



# TURNAROUND:ARTS

creating success in schools

## WHITE HOUSE COMMITTEE LAUNCHES ARTS INITIATIVE TO HELP TURN AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

***Presidentially-appointed artists Chuck Close, Yo-Yo Ma, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kerry Washington, Forest Whitaker, Damian Woetzel and Alfre Woodard to work with schools in eight states as part of the program***

**Washington, DC, Monday April 23, 2012 (Embargoed 8:30 a.m. EST)**—Today the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced the launch of a new arts education initiative to help turn around low-performing schools, developed in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education and the White House Domestic Policy Council. The Turnaround Arts initiative is a new public-private partnership designed to narrow the achievement gap and increase student engagement through the arts. Working in some of the nation's lowest-performing elementary and middle schools, this program will test the hypothesis that high-quality and integrated arts education boosts academic achievement, motivates student learning and improves school culture in the context of overall school reform, announced the committee's co-chairs, George Stevens Jr. and Margo Lion.

Turnaround Arts will work in eight turnaround schools across the country—public schools in the lowest-achieving five percent of their state that are receiving School Improvement Grants through the U.S. Department of Education. Over the course of two years, Turnaround Arts will bring intensive arts education resources and expertise into these schools and support the school leadership in using the arts as a pillar of their reform strategy. An external evaluation of the program will measure the impact and effectiveness of this approach.

Arts and music education are absolutely critical to providing all students with a world-class, well-rounded education, and nowhere are they more essential than in the low-performing schools participating in the School Improvement program, said Secretary of Education Arne Duncan. I am grateful that the President's Committee and its partners are showing leadership to engage students in these schools with arts and music. I am confident this initiative will prove that the arts are an effective strategy for improving student engagement and achievement while turning around schools.

Three studies released this month by the [Council on Foreign Relations](#), the [Department of Education](#) and the [National Endowment for the Arts](#) emphasized the importance of access to arts education, citing better grades, increased creativity, higher rates of

college enrollment and graduation as well as higher aspirations and civic engagement. Research shows that when students participate in the arts they are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, have higher GPAs and SAT scores and show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12. They are also more likely to be engaged and cooperative with teachers and peers and are more self-confident and better able to express their ideas. These benefits are particularly pronounced in high-poverty, low-performing schools.

"Effective and high-quality arts education can be a powerful catalyst for successful educational reform," said PCAH Vice-Chair, Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D. "All of the eight schools selected for this program are tackling overwhelming challenges. And all of them—from a remote Native American Reservation in Lame Deer, Montana to a community in Des Moines, Iowa recovering from devastating floods—are committed to harnessing the unique ability of the arts to help surmount those challenges. With Turnaround Arts, our goal is to increase the participating schools' chances of successful turnaround and, in the process, build a cohort of stand-out case studies in the field that will ignite a national conversation on the ability of the arts to improve the climate and culture of some of our country's lowest achieving schools."

Over the next two years, the President's Committee and its partners will provide training and resources to address each selected school's needs. Resources will include an Aspen Institute summer leadership program, in-school professional development, partnerships with community arts education and cultural organizations, additional art supplies and musical instruments and community engagement events. Presidentially-appointed artists on the Committee, Chuck Close, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kerry Washington, Forest Whitaker, Yo-Yo Ma, Damian Woetzel and Alfre Woodard, will adopt one of the selected schools for the length of the program, working with the schools and communities and highlighting their successes.

"We think Turnaround Arts will show that arts education is a solution that has been hiding in plain sight," said Sarah Jessica Parker, actress and PCAH member. "And the other PCAH artists working in these schools are so excited to be part of this project. It will be a model for demonstrating how high-quality arts education can help turn failing schools into high-performing ones—and provide every student with access to the great education they need and deserve."

The partners in Turnaround Arts include the National Endowment for the Arts, the Ford Foundation, the Herb Alpert Foundation, Crayola, NAMM Foundation, the Aspen Institute and Booz Allen Hamilton. Intel and SKDKnickerbocker are providing additional support and resources. Turnaround Arts is being run and managed by the Arts Education Partnership, a national coalition administered by the Council of Chief State School Officers, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education.

Participating schools were competitively selected from nominations by state and municipal authorities. In addition to being recipients of a School Improvement Grant,

criteria for selection included demonstrated need and opportunity, strong school leadership with district support and a commitment to arts education. Turnaround Arts schools represent elementary and middle schools from across the country and encompass a diversity of student demographics and urban and rural settings. They are:

- (1) Batiste Cultural Arts Academy at Live Oak School in New Orleans, LA (PK-8)
- (2) Findley Elementary School in Des Moines, IA (PK-5)
- (3) Lame Deer Jr. High School in Lame Deer, MT (7,8)
- (4) Noel Community Arts School in Denver, CO (6,7)
- (5) Orchard Gardens K-8 School in Boston, MA (K-8)
- (6) Savoy Elementary School in Washington, DC (PK-5)
- (7) Martin Luther King, Jr. School in Portland, OR (K-8)
- (8) Roosevelt School in Bridgeport, CT (K-8)

More information about the TAI and profiles of selected schools can be found here:  
<http://turnaroundarts.pcah.gov> (no www.)

More information about the PCAH can be found at [www.pcah.gov](http://www.pcah.gov)

For more information or to schedule interviews, please contact Jody Arlington [jodyarlington@mac.com](mailto:jodyarlington@mac.com), 202.316.4316 or Rachel Racusen at [RRacusen@skdknick.com](mailto:RRacusen@skdknick.com), 202.464.6616.

**About the President's Committee on The Arts and The Humanities**

Created in 1982 under President Reagan, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities (PCAH) is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. The PCAH works directly with the three primary cultural agencies- National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services- as well as other federal partners and the private sector, to address policy questions in the arts and humanities, to initiate and support key programs in those disciplines and to recognize excellence in the field. Its core areas of focus are education, cultural exchange, and creative economy. Under the leadership of the First Lady and Honorary Chairman, and through the efforts of its federal and private members, the President's Committee has compiled an impressive legacy over its tenure, conducting major research and policy analysis, and catalyzing important federal cultural programs, both domestic and international.