

MODEL SCHOOL FAQs

PLANNING

Q: How do teachers plan together?

A: Informal and formal collaboration is ongoing. Planning time is secured daily, and administrative facilitated planning meetings occur weekly for grade level & department teams. Artful conversations are part of the school's culture and are seamlessly woven into planning discussions.

Q: How do your specialists plan with teachers?

A: Ideas and planning support come from a variety of areas (weekly planning sessions, monthly vertical planning session, CSI meetings, arts committee meetings, infusion lesson planning sessions, ongoing curriculum mapping and on the fly). Project directors, specialists and arts team members also take advantage of weekly PLC meetings and monthly art talks.

Q: How much time do you have for teachers to plan together?

A: Planning time varies from campus to campus, and ranges anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour & a half daily. Some campuses have additional planning time on early release days.

Q: What does your common planning time look like?

A: Each grade level & department collaborate to plan lessons, discuss policies, complete paperwork, and meet the needs of all learners.

Q: How and when do you plan your ideas?

A: Planning occurs before and after school, during scheduled planning times, during art talks, and through digital curriculum mapping & CSI charts. Arts integration is an ongoing part of the culture and in many ways has become a natural thought process for teachers. Teachers look at ideas online to support grade level standards. They collaborate with art specialists, and also gain ideas from professional development and outside arts experiences.

BUY-IN

Q: How do you get new teachers on board with the process?

A: All new teachers attend the Whole Schools Summer Institute within a timely manner after hiring. Additional monthly professional development sessions are devoted to arts integration. High expectations are set for all educators. The teachers are shown the process, provided a mentor, and are expected to do the work. Administrators, Project Directors, Arts Team members & teaching artists offer feedback and advice on lessons.

Q: How do you get and keep teacher buy-in?

A: Engaging ongoing professional development, support, incentive programs and high expectations support buy-in and teacher growth. Utilizing the arts and arts integration strategies is a part of the interview process for new teachers. New teachers are required to attend the summer institute and work closely with the arts director, their mentor, and the arts team to ensure they understand the approach. Fun arts related activities throughout the year help energize the teachers and refresh their "toolbox" of arts integration experiences and strategies. Model schools expect teachers to use this

style of learning for the students, and they support it with data that shows it works for their population.

Q: How do you get everyone on board/buy in?

A: Keep the training exciting, offer incentives, provide administrative support, and have accountability procedures in place.

Q: How supportive is your district/superintendent/principal?

A: Administrative support is crucial. Model school principals, assistant superintendents & superintendents are very supportive of the program.

FUNDING

Q: What existing funding resources do you use?

A: Fundraising, PTO funds, Community Donations, District funds, Title Funds, Community Grants, MAC Mini-grants, & MAAE Grants.

Q: What kind of fundraisers do you have/How do you raise money?

A: Dollar days are common small fundraisers where students pay a dollar to participate in a special activity (i.e., pajama day, hat day, jean day, sunglasses day, crazy hair day).

Large fundraisers are held annually and change regularly. Some common fundraisers have consisted of selling coupon booklets, cookie dough, participation in 5K fun runs, magazine sales, smart cards, Kroger cards, square one art, and Artnome shows.

Q: How do you ensure your fundraisers are successful?

A: Promote the events on social media with full transparency telling the parents and community members how the funds will be used and why. Send personal invitations to decision makers and community leaders, and include student performances when appropriate. Include parent and community leaders in the planning and development of fund raisers.

Q: How do you pay for arts resources and supplies?

A: Education Enhancement Funds, PTO, Arts Fundraisers, district funds, title funds, grants, and community business partners.

Additionally, parent & community members donate resources and supplies. Supplies are donated to the campus from a variety of local businesses (carpet stores, framing shops, hardware & builder supply stores, fabric stores, and local factories). Parent & community talent and interest surveys are completed at the beginning of each school year to identify additional resources.

SCHEDULING

Q: How do you make the time?

A: You make time for what is important. Authentic arts integration is not an add on. It is a rigorous and purposeful instructional approach where the students understand and apply the material both academically and artistically. Traditional lessons become arts integration lessons by incorporating the arts. Asking students to pantomime definitions and concepts, analyze art prints and illustrations using the appropriate terminology to make connections to self, text, and world, and choreographing dance movements to

demonstrate an understanding of repetitive patterns and natural cycles are examples of augmentations to traditional lessons, not additional separate lessons.

Q: What does your daily schedule look like?

A: All model school schedules vary depending on the number of students, classes, specialists, and resources the schools have available. Deliberate planning goes into the development of each schedule to ensure planning and professional development time is secure. Copies of schedules may be requested at your model tour.

Q: How do your teachers have time in the day for arts integration?

A: Arts integration is an approach to teaching and learning. Authentic arts integration should not increase the instructional time required to teach specific skills. Focusing on creating arts integration experiences that are not project based activities within meaningful arts integration plans weekly that can be done in one class or built upon throughout thematic units ensures that the arts are integrated throughout the curriculum.

PARENT & COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Q: What does your school do for parent involvement?

A: Parent arts nights, art festivals, student performances & art shows in the community and at the school, teaching artists demonstrations and special events, and parent hosted discussions are developed to support parental involvement and understanding. Virtual and Drive-Thru events are occurring due to COVID.

Q: How do you connect parents and the arts?

A: Images and information are regularly shared through social media, newsletters, and PTA programs. Events such as Arts Night or Arts Day put parents in the seat of a student. They participate in a hands-on arts integration lesson just like the students.

Q: How do you involve your community and parents?

A: Model Schools actively reach out to the community in a variety of ways. Teachers involve parents and community members in specific classroom activities, projects, and events. Principal's host monthly or quarterly "Coffee and Conversations" where parents and community members are invited to learn what is going on and how they can help.

Q: How much parent/community support do you have?

A: Model schools have active parental support, ranging from 50% involvement to 80% or more involvement at any given function.

Q: How do you connect with/use your community?

A: Model schools reach out to the community. The community knows the school and works with them as partners. Many model schools have community members who adopt them to provide support with volunteers, donations, and services. They also form relationships with local arts organizations and partner with local artists.

CAMPUS LOOK

Q: How often do you change out your hallway displays?

A: Hallway display rotations vary among campuses. Grade level displays are required to rotate once every two weeks to once per month/unit.

Q: Do you have a school wide format for hallway displays?

A: Model Schools allow teachers to be creative with their displays. They offer guidance and have requirements such as a description, arts standards, academic standards, etc. Some model schools have teacher display checklists that they complete each month and submit to the project director or arts team representative for their displays.

Q: Who checks hallways to be sure the school is ready for tours?

A: The project directors walk the halls and give feedback to teachers regularly. Teachers check individual displays daily to ensure nothing has fallen. Teachers are reminded prior to any formal tour that visitors will be present. Grade level art representatives and/or project directors conduct final checks before the tour begins.

Q: How long did it take your school to get where you are?

A: It takes time. On average, schools dedicate 4 to 6 years to the program before applying for model status. These chosen few have continued the journey constantly adapting to various changes as an ongoing part of the school's culture. Currently the oldest member joined MWS in 1999.

IDEAS & ARTISTS

Q: How do you come up with arts-integrated lessons?

A: Often lessons are developed from the resources and training offered through the Whole Schools Institute. Additional lessons come from educators at other schools or from online websites (like Arts Edge and Edutopia). There are thousands of ideas out there that can be adapted into a lesson that works for your students. If you are designing a lesson from scratch, the best method is to look at the academic strategies you need to teach and determine which art discipline might best align with it. For example, science and dance are often a good fit because they both deal with dynamic forms of movement; language arts and drama are a natural fit as well because they both involve story elements. Then look for the strategies in that arts discipline which would best fit the lesson you want to teach.

Q: What are your best arts-integration ideas?

A: A lot of art prints are used in creating arts integration lessons, especially for teachers just starting out. This is an easy way for both struggling students and teachers to easily access visual arts and academic standards as well.

Theater, tableaux, basic acting, and stage directions seem to fit well with any subject or grade.

The various elements and styles of music are often utilized within the classroom.

Student-created songs using those elements or styles is also great for any subject/grade.

Dance elements and techniques are connected to academic standards throughout the curriculum. The students analyze and create choreographed dances to retell stories, understand cycles in science, understand and apply patterns and repetition in math, and much more.

Q: Which artists do you use?

A: Anyone we can find! The classic masters like Van Gogh and Kandinsky are always used within the classroom. Often teachers will branch out and find lesser-known artists as well as artists within the community.

The Mississippi Arts Commission has a roster of vetted teaching artists who are all excellent at what they do. You can find that list here (make this a link).

MISC

Q: Are other mandated programs or policies obstacles to arts integration?

A: It can be, but it does not have to be. It is an eternal struggle to reassert our focus on arts integration with the many curriculum programs and other mandates that come both from the MDE and the school district. Sometimes these programs fit seamlessly with maintaining an arts integration focus, and sometimes they simply do not. Model schools center their efforts on the strategies that work best, find artful connections, manage their time, and make it work.

Q: How do you manage your staff development?

A: Many model schools keep a spreadsheet of the attendees at MWS professional development trainings over the years. New teachers always fill spots first, and the seasoned faculty are rotated based off the spreadsheet. Administrators dedicate monthly PD meetings to arts integration training and finding connections within newly adopted programs. The arts team identifies areas of need through various informal needs assessments and professional development training is designed based on the needs of the staff.

Q: What kind of assessments do you use?

A: Model schools use a wide variety of formal and informal assessment. Some of the more commonly used assessment pieces include I-Ready Diagnostic, online learning, Standards Masteries, Early Star Literacy, MAAP, STAR, Case 21 Benchmark, and curriculum assessments from Wit & Wisdom and Ready Math, teacher made rubrics and student reflections.

VIRTUAL (new)

Q: How does arts integration occur virtually?

A: Arts integration is always the focus within a model school. Videos and power points guide the students through learning, students continue to create and collaborate within virtual & hybrid classrooms. Students use Flipgrid and other digital tools to share visual arts, dance, theatre, and musical connections and creations.

Art and music specialists support district level teachers providing ideas to use in classrooms through Zoom and Google Classroom.

Students do not have easy access to supplies at home. The emphasis is more on trying to create something that reflects their learning rather than perfecting the techniques of a particular medium. Drive-thru art supply days have been utilized to support the use of arts at home. Many teachers are working with formats like Google Slides to have students create digital collages and other media art pieces. Reflection and analysis of images, videos, and performances are utilized, and simple pantomimes are often created.

Drive-thru art shows, virtual art evenings and other events continue to be created.