Arts in Basic Curriculum

20-Year Anniversary Evaluation
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Participating sites and interviewees

About the Improve Group

The Improve Group is an independent evaluation and planning firm with the mission to help organizations deliver effective services. The research design, data collection, analysis and reporting expertise of the Improve Group particularly emphasizes building the capacity of local organizations to make information meaningful and useful. The Improve Group has been working with arts education initiatives since 2003.

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Executive Summary

At their 20-year anniversary, the Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project can look back on many accomplishments and innovations that have helped the Project make progress on its goal to ensure that every student in South Carolina has access to a quality, comprehensive arts education. Through funding, research, advocacy and training and technical assistance, the Project has been a model for a number of advancements in arts education. The statewide focus, the creation of arts education standards and curriculum, the success of its advocacy and its inroads on arts education assessment and integration mark the ABC Project as a significant leader in the field of arts education. At this 20th anniversary, the ABC Project engaged an independent evaluator to explore the Project’s impact at this stage of its history.

This report captures the findings of this 20-year evaluation. The evaluator conducted interviews with key stakeholders; surveyed teachers (arts and non-arts), administrators, arts coordinators and parents at Project sites; reviewed program records; and referenced findings from other relevant research studies. Recommendations based on these findings are offered to help ABC successfully build on its efforts to provide access to a quality arts education for every student in the state.

Project Governance
ABC’s partners, the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education and Winthrop University work together through a Coordinating Committee; this body exhibits a number of indicators of strong collaboration. Though the partnership has faced challenges at times over the 20 years, partners have been able to work through difficulties to continue constructive collaborative work. From the beginning of the Project, ABC has also had a commitment to involving a broader array of stakeholders through a larger Steering Committee.

Recommendation: A large Steering Committee provides an opportunity to engage representatives from many sectors who can and do support arts education, but it can also be too large for close involvement in activities such as annual planning. ABC will need to identify ways for new participants and/or fresh perspectives from the different sectors represented on the Steering Committee to provide direction and feedback for the Project.
Funding and Grantmaking

ABC has consistently grown the number of funded sites through ABC grants as well as those sponsored by the State Department of Education (Distinguished Arts Program). Thirty-five percent of all school sites in the state have applied for or been part of an application for a successful DAP grant; 25% of school sites across the state have applied for or been part of an application for an ABC grant. When asked about the impacts they have observed, almost all parents report that arts education develops their child’s creativity, a quality which educators are increasingly recognizing is a critical element to children’s education today and their ability to adapt to the changing world as they mature. Acting on a recommendation from the 10-year evaluation, ABC increased its outreach to target underserved, primarily rural, sites.

*Recommendation:* In order to continue to expand ABC’s influence and its arts education reform efforts throughout the state, ABC will likely have to rely even more on working through site representatives. ABC has reached many sites in the state, but stretched staff capacity will not be able to support a significant number of new sites. At the same time, some changes may be needed in the outreach model currently in use. The methods of engaging outreach sites have proved successful in building support for arts education, participation in advocacy and use of ABC tools. But, the model may not be as effective at overcoming some differences in resource availability or in the engagement of faculty in discussions about arts education.

*Recommendation:* Differences between DAP and ABC sites indicate that a review of guidelines, expectations and implementation for these two programs could help to clarify how programs can “learn” from one another to accomplish progress on shared goals.

Research

ABC has shown a consistent commitment to investigating its impact and evaluating its progress. Moreover, the Project has acted on the recommendations of past evaluations and has formed a productive partnership with the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina to continue to inform its efforts. The South Carolina Arts Achievement Project (SCAAP) is an innovative standardized assessment tool that was developed through the efforts of ABC stakeholders.

*Recommendation:* Future evaluations will be aided if ABC is able to gather consistent data on the impact of professional development opportunities, as well as encouraging participation in SCAAP to build a record of arts education achievement at sites.
Training and Technical Assistance
A majority of districts in the state have sent representatives to ABC’s summer professional
development workshops. Those attending the workshops have participated in a wide diversity
of workshops, found the content relevant and reported these experiences help them to use
State Standards in their classroom. Technical assistance has been a major focus of ABC staff
time, but many staff at sites do not recognize this assistance as having come from ABC or are
unaware of the assistance. Most of those who have participated in ABC professional
development or technical assistance report a strong positive impact from the experience.

A majority of arts teachers at ABC sites are participating in professional development
activities at higher rates than non-arts teachers. Many survey respondents reported that the
arts standards and curriculum guides which ABC has been so instrumental in creating have a
positive impact on student achievement. Finally, survey results indicate that South Carolina is
outperforming national levels in the percent of arts teachers who are certified in the areas
they teach.

Recommendation: ABC will need to identify ways to increase stakeholder
awareness of the Project and its work. Awareness was limited among survey
respondents about what ABC is and the support that ABC staff offered their
school or district.

Advocacy
ABC has had a number of important successes in policy work at the state level and can serve
as a national model. In particular, other initiatives can learn from ABC’s experience in state
policy work, curriculum standards and standardized assessment. At the local level, ABC has
sought to build support through the Project’s direct efforts but also by encouraging sites to
involve local stakeholders in creating arts education strategic plans. The evaluation showed
that those with knowledge of the strategic plans did indeed have supportive attitudes about
arts education, but many other stakeholders were not aware of the plans. In addition, the
participation of stakeholders in the planning process is not as broad as ABC has encouraged.
Strategic planning appears to be useful in building support for the arts; however, the methods
of engaging stakeholders at district-wide sites should be reviewed to attain the same
outcomes of support and engagement achieved at school sites. In general, district-wide sites
tend to show lower levels of support for arts education and less awareness of ABC.
Recommendation: ABC must reinforce a message to sites that it is important to engage and communicate with a broad group of stakeholders in the planning process. Such widespread engagement can also be a vehicle to sustain progress made in building support for arts education, as strategic plans are regularly reviewed and updated.
Introduction

The Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project has ensured students throughout South Carolina have a quality, comprehensive arts education for 20 years. Through funding, research, advocacy and training and technical assistance, the Project has been a model for a number of advancements in arts education. The statewide focus, the creation of arts education standards and curriculum, the success of its advocacy and its inroads on arts education assessment and integration mark the ABC Project as a significant leader in the field of arts education. At its 20th anniversary, the ABC Project engaged an independent evaluator to explore the Project’s impact at this stage of its history. This report captures the findings of this 20-year evaluation.

This report opens with a brief history of ABC, including findings from its 10-year evaluation. The report then provides a description of the structure of ABC and evaluation findings on the effectiveness of this structure. Next, evaluation findings are presented for ABC’s main areas of work: funding, ongoing research, training and technical assistance, and advocacy.

The report then describes additional key findings about the impact of ABC on participating sites. Finally, recommendations stemming from evaluation findings are presented to inform ABC in the next chapter of their work.

A number of sources of information were used for this report: interviews with key stakeholders; a survey of teachers (arts and non-arts), administrators, arts coordinators and parents at Project sites; program records; and other relevant research studies. A more detailed discussion of the evaluation approach and a description of survey respondents can be found in the appendices.

1 Over 4,000 total responses were received through this survey from parents and staff at ABC and DAP sites across the state. 96% of school sites and 93% of district sites are represented in survey results.
Arts in Basic Curriculum: A Brief History

The Arts in Basic Curriculum Project (ABC) began with a grant to the South Carolina Arts Commission from the National Endowment for the Arts that supported planning to connect artists-in-schools programs to schools’ visual and performing arts curriculum. Significantly, the grant required collaboration among state arts agencies, state departments of education and higher education. In this way, this grant and the subsequent planning work brought together the three main partners of ABC: the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education and Winthrop University. The ABC Steering Committee, created at the same time by the Arts Commission, involved many more stakeholders who had an interest in the arts or education in South Carolina. In this way, the ABC Project set a precedent early in its history that it sought the involvement and engagement of a broad group of South Carolinians to support arts education in the state.

As seen in the timeline of Project milestones below, ABC quickly established a focus on developing tools and assistance to promote the use of quality arts curricula. Another early and continuing focus was established when ABC recognized that direct funding to schools and districts would be important to increasing support for and the presence of quality arts education around the state. Not long after, ABC began the first of a number of professional development programs that engaged not only arts teachers but also administrators, again to build skills and support for quality arts education. The Project has also commissioned research on relevant issues periodically. Most recently, regular research on the impact of ABC’s work has been conducted by the University of South Carolina’s Office of Program evaluation for the past nine years. Finally, throughout its history, ABC has recognized the need for building local support and state level advocacy for arts education to create an environment that promotes quality arts education for all students in South Carolina. Major milestones in these areas are included in the timeline below. This timeline is drawn from a much fuller history of the ABC Project which was completed in 2007 by Ray Doughty, ABC Project Director from 1991-1998.
ABC Project Milestones

1987
The South Carolina Arts Commission receives an Arts in Schools Basic Education Grant (AISBEG) from the National Endowment for the Arts to begin planning for what would become ABC. Winthrop University and the State Department of Education are key early partners to the ABC Project. Fifty other stakeholders comprise the Project steering committee.

1988
South Carolina Arts Commission and its partners create The ABC Plan. This document outlines a curriculum for arts instructors while also providing a reference to support the engagement of other teachers, administrators and teaching artists in supporting this quality arts curriculum. The Arts Commission receives a three-year, $150,000 AISBEG implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to continue its work on ABC.

1989
ABC Model Site grant program is opened to South Carolina schools and districts; awardees are to act as exemplars for future grantees. With its advocacy allies, ABC enjoys a policy accomplishment in the Target 2000 Education Reform bill, which includes provisions based on the ABC Plan and funding for Target 2000 Arts in Education grants. These grants would later be known as Distinguished Arts Program (DAP) grants. DAP and model site grant programs continue to embody ABC’s funding support to school and district sites.

1990
Curriculum frameworks for dance and drama, developed through funding provided by the South Carolina Arts Commission, are adopted by the State Board of Education. Such frameworks define curriculum and key components of a quality arts education. Frameworks promote consistent access to quality arts education around the state and are intended to replace existing approaches in many schools that were based on textbooks and/or performances and productions.

1991
The South Carolina Arts Commission receives a second, three-year, $150,000 AISBEG implementation grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. ABC hosts its first in a series of Higher Education Forums and Arts Leadership Institutes.

1993
The South Carolina Board of Education approves the South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Frameworks, one of the first subject area frameworks approved by the Board; framework development for other subjects followed in subsequent years. Also in 1993, the Board of Education approves teacher certification in dance.

1995
The first Curriculum Leadership Institute for the Arts takes place; this summer staff development workshop is patterned after similar professional development projects for math and science. Also in 1995, a five-year progress report, Making the Arts Basic in the Curriculum: Five Years of Progress in the ABC Model Sites, is published.
1998
ABC advocacy efforts result in important arts education language being included in South Carolina’s Education and Accountability Act. A collection of South Carolina professional arts education organizations publishes a joint statement on the importance of arts education—Where We Stand. Another key milestone also happens in 1998: the State Department of Education adopts Visual and Performing Arts Academic Achievement Standards, which ABC had been developing. Finally, teacher certification in theatre education is also approved by the State Department of Education.

1999
ABC publishes a ten-year Project evaluation report - The Arts in Basic Curriculum Project: A Ten Year Evaluation. Based on recommendations from this evaluation, ABC creates an outreach initiative to target previously underserved schools and districts.

2000-2001
The arts are included on the Education Accountability Act mandated school report card. Responding to another recommendation of the 10-year evaluation, the ABC Coordinating Committee develops a new ABC Project strategic plan; the outreach initiative is funded and officially begins. The first Arts Education Research Project report is published.

2002
The South Carolina Leadership for Success Academy (SCALSA) focused on the needs of new arts teachers is created. The South Carolina Visual and Performing Arts Standards are revised and aligned with national arts education standards. The South Carolina Department of Education Target 2000 grant program becomes the Distinguished Arts Programs grant program.

2003
ABC establishes an approach of having regional consultants assist in the outreach initiative. The ABC Project is also highlighted as a national model for arts education reform at a meeting of the National Arts Education Partnership. The Arts Education Leadership Institute is also highlighted by the Arts for Learning website.

2004
The ABC Steering Committee adopts a new five year strategic plan for the Project.

2005
The ABC Project develops a logo to represent its work. ABC redesigns professional development opportunities at ABC Advancement Sites, offering three professional development meetings each year for teachers, with substitute pay provided for two representatives. A task force begins work on developing a definition of arts integration.

2006
A task force is established to ensure that theatre teachers can attain “highly qualified status”, as defined by federal No Child Left Behind legislation.

2007
ABC works with the State Department of Education to coordinate work on “Scope and Sequence” guidelines for standards-based arts curriculum.
Looking back: ABC’s 10-Year Evaluation

In 1999, South Carolina completed another milestone evaluation with Michael Seaman, Associate Professor of Educational Research at the College of Education at the University of South Carolina. The major findings of the 10-year evaluation were that the ABC Project had built a strong network that measurably strengthened arts education in the state, and that the Project must develop new initiatives in order for this reform to continue. Seaman’s primary recommendation to ABC was that Project staff members develop a data-informed strategic plan for arts education, and then use this plan to determine funding priorities. Additionally, he suggested that support for arts education could be improved through an expansion of school district, school site, and teacher networks in order to most effectively increase support for arts education reform. The evaluation also recommended that ABC expand the school district arts coordinator network. One of the key findings was that having an arts coordinator is a key factor in promoting arts education and supporting arts curriculum within districts, and therefore a coordinators’ network would be particularly beneficial in growing district-level support for arts education.

Seaman also found that arts education at ABC school sites was diverse in both quality and depth. Arts education in these schools was found to be more framework-based when arts teachers were active members of the state arts education networks. Furthermore, the report found that support for arts education and arts integration was higher in ABC participating sites than non-participating sites. Seaman therefore recommended that ABC recruit schools and districts that would otherwise not seek to connect with the Project in order to strengthen existing networks, improve arts programming and increase support for arts education. In order to further the ABC Projects’ impact on arts education in South Carolina statewide, Seaman recommended that ABC focus on expanding its partnerships and outreach to districts and schools. For example, the report recommended that ABC establish a multi-tiered partnership for schools, with different goals and standards for each tier, to allow some flexibility for schools and districts.
ABC’s Structure and its Effectiveness

The following section describes ABC, how it is structured, the activities it uses to achieve goals, and how effective its structure is perceived to be by members of the education, arts, policy and arts education community.

Project Structure, Goals and Activities

The Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Project is a statewide initiative with the mission to provide leadership to achieve quality, comprehensive arts education (dance, music, theatre, visual arts and creative writing) for all students in South Carolina. Operating for 20 years, the ABC Project is under the direction of the South Carolina Arts Commission, the South Carolina Department of Education, and Winthrop University’s College of Visual and Performing Arts, who oversee the Project through a Coordinating Committee. The Coordinating Committee meets regularly, including an annual retreat to assess the current environment, review the Project’s progress on strategic goals and make plans for the coming year.

These partners are also part of a larger ABC Steering Committee which sets broad direction for the ABC Project. The Steering Committee has, from its inception, been a large body representing diverse interests and intended to involve and engage a spectrum of stakeholders who have an interest in arts and arts education. This committee includes representatives from schools, districts, colleges, artists, arts organizations, teachers and community leaders. The ABC Steering Committee is responsible for reviewing ABC Project initiatives and making recommendations. The Steering Committee meets three times each year.

Though the main goals of ABC have remained the same throughout the Project's history, these goals, and strategies to achieve these goals, are regularly refined through strategic planning processes, per a recommendation from the 10-year evaluation. The current ABC Project Strategic Plan identifies six goals of the Project for the 2006-2010 period:

1. Maintain statewide momentum toward excellent arts education through leadership and strategic partnerships at all levels.
2. Increase understanding and support of arts education.

3. Establish and maintain public policy and systems of accountability that promote quality, comprehensive arts education for all students.

4. Increase individual schools and school districts capacities to implement comprehensive, standards-based arts education.

5. Increase knowledge and understanding of diversity in the arts among educators and students.

6. Enhance and diversify ABC development activities.

These goals guided the creation of a logic model which framed this evaluation (logic model can be found in Appendix A). The logic model used these current goals to identify indicators of success for the ABC Project; thus, many of the strategic plan’s objectives and relevant indicators are referenced throughout this report.

ABC primarily carries out its mission through grant-making, training and technical assistance, conducting research, and being a leader in advocacy to support public policies that promote quality arts education. Grant-making is accomplished through the South Carolina Arts Commission ABC Advancement grants and the State Department of Education Distinguished Arts Program grants. These two grant programs are referred to as ABC and DAP grants, respectively, in this report. This funding provides resources directly to schools and districts to support their efforts to build quality, comprehensive arts education programs. Funding sites may be schools or districts and some sites have received support from both ABC and DAP grant programs.

ABC also provides training and technical assistance to individual sites. This work helps sites with implementing local curriculum aligned with the South Carolina Curriculum Standards, identifying and implementing model programs, establishing curriculum guidelines, ensuring that specialists teach the arts, promoting the role of district-wide arts coordinators and supporting arts education strategic planning processes. The ABC Project brings site leaders together during regular day-long seminars to share information about their local projects,

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2 A logic model is a table or other graphic that describes goals, activities, indicators of success, and measurement tools.
discuss and learn about new initiatives and to gain professional development. ABC also provides professional development services to schools and districts that facilitate curriculum development using the South Carolina Curriculum Standards. Professional development is offered through (1) in-service training packages for classroom teachers and arts teachers; and (2) summer institutes for administrators, arts teachers and arts teacher educators. Finally, the Project has been active in ensuring that teacher certification is available in all arts areas, to promote appropriate pre-service training for arts teachers.

**Research** on its impact and on topics relevant to promoting quality arts education has been another important area of activity for ABC, including early studies and its 10-year evaluation. Since 2000, the Office of Program Evaluation at the University of South Carolina has published regular studies through the Arts Education Research Project that specifically investigate outcomes at ABC sites. Further, the South Carolina Arts Achievement Project (SCAAP) has been an innovative tool in this arts education research - supporting standardized assessment of arts education impact at multiple sites in South Carolina.

Finally, **advocacy** has been a critical activity for ABC over the years. Often, ABC works closely with the South Carolina Arts Alliance on advocacy efforts. Over its history, ABC Project partners, staff and site participants have all participated in advocacy efforts to promote policies that would support quality arts education. ABC also includes advocacy and leadership training in its professional development opportunities.

**Evaluation Findings on the Effectiveness of ABC’s Structure**

ABC looks to strengthen and sustain its efforts through its structure of Steering and Coordinating Committees. A number of indicators of strong and productive governance for these groups are identified in this evaluation. Findings relevant to these indicators are summarized below.
Indicator: Clear communication amongst committee members

In his 10-year history of the ABC Project, Doughty reports\(^3\) that the Coordinating Committee met regularly in person and corresponded often by phone and email. In addition, he describes that the committee began meeting for an annual retreat in 1990.

In interviews, all Coordinating Committee representatives report they have experienced effective communication on the committee. They described that communication takes place through regular Coordinating Committee meetings and the annual retreat. The steering committee meets 3-4 times a year, and communicates through emails and conference calls. The Arts Commission, State Department of Education and ABC staff members see each other more regularly than Winthrop representatives in day to day interactions. The annual retreat is valued by Coordinating Committee members.

Non-Coordinating Committee interviewees report good communication as well, again primarily through meetings and email. About half of the interviewees mentioned the steering committee meetings as a venue for sharing information. Four of the ten interviewees described that relevant communication often takes place outside of formal ABC settings. For instance, two interviewees mentioned that they are updated on relevant issues at Council of Arts Education Presidents meetings. Two others mentioned that there is a lot of cross-fertilization among boards of various organizations. Two areas of improvement were suggested during the interviews. One interviewee raised the point that using communication channels that focus on boards may hinder the inclusion of “new voices at the table”. Another noted that that reliance on long, comprehensive steering committee meetings can be difficult, and it is a burden to take that time from other responsibilities.

Indicator: Partners are well-informed about relevant actions taken by one another

Previous members of the Coordinating Committee said that partners have historically done a good job of informing one another about relevant events, especially Winthrop and Arts Commission partners. Existing members agree that this is an important part of membership in the Coordinating Committee, with one interviewee saying it can get “a little bumpy when we get unilateral action and someone gets surprised by something”. This suggests that members

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appreciate advance knowledge of one another’s activities as well as opportunities to be involved.

At the time of the interviews, recent staff changes with one partner were impacting the information flow to members. Interviewees described an initial period after this staff change wherein the partnership experienced difficulty getting the new representative assigned, up to speed on the purpose of ABC and vested with the decision-making authority appropriate for an ABC partner. One interviewee gave an example of documents related to arts standards that were created without ABC Coordinating Committee input. However, most of those who mentioned these difficulties noted that they were improving at the time of the interviews and had high expectations for the coming months. The experience does illustrate the importance and complexity of maintaining a strong partnership in a long-term initiative like ABC.

**Indicator: Decisions reflect the consensus of partners**

Current Coordinating Committee members mostly agree that decision-making goes well, noting that ABC staff is involved on the Coordinating Committee to inform decisions. Issues of reduced information from and opportunity for input after the staff change with one partner (described above) were raised again by some interviewees in response to this question. One said this hampered decision-making. Another interviewee, involved in the past, described that the partners “...worked in a way that we would not make substantive decisions without getting each other’s input.” One non-Coordinating Committee member observed that the full steering committee used to get more questions on direction, whereas this activity has more recently shifted to the Coordinating Committee.

Strategic plans were mentioned several times in interviews as an important reference during decision-making. One of the strongest recommendations in the 10-year evaluation was to develop a strategic plan to help guide decision-making. Subsequently, strategic plans have been developed that guide ABC’s work, including framing the focus of this 20-year evaluation.

**Indicator: Common vision of targets is shared by partners**

Doughty’s history describes deep involvement of the State Department of Education, Winthrop University, the Arts Commission and the influential steering committee in developing the guiding principles of ABC with the support of an initial planning grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). This guiding principle continues to be that arts
education should be an integral part of a student’s overall education program, not an appendage but basic to all students’ education in South Carolina. The steering committee worked in subcommittees to conduct a survey of needs, establish a common vision and outline recommendations for meeting that vision. Doughty recounts the basic statements of this vision that he asserts remain central to ABC’s work today:

1. All children in South Carolina schools should have equal educational opportunities to study the arts.
2. The arts are basic to general education and have profound value in shaping the quality of life/education in South Carolina.
3. The arts impart necessary knowledge, skills and understanding, and are a vital part of the education of all children.
4. The arts transmit and express civilization and are an important resource in education.
5. Creativity, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills are fostered through quality arts education.

In addition, the steering committee defined key strategies that ABC would use and specific resolutions that addressed elements such as curriculum, teacher training and certification and advocacy. Coordinating Committee interviewees who were involved in developing the vision described it as a very collaborative process with many key stakeholders involved.

Today, all Coordinating Committee interviewees confirmed that the vision is clear and all members are in consensus about its meaning. Interviewees said there has not been a change in the basic vision of ABC, though some recognized that strategies and emphasis have evolved over the years. Non-Coordinating Committee members did not consistently articulate the vision as clearly as Coordinating Committee members, but all did describe a similar focus for ABC and noted that they felt the vision was clear. Most interviewees said that ABC’s vision and goals were important to their own organization. One remarked that, while some legislators see ABC’s importance, a number are not very involved in education.

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Indicator: Partners’ individual agency actions generally support ABC’s vision
Eight (all who responded to this specific question) Coordinating Committee interviewees report that the Coordinating Committee member organizations’ actions generally support the vision of ABC and all felt that their organizations supported their involvement with ABC. One interviewee reported similar impressions historically, since they are no longer involved. Several interviewees mentioned that a meeting with a higher-level staff representative of the partner organization with the recent staff change had helped this staff person better understand their role with ABC and the staff has subsequently increased their involvement.

Indicator: Transitions are managed to support ongoing partner involvement and support of common vision
All Coordinating Committee interviewees responded that ABC was supported and functional throughout transitions. A few described that this did not mean that transitions were easy; they required a “training-in” of new members. The majority of Coordinating Committee interviewees reported that it was helpful during these transitions to have some continuity in those involved on the committee who could provide institutional memory and help orient new members. Interviewees described some examples of how transitions can be challenging, both in recent times and in the past. One interviewee, involved since the beginning of ABC continued with this important observation,

While the persons representing the three agencies - Winthrop University, the Arts Commission, and the State Department of Education - have changed almost yearly since 1989, the group has remained a cohesive and effective committee supporting both the Steering Committee and the [ABC] Project office.5

Indicator: Partners contribute needed financial resources and influence to maintain coalition and programming
The Arts Commission has funded the administration of ABC through grants to Winthrop University, in addition to administering the ABC grant program. The State Department of Education, with allocations from the South Carolina Legislature, administers the DAP grant program and has recently also begun to contribute funds to support ABC’s administrative costs. Winthrop University provides in-kind resources to support the ABC Project office. No partners remarked on inadequate levels of funding from partners. All Coordinating Committee

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partners further described how connections are shared with other committee members to expand ABC’s sphere of influence.

**Indicator: Partners have a high level of trust with one another**

Most Coordinating Committee members reported that the partners trust one another. An interviewee defined trust among partners as each one’s actions honoring the leadership role of ABC. Further, that partner said that trust could be compromised if a partner’s actions do not seem to honor the leadership role of ABC, such as not bringing up important issues for ABC to review. Non-Coordinating Committee members mostly said there did not seem to be any trust issues from their perspective. One interviewee suggested that others may feel there is an “outside and inside circle”, related to how long individuals have been involved with ABC, but the interviewee considered this to be a misperception.

**Indicator: Influential partners participate in coalition**

The initial NEA grant which supported the start-up for ABC required collaboration among state-level organizations: state arts agencies, state departments of education and higher education. The executive director more than fulfilled this requirement by appointing a steering committee of more than 50 people from over thirty different fields, including education, government, cultural institutions, professional associations, higher educations and “virtually any area the fledgling ABC planners could think of that might support and/or oppose the development of the initiatives.” In Doughty’s 20-year history, he adds that the Steering Committee continues to meet three times each year and has an active task force system. The ten-year evaluation notes that the Steering Committee had become more of a place to exchange information and had less of a “working role” than it had in the beginning.

All Coordinating Committee interviewees said that the key stakeholders are committed and involved on the committee. There was agreement that the Coordinating Committee is a good size to accomplish its work. There was also agreement that stakeholders not serving on or represented by the Coordinating Committee should be involved in other ways. Half of the Coordinating Committee interviewees mentioned the Steering Committee as an important mechanism for this. Another described how the Coordinating Committee had invited arts

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education associations to the annual Coordinating Committee retreat because that input was important for planning.
ABC’s Funding and Grantmaking: Evaluation Findings

This section begins the first of four that share the evaluation findings on ABC’s main areas of work: funding, research, training and technical assistance, and advocacy.

ABC funding and grant-making is a cornerstone of the Project’s work. When a site receives funding, it not only obtains resources for arts education, but also gains a connection to ABC’s other resources such as teacher training and professional development, a requirement to complete an arts education strategic plan and access to advocacy networks and technical assistance. The expectation is that, in addition to the direct funding, such resources will foster a quality arts education program and increase support for arts education at the site.

Previous research studies looked specifically at the impact of this funding and had positive findings. In 1995, Graybeal found,

> ...the ABC grants, along with other state initiatives such as the Target 2000 grants, have had a substantial impact on arts education in the model sites. During the past five years, the arts programs have grown substantially, in both quality and quantity. Improvements or increases have occurred in virtually every element addressed in this study and in all arts areas. As a result of these changes, students in the model sites are receiving a more complete and comprehensive arts education. 

The 10-year evaluation found that grant programs have increased the diversity of opportunities for students, provided funding for resources that would otherwise be inaccessible, increased personnel or resources in a district, improved educator understanding of the arts curriculum and how to integrate the curriculum with other disciplines.

Funding at the Classroom Level

Survey results from ABC and DAP grant sites show that two-thirds of arts teachers report that their arts classes had benefited directly from a grant in the last five years. Just over half of

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those who had benefited from a grant received one from the State Department of Education. About the same share had received a grant from the State Arts Commission; 34% had received a grant from another source (teachers could select more than one source of grants). Grants that arts teachers have received include ABC and DAP grants, as well as EIA grants, ISCA grants, Teacher’s PET grant, J. Marion Sims grants, Michelin Golden Apple Teacher grants, Public Education Partners, Palmetto Electric, APT grants, Surdna Foundation grants and county based grants. Teachers are the most common authors of grants which benefit arts classes, as seen in Figure 1 below.

**Figure 1. Authors of grants for arts classes**

Note: Arts teachers responded to the question, so “I did” means an arts teacher wrote the grant.

Source: the Improve Group

A 1995 research study concluded that a shortage of resources was a problem for ABC sites - in facilities, instructional materials, staffing, instructional time, instructional quality, and staff development. In general, dance and theatre programs were found to be those most in need of improvement.8

Arts teachers commented in the survey on the sources of funding for the resources they use in their arts classes. Table 1 shows that grants are a significant source of funding, in addition to

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district and school sources. “Other” sources of funds for arts resources come from the State, Box Tops for Education, Booster Clubs, community donors, fundraisers, an art fee paid by students, community arts groups, community businesses, parents, personal teacher funds and ticket sales for any performances held.

### Table 1. Sources of funding for arts resources

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of funding</th>
<th>Percent of arts teachers selecting as a source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>District</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grants</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent/Teacher Association</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I do not know</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Teachers expressed a need for additional resources to deliver standards-based arts education, particularly: school-owned instruments for economically disadvantaged students, text books, printed music, computers (for digital arts and photography), SMART Boards, kilns, general art supplies (paper, paints, glue, brushes, etc), music stands and a performance space.

Teachers of arts and other subject areas reported on the survey any barriers to taking students to out-of-school arts-related activities and field trips. Table 2 shows that funding is the most common barrier teachers listed, followed by a lack of time. A minority reported that they did not find arts activities relevant or that they did not know of opportunities for activities in their community.
Table 2. Reasons teachers do take classes to out-of-school arts activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary reason for not participating in arts-related activities outside of school</th>
<th>Percent of teachers selecting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>There is not enough money</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There is not enough time</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These activities are not relevant to the subjects I teach</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other*</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am not aware of opportunities for arts-related activities in my community</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>These activities distract from classroom learning</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

*Responses include a lack of time to plan these activities and a lack of funding to execute them, the fact that they do not have their own classroom of students to take because teachers rotate between several classes, or that field trips are not available to the students that they teach.

Grant Sites Statewide

ABC’s mission clearly prompts the Project to reach as many schools and district sites across the state as possible, to achieve a truly statewide initiative focused on quality arts education. Though program records do not go back to the beginning of the Project, Doughty cites that ABC began in 1989 with 11 schools and school districts as ABC sites. As Figure 2 shows below, the ABC Project has steadily increased the number of school sites receiving funding from either ABC or DAP programs throughout the state. The figure represents the total number of sites funded each year, including new sites as well as continued funding for existing sites.
After the 10-year evaluation, ABC identified certain under-served areas of the state and sought funding to increase outreach to these areas. Today, ABC and DAP have reached more than half of the schools in those areas (122 schools out of a total 225 schools) with many of these school sites first receiving funding in 2002. The 10-year evaluation specifically recommended that geographic diversity of sites be increased. With most sites represented in survey results, Figure 3 below shows how respondents described their community. The figure depicts a relatively even representation of different kinds of communities throughout South Carolina.
Figure 3. Types of communities that are ABC/DAP sites

Source: the Improve Group

The survey also provided an opportunity to investigate differences between (1) ABC- or DAP-funded sites and (2) sites which received funding at either the school or district level. Differences were investigated on survey responses using statistical tests\(^9\), and are described below.

Comparison of ABC and DAP-funded sites\(^{10}\)

Support for arts education
Sites who responded to the survey had received funding from the ABC grant program, the DAP grant program or both. Levels of support for arts education were consistent regardless of the funding source. For example, respondents responded similarly about whether or not:

- Arts should be offered at the school
- Students should have arts every day
- Arts should receive a letter grade on report cards
- Arts should be included in state testing
- Visual and music arts classes should be required
- The importance of students taking music, visual arts and creative writing classes

\(^9\)Statistical tests include chi-square tests (significance at < 0.05) for categorical variables and independent sample t-test (95% confidence interval) for continuous variables.

\(^{10}\)ABC-only sites tended to be more in rural areas. The representation of high school teachers is higher in sites that have received both ABC and DAP funding.
The purpose of having arts classes

Interestingly, a few statistically-significant differences were apparent in responses about dance and theatre, as seen in Table 3 below. DAP-only sites had lower levels of respondents agreeing that theatre and dance should be required and were important for students to take. On a related note, dance and theatre are offered less often at DAP-only sites as well, according to administrators responding to the survey.

Table 3. ABC and DAP sites: Differing views on the importance of dance and theatre

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Theatre should be required for students</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance should be required for students</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre is important for students to take</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>87%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance is important for students to take</td>
<td>81%</td>
<td>71%</td>
<td>80%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance is offered at my school</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre is offered at my school</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Another area of difference was the frequency with which teachers had discussions about arts education with other faculty members in their school. DAP-only sites had a higher proportion (69%) of teachers reporting that they had such conversations “Never” or “Only a few times in the school year”. About 55% of ABC-only or sites with both kinds of funding had the same response. ABC-only and sites with both kinds of funding had higher proportions (41%) of teachers reporting that they had such conversations more frequently, compared to 28% of DAP-only site respondents.

DAP-only site teachers also reported less often that their principal and other teachers see the arts as important as other subjects. Teachers from ABC-only and sites with both ABC and DAP funding felt more support from colleagues. Please see Table 4.
Table 4. ABC and DAP sites: Differing views on how other faculty views arts education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal sees the arts education is as important as other subjects</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers feel that arts education is not at all important</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Arts coordinator
About eight percent more respondents from sites which had received both DAP and ABC funding knew whether or not there was an arts coordinator for the district and reported having one (43% for sites receiving both grants compared to 35% for sites receiving ABC or DAP only). There was little difference in responses from sites about the helpfulness of arts coordinator contributions. Arts coordinators did not show any differences in their responses about who they report to or their roles in coordinating arts activities or serving on strategic planning committees in the district.

Strategic planning
While the majority of respondents from all sites said they did not know if their school or district has an arts education strategic plan, DAP-only sites reported in lower numbers than other sites that they had a strategic plan or that their school’s renewal plan addressed the arts. In general, respondents from sites which had received BOTH kinds of grants said more often that they had strategic and renewal plans addressing the arts, as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. ABC and DAP sites: Differences on reporting about strategic and renewal plans

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My school or district has an arts education strategic plan</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My school or district’s renewal plan addresses the arts</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>34%</td>
<td>53%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group
In addition, these sites also differed in WHO participated in creating arts education strategic plans. DAP-only sites involved administrators and non-arts teachers less, but ABC-only sites involved students less, as seen in Table 6. There were no differences amongst these respondents on the involvement of other stakeholders such as artists, arts teachers, curriculum experts, community members, or in their own involvement in the strategic planning process.

Table 6. ABC and DAP sites: Differing reports on strategic plan involvement

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administrators</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other teachers</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Arts integration
Survey respondents from DAP-only sites tended to report that non-arts teachers integrated the arts in their classes less often, as seen in Table 7. Non-arts teachers’ survey responses about how often they themselves used the arts in their teaching followed a similar pattern, with teachers from DAP-only sites reporting the use of arts in their teaching was less frequent than that of teachers from other sites.

Table 7. ABC and DAP sites: Differing views integration of arts by non-arts teachers

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers integrate the arts often in their curriculum</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers integrate the arts sometimes in their curriculum</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>68%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group
Advocacy

Participation in advocacy to address state arts education policy differed among these sites. Teachers from ABC-only sites reported less frequent advocacy activities, while administrators from the same sites participated in greater numbers in advocacy efforts. Please see Table 8.

Table 8. ABC and DAP sites: Differing levels of participation in advocacy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts teachers who say they have participated in advocacy</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>56%</td>
<td>54%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrators who say they have participated in advocacy</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>62%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Professional development and certification

There was no difference among sites on the groups of students (i.e. Pre-Kindergarten, special education, elementary, middle or high school) who received instruction from a certified arts instructor. Administrators at DAP-only sites reported less awareness of arts education teacher training opportunities. There was no difference in administrator responses about the importance of arts teacher certification and training to their hiring decisions.

Use of ABC tools and supports

About 16% fewer respondents from DAP sites said they were familiar with the Arts in Basic Curriculum Project and its goals (20% from DAP sites compared to 36% from other sites). Sites with funding from both ABC and DAP grants more often reported using tools developed by ABC and on the positive impact of these tools, as seen in Table 9.
Table 9. ABC and DAP sites: Differing use of ABC tools and supports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of ABC-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of DAP-only site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both ABC and DAP funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Teachers report having an arts curriculum guide specific to their district</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teachers report using the South Carolina arts standards when creating lesson plans</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts curriculum guide has a positive impact on quality arts education</td>
<td>47%</td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>58%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts teacher certification has a positive impact on quality arts education</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer institutes have a positive impact on quality arts education</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>27%</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC technical assistance has a positive impact on quality arts education</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>NA&lt;sup&gt;11&lt;/sup&gt;</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Comparison of Results by Type of Site<sup>12</sup>
Survey responses were investigated for differences between those ABC grant sites who had received funding at the level of school, district or both. More district sites received their last year of funding 3-5 years ago, whereas more school and “both” sites received their most recent year of funding within the last two years.

Support for arts education
There was no difference between different types of sites on whether the arts should be offered at their school and whether it should be included in state testing. However, fewer respondents from district sites agreed that students should have the arts every day. District-site respondents also had higher numbers of respondents saying that various kinds of arts classes were not as important for students to take, particularly dance and theatre. District-site respondents also had lower percentages agreeing that various arts classes should be

<sup>11</sup> DAP sites do not receive technical assistance from ABC

<sup>12</sup> District sites tend to have more middle and high school teachers, as well as fewer parents and more administrators, represented in survey responses.
required, as seen in Table 10. However, there were no differences among these different types of sites on the relative priority of arts with other subject areas. District site respondents did report more often that middle and high school students received instruction from a certified arts teacher.

Table 10. School and district sites: Differing views on the requiring arts classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Visual arts should be required</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>91%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music should be required</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre should be required</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dance should be required</td>
<td>51%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creative writing should be required</td>
<td>77%</td>
<td>68%</td>
<td>78%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

District-site respondents reported more often that their discussion about arts education with other faculty members were infrequent, as seen in Table 11.

Table 11. School and district sites: Differing views on the frequency of arts education discussions with other faculty

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times in the school year</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A few times in the semester/quarter</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daily</td>
<td>6%</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

District-site respondents also reported less often than school-site respondents that administrators and non-arts teachers considered arts education as important as other subjects, as seen in Table 12.
Table 12. School and district sites: Differing views on how important administrators and other teachers consider arts education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principal considers arts education as important as other subject areas</td>
<td>64%</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Superintendent considers arts education as important as other subject areas</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers considers arts education as important as other subject areas</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>28%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Finally, non-arts teachers from district-grant sites reported some positive impacts of arts classes at lower rates than non-arts teachers from school-grant sites, as seen in Table 13.

Table 13. School and district sites: Differing views on the impact of arts classes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students do better in class</td>
<td>69%</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>72%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents are more involved in school activities</td>
<td>67%</td>
<td>48%</td>
<td>49%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attendance in improved</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>27%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher morale is stronger</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are fewer disruptions in my class</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group
Arts coordinator
Respondents from sites where the school had received funding more often said there was no arts coordinator for their district. Specifically, 20% of school site respondents said there was no arts coordinator, compared to 5% of district site-funded respondents and 11% of both school site- and district site-funded site respondents. There was no difference in responses among these sites on describing the value of the contributions of the arts coordinator. Arts coordinators from these different kinds of sites showed no differences in responses about their responsibilities.

Strategic planning
School-site respondents showed more awareness of the existence of an arts education strategic plan, with 86% of district-site respondents reporting they did not know if their school or district had one, compared with about 56% of school-site respondents being unaware of a plan. In addition, though there were no differences on the involvement of administrators, community members, students, curriculum experts or artists in the planning processes, differences did exist among these sites on the involvement of others, as seen in Table 14 below. In general, district sites reported lower levels of teacher, parent and personal involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts teachers were involved</td>
<td>99%</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers were involved</td>
<td>76%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents were involved</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>51%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I was involved</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>26%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Arts integration
District-site respondents showed less support for integrating the arts with other subject areas. In addition, fewer district-site respondents indicated that non-arts classes frequently integrated the arts, as seen in Table 15 below.
Table 15. School and district sites: Differing views on arts integration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response Description</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The arts should be frequently integrated with instruction on other subjects</td>
<td>73%</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers integrate the arts often in their curriculum</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers integrate the arts sometimes in their curriculum</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>57%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-arts teachers do not integrate the arts into their curriculum</td>
<td>2%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

Advocacy
District-site administrators reported less often that they had participated in advocacy to address state arts education policy. Five percent of administrators from district-grant sites said they had participated in advocacy, compared to 30% from school-grant sites. There was no difference amongst arts teacher respondents on whether or not they had participated in advocacy to address state arts education policy.

Use of ABC tools and supports
District-site respondents reported being familiar with ABC less often than respondents from school sites. Less than 20% of district-site respondents said they were familiar with ABC, compared to 60% of school-site respondents (and 45% of respondents from sites with both kinds of grants). District-site respondents also reported the positive impact of various tools and support less often than respondents from school sites, as seen in Table 16.
Table 16. School and district sites: Differing views on the positive impact of these tools on the quality of arts education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Percent of school site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of district site respondents with this response</th>
<th>Percent of sites having both school and district funding with this response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arts curriculum guide has a positive impact on the quality of arts education in my school or district</td>
<td>54%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>55%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer Institutes have a positive impact on the quality of arts education in my school or district</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC technical assistance has a positive impact on the quality of arts education in my school or district</td>
<td>36%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: the Improve Group

ABC’s Ability to Sustain Funding

Ray Doughty recounts that in the early days of ABC nearly all funds for the Project came from the Arts Commission (with NEA assistance). The State Department of Education began contributing funds to design and manage professional development programs in 1995. NEA has provided two grants since 2000 that enabled ABC to increase outreach efforts, responding to a recommendation in the 10-year evaluation to increase outreach. The history includes a number of examples where ABC has been able to raise funds to have a substantial impact, while presenting examples of initiatives that were discontinued because of lack of funding, such as:

- Model site funding allowed sites to develop curriculum, provide staff development, establish local advocacy networks, design implementation strategies and create evaluation/documentation procedures. The design and funding plans for model sites remained the same until 1998 when the number of sites reached twenty.13

• One professional development series (CLIA II) was discontinued between 1997 and 2005 because of lack of funding

• A successful 1997 pilot of “An Art for Better Schools” program to build support for the arts among school administrators by providing them an opportunity to experience difference art forms was discontinued due to lack of funding.¹⁴

• Target 2000 Arts in Education/Distinguished Arts Program grant program was funded at over $1 million per year after a pilot year with ABC advocacy.

• ABC raised $859,000 from 1987-2003.¹⁵

• The Arts Commission established a three-year grant program to assist districts in creating an arts coordinator position (per a recommendation from the 10-year evaluation).


ABC’s Ongoing Research: Evaluation Findings

ABC has arranged for regular, in-depth research and evaluation to support ongoing improvement and strategic growth. Several studies investigated issues critical to ABC’s mission and are summarized in this section. Significantly, as this 20-year evaluation reflected on findings from the 10-year evaluation, it is clear that ABC makes use of research and evaluation findings to build on successes and make improvements where needed.

Beginning in 1999, ABC contracted with the Office of Program Evaluation (OPE) at the University of South Carolina to evaluate the effects of arts-integrated education in participating schools, and OPE investigators have regularly evaluated various aspects of ABC ever since. These evaluations employ a variety of appropriate and respected research methods including classroom observations, parent and teacher surveys, and analysis of school-wide standardized test score results. OPE also completed studies in 2005 and 2006 that took different approaches to evaluating ABC than their previous investigations. In 2005, OPE reviewed the state of arts education in South Carolina Public Schools and compared students’ standardized test scores between arts-immersion schools and schools that used a more traditional curriculum. In 2006, OPE compared ABC participating schools that were rated as Above Expectations with those concerned to be Below Expectations, in order to gather best practices and provide targeted technical support to select ABC sites. A list of ABC evaluations conducted by OPE in recent years is provided in Table 17.

An important tool in several OPE research projects is the South Carolina Arts Achievement Project (SCAAP). SCAAP is a web-based arts assessment, the first and only web-based large-scale assessment of its kind in the United States when it was initiated. The University of South Carolina worked with the State Department of Education and arts educators to develop the tool in 2000. ABC partners describe that the drive to create such a tool was started when a former ABC Project Director went to the State Department of Education. SCAAP represents a particular innovation in efforts to develop statewide arts assessment tools; SCAAP engages students in the traditional question/response format as well as in an interactive performance format. Currently, the tool provides assessment for music and visual arts at the fourth grade level, and participation is required for all DAP recipients. The long-term objective of SCAAP is
to develop assessments in four arts disciplines at several grade levels\textsuperscript{16}. The tool is designed for wide-spread use and thus has the potential to provide an arts education standardized assessment statewide, a benchmark which has stymied many other states. OPE administers this tool and has used it to inform multiple research projects for ABC.

OPE evaluations of ABC found high levels of on-going support for ABC among parents and teachers in participating schools. While some parents expressed concerns that arts-focused education would detract from other areas of the curriculum, OPE analysis did not find evidence supporting this concern when examining standardized assessments results in other curriculum areas.

OPE’s evaluations represent quality research practices and are useful in understanding how ABC is working within schools. The main limitations of OPE’s evaluations reflect common struggles in social science research. For example, OPE’s investigations include an in-depth examination of a small number of case studies. As a result, their findings cannot necessarily be used to draw conclusions about arts education in other schools. Furthermore, while some of the University of South Carolina evaluation studies examine school-wide results on the Palmetto Achievement Challenge Tests (PACT) standardized assessments, the studies cannot show a causal link between arts-integrated education programming and these standardized test results due to the number of complex factors that influence students’ scores on standardized assessments. While some OPE studies attempt to compare test scores from ABC participating schools with non-participating sites, comparison sites are selected based on limited demographic criteria, which limits the degree of certainty that these comparisons are appropriate.

Nevertheless, OPE’s evaluations use a variety of appropriate and meaningful research methodologies. The evaluations are strong in that they use a mixture of qualitative and quantitative research methods - such as classroom observations and analysis of standardized test score results - in order to provide a detailed picture of how ABC is being implemented in schools while maintaining a larger focus on the goal of improving student learning and performance. In this report, we relate the results of our study with the findings of ABC’s past

evaluations where appropriate. Table 17 provides a summary of ABC research studies over the years, including their purpose, methods findings and strengths and weaknesses.