

**Background** The West Alabama Arts Education Collaborative completed its second full year of programming in 2019-2020. In 2018-2019, it had two large-scale arts integration residency programs and doubled that reach to four programs in 2019-2020. In the fall of 2019, the WAAEC held two programs in the Tuscaloosa County School System at Myrtlewood Elementary and Buhl Elementary. In the spring of 2020, the WAAEC held one program in the Tuscaloosa City Schools at The Alberta School of Performing Arts. It was scheduled to start a program at Englewood Elementary (Tuscaloosa County School System) in May of 2020, but due to COVID-19, it was postponed until 2020-2021. Altogether, the WAAEC programs in 2019-2020 reached approximately 250 students and 12 teachers, not including students and teachers from Englewood Elementary (estimated 120 and 8, respectively).

**Program Goals**

- Form partnerships with schools to offer innovative arts integration units
- Help classroom teachers gain confidence using the arts to teach state core curriculum standards
- Recruit and train teaching artists in the West Alabama region in arts integration curriculum design and execution
- Form relationships with community arts organizations in order to build varied and sustainable arts integration programs in schools

**Goals at the Local Level**

**3 (4 with Englewood) school partnerships serving 4 grade levels**

- Myrtlewood Elementary School - Fosters, AL - 1st grade (Tuscaloosa County Schools)
- Buhl Elementary School - Buhl, AL - 3rd and 4th grade (Tuscaloosa County Schools)
- The Alberta School of Performing Arts - Kindergarten (Tuscaloosa City Schools)

**3 units serving approximately 250 students in 2 different core curriculum areas:**

- Social Science
- English Language Arts
- Co-designed by 12 classroom teachers and 3 teaching artists
- Approximately 120 hours and 25 weeks of arts integration units

**Evaluation Parameters**

**Changes in student engagement and participation levels**

- Improvement in students' familiarity with different art forms
- Change in classroom teachers' skill level and interest in using arts in their lessons
- Degree of meeting state standards in the arts and academic areas

**Other Goals**

- Training for teaching artists in all disciplines using arts integration
- Following up with classroom teachers at programs after units end to assess longevity of skills learned
- Training for community arts organizations in arts integration/recruitment of local teaching artists
- Training for principals on the benefits of becoming an arts integrated school

**Summer and Virtual Plans**

- Meeting monthly with state leaders of the Artistic Literacy Consortium to restructure the Collaboratives with more autonomy in local areas and make a 3-to-5 year strategic plan
- Meeting weekly with the other Collaboratives (Greater Birmingham and North Alabama) to collaborate on a large virtual PD for either classroom teachers or teaching artists to be held in late June or July
- Local teaching artists are making videos of virtual lessons to be shared with schools
- Reconnecting with TASPAs teachers to continue their learning that was cancelled in March
- Providing arts organizations with a list of resources

## Year Two in Overview

### Fall 2019

**Myrtlewood Elementary**

- Curriculum planned by teaching artist Ruth O'Connor alongside classroom teachers with the goal of finding out where the arts could enhance their regular subject matter. By the end of the 9-week program, classroom teachers had learned the skills necessary to use visual art in the teaching of their social science standards.
- Served all students in first grade with visual arts program integrated with social science/language arts.
- Focused on local history and individuals in historical settings.
- Students had 1 hour of arts instruction once a week.



Above, Photo from the Buhl Elementary School Poetry Cafe, the culmination of the WAAEC's Creative Writing Program at Buhl in partnership with the Alabama Writers' Forum. All 3rd and 4th graders from the school read their original poetry in front of their peers, families, and teachers in February 2020.

**Buhl Elementary**

- First residency program in collaboration with a state arts organization, partnering with the Alabama Writers' Forum (AWF) with the goal to help students on personal expression in writing.
- Students learned the basics of poetry (some students had never read or written a poem before), and were given opportunities to write their own poetry each week.
- Served all third and fourth grade students.
- The program ended with a "Poetry Cafe" poetry reading event in which students read their original work from a published anthology that they took home to their families.



### Spring 2020

**Alberta School of Performing Arts**

- Visual arts/English language arts program with teaching artist Ruth O'Connor. The program centered on looking at artwork and describing what they see.
- Served all Kindergarten students
- The last couple of weeks were cancelled due to COVID-19. We plan to reconnect with the Kindergarten teachers over the summer for virtual professional development, and hope to return to TASPAs in the fall to do the program again with their input.

**Englewood Elementary**

- Collaboration planned with the Tuscaloosa Symphony Orchestra at Englewood Elementary School. A 5-week performance-based residency was planned for all fourth grade students beginning in May. Due to COVID-19, it was postponed. We hope to bring the program to students - either in person or virtually - during the 2020-2021 school year.

**Professional Development at Myrtlewood and Buhl**

- In addition to arts integration residency programs, we also hosted school-wide professional development in arts integration for all classroom teachers at both Myrtlewood and Buhl Elementary Schools.
- Shannon McCue and Sandy Wolfe (alongside representatives from the other two state collaboratives and leaders at the state level) attended a conference on Collective Impact initiatives in Pittsburgh in October of 2019, where they learned more about how the Artistic Literacy Consortium can improve its collective impact model to serve the state's students more effectively.