving other supporting data.

Table 1.1 Sources of data gathered for the purpose of answering the research questions

Location	Interviews	Position	Documents
1.School C	1 Mr. A	Principal	1a School A Annual Report for the 2012-13 School Year 1b School A Website 1c School A School Report Card 1d. School A Student Handbook 1e. School A Board Meeting Minutes
	2. Ms. B	Curriculum director, peer coach	
	3. Mr. C	Teacher	
	4. Ms. D	Board member	
2. School B	5. Ms. E	Administrator and curriculum director	2a. School B 2011-14 Three Year Strategic Plan 2b. School B Website 2c. School B School Report Card 2d. School B Student Handbook 2e. School B Board Meeting Minutes 2f. School B Newsletters September 10, 2013 Volume 3 Issue 3 2g. School B 2012-13 Annual Report
	6. Ms. F	Teacher	
	7. Mr. G	Teacher, board member	
	8. Mr. H	Board member and parent representative	
3. School C	9 Mr. I	Principal	3a. School C Arts Magnet Original

	10. Ms. J	Program developer and leader	Program Proposal
	11. Mr. K	Teacher	3b. School C Arts Magnet Website 3c. School C High School Report Card
	12. Ms. L	Board member	3d. School C Arts Magnet Original Newsletter 3e School C Arts Magnet Course Descriptions 3f Northwest Suburban Integration School District website

d. Researcher Positionality

This study seeks to understand what it takes to start a successful arts integration school, including an understanding of the types of issues that could arise, causing school founders to struggle unnecessarily or at worst fail in their quest. Although my intention in conducting the study was simply to learn from other leaders within these selected educational settings, as interviews were conducted, I found myself at times disagreeing philosophically with responses that were given. These disagreements were based on my own knowledge, education, and experiences as a teacher and administrator in K-12 for the past 17 years.

I minimized the effect of my own positionality, first, by not voicing my own opinion. I pre-determined that my role as a researcher was not to voice my opinion or to give advice, but rather to ask questions and listen intently to individuals who had experienced this process of developing and opening a school first hand. Occasionally, I would encourage each interviewee by affirming their responses with a nod of the head or by verbal gesture, which indicated that I understood what the interviewee was relaying at the time of the interview. I also attempted to minimize my own positionality by transcribing each interview word for word, rather than paraphrasing,

which could lead to an interpretation through the lens of my own philosophy, beliefs and experiences. These “word for word” transcriptions were then analyzed repeatedly allowing the themes to emerge from the responses given along with the review of documents.

My personal and professional goals are directly associated to the research findings; to develop arts integration charter schools within rural areas of Minnesota. As the research questions are explored for this study, I hope to gain valuable insight into this process of school development. This direct experience with the data and insight gained by conducting the study will be used in my own efforts to develop successful arts integration charter schools.

Within the rural regions of Minnesota, school choice is rare or in many cases nonexistent. Professionally, I hope to address one specific goal of charter school legislation, which is to provide parents and students with more opportunities, or choice where public education options are limited, such as rural areas.

Factors which strengthen the research findings

There are several factors within the makeup of the sample of interviewees and within the responses to specific interview questions, which I believe strengthen the overall findings of this study. Although the school structures, grade levels being served, mission, and purposes for establishing the three programs are significantly different, many of the issues that arose during the school’s initial development as well as the methods for addressing issues, which arose at all of the three sites, were quite similar. This similarity in issues and in the specific responses to these issues arguably strengthens the findings or answers to the two research questions. A second factor,

which strengthens the findings of the study, is the positions of the interviewees responding to questions. At each site at least one individual was involved in the initial startup of the school or program. Several teachers were involved during the first years of the schools being opened and two individuals were involved in the grant writing process and development of the program.

Each of the programs has been functioning successfully for at least 7 years, allowing the participants to speak from direct experiences. In many cases, these individuals were able to provide clear reflective responses to how issues emerged throughout the initial development and start-up years of each respective school and how those involved responded to the issues in a productive and meaningful way. Finally, after the data was gathered and organized, I was able to confirm report findings with those interviewed. As described previously, I asked participants in the study to provide feedback regarding the accuracy of my interpretation of the statements that were made during the interviews. (Appendix C) Unanimously, all of those responding reported that the data, which was captured, interpreted, and recorded, using quotation marks, was accurate and that my perceptions were correct. For example, one participant responded; “Carlo, I agree with the information you've got for me. It was interesting to read over your project.”(2) Similarly, another participant from a different location responded; “Looks good! Have fun building your program and thanks for having the dream and making the effort.”(12)

Limitations

The study was conducted with limited resources and time availability. Although the three schools selected for the study represent diversity in terms of school types (charter,

vs. traditional and elementary vs. high school) only four individuals at each site were interviewed, thus limiting the data gathered. By interviewing everyone at each of the school sites, a larger amount of data could be attained, which would provide additional perspectives, could further confirm findings at each site, and potentially a more comprehensive understanding of issues surrounding the research questions. Additional studies could therefore include larger sample sizes; including a whole group sample.

Analyzing and Categorizing Findings

Based on the quantity and type of data collected, and in light of the research questions and intended use of the data, I determined that a holistic approach to data analysis (Handcock & Algazzine, 2011) would be the most appropriate. This approach would allow me to draw conclusions based on the text as a whole; focusing on emerging themes and issues rather than on individual personalities. The research questions focus on leadership skills and steps taken by educational program leaders in order to overcome issues as they develop arts integration schools or programs. This case study does not therefore, highlight specific schools or leaders, but rather seeks to identify and understand generalizable skills, steps, issues, and strategies that can be understood and then transferred into a new setting. The intended use of the data is to understand and incorporate principals and insights from those who have “walked the walk,” (a phrase used by several interviewees) as the process of developing arts integration schools is replicated.

Throughout the process of collecting the data through interviews and by reviewing relevant documents, I found myself continually reflecting on, examining, and interpreting the information in order to reach tentative conclusions (Handcock & Algazzine, 2011) as

to; (a) how the data addresses the research questions and; (b) how the data should be organized in order accurately and clearly reflect the opinions and experiences of those being interviewed. There were twelve interviews conducted, using the same set of interview questions. Most of the interviews lasted approximately 35 minutes, as teachers took time from their prep period to meet with me. Interviews with program leaders outside of the classrooms lasted a little longer (approximately 40-45) as informal discussions developed and additional questions were asked after the interview had concluded. The quantity of data was therefore sufficient to answer the research questions, but did not necessitate the use of computer software programs to assist in categorizing and processing.

Most, if not all, of the interviewees at each site were involved with and assisted in the development of their respective school or program. This unique opportunity allowed me to gain the perspectives of “school leaders” irrespective of their current position. For example, at one site, one teacher was also a board member. At a second site, the administrator being interviewed also teaches. At a third site, the board member and initial developer was a former teacher. The notion that teachers also occupy leadership roles within the schools is supported by comments made from administrators being interviewed and statements contained in documents. For example, one administrator stated; “We believe that teachers carry out the vision of the school, and that teachers must be given the means and the authority to do so.”(1) All individuals being interviewed were long-term employees and occupied various leadership roles, thus allowing much of the data, which emerged from the interviews to address the research questions more directly from a leadership standpoint.

Data analysis focused on organizing and reducing the information collected into themes or statistical descriptions and inferences, and then to later interpret the data or attach meaning to it in order to address the research questions. (Fitzpatrick, Sanders & Worthen, 2011) Adhering to a general guideline of case study researchers, (Handcock & Algazzine, 2011) I followed a constant process of examining each piece of information gathered in light of the research questions.

Summary

In short, this case study research examined three existing arts integration school programs in the Minneapolis and surrounding regions in the effort to gain a clear understanding of the types of challenges school and program leaders faced when developing and operating these arts integrated K-12 schools. The study also sought to clearly identify how these challenges were confronted and addressed through school leadership practices. Data used to address the research questions was gathered using two primary methods; in-depth interviews with school and program leaders and a thorough review of relevant documentation. All data collection took place during the fall of 2013, after which an in-depth analysis was completed. Study findings were organized and documented as a final report to be presented in the spring of 2014.

Chapter 3 Settings and Description of Cases

Study Setting

Three public schools, which emphasize the arts as part of the curricular options, were identified for the purpose of studying the research questions. In order to gather a broader spectrum of perspectives and experiences, a variety of different schools were

purposefully chosen, all of which contain the key program design of being arts integration or arts-rich schools. For example, one of the selected schools is a traditional K-12 district school while two were charter schools. Likewise, two of the identified schools were elementary schools while one was a high school.

Overview of research sites

1. School A

School A is a Minneapolis tuition free K-8 charter school that opened in 2003 around two central themes or core values: the responsive classroom and arts integration. School A currently enrolls approximately 180 students and employs 11 regular education teachers, one special education teacher and numerous educational assistants and support staff. School A has been designated as a Reward School by the Minnesota Department of Education based on the Multiple Measures Rating for Title I schools (1b)(1c). As cited on the school website and the Annual Report, the school's mission is to "create a learning community that is diverse, knowledgeable, thinking and caring and will serve as a demonstration site for the best practices in integration of social and academic learning."

(1a)

The following excerpt is taken from the school Annual Report:

Our approach to creating such a supportive community is grounded in research in child development, social-emotional learning, effective curriculum and instructional design, classroom organization, and community assets that support youth success. Because a large body of research and good practices shows us that the greatest cognitive growth occurs when children learn to care for themselves, others, and the

school environment, School A fully integrates academic and social learning throughout the school day. [School A Annual Report, 2012-13 School Year]

Table 1a Student demographic makeup at School A

Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Am Indian	2	1.4
Asian	4	2.9
Hispanic	5	3.6
Black	11	7.9
White	118	84.3
Total	140	100

The original developers of School A were all prior St. Paul Public School teachers with a desire to develop a program that would offer a new way of “fostering responsible citizens in the world.” (4) School A vision involved developing a future generation that “thinks and acts differently.”(4) The school “Utilizes instruction which is differentiated and challenging, active, arts-infused, interdisciplinary, and inquiry-based.”(1a) The founders wanted to provide an “alternative to the alternative school for kids shunned in society.”(4) Part of this process was “to model what caring adults look and act like.”(4) More specifically, the staff at School A will; “Model applied social and academic skills in collaboration with the larger community.” (1a.) The founders of School A believed arts integration was a necessary component in order to develop the socially emotional responsible classroom, so the program was and is designed to allow students to participate in the arts for one hour each day. “All of us are artists,” (4) and the arts “allow us to identify positives within ourselves,” (1) were among many statements made by the

interviewees as they described the importance of arts integration within the responsive classroom at School A.

A second motivating factor in developing the school (A) came from the observed reduction of arts programs within the surrounding public schools. As one founder and board member explained the reasoning behind the school's areas of focus; "Because of the arts being less and less a part of public school curriculum as well as the need for social skills in the schools."(4)

One of the founders and current School A board member worked in the corporate world prior to teaching and described how one of her previous job duties involved hiring scientists for a large corporation.

Many scientists I hired through 3M lacked social skills. And as we know, product is not made in singularity." We asked the question of; How can we help young people become more collaborative and use social skills to leverage intellectual skills, and came to the determination that the arts inherently lend themselves to a spirit of appreciation, reflection and thoughtfulness which are high level social skills. [Board member (4) December 11, 2013]

I interviewed four individuals at School A, occupying the roles of; teacher, administrator, peer coach (and curriculum coordinator) and board member. One of the interviewees was involved with the initial development of the school, two of the interviewees were involved at the initial stage of operation as teachers and one was hired approximately three years after opening the school. This variety of experiences and perspectives from interviewees, along with an analysis of several key documents,

provided what I believe is a clear picture of the school's initial stages of development. These initial stages include the collective vision and mission, which prompted the school's development, along with the struggles, strengths and limitations that clearly emerged during the first several years of operation. This founding group partook in the struggles and successes required to bring about or manifest what the founding group had originally envisioned as a learning environment which maximizes the promised positive, unique and holistic learning experience for students.

2. School B

Also designated as a Reward School in 2013 by the Minnesota Department of Education, (2c) School B is a K-8 charter school located just north of Minneapolis in Blaine. The school was developed originally by a parent who wanted to create a school that addressed the needs of her son and one which contained qualities that she felt were lacking in other local schools. The school founder also served as board chair for the initial stages of school development and the first several years of school operation. School B opened in September of 2008 with 160 students enrolled in grades kindergarten through 6, eventually expanding to include grades 7 and 8. School leaders are now considering the development of a high school, which has been a topic of debate and division for the past several years. School B utilizes a core knowledge scope and sequence curriculum while emphasizing four "pillars" or areas of focus which are: arts and science focus; enhanced learning experiences; differentiated instruction and; character development. The school currently enrolls 423 students with the following demographic makeup;

Table 2a The student demographic makeup at School B

Ethnicity	Count	Percent
Am Indian	9	2.1
Asian	34	8.0
Hispanic	2	.05
Black	38	9.0
White	340	80.4
Total	423	100

The mission of School B is as follows: “To awaken a passion for learning through an enriched and individualized approach to education. Students, parents and teachers will work together to ensure positive character development and build a strong foundation for higher education.”(2b) School B is clearly an arts rich school, evidenced by visual arts displays, which lined its walls of the school and front office area. Parents are attracted to School B for a variety of reasons including the arts and science focus.

As one board member explained;

The schedule is year around, shorter summer break with breaks scattered in-between, the uniform policy, which takes away a little bit of pressure on the students and makes it easier and makes the students feel more of a collective shared experience, the pillars of the school, such as differentiation and the smaller class sizes. [Board member (8) January 15, 2014]

School B offers arts programs to all students during the school day primarily as segregated subjects of study. As one interviewee stated; “Arts are important; not just drawing, its music, drama, dance. It’s important to the culture of the school.”(5) I had the opportunity to interview four individuals at the site, including two teachers. One teacher had been employed at the school since year one, the second was a more recent hire. This second teacher also serves as a board member; a dual role which is unique to charter schools and is mandated by state statute. I also had the opportunity to interview one administrator and one board member. The administrator’s role includes oversight of teaching and learning including curriculum development and purchasing. The board member interviewed is also a parent of a School B student. This individual serves as finance committee chair and was mentioned and credited by other interviewees for much of the financial success experienced at the school. The four interviewees were diverse in terms of job functions and offered unique perspectives and relevant information in light of the two research questions. These individuals offered insight based on their own personal experiences and offered sound advice on developing arts programs as well as how to avoid negative scenarios experienced during initial years of operation.

The first year of School B’s operation was clearly difficult due to internal conflicts within administration and the board. As a result, the first director was “gone by October.” (6) The school revolved through “three directors during the first year” (5) leaving a void in the school leadership and placing teachers, many of which were also first year teachers in a position of “running the school.”(6) After settling into the first year of operation, the school became more stable and very successful by all measures and

is now “busting at the seams” (5) with a waiting list of over 700 students wanting to enroll into the program.

3. School C High School Arts Magnet Program

Unlike the two previously mentioned schools, School C is a “school within a school.”(10) A distinct arts infused program housed within a larger high school campus. School C is part of a large traditional high school district. School C was developed through a consortium of 8 different school districts offering magnet schools from grades K-12 in three themes; Arts, International Baccalaureate (IB), and Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM/STEAM).

The consortium program philosophy describes how arts magnet programs provide a strong academic core with opportunities for students to create at many levels. The philosophy also explains that teaching through the arts helps students experience concepts rather than merely discussing or reading about them. (3f)

The consortium district was created in 2001 in response to the State of Minnesota’s Desegregation Rule. The Arts magnet arising from the consortium was offered at the specific high school site because after researching the topic, district program leaders believed that students of color would be attracted to arts programs and thus, the students would be willing to travel by bus almost an hour to the High School. (12, 3f)

Individuals represented in the interview process at School C include a science teacher, the original program leader and developer, a board member, and a school principal that was hired several years after the program was developed. The Arts Magnet Program at School C started with approximately 60 freshmen students during year one, adding a

grade level each year as the freshmen moved into the next grade level. Of the 250 students enrolled each year, approximately 20% enter through the open enrollment process, from other neighboring school districts, while the remaining 80% of the students reside within the District boundaries. Students enrolled in the program have shown some interests in the arts and eventually can focus their studies in one particular form of art. The program mission statement is as follows: “Academic excellence through artistic inquiry.”(3a) The arts are infused across the curriculum as a platform for learning through modified courses such as the Arts Infused (AI) Science, AI English and AI Social Studies. (3b) The program seeks to “improve academic achievement through an arts-infused curriculum and an opportunity to experience and specialize in art disciplines of their choice.”(1a) Academic topics are learned in ways that generate higher interest levels within the students. For example, studying sound through the musician’s lens and creating visual arts displays to represent the concept of equilibrium in science. (13) Program developers and teachers at School C described how arts integration prepares students for post-secondary educational options by “training students to think creatively and collaboratively.”(10) Students studying media arts or applied graphic arts learn to use advanced computer software often used in various business and arts-related industry, thus better preparing students for the work force directly from high school. (13)

Table 3a Student demographic makeup at School C Arts Magnet Program

Ethnicity	Percent
Am Indian	3.0
Asian	5.0
Hispanic	6.0
Black	6.0

White	79.0
Total	100

Chapter 4 Findings

After reviewing all of the findings, acquired from interviews and documents, numerous times, in light of the research questions, and with prolonged reflection; three central themes or categories of leadership skills or program components emerged resulting in information-supported themes. The three central themes or categories are; 1. The development and adherence to a clear mission, vision, and school goals; 2. Development of an effective and continuous professional development program, and; 3. The ability to communicate effectively.

After seeking to identify steps, leadership qualities, and specific skills associated with the question; “What does it take to start and maintain a successful arts integration school” (research question 1) along with “the types of challenges” that leaders face as they start an arts integration school (research question 2) I soon realized that the two research questions for this study are closely interrelated. Although some of the following data can certainly overlap or be placed under multiple categories, each component has been thoughtfully categorized in consideration of the scope and limitations of this research and for the purpose of answering the two specific research questions.

Table 1.0 Overview of the categories of data obtained through interviews, document review and literature review.

Research Question 1. In terms of organizational leadership, what does it take to start and maintain a successful arts integration school?		
Research Question 2. What are the types of challenges that leaders engaged in starting an arts integration school face?		
Three central themes emerging from the data		
1. Clear Mission/Vision/Goals	2. Strong Professional Development	3. Effective Communication
Sub-categories which act to further categorize and organize the data		
a. Financial planning & budget- All decisions should be driven by the school mission and vision. b. Focus on arts-integration initially before integrating other academic topics.	a. Curriculum development b. Scaffolding support system. Open lines of communication c. Data driven decision making	a. Effectively promote the program to all stakeholders b. Community Support & Political Challenges c Establishing expectations, culture and norms

Finding #1 Leaders of successful arts integration schools develop and adhere to a clear mission & vision

Each of the three schools visited were developed initially with a clear mission and vision, which drove or directed the development of the school or program design as it formed into what is established today. As one participant explained; “Clearly the first leadership skill is the vision to say; this is what I want to have happen. And then the same amount of initiative to go ahead and to make it happen.”(8) Although the arts were, and continue to be, strongly tied to each school achieving its mission, the central focus of each school mission varied greatly from desegregation of students of color to developing responsible citizens using progressive, responsive classroom and developing a small school with passionate life-long learners.

Leaders at each school cited the practice of adhering to the school mission and vision as an important factor in the school’s overall success. For example, in explaining the importance of adherence to the school mission, one interviewee described it through the

lens of her personal observations as the school was initially developed by its founder. “Know where you want to be; a lot of times it can come across like you’re not listening, but she (school founder) knew exactly how it was going to work.”(6) Another school leader suggested that in developing an arts integration school the leader should; “Figure out your priorities.” This individual also warned that; “When the school is new, parents come in with different visions of what the school should be.” This individual suggests that school developers and leaders should; “Come up with a vision and stick with it.” (5) Another interviewee stated it this way; “Whatever you do, you have to fit it into your mission. Align your activities to the mission.”(7)

The practice of mission-driven decision-making was evident at each school site. Programmatic and administrative decisions appeared to be made through the lens of achieving each school’s particular mission statement and school wide goals. For example, at one site, the school’s cap of 25 students per class reflected the founder’s desire to take an “individualized approach to education” and develop a small school community;

She (founder) started the school to tailor it to what she thought was missing in her son’s school. She wanted a school that would be good for the area. A lot of it was community size; small school. She started a cap of 25 kids per class.”[Teacher 6 November 21, 2013]

At another site, the principal acts as a filter for the school’s funding decisions by asking questions to staff regarding their requests and choices. For example, a teacher wanting to bring a particular artist into the school to teach a specific topic to students

might be asked to articulate how this artist will benefit the students. (1) At another site, course offerings and the length of time in which a course is taken by students had to be re-designed to match the arts-infused philosophy of learning, altering the system of delivery. “We did a reverse order with offering science progression. Our kids get science and chemistry at a deeper level. Integrating the arts takes more time to implement and go through than a traditional science class.”(11)

The mission-driven or guided decision making process also applied to student achievement and making programmatic decisions based on measureable results. For example, all of the schools emphasize student achievement within the school mission, vision and school goals; “School A will focus on a core curriculum that students will address critically and with depth.”(1a) Similarly, the mission of School B is to “Awaken a passion for learning through an enriched and individualized approach to education.”(2b) School C mission states; "Academic Excellence through Artistic Inquiry."(3b) From the perspective of student achievement on academic assessments, each of the sites also made decisions with the intent of increasing measureable achievement. For example, at one site the administrator explained “Using data to drive instruction is huge. Our main effort to improve test scores is data driven instruction.”(5) At this school, the teachers go through a cycle of assessing students, evaluating data and developing student-specific support structures to reteach and help ensure that all students are learning the standards. “We do this four times per year formally.”(5) The other sites used a similar process of meeting standards. For example, one teacher at School C explained how they (department) decided to “taper back on the arts integration in biology to make sure we get ready for the state test.” (10)

At School A, the principal described his school's similar approach:

Being principal is really a namesake, there are no magical powers. The staff knows what's going on and they have to articulate it to the principal every Tuesday. What's going on and where are the gaps based on data? All staff get together and we talk." [School Leader (1) December 11 2013]

This process of evaluating student achievement and taking necessary steps to ensure measureable academic achievement was universal at all three sites.

The importance and benefits of incorporating the arts into every student's academic day was embedded within each school's mission, vision, and school goals or "pillars." Universally, individuals being interviewed could clearly articulate a variety of ways in which the students at the site benefit from arts programs. These benefits, which were described by participants at all sites, align with research findings supporting arts and arts integration programs which are presented in the background portion of this report. For example, when asked to describe the school (program) philosophy of arts education in terms of benefits to students, (interview question E1) the responses demonstrated knowledge of research and in some cases, interviewees referred to study findings. "Numerous studies that show kids with access to arts perform better academically. It's a great outlet that enhances every single academic subject." (5)

What follows is a summary of statements made by interviewees at all three sites indicating a uniform philosophy of arts programs in terms of benefits to students:

The creative process and the ability to express creatively is equally as important as athletic and speech and debate programs. They all work together to create a well-rounded individual. [School principal November 15, 2013]

At another site, the program leader described:

The arts allow you to teach so that kids are creative in every avenue. Kids doing several areas of art will make them well rounded as artist. They can think outside of themselves. So this helps them think of science from a different perspective and begin to like science where they didn't before. [Program leader 10 November 15, 2013]

At another school, one leader explained how arts benefit students:

Kids see themselves as artists. It's a tactile, concrete skill that gives teachers a lot of pathways to exploring things. It enriches. Teachers can make a lesson more engaging, more active. The responsive classroom and arts are about choices. Students are more engaged when we're making decisions. It (art integration) gives teachers a way of making a lesson more engaging. [Curriculum director, December 11, 2013]

Clearly, the document analysis portion of the study supports the notion that interviewees share a collective philosophy regarding the benefits of arts education. Statements contained within the various documents collected also contain references to, or citations of, research related to arts education.

The following summary of statements extracted from various documents (from all three school sites) underscores this point:

Research studies point to strong relationships between learning in the arts and fundamental cognitive skills and capabilities used to master other core subjects, including reading, writing and mathematics. A strong arts education promotes the skills children need to be successful. Exposure to art education promotes self-directed learning, improves school attendance, and sharpens critical and creative skills. In fact, several recent studies have concluded that the creativity and innovation utilized in the artistic process will be highly valued by employers in the United States in the coming years as we continue to shift into a global economy.” [School B Website 2b]

At a second school site, documents also indicate a uniform philosophical viewpoint regarding the benefits of arts education.

Children need multiple doorways into learning, and the daily presence of storytelling, drawing, singing, poetry, and movement in our lessons will make it possible for every student to find the way in. We will use the arts-integration model developed by Origins and taught in its course, Building Academic Communities Through the Arts. Sourced from [Howard Gardner’s Theory of Multiple Intelligences], the work of Elliot Eisner, Columbia University Teacher’s College, the Arts Plus model and many others our curriculum is arts-infused. [School A Student Handbook 1d]

1a. Financial planning & budget: Leaders of successful arts integration schools are savvy with funding and make financial decisions based the school mission and vision.

Financial stability at all of the schools was achieved in part, through strong financial management and through intentional mission-driven (financial) decision making rather than excess of funding. Major decisions involving purchasing were passed through a type of screening process to determine if the school mission and vision would be advanced or supported as a result of the spending. As one principal stated; “Every single decision should funnel through the mission.”(1) Another leader stated it this way; “What you spend your startup money on should be solely dependent on the mission of your school.”

(5)

At one site, a current example was given to illustrate this point;

Right now we’re discussing if we should add more technology. It’s not related to the mission so we’re having a huge discussion on: do we add more technology? And, is more technology in any way related to our mission? We can’t find that it is, so why would we add more when we’re not using what we have well because we haven’t figured out how it goes with the mission. [School leader 5 November 12, 2013]

This individual also echoed statements made by other interviewees in describing the difficulty of adhering to the school’s mission when very different opinions exist within the school’s body of stakeholders. “It’s hard when you have parents, teachers, and the board coming from a different perspective and everybody has a different view.”(5) This

individual described what she felt was the reason for the school's success when navigating through this decision making process involving many different perspectives. "Every single decision we make is made on student achievement. Are we enhancing student achievement with technology? Right now we're not, so why would we put more into it."(5) One thing that did not emerge from the data is a universal "silver bullet" tactic or method of addressing funding challenges and shortfalls. At each site interviewees discussed financial constraints along with several common sense principles that were employed to assist in developing financial stability. Actions taken by school leaders in addressing shortfalls or in supplementing the general budget included; fundraising efforts, cutting back or combining positions during financial cutbacks and even finding used furniture to reduce spending. Each site team expressed difficulty in applying for and receiving grant dollars and explained how fundraising efforts help to some extent.

At one site, the board member and finance committee chair explained:

The funding for a school is extremely tight. It's insanely tight. We were able to stretch our dollars because the early administration staff that we had were experts at paying attention to the school communities and scrounging. Literally scrounging for resources we needed. We got all of our lunchroom tables for \$20 and our initial lockers for free. As other schools close, their obligation is to first make their materials and furniture available to other schools. So as schools closed or remodeled we basically went in and cleaned them out. So we saved tens or hundreds of thousands of dollars in putting our school together the first few years.

[Board member 8 January 15, 2014]

Funding shortfalls were addressed at each site using strategies that were site specific or developed to address the unique challenge faced by the school at a particular time. For example, at one site, the leadership responded to “state withholding money” (holdback) by establishing a line of credit.(7) This individual reiterated how the school’s board is “savvy with budget” which is a universal solution to avoiding funding shortfalls. At another site, the leadership team decided to improvise when a funding shortfall occurred. “The state cut innovation funding back to 86%. We had to decrease programs and combine positions.”(12) The leaders at the third site decided to adopt a late start, choosing to maximize funding for the educational program rather than transportation. “We had to decide if we wanted to use our money for transportation or art programs.”(4)

All of the schools visited were financially stable and either at or near capacity as far as student enrollment. One of the sites contained a large waiting list of students wanting to enter the program and a fund balance of over a million dollars.(5)(2a) At one site, much of the financial stability was attributed to a board member with a strong financial background. “One board member has made us financially stable. He joined the board with finance knowledge and now heads the finance committee. Finding someone like that is important.”(7)

Fundraising and grant writing

To varying degrees, fundraising was conducted at the two charter school sites, primarily by parent support organizations. Fundraising efforts were conducted more frequently during the first years of operation. As one interviewee explained, “The first few years we did a lot of fundraisers, now we do a few larger fundraisers and we find

that's more successful.”(5) Fundraising is now conducted at least annually and exclusively by parent groups.

At each site, leaders described the need for the school to find and apply for available grants. On several occasions, grants were described as a way to continue with specific professional development and programmatic practices because of changes in funding as grant funding periods ended. For example, one leader described the need for funding specifically, for hiring artists to come into the school and work with teachers and students. Bringing in various artists to supplement the curriculum and enhance learning experiences for students is a foundational practice of all three schools and a practice that has been conducted since each school's opening. As one leader stated: “We have to be diligent about seeking grants for the artist in residence.” (4)

Another leader described the need to find funds for professional development specific to arts integration.

Professional development on arts integration training is much more difficult to do now that the grant is done. We don't spend as much time together now. I need to find some staff development grants in inquiry and artistic process. We now hire people who are artists or have it in their background, which helps.” [Program leader 6 November 15, 2013]

At this site, some arts integration training is provided to teachers; however the majority of professional development is now aligned with what is provided to the entire high school faculty.

Grant writing and the steps required in order for a school to receive additional funding through grants from business corporations was universally described as difficult and challenging. At one site, an interviewee who serves as finance committee chair explained how finding grants that are directed towards their particular student program and student/neighborhood population has not been successful;

It's a disappointment and challenge for us in that we have been unsuccessful in getting some meaningful level of non-state education revenue. There are a number of schools that get a significant portion of their funding through charitable donations, grants, and foundations. That is impressive and good and wonderful for them but we have received none of it. [Board member 8 January 15, 2014]

The primary reasons given by school leaders for not pursuing grants are the specific requirements attached to the funds. As one board member explained;

We haven't deliberately perused the grants. Part of the reason we haven't perused them is that it isn't clear to us that we are a good candidate. It's not like we see some great low hanging fruit where we are a natural fit for a particular foundation's funding. We don't serve (high populations of) disadvantaged kids, or a particular community. We are not part of a specific cultural or racial neighborhood. [Board member 8 January 15, 2014]

At another site, one interviewee described political expectations or "strings" attached to the funding and the amount of time required to access these additional dollars.

It's a mixed bag, because the organizations put requirements on the grant such as test scores. If you give me the money, don't tell me how to use it or disseminate it.

We think it would be good to have a smart board, but at the same time, what do you have to take away in order to get that? We are continuously writing grants but not those with a lot of strings attached. We don't want anything to affect learning here and we won't change because of the grant funding because of the loopholes you have to jump through. [School leader 1 December 11, 2013]

Grant writing to find additional funds for the school was universally described as challenging and time consuming with an element of risk of investing time and resources on a grant that may not be awarded. As one board member explained:

It requires a significant amount of commitment. [An individual or an outsider and so you have to commit to pay this outsider upfront and hopefully they will fund themselves and more.] [Board Member 8 January 15, 2014]

In summary, each of the schools analyzed in this case study research have developed and adhere to a clear, research-backed mission and vision for educating students. Interviewees' at all three sites have embraced a similar philosophy regarding the benefits of arts and arts integration. These philosophies were clearly articulated during the interview process. The document analysis for this study also supports this assertion. For example; "At the cornerstone of School C is a belief that infusing the arts across the academic disciplines improves academic achievement, supports the growth of 21st century skills and prepares students for whatever career path they choose." (3b)

More specifically, leaders of successful arts integration schools use a mission-driven approach to spending. They manage money well and find ways to supplement the general fund through fundraising and grant writing or by finding ways to reduce cost such as

finding supplies and furniture at lower prices. The data suggests that funding for professional development should be strategically planned for, especially after initial temporary grant dollars no longer exist. The findings also indicate that additional funding through grants are difficult to attain and often have “strings attached” which may compromise the school philosophy, values, and culture. Applying for grants also contains an element of risk in terms of the time commitment needed to apply versus the possibility of not receiving dollars.

1b. Leaders should focus on arts-integration initially before integrating other academic topics

Interestingly, teachers from each of the three sites described similar experiences of attempting to integrate not only the arts, but all subjects together during the first year of operation. In each case, this work proved to be overwhelming to the teachers, many of who were also first year teachers. At one site, the original developer explained; “When we first started we were trying to integrate all subjects as well, not just the arts but teaching across subjects. It was too difficult.”(10) Another teacher at a different site confirmed this finding, stating how; “Originally each staff member was required to do 90 hours of professional development and integrate all curriculums. This was more than they could do.”(10) As a result, all of the sites decided to back away from what clearly became an over ambitious plan and rather focused on one integration goal at a time.

The data revealed that developing arts integrated curriculum is much more difficult than one might expect. This difficulty is due, in part, to the required level of expertise and knowledge in the arts on the part of the regular education teachers. This scenario forces

teachers and school leaders to choose one of two possible processes in developing curriculum; (1) training regular education teachers or; (2) hiring artists to work collaboratively with teachers. The former option is expensive and time consuming and as I describe later in this report, forces an administrative decision to be made about where time and resources should be spent-arts integration or academic achievement. The latter choice of hiring artists to work with teachers in curriculum development proves to be equally difficult due to the conflicts that arise. These conflicts are often related to priorities and “personalities.” (4)

Several interviewees described the importance for school leaders to not only align activities and dollars to the school mission and vision, but to also understand that these navigational statements must be achieved over time. As one leader explained: “The mission and vision is married to what is practical and doable and getting people there incrementally.”(2) One interviewee stressed the importance of providing “scaffolding and support to get the whole staff there.”(2) Structures and supports were emphasized by interviewees at each of the three sites visited and were described as a variety of systems including a schedule that provides time for work to be completed, along with specific and ongoing training. This topic of support and scaffolding is highlighted in more detail under finding 2.

In summary, given the importance, size, and difficulty of the task of developing arts integrated curriculum, leaders of successful arts integration schools should focus on this specific task initially. The process of integrating other subjects should be conducted over time and with a support system which is ongoing and scaffold. One program leader explained it this way; “As school is in the initial stages of development, school leaders

should think along the lines of: this is what I want for you (teachers) and students but how do I empower you to do what is envisioned?"(2)

Finding #2. Leaders of successful arts integration schools have established a strong system of professional development

Strong ongoing professional development is one of the universal themes that clearly emerged from the data collected as a necessary component of successful arts integration schools. Each of the schools examined had developed a strong systematic process of providing and evaluating teacher professional development. Much of the training that teachers received revolved around the school's mission and areas of focus, such as data driven decision making and responsive classroom. The data also revealed the need for strong and sustained professional development for teachers who integrate the arts into academic curriculum. This was particularly important for those teachers with no background or prior training and experience with the arts. Teachers without arts backgrounds are asked to integrate a subject that they know little of or have had no prior training in. As one interviewee explained; "We had to train teachers who are not artists on what can be done in visual arts and principals of each art discipline and to know how to infuse it." (10)

This point was emphasized by one teacher as he recalled his personal experiences:

If I hadn't taken the professional development that took me into the direction of understanding art, we (the students) would be making things like posters all the time for 2d visual art. We wouldn't be doing ceramics or figuring out how to put theater in there or how to put dance into the physics class. The training helped us

to think in terms of the artist first within our classroom and how to tap what their students' understanding is. [Teacher 11 November 15, 2013]

The amount and depth of initial professional development related to art integration training varied greatly at each site. This discrepancy was based on the level of planning, funding, and the leadership goals in place. For example, As school leaders at one site prepared to develop an arts infused high school program, a group of 8 teachers and program leaders were able to spend two weeks at Harvard University's Project Zero and receive intensive training on arts integration and cultural awareness. (12) At this site, professional development was diverse and ongoing for those developing the program and for the founding teachers. As one program developer described: "We visited other arts infused schools. There was regular training for non-arts teachers as artists."(10)

In contrast, at a second site, interviewees described how the school experienced high administrative turnover within the first year of operation. "We had a few different directors in that first year."(6) At this site, the staff did not initially receive much, if any, formal arts training but, rather, they relied on each other to provide training in small informal PLCs as needed. As one interviewee described; "The teachers pretty much ran this show for the first year. We did not have any specials so the teachers were in charge of doing the arts and PE (physical education). It made it really difficult." (6)

In addition to administrative turnover, finances seemed to be a contributing factor to the lack of formal professional development, as one interviewee explained;

We are now a part of Q-comp, which has helped our professional development. At the beginning we did a lot of in house things with people we had. We didn't have a

lot of money to bring in people, so someone good at technology would teach the rest of us. [Teacher 6 November 21, 2013]

At the third school, teachers received extensive training in the responsive classroom and had the opportunity to work with teaching artists to develop curriculum. As discussed in other sections of this report, the practice of forming collaborations between teaching artists and non-arts teachers for the purpose of developing arts integrated curriculum contains inherent and significant challenges. As one interviewee stated; “We went through five visual arts teaching artists during the first year.”(4)

After the first initial years of operation, each of the schools became more stable in the practice of integrating the arts and began refining the school’s professional development system in general. One program leader described; “We brought in different artists for a finite time as contractors instead of artist in residence. After a couple years of struggling, we now combine it where we bring in contractors and have artists in residence.” (2) Each of the sites listed similar practices and avenues for receiving training in the arts and in other program focuses such as data driven decision making, cultural awareness, developing strong literacy programs, and responsive classroom training.

Strong professional development in arts integration requires a unified philosophy about the benefits of the arts to students. Clearly all of the interviewees shared a similar philosophy. As mentioned previously, this point is also supported through the analysis of documents from each site.

One of the leaders described the importance of how administration views professional development;

Leadership has to believe the arts are important and that they can be incorporated across the curriculum and then conveying that to staff. It's a hard concept. Not just drawing, its music, drama, dance. It's important to the culture of the school not just the leadership. Provide staff development around the arts, so everyone is following the same vision around the arts and communicating that to staff so they understand why it's important to kids. [School leader 5 November 12, 2013]

In addition to attending workshops and engaging in whole school professional development, including Q-comp, all of the schools engage in various forms of professional learning communities, sharing ideas and supporting each other in various ways. As one teacher explained; "We as staff have regular meetings to talk about how arts integration would work. We do training to build the bridge we wanted to see."(11)

At all sites professional development was generally more intensive during the initial stages of operation and for new hires. Resources for training varied as funding permitted and ranged from out of state workshops to in house sharing of information between teachers. At one site, unique features of professional development apply to teachers who are expected to integrate the arts in the classroom daily. Professional development is designed to support the teacher as an artist and in developing artistic thinking and behavior. As one interviewee explained; "One of the things we've really tried to emphasize in the professional development is that you have to be a practicing artist."(2) Here, the teacher becomes the practicing artist and embeds artistic components into the everyday classroom routines. For example, some teachers would attend workshops for artists, for the purpose of enhancing their own artistic skills in creative writing. (2) At this particular training teachers learn to think and act as creative writers by carrying a writing

notebook wherever they go. This technique allows them (teachers) to regularly record ideas and thoughts that would later be used as writing prompts. Similarly, training for visual artists would involve carrying a sketchbook for jotting ideas and drawings, which could later be built upon or used in some way. “This process helps to get a sense of what a real artist goes through.”(2) Students are also taught this creative writing technique and use their own original ideas to develop creative writing pieces, rather than relying on pre-determined writing prompts.

As the data reveals, successful arts integration schools establish strong systematic and relevant professional development programs for teachers. These programs should revolve around the school mission, vision, and areas of focus and give special emphasis to advancing the arts integration process. Arts integration or developing arts integrated curriculum and experiences for students was universally described as a challenging practice due primarily to the level of expertise in the arts required by non-arts teachers. Developing these skills takes time and resources and successful school leaders provide a scaffold of support for teachers. When integrating curriculum, schools use one of two primary approaches; training teachers as artists or hiring artists to work with teachers to develop curriculum. Both practices clearly have inherent challenges and should be addressed based on the school’s focus, resources, and other considerations.

2a. Leaders must address the challenges of developing arts integrated curriculum

Uniformly, all of the schools visited developed their own arts integrated curriculum. As one interviewee explained; “It’s hard to find curriculum that integrates the arts.”(5) Most of the challenges with curriculum experienced at all three sites were those typically

faced at schools such as reaching agreements on which curriculum to use and how decisions were made in purchasing. The bigger issue surrounding arts integration was that of teacher training. All of the sites described difficulties faced by non-arts teachers in attempting to teach a subject they are not accustomed to. As one teacher stated; “I am not an artist by any means. We would integrate the arts the best we could until we got a specialist.”(6)

One program leader at a different site explained the struggles they faced:

Teachers often came to me and said; “I don’t know anything about the visual arts. You’ve got to tell me what the principles and elements are. So we tried to do as much of that as we could, including curriculum writing and including technology around these topics.”[Program leader 10 November 15, 2013]

What came out of the interviews very clearly and persistently was the need for either; a. intensive training of non-arts teachers in artistic education or; b. the absolute need to hire arts teachers to develop and teach the arts curriculum. As one teacher stated; “If you really want the arts to happen, be sure to hire an arts teacher.”(6)

Of the three schools being studied, two of them actually include integration in the description of the school mission or goals. These schools also “infused” or “integrated” the arts into academic disciplines daily. The third school program contained an arts rich curriculum, delivered primarily as separate areas of study and engagement. This third site also offers intersessions during the year-round calendar in which integrated units of study are offered to students.

Teachers with no previous arts backgrounds experienced high levels of difficulty in teaching the arts to students and infusing arts into the general curriculum. For these individuals, specific training was necessary and helpful in the professional development and curriculum development process. As one program leader stated; “We had to train teachers who were not artists on what are the basic principles and elements of each art discipline so they can say; oh, I could infuse this sort of art with this science project or concept.”(10)

One teacher described how specific arts education and integration training he received assisted him in curriculum development. In this case the teacher was involved in a grant-funded program called Arts Courses for Educators. The ACE class was designed specifically to train teachers in the arts for the purpose of developing curriculum. In contrast, a second teacher at a different site described how she struggled to include arts projects during the first year of operations and eventually “turned it over” (6) to the arts specialist teacher after the individuals were hired. This transfer was due to time constraints and the school adopting a different focus in the academic classes.

One particular school had unique difficulties as they attempted to bring visual arts into the classroom by hiring a visual artist to work with teachers in designing curriculum and activities. As one interviewee explained; “It was demanding at first because of the need for the teaching artist to work with all of the very different teachers.”(4) This statement was confirmed as another interviewee at the same site explained how during the first year, the school “went through five different visual art teachers” (2) due to collaboration difficulties among the staff.

Clearly the data highlights challenges in developing arts integrated curriculum, which were experienced universally at each of the three schools visited. Overcoming obstacles and difficulties encountered when developing curriculum is an essential leadership skill. Successful arts integration school leaders must establish a process for ongoing curriculum development and support for those involved in the development process.

2b. Leaders of successful arts integration schools establish a scaffolding support system

The school leaders' ability and willingness to provide a scaffolding support system for teachers and staff clearly emerged from the data as a key factor in the success of the three schools visited. This is especially true during the first years of operation while teachers are adapting to the new school program, or as one interviewee described; "When we're trying to stay above water."(6) The ability to develop and incorporate a school wide scaffolding support system that also contains individualized components and includes coaching, was generally referred to as a leadership skill involving empathy and insight. For example, when responding to interview questions related to school leadership and leadership skills required to successfully develop an arts integration school (interview questions A2, E4) one respondent stated; "A leader that is encouraging and challenges you is the nuts and bolts. Someone who allows you to take risks, then finds the data to analyze what was done."(3) Likewise, a former teacher and current peer coach described the types of questions that are asked regarding a support system; "How do we treat each other, how do we help each other and live by those golden rules?"(2) At another site, one interviewee stated that; "Leaders must be able to work really well with adults."(10) In responding to the above mentioned interview questions, one administrator suggested

“Clarity,(1) then he provided an example of what clarity might look like; “Ok folks we’re doing this, this is the reason, and this is how I’m going to support you.”(1)

Each of the sites visited had developed a scaffold support system for teachers and staff. These systems were site specific but all contained similar attributes including a strong professional development program, time, and resources for training and equipping teachers in the curriculum development process and in other critical job functions. These other functions include responsive classroom training, workshops in developing artistic skills, support and training in developing data driven lessons, and other site specific tasks. Leaders were described as encouraging, possessing empathy, intuitive, allowing teachers to take risks, direct, and operating with an open door policy.

2c. Leaders of successful arts integration schools use data to drive decision-making

As described in various sections of this report, questions related to data and the benefits to students are frequently asked by administration and program leaders at all three sites. Data is used to assess prior to making decisions, such as purchasing, and after work has been completed or a change has been implemented, in an effort to determine if the investment in a particular artist or curriculum has been beneficial to students. Data-driven instruction is a more specific process associated with measurable student achievement and includes teacher-created assessments based on the Minnesota state standards. At one site, the assessments are given to students three times per year, followed by a period of re-teaching. “Through the use of data driven instruction and re-teaching, school leaders have seen improvements in both math and reading scores.”(2g)

The practice of regularly using formative data to evaluate student performance and

develop plans to address any weaknesses was also evident within the interview data at all three sites. Documents validating this assertion were more readily available at the two elementary charter schools. These two schools are labeled as Reward Schools by the Minnesota Department of Education multiple measure rating and are described as being; “in the top 15 percent of Title 1 schools.” (2g)

All three schools clearly focused on academic learning and the regular practice of measuring student achievement.

As stated in one school document:

As a school we have focused on reading, writing, and math instruction for the past five years. Commencing with the 2009-10 and continuing into our 2013-14 school year we will be assessing our science and technology instruction process and content alongside reading, writing and math. What we see is a school that by several measures has had a very successful year. [School B 2011-14 Three Year Strategic Plan 1a]

The arts magnet program is a school within a school, so disaggregated data surrounding student performance of those enrolled in the program was not available. Interviewees at the site frequently referenced the process of gathering and evaluating data to determine program or initiative effectiveness. For example, the science department at this site altered the order in which students receive science courses and reduced the level of arts integration in biology class in order to ensure that students are performing well on the state mandated Minnesota Comprehensive Assessment in science. (7)

At all three sites, the interviews revealed a strong and persistent reliance on data for the purpose of driving instruction and evaluating programs or initiatives for effectiveness. Throughout each of the themes of findings, the practice of using data to drive decisions continued to emerge. Leaders of successful schools must therefore adopt a practice of embracing the use of data regularly to ensure that students are learning and that the continuous improvement cycle is taking place.

Finding #3 Leaders of successful arts integration schools use effective communication to promote the program and to establish norms and school culture

Leaders of highly successful arts integration schools “Communicate clearly and persuasively to others.” (6) At all three sites, a leader’s ability to talk with others about the program for the purpose of promoting the school and for developing a cohesive site team was described as a critical skill. As one teacher explained; “Leadership needs to be able and willing to meet with parents, talk with kids, wear many hats, and be personal, visible, likable, and feared. They are at the forefront with the parents.” (7)

Leaders must continually and effectively promote the school to prospective parents and students particularly during the development stage. Much like a business, charter schools rely upon students as “customers” for funding. At one site, the school founder followed a rigorous schedule of engagements and activities in order to promote the program and develop buy-in from the community. As one teacher explained; “The original person did a lot of marketing in the paper and on radio.” (7) The skill of effective communication was necessary in order to provide expectations and to inform all

stakeholders, including perspective parents of students entering the program and school staff, about the program needs, benefits, expectations, and limitations.

Interestingly, at the arts magnet district school, the school leaders followed a similar rigorous schedule of activities to promote the program within the school community. This intense communication was necessary, not only in attracting students from other districts, but to address inaccurate rumors and unintentional divisions that occurred as the program became operational.

As one interviewee explained;

Misperceptions had to be ironed out and the entire staff of a whole high school had to get on board with the validity of why we're going to have an arts magnet program. As the program was being developed, leaders worked tirelessly attending district meetings, community meetings, talking at rotary, talking with various civic groups, talking on local radio, writing for the local newspapers for the purpose of getting buy-in. [Board Member 12 November 15, 2013]

3a. Leaders effectively promote the program to all stakeholders

Communicating clearly with all stakeholders was universally described as essential in developing buy-in and in ensuring that students (and parents) were aware of what the programs offer and what they do not. Interviewees at all three sites described how many of the students entering the program were not academically motivated to be successful. At the high school level, many of these students lacking academic motivation eventually left the program. Other interviewees described how the school initially was viewed as an “alternative school,” attracting students with poor academic habits and behavior

problems. The arts programs attract students, but in many cases these students experienced high levels of difficulty with the program's flexibility and other inherent features such as the need to collaborate and work closely with other students in the program. For example, when completing arts projects, students are often given higher levels of autonomy and unsupervised time to work together for reflection, discussions and decision-making about the curriculum. Students who have difficulty adjusting to this type of academic setting are not as successful and experience difficulty. As one program leader explained; "They're given so much space and they're not mature enough to use that space." (10)

One teacher at a different site described the issue in this way:

Originally we were seen by the public more as an alternative school. During the first years, kids coming in could not handle it and we became an alternative school, until we began clarifying the requirements and asking kids to leave if they couldn't handle it, which upset some parents. [Teacher 7 November 11, 2013]

School and program leaders at all of the sites described a similar process that they went through in order to educate the prospective parents and students, regarding the rigorous educational component and the high expectations for those entering the program. Eventually, students who were willing to work hard with the academics and who were a more appropriate fit for the type of rigorous programs offered by the school became the majority of the student body. One leader suggested; "Making sure the kids know what they're getting into and being very clear and upfront about what is being offered at the

school will help to attract students with good work ethics and previously established patterns of success.”(10)

3b. Leaders communicate effectively to develop community support & to address political challenges

Developing community involvement and buy in from stakeholders during the initial startup phase was extremely critical to the schools’ success. Leaders at each site described a similar process of initial advertisement of the school or program in order to attract prospective students & parents and to develop support from the unique community in which the school was to be developed. These initial steps included frequent face-to-face meetings, advertising with media and local community organizations such as rotary clubs, chamber of commerce, community organizations, radio programs and newspapers.

The “community” described by interviewees at all three sites generally referred to parents and parent support groups such as the parent-teacher organizations, students, teachers and school staff as well as community businesses and organizations. In some cases, parents own businesses and provide assistance in various ways. As one principal explained; “Some families have connections such as studios or catering businesses. We incorporate our curriculum with the community. So, for example, if we have a unit on clay we visit a pottery shop.”(1)

After the first several years of operation, advertising efforts decreased across the board as the schools built reputations as successful schools. As one interviewee explained; “We don’t communicate (advertise) the school; only word of mouth. We don’t do any marketing. Community involvement and interest is extremely high. Our lottery is always

full because we're consistently high with scores." (7) A school leader at a different site explained how parents are encouraged to participate in and support the school. He stated that; "Parents are given autonomy to host one event per month for a social goal or learning goal."(1) He described the current event being hosted by parents; "It's called a Lantern Walk," used to celebrate light. Participants make a lantern, using art, and singing songs made in music, then they walk around the neighborhood and then they come back have chili and cocoa."(1)

At another site, one interviewee described the importance of building partnerships with parents;

Education today is a partnership between teachers, the staff, and the parents. That partnership is becoming more and more important. If you're trying to do something different and rise above the average, to add additional science and art programs, you have to create a high level of participation with the parents. [Board member 8 January 15, 2014]

Although each school relies upon the support of parents and the community, the same community involvement was also described by individuals at all three sites as strongly tied to political challenges.

As one leader explained;

Getting a strong parent committee going is political in itself because you have some strong parents that really want to rule the group. We have a flattened style of management and we want that style to roll into our parent organization where

many parents have the opportunity to lead in many areas. [Board member 4
December 11, 2013]

Another school leader stated it this way;

It's tricky because the community might make recommendations that you don't want to make. We listen, you have to listen, and sell a product. Be truthful about what you're selling. Be personable but honest and up front with what you're offering. [School leader 1 December 11, 2013]

School documents clearly support this assertion;

We cannot afford to expand our academic program to include 20 parent expectations; however, we will make it clear to parents through written documentation and open house information about the pros and cons of enrolling their child(ren) at School A. The fact is, we cannot be all things to all people. However, we can highlight what we are and what we can offer a child and family that enroll in School A. [School A Annual Report for the 2012-13 School Year]

Other political challenges described by interviewees were generally unique to the school setting. For example, at one school, the major political opposition came, initially, from the home school district in which the charter school was being developed and involved the transportation of students to and from the charter school. The local district was unable or unwilling to transport students to the school before 10:00 am each morning. This transportation conflict resulted in a net loss of student enrollments. With only 55 students for the first year of operation, the developers had to choose between using funds for bussing or the educational program and decided to incorporate a late start.

(4) At another site, the main political issue was an internal rift among teachers and staff within the existing school. Because of the development of a school within a school, an instant and unintentional “divide of potential challenges” (9) developed between the staff within and those outside of the program. “It was easy for existing staff members to feel instant disconnect from a program outside their own realm of interest and responsibility.”(9) Some of the issues that branched out from this dual system included an initial sense of resentment or suspicion from other school staff due to factors such as smaller initial class sizes and the perception of having teaching assignments that were less difficult than those teaching outside of the program. The arts magnet program teachers also had access to higher levels of funds and resources than those outside of the program, amplifying suspicions and resentment. Other conflicts were more tangible including conflicts with student and class schedules.

At the third site, the main political challenge involved administrative decisions during the first year of operation. Although the specifics of the challenges and issues faced during year one were unknown by those being interviewed, as described in previous sections of this report, everyone interviewed described high administrative turnover resulting in three different school leaders. It was generally understood that the school board and the school leader experienced disagreements and conflicts in determining how the school was to operate. Turnover of administration resulted in the school’s teachers, most of which were also first year teachers, running their classrooms and integrated the arts within their own classrooms as best as they could until arts teachers and specialists were eventually hired.

In summary, political challenges experienced at each site were addressed through effective communication. This communication included intensive advertising, face-to-face meetings and speaking with various community organizations in an effort to promote the school programs. One universally experienced political challenge involved balancing the need for parent and other stakeholder participation in the leadership process with that of adhering to a clear mission and vision. Charter schools in particular, have a specific mission and program focus. At times, parents will attempt to include activities and programs outside of the schools' capacity and mission. Leaders of effective arts integration schools must therefore convincingly communicate program benefits and limitations to stakeholders rather than becoming all things to all people.

3c Leaders communicate effectively to establish culture, expectations and structure.

Each of the schools visited had established expectations, a positive school culture, and specific structures in place for regular meetings, collaborations, and sharing of information. At one site, teachers collaborate twice a week. "Every Tuesday and Thursday we expect staff to learn with a learning buddy after school."(1) At another site, a specific structured meeting process was in place for meetings with all teachers designed around "finding out where kids are weak-meetings are conducted four times per year."(5) These particular data driven meetings contain specific steps and strategies for collecting and analyzing data and are designed to support struggling students.

The school administrator explained the process;

“First teachers predict where kids will fall. Then we give the assessment and score them within 24 hours and the teacher meets with me with predictions and scores.

Then they look at what they need curriculum wise-coaching, observations. Then we decide what types of support is needed for specific kids,-we do this four times per year formally.” [School leader 5 November 12, 2013]

At another site, one interviewee explained how the structure of weekly meetings is “really critical.”(2)

At each of the sites visited the collaborative process was emphasized. A leader’s ability to establish expectations and norms around the support of teaching and learning was cited as an important leadership skill. As one interview described it; “to be able to get a team together, getting all the right people on the right bus, and making sure the bus is going in the right direction, especially when you’re starting a new program.” (10)

At another site, the curriculum director explained;

Over the years the structure of our meetings has changed. There is now an agenda. It will start on time and end on time. I will communicate whatever I need to in writing via email and you’re responsible to read it, but I’m not going to go over it in a staff meeting. Those practices are really helpful in a well-run organization. Whatever structure we have it has to work. We tweak it until it does work, but then that structure is what we fall back on. We’ve done a lot of work on creating staff ground rules and it’s been a lively document and discussion about how we treat each other, what do we do for one another, and how do we all sort of live by those goals as we work together. The leadership and support of those rules is important

to have open honest tactful communication. It's what we do with the kids and we do it as staff too. [Program leader 2 December 11, 2013]

Clear and continuous communication was described as the essential factor in creating conducive and collaborative environments within the school setting. One principal suggested; "Communicate the benefits to others, the opportunities the program presents, and how it supports teachers. Do a good job on the front end of communicating with all stakeholders." (9) At another site, one interviewee affirmed this assertion, stating; "A huge leadership skill is clarity. There are a lot of changes that come as you're developing the school. The more you lay out and explain this is what we're doing and why we're doing it, the better things will go." (2) This interviewee also described the importance of a leader to; "Know what is an executive decision and what is not. Knowing when to open something up for discussion, versus something that is not needed to be talked about."(2)

A sixth sense? Leaders of successful arts integration schools are intuitive and perceptive. At each of the sites interviewees described how the leader's role involved knowing what the needs were, knowing when to push forward or pull back, when to support and when accountability is needed. Successful leaders are trusted and feared or respected at the same time. By being available, providing support, vision rationale, research, direction, resources and ideas, leaders of successful arts integration schools ensure that students are being successful within a positive, optimistic school culture. As one board member explained; "The success of the school is tied very directly to the quality of the executive director. It has a huge impact on the culture and what gets done." (8) Various interviewees described the importance of a leader's ability to know and perceive issues.

For example, one interviewee stated;

The leadership has to figure out what are the different needs for different grade levels and what is our vision, but then what is practical for people along the way and what are the standards. So there is that need to really get a sense and communicate effectively with your staff so that you know what they're doing, what they're getting, and what the results are. [Program leader 2 December 11 2013]

In addition to these intuitive abilities, one interviewee described how successful leaders remember the human element of work. "You have to look at the humanity of all the people you work with."⁽²⁾ This individual also provided a word of caution; "Giving a mandate on any level is serious business. Assess the needs of kid's teachers, but keep the human factor involved."⁽²⁾

In summary, successful arts integration schools rely on the ability of the school's leaders to communicate consistently and effectively with the entire school community. Communication is the key, not only in promoting the school to parents and students, but also in establishing norms, culture, and expectations internally with teachers and staff.

Leaders communicate relentlessly to address needs, deficiencies, misconceptions, and to provide support, encouragement and feedback. Coupled with these communication skills is the leader's intuitive abilities or the insight needed in order to ensure that adequate support and direction is being provided. As one board member described, "The role of the leader is extremely demanding; it's a tough balance, a tough role to be the

director of a charter school because of the breadth of talent required from interacting with and leading the staff which is different than leading a typical school.”(8)

Chapter 5 Conclusions

Review of the findings

Among the data gathered for this study, three central themes emerged in light of the research questions. First, when developing an arts integration school, a clear mission and vision needs to be established and adhered to. The second theme involves the development of a strong professional development program. Last, the school leaders must possess effective communication skills and engage in ongoing promotion and dialogue with all stakeholders. These themes are factors of significance and should therefore be the focus of considerations when planning to develop and operate a successful arts integration school. The data is validated through the repeated emergence of these themes throughout the interviews and within the documents at all three sites.

Within each of the three themes there emerged the “nuts and bolts” or sub-categories that comprise it. For example, “strong professional development” is general terms and can represent a long list of actions that are not related to nor would they assist in developing an arts integration school. The school leader’s ability and willingness, however, to provide sustained professional development in arts integration that is scaffolding or that contains the necessary support elements such as time, resources, feedback, and moral support is a more descriptive and accurate depiction of the theme “strong professional development” which emerged from the study.

Challenges that were universally experienced at all three sites

Challenge #1. Curriculum Development.

Leaders at each of the three sites described similar difficulties when finding and selecting curriculum. These general difficulties were not unlike those experienced at any given school. For example, challenges regarding choosing one publisher versus using several different publishers. One universal challenge to these three arts school programs did emerge and involved developing and writing curriculum that integrates the arts with various academic topics such as science or social studies. As one interviewee stated; “It’s hard to find curriculum that integrates the arts.”(5) Writing and developing arts integrated curriculum is extremely challenging because of two main factors; (1) the difficulty associated with teaching artists collaborating with non-arts teachers, and; (2) the lack of planning time, especially when teachers are concerned about teaching standards that will be tested on state assessments. As one school leader explained; “We try, but especially today when there is so much writing in the big assessments, it’s hard to not fall into the “putting it by the wayside.” We don’t, but then to find curriculum that supports the arts today is difficult.” (6)

Leaders expressed difficulties with the amount of time required to develop arts integrated curriculum. The general concern expressed by administrators and teachers was that of spending high amounts of time on arts integration versus teaching the standards that are measured on statewide assessments such as reading and math. “especially with common core. This pushes us farther away from arts integrated.”(5)

At another site, the curriculum coordinator described some of the challenges and questions asked by the teachers regarding arts integration.

Programmatically it's hard to know that this open ended, arts integrated experience is going to help this kid who's a struggling reader. And we can't tell you to dance it out and figure out how to read. Our job is to move you along in reading. So I might want to do this type of lesson, but this kid is struggling or this class isn't getting this or you're not meeting the standards. [Curriculum director 2 December 11, 2013]

Universally, interviewees expressed a similar struggle with what seemed to be dichotomous or opposing issues competing for time and resources; the need for academic accountability and the time required for the process of integrating the arts into academic standards. Leaders of successful arts integration schools must overcome these challenges and work to effectively include time and resources to both of these critical programmatic functions.

A secondary and related challenge regarding arts integration and curriculum development involved the process of developing arts integrated curriculum. Two primary methods of curriculum development were described at the three sites. These methods involved either; (1) using teaching artists to work collaboratively with non-arts teachers to develop arts-infused curriculum, or (2) by training non-arts teachers how to infuse the arts into academic curriculum. Both methods were employed at all three sites, and each method presented significant challenges to both teachers and administration.

Throughout the year, each of the three schools are engaged in the practice of bringing artists into the school to teach the arts to students directly or to work with non-arts teachers in developing arts infused curriculum. At one site, the latter method proved to be

extremely challenging as the school experienced a turnover of five different visual artists during the first year of operation. This high turnover was described as the result of conflicts and frustrations, which emerged between the artists and the teaching staff. Although specifics were not elaborated on in the interviews, those discussing this issue with me described how “personalities”(4) were involved and described how the different processes of thinking and values of those attempting to collaborate deteriorated the attempts to develop meaningful arts-integrated curriculum.

Challenge #2. Focusing on the mission, vision and arts integrated curriculum.

At all three sites, leaders were challenged in two distinct ways; 1. to stray from the school’s original mission in an effort to “be all things to all people” and 2. in attempting to integrate across the curriculum at the same time in which teachers were attempting to integrate the arts.

The school mission, vision, goals, and data should direct all decisions. Among the many voices that make up the body of school “stakeholders,” it’s not unusual for school leaders to experience pressure from stakeholders wanting to “rule the group” (4) or wanting the school to provide services outside of its (the school’s) capability or area of focus. The ability to balance the need for inclusive leadership (i.e., allowing the community to have a voice in the development and operation of a school) along with what is doable, practical, and beneficial for students is a critical leadership skill. As school leaders develop and maintain successful arts integration schools they must be upfront with stakeholders about the program benefits and limitations. Leaders must also adhere to the school mission, vision, and goals and consider decisions through the lens of

student achievement referring to data to determine if and where resources including time and funding, should be used.

As I described in previous sections of this report, at each of the three sites the leaders and teachers described difficulties in attempting to integrate across the curriculum in addition to integrating the arts during the first years of operation. This dual focus during the first year of operation proved to be overwhelming. Teachers and leaders came to the conclusion that the work was “too much.”(6). I was able to interview teachers and program leaders who founded the schools and have been involved with the school since they became operational . Universally, these representatives expressed caution about attempting to develop curriculum that was not only arts integrated, but also integrated across all topics or disciplines. While blurring the lines between academic subjects is recommended as a best teaching practice, this process should be conducted gradually over time and not initially.

Implications of the findings

This case study seeks to understand what the role of leadership is in developing a successful arts integration school. Many of the general study findings are not novel. Best practices used by leaders at all three sites have been well documented and are present in successful businesses and schools varying in focus and design. For example, the most important finding emerging from the data is need for leaders of successful arts integration schools to develop and adhere to a clear mission and vision. A leader’s ability to “Provide and sell a vision.” Kruse & Seashore Louis (2009) is a skill highlighted in various sources

of literature including; Marzano, Waters & McNulty,(2005) and Reeves, (2009) just to name a few.

Findings that emerge from this study which are unique and potentially of high value to those interested in developing arts integration schools reveal the need to pay special attention to the design of the program, specifically, how integrated curriculum is developed. Special consideration should also be given to the process of scaffolding and to the use of resources, including time and funding, in order to sustain the integration of arts and academics.

Those interested in developing and operating an arts integration school should develop and adhere to a clear and measurable mission, vision, and school goals. This becomes particularly important when determining how resources are used and what types of programs and initiatives to offer. For example, there will be limitations or program components that cannot be offered which stakeholders, primarily parents, will need to be able to accept in exchange for what the program does specialize in: arts integration.

A second consideration regarding the clear mission, vision, and goals is to focus on arts integration first. This focus requires a commitment of funds, time, and other resources. The presence of a robust and continuous professional development program is essential in developing an arts integration school. This became especially evident as interviewees described the difficulties in writing arts integrated curriculum, a necessary task because of the lack of availability of such curriculum. A second strong finding, therefore, arising from the data directly related to the research questions, is the need to either hire individuals who have arts background, or to hire those who are flexible and

able to change and collaborate with others regularly. Program administrators must also provide extensive initial training as well as other support structures designed to assist teachers in the complexities of integrating the arts in ways that enhance learning experiences for students.

Professional development should not only be robust, but be scaffold as well. This essential component “considers the human element”(1) by providing a nexus of support structures for the teacher or staff members in achieving professional goals that are school-wide as well as individualized. Support structures should range from materials, planning time, training, coaching, and mentoring.

Last, a strong professional development program that is aligned to the school’s mission, vision, and goals must be funded. The sites reported a lack of funding for arts residences and other integration – focused development after initial grants “ran out.” (6) Other professional development areas of focus can also take precedent if intentional efforts are not made to sustain/fund this mission specific practice of integration. Other topics, which may take precedence, include: data driven instruction, other state mandated training, Q-comp, technology training, and other training in best practices. In most cases, teachers initially developing the programs receive higher levels of training compared to those entering into the program after the school opens. Decisions around budgeting must consider the need for continuous improvement in arts integration in order to avoid lower quality training or the practice “going by the wayside”(2) as one interviewee stated.

As mentioned previously, there are several considerations school leaders must make when deciding how to integrate the arts. One approach is to train teachers to integrate the

arts. The second approach involves hiring arts teachers to teach the arts and allowing non-arts teachers to “hand off”(6) the practice. Hiring teaching artists to come into the school and work with non-arts teachers was a third option, however, this resulted in high levels of difficulty and conflict at one of the sites visited. Within the two schools emphasizing integration in the mission and vision, the practice of training teachers to be artists has proven to be most effective, however, training teachers to teach arts is time consuming and costly, requiring a strong commitment from administration.

Successful arts integration schools also focus on measurable student achievement as an essential part of the robust professional development program. One example is the use of data driven decision-making. DDD is a term used to describe the use of formative, teacher developed assessments that can assist in determining how well students are learning and what interventions should be made prior to advancing to the next topic or “re-teaching.”(2g) In all aspects of school achievement, using data was consistently cited by interviewees at all sites as a means to make school and programmatic decisions. Determining whether or not an artist is effective in the classroom, or how well a particular curriculum is assisting students in achieving standards, and the administering of a “Parent Involvement Survey” (1a) are all examples of how data is regularly used at the school sites.

Last, when developing arts integration schools, or other magnet school programs, the ability of program leaders to effectively communicate with external and internal stakeholders is essential to the school’s success. The vast majority of political issues faced at each of the sites were successfully addressed by “relentlessly” (12) communicating with the public regarding the program design, benefits, and limitations.

This effective communication is essential as the school is being developed to establish buy in and attract potential students and to address political rifts within the organization while “keeping the bus moving in the right direction.”(10)

Personal Application of the Findings

I designed and conducted this research with the intent of using the information gained to develop arts integration schools in Isanti County and other rural areas of Minnesota. Table 6.0 provides information on the achievement of students in Isanti County, which evidences that a significant portion are not proficient in the tested subject areas.

Table 1.2 2012 & 2013 MCA III Mathematics & Science Achievement of students attending schools in Isanti County (Retrieved from: Minnesota Department of Education)

Area School Districts	Year/ Grade/ Subject	Percent of students not proficient
0015-ST. FRANCIS	2012 6 Math	40.4
0911-01 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI	2012 6 Math	41.0
STATE (MN)		40.1
0015-ST. FRANCIS	2012 6 Science	41.5
0911-01 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI	2012 6 Science	35.0
STATE (MN)		42.3
0015-ST. FRANCIS	2012 5 Science	41.5
0911-01 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI	2012 5 Science	35.0
STATE (MN)	2012 5 Science	42.3
0015-ST. FRANCIS	2013 7 Math	48.2
0911-01 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI	2013 7 Math	44.3
0015-ST. FRANCIS	2013 8 Science	57.7
0911-01 CAMBRIDGE-ISANTI	2013 8 Science	45.5

Utilizing the data gained from this study, I designed a school and classroom model that provides what I believe are the necessary levels of support embedded within the school day. This classroom model includes the following key components:

1. Smaller class sizes (22 students per class)
2. A team teaching approach that includes one licensed K-6 teacher, one licensed art teacher, and one highly trained teaching assistant. Each *teaching team* is responsible for 44 students (2 classes of 22)

3. Connected classrooms that allow for daily team teaching and for the teaching assistant to work with students in both classes easily and as needed.

4. Classroom sets of laptop (chromebooks) and/or iPads. This allows students to work on computers within the classroom more often and be supervised by the instructional assistant as teachers collaborate.

5. A year-round school calendar, which allows for higher levels of professional development and collaboration time among teaching teams.

Within this teaching team model, responsibility for students is shared by both teachers and the team is responsible for providing arts integrated experiences daily while using a data driven decision model to help ensure that all students are learning the academic standards.

Also provided within this model are:

- a. high levels of professional development time;
- b. training in arts integration provided by outside agencies as needed;
- c. instructional assistants that are highly trained;
- d. all staff hired possesses, and demonstrates, attributes of flexibility, optimism, the ability to problem solve, adaptability, passion for students and the arts, and related qualities. In short, a “no failure” approach to teaching students;
- e. all staff are hired on an at-will basis; teachers and employers may terminate employment at any time with or without cause. This agreement allows supervisors to terminate teachers when students are not achieving and attempts to improve teaching skills have failed;
- f. salaries that reward exceptional teaching.

Within this model, instructional assistants often provide supervision to all 44 students during such times as daily quiet reading-40 minutes; daily computer-based learning-50 minutes; recess-30 minutes; and other weekly special activities such as all school assemblies or guest artists and shows. These supervision duties allow teachers to collaborate and plan as a team and individually.

In addition to supervisory responsibilities and assisting in the classroom daily, instructional assistants, under the direction of the classroom teacher, provide critical support as smaller groups of students are instructed to address achievement gaps. For example, instructional assistants can supervise classroom independent work as teachers work with smaller groups of students to re-teach standards. In another example, instructional assistants can lead small groups in basic math equations as directed by the teacher, while the teacher provides enrichment experiences to the majority (60%) of students.

The findings from my study strongly suggest the need for a school and classroom model design that would provide higher levels of teacher support than what is offered by the traditional class model. For example, the data shows that developing arts integrated curriculum is extremely challenging by nature and requires ample time for collaboration between arts and academic teachers and/or high levels of time for training regular education teachers in the process of developing arts integrated curriculum. These same teachers are also responsible for carrying out the regular, often daily, process of gathering data for the purpose of analysis and re-designing lessons for small groups of students (approximately 40% of the students) needing additional instruction before proceeding

with the curriculum. Teachers must also concurrently address the majority of students (approximately 60% based on Minnesota Department of Education data) of students who are achieving the standards and are prepared to move forward in the curriculum or risk becoming bored or disinterested in the work at hand. Analysis of the data lead me to the conclusion that the task of developing art integration schools demands an innovative class design with extraordinarily high levels of support for teaching and learning.

Recommendations for Future Research

At each of the three sights visited statements were made by at least one individual being interviewed regarding the value of arts integration for the purpose of increasing student performance on standardized assessments, such as the MCA exams. At one site, the science department decided to “taper back on integration in biology” (7) due to concerns that students in the program might not perform well on the science MCA exam.

Research does exist supporting the notion that arts education and integration can help struggling learners better learn the topics being assessed. For example, (Fiske, 1999) found that the arts provide students with authentic learning experiences that are real and meaningful to them. Others have discovered that when the arts are integrated into academic instruction, the learning experiences can become enhanced with discovery, improving the conditions for learning (The Arts Council, 2005). Over the past two decades, ample research has been conducted establishing direct correlations between sustained involvement in arts programs and the development of cognitive and meta-cognitive capacities or “habits of mind,” associated with high student achievement and college readiness (Conley, 2007; Lefkowitz, L., Woempner, C., Kendall, J., & Frost, D. 2009). These capacities include focused perception, analysis, elaboration, problem

solving, motivation, active engagement and critical thinking skills (Deasy, 2002; Catterall, 2002).

Researchers have also found evidence to suggest that learning in the arts has a positive impact on student learning in other domains, which they describe as constellations or complex webs of influence (Catterall, James S. (2002). DuPont (1992) for example, found that when children were involved in the process of integrating creative drama with reading, they were able to better comprehend what was read, regardless of their involvement in acting out the created roles.

For future research, I recommend empirical studies designed to examine how secondary school students perform on standards-based science assessments when various art and science standards are integrated together into units of instruction. Findings from studies like this would help to build a base of literature surrounding the use of arts integrated curriculum as a means to improve student achievement. Because of the importance placed on student performance based on standards-based assessments such as MCA, these types of findings would help to establish higher levels of confidence within the education community that the arts are essential rather than an optional component of the school day. Findings could also be of value to Local Education Agencies (LEAs) in providing direction regarding curriculum development and reform efforts.

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Appendix A. Interview Guide (Protocol):

At the beginning of the interview, I provided the subjects with an overview of the purpose of the study and provided definitions of any key terms. Given the semi-structured nature of the interviews, I began each segment of the interview with one of the identified interview questions followed by a series of follow up questions to gain more clarification and a more in-depth understanding of the issues at hand.

Research Questions

There are three primary questions of interest for this study:

Primary research question	Method of data collection used to address research question	Related interview questions
1. In terms of organizational leadership, what does it take to start and maintain a successful arts integration school?	Interviews with school leaders. Document review	A1,A2,A3,A4, A5, A6, B1, B2, B3, C1, C2,C3, C4,D1, D2, D3,D4, E2, E3,E4, E5
2. What are the types of challenges that leaders engaged in starting an arts integration school face?	Interviews with school leaders. Document review	A7, B1, B2, B3, B4, D2, D4, D5, E3, E4
3. How are these challenges addressed?		

Appendix B. Instrument to Gather Data

		Background Information	1. Please provide a historical background on the school program.	Notes
			2. Who were the main developers of the school?	
			3. Please describe your position and responsibilities at the school.	
(Adopted from Leithwood, Louis, Anderson & Wahlstrom, 2004)	Setting Directions	A. Governance & Management	1. Why was the school or program developed (mission and vision)? In other words, describe the need and interest in the arts integrated school, which prompted its development.	
			2. How are group goals and performance goals developed and fostered?	
	Redesigning the Organization	3. How were school policies agreed upon and developed?		
		4. What is the process (steps) for changing the school structures or policies? Who is involved? How often are they reviewed?		
	Setting Directions	5. Please list (describe) specific leadership skills that are necessary in developing and maintaining a successful arts integration school/program and explain why they are important.		
	Developing People	6. Describe the professional development needs of the school and how they differ from other schools.		

Setting Directions				
			7. What are the challenges surrounding professional development and providing individualized support to staff?	
		B. Marketing & Outreach	1. Describe some of the political issues faced during the startup phase? Current challenges?	
			2. Was there opposition to the efforts of developing the school (or program)?	
			3. What do you feel were (are) the root causes of such challenges or opposition?	
			4. How were those initial challenges addressed?	
		C. Community Involvement	1. Please outline some of the steps taken by the founding group in developing the program/school.	
			2. How long did it take for the school/program to evolve from a conceptual idea into a functioning school?	
			3. Please describe the role of community involvement in the development and success of the school.	
			4. How has community interest and involvement been developed and maintained? How?	
		D. Financial Management.	1. Please explain how the school is funded including various sources of funding and those unique to this school or program.	

			2, Are there funding shortfalls? If so, how do you overcome them?	
			3, How involved is the board in fundraising? In what ways do they assist the school with fundraising?	
			4. What were/are some of the challenges surrounding finance during the initial development of the school/ program? Now?	
			5. In your opinion, what were / are the reasons for these challenges? What causes them (sources)?	
	Setting Directions	E. Educational Program & Accountability Goals	1. Can you describe the school philosophy of arts education in terms of benefits to students?	
			2. How is curriculum selected? What criteria do you use? Why?	
			3. Describe issues / challenges that are associated with curriculum in an arts integrated program	
			4. How do students perform on state mandated tests?	
			5. Describe the role of school leadership in developing and operating highly successful schools	

Appendix C Email sent to participants soliciting feedback to increase validity of findings

Hello (participant's name), thanks again for taking the time to interview with me.

One step in validating research findings is to share them with those interviewed and invite feedback to incorporate into the data or to change statements. I want to make sure that my perceptions were correct and that I understood you well before I finalize my paper (and move on to the next stage of my life :)

Please feel free to read through the text and take note of your specific contributions in quotations. **I assigned the number x** to your comments so look for those and then let me know if they are accurate, or if you would like to change them. Please provide me with a quote that could be substituted for it.

Keep in mind that this is not the totality of my report. I'm now working on a discussion portion, which includes my overall interpretation-a discussion of how the findings will be used, and ideas for future studies.

I appreciate your feedback. For the sake of getting this wrapped up in a timely manner, could you please respond by next Wednesday the 22nd or sooner. Your response could just be....."it looks accurate" or "I agree with the information" or "no, on page x, what I meant to say was "....."

Hope this makes sense.

When I'm done with the whole process, I'll send you a completed copy :)

Best wishes,

Carlo Galeazzi

