



Natural and  
Cultural Resources



TO: Members of the Joint Legislative Commission on Governmental Operations  
President Pro Tempore Phil Berger, Co-Chair  
Speaker of the House Tim Moore, Co-Chair  
The Senate Appropriations Committee on General Government and Information  
Technology  
Senator Jim Davis, Co-Chair  
Senator Norman W. Sanderson, Co-Chair  
Senators Andrew Brock, Josh Stein, Jeff Tarte, Mike Woodard  
The House Appropriations Sub-Committee on General Government  
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Representative George Cleveland, Chair  
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Representative Gale Adcock, John Ager, Mark Brody, Susan Fisher,  
Elmer Floyd, and Larry Pittman, Joe Sam Queen, Sam Watford  
Fiscal Research Division  
Mark Trogdon, Director  
Lisa Hollowell  
Mark Bondo  
Daniel Sater

FROM: Wayne Martin  
Director, North Carolina Arts Council  
Department of Natural and Cultural Resources

RE: A+ Schools Special Fund  
Report FY 2014-2015

DATE: 9//25/2015

Pursuant to GS 143B-87.2, please see the attached report required by September 30, 2015.

**BUDGET CODE 24812 A+ Schools Special Fund**

<b>BEGINNING BALANCE</b>			<b>\$442,883.66</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>			
	STIF Interest		2,082.51
	Non Capital Gifts*		212,500.00
	General Revenue, Misc.	Training Revenues	<u>154,303.13</u>
		<b>TOTAL REVENUES</b>	<b>\$368,885.64</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>			
	Personal Services		112,593.99
	Purchased Services	Training Contracts	335,924.54
	General Admin Supplies		<u>916.27</u>
		<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURES</b>	<b>\$449,434.80</b>
<b>ENDING BALANCE</b>			<b>\$362,334.50</b>

**Brief description of the program**

The A+ Schools Program is a whole school reform model that began in North Carolina as a public-private partnership in 1995. The central vision of A+ Schools is to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students by using arts-integrated instruction which incorporates Howard Gardner's theory of multiple intelligences and recent brain research findings, along with dance, drama, music, visual art and creative writing. Currently the program serves 50 preK-12 schools in all regions of the state with over 20,000 students and 1,500 teachers/administrators.

In the summer of 2010, the A+ Schools Program moved from UNC-Greensboro to become a part of the North Carolina Arts Council and the Department of Cultural Resources. The state allocation that transferred to DCR for the program was just over \$56,000. The A+ Schools Program is recognized as the most successful arts-based whole school reform model in the nation. North Carolina has helped to train other states to implement the program as well. Currently there are A+ networks in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.

While the majority of A+ Schools are designated Title I, they continue to demonstrate achievement at or above the state average, while teaching a much fuller curriculum than many other schools. Years of evaluation conclude that when a school is highly engaged in the A+ process, teachers are more satisfied and effective, students are more engaged, and there is more community and parental involvement.

Currently, the A+ Schools Program has three full-time dedicated staff positions, two of which are receipts-based. All training is conducted by highly qualified A+ Fellows who work through personal service contracts. There are 50 A+ Fellows, a cohort made up of master teachers and professional teaching artists, serving the professional development needs of the schools in the network. The lion's share of our expenditures go directly to professional development for schools, teachers and administrators through summer training institutes, school-based training workshops during the school year, and school leadership meetings in the fall and spring.

## Highlights from 2014-15

- In the summer of 2014, we brought three new schools into the A+ network: Reynolds High School, Creedmoor Elementary and EK Powe Elementary. Additionally, over 20 veteran schools were involved in multiple-day institutes to refresh their A+ commitment and strengthen their practice. The summer of 2015 saw four new schools added to the state network: New Bridge and Townsend Middle Schools, North Graham Elementary and ZECA Charter. North Carolina A+ now has 50 active schools in the network.
- Over the past 18 months, A+ Schools staff and fellows collaborated with VIF International Education to develop globally themed arts-integrated professional development for teachers through the [VIF Learning Center](#). This partnership supports teachers' ongoing professional development, simultaneously enhancing global learning and promoting arts integration across different subjects.

The first A+ Schools professional development module in VIF's Learning Center lets teachers explore how to inspire global inquiry by introducing various art forms - dance, drama, music and visual arts. This challenges educators to discover how the arts can enhance global learning in their classrooms. Upon completion of the module, teachers will earn the Global Arts digital badge, which can be shared with principals, colleagues and peers around the world through online portfolios. All A+ educators across the nation will have lifetime access to the A+ Global Arts Modules as well as access to the entire VIF Learning Center for the first year.

- In addition to training new schools in North Carolina this summer, we also trained a new A+ School in Sioux City, Iowa, who will be a sister school for our long-time A+ School in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. The Superintendent in Sioux City, Paul Gosman, who had a previous A+ connection with the now defunct South Dakotans for the Arts, is highly engaged and is interested in additional A+ Schools in his district. Our work to support these efforts will continue in the coming years.

This summer, we also hosted a team of educators from Bern, Switzerland, who are very interested in starting an A+ movement in Switzerland. These visitors were imbedded for a week of training with our new middle schools and were also able to attend the A+ 20<sup>th</sup> Conference. The planned work will likely begin in 2016 with a week-long arts integration seminar to garner interest, followed by the training of one or two pilot schools. Jean Hendrickson has agreed to provide planning support as we continue to develop this relationship.

*(Note: Schools outside of North Carolina pay a premium for our services. This revenue helps to support the training that we provide for our in-state schools year round.)*

- This year the A+ Schools Program continued its new, expanded scope of services to provide arts integration training to teachers and administrators outside of the network of A+ Schools. Once again, we held two week-long arts integration seminar at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) in Cullowhee and two days of professional development in conjunction with NCDPI in two regions of the state.



- Recently, A+ Schools received a \$100,000 grant award from the Kenan Charitable Trust to refine our messaging and to aid in the recruitment of new schools. The Trust is very interested in helping A+ scale our work to more schools, more educators, and more students throughout the state. We will be hiring a PR firm in the coming months to assist in these efforts.
- And last but not least, we hosted the A+ Schools 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference from August 3-5, 2015, in Durham. The feedback from the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Conference attendees has been extremely positive. The opening night event, five keynote speakers, 30 concurrent sessions, and ample time for networking made for an engaging, interactive and inspiring conference. With over 350 attendees at the Monday evening legacy event, and 300 educators, artists, advocates and funders from across the nation with us on Tuesday and Wednesday, the conference goals of celebrating, sharing innovative practice, thinking forward and inspiring action kept all participants connected to the work of the A+ Schools network.

In a post-conference survey, some participants reflected back on their experience:

"We wanted to say THANK YOU to you, and to everyone who made the 20th celebration such a remarkable event. We have been to lots and lots of conferences, but this one stood out as by far the most inspiring." - Susanna Abell, Teaching Artist, Silver Trout Arts

"Great time in Durham! Great folks, presenters, facilities, food (trucks!!!), and networking! Awesome experience - excellent conference!" – Mark Sidelnick, Associate Professor of Education, UNC Asheville

"It was the most creative and thoughtful conference, from an attendee point of view. It felt like a small family gathering, despite how large the attendee population was. I felt considered and cared for ~ this I cannot say for other conferences." – conference attendee

"It was wonderful...uplifting...rejuvenating...inspiring. There was so much to take away that was positive. Kudos to all who shared themselves at this event. I came away ready to go back to my classroom eager to work with my students. Thanks for reinforcing what I've always known in my heart were the best teaching practices!" - conference attendee

"I loved the flow, the consistent thought toward detail and participants' interests and comfort. I thought the scope of the conference was superior and actually took me by surprise as I continue to realize just how much A+ has matured over the past 20 years. Michelle and her team are just the right mix of organizational wizards and innovators. BRAVO"!!! – conference attendee