

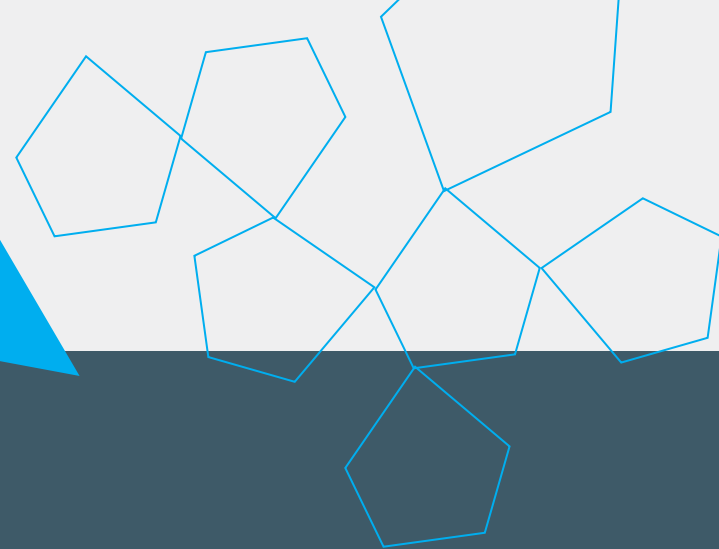
WEST ALABAMA ARTS EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

BACKGROUND

The Arts Council of Tuscaloosa announced the establishment of the West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative, a project of the Artistic Literacy Consortium, in 2018. The Collaborative is administered through a regional office located at the Dinah Washington Cultural Arts Center. The Artistic Literacy Consortium is a joint project between the Alabama State Council on the Arts and The Alabama State Department of Education. Currently, less than 40% of school systems across the state of Alabama offer arts education programming with rural communities impacted the most.

A leadership team of arts, education, business, and community leaders from across the state worked for three years to create the Alabama Plan for Arts Education. The plan was accepted by the State Board of Education in March 2016. In 2018, the Alabama State Legislature approved \$400,000 in new funding for the Alabama State Council on the Arts to launch three pilot Regional Arts Education Collaboratives. The collaboratives are strategically located in Huntsville, Birmingham, and Tuscaloosa. The shared goals for the three collaboratives are to provide regional arts education inventories as well as professional development for teachers, artists, and arts organizations in arts integration.

The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative held its first semester-long program in the Tuscaloosa County Schools at Myrtlewood Elementary in Fosters, Alabama and in the Tuscaloosa City Schools at The Alberta School of Performing Arts. At Myrtlewood, all second graders received visual art classes twice-weekly with professional teaching artist Ruth O'Connor. The curriculum, co-designed by O'Connor and the Myrtlewood second grade teachers, aimed to integrate art into the regular classroom curriculum. At TASPA, all fourth grade students received once-weekly visual art classes that were integrated with the English/Language Arts curriculum.



PROGRAM GOALS

- Form partnerships with schools to offer innovative arts integration units
- Help classroom teachers gain confidence using the arts to teach state core curriculum standards
- Recruit and train teaching artists in the West Alabama region in arts integration curriculum design and execution
- Form relationships with community arts organizations in order to build varied and sustainable arts integration programs in the schools

Top left and bottom: Images from Myrtlewood Elementary; Top, courtesy the Tuscaloosa News



“My favorite part was making an animal. It was so so so so much fun. I made a snake out of blue, red, and green. I am very proud of my artwork.”

“I love art class. I made a gulper eel. It has a long tail. It’s orange and yellow and red. It lives in the water.”

“My favorite part was getting to be creative and having fun.”



Left, Images of teachers and students actively engaging in the program at The Alberta School of Performing Arts

YEAR 1 PLAN & OVERVIEW

Goals on the Local Level

- 2 school partnerships serving 2 grade levels
- Myrtlewood Elementary School – Fosters, AL – 2nd grade (Tuscaloosa County Schools)
- The Alberta School of Performing Arts – Tuscaloosa, AL – 4th grade (Tuscaloosa City Schools)
- 2 units serving approximately 160 students in two different core curriculum areas
- Science: Ecosystems- Animals and their Habitats
- Language Arts: Reading Comprehension- Author’s Purpose and Elements of the Story
- Co-designed curricula by 7 classroom teachers and 1 teaching artist
- Approximately 100 hours and 17 weeks of arts integrated lessons through one 9-week unit (Myrtlewood) and one 8-week unit (Alberta)

Evaluation Parameters

- Changes in student engagement and participation levels (from teachers’ and students’ perspectives)
- Demonstrated growth in vocabulary skills (Myrtlewood and Alberta)
- Demonstrated growth in reading comprehension (Alberta)
- Change in classroom teachers’ skill level and interest in using arts integration in their lessons
- Degree of meeting state standards in the arts and academic areas

Other Goals

- Training for teaching artists in all arts disciplines in using arts integration
- Following up with classroom teachers at programs after units end to assess longevity of skills learned
- Training for community arts organizations in arts integration/recruitment of local teaching artists
- Training for principals on the benefits of becoming an arts integrated school

2018-2019 Measured Outcomes

- Increase in student engagement and participation
- Demonstrated growth in vocabulary skills
- Demonstrated growth in reading comprehension
- Increase in classroom teachers’ skill levels and interest in using arts integration

