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The Results are in: Wolf Trap's Arts-Integrated Education Model Boosts Young Children's Math Achievement

Independent Research Confirms Arts-Integrated Approach Raises Math Scores, Enhances Teacher Practice through High-Quality Professional Development

Pittsburgh, PA (March, 2015) – Newly released research shows that **Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts'** arts-integrated education model bolsters young children's math achievement. The independent study, conducted over four years, validates that the **Gateway to the Arts Western Pennsylvania Wolf Trap** approach to blending core subjects and performing arts disciplines is an effective way to enhance student achievement. *Additional resources, including a summary video with classroom demonstrations and the complete research report, may be accessed at www.wolftrap.org/StemArtsStudy.*

Conducted by independent evaluators at the [American Institutes for Research \(AIR\)](#), *Findings from the Evaluation of the Wolf Trap Arts in Education Model* (the Study) examined the effects of Wolf Trap's arts-integrated teaching approach on teachers' practice and students' math knowledge. Key findings include that:

- Students participating in Wolf Trap's Early Childhood STEM Learning Through the Arts (Early STEM/Arts) demonstrate better math achievement, as compared to control groups and as measured by the Early Math Diagnostic Assessment, a standard evaluation tool.
- Wolf Trap's teacher-training includes all measurable features of high-quality professional development.
- Lessons taught by Wolf Trap-trained teachers demonstrate higher levels of arts integration, particularly with respect to linking arts with math learning.

Gateway to the Arts is one of 17 sites across the country implementing Wolf Trap's arts-integrated model. **Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts** provides National Affiliate sites with intensive professional development for educators and teaching artists; classroom-based residencies for students; curricular materials aligned to national and state standards; and ongoing programmatic training and support.

Arts-integrated learning combines content and skills from the arts with core subjects such as language, literacy, and math. For example, in a pre-kindergarten classroom, a teacher might integrate mathematics and music by teaching number sense and steady beat together so that learning in one subject enhances learning in the other.

“I believe most learning is done through multi-sensory experiences,” shared by Pittsburgh Public School Kindergarten teacher, Stephanie Szolis. “Students at any age need different means to convey their intelligence and Gateway to the Arts gives them the ability. The ultimate engagement happened when the resident artist and I worked together to enrich my students in problem solving and engineering during the STEAM residency. I learned how to write an engaging song to teach the steps of engineering and the children used it to solve problems. The ideas they produced were amazing for three and four year old children. The program gave them the chance to share their thinking in a non--traditional manner, which made it safe and exciting.”

“Early childhood is *the* critical time for learning, and we know that children learn best by ‘doing,’ moving, playing and experiencing. The very skills children need to succeed – problem-solving, creativity, collaboration – are intrinsic to arts-integrated learning,” said **Akua Kouyate-Tate**, Senior Director of Education at Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts. “Wolf Trap Foundation is proud to support Gateway to the Arts by giving their educators the tools and training to effectively deliver arts-integrated instruction. Together, we are having a significant positive impact on students’ achievement.”

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Gateway to the Arts partners with communities and schools to provide high quality arts education experiences to students, educators, and families throughout the western Pennsylvania region. Our teaching artists are professional performing and visual artists who can provide in-school and out-of-school residencies, workshops, and professional development opportunities that can be customized to meet the needs of every educator, school, or community partner.

Based in Vienna, Virginia, just outside Washington, D.C., **Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts** is a leader in early childhood arts education. Wolf Trap’s education programs include Wolf Trap Institute for Early Learning Through the Arts, which provides innovative arts-based teaching strategies and services to early childhood teachers, caregivers, and children from birth through Kindergarten. As a national sponsoring organization of Gateway to the Arts, Wolf Trap Foundation offers programs and services at 16 other Affiliate sites and in 30 states nationwide. Wolf Trap Foundation for the Performing Arts also presents and produces a full range of performances at Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts.

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