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TURNAROUND:ARTS

creating success in schools

Our nation has both a moral and economic imperative to make sure that our schools are providing a quality education to all students. We won't be able to provide all students access to a great 21st century education unless we make it a priority to turn around chronically-underperforming schools, which disproportionately serve high-poverty areas. Recent research demonstrates that arts education can be an essential tool in helping to solve these very problems. Arts and music education doesn't just give artistic students something to do; it uniquely improves learning in all subjects, increases confidence and engagement, and sets students up for long-term success in school and in life.

We believe that effective, integrated arts education should be a part of our larger toolkit for turning around high-poverty, underperforming schools. As part of this administration's commitment to finding school turnaround solutions and creating more competitive learning environments, we are testing this hypothesis by launching a new Turnaround Arts Initiative in eight of our most challenged schools. Specifically this new public-private partnership will:

Help Close the Achievement Gap and Improve School Climate through the Arts

- This initial two-year program will launch in eight U.S. public schools that are receiving federal School Improvement Grants from the U.S. Department of Education. These SIG funds are provided for three years to schools identified as being in the lowest five percent of U.S. public schools and who have committed to intensive reform. PCAH has selected eight of these "turnaround" elementary and middle schools from across the country to participate in the program and because this effort is being funded through existing federal grants and private sources, poses no additional cost to taxpayers.
- As part of Turnaround Arts, PCAH and its partners will provide these schools an array of arts education services, resources and materials designed to increase their chances of success, engage their community, and raise the visibility of their achievements.
- Each school will receive training and professional development for school leadership and teachers from nationally-recognized arts education providers; partnerships with community arts education and cultural organizations; arts supplies and musical instruments; and a public arts event in the school with students, parents, community, and the involvement of a PCAH artist.
- As part of the program, PCAH Artist members including Chuck Close, Yo-Yo Ma, Sarah Jessica Parker, Kerry Washington, Forest Whitaker, Damian Woetzel and Alfre Woodard will "adopt" one of the Turnaround Arts schools, participating in events, master classes and community events with their school over the course of the term.

Test Whether High-Quality and Integrated Arts Education Can Be An Effective Tool to Aid School Reform

- An external evaluation will be conducted over the course of the program to determine the impact and effectiveness of using arts education in conjunction with other reform efforts at the eight selected schools.

Build a Model for Successful School Turnarounds through High Quality Arts Education

- In addition to being recipients of a School Improvement Grant, criteria for selection included demonstrated need and opportunity, strong school leadership with district support and a commitment to arts education.
- These are schools that are at "ground zero" of the Administration's effort to find school turnaround solutions and create more competitive learning environments. This program will provide a model and specific case studies for how the arts can be used to maximize those results.
- The selected schools are elementary and middle schools from across the country and encompass a diversity of student demographics and urban and rural settings, including New Orleans, LA; Des Moines, IA; Lame Deer, MT; Denver, CO; Roxbury, MA; Washington, DC; Portland, OR; and Bridgeport, CT.