

**Arts Education Collaborative Leadership Academy:
Evaluating a Professional Development
Experience for Arts Educators**

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Executive Summary

The Arts Education Collaborative [AEC] Leadership Academy is a sustained, in-depth professional development community for arts education teachers. The academy consists of an intensive weeklong workshop for K-12 teachers, followed by four day-long seminars throughout the year. The idea of the Academy is to have an initial intensive experience to build content knowledge and community and then sustain a support system for teachers as they work to implement change in their schools. In this report we review findings from two separate studies of the Leadership Academy. The first examines the immediate impact of the 2005 weeklong workshop where teachers learn art content, pedagogy, and leadership skills, and where they developed their personalized action plans for leadership in arts education. The second study focuses on the extended Leadership Academy experience as teachers go back to their schools to work to implement their personal action plan. This study included alumni from Leadership Academies that occurred in 2003 and 2004.

Overall, findings suggest that the Leadership Academies have been successful. The weeklong workshops have provided powerful learning opportunities. The Leadership Academy workshops included exposure to useful new content that teachers could use immediately in their classrooms. However, teachers particularly valued two other key aspects of the workshops: The strong focus on developing leadership skills and the exploration of teachers' own artistic practices. While findings support the overall effectiveness of the workshops, they also suggest areas for improvements. In particular, the curriculum should continue to be updated and revised to reflect teachers' evolving knowledge and practices.

The most powerful findings of this report concern the long term impacts of the Leadership Academy in creating a community of arts leaders among the region's teachers. Reflecting recommendations from the National Staff Development Council Standards for Staff Development, the Leadership Academy seeks to support teachers as a real community of learners by providing repeated opportunities for teachers to meet, share issues and concerns, engage in collaborative problem solving, and discuss general goals for arts education. Teachers took advantage of these opportunities and valued them. Teachers found it more productive to work on their action plans as part of a community. They valued the feedback and support from colleagues who understood the challenges of implementing change within the school system. The personal action plans were a particularly powerful engine of change. Throughout the process, teachers found the active involvement of the AEC, especially that of Sarah Tambucci, to be important in sustaining their own initiatives.

In this report we described how participation in the Leadership Academy enabled teachers to:

- Acquire new skills and strategies for the classroom
- Acquire new leadership skills
- Learn how to be strategic planners
- Learn how to use personal action plans to guide, shape, and measure their success
- Re-connect with their artistic roots and creative expression
- Become more aware of out-of-school resources for arts education
- Become part of vibrant and sustainable learning community

These findings are strong but typical of good professional development experiences. However, we believe the unusual and more important findings are that the study provided direct evidence that, as a direct result of the Leadership Academy:

- Teachers are becoming leaders in arts education in their schools
- Teachers are implementing change in a variety of local school contexts
- Teachers are changing their ways of classroom teaching
- Teachers are becoming more active and strategic advocates of the arts and arts education

Overview of Methodology

We conducted semi-structured interviews with 20 teachers who attended the Leadership Academy from 2003 to 2005. The sample included teachers from both music and art disciplines who had diverse levels of education and teaching experiences and belonged to school districts with varying characteristics. Teachers were interviewed face-to-face, either at their school or at an outside location such as a coffee shop. Interviews lasted approximately one hour and were audio recorded. During the interview, teachers were asked a series of open-ended questions about their arts and teaching background, their school district, and their experience and learning at the Leadership Academy. Later, the interviews were transcribed and coded in order to identify major elements for analysis and patterns in participant responses. The coding process was a qualitative, inductive one that did not begin with any assumptions or specific hypotheses about the nature teachers' responses. Instead, themes and patterns emerged from our reading and re-reading of interview transcripts. Within the themes that emerged, we searched for connections and relationships that would further clarify the trends we had located.

Study 1: Creating a Learning Community

All eight teachers from the 2005-2006 Leadership Academy summer session participated in the evaluation study. Overall, teachers reported that they learned a great deal and had an intense, interesting, enjoyable, and useful experience. As one participant explained:

Well, I'm currently in a class for administration and I think I learned more in the one week at the AEC about leadership and being a great leader than I've learned in two years at school.

A primary objective of the program is to build a learning community that can sustain itself beyond the workshop. The structure of the workshop appeared to be successful in this. When asked to give their overall impression of the experience, five teachers said the most important piece of the workshop was the professional relationships that they were able to build with the other teachers and the AEC. Part of the reason the workshop was successful, was that the teachers felt that they were an intimate group who brought diverse experiences and interests to the table. Teachers also mentioned valuing the energy and ideas of Sarah Tambucci and her role in the emerging community. Other positives included an appreciation of guest speakers who consider art beyond the classroom -- including speakers from the Mattress Factory and Attack Theatre.

Beyond their general impressions, we asked teachers to respond specifically to five questions: What did you learn about teaching? What did you learn about leadership? What did you learn about the Pennsylvania Standards for the Arts and Humanities? What did you learn about being both a teacher and an artist?

What did you learn about teaching? Teachers reported a number of new specific strategies and ideas for their teaching in the classroom. Three mentioned learning new ways to structure lesson planning, including the novel idea of "backwards planning." As one of these teachers explained, she reconceptualized her thinking as:

What do I want the students to learn rather than going through and developing lesson plans and fitting them into this particular standard or that particular standard.

Teachers mentioned acquiring other specific strategies such as different kinds of art critiques, the tower-building/team-building exercise, movement activities designed for smaller spaces, portfolios, rich tasks, rubrics, brainstorming, anchors, connections between art, music, and history, current educational research, and new ideas about assessment, curriculum, and instruction. Reflecting the workshop emphasis on community building, participants mentioned that they planned to share the strategies they acquired with other teachers in their home districts.

Beyond gathering specific tools for different classroom situations, two teachers also reported greater personal revelations about their whole style of teaching. The workshop encouraged them to think about teaching as facilitating student exploration as opposed to controlling student learning.

What did you learn about leadership? Teachers reported learning about different styles of leadership and information gathering, with six teachers focusing specifically on the graphing activity and discussion about leadership styles. As one teacher described:

We learned about different types of personalities and how to combine people in more effective ways. We learned about teamwork strategies and team building strategies to sort of bring people together in new and refreshing ways, to sort of get a fresh perspective on things.

It was useful to identify my co-workers who are certain styles and then for me to be able to adapt to how I approach them because now I know the different things that make them tick.

Furthermore, teachers learned about the importance of communication skills in leadership. Teachers learned how to interact with various leadership types to effect change, achieve new perspectives, raise grant money, and improve relationships with colleagues.

Several teachers mentioned how important the workshop discussions were in helping them to change their notion of leadership, the importance of vision and decentralized power, and the differences between leadership, management, and advocacy. As one participant described it:

Being a leader means giving up a lot of your power, if you will, and really listening to people and combining people in effective ways, to get things done and not to feel like it always has to be centered or focused around you. And I think many people, their idea of being a leader is being the person that sets all the orders and gives the orders and that's what they do and I think the AEC just really opened my mind to say that, we're servants, we work for kids, and we work for teachers, and we work for each other, and we work for the arts, and we're advocates, and we're leaders, and we're sponsors, and we're developers. So, we have all these different hats to wear and a good leader wears them all. They're not just a manager, they're a person that guides and inspires other people and I think that that's one of the things you don't get from a book. And I got that from my week at the Leadership Academy.

The workshop helped some teachers to see themselves as potential leaders. Some described the realization that they might have 'a good gut instinct' for leadership. Others felt

encouraged in their goal to be leaders, discovering that even challenging aspects of leadership, such as the action plan, might be possible through a variety of means with the assistance of the Leadership Academy.

What did you learn about the standards? Three teachers described learning more about the standards and developing stronger motivation to use them. Teacher learned the content of the standards and also explored strategies for integrating math and reading standards in art classroom instruction. As this participant described:

I know that when you use the PA Standards, each of the school districts have their own strategic plan where they have benchmarks that go along with the Standards. You put them in your lessons and you make sure that you're teaching so that we should not only validate the arts, but also that we should work hand in hand with the reading specialists and the math people and the social studies and science to connect our field with them.

But more than half of the group reported no new learning around the standards. Four teachers reported that the standards were old news to them and felt that the Leadership Academy did not add significantly to their understanding of the standards. A fifth teacher reported that appreciating a review of the standards, but felt that the treatment during the workshop left him unmotivated to use standards more actively in his classroom.

What did you learn about being a teacher and an artist? Some teachers spoke about how the Leadership Academy reminded them that they were artists at heart. They felt motivated to get involved in their art making activities. A teacher told us how important it was to see other people's own artwork and be involved with arts organizations:

I learned that you need to really get out there and see what other people are doing, other organizations, other artists. Because, I think, you know, you become stagnant at certain points, you get kind of artist's block. And it's just really re-invigorating to hear what others are doing and who they're working with and how you can collaborate with them and bring students to them and have their students come to you. I think that's what I learned the most is that you really need to not be so incestuous with your own programs and, you know, what's going on in your organization but, you know, see what other people are doing, other organizations, and learn from that and, you know, try and work with them, too.

Other teachers, although they recognized the importance of being an artist, reported that the workshop did not offer the new strategies or motivation for helping them find the time and energy to make or appreciate art. These teachers felt that further specific strategies to help them manage the dual role of artist and teacher would have been helpful.

Summary. Overall, the summer session was viewed as a useful learning experience in its own right. However, teachers noted that it was especially effective as preparation and prelude to the Leadership Academy school year-long program, with its emphasis on the personal action plan. As these three different participants explained:

I guess that is what the Leadership Academy is all about: How do we take our action plans and keep going?

You have to use everything you learned that week in the summer to do the action plan.

...The Leadership Academy is not really complete. Just because the summer seminar is done, we still have a lot of work to do for the Academy. So, I think the moment that will define it for me is when I have my action plan completed.

And indeed, as Study Two findings indicate, it is the follow-up structures of the Leadership Academy that enable true leadership development and educational change.

Study Two: Sustaining a Learning Community

To assess long term impact of the Leadership Academy, we interviewed 12 teachers who had completed with the summer workshop in 2003 or 2004. Thus, when interviewed, the teachers had participated in the follow up activities and been involved for some time in implementing their personal action plans. The purpose of these interviews was to search for specific evidence of long-term outcomes due to participation in the Leadership Academy. Many of the question asked to teacher to reflect on their past experiences. Thus, the evidence should be interpreted as teacher's current understanding of the sum of their participation.

Motivations for Attending the Leadership Academy. Most of the teachers found out about the Leadership Academy via AEC mailings. One participant who worked in five buildings at the time that he received the Leadership Academy announcement said, "In each one of my buildings was this bright canary leaflet thing... Monday I dumped it, and Tuesday I dumped it. Wednesday I dumped it. Thursday I read it [laughs]." Several teachers heard about the Leadership Academy from a friend, supervisor, or other personal contact.

Teachers who attended the Leadership Academy cited four categories of goals for what they thought they were going to get out of the experience.

Seven teachers expressed a desire to learn more about leadership and advocacy. Most teachers knew little about leadership, and thus were generally interested to learn whatever they could. Others came with specific problems to solve. For example, one teacher had just been given a new position that required leadership skills, said that her district is:

...very tough on their leaders. So I thought, 'Okay, I really have to have my stuff together.' I didn't want to go into this blind. I didn't want to have those negative comments come back at me because I hadn't thought about things in leadership, components of leadership.

Other teachers saw the Leadership Academy as one in a series of opportunities to learn more about their profession. As one teacher stated, "I always feel like I'm never done learning... that lifetime learning is definitely a category I place myself in." Another spoke about Leadership Academy presenters and facilitators: "Why reinvent the wheel if other people have done something?" Similarly, another teacher said that she wanted "everything and anything the Leadership Academy had to offer, whether I could apply it more personally or in my school." These teachers regard learning as an important ongoing part of their practice.

Some teachers looked forward to the opportunity to engage in dialogue with their peers, and to extend their network of colleagues. As one participant explained, “There’s a certain energy that you get from having that dialogue with peers. And I guess I sort of missed that a little bit, and so I thought this would be a perfect opportunity to engage that part of my brain again.” Another said that she had felt isolated in the classroom and needed “something to be more stimulated.”

Finally, the star power of Sarah Tambucci should not be overlooked as a factor that attracted teachers to the program. Teachers told us that they wanted to work with Dr. Tambucci, a well-known national, and local leader in the field of art education. One teacher told us, “It doesn’t take rocket science to figure out that she’s an awesome individual with a wealth of knowledge and experience. And people that don’t get on board are nuts.” Two others said that they were urged to participate in the Leadership Academy from others who specifically talked about the value of Sarah’s expertise and knowledge.

Three Impacts of the Leadership Academy on Teaching

1. Ideas, inspiration, and support from the learning community

Teachers mentioned learning new ideas and strategies. This occurred through a variety of means, including peers sharing their different situations. Finding out about others’ circumstances and strategies contributed to a substantial pool of possibilities, ranging from ideas for lesson plans and classroom set-ups to ways for promoting an arts program to the community. As two teachers explained:

[I learned] ideas for lessons and ideas on how they handle and deal with people and the things they’re doing within their classrooms that I look at and say, “Wow!” I mean, even just walking into this room today, I’m checking out little things that you see that you could use. The things that [other teachers] do to promote the arts in their program.

We would break into these smaller groups and talk about an issue. You know, funding for your program or, you know, making yourself more visual. Doing an art show, a lot of people had never done that, so how would you do that? You know, so using the experience of others. Somebody usually had gone through that.

I got to know different ways people are incorporating the Standards into their work. And it’s, like, “Oh my God. How did you even think of that? I never would have thought of that.” And it’s mind blowing stuff like that that makes you want to try it or find out more. And, I mean, that’s what we’re supposed to do.

The inclusion of teachers from several arts disciplines helped teachers gain broader perspectives on the arts, including varied methodologies from other fields and interdisciplinary tools for teaching. All 12 teachers commented on the way that this trading of ideas and experiences generated an atmosphere of inspiration and rejuvenation:

We had an incredible session at the Warhol. One of the music people had done a little mini-lesson and it just totally put a light on for me. I’m trying to even think of what the circumstance was. He was talking about paintings and

instead of using words, he used musical expression. He played the flute and we'd clap or click our fingers. And to feel that, I've never experienced that before. I've never thought about music as a way of communicating, you know, in rhythms and things.

There are people in the Leadership Academy that have been teaching 30 years. And they still have that drive and energy and enthusiasm and, and it's contagious. And Sarah feeds off it, we feed off of each other.

The academy experience was successful in building a sense of shared community among the teachers--particularly important for the five teachers who mentioned that they felt isolated and alone prior to joining the Leadership Academy.

I learned to look back at what I have already done. Things that I thought were just, "I can't believe this around here." It's happening, you know? They've got the same issues in their districts. No matter where, or what demographics they have, or whatever.

You can be a leader in your building and you do need to be a leader in your building because usually we're the only one there. I mean, it's not like there's three second grade teachers and three third, you know what I mean? We're usually the only one there.

There's a reluctance within departments and the people that you work with in your own field at times. And I used to think that I was working in isolation with that feeling, but it happens everywhere. So it was nice to be able to get out there and see you're not alone and there are supports for you... if I could sum up and say what's the most striking thing of all that, it's the networking that has occurred and the fact that I'm finding that I'm not alone. That there are other people and that I can call upon them for resources for ideas or just to share what I'm going through, whether it's in a classroom or whether I'm having challenges with other people within the department in terms of trying to get somewhere with an action plan. Just knowing that there are people that you can network with and bounce ideas off of so that you're not working in total isolation.

Relationships from this community, initiated in the summer session, were often sustained over the course of the school year, both as part of AEC events and also independent of the AEC. This included such activities as sending emails, attending arts events, and participating in professional development teacher groups. As this participant explained, peers became a close-knit and supportive network to draw upon for help:

Two of the other teachers came to my arts festival because they're planning their own festival for June and I said, "Hey, I got anything you want, anything you need, anything you want to steal, any of you need help planning yours, just give me a call and, you know, I'll help you out."

Seven teachers did mention, however, the logistical difficulties of continuing these relationships. Perhaps for this reason, connections between teachers were often fostered through events and activities arranged by the AEC. This ranged from attending the follow up Leadership Academy meetings during the school year to working on the AEC frameworks

and from attending discussion groups and professional development workshops to receiving emails from AEC staff.

2. Being an artist and a teacher

The Academy sought to involve teachers in producing and appreciating art. Four teachers commented that academy helped to reconnect them with artmaking. As one teacher explained:

You asked me earlier on if I consider myself an artist and I said, "Oh, it depends on the day of week." I think a lot of teachers in the Academy sort of have that same response. So, I realize that I'm not the only one who's sitting here thinking, "God, I want to get back to my painting." You know, there's a lot of people that are feeling that way.

We had an experience with Hugh Merrill who was a teacher from Kansas City, Kansas City Art Institute. He did an activity, or a whole series of activities, with us that helped to bend our mind back to when we were studying art. And when we were those studio artists. Bend us back to the creative process. And I think just having that focus, re-focus, that that's what it is. No matter what we're doing, if it comes, it made everything crystal clear for me. If you're not teaching the creative process, then it's, if you are teaching the creative process, do it in a positive way, then everything does sort of line up. Everything does sort of line up, everything makes sense and it becomes so much easier. Everything's easy 'cause that's what you're teaching. I'm an artist. I do the creative process. My students need it. This is something they can take outside of the art room and into their regular life.

[Sarah Tambucci] did a lot of pieces where she took us out of our comfort level. I'm pretty comfortable doing a lot of things, but there are some things I'm not real comfortable doing. Hopping around up in the dance studio was one. Acting at the O'Reilly Theatre was one. We did this one piece and I laid, I was a guy sleeping at night. I laid there for twenty minutes on stage while my colleagues were, they were in character, and it was wonderful. I could hear, I could see. And it was like, what are you? You know, I was sleeping. I don't want to do this. [Laughs] But, you know, that fear. But see, I didn't realize it at the time 'cause I figure I play in front of thousands of people. This is great. But I only do what I do. So that was great, too. To not be afraid. To not use, but to use the connections that you've established to benefit your children.

Teachers commented on opportunities to experience the arts. Teachers noted events at the Pittsburgh Public Theater, the Mattress Factory, Pittsburgh Filmmakers, the Manchester Craftsmen's Guild, the Andy Warhol Museum, and a dance studio. Experience as an audience member affirmed the importance of professional arts and their potential connection to arts education in the schools.

What I really liked particularly, though, was the, at the end, the last day, Sarah brought in Etta Cox and her jazz musicians and the performance was fantastic. But when she gave us the opportunity to ask them questions and they were encouraging us to continue to do what we do, like with music

education in the schools, and encouraging the kids, that was a moment that I thought I'll never forget. To see people who have made it in the business saying education in the arts are important.

The artists were not just brought in as show and tell. The academy helps to contextualize the experiences and model how one might use out-of-school arts resources in classrooms.

I have to say that, I was not as confident in using a lot of the resources. Like, going out and saying, "Oh yeah, we can, we can use the Mattress Factory as a resource. Oh, okay, maybe they'll come and talk to others." So, that kind of confidence was really good too. Giving me that. That's what the academy did.

3. Evidence of change in classroom teaching

The strongest evidence of success of the Leadership Academy centers on actual changes in teachers' classroom practice. This impact was sometimes through specific content gained during the academy and sometimes through the implementation of the personal action plans. Eleven of the teachers' action plans were intended, to some degree and through some component, to directly affect students and work in the classroom through school arts festivals, student concerts, the development of a sequential curriculum, and the organization of arts teachers to work on curriculum and other issues. Examples include:

And, I have so many kids that are in music in my classes. It's really helped me to communicate with them better....I'm thinking of one particular boy in art appreciation class. He's great. We have the best debates and discussions. I love it! So, we were at the museum one day talking about these sculptures and he's like, "I just don't get it. They're all the same. They're all clay." That was at the [Carnegie] International, the Kathy Butterly. I don't know if you saw those, and I said, "Okay, let's think about music." We started to have this whole music discussion. I mean, I was in the band in high school. I never could have done this if I hadn't done the Leadership Academy because I was just, I was able to pull these things out of him just questioning and just using a few little musical terms that I had learned at the Leadership Academy, and I really got him. I mean, I got him hooked. He was like, "Oh, okay, I get it now." So, I mean that, those kind of experiences, I think, are just unbelievable in terms of transporting it right into the classroom.

I just keep going back to when we had our combined concert and all the kids were on the stage and they were all just interacting and they were talking and they were talking about music and the kids were just really into it and all the middle school students were asking the high school students all about their instruments and what they could do and what they could play. So, for me, that was sort of the high point of it all, seeing the kids interacting that way.

We were impressed with the general success teachers had with their action plans. Only one participant told us about a failure of the plan:

[My action plan] kind of fizzled. I really wanted to work more on getting some sort of something going for my sixth, seventh, and eighth graders... but then again sixth, seventh, and eighth graders don't want to do anything, so. But my project was to find something that they did want to do. And I don't know,

between Sarah and Betty and my principal it was like we're just, you know, I tried to pursue a couple avenues that kind of fell through and just... It didn't work out at all.

Two Impacts of the Leadership Academy on Teachers as Leaders

1. Leadership Skills

As a direct result of Leadership Academy experience, teachers reported improvements in many core leadership skill sets. Major categories of skills include the following.

A. Confidence:

So [when I have to take on] things like that, initiatives or programs that would really benefit our school and our kids and our art program, I feel like I'm not even hesitant, that if it's out there and it looks interesting, it's like, let's go with it. Whereas I would have been more inhibited [before the Leadership Academy]: "I don't know if I can handle this. I don't know if I can do this." I feel like there's a confidence there to do stuff like that.

There's a lot of, like, subconscious confidence things. I mean I know I keep talking about confidence a lot. I don't know if in the past I've been held down, held back or anything. But I don't think it's that kind of thing, but just to know that I have this intelligence that's in me that I've learned certain things. I feel more able to approach administrators and ask for things in the right way. You know? To understand their needs, I guess, and not ask them for something at the wrong time.

B. Sharing knowledge:

Well, I think, I think, being a leader is knowing resources. I think being a leader is doing, in your own room.... I think there are two meanings to leadership. The obvious one, where you're, a leader. And you are the person ahead of everyone. But, I also think, I think that leadership in my instance is just making myself better and making myself available if people need me. And doing my best all the time.

...if I'm asked to do a presentation, you know, and I have been asked several times this year, to do presentations just on my involvement with the AEC or something about Standards. It seemed like at the beginning of the school year, it was just about every month I was asked to do one. I couldn't have pictured myself doing that years ago, because in high school I was like the quietest person in the whole room. I was just really backward.

C. Strategic thinking and flexible planning:

Well, [being prepared,] that's part of it, because leadership means analyzing a situation, not walking into it blind, but stepping back, analyze the situation, understanding what you're dealing with, working out a preliminary plan of where you want to go with it, being able to adjust that plan, being able to reset goals when they need to be.

[To] look at things as a, look at things as a whole and just see problems as opportunities. [The Leadership Academy] really gave me a whole new outlook, outlook on just how to... look at things and to make things, good things happen out of not-ideal situations. That's what I've gotten most out of it.

D. Persistence:

So you don't say, "Okay, well I can't do this." "Can't" never enters, you know, your mind. You just work within the realm in which you can work, and then I learned from others that they were very persistent.

Keep moving towards the goal and keep adjusting the goal when you need to. Be flexible. And advance your goal, no matter what, you still need to advance it.

And so every once in a while [after participating in the Leadership Academy], when I'm involved with a situation that's very difficult with people I'll think about [what I learned] after the fact. I wish I could kind of paste it on my nose to keep that in front of me. But I do remember it later and I try to think of that then and dealing with people that might be more challenging to deal with or cope with.

E. Coordinating efforts:

The very first day, I'll never forget this, Sarah... asked us if we knew what to lead or leadership meant. And I don't think anybody actually came up with the definition that she had but when she said it, it made so much sense and, to lead actually, or leadership actually, means "to serve." And if you're going to be a leader, then you have to be willing to put yourself out there and to serve and to serve the people that you're leading.

[The Leadership Academy] helped me to be a stronger leader as I am actually leading this group of parents and knowing how to have them actually lead but yet I am kind of a guide for it. You know what I mean? I'm not really in there saying, "Okay, we're going to do this, this, this, this..." They're actually calling the shots but yet they are kind of going through me as they do it, and then I go to the principal, you know.

I'm also president of the arts council in our area and the Leadership Academy has helped me be a better leader there, too. I'm able to delegate when before I would just do it myself. Or, accept status quo, when I can now say to people, well, you know, here's the action plan, here's what we need to do. So, I'm more effective in that way.

F. Communication and networking:

I learned... the administrative talk, the administrative speak, their language, and just how to communicate with them, using some of their buzz words. They'd go, "Oh, she did say, she's not just a stupid teacher. No, she gets

what we're about here in this administrative role." And the Leadership Academy provided a lot of that.

Communication with other people is a real big thing [at the Leadership Academy]. How to communicate with all kinds of people, whether the person is in your field or in a different field.

I think the networking with corporations and all the organizations that I was able to do [at another, non-Leadership Academy event], I won't have been able to do had I not gone to the Leadership Academy because I knew some people from the Warhol. I knew some people from the Mattress Factory because they came to the workshop program with the Leadership Academy. So, I was able to ask them and say, "Hey, look, we met at the Leadership Academy, I'd really like to have you guys come [to our arts festival]." So, that component, having those five cultural organizations come out, won't have happened without the Leadership Academy. So - the funny thing, the defining moment like you said - I could picture myself networking with these people and [another teacher] was really funny. She was like, "Oh my God, you're so good." She's like, "You have to teach me how to do that." I'm like, "Go to the Leadership Academy. You'll learn how to do it."

2. Leadership in Action

The new leadership skills came together for many teachers around implementation of their personal action plan. The action plan model enabled teachers to enact a leadership role in a real-world setting, figure out strategies to deal with obstacles, and accomplish some aspects of their plans to both become successful leaders and understand more deeply the role and reality of being a leader. As these two teachers recounted:

But I didn't ever have to do [one of the action plans' objectives] on a professional basis. And the teachers I'm dealing with were my teachers. And I student taught with them. So I know them on so many different levels. And now to try to affect their mindset and to affect change was extremely scary. But through just little bits and pieces, I figured for the action plan, what do I have to do first? And what do I have to do before I do that, and what do I have to do before that? And it came down to, I need to just have a conversation and we were able to do that. Get past that little chunk. And then I coerced them into going to an opportunity alert which was writing scope and sequence. So they got, they heard other people say some of the words I was saying. And then listen to them a little better. So then the next time we were able to come together I gave them, not assignments, but guidelines on what they could do next. And here's what I've done already. So it was baby steps, baby steps, baby steps.

The action plan that I had and I did it with [another participant] who's over at [other participant's school], was to try to promote the Standards, actually not promote the Standards, but make the parents aware of the Standards, in an effort to try and help with the advocacy issues. What I realized though was educating the parents was not the only thing that needed to be done... As I got involved in the action plan, I found that the kids needed to be educated about the Standards and also the other staff members in my building needed

to be educated about the fact that the arts had the Standards. So, it ended up seeming like, as I ventured out in the one avenue, it actually was doing like this little, again, coming around to all these other branches leading to the same thing, advocacy needs to be done everywhere, not just in one direction. So, I decided that I would do little steps. Just at a parent, PTG meeting, parent teacher group meeting, I asked if I could speak to the parents about the Standards in the arts. And at open house, I would speak to the parents about the Standards in the arts. When I would introduce class the first day with the 6th and 7th graders, I would talk about the Standards now. So, it's kind of like infiltrating the information, you know, putting it out there, little bits and pieces at a time or when you do an art show, display the Standards so that people can learn. Stick a little tag about it in a program during a concert, so the parents see Standards. It's helping, I think, to put the arts back on the map again, which we always knew were important, but it's kind of making the public a little more aware that there's an importance there, too.

Teachers also utilized their more deeply developed leadership abilities to generate substantial change in their advocacy, credibility, and visibility. Many of these changes were, again, driven by the personal action plans. Seven teachers designed action plans that had components that addressed advocacy and increased promotion of arts education, credibility and deeper understanding and respect for the arts, and visibility and wider awareness of arts programs. Teachers' action plans resulted in the organization of professional and parental groups, arts teachers throughout schools, arts teachers district-wide, concert performances, and art exhibitions.

[Since beginning a parent focus and advocacy group] I have seen and I'm glad to be able to say that I actually have seen progress. I have seen parents who have spoken, been very outspoken as to the number of students that are a part of the arts program. I have seen parents who are interested in attending recruitment performances. Parents who are interested in talking to the counselors who actually feed these students and once they have gotten here, so they don't get lost in the shuffle. I have heard parents write letters saying what their pa-, their students have gained from the choral program after having been in it for three years or so. And so that I have seen, and it's, it's, and I've heard the principal say, which I'd never heard until this year, him openly say to parents, "Well, the choral program is really, really progressing and so we don't plan to get rid of it." And in front of parents, you know, not just to me. So, it's, it's, that it really came from the advocacy/focus group.

Importantly, teachers did not cease such activities with the end of their participation in the Leadership Academy. Eleven teachers noted their intentions to continue with their action plans and their advocacy, credibility, and visibility activities. These plans for the future included, more specifically, possible career moves into administration, beginning new arts programs, taking on leadership roles in professional organizations, promoting the arts, and becoming more knowledgeable.

I don't think my goals are really complete, you know, I think my goals are pretty much ongoing as far as keeping my program visible, keeping the numbers going up, keeping students interested, changing with the times, making sure that we're doing the right kinds of music and getting them

involved in as much, as many different kinds of music as possible. I think, just trying to keep up with those things, those are my goals.

As these quotes show, leadership development was greatly aided by the use of the personal action plan system. The action plan provided teachers with a task that encouraged them to think about their particular pressing leadership challenges and to be creative in planning strategies to address those challenges. The plans emerged in the workshop and served to tailor the general information to their specific circumstances. By revisiting the plans in the months following the workshop, teachers had a shared yard stick to measure their progress and to talk about progress with other teachers in the cohort.

Conclusions

Findings provide strong evidence that the Leadership Academy has been successful in creating, enriching, and sustaining a community of learners committed to improving art education in the schools. Specific findings include:

- Teachers acquired new skills and strategies for the classroom
- Teachers acquired new leadership skills
- Teachers learned how to be strategic planners
- Teachers learned how to use personal action plans to guide, shape, and measure their success
- Teachers re-connected with their artistic roots and creative expression
- Teachers became more aware of out-of-school resources for arts education
- Teachers became part of vibrant and sustainable learning community

These findings are strong but typical of good professional development experiences. However, we believe the unusual and more important findings are that the study provided direct evidence that, as a direct result of the Leadership Academy

- Teachers are becoming leaders in arts education in their schools
- Teachers are implementing change in a variety of local school contexts
- Teachers are changing their ways of classroom teaching
- Teachers are becoming more active and strategic advocates of the arts and arts education

The workshops are generally seen as good experiences for building a cohort, introducing new leadership concept and skills, exposing teachers to a variety of teaching strategies and new arts experiences. The extended support for the learning community was appreciated by the teachers and appeared effective in helping them to apply their new leadership and teaching skills. In moving forward with the Leadership Academy, AEC should continue to revisit the “freshness” of the curricula, foster partnerships with arts organizations that can help support teachers, seek out a broader audience of teachers who may not see themselves as leaders, and provide opportunities that maintain energy and advocacy among alumni in the network.

We conclude this report with the reflections of one these alumnae:

I think [the Leadership Academy] made me realize that the potential to do some of the things that I'm capable of doing was always there, but I didn't realize it at the time. Because it made me look back even in my college years

and find out I was doing some things that would have been considered leadership potential. But that I didn't view it at the time. It's that passion. You're in the middle of doing it, you don't say I'm out to do this because I want to be a leader, you're just doing it. Someone says or makes a comment to you, and all of a sudden the attention is on you as if you were the leader doing this. Cause I always viewed myself as a follower. But when I look back over my career, there have been, like I said, opportunities or times when I did initiate getting involved in some of those things or people had come to me and said, based on what you're doing I would like you to be involved in this. So I think the potential is always there but it needed to be developed more.

Appendix A: Interview Questions

1. Why did you decide to become an art teacher?
2. Tell me about arts education and experience.
3. Tell me about your school, district, and the arts education program.
4. What does art do for students?
5. What does it mean to be a leader in the arts?
6. What does a quality arts education program look like?
7. Tell me about a great lesson that you teach. Why do you like it?
8. How did you find out about the Leadership Academy?
9. Why did you decide to apply?
10. Tell me about your experience in the Leadership Academy.
11. Can you think of one moment that encapsulates or summarizes your leadership academy experience?
12. What did you learn?
13. What did you learn about leadership?
14. What did you learn about your peers?
15. What did you learn from your peers?
16. Did you make connections that you have maintained after the program? If yes, please give examples.
17. What are some leadership opportunities that you see or can envision now that you could not before.
18. Now that you have completed the Leadership Academy, what are your goals for the future?
19. What recommendations do you have for improving the Leadership Academy?