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# **The Arts Learning Pathway**

## **An Evaluation Report for Burncoat Quadrant Worcester Public Schools**

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## INTRODUCTION

The Arts Learning Pathway (ALP or Pathway) in the Burncoat Quadrant of the Worcester Public Schools District serves students in grades preK-12 from across the district who seek learning in the arts. The Pathway consists of the three schools in the quadrant that offer comprehensive arts education: Worcester Arts Magnet School (WAMS), Burncoat Middle School (BMS) and Burncoat High School (BHS).

The ALP offers arts-rich learning opportunities for students, providing classes in dance, drama, music and visual arts across grades K-12. At WAMS students study the four art modalities throughout the year in grades K -6, with drama, visual art and music specialists also in preschool classes. During their 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> grades at BMS students choose one art modality to emphasize, although non-magnet students (those who do not study in a magnet arts course) might attend enrichment classes in the other arts modalities. In grades 9-12 at BHS students typically emphasize one art modality although the magnet and enrichment classes in their area of emphasis and the other arts are also available to them.

This evaluation of the ALP intends to clarify the various aspects that make up the Pathway and illuminate the characteristics of the Pathway, and the journey along it, as perceived by the participants (students, teachers, administrators) and stakeholders (parents and community members). As well, the evaluation report will highlight perceived challenges for the Pathway and include suggested recommendations for improvement.

## EVALUATION PROCESS

The evaluator began conversations with Burncoat Arts Quadrant Committee members Dr. Susan O'Neil (principal, Worcester Arts Magnet) and Dr. Mary Meade-Montaque (Quadrant Manager) in the fall of 2013 to design an evaluation of the Arts Learning Pathway. Lacking a formal description of the ALP this evaluation will provide the basis for the Arts Quadrant Committee (made up of the principals of the three arts magnet schools, the performing and visual arts liaisons and the quadrant manager) to craft such a document. The questions below were developed with the committee to guide the evaluation. Many of them are addressed directly within this report, yet several remain unanswered.

Key evaluation questions include:

- What constitutes the arts learning pathway?
- What does the arts learning pathway achieve? What do we want it to achieve?

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- In what ways does the pathway engage teachers and students in arts learning?
- How does students' understanding of, and skills in, the arts change as they travel the pathway?
- How do teachers and administrators design, develop, and evaluate new arts resources?
- How do teachers make arts and arts integration meaningful and purposeful in the elementary grades?
- How is access and engagement in the arts ensured for students in grades 7-12?
- What have been the major strengths and challenges for the pathway participants (teachers, staff, administrators, students, partners, parents)?

#### Evaluation Activities & Methods

- School and classroom observations at Worcester Arts Magnet School (WAMS), Burncoat Middle School (BMS) and Burncoat High School (BHS)
- Focus group interview with classroom teachers and arts specialists at WAMS
- Focus group interview with visual art teachers at BMS and BHS
- Focus group interview with performing art teachers at BMS and BHS
- Interviews with principals and staff of WAMS, BMS and BHS
- Interviews with key school/ district staff who have been involved over time
- Focus group interview with parents and caregivers of students attending WAMS, BMS and BHS
- Review of curriculum documents
- Survey of alumni from WAMS, BMS and BHS
- Observation and informal interviews (teachers, students, family/ community members at the end of year arts celebration at Worcester Public Library)
- Analysis and preparation of summative evaluation report

In addition, the evaluator communicated regularly with the Burncoat Quadrant Manager, Dr. Mary Meade-Montague. Data analysis was conducted during the spring of 2014, and the report drafted in June. This report was completed based on discussions with Burncoat Quadrant staff in July 2014, and revised in 2015.

## FINDINGS

This report presents findings in the following sections tied to the evaluation questions above:

- The Arts Advantage
- Learning along the Arts Learning Pathway
- Teaching along the Arts Learning Pathway
- Challenges to address
- Visions for the future

Within each section the three schools of the Pathway will be highlighted and the composite picture created will illuminate what elements characterize the Arts Learning Pathway. Discussion regarding recommendations for sustainability and improvements of the Pathway is included in the last section of this report.

### The Arts Advantage

A review of the last two decades of research on the value of arts education in preK-12 education in the US reveals a remarkably consistent picture of the advantages that students of the arts enjoy. In addition to developing cultural literacy, artistic skills and techniques, students have demonstrated the following instrumental outcomes:<sup>1</sup>

- Student **achievement**, typically as represented by reading and mathematics performance on high stakes tests, including transfer of skills learning from the arts to learning in other academic areas—for example, the spatial-temporal reasoning skills developed by music instruction;
- Student **motivation and engagement**, including improved attendance, persistence, focused attention, heightened educational aspirations, and intellectual risk taking;
- Development of **habits of mind** including problem solving, critical and creative thinking, dealing with ambiguity and complexity, integration of multiple skill sets, and working with others; and
- Development of **social competencies**, including collaboration and team work skills, social tolerance, and self-confidence.<sup>2</sup>

Evidence gathered in this evaluation demonstrates that for the most part Arts Learning Pathway students across the three schools achieve these instrumental outcomes in each of the four categories. From their own descriptions of experiences in their schools, to the observations of teachers and administrators, as well as parents, the ALP magnet students demonstrate heightened academic achievement, robust motivation and engagement in school, creative and critical

<sup>1</sup> *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future through Creative Schools*. The President's Committee on Arts and Humanities. 2011. (p. 15-16)  
[http://pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH\\_Reinvesting\\_4web\\_0.pdf](http://pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web_0.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

thinking as habits of mind, and self-confidence, collaboration and other indicators of social competency. Let's take a look at each of these advantages below.

### Student Achievement

The Worcester Public Schools website for the Worcester Arts Magnet Elementary School indicates that 85% of the students in the school have reached the level of proficient or higher in English Language Arts compared to a state average of 61% on the 2014 MCAS. In mathematics for the same year 81% of WAMS students achieved proficient or higher compared to the state average of 62%. In a comparison across the four years 2010-2014 a large majority of students consistently scored proficient or higher across the grades tested. Although the school serves many low-income students as a Title I school, these standardized test scores indicate that students achieve academic success across the grades at a significantly higher rate than the state average.<sup>3</sup> One parent suggested that *"WAMS is now so strong in academics now that some students are seeking it out for that... it opens up a thirst to learn and see what's out there."* WAMS is rated a Level 1 school in by the MADESE, indicating the highest level of achievement available based on student academic testing scores. From the interviews with magnet students themselves in BMS and BHS, and from their parents and teachers, it is clear that those who participate in the arts excel in the academic subjects. As one BHS student noted, "top students in art are top achievers in academics." A parent of a BMS student also observed that, *"Most of the kids in national honor society are on the stage and they are all in magnet."*

However, one parent expressed the concerns that several parents had about the rigor of the academic program at the BMS and BHS. He and several others said there was a *"perception"* that the BMS and BHS did not provide the same level of *"academic rigor that WAMS"* provided, and that they had chosen to send their children to other schools in the area after completing WAMS despite their lack of the arts programming. Notwithstanding, two other parents, both members of Support Our Fine Arts (SOFA), offered the perspective that some of the teachers of the academic subjects at BHS were as intent on students achieving both academic and artistic success as the art teachers. Both BMS and BHS are rated as Level 3 schools by MADESE based on student achievement test scores.

According to the responses from the Alumni Survey, 91% of alumni agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the *"magnet program prepared me for college and career by developing my mastery of artistic skills and processes,"* while 73% agreed or strongly agreed with the statement that the program prepared them for college and career by developing "mastery of academic

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<sup>3</sup>[http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement\\_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=03480225&orgtypecode=6&](http://profiles.doe.mass.edu/mcas/achievement_level.aspx?linkid=32&orgcode=03480225&orgtypecode=6&)

content.” Although the low response rate was not unusual for surveys, the 11 students who responded offered insight into their achievements along the Pathway when noting that the program “*provides a foundation for future careers, success and academic endeavors.*” One student observed that, “*In order to be a part of the magnet, you have to take an ensemble and difficult theory classes. So it is not easy and not everyone can survive in the program.*” Clearly, the Pathway provides multiple ways for students to achieve in both the arts and academics, and many of the students found that the challenges along the Pathway provided the preparation they needed to continue into college. All of the survey respondents are currently enrolled in post-secondary programs, with one third of them pursuing majors in the arts and 73% enrolled in four-year degree programs.

### Motivation and Engagement

At each of the focus group interviews with students from the three schools in the Pathway students said the arts were what brought them to school and what kept them coming to school. As one teacher at WAMS noted,

*Attendance is so high because they want to be here.*

Students’ perceptions of their school experiences were expressed in a more effusive way, with one WAMS student noting that “*Magic is the most appropriate word.*” And another describing the school, “*Its awesome! Because it’s awesome!!*”

One alumnus noted in a survey response that, “*I had to have good grades in order to stay in the dance magnet program.*” Another alumnus stated that the most important skill learned in the magnet program was, “*Organizing, for sure! Because it was not only one class during the day, you had to almost meet every day after school on top of your own life....it keeps you motivated in doing everything.*” The arts classes became the motivation for engaging in academic work, prompting students to achieve across the disciplines.

### Habits of Mind

Students at WAMS revealed that the variety of experiences in the arts allows them to be creative and to think critically in how they compare their own art production and performances with others. One student offered an example of this from a drama class, “*I like drama because we have the play every year and we get to watch whole classes and compare them and see how different they are.*”

Parents confirmed that students engage in critique with their peers by noting that, “*Peers come to support and respect, offering feedback to the students from critique.*” One parent explained that arts learning teaches the soft skills that students in high school need, noting that soft skills means taking the learning and being able to put it into action, making more than grades and knowledge. Another



noted that students are learning 21<sup>st</sup> century skills, commonly understood to be creativity, communication, collaboration and critical thinking.

A middle school student said that art allows them to make connections with their lives. Other BMS students, like the alumnus cited above, noted that arts classes teach organization, and that through music you learn your personality, you recognize if you are a hard worker. The said that in dance they learn timing, not procrastinating, which helps with other classes by understanding time management. In theater, learning the art of memorization, of continuous practicing, helps them with tests and improves memory in general.

Parents noted that students in the arts learned teamwork and responsibility through the needs in the performing arts to collaborate in performances. For example, in Special Chorus, they said, students learned self-discipline, and what it means to make a commitment, as they tour and perform. Another noted that their child also developed confidence, a stronger personality, stronger presentation, poise, and acceptance of others and difference. Students demonstrate responsibility as they recognize and value the talents of others. Succinctly one parent said that the arts transcend all differences,

*Because students need to make hard choices, they have to make decisions based in values and criteria.*

One alumnus noted that “*commitment*” was the most important concept learned in the program, while another wrote that it was the ability to be flexible that was valued,

*Learning to adapt and be flexible relating to practicing and ensembles.  
Learning to adapt to how people play and their styles in ensembles.*

Two alumni wrote about learning the ability to create and develop as important components of the program, writing that

*...because no matter what I was doing or unsure of what I was making I was constantly encouraged to try different methods that were not traditional. I was encouraged to try to create in a way that was natural for me.*

The other alumnus noted that,

*...I got to be myself and become who I am.*

Almost 75% of the alumni noted that the Pathway prepared them for college and career by developing ways of thinking in the arts and creativity. These habits of mind developed along the Pathway, flexibility, commitment, creativity, self-discipline, organization, responsibility and critique, all shape the people that the students become as they continue through life.



## Social Competencies

Consistently across the three schools students indicated that they felt part of a family among those who studied in the arts. They expressed satisfaction at being part of a group, and with belonging to a school community that offered them the opportunity to engage in the arts. The teachers noted that students came together in the arts from diverse cultural, linguistic and socio-economic backgrounds.

As one WAMS teacher noted,

*Bringing a diverse culture together is also something that is really special in this school. Kids come from affluent areas but we are a neighborhood school first. We are primarily neighborhood.*

Other teachers noted,

*Children are so accepting...its from the depth of what they get in the arts. Everyone has their place in something they love. It makes students excited to come to school because it's so diverse. It's something so special.*

*Art gets kids to develop their freedom of expression. Gives them the opportunity to try things outside of school as well [and] gives them poise and self-confidence.*

*It's about feeling a sense of comfort and support in the school. Everyone feels safe here. We don't usually have kids...fighting in the playground. Everyone supports each other and they feel comfortable doing that. They listen...*

One parent expressed strong appreciation for the experience her daughter had in a special non-magnet chorus,

*Her opportunity to be a member of the Quadrivium chorus.....has done even more to boost her confidence and provide incredible opportunities and experiences. The awards, honors, and accolades the chorus has received under the direction of Mr. David Twiss speak for themselves. With very limited funding, he has created a world-class ensemble made of up a diverse group of students. Anyone who hears them sing understands his ability to develop talent. The group's invitations to and participation in prestigious choral festivals certainly attests to that.*

Several alumni responses supported the statements of the teachers above, noting that they learned about themselves while learning to communicate with others, with one alumnus noting that the most important concept learned in the magnet program was “the ability to advocate for myself and to communicate with

others.” Another alumnus wrote that most important were “*discipline and teamwork.*” Working together through the arts, students found ways to engage and develop social competencies.

### Learning along the Arts Learning Pathway

Arts Learning along the Pathway might begin with students attending WAMS, or it might begin with students entering from a different point, another elementary school in the district for example, or coming to the district when they are already in middle school or high school. For the purposes of this section we’ll look at the learning experiences of students at different points along the Pathway to understand their perspectives. The students who were included in the focus group interviews at BMS and BHS were all “magnet” students, as those students who follow the Pathway are referred to, and a large majority of them had followed the Pathway all the way through since entering WAMS in kindergarten.

#### Worcester Arts Magnet Elementary School

Every student at WAMS experiences learning in all of the four art modalities across their school year, including art production and performance skills, techniques, critique and history. In addition to learning the arts students frequently find that the arts are integrated within the academic subject, or conversely that the academic subjects find their way into the art classes. One teacher explained this when asked what made this school a magnet school by saying that the school represented “*An amazing integration of the arts with the academics, and how they strengthen each other.*” Everyone did not fully agree that the school practices arts integration, although this disagreement could also stem from the various definitions and understandings of what constitutes arts integration.

From both the students’ and teachers’ statements it was clear that the arts permeate everything at the school, and are synonymous with creativity, improvisation and risk-taking. The school culture itself seems to define a place where teachers and students explore and accept that what they do, how they act, and what they look like. All are accepted. At the teacher focus group one teacher explained this,

*“Quirky shines here!” (there was enthusiastic agreement around the table, heads nodding). Parents have come to me saying their kids had problems in other schools but here they were fully embraced. Kids who come in wearing stripes and polka dots, who have blue in their hair. It’s unquestioned. They just fit right in. There’s really a place for every child.*

Students agree with that assessment and make the case that the arts contribute to their learning in the academic subjects a well. Their learning in the arts offers them opportunities and choices to be creative, to discover new possibilities. Here are the student voices about what happens to them at this school:

*The arts make us creative. It helps us discover ourselves. If we didn't have those art projects we wouldn't be good at the science project or anything creative really.*

*Music just sounds good. Drama, you could be a new person, have all these cool events. In other schools I didn't have these.*

*I learned that anything is possible....I put my art science project together at the last minute we won the first prize. It was about packaging in nature, like the tomato or an apple that holds the seeds inside.*

Their one complaint: *We want arts for longer times!*

In addition to art classes during the school day students have historically been offered extracurricular activities both during and after school. Flex scheduling by staff allows before school chorus and art club and after school string and band. Fundraising for supplies in the visual arts and busing for chorus has been necessary. Staff and administration continue to seek grants for supplies, residencies and extracurricular arts experiences, while teachers and parents frequently take the initiative to hold fund-raisers and campaigns to raise monies for both in school and after school activities. For example, one volunteer built stage props charging only for the materials used. Some activities have suffered in recent years for lack of funding for the arts by both non-profit and government organizations as well as school districts across the nation.

### Burncoat Middle School and High School

Because the two schools share many of the facilities and the teachers, this discussion will combine the experiences of the both schools, noting where the students and parents refer to specific schools.

In the middle school, as noted above in the introduction, students choose one art form to study if they choose to take part in the magnet program, although they still have access to enrichment courses that are available to all students at the school. While many of them find this choice of one art form difficult, especially if they came from WAMS where they learned across the four art modalities, they also found some surprises. One student explained, *"in WAMS we found what we really loved to do. It helped us identify what we really love."* Another said, *"I really love theater but I have missed the dance, music and art, but really enjoy theatre, would like to get back to playing clarinet. I took dance classes for about 6 years and want to get back to that."*

In addition, at BMS students study in individual classes with "consultants" or professionals who come to school to teach in the arts both during class time and

after school. Musicians who visit also perform for the students as well as provide individual instruction. A student noted,

*We have individual lessons during class every couple of weeks in music. We're having some people come in and they will play for us and then give us lessons.*

Magnet students express appreciation for the opportunity to focus on their art form and note that arts activities enhance their learning experiences at the school. One middle school student noted that,

*...magnet schools are a fun and creative way to complete the frameworks and other schools just give you a packet and a test....learning is more fun when you are doing something you love.*

The close links between BMS and BHS provide students with an array of mentors in the arts because of the proximity of the arts teachers and the willingness of former students to offer guidance and advice. As the middle school students explained,

*Sometimes the high school teacher comes into theater to help us.*

*Some previous dance students come and say hi and give us tips on how to be the best you can be in dance, on what to do.*

Although the middle school does not practice arts integration, there is clearly an influence from the nature of the magnet school climate on teachers of the academic subjects similar to the “quirky” noted above in WAMS. One MS student said that,

*My English teacher is very creative, makes it fun and easier to learn, its not my favorite subject its not very easy for me, but she's very goofy during class, makes it a little more light. We get to do performances. She creates assignments that we enjoy and are meaningful, like the haikus for Japan. [She] showed us pictures from her visit to Japan, tells us stories about her life.*

In the high school students continue along the magnet path they chose during middle school, or select another art form, and again have the option to enroll in enrichment classes. All music students, except vocal music students, take a private lesson once a week at the school. The high school students noted the advantages of attending an arts magnet school as magnet students where they said art sets the tone of the school:

*Helps you with college because of developing a portfolio. We stand out because we've done this for four years.*

*Helps with skill building. [We] leave here after and we can focus on one area, a skill that others don't have.*

*Art helps you focus more, if math doesn't matter then I go to music, and feel like you are supposed to do better.*

When asked if they came to school just for art, the whole room of high school students nodded enthusiastically and all together yelled, “*Yeah, come to school just for art!*” And one said, “*I wouldn't come to school without art.*” Other students pointed out that art class provides a break in the day from academics and offers stress relief. Like the WAMS students above the HS students noted that they enjoy working together and that this sense of community and joy in learning makes them feel good.

Students also noted the advantage of having the same art teacher over the four years in high school, saying that the teacher got to know them, provided personalized attention and developed a special and close relationship with them. This sense of developing relationships extended to their interactions with non-magnet students at the school, and appears to be based in their ability to form strong bonds through the intensity of their artistic and creative explorations. One student said that it was “*easier to build relationships in general. The work in arts makes us close because we become vulnerable.*” At the same time they recognized that teachers expect a lot of them, especially when they compete in dance and music.

In addition to the arts classes there are extracurricular opportunities for students, and funded projects such as the *Dizzy Feet* \$10k Grant recently awarded to the BHS dance department by Worcester Educational Development Foundation (WEDF) for Period 2 and 6 non-magnet students from “*So you think you can dance.*” When there is transportation and coverage for classes for the teachers, the students are able to attend exhibits and performances off campus, such as the Tina Printess program, a visit to the Worcester Craft Center, the Worcester Art Museum (which included the English department.) As well, students' artwork is on exhibit at various venues around the Worcester community. One visual art teacher noted that,

*We've done things for the police department and used our artwork for billboards. We hang work in galleries at different performing arts shows, and the craft center has a show for AP students “Art Alive—Youth Art Work.” The school district offices at 20 Irving St shows our art, the US Memorial Health Center shows our art (and frames it for you), where it is hung in patients' rooms, every year.*

## Teaching along the Arts Learning Pathway

### Worcester Arts Magnet Elementary School

Art teachers at WAMS say that their goals for teaching in the arts include both a focus on the qualities, skills and techniques of the art form, arts for arts sake, and a focus on an integration of the art form with academic content. They also note that their intent in teaching the arts for arts sake is not to train students to become artists but to offer them a more complete education, an education for the whole child. As the teachers noted,

*That's our main goal.....arts for the arts sake. Figure out ways to connect the two of them (academic) rather than using the arts as a tool.*

*Some parents ask if their child needs to be talented in the arts to come, but I tell them no, they may not pursue the arts in college, but they are well-rounded kids, and have a great understanding and appreciation for the arts when they leave.*

The teachers expressed their dedication to the mission of the school to build awareness of the arts, and the intensity of the work that this dedication requires. They noted that their work is dynamic, as they seek ways to improve and expand on the program and the quality of their teaching in the arts and in academics. In their own voices they express these ideas,

*Its not a "run in and teach your curriculum and go" kind of school. It's a lot of work.*

*This group never settles. It's always about how can we make it better and get it out into the community. To builds awareness of the arts and the all around success in the school is one of our goals.*

*Even teacher attendance is amazing here! People stay until 7 or 8 at night, and come in on the weekends, and during the summer. It's the dedication. You've got to get people to buy into it. You can talk it, but if you don't walk it, people can see it later.*

Teachers create their own curriculum materials as they follow the state teaching standards in their own art form. These materials are unique to each teacher, although in some cases the teaching follows a creative curriculum design not yet documented. There is a master schedule created at the start of the academic year, and adjustments to the schedule for field trips, special programs and assessment are noted in weekly notes from the administration. To include the arts classes and address the state academic content standards requires creative solutions, one of which is demonstrated by the district approval of the reduction in the required recess time at the request of the school site council. As well,



teachers must find time to plan together outside of the scheduled class time.

*It's very structured here. But we don't have time within the day to do extra projects with the kids. They would love to do more of that...but there's not time in the day to do that.*

*Classroom teachers have less teaching time in this school because we cut into their teaching time with the arts classes. Yet we supersede all the schools in the city, and with a very diverse population.*

As noted above, arts integration takes different forms. At times the academic content finds its way into the arts classroom and at other time the classroom teacher will find ways to include arts learning while addressing academic subject content. For example,

*One teacher who does a lot of arts integration...had the kids laying under their desks being Michelangelo. As an artist to see a teacher take a risk like that is incredible.*

Dick Deasy, former director of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP), recognizes the complexity of defining the field of arts integration when he writes,

“Arts integration” refers to the effort to build a set of relationships between learning in the arts and learning in the other skills and subjects of the curriculum. The effort appeals to many educators and arts educators, but often for quite different reasons. Some embrace the work out of a theoretical, research-based or philosophical conviction that it is a powerful way to learn and practice fundamental skills, knowledge and attitudes in the arts and other disciplines. Others view it as a pragmatic and, perhaps, expedient way of providing comprehensive instruction in the arts and other disciplines within the confines of the limited school day and within the constraints of available manpower and financial resources. The term, therefore, means different things to different people.<sup>4</sup> (p. 3.)

Among the teachers at WAMS there is recognition of the role of the school leadership in supporting and sustaining the strong arts learning program. They expressed the importance of valuing the work of the arts teachers and the opportunities that they provided for students by the principal and other arts leaders. This recognition and valuing extended to the students and their families, and can be interpreted as a supportive environment. In the words of the teachers,

*If we look at our arts program, a huge part that is different here is that the principal buys into it, she supports it, she models it. She encourages us to*

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<sup>4</sup> Deasy, R. (2003). *Creating Quality Integrated and Interdisciplinary Programs: Report of the AEP National Forum*, September 2002.



*push kids and to give them a chance. She's so supportive of us and the kids. She makes it her business to find out what's going on in their lives. We have kids that have very difficult needs from home.*

An example of the principal's support comes in the form of her grant writing, seeking funds for programming for extracurricular learning opportunities for students that support the professional development of teachers. She makes the needs of the school well known to the community and they then return to the school with additional opportunities, such as the ones described below,

*WEDF (Worcester Educational Development Foundation) came to us to request that grades 2 and 6 go to the African American Art Museum in Clinton and try to connect it to their curriculum in world geography. Kids will have a free field trip with the art specialists as well and we'll look at integration and grade level standards.*

*SOFA (Support Our Fine Arts) provides grant opportunities and we go to their meetings. We write the grants to SOFA, we just got one for visual art and one for instrumental music.*

### Burncoat Middle School and Burncoat High School

As noted above, many of the arts teachers share facilities and students across both schools, so this discussion of teaching in the schools will reflect interpretations combined from the focus group interviews with students, teachers, parents and administrators, as well as classroom observations in the different arts modalities. In all observations the committed teachers were anxious to engage their students in learning in and through the arts. While teachers acknowledged that the schools are designated as arts magnet, some suggested that the changes over the years have "muddled down" a purer intention, clouding a clearer picture of what constitutes an arts magnet school.

Clearly the art teachers hold students to very high standards, and "go over and above," as noted by a parent. The teachers express a similar dedication to their teaching and to their students that was found at WAMS, as one of them noted,

*We put the time and effort into it because we love what we do, it's our passion and we pass it on. The kids keep us here. I'd be gone if it wasn't for the kids.*

Notwithstanding their dedication and commitment, however, the arts teachers acknowledge that a lack of resources (including time, budget, facilities) at both BMS and BHS puts a strain on their efforts. For example, it was noted that at the middle school the arts periods have been reduced from 10 periods to 4 periods a week, and that sometime private lessons with consultants are not available for all

students. Although their scheduled classes have been reduced they said that they are expected to do the same amount of work in less time.

The arts teachers at BMS and BHS demonstrate their competence and qualifications in their classes and in their curriculum materials. The excellence of their work through awards and recognition such as the recent award for BHS dance teacher Joan Sheary by Dance Teacher Magazine.

While the arts teachers seek collaborations across the arts modalities they have no formal structure in place, such as a department of the arts, for structuring their planning or collaborations. Currently they meet in a department group that includes the health and physical education teachers, with the two groups holding different goals and outcomes for the students.

The arts teacher said that the magnet students they teach at both BMS and BHS exhibit a “*certain passion*” and interest that is not shared with the regular students at the schools. Yet, they suggest, that the students are not always seen in a positive light, and sometimes considered to be “*a problem*.” The teachers recognize regular students who could benefit from the magnet program but noted that they have seen students “*getting lost in the shuffle*,” and not having the opportunity to attend magnet classes.

Teachers noted that special needs students can excel in the arts and frequently need the arts to find their way. A performing arts teacher explained, “*expectations for students within class are all the same, in select chorus students with special needs don't fit in any other school, so this program is very important. We are not only their teachers, we are their mentors, we teach them for life. The kids want to learn, they want to be in our classes [and] our referrals are very low, 6 or 7 a year versus 90 for other teachers....we serve everybody, we don't just look for the stars.*” In addition, the HS students noted that international students benefit from the arts magnet options as well,

Teachers speak with pride about their alumni, noting examples of their former students' successes,

*Dr. Daniel Sedwick, composer teacher at Harvard is an alum. Some teachers have attended the school, and have children here, several seniors are auditioning currently.*

Non-magnet students take advantage of the schools' exceptional and dedicated faculty, “*Out of the 128 students I see on a daily basis, very few are actually members of the music magnet program and only 4 receive lessons from the vocal consultant as opposed to the instrumental program in which every student receives at least one lesson per week.*”

Each of the arts modalities have their specific content relevant instructional methods for teaching within the context of the schools. Although the facilities are not ideal in all cases, the teaching that was observed during visits to the classrooms indicates that both educationally and artistically the teachers in the arts provide the value and quality expected in a school of the arts. The following descriptions of classroom teaching are based on observations in the schools in April 2014.

## Dance

The dance program is run similar to a professional dance studio, in a large and open space (with an additional smaller studio for smaller classes) with bright lights and posters of dancers to inspire students all around the room. The teachers treat the dancers in a professional manner with both support (when students perform tasks well) and discipline (pointing out how to improve movements to mastery). The diversity of students' background experience and skill in dance was quite varied in the 7th grade class that was observed, however the teacher was skilled in moving students through the exercises providing comments that both encouraged and corrected movements based upon the individual student competence. Students were fully engaged in learning (moving or perceiving the movement of others) with the teacher dancing with the students throughout and demonstrating routines and techniques using the language of the art of dance. The range of dance styles included ballet, musical theater and jazz to provide a strong foundation for further study in modern dance in the high school.

The 3rd and 4th year high school students were preparing for an upcoming performance of *Cats*. Once again, the rapport of the teachers with the students in this combined class was impressive in both its support and discipline of each dancer as a fully engaged group of dancers where the variety of background experiences and skills has narrowed due to their years dancing together (as stated by one of the teachers) and development of advanced skills in performance technique and expression. The joy and support of the ensemble was evident as students applauded individual student or group performances led by the teachers.

The well thought through sequence of dance offerings (middle through high school) is impressive in both its diversity of dance offerings and developmental growth in professional performance standards as evidenced in these classes. The passport from middle to high school appeared seamless.

## Theater

Due to a scheduling conflict only a high school class was observed, however the middle school teacher was able to discuss the program, its philosophy and pedagogy. Both instructors, who worked closely together as the theater department across middle and high school, transformed their spaces into lively

theater centers with resources made available for students to write, act, direct and work backstage in a professional manner similar to the dance program. The large number of students pursuing the theater magnet program speaks to the popularity of this program with over 106 students in middle school and 102 students in the high school program.

The high school class was a study in individualized learning. Small groups were working on scripts in clusters throughout the auditorium while others were preparing the set for the upcoming performance of *Cats*. Once again, the continuity from middle to high school was seamless as students were building the same range of skills for performance in theater, with the younger students more dependent on the teachers for direction and support and the older high school students taking on more independence and authority for their learning. Similar to the dance program the teacher student rapport was supportive and a collegial atmosphere was evident in their interactions in the high school. Similar to the dance program students graduating from this magnet program chose to continue their study in some aspect of curricular or co-curricular activities in higher education.

The concern expressed by these teachers was that they had so much to give to other teachers and would like to be part of the grade-level clusters, not just the current arts clusters. In light of the interdisciplinary nature of the theater program, this in particular would provide a wealth of learning opportunities for students beyond the magnet classes. The continuity in the theater program seemed strong based upon the number of students who continued to study from middle through high school.

### Visual Art

The contrast between middle and high school art offerings was marked in several areas. The studio space was extremely crowded in the 8th grade classroom, with a large class in a studio room with a variety of resources for the students, including posters of art works, information on careers in the arts, color wheel diagrams and other instructional materials and art supplies. The middle school offerings were for all students, including the magnet students, and the curriculum was rigorous with both theory and practice of art making evident in the classroom. Students, both those in and those outside the magnet program, were fully engaged from entering the classroom until the period ended, working independently on projects with careful direction and guidance of the art teacher. Students working in small groups were guided by the teacher to become peer learning communities with students helping one another in designing, creating and critiquing each other's art pieces. Similar to the dance program, students were introduced to the language of visual art throughout the class as the teacher taught new content, critiqued the ongoing work and prepared individual students for an upcoming exhibit of their best works. The

sequence of visual art activities resulted in students being fully engaged in mastering technique and expression in their art works.

The high school offerings were markedly different with students working on a variety of projects more independently with less teacher supervision. Student engagement was less apparent in the Arts Magnet III and IV classes where students took more time to start their work and seemed less interested in each other's pieces. When questioned, the students in this small class could describe their projects and how the work built upon previous class sessions so it appears there is a broad curriculum in visual arts that they are pursuing.

The continuity was less evident between middle and high school and the teachers credited this with the dissolution of the magnet program as an entity since both magnet and non-magnet students were pursuing courses creating a diversity of levels that weakened the curriculum. The former curriculum that included drawing, painting, sculpture, oils, acrylics, and art history is no longer offered.

## Music

The evaluators observed several music classes: a magnet performance class, a combined choral class for magnet and non-magnet students, and the Quadrivium Chorus. The spaces for the classes were filled with musical instruments and equipment, although, like the piano, not in top condition. The choral class was primarily non-magnet students the focus on the teacher was on performing music for students' enjoyment.

In the choral class, magnet students were involved in a variety of activities, coming and going to the class for private lessons and group projects. The primary focus of the class was preparing for an upcoming concert, but once this was arranged students engaged with a fellow student in learning from him about the composer Thomas Tallis whose music they had previously studied. Following the presentation students engaged in a short discussion of the music they heard previously and Tallis' style of using minor keys to represent lamentation. While there was obviously a connection to a previous class, the student's presentation did not include music to illustrate his research on the life of the composer, so the engagement of fellow students was limited.

During the observation of the Quadrivium Chorus, again made up of magnet and non-magnet students, the students performed Mozart's Ave Maria, a McCartney Beatles song, the above-mentioned lamentation by Thomas Tallis, and a rousing gospel tune. Notwithstanding the aged piano as accompaniment, the performance was exceptionally moving and expressive. Nothing demonstrates the value of the arts in education more dramatically than young adolescents raising their voices in song!

In May at the Arts/Learning symposium held at Lesley University the BHS string quintet performed for a large audience of arts education advocates, allowing for another perspective of the value of the music program. The evaluators attended the performance at Lesley, which was superb, with students demonstrating excellent musical technique and expression.

## CHALLENGES FOR THE PATHWAY

Several challenges for the pathway have been mentioned already, and in this section they will be further discussed. The challenges that were observed and most frequently voiced by students, teachers, administrators and parents include a scarcity of resources (time, money, supplies and equipment), the need for improvement of facilities, especially for the performing arts, and the lack of recognition across the arts for arts teachers and the work that they do to sustain the level of arts education along the Pathway. This recognition of the program and the arts leads to another challenge for teachers and students alike: class scheduling. Parents and administrators identified the challenge of keeping students in the Pathway after they completed the elementary school. Of course, these challenges take different forms at each school and vary across the art modalities.

### Resources

Teachers in public schools, and especially teachers of the arts, can be very resourceful when it comes to meeting the needs of their students. Visual arts teachers become scavengers of materials wherever they find them, and performing arts teachers work magic when it comes to seeking venue for their students to perform. Arts teachers in the Arts Learning Pathway in Burncoat are no exception. Some examples of this resourcefulness:

- A retired man volunteers to make props for WAMS theater productions and doesn't charge for his time, just the materials. And the kids collect box-tops, at a nickel a box-top and twice a year we get a check for \$300-600 to use that to pay for the materials.
- The visual art teacher at WAMS has a fundraiser each year called *Square One Art* that purchases art supplies for the classes in visual arts.
- WAMS Special Chorus had a fundraiser last year where people brought in bags of clothes and were paid by the pound (~\$900 a year provides buses for competitions).
- WAMS parents provide funding for visiting artists.  
Many students provide their own musical instruments

Yet, in spite of the efforts made by teachers and others, many needs remain unmet. These unmet needs are noticed by the students and have an impact on how the schools are perceived by the community. A general need across all levels is an upgrade in technological resources, including computers with Internet access, projectors and screens, at a minimum. Some examples of resources still needed as noted by the teachers, students and leaders:

- New or updated music texts for WAMS (current ones from 1960 so not used).



- New or updated keyboards for WAMS (currently 21 years old, from the original allocation for the school)
- Increase in budget for the dance teacher's part-time salary.
- Sufficient musical instruments for an ensemble in BMS
- Sink in BHS visual art room
- Budget or funding for for BMS/BHS dance program ("every mirror, every barre, all the music, we have raised all the money ourselves")
- Coordination on scenery as well as budgets for costumes for theater and dance productions
- Budget or funding for field trips
- Music stool for a bass player
- Music stands for BMS/BHS
- New or updated piano for music
- Stage microphone (student strained her voice for lack of one)
- Clay for pottery classes (currently not offered)
- Paper for oil painting classes (not offered)

A BHS student noted that her teacher asked her to write a full length one act play that was performed on March 1, 2014. They had \$200 for costume, set design and transportation, "I can't be more proud...but, the festival we went to ...noted the lack of completed sets."

### Facilities

For many of the parents and several teachers facilities are considered the "main problem," particularly for BMS and BHS. Students as well note that not having adequate or sufficient performing arts space for practice or for productions represents a serious shortcoming for the schools. Students rehearse in the cafeteria, and dancers avoid the holes in the floor of a space lacking in adequate heating. As one dance teacher noted, the floor is exactly the same as it was 25 years ago when she was a student. According to those who have experienced it, the auditorium has poor acoustics, a stage with protruding nails in the floor and a leak through the roof. The uncomfortable seats are generally avoided by potential audience members. Many noted the contrast with the auditorium at Worcester Tech, Shrewsbury HS and Wachusett HS which have beautiful auditoriums, recording studios, and equipment. "We're losing kids to these schools," noted one parent.

But this was not always the situation, since at the beginning (22 years ago) WAMS had magnet funding and it made a difference. Parents and teachers now recognize that there is a need to build a fine arts facility to attract and keep students in the Arts Learning Pathway. The two art rooms currently measure less than 1800 sft total and as one parent noted, "Children are smart, they see the mismatched tables, the outdated equipment, and don't feel special.... kids will feel better if they come in and they are respected, like that football team that gets

new uniforms.” The BHS students noted “we would get more recognition if we had more money, we can’t even rent out a place to perform.”

### Recognition

While the three Arts Learning Pathway schools each have been designated as arts magnet or arts focused schools, this designation might not be well known across the districts. Several parents and WAMS classroom teachers made the point that they had not been aware of the arts learning opportunities at these schools until they came to the schools themselves. The names and the webpages of BMS and BHS do not reflect the arts learning, and it might be that the arts in Burncoat are a well-kept secret that needs to be shared with the community.

Within the upper level schools the teachers’ perspectives indicate uneven support for, recognition and valuing of, the arts by school leaders. As noted above, there is no fine arts department in the school organizational structure, and thus no route for communication and planning among the arts teachers. While one parent noted that art is respected and appreciated at the schools, that perception is not shared. In fact, some arts teachers noted a lack of evaluative teaching observations in the classrooms by school leaders, or evaluations that made note of non-existent equipment. Teachers noted that school leaders from their school and from the central office infrequently attend performances, or complain about the quality of the performances.

### Scheduling

Some parents and students have had the experience of traversing the complete pathway from 1<sup>st</sup> grade to 12<sup>th</sup> and made note of the differences between the three schools. They especially noted the difficulties that some of the students have had in scheduling art courses in BMS and BHS. While the arts teachers would be the most qualified to assess students’ needs and abilities in the arts, on occasion the administration and/or guidance counselors make decisions about where to place students in art classes. These decisions can be difficult and have a lasting negative impact on students.

Parents, teachers, and students called attention to the difficulty in scheduling arts classes for students taking AP courses. Parents’ examples of this include a student who left the school because AP courses didn’t accommodate the music magnet courses, and another had to choose between music and drama in 9th grade. In the perception of the parents, guidance counselors advise students to take AP instead of the arts classes, and are not well informed about opportunities for study in the arts in higher education. As one parent suggested, “They should look at the portfolios of the students.”

One example of the complexity of resources, facilities and scheduling was

reflected in the words of a parent who noted that few students get experience in band in WAMS, leading to difficulty in scheduling it in middle school. “If a kid plays an instrument he should be able to be in the band...kids lose the thread in MS, and they don’t experience the ensemble. At least 100 kids from WAMS and only 10 in the band (which is offered after school).” In fact, band has been offered at WAMS after school (one hour on Fridays) since fall 2012, made possible by teacher’s use of flex scheduling.

Again the point was made that a magnet arts school needs to work for the magnet students. The double period block of AP science that cuts into the music class was offered as one example, the teacher concluding “if the schedule isn’t working for kids in the magnet then how can we be an arts magnet?”

### Documentation (curricular and extra-curricular activities)

The Arts Learning Pathway represents a significant effort over many years to provide arts learning to the students in WPSD. Yet, the documentation of these efforts has fallen on the individual teachers to record the activities of the students, both curricular and extra-curricular. In the event of a change in the faculty these documents are subject to loss and inconsistency.

### Continuity and Student Persistence

As noted previously in this report WAMS has a more arts integration focus and offers very different experiences for students, and teachers, from those offered at BMS and BHS. One parent noted that WAMS is unique, a place where the arts are an integral part of learning, and said that “We want the feeling of the WAMS all throughout the middle school and high school.” Students come to WAMS from all over the city, and if they come from a different quadrant they might choose to return to that quadrant at the end of 6<sup>th</sup> grade. Many students go to private schools or to the Doherty Quadrant, as noted by the WAMS administration. As noted above the perception that several parents had about the rigor of the academic program at the BMS and BHS was reinforced through follow-up emails after the parent focus group. This “perception” that BMS and BHS did not provide the same level of “academic rigor that WAMS” provided needs to be explored. Another parent noted that the “Most difficult time to keep them excited is in middle school, not as much offering, not every instrument available, not always teachers available.” These perceptions challenge the Arts Learning Pathway.

## VISIONS FOR THE FUTURE

Teachers, parents and administrators recognize that the future for the Arts Learning Pathway depends upon the efforts of all involved. More than 15 years

ago the Arts Education Partnership in *Gaining the Arts Advantage*<sup>5</sup>, uncovered thirteen critical factors that indicate what a successful district-wide arts program needs in order to offer the most advantages to students. While the district of Worcester is larger than the Burncoat Quadrant, what is apparent through this evaluation is that many of these factors are in place and functioning at some level now. The 13 critical factors are:

- a community actively engaged in the arts politics and instructional programs of the district – inside and outside the schools
- a school board providing a supportive policy framework and environment for the arts
- a superintendent regularly articulating a vision for arts education in the district
- a cadre of principals that collectively supports the policy of arts education for all students
- teachers who practice their art and are encouraged by district administrators to grow in their art as well as in their teaching competence
- district arts coordinator(s) who facilitate program implementation and maintain an arts supportive environment
- parent/public relations programs to inform the community and gain its participation and support
- national, state, and other policies, and programs employed by the district to advance arts education
- an elementary foundation in the arts
- opportunities for higher levels of student achievement through specialized programs
- continuous improvement in arts education through reflective practices at all school levels
- planning with a comprehensive district-wide education vision but incremental implementation
- continuity in leadership in the school and in the community

Some of the challenges noted above are being addressed at this time. Staff and parents advocate at public hearings and hold up the students' artwork, and no one ever suggests that "we're going to take the arts away." The parents who have had children in the Pathway are the strongest advocates for a sustainable future for the arts in Burncoat Quadrant. Some changes have been discussed, such as a new model for the middle school in which 10 weeks of all arts modalities are offered, and then students move into 20 weeks of two arts modalities. This change would offer a better transition for students from WAMS, but would require hiring two more teachers, again the challenge of resources. One BMS student suggested that the future might include, "more interaction between art classes," like visual art students painting the set for theater, "[we]

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.aep-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/08/WhyYourChildNeedstheArts-FINAL.pdf>

want to learn more from the other classes, see performances, visit museums, more outside activities, field trips.” Another student said “I want every teacher to step out of their comfort zone sometime, it really helps students learn to take risks if they see if a teacher take risks. They could encourage the students.” This observation holds true for school leaders as well.

At the high school it was suggested that there was a future that integrates art into disciplines in a more formal way. As well, an expanded curriculum that included media arts, including music production, film and theater production, was envisioned.

WAMS teachers see that the “quirkiness” of the kids was open all through the schools, and that their students were not limited to one art form as they moved into middle school. They envision a future with more creativity in BMS and BHS and more control of what happens to MS students. Time to plan with specialists to increase collaboration and more fully integrate the arts also forms part of their vision.

Support Our Fine Arts (SOFA), an organization of BHS, BMS and WAMS administration, teachers, parents, alumni and community volunteers meets monthly throughout the school year and sponsors fund raising events including an annual student performance for all three schools. The organization holds a vision for the future of the Arts Learning Pathway as they work to support fine arts in the schools and to see that the arts teachers and students have everything they need. Begun to provide funding for consultants in BMS and BHS with a more urgent message as their name, Save Our Fine Arts has become Support Our Fine Arts. The organization provides “the extras” and offsets the schools’ budgets for what “downtown doesn’t give them.”





## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Make the Arts Learning Pathway clearly visible and easy to describe for the public. **Conduct an awareness campaign to promote learning in the arts across the district**, and the arts activities of the students and teachers in the Pathway schools.
- Expand the arts curriculum to **include classes and opportunities for learning in media arts**.
- Develop **reliable and consistent funding** sources for providing resources for the arts curricula and extracurricular activities.
- Create and implement a plan to **upgrade facilities** for all the arts.
- Offer alternatives and **choices for middle school students** of the arts.
- **Improve communication among all stake-holders** along the Pathway, particularly teachers, parents and school and district leaders.
- **Include arts teachers in decision-making processes**, such as magnet students selections and discussion about scheduling.
- **Develop awareness** among the Pathway teachers of the alignment of the Arts Learning Pathway with **the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards**.
- **Document the Pathway** in curriculum documents, digital and hard copy.

The foundations and lifelong goals established by *The National Coalition for Core Arts Standards* (NCCAS), as the basis for the new (2014) standards in arts education, suggest that five basic values shape the expectations for arts learning. The **arts shape communication**, “The arts provide unique symbol systems and metaphors that convey and inform life experience (i.e., the arts are ways of knowing).” **The arts foster creative personal realization**, “Participation in each of the arts as creators, performers, and audience members enables individuals to discover and develop their own creative capacity, thereby providing a source of lifelong satisfaction.” The **arts offer connections across time and space**, “Understanding artwork provides insights into individuals’ own and others’ cultures and societies, while also providing opportunities to access, express, and integrate meaning across a variety of content areas.” **The arts foster wellbeing**, “Participation in the arts as creators, performers, and audience members (responders) enhances mental, physical, and emotional wellbeing.” **The arts promote community engagement**, “The arts provide means for individuals to collaborate and connect with others in an enjoyable inclusive environment as they create, prepare, and share artwork that bring communities together.”<sup>6</sup>(p. 10)

<sup>6</sup> <http://nccas.wikispaces.com/Conceptual+Framework> Accessed June 16, 2014

## APPENDICES

Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Teachers

Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Students

Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Parents





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## **Appendix A: Interview Protocol for Teachers**

- Introductions, all (voice registers)
  - Purpose of the evaluation: To provide a clear picture of the arts magnet quadrant program, the arts learning pathway, to be used for future program planning and improvement.
  - Informed consent: Information about confidentiality, anonymity, and permission for audio taping
  - Outline of the session
  - What does it mean to work in an “arts magnet” school? How is it different from working at a school that is not “arts magnet?”
  - What kinds of assumptions about resources (human, financial, organizational, community) to you have at this school? Give examples in which these assumptions are based.
  - What are your expectations for the students you teach, in the near and distant future?
  - Thinking about the school as a whole, what would you say are the goals of the school in regards to the community of Worcester, to the Burncoat quadrant? How do you know when you have achieved them?
  - Talk about opportunities that you have had to work with other schools in the Burncoat Quadrant.
  - What has been the unique nature of parents’ participation, including the SOFA organization?
  - Talk about partnerships with community cultural arts organizations, and how they have benefited the students.
  - How do the arts teachers coordinate with classroom teachers? Is there any form of arts integration in the regular classroom?
  - What have been your experiences of program review at the school? Are they grade level, subject specific, general curriculum, or otherwise categorized?
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## **Appendix B: Interview Protocol for Students**

- Introductions, all (voice register)
  - Ask students how long at school, if been to other schools
  - Purpose of the evaluation: To provide a clear picture of the arts magnet quadrant program, the arts learning pathway, to be used for future program planning and improvement.
  - Informed consent: Information about confidentiality, anonymity, and permission for audio taping
  - Outline of the session: General questions, please give examples
  - This is an arts magnet school. ....tell me what that means to you. What is special about this school?
  - Besides the classes that you take in the arts, what other kinds of arts related activities do you do here? Do you leave the schools to do other activities and do artists or performers come here? Give examples.
  - Do you have any activities that include art, music, dance or drama in the regular classroom? Give examples. Do you have math, science or language in the art classroom?
  - Tell me about any special events during the school year that involve the arts, either performing or visual. How did you participate?
  - Do you have lessons with visiting artists?
  - What are your favorite classes? Why?
  - Give examples of ways that you learn in an arts class.
  - What are some things that you have learned (or created or produced) in your arts classes? How do you know when you have learned them? What do you hope to learn to do in the future?
  - How have you used technology in the arts classes?
  - Have your interests changed since you've been at this school? How? What are you interested in now that you didn't know about before?
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### **Appendix C: Interview Protocol for Parents**

- Introductions, all (voice registers and info about what grades/classes and pathway their children are in)
  - Purpose of the evaluation: To provide a clear picture of the arts magnet quadrant program, the arts learning pathway, to be used for future program planning and improvement.
  - Informed consent: Information about confidentiality, anonymity, and permission for audio taping
  - Outline of the session: Several general questions about the “arts pathway.” Please provide specific examples to illustrate your ideas.
  - Tell me about your child’s experiences with the arts at the school.
  - What special arts related event(s) have you heard about or attended at the school? What expectations did you have?
  - Has your child had access to the arts experiences they and you were seeking at the school?
  - How has your child grown as a result of the arts offered in the arts learning pathway?
  - Do you have ideas about other arts activities that could be offered?
  - Talk about the purpose of SOFA? What is the vision?
  - What are the challenges for you as a parent with a student in an arts focused school?
  - What are the benefits?
  - What is the best representation of the school in the community?
  - What does the Burncoat quadrant pathway offer the community?
  - Anything missing?
-