



# TURNAROUND:ARTS

creating success in schools

## WHITE HOUSE COMMITTEE SELECTS LAME DEER JR. HIGH SCHOOL FOR PRESTIGIOUS ARTS INITIATIVE TO HELP TURN AROUND LOW-PERFORMING SCHOOLS

### *Dancer Damian Woetzel to work in school as part of new 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 that Lame Deer Jr. High School in Lame Deer, Montana has been selected to participate in 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 improve student engagement through the arts. Lame Deer was chosen to be one of eight schools featured in the program through a highly competitive national selection process, and will receive intensive arts education resources, expertise and the involvement of high-profile President's Committee artists over the course of two years to support their educational reform effort.

"The President's Committee is delighted to have the students of Lame Deer, and their dedicated principal, Aundre Bell, participating in Turnaround Arts," said PCAH Vice-Chair Mary Schmidt Campbell, Ph.D. "We are particularly excited to be working with this community, given the rich culture and traditions of the Cheyenne people, to harness the power of the arts to help transform this school into a creative, engaging and high-performing learning environment."

Turnaround Arts will work in eight elementary and middle 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. An external evaluation will measure the impact and effectiveness of using rigorous and integrated arts education together with other educational reform efforts in high-poverty, low-performing schools.

"I am a firm believer in the power of arts education because I know what it can do for our children," said Denise Juneau, State Superintendent. "We all know that a well rounded education brings better jobs, more opportunity and a better society. Every student from every culture, geographic region and socioeconomic level deserves quality arts learning and the Turnaround Arts initiative will be an invaluable resource for the work and success that we are already seeing at Lame Deer."

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.

"We are so honored to be one of eight schools in the nation selected for this prestigious program," said Aundre Bell, Principal, Lame Deer Jr. High School. "The Northern Cheyenne people and culture is known for its resilient creativity. When that creativity is accessed, it can open a powerful door to success for our children. Turnaround Arts brings a unique opportunity for students to learn, grow and be engaged and challenged in new and exciting ways."

As part of the program, the President's Committee and its partners will provide training and resources to Lame Deer and the other participating schools, including an Aspen Institute summer leadership program, in-school professional development, partnerships with community arts education and cultural organizations, 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.

"I am honored to be working with Lame Deer Jr. High School over the next two years," said Damian Woetzel, Dancer, Director, and PCAH member. "I believe that the arts can enrich and transform the lives of individual students by creating passionate enthusiasm for learning, and increasing participation and engagement with the world beyond the classroom. I am truly looking forward to working towards these goals with the teachers and students at Lame Deer."

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. Inktel 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.