



City of San Antonio

Agenda Memorandum

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Agenda Date: 2/7/2017

In Control: Early Childhood Education Municipal Development Corporation Board of Directors

DEPARTMENT: Pre-K 4 SA

DEPARTMENT HEAD: Sarah Baray, Ph.D.

COUNCIL DISTRICTS IMPACTED: Citywide

SUBJECT:

Educational Presentation

SUMMARY:

Briefing on the Wolf Trap program aimed to provide STEM education through an integrated arts approach in an 8-week residency program to 20 Pre-K 4 SA classroom teachers.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

The Wolf Trap Institute is a proven national model for utilizing the performing arts to support young children's cognitive, emotional, and physical development. Wolf Trap enhances academic skills in STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) content through developmentally appropriate arts-integrated professional development and coaching for teachers while providing engaging learning for children in content that is infrequently taught to young children.

Wolf Trap addresses two primary concerns:

- The school readiness of children, especially for children living in poverty, and
- Access to effective professional development and coaching for teachers who work with these children.

The Wolf Trap Institute's art-based teaching method taps into children's innate desire for active, multisensory learning and utilizes these methods to teach challenging content.

A recent independent study funded by the US Department of Education and conducted in Fairfax County,

Virginia indicates that teachers who use the Wolf Trap Institute's arts-integrated early childhood strategies had a significant, positive impact on children's learning in math. Additionally, a new analysis released in 2016 shows that student's in the classrooms of Wolf Trap-trained teachers gain the equivalent of more than a month of additional math learning. Participating teachers also developed skill-sets to engage students in performing arts learning experiences (music, dance, drama) that develop early childhood mathematics learning skills in number and number sense, measurement, geometry, algebra, data analysis, statistics, and probability. Students in these classrooms received the equivalent of 1.3 additional months of learning, or 26 additional days, compared to their peers in the control groups. In the second year, a sustained impact was found amounting to 1.7 additional months of learning, or 34 additional days, even though not all students in the second year continued in classrooms with teachers participating in the program. Pre-K 4 SA will measure the success of this program by comparing GOLD data for participating teachers and non-participating teachers in Math and Science.

ISSUE:

The Wolf Trap classroom artist residencies provide an opportunity for the resident artist and classroom teacher to work together to:

- Demonstrate how to use performing art experiences to get children more engaged;
- Improve learning in areas specified by the required curriculum;
- Ensure the performing arts become integrated into the teacher's daily routine.

Throughout the 8 week residency (11 lessons), teaching artists and teachers collaborate on goals, formal planning, classroom implementation and assessment. Once the resident artist completes their residency, the teacher has a tool box of arts integrated techniques, hands on experience and lesson plans at their disposal.

Residency Structure:

- Orientation/pre-residency planning meeting between teaching artist and teacher.
- 10 classroom sessions led by the teaching artist (30-minute sessions) followed by a 15-minute debrief discussion between the teaching artist and teacher.
- 2 planning meetings where the teaching artist and teacher create a lesson plan for the classroom teacher to use.
- 2 sessions led by the classroom teacher while the teaching artist is present and participating.
- Resource materials are provided to the classroom teacher: a copy of Stages for Learning: Performing Arts Experiences for Early Childhood Education, an audio recording of accompanying songs and a Wolf Trap Institute classroom poster.

Year II: Through a USAA charitable contribution, Pre-K 4 SA, in collaboration with the Arts Fund, secured San Antonio as the only Texas Affiliate of the nationally respected Wolf Trap Institute. In order to encourage STEM education through arts in our community, a Wolf Trap artist presented STEM lessons in five Pre-K 4 SA classrooms throughout a one week residency.

Year III: Thirty San Antonio education leaders observed these lessons and were exposed to the Wolf Trap approach. This resulted in Southwest ISD and other school districts to include Wolf Trap in their schools to enhance their curriculum and improve science and math through this integrated art approach. In addition, the Pre-K 4 SA classrooms continue to be model sites to train new community artists on Wolf Trap.

Year IV: Through a USAA charitable contribution, 20 Pre-K 4 SA classrooms (5 at each education center) will participate in an 8-week artist residency to enhance STEM. This will allow Pre-K 4 SA Education Centers to model and support arts integration for other early childhood programs in San Antonio.

ALTERNATIVES:

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.

FISCAL IMPACT:

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RECOMMENDATION:

This item is a briefing for informational purposes only.