



**TURNAROUND ARTS:**  
**MINNESOTA**  
creating success in schools

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**For Immediate Release**

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**Perpich Center for Arts Education names four schools in Turnaround Arts: Minnesota initiative**

**Golden Valley, Minn.** – Perpich Center for Arts Education has chosen four schools to participate in Turnaround Arts: Minnesota, a national initiative designed to narrow the achievement gap and improve student engagement through the arts: Bethune Elementary School, Minneapolis; Northport Elementary, Brooklyn Center, Robbinsdale School District; Northside Elementary, St. James; and Red Lake Middle School, Red Lake.

Spearheaded by Perpich Center, the Minnesota program is one of six new localities from across the nation selected by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts and several private foundations.

Participating schools were selected through a stringent, nationally-vetted process. Selection criteria included demonstrated need and opportunity, strong school leadership and a commitment to arts education. Turnaround Arts schools represent a diversity of student demographics in urban, suburban and rural settings. The program will begin in July with a summer leadership retreat in northern Virginia for all schools in the network.

The state legislature approved \$750,000 specifically for the Minnesota Turnaround Arts initiative. In addition, the Minnesota State Arts Board has committed \$300,000 for grants—up to \$75,000 per school per year. Each school also will receive \$25,000 in arts supplies, musical instruments and play licenses through national Turnaround Arts.

“Minnesota has some of the highest achieving students in the nation, but we also have one of the highest achievement gaps between white students and students of color,” U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison said. “Turnaround Arts will use arts education and our community’s rich culture to inspire our students and close that achievement gap.”

Perpich Arts High School  
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Schools in the program receive intensive arts education resources and expertise and the schools' communities will be involved in strategic planning processes with guidance from Perpich, a state agency serving all schools, students and educators in Minnesota. Created in 1985 by the Minnesota state legislature, the agency seeks to advance K-12 education throughout the state by teaching in and through the arts. Selected schools will receive arts education training and resources to address their individual needs as well as access to community arts and cultural organizations and a national network of school leaders and teachers.

The President's Committee has appointed high profile artists – songwriter Clarence Greenwood (aka Citizen Cope), actor/rapper Doc Shaw and actor Sarah Jessica Parker – who will “adopt” Minnesota Turnaround Arts during the next two years to support the schools' educational reform efforts. Local Minnesota artists and cultural organizations also will participate with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

“We look forward to working with the dedicated leaders and teachers of these schools,” said Sue Mackert, executive director of Perpich. “Perpich has a strong tradition of collaborating with schools and communities across Minnesota to use arts education as a tool for addressing the systemic issues affecting achievement.”

“The act of creating art brings great joy to children,” said Minneapolis School Superintendent Bernadeia Johnson. “The arts can increase children's engagement at school and the Minneapolis district is committed to building up the presence of arts at Bethune.”

The superintendent in St. James spoke about how the program will allow them to expand their tight focus on reading and math without abandoning the goal of academic achievement. “The St. James School District has always valued the arts in education,” said St. James Superintendent Becky Cselovszki. “However, with financial concerns and a heavy focus on reading and math, we've had to emphasize those core areas. The Turnaround Arts initiative is so exciting because it blends the arts and academics with a common goal of increased student learning. Our district is looking forward to this new partnership.”

Arts education has been shown through numerous studies to be an important part of education as a whole and able to give students tools for success. Decades of research show that arts-engaged students perform better than their peers.

“I am very excited about this wonderful opportunity. I believe through art enrichment, all different types of learners are reached,” said Northport Principal Leona Derden. “We know that years of research show that art is closely linked to almost everything that we as a nation say we want for our children and demand from our schools—academic achievement, social and emotional development, civic engagement, and equitable opportunity.”

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For example, recent studies show that students that participate regularly in the arts:

- Are more self-confident and better able to express their ideas;
- Have higher attendance and high school graduation rates; and
- Are more likely to go on to a four-year university, graduate from that university and go on to a career with potential.

Arts education can also benefit overall school culture and climate, especially when it is integrated into the school, giving teachers new tools, increasing collaboration, creating an atmosphere of creativity and inspiration and engaging parents and the community.

“One of the greatest challenges we face is student performance in the areas of academics and behaviors,” said Red Lake Middle School Principal Susan Ninham. “My hope is the arts integration program will provide our students opportunities to envision themselves as successful at learning. They can get a high-quality education that includes art forms from their Anishinaabe culture.”

However federal data shows that students who need arts education the most are getting it the least. While affluent public schools have high rates of arts education, high-poverty schools often have almost none. There are over 5 million students in public elementary schools in this country without either a music or an arts class in their school. Almost all are high-poverty.

“In Minnesota, we have seen a trend in schools cutting back on arts education to balance tighter and tighter budgets,” Sue Mackert said. “We hope to change this picture. Perpich, in concert with our national and local partners, will show that arts education makes a difference.” The program will provide both uniform and customized resources to respond to the particular arts education-related needs of the individual schools selected to participate.

A preliminary assessment of the pilot schools in the Turnaround Arts initiative in other states shows that the hypothesis is holding true, with math and reading scores going up and students and families increasing engagement. The report leading to the establishment of the Turnaround Arts program as well as a new interim report on its effectiveness can be found at [www.pcah.gov/publications](http://www.pcah.gov/publications).

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### **About Perpich**

Perpich Center for Arts Education is a state agency serving all schools, students and educators in Minnesota. Created in 1985 by the Minnesota state legislature, the agency seeks to advance K-12 education throughout the state by teaching in and through the arts. Perpich staff and faculty experts provide outreach, professional development, research, curriculum and standards development. Perpich is home to a public arts education library and an innovative, two-year, statewide residential high school that serves as a living laboratory for creative development in the arts. Additional information about Perpich is at [perpich.mn.gov](http://perpich.mn.gov).

### **About the Minnesota State Arts Board**

The Minnesota State Arts Board is a state agency dedicated to ensuring that all Minnesotans have the opportunity to participate in the arts. It receives appropriations from the Minnesota State Legislature and funding from the National Endowment for the Arts and private sources. The Arts Board offers grants, services and other resources to individuals and organizations to stimulate and encourage the creation, performance and appreciation of the arts in the state. Additional information about the Arts Board can be found online at [www.arts.state.mn.us](http://www.arts.state.mn.us).

### **About the President's Committee on The Arts and The Humanities**

Created in 1982 under President Reagan, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues. The committee works directly with the three primary cultural agencies—National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Institute of Museum and Library Services—as well as other federal partners and the private sector, to address policy questions in the arts and humanities, to initiate and support key programs in those disciplines and to recognize excellence in the field. Its core areas of focus are education, cultural exchange and creative economy. Under the leadership of the First Lady and Honorary Chairman, and through the efforts of its federal and private members, the President's Committee has compiled an impressive legacy over its tenure, conducting major research and policy analysis, and catalyzing important federal cultural programs, both domestic and international.

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