

ARTS INTEGRATION

What ArtsNOW's Evidence Shows



ArtsNOW partners with schools and educators to integrate dance, music, theatre, and visual arts into academic learning. Research across ArtsNOW partner schools shows what can happen when students are actively engaged and educators have the tools and support to teach creatively.

WHAT EDUCATORS ARE SEEING

In a 2025 evaluation conducted by the University of South Carolina Research, Evaluation, and Measurement Center in over 800 classrooms that partner with ArtsNOW:

94% reported students became **more confident communicators**

92% of educators reported an increase in **students' understanding of academic concepts**

95% of educators reported **increased student engagement.**

90% of educators reported **improved classroom climate**



8 out of 10 educators are more likely to stay in the profession; **87% feel more confident** in their teaching.

STUDENT OUTCOMES

Reimagining and Accelerating Literacy through Arts Integration (REALI), an Innovative Approaches to Literacy grant from the U.S. Department of Education, supported 6 schools in Georgia and South Carolina 2021 to 2026. 78% of participating fourth graders improved their reading scale scores, far surpassing the project's federal benchmark of 30%.

Largest Improvement in South Carolina

Third-grade English Language Arts (ELA) scores increased 36% in one year at J.C. Lynch Elementary School.

STEM + The Art of Integrated Learning (SAIL), an Assistance for Arts Education Development and Dissemination (AAEDD) grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education, supported 4 schools in Georgia from 2021 to 2026.

+ 3.1 Points Gained in Math

Math proficiency increased in schools participating in the SAIL grant from 28.2% to 31.3%, while comparison schools declined during the same four-year period.

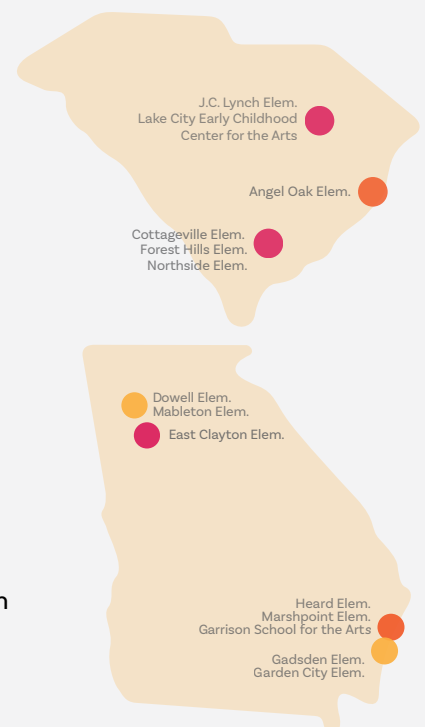
13.3 Percentage Points Above State Average

Third-grade ELA scores increased 39.8% in one year in the Colleton County School District.

SmART Literacy (2018-2023), an AAEDD grant funded by the U.S. Department of Education, served four schools in Georgia and South Carolina. In the final year of the grant, students outperformed comparison schools in end-of-year ELA scale and Lexile scores.

+ 20 Percentage Points

Third graders reading on level increased from 56.7% to 76.7% at Heard Elementary (+20) and from 60% to 74% at Angel Oak Elementary (+14) over five years.



When Learning Comes to Life, Student Achievement Grows.

The proof is clear: students in ArtsNOW partner schools are making measurable academic gains. Through sustained, arts-integrated professional learning and classroom support, ArtsNOW helps schools improve student outcomes. By bringing learning to life, ArtsNOW creates meaningful impact for everyone invested in student success:



For school and district leaders: It offers a powerful strategy for supporting student learning, engagement, classroom climate, and educator confidence.



For educators: Arts integration creates more ways to reach students and strengthen understanding.



For families and communities: It helps students build the skills they need to learn, communicate, create, and solve problems.



For partners and funders: It creates an opportunity to help schools build lasting capacity for creative, engaging learning.

PUT THIS EVIDENCE INTO ACTION.

These findings are most powerful when they move beyond the page and into the conversations shaping what happens in schools.

Share this brief with a school leader, educator, policymaker, funder, colleague, or community partner.

Then, join ArtsNOW on **October 13 for a live virtual Research Briefing** to go deeper into the findings, connect the research to what is happening in classrooms, and explore what the evidence means for students, educators, and school communities.



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Want to help expand access to creative learning? [Support ArtsNOW's work.](#)