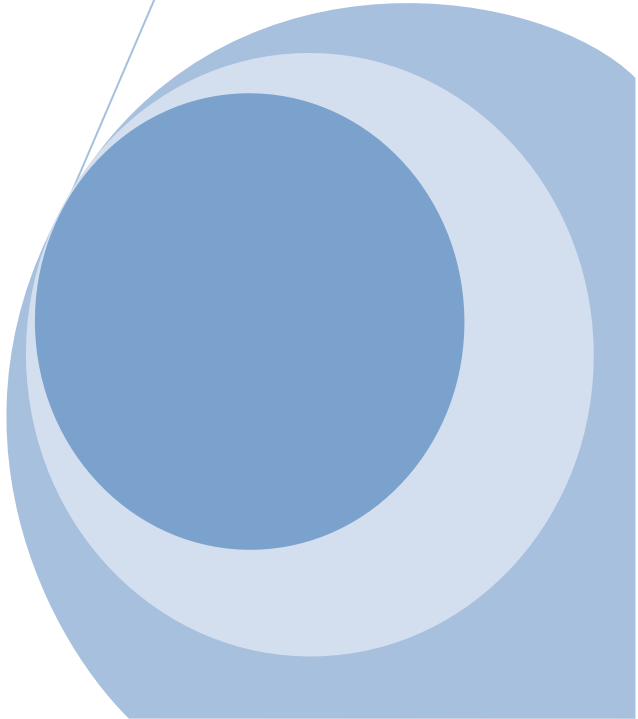




Evaluation of the California Subject Matter Project

The California Arts Project Case Study

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Introduction

Arts education in California has had its ups and downs given the tumultuous budget history with years of high funding followed by cuts. The partnership between Temecula Valley Unified School District (TVUSD) and the Riverside, Inyo, Mono, and San Bernardino California Arts Project (RIMS CAP), a regional site of The California Arts Project, exemplifies the progress that can be made with support and persistence in the face of budgetary challenges. As this case study highlights, RIMS CAP supported TVUSD in building its arts program in two main ways: (1) developing capacity in a teacher leader who persisted in moving arts education forward and (2) supporting the development and implementation of a strategic arts education plan by providing content and pedagogical expertise. Although TVUSD is only in the early stages of implementing its newly formed strategic arts education plan, the support for the plan at every level of the district—from teachers to principals to district administrators and board members—is an accomplishment. The support from RIMS CAP was essential for directing more attention to arts education in TVUSD and helping the arts become a more central focus of the district. Because the visual arts in TVUSD are making the most progress toward a standards-based, aligned curriculum, this case study focuses on the visual arts.

The Need for Arts Education

In the increasingly global economy, an innovative and creative workforce is essential for the United States to remain competitive. The President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities recently reviewed arts education and found the arts to be an important avenue through which schools can prepare students to be creative problem solvers who think “outside the box to address challenges.”¹ The arts disciplines (i.e., visual art, dance, music, and theater) “offer students the opportunity to envision, set goals, determine a method to reach a goal and try it out, identify alternatives, evaluate, revise, solve problems, imagine, work collaboratively, and apply self-discipline.”² These skills can help prepare students to become the next generation of inventors, designers, and creators.³

Several factors present challenges for arts education in schools. The arts are not often viewed as core subjects, and many schools see arts education time as an opportunity to provide common planning for other content-area teachers or pullout time for students with special needs, thus treating arts education as unimportant. High-stakes testing has turned attention toward math and English language arts and away from other subject areas, especially in lower performing schools that feel the urgency to increase test scores. The current budget situation has driven schools to prioritize funding, which can lessen the extent to which students at all grade levels receive arts

¹ President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. (2011). *Reinvesting in arts education: Winning America’s future through creative schools*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web.pdf

² California Department of Education. (2001). *Visual and performing arts content standards for California public school: Prekindergarten through grade twelve* (p. ix). Sacramento, CA: Author. Retrieved from <http://www.cde.ca.gov/be/st/ss/documents/vpastandards.pdf>

³ President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. (2011). *Reinvesting in arts education: Winning America’s future through creative schools*. Washington, DC: Author. Retrieved from http://www.pcah.gov/sites/default/files/PCAH_Reinvesting_4web.pdf

education. With the marginalization of the arts, high-stakes testing, and budget constraints, concern is growing about student access to arts education.

This concern is particularly apparent in California where “funding for arts education has been volatile, with declines when state funds have been scarce and growth during better economic times.”⁴ Throughout the last decade, California legislatures released policies concerning arts education including *The Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools (2001)* and the *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (2004)*.⁵ In addition, the University of California (UC) system released a series of requirements for high school classes to ensure students would be ready for university courses. The “f” requirement lists guidelines that high school visual and performing arts courses must meet for students to be UC eligible. These policies suggest that California policymakers expect schools to provide high-quality arts education. However, a 2005–06 study of arts instruction in California found that 89 percent of schools fail to provide students with a standards-aligned art course in all four disciplines.⁶ Further, teacher preparation at institutes of higher education in standards-based arts education is mixed and does not always equip teachers to build a standards-aligned curriculum. Additionally, due to budget constraints, elementary schools have removed arts specialists, consequently relying on elementary classroom teachers to provide arts education. The study in California found that 65 percent of elementary classroom teachers were not familiar with the visual and performing arts standards, and while most secondary teachers reported being familiar with the standards, only 48 percent said they attended a professional development session on incorporating them into instruction.⁷

The California Arts Project Addresses Gaps in Teacher Knowledge

The California Arts Project (TCAP) fills this void in teacher knowledge by engaging teachers in professional development that will “ensure access for all California students to a sequential, comprehensive, and excellent standards-based visual and performing arts education, [since] arts education is critical for every student’s preparation for success in the 21st Century.”⁸ A standards-based curriculum focuses on students’ learning rather than teachers’ teaching. According to the RIMS CAP site director, “Standards-based education looks the same no matter what the content. You begin with the end in mind. You look at the standards. You lay out a curriculum for what you want to occur.” Teachers who teach a standards-based curriculum know

⁴ Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., & Kim, D. (2007). *An unfinished canvas. Arts education in California: Taking stock of policies and practices*. Summary Report (p. 7). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

⁵ *The Visual and Performing Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools (2001)* provides a comprehensive list of the skills, knowledge, and abilities students should master at specific grade levels in each of the arts disciplines. The skills, knowledge, and abilities are broken down into five strands: artistic perception, creative expression, historical and cultural context, aesthetic valuing, and connection, relationships, applications. *Visual and Performing Arts Framework for California, Kindergarten through Grade Twelve (2004)* provides teachers with guidance on how to operationalize the visual and performing arts content standards in their instruction.

⁶ Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H. A., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., & Kim, D. (2007). *An unfinished canvas. Arts education in California: Taking stock of policies and practices*. Summary Report (p. xiii). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

⁷ Guha, R., Woodworth, K. R., Kim, D., Malin, H., & Park, J. (2008). *An unfinished canvas. Teacher preparation, instructional delivery, and professional development in the arts* (p. xii). Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.

⁸ CSMP: The California Arts Project, <http://csmc.ucop.edu/tcap/>

what they want their students to learn, and that knowledge drives their instruction. In developing a unit of study, teachers work within the standards to develop learning goals to teach content and informal and formal assessments to measure student learning. Art projects are the vehicles through which teachers teach the standards and students learn the content. The art projects do not dictate the curriculum, student outcomes do.

However, standards-based instruction does not occur in every arts classroom. As the RIMS CAP site director pointed out,

The unfortunate thing for arts, because they are not tested, districts have not necessarily laid out a curriculum. They oftentimes will think, “Well, you have your standards,” and every teacher fend for themselves. That’s part of [TCAP’s] work with the districts—to help them realize that you need to have a curriculum, you need a scope and sequence, and you need to know what is expected in that course across the district to have some continuity in what students are learning.

TCAP effects change in schools and districts by building capacity in teacher leaders who can share their learning with colleagues and advocate for a standards-aligned curriculum. In addition to the teacher leader support, TCAP partners with schools and districts to directly provide consultation, facilitation, and support for standards-based arts instruction.

An Important Partnership

A partnership between TCAP and a district interested in moving its arts program forward is valuable because the district receives expert advice and consultation for no fee. The partnership between the Riverside, Inyo, Mono, and San Bernardino California Arts Project, a TCAP regional site, and Temecula Valley Unified School District (Exhibit 1) is one example of TCAP’s instrumental role in supporting teachers, schools, and districts in building a standards-aligned arts curriculum. In TVUSD, RIMS CAP drove the effort for standards-based instruction in two main ways:

1. Developing teacher leaders and supporting them in sharing their arts knowledge and pedagogy with other teachers and advocating for a standards-aligned arts curriculum in their district
2. Consulting on the district’s visual and performing arts strategic plan development and supporting the implementation of a standards-based arts curriculum.

The premise behind TCAP is for teachers to teach teachers pre-K through post-secondary. Therefore, teacher leader selection and support are important components of the program. TCAP identifies new teacher leaders in multiple ways, including teachers participating in open TCAP professional development programs, such as the TCAP Framework Series. This series consists of

<p style="text-align: center;">Exhibit 1</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Temecula Valley Unified School District</p> <p>TVUSD is in a suburban area 70 miles north of San Diego, California. The district serves approximately 30,000 students, of whom 40 percent are White and 30 percent are Hispanic. Temecula is an affluent community; only 17 percent of students in TVUSD qualify for the free and reduced-price lunch program. The district is average in its academic performance, with 74 percent of students proficient in language arts and 60 percent proficient in math.</p> <p>Currently, the district offers arts classes in middle school and high school in all four arts disciplines. The district removed elementary arts specialists in 2007 and now expects elementary classroom teachers to provide students with arts education. Historically, the arts education program has been disjointed without a comprehensive kindergarten through 12th grade plan for the arts.</p> <p style="text-align: right;"><small>Source: California Basic Educational Data System (http://dq.cde.ca.gov/dataquest/)</small></p>
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six to eight sessions focused on building teachers' understanding of California's Visual and Performing Arts Framework and Content Standards through experiencing standards-based arts lessons and developing instructional lessons for their own classrooms. During this series, teachers also have opportunities to share their practice with other participants and make presentations to the group on the implementation of their classroom lessons. The Framework Series is often a teacher's first professional development experience so facilitators use this opportunity to identify potential teacher leaders. TCAP facilitators observe participants and take note of those who have deep content knowledge, interact well with adults, and effectively present information. Once TCAP facilitators identify teacher leaders, they slowly bring them on board and invite them to future professional development sessions. As teacher leaders become more involved in TCAP professional development, they continue to build their skills and are eventually asked to support TCAP's work by presenting information during professional development programs or supporting arts curricula development in other districts.

For example, the TVUSD teacher leader participated in the Framework Series in 1998, and after that experience she became deeply involved in working with RIMS CAP. RIMS CAP asked her to a 2-week Invitational Institute during which she developed an elementary theater unit of study with the support of a coach and feedback from other participants. To build her leadership skills, she attended TCAP's Leadership Academy where she learned TCAP's model for designing professional development and curriculum, and developed leadership skills needed as a teacher working with adults in professional learning settings. She also refined her leadership skills by engaging in professional development on effectively presenting material, facilitating conversation, asking the right questions, and coaching peers. As she became more skilled as a teacher leader, RIMS CAP supported and encouraged her to share the arts education knowledge and pedagogy she had learned by becoming a presenter and facilitator for TCAP professional development. Building her leadership capacity had a dual purpose: It improved her effectiveness as a facilitator and built her own knowledge of and skills in arts instruction, both of which help her support other teachers in developing standards-based arts instruction and advocating for standards-aligned arts curricula.

In addition, RIMS CAP became the teacher leader's professional organization and supported her in advancing her arts instruction knowledge and skills. According to the TVUSD teacher leader,

[RIMS CAP] helps me know what I need to know when I don't know what I need to know. They are so connected statewide and nationally. I would be lost. I feel very much blessed that my whole teaching arts has grown in tandem with them. They have groomed me the whole way. ... TCAP in general will support us in whatever ... [they are] always available to make things happen. They are a resource.

TCAP and RIMS CAP supported the teacher leader by building her leadership skills as well as encouraging and supporting her in developing her own practice and pushing for change within her district.

Teacher Leaders Advocate for Arts Education

TCAP professional development concentrates on building teachers' arts knowledge and pedagogy. Teacher leaders then have the content knowledge and skills to change their own practice and share what they have learned with other teachers in their district. The teacher leader

in TVUSD shared her knowledge and encouraged her district to expand arts instruction in three main ways:

1. Lobbied for common planning time for teachers of like arts disciplines
2. Facilitated professional development for elementary school teachers who wanted additional support in visual arts instruction
3. Helped accumulate support for standards-based arts instruction.

Common Planning Time for Like-Arts Disciplines

By participating in RIMS CAP professional development, the TVUSD teacher leader had collaboration time with other teachers in her discipline. Teachers engaged with each other in meaningful conversations about curriculum and instruction. As the teacher leader noted, those opportunities in the districts are rare: a true professional learning community with the “whole process of writing curriculum and sharing your work, your classroom as a learning lab, and you’re developing best practices—I haven’t had that experience in my own district with colleagues of my own discipline until very recently.” Participating in a professional learning community was an important part of the teacher leader’s experience and an opportunity she advocated for in her district.

In TVUSD, typically only one visual arts teacher is at each middle school so principals asked arts teachers to meet with colleagues outside their discipline such as physical education teachers or foreign language teachers during mandatory monthly common planning time. Recognizing that meeting with non-visual arts teachers was not useful, the teacher leader convinced her district to allow all middle school visual arts teachers to meet during the mandatory common planning time. Consequently, middle school visual arts teachers meet monthly on Monday mornings for 45 minutes to discuss curriculum, instruction, and assessments. Finding a central location to meet (given the distance between the middle schools) and the varying levels of middle school visual art teachers’ involvement remain challenges for consistent participation, but the teachers now have the opportunity to learn from one another and no longer operate in a vacuum.

In addition to the monthly common planning meetings, the district allowed the middle school visual arts teachers to use Title II professional development funds to collaborate as a group with the RIMS CAP site director to build a standards-based curriculum. The support RIMS CAP offered the teachers is detailed later in this case study.

Visual Arts Professional Development in the District

Through RIMS CAP professional development, teacher leaders gain skills in facilitating professional development and coaching, which aid them in organizing arts professional development for their peers. TVUSD has no arts specialists at the elementary school level, so elementary classroom teachers are responsible for providing arts instruction. To help them become more comfortable with teaching visual arts, the TVUSD teacher leader provided professional development on standards-based instruction. She organized four 90-minute visual arts workshops to build teacher content knowledge. She based this professional development program on TCAP’s professional development Framework Series so, for example, she ensured the teachers participated as learners.

The purpose of the professional development was to build teachers' language and understanding of arts standards so they regard teaching visual arts as more than teaching a step-by-step process that requires no creativity on the child's part (Exhibit 2). The purpose was also to help teachers see connections to other disciplines so they do not view visual art as a burden but as something to integrate into other subject areas.

The professional development series was well received by the elementary school teachers. The teacher leader's K-5 professional development series filled up after 1 day of its posting. As one district administrator explained,

Without a doubt [the teacher leader] is K-12 known as an arts specialist. ... Teachers know when they go to a session from [her] they are going to get the information; standards-based instruction with the assessments, with all of the pieces. Without [arts] specialists we need to make K-5 teachers the specialists. [The teacher leader] makes them feel they are because she helps them through the process.

Exhibit 2

Arts Are Not Crafts

Because K-5 teachers do not often have professional development in arts education, professional development in art content knowledge and standards-based arts education is important. Non-arts educators often see off-the-shelf arts programs that teach students a step-by-step process for creating a product as arts instruction. However, as a TVUSD board member explained, these step-by-step programs are teaching crafts not arts:

Crafts are following a step-by-step process to create an outcome that the students already see. Creativity is not involved in that process. I say that's what most of what K-5 "arts" is. Mostly the child is asked to do a certain task to come out with a certain outcome. Teaching elements of arts is not part of that nor is creativity on child's part... That was the problem we were seeing. The Parent Teacher Association bought Meet the Masters. Neither the teacher leader nor I see that as an arts curriculum. Not what I wanted for my own children and for the rest of the children in the district.

While the teacher leader is well respected and the driving force behind the professional development, the support she receives from RIMS CAP is integral because it provides the tools to plan and facilitate the professional development she delivers to her peers.

Additionally, the support of her district is instrumental because it is willing to use district Title II funds to pay teachers interested in attending arts education professional development. Through these professional development sessions, the teacher leader moved arts education in the district one step further toward standards-based instruction and bolstered support for standards-driven arts instruction.

Support for Standards-Based Arts Education from All Levels in the District

As a TVUSD school board member pointed out, "You need a support person at all levels to get

the arts moving." In addition to offering professional development and organizing common planning with other middle school visual arts teachers to build the support for standards-based arts education, having district colleagues participate in RIMS CAP professional development was helpful so the teacher leader is not moving arts education forward alone. In 2008, a high school visual arts teacher participated in RIMS CAP professional development and has become more involved with the district's strategic arts education plan. As the teacher leader said, she now has "someone who at least shares in knowledge and understanding of where [she is]. ... She is try[ing] to get more teachers to come to the professional development so [she is] not doing this alone." With broader understanding of standards-based arts education, the teacher leader has other like-minded arts teachers to advocate for such instruction.

In addition to gathering other arts teachers' support for standards-based arts education, gaining the support of principals, administrators, and board members was critical for moving arts education forward. As the teacher leader described, "The stars were aligning" with the hiring of the new district administrators. One is a former dancer and strong supporter of arts education. The other supports a better aligned K–12 arts curriculum, explaining that if teachers know "you're teaching this and I teach that because I teach the next level ... teachers teach more strategically." In addition to support at the district level, an arts-minded member joined the TVUSD board. She believes that "The arts allows for critical thinking and creativity beyond ELA, science, etc. It is critical for the development of kids." At the school-level, the lead teacher has the support of her principal who was a former music teacher. The district, however, still struggles with gaining the broad support of all principals because many still do not value arts education.

After 12 years of trying, the teacher leader finally gained support at various levels of the district for standards-aligned arts education. This was partly due to chance because arts-minded educators assumed district leadership roles and partly due to her persistence because she kept the arts education agenda moving forward while working to gain broader support.

RIMS CAP Provides Arts Expertise

A TVUSD board member shared her perception of the importance of a strategic plan in advancing arts education: "Half the time nothing happens because there is no plan." To effectively develop and implement a strategic arts education plan, the support of teachers, administrators, and board members is needed. That support exists in TVUSD from all levels within the district. However, support alone is not enough. A facilitator is needed who can build consensus among key stakeholders and who has the content and pedagogical expertise to support the district in planning and implementing the plan. RIMS CAP played that vital role, as a visual arts teacher involved in the strategic planning process shared:

The most important thing: we do have the visual arts master plan. ... It kind of had fits and starts up until [RIMS CAP] came along. You have a broad range of teacher experience and you needed outside help to come in to coordinate it. I think [RIMS CAP] was essential in helping us put that program together. ... When you have someone come out and work with you who is not in the immediate fog of your district, your ego, they are able to step back from the canvas.

The district started the strategic arts education plan in 2006, but progress was slow until the assistant superintendent of educational services contacted RIMS CAP to facilitate the process. With RIMS CAP's support, the district board passed the strategic arts education plan in January 2011 and began implementing the plan's first phase.

RIMS CAP Facilitates the Strategic Arts Education Plan Development

During the planning process, the district started with approximately 30 individuals from varying disciplines. Given the variation in experience and disciplines, the team had a range of priorities for arts education. RIMS CAP helped the team set priorities by facilitating a process that merged and categorized each person's priorities into five major classifications: standards-based curriculum and instruction, professional development, program administration and personnel, visual and performing arts funding and appropriations, and partnerships and community collaborations. These classifications became the main focus areas for the district's strategic arts education plan, and within each area the group set goals (Exhibit 3). As a result of this process,

every person’s idea was valued and the group moved one step further toward creating a strategic arts education plan. In addition to setting priorities, RIMS CAP provided the teachers with template matrices for assigning tasks and developing timelines. As one teacher expressed her praise, “[RIMS CAP] came in with the right equipment to get things going.”

During the year planning process, the team dwindled to a subcommittee of four: two elementary school teachers, one high school teacher, and the teacher leader. This group finalized the strategic arts education plan, which the TVUSD board approved in January 2011. As a district administrator explained, “The goal [of the strategic plan] is to build awareness and give all students an advantage. [Arts education is] just as important as reading and writing.”⁹ It was also seen as an important document for when the district received additional funding for arts

Exhibit 3

Temecula Valley Unified School District Strategic Arts Education Plan

I. Standards-Based Curriculum and Instruction

Goal 1: Establish and implement a standards-based curriculum in all areas of visual and performing arts that ensures all students, K–12, have access to the visual and performing arts.

Goal 2: All K–12 students will receive instruction in all four arts disciplines daily throughout their academic career taught by highly qualified certificated teachers in dance, music, theatre and visual art.

II. Professional Development

Goal 1: All K–12 teachers and administrators will participate in ongoing professional development designed to support arts content and cross-curricular teaching and learning.

III. Program Administration and Personnel

Goal 1: Establishment of Visual and Performing Arts Coordinators for Secondary and Elementary.

Goal 2: Provide visual and performing arts site leads at each elementary, middle and high school.

Goal 3: Provide highly qualified certificated teachers in all four arts disciplines, K–12.

IV. Visual and Performing Arts Funding and Appropriations

Goal 1: Allocate funding to the arts programs at a level commensurate to other core content areas through general funds, state and federal categorical funds, local business partnerships, grant opportunities and other sources as determined.

V. Partnerships and Community Collaborations

Goal 1: Form partnerships with community arts organizations, industry, civic organizations, and businesses to support each other with visual and performing arts goals for a growing city.

Source: Temecula Valley Unified School District Strategic Arts Education Plan, Final 2010.

⁹ Avants, M. (2010, October 19). Temecula Valley USD creates plan to integrate arts in schools. *Southwest Riverside News Network on the Web*. Retrieved from <http://www.swrnn.com/2010/10/19/temecula-valley-usd-creates-plan-to-integrate-arts-in-schools>.

education. As one teacher stated, “We designed it so when the money comes in, we know how to spend it.”¹⁰

RIMS CAP’s facilitation of the strategic arts education plan was essential for building consensus in the district and developing a structured plan. District officials and teachers see this plan as instrumental for driving arts education forward. According to the RIMS CAP site director, “On a district level, they are really seeing the arts at this point and time as an equal to other content area or at least trying to put them in that role.” The strategic arts education plan created a measure for arts education. This plan holds the district accountable for moving the arts forward and provides a blueprint for furthering arts education when money becomes available.

RIMS CAP Supports Strategic Arts Education Plan Implementation

RIMS CAP played an important role in the first year of implementation of the strategic plan. The support it offered ranged from helping school leaders assess where their schools were in terms of arts education to providing teachers with professional development on creating a standards-aligned curriculum. The RIMS CAP site director met with all the elementary school leadership teams and helped them assess their arts progress in three areas: curriculum, instruction, and professional development. This process provided a baseline measure of the elementary schools’ arts education so the district could identify additional supports needed to build their arts curriculum and instruction. In addition to helping schools assess their progress on arts education, RIMS CAP sponsored TVUSD teachers to attend TCAP professional development or provided professional development in schools to build teacher knowledge of standards-based arts instruction. One aspect of the strategic plan is to have a K–12 aligned standards-based arts curriculum for every arts discipline, so the RIMS CAP site director facilitated two 1-day professional development sessions to support the middle school visual arts teachers in building a standards-based curriculum (Exhibit 4).

RIMS CAP meets teachers and schools where they are and provides them with support to move closer to the ideal of a standards-aligned K–12 arts curriculum. It supports teachers and schools by providing professional development and facilitating discussions that result in a better understanding of and development toward standards-aligned arts courses. RIMS CAP recognizes that teachers and schools will make the shift to standards-based arts instruction at their own pace. The RIMS CAP site director articulated how teachers progress on a standards-aligned curriculum: the first step is to build a curriculum, and the next steps are implementation and assessment. In the first phase of the strategic arts education plan implementation, the district and RIMS CAP have been focusing on standards-aligned curriculum development so teachers have a common understanding of student outcomes from which they can discuss effective instruction.

¹⁰ Ibid.

Exhibit 4

RIMS CAP Facilitates Curriculum Development

RIMS CAP encourages teachers to plan instruction with student outcomes in mind so they “think about what they want students to walk away with each year.” During a 1-day professional development session, the RIMS CAP site director worked with the middle school visual arts teachers to develop key knowledge and skills they hope their students will learn from the visual art course. She asked the teachers to write each essential knowledge item or skill they hoped students would learn on a sticky note and displayed them on the board. The teachers then worked together as a group to categorize the skills and knowledge. This process helped shift teachers’ thinking from a solely technical orientation (e.g., whether the student’s product meets the technical requirements of drawing or painting or printmaking) to also include consideration of how to build student content knowledge. The hope is for teachers to use these goals not only to assess whether student work is technically correct, but also to evaluate students’ understanding of art content knowledge. The exercise with the sticky notes brought the teachers one step closer to achieving a common set of student goals from which they can build a visual arts curriculum.

Once the standards-based curriculum is built, the next step is for teachers to implement it and develop assessments to measure student progress on standards. Having common student outcomes allows teachers to have conversations about student work that go beyond sharing project ideas. They can discuss the extent to which students are demonstrating the intended skills and knowledge in their work. As the RIMS CAP site director pointed out,

When the beginning arts curriculum gets fully developed [in TVUSD], ... they can begin next year to teach from that curriculum and have common expectations of what the first benchmark will be. ... Then they can bring in student work and have conversations about: Did students meet those expectations? Are they showing the skills we want them to have? Are they showing in their thinking processes the art vocabulary, the art criticism, the self-evaluation?

Shifting teachers’ thinking to focus on student knowledge and skill acquisition is one step in the process of helping them change their instruction.

TVUSD Strategic Arts Education Plan Progress to Date

The district split its strategic arts implementation plan into three phases, focusing on the aspects that do not require funding first. Having received board approval only a year ago, TVUSD is in the first phase (2011–12) of implementation.

The district’s greatest accomplishment is making arts education a priority and having a strategic plan to guide the creation of a standards-aligned arts curriculum in all the arts disciplines. As noted, the visual arts are furthest along because the teacher leader is a visual arts teacher, as are several of the other more involved teachers. Nonetheless, TVUSD is still in the early stages of developing a standards-aligned K–12 visual arts curriculum, a Phase II goal (2012–13).

According to the RIMS CAP site director, the hope is to have a middle school arts curriculum by summer 2012 so the teachers can begin implementation and assessment development during the 2012–13 school year. Additionally, one high school visual arts teacher is beginning to visit the middle school visual arts teachers to see how to align the high school curriculum with the middle school curriculum. At the elementary level, the teacher leader is providing classroom teachers with professional development in teaching a standards-aligned visual arts lesson.

Movement is happening at elementary, middle school, and high school levels the visual arts, but more work remains to be done. In the words of the teacher leader,

It's like moving a mountain one teaspoon at a time. I have seen progress, so I'm not giving up hope. I'm hoping that by the time I retire that things will have really swung this way especially given the 21st century skills ... we really need to be fostering that.

Change is challenging, especially when it aims to alter teacher practice. In pushing arts education forward, the teacher leader battles the traditional norms of schools: teacher autonomy over instruction, egalitarianism between teachers, and seniority indicating expertise.¹¹ Teacher leaders can encourage their peers to use standards-based instruction but can do little to hold them accountable because they are not supervisors. Therefore, principal and district support is critical to empower and back up the shift to standards-based arts instruction, especially for encouraging teachers with more seniority who are typically unwilling to change. Having key arts-minded district and school administrators and teachers was important to the progress of TVUSD and growing this support will be important for furthering arts education. In addition, progress is slow because education in the arts is often underfunded and not prioritized by districts. In TVUSD, the teacher leader and other arts advocates worked hard to build support from key district and school staff to begin to prioritize arts education, and they have made modest progress. It will take time to continue to educate teachers on the importance of standards-aligned curriculum and gain broader support from more principals, teachers, and district administrators. With a strategic plan in place and the support of RIMS CAP's expertise, however, the TVUSD is slowly progressing toward its ideal of a standards-aligned curriculum in every arts discipline.

The goal is to have a K–12 aligned curriculum for visual arts and music by the end of 2013. The district has already prioritized like-discipline professional learning community meetings and professional development opportunities with the support of Title II funds and the support of RIMS CAP. With the adoption of the strategic plan, the district has shown a commitment to visual and performing arts and has a plan to which it will be held accountable. This spring, the district presented the TVUSD board with its progress on reaching the strategic plan's goals and it will continue to do so every year.

Conclusion

Although there is more work to be done, TVUSD, with RIMS CAP's support, has made substantial progress in prioritizing arts education. With support at every level in the district and the persistence of the teacher leader and other arts teachers, TVUSD was and still is in the perfect position to advance arts education. However, support and persistence alone are not enough. As this case study highlights, RIMS CAP played a vital role in building leadership capacity in one teacher leader by providing her with the skills and knowledge needed to advocate for better aligned, standards-driven arts education in TVUSD. Her effort and drive were instrumental in increasing the district's attention to arts education. However, in the words of the teacher leader, "It's hard to be the concept of a prophet in your own land." Therefore, RIMS CAP's support for her and the district was crucial. RIMS CAP supported the teacher leader's development so she could advocate for arts education and have like-minded individuals to discuss challenges and successes with and offered guidance to the district whenever it requested. RIMS CAP provided the content and pedagogical expertise as well as the consultation and facilitation needed for the district to realize a strategic arts education plan, and most important, begin to move arts education forward.

¹¹ Johnson, S. M., & Donaldson, M. L. (2007). Overcoming the Obstacles to Leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 65(1), 8–13.

