

Solicitation for Interest: ArtsNow Learning and Angel Oak Elementary School

Section I:

ArtsNow Learning, Inc.

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Pamela Walker, President and CEO, pam@artsowlearning.org

Group type: Non-profit 501(c)3

Length of time working to turn around schools: 13 years

Philosophy regarding education and student achievement:

The mission of ArtsNow Learning is to transform lives through customized solutions to meet educational needs utilizing arts-integration and innovative strategies. ArtsNow Learning is the leading professional learning organization for resourceful and innovative approaches which engage students, equip educators, and grow school communities for meaningful impact on the future. Through collaborative partnerships we transform education through rigorous, innovative teaching strategies for the 21st century learner. Since 2006, ArtsNow Learning has served 255 schools within 26 school systems throughout Georgia, Florida, and South Carolina. We have directly impacted professional learning of nearly 17,000 educators and impacted over 211,000 students.

ArtsNow has a history of working with school districts to construct instructional models that fit the context, curriculum, and district environment in which they are operating. We work to provide customized educational solutions in four different models:

1. *Individual, Local School(s)* – ArtsNow Learning supports individual, local schools with customized professional learning plan and provision of services based specifically on the school's needs.
2. *Regional Hub(s)* – Within a geographic region, ArtsNow Learning supports multiple schools (two or more) connected by a specific, targeted focus (such as STEAM) or as a result of a grant funded project with common goals and outcomes. Although multiple schools are served, this model is not dependent on a physical location, or "center". (See examples of success below.) One current example of a Regional Hub is in Hephzibah, Georgia (Richmond County Schools) where the donor, the Chestnut Family Foundation, wants to specifically support arts integration and positive student outcomes in the region. In this case, over a three-year period, this funding will support three (3) elementary schools, one (1) middle school and one (1) high school in this designated region. Another example of a Regional Hub is Cobb County Public Schools where we serve teams of teachers from multiple schools throughout the year around a specific innovation, including STEAM and Arts Integration. A final example of a Regional Hub is Clayton County Schools where, as the result of a current federal grant, we work with math teachers from nine different schools within the district to improve math instruction through arts integration.

Different regional hubs have a wide-range of needs in terms of support, and a multi-year commitment is needed for impact and sustainability.

3. *Innovation Center(s)* – ArtsNow Learning Innovation Centers are site-specific locations established in partnership with one or more school districts, with institutions of higher learning, or with arts organizations and are the destination for ArtsNow Learning’s programming for that area, such as the Center for Innovative Teaching in Barrow County. (See examples of success below.) In this partnership, ArtsNow Learning has regional offices onsite and provides ongoing programming for teachers and students, grades 4th through 8th. Twenty-six teachers from across the entire district receive training, plan arts integrated units with multiple consultants, bring students to CFIT for facilitation of instruction by ArtsNow Learning consultants on an ongoing basis throughout the year, and debrief all experiences to allow teachers to redeliver arts integrated instruction at their local schools.

An Innovation Center requires provision of free working and programming space for ArtsNow Learning, and an additional agreement for the facilitation of programming. However, a multi-year commitment is needed for impact and sustainability. Given the right amount and structure of professional development and support, Angel Oak can eventually become an Innovation Center through which other Charleston County teachers can learn, and observe exemplary instructional delivery and planning.

4. *Learning Laboratory* – ArtsNow Learning Laboratory will be a facility operated solely by ArtsNow Learning to deepen and expand our mission. This will be the location for professional learning, conferences, leadership forums, additional programming, and development opportunities to advance best practices for arts-integration and 21st century skills.

Detailed bios of individuals proposing to lead this work:

Pamela Walker, ArtsNow Learning CEO & President, leads ArtsNow Learning, an Atlanta-based non-profit, that provides professional learning and educational resources to advance innovative practices through the arts. She has a vast array of knowledge, experience and leadership in organizational planning, strategy and advancement; as well as expertise in educational leadership, arts in education, whole-school transformation, professional learning frameworks, and research and evaluation. Pamela previously served as the Director of Enterprise Education for the Woodruff Arts Center, has served actively as an independent consultant, locally and nationally, and has experience as a teacher, administrator, and district level leadership. She received her undergraduate degree from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro, master’s degree from Meredith College in Raleigh, North Carolina and post-graduate studies from Georgia State University. Ms. Walker and ArtsNow, Inc. have received multiple awards, including Georgia Natural Gas’s True Blue Community Award and the Self Actualization Award from the Showcase Group. As well, ArtsNow was announced as the Georgia affiliate of National Young Audiences. Pamela collaborates with several boards and committees such as the Georgia Department of Education STEAM Advisory Board, STEM Cobb Advisory Board, National Arts in Education Dissemination Community of Practice Committee, and is a member of Arts in Education Partnership. She enjoys opportunities to provide professional contributions to a variety of organizations and school systems as she strives to

advance teaching and learning and 21st century competencies through the arts and innovative practices.

Crystal Collins, ArtsNow Learning Executive Vice President, comes to us as a former principal of an ArtsNow Teaching and Learning Laboratory School. She was principal for eight years and was very successful in the leadership and implementation of school-wide arts integration efforts. During her 17-year tenure in school and district level leadership, she worked in the Continuous Improvement Office within the division of Curriculum and Instruction. Ms. Collins has also served as an assistant principal. As principal and assistant principal, Ms. Collins was responsible for leading professional development. Of particular interest is her leadership with arts integration at Magill Elementary School. Magill is a Title One school of 143 staff members, 1400 students in a K-5 setting, provides 14 self-contained special education classrooms, and serves approximately 25% ESOL population. Ms. Collins' vision was to offer more hands-on, active, and engaging learning opportunities for all Magill students. She led the faculty, parent community, and other stakeholders through rigorous arts-integrated strategies and required at least one arts-integrated lesson per day in each classroom. There was immediate improvement in student attendance and statistically proven decrease in student discipline after the first year of full implementation. Ms. Collins continued arts-integration for all eight years at Magill. Magill was a Teaching and Learning Laboratory for Gwinnett County and ArtsNow Learning, so other principals and leadership teams would come to Magill in order to observe and learn best practices. Ms. Collins has extensive experience with elementary level education and leadership. Prior to her leadership experience, she was a third grade teacher. Ms. Collins earned her Bachelor's degree at Georgia State University and her Master's degree from Brenau University. She continued at the University of Georgia for her leadership degree.

Section 2:

Highlighted results from our work with current and previous schools:

(1) AEMDD grant from 2007 to 2010 – The impact of arts integration on students in the economically disadvantaged (ED) subgroup was substantial. At baseline (2007) and in year 1 (2008), both project and matched comparison schools' ED students were equally likely to score above grade level ("Exceeds") on the state assessments in Reading, Math and Social Studies. By the end of year 3 (2010), ED students in project schools were 32% more likely to score "Exceeds" on Math than ED students in comparison schools. (Odds Ratio (OR) =1.391, $p=.003$); 36% more likely to score above grade level on Reading (OR=1.445; $p=.001$); and twice as likely as their counterparts in comparison schools to score above grade level on Social Studies. (OR=2.149, $p=.000$)

(2) AEMDD grant from 2014 to 2018 – A quasi-experimental evaluation showed the three project schools significantly outperformed the three comparison schools on the 2018 state English/Language Arts assessment, both overall and on Writing subscale. Additionally, 70% of 4th & 5th grade students at Hasty Elementary School showed improvement in their state Writing test score from 2017 to 2018, compared to only 39% in the matched comparison school. For grades 1-2, a writing test was administered as a pre and posttest, in October and April. This assessment was developed and validated by the Georgia Center for Assessment (GCA) at the

University of Georgia. The test included both constructed response and extended response items. A Wilcoxon signed ranks test was conducted to determine whether there was significant growth from pre to post within each of the 3 schools, within each grade level, and overall. Results showed that overall, writing performance improved significantly from pre to post ($Z = -10.76$, $p < .001$) with 59% of students showing positive ranks in their change from pre to post. At one of the project schools, the percentage of students passing (e.g. earning a 'Proficient' or 'Distinguished' score) the End-of-Grade English/Language Arts Assessment increased from 17.2% at baseline to 25.9% in 2019. ($\chi^2 = 9.186$, $p = .002$) In addition, if you examine the subset of 102 students who attended Hasty from 2016/17 through 2018/19, with exposure to three years of arts-integrated ELA instruction, the increase is even larger, from 12.9% passing in 2017 to 32.4% passing in 2019. ($\chi^2 = 13.176$, $p < .001$). For example, one 5th grade science teacher who transferred to this school in 2017 was initially reluctant to integrate the arts. However, during this additional year of support, she spent many days working with ArtsNow Learning consultants to develop and use arts-integrated science lessons. The proficiency rates of her students increased from 12% in 2018 to 47.8% in 2019, providing compelling evidence of the potential benefits of arts integration.

(3) state Innovation Fund grant – 2016 to 2018 – From baseline to the end of year 1, increases were seen in 3rd grade proficiency rates across the three project schools, where the increases all exceeded the district average.

	2016 % passing ELA	2017 % passing ELA	Change
Clarkdale	20.9	25.7	+4.8
LaBelle	15.7	26.0	+10.3
Powder Springs	19.8	32.8	+13
Overall	19.2	28.6	+9.4
District avg	44.0	47.4	+3.4

In 2016, less than half of the 3rd grade students at these three grant schools were reading on grade level (Lexile of 650+) by the end of 3rd grade but significant increases in this proportion were observed between 2016 and 2017. As shown below, our schools' increases ranged from 2.3 percentage points at Clarkdale to 16.5 percentage points at LaBelle.

% of 3rd graders reading on grade level – changes from 2016 to 2017

Clarkdale ES – increased from 41.8% to 44.1%

LaBelle ES – increased from 41% to 57.5%

Powder Springs ES – increased from 36.8% to 45.5%

(4) Center for Innovative Teaching, in Barrow County School System (Winder, GA)
Partnered with Barrow County School System (BCSS), ArtsNow facilitators worked in tandem with classroom teachers to provide arts-integrated instruction to students in elementary and middle schools through an innovative program hosted by the Center for Innovative Teaching (CFIT). In this way, students received expert arts-integrated instruction while teachers received job-embedded professional development. Students demonstrated clear gains in content knowledge in their core areas (as measured by gains in

performance on standardized testing, reported elsewhere), and teachers noted additional growth in their students' "soft skills." Prior evaluations with teachers and students revealed several areas of psychosocial growth for the students. Specifically, survey results showed students' self-esteem is enhanced through participating in arts-integrated learning, and they have a greater sense of community and collaboration. In addition, before ArtsNow Learning training in Barrow County, only 17.4% of the teachers integrated the arts at least once per week, compared to 82.6% after the year-long training. Teachers also reported feeling "more engaged in their work".

(5) Powder Springs Elementary, in Cobb County School District (Marietta, GA)

Powder Springs teachers have been supported by ArtsNow consultants since 2015 and this ongoing, productive collaboration has yielded many positive benefits. For example, the gap in ELA proficiency between economically disadvantaged and non-economically disadvantaged students was 20 percentage points in 2016 and has decreased to only 12 percentage points in 2018. In addition, the percentage of 3rd grade students proficient in ELA increased from 19.8% in 2016 to 34.8% in 2018, a 15 percentage point increase compared to only a 3.5 percentage point increase observed across their district.

(6) Angel Oak Elementary, in Charleston County School District (Johns Island, SC)

After one year (2018-19) of professional learning in arts integration delivered by ArtsNow, Angel Oak has shown substantial gains in academic growth and achievement. For example, all grades 3rd-5th increased in percentages of Students Meeting or Exceeding SC Ready ELA/Reading expectations. The average of all three grades increased from 25% to 40.8%. (most growth: 3rd grade increased in percentage points by 30.7%, 5th grade increased by 14.8%, 15% growth total from 2017-18 to 2018-19) (*still embargoed). All grades 2nd-5th increased in percentages of Students Meeting or Exceeding MAP yearly MAP goals in Reading (most growth: 3rd grade increased by 38%). Overall growth increased from 2017-18: 40.3% to 55.2% (15% growth). All grades 2nd-5th increased in percentages of Students Meeting or Exceeding MAP yearly goals in Math (most growth: 2nd grade increased by 22%, 3rd grade increased by 31%). Overall growth increased from 2017-18: 30.1% to 45.4% (growth of 15.3 percentage points).

Experience with improving climate/culture indicators:

While all of these projects have seen statistically significant, though variable, gains in student achievement, larger gains have been observed in teachers' confidence in their ability to integrate the arts with fidelity in their classrooms. For example, in 2016, AEMDD grant teachers were asked about their level of confidence in their ability to integrate the arts into core content areas. Responses indicate growth in teachers' confidence overall, and substantial growth among novice teachers with less than three years of teaching experience. Also, during this federal AEMDD grant implementation, all three project schools increased their School Climate Ratings (assigned by state DOE, based on attendance, discipline and stakeholder survey responses) with two of the schools maintaining a 4-star rating through the last year of the grant (max is 5-star rating). This can serve to address concerns related to teacher turnover as it relates to professional

development and growth. Often lower performing schools have less experienced teachers and experience higher rates of teacher turnover, so building their professional capacity along with their ability to collaborate effectively with one another enables ArtsNow Learning to provide sustainable change within schools. At Angel Oak Elementary, the average of all three grades increased in percentages of students “Committed” in behavioral, cognitive and emotional domains on the AdvancEd Student Engagement Survey from 2017-18 to 2018-19.

A recent study of an arts-infused school model, similar to what ArtsNow Learning is proposing here, was conducted in Houston, Texas as a cluster-randomized control trial involving 42 elementary and middle schools. The *Arts Access Initiative*, supported by Young Audiences of Houston, began in 2013 and provided a way for partnerships with arts organizations (similar to ArtsNow Learning) to provide the support and experiences for school campuses so their students could benefit both academically as well as creatively. (Bowen & Kisida, 2019) Results showed significant positive effects on student behavior, student-school engagement, and writing abilities, with more pronounced benefits for students in historically underserved subgroups. This instructional model has experienced success in the city of Houston, and we believe it will yield similar results in a community such as Charleston County, South Carolina. We have already begun to lay the foundation for this approach at Angel Oak Elementary, and believe that eventually teachers at Angel Oak can serve as models for other elementary school in Charleston, acting as a demonstration site for other schools to come observe arts-integrated, high quality instruction ‘in action’.

As a nationally recognized leader in the field of arts integration, ArtsNow Learning has successfully designed and delivered high-quality professional learning for over a decade in Title I at-risk schools, spanning 26 school systems across Georgia, Florida and South Carolina. ArtsNow Learning engages a high-quality, senior-level team of coaches and consultants who provide professional development for teachers and administrators that promotes the use of research-based, arts-integrated instructional strategies. ArtsNow Learning was also cited in the final recommendations from an Arts Learning Task Force. (Published by Georgia Council for the Arts in August of 2015) This report describes a district that works closely with ArtsNow to provide a model for whole school reform through arts integration and states this is an example of a “model arts learning program”. Not only does the task force recommend integrating the arts to “engage students in real-world problem solving” they also recommend the creation of statewide arts integration program “that adapts elements from successful arts integration models, such as ArtsNow Learning in Georgia”. (p.20) Additionally, in 2014, ArtsNow Learning was the lead partner in an Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grant for over \$2 million to provide arts-integration training to elementary teachers. Throughout this project, ArtsNow Learning has worked to provide efficient, effective support to teachers and met all milestones on time and within budget. In 2017, ArtsNow Learning began serving as the lead partner with Clayton County Schools on a Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE) grant focused on grades 4-9.

ArtsNow Learning recently became Young Audiences’ (YA) Georgia affiliate. This immediately boosts our national presence and connects us with 31 additional affiliates across the country. YA is the nation’s largest arts in education learning network, serving over 5 million children and youth each year in more than 7,000 schools and community centers across the country through its diverse network of local affiliates like ArtsNow Learning. Young Audiences Arts for Learning is an association of affiliated organizations that are each dedicated to local education and community development by connecting exceptional teaching artists with teachers

to provide in-depth arts residencies that raise academic and artistic achievement, while enhancing and developing learning skills that translate across curriculums. In addition, the YA network collectively works together to impact arts in education practices and policies on a national level. Being able to collaborate with such a variety of audiences will be advantageous to our work in Charleston County.

Experience with fiscal management:

As a non-profit organization, ArtsNow Learning is governed by a board of directors. We create an annual budget each fiscal year which is July 1 through June 30. Our budget team includes our Business Manager and executive staff. The budget process starts in early May and includes a review of historical data, looking ahead at the coming fiscal year and our commitments, as well as aligning the budget with our Strategic Plan. The budget team creates the annual fiscal year budgets for Board approval by June 30 each year. Once approved, the budget is entered into our accounting system for comparison to actual. Monthly financials are presented to the executive officers comparing actual to budget with a variance analysis provided. The Board reviews all financials at quarterly board meetings. On a monthly basis we project the remaining year's cash receipts and expenditures and update weekly with actual receipts and disbursements to alert us if any variances occur and why.

Last October ArtsNow Learning was awarded a \$2.3 million grant from the US Department of Education, and we are the fiscal agent of this federal grant. To adhere to federal regulations, we have implemented precise processes and procedures to insure the proper disbursement of federal funds. Our Business Manager records each of the expenditures and receipts in our accounting software system. We track these disbursements against the approved budget and review monthly with the Project Director and Grant Manager.

ArtsNow Learning engages with multiple schools and school systems across the southeastern United States. As a team we interview each prospective school, or school system, to ensure their commitment to our organization as well as the ability to compensate us for our services. The majority of the schools we engage with have special funding to contract our services, typically through Title One or Title Four funds.

Over the past five (5) years, ArtsNow Learning's annual budget has grown from \$300,000 to \$1,500,000. Our growth is tied to expanding into more school systems and being the recipient of a federal grant. As a non-profit organization required to have annual audits, we have never been sited or had any negative response on an audit. ArtsNow has 4 fulltime employees with over 20 independent contractors as teaching artists and consultants.

Our Business Manager, Delores McDaniel, has been with ArtsNow Learning since 2008. She has over 30 years of experience in financial systems, accounting and industry best practices. She also has extensive experience in non-profit accounting and grant reporting.