The Arts are Alive and Well at PPS!

While some school districts have cut funding for arts education, Pittsburgh Public Schools continues to offer a transformative program that engages students on many levels. Through the arts, students learn to express themselves and share ideas. They discover that the arts can be refined—and practiced! They come to understand how history and culture influences arts, and how you can assess the value, quality, and meaning of a piece of the arts through aesthetic and critical processes. Through the lens of the arts, students gain a better understanding of their school, community, and the world.

Arts education is offered at every grade level at PPS, from PreK through high school. Our instruction is based on a standards-driven curriculum that aligns to the PA Academic Standards for the Arts and Humanities. Courses are sequential and developmentally appropriate. By making arts education an integral part of every child’s school experience, we hope to do more than just enrich and develop their artistic skills. We strive to extend their appreciation of the arts, and open up additional opportunities for learning, recreation, and potential careers. The goal of PPS Arts Education is to ensure that all students have access to a high-quality arts education in the four disciplines—dance, music, theatre, and visual arts + media.

According to the National Endowment for the Arts, teenagers and young adults of low socioeconomic (SES) status who have a history of in-depth arts involvement show better academic outcomes than low-SES youth with less arts involvement. They earn better grades and have higher rates of college enrollment and attainment.

Ten Lessons the Arts Teach:

How to make good judgments.

A problem can have more than one solution.

There are many ways to see and interpret the world.

You must have the ability and willingness to surrender to the possibilities of a piece of art as it unfolds.

We are not limited in our thinking.

Small differences can have large effects.

All art forms employ some means through which images become real.

Art expresses what cannot be said.

Art allows us to discover the range and variety of our feelings.

Arts education is important.

Parents—You Play a Supporting Role!

The Center for Arts Education states, “The arts need effective advocates in education—and no one can be more effective than parents. When parents come together as a community to mobilize, educate, and inspire, they can move arts instruction to a central position in the school day where it belongs.” At PPS, we welcome your involvement as we continually improve our arts education curriculum programming.
Community Partners Make a Difference

We are fortunate to have wonderful and supportive cultural resources within the Pittsburgh arts community. With their help, we’re able to enhance the educational experiences of our students. Throughout the year we partner with museums, performing arts organizations, arts departments of colleges and universities, local artists, arts councils, foundations, and local businesses.

All-City Arts Showcase

It’s a six-week-long exhibition that happens from March to May every year. The All-City Arts Showcase celebrates the arts learning, creativity, and talents of PPS students in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts + media. Students in grades K–12 display both 2D and 3D visual artwork in various mediums and themes, including ceramic and metal works at the Trust Arts Education Center.

The music concerts, which trace back to 1941, allow students to perform prepared pieces on one of the City’s most notable stages. And five high schools present musical theatre productions as they compete for The Gene Kelley Awards for Excellence in High School Musical Theater, which are patterned after Broadway’s Tony® Awards.

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Second Grade Concert – “Meet the Orchestra”

Imagine the delight when all PPS second graders go on a musical journey through the colorful sounds of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. This exclusive concert provides an exploration of the instruments and families of the orchestra, as well as the role of the conductor.

Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild

Invitation Art Exhibition Awards

The annual Manchester Craftsmen’s Guild Invitational continues a tradition of serving Pittsburgh area high school students. It highlights talent, rewards achievement, and encourages hope among those who might otherwise be overlooked. The event is held every May.

Check your PPS school calendar for upcoming events! Students participate in many arts opportunities throughout the school year. They engage in field trips, residencies, exhibitions, after-school programs, performances, and themed-based competitions sponsored by Pittsburgh’s arts community.

The Arts Education Collaborative of Pittsburgh published High Quality Education in the Arts: A Handbook for Parents, designed to empower parents to advocate for quality arts education for their children. You can download a copy of this handbook—pghschools.org/artshandbook.