



Milwaukee HS of the Arts

MHSA Arts Specialty Proposal

“Intellectual Growth Through Creative Expression”

January 6, 2010

Criteria #1: School wide implementation of special program or area of study

Established in 1984, Milwaukee High School of the Arts (MHSA) launched a creative, challenging and nurturing cultural community, providing unparalleled preparation for higher education and a profession of the student's choice. Whether the student chooses to pursue the arts as a profession or some other path, MHSA's goal is to prepare students to be life-long learners and productive citizens in the society of today by giving them the necessary tools for success. MHSA's students receive a minimum of two hours of study in the arts each day. Major areas of study are creative writing, dance, instrumental or vocal music, theatre and visual arts. MHSA is open via audition to students from throughout the Milwaukee metropolitan area. Students who are accepted demonstrate the talent, potential and desire to grow to the best of their ability.

Curriculum: The academic program is rigorous and includes accelerated and advanced placement courses in the areas of Art History, Art Studio, Biology, Calculus, Chemistry, English Language, English Literature, American Government, European History, U.S. History, Physics. Honor/Accelerated courses are available in English 9, British Authors, American Authors, Algebra, Geometry, World Geography, World History, Economics, Biology, Chemistry and Foreign Language (Spanish). Students must enroll in six courses each semester that are spread out in an eight period day.

Milwaukee High School of the Arts (MHSA) programs the entire student population into arts classes of their choice, which would be considered their major while attending the school. All students participate in an arts-integrated curriculum, delivered by a staff that is composed of over fifteen arts specialty teachers, several artists in residence and an energetic academic staff that has a minimum of fifteen credits in the arts from a college or university. All MHSA students (regular education and special education) participate in two hours of daily arts instruction in the student's chosen major of theater, visual art, drama, dance, creative writing or music (band, jazz, piano, orchestra or vocal) to all grades for his or her entire high school career. The students arts programming, combined with their regular academic programming makes for a well-rounded and engaging curriculum for the students.

Students may also take additional arts classes in non-major areas when their academic credits are fulfilled. All classroom teachers integrate arts into daily academic lessons. Because of our arts philosophy, teaching looks different. Teachers who teach through the arts incorporate visual arts, music, drama, creative writing and dance into their everyday lessons. Learning also looks different. When students and teachers express themselves through the arts, children demonstrate creativity that is the highest level of Bloom's Taxonomy. The arts are a natural way of assessing student knowledge, because when they express themselves they are demonstrating knowledge, not just guessing on a test. Parents have chosen MHSA because they know their children learn through creative means. Gardner's multiple intelligences teach through kinesthetic, visual and auditory learning. The arts lend itself to project based and group learning which addresses intra and interpersonal learning styles.

Many productions performed by students are original student works. These works are the result of collaborations between academic and artistic faculty. The arts are used as a starting point for greater understanding in academic areas. Many academic classes infuse lessons with artistic references to accelerate learning and enhance methods of practical application. For example, a Math lesson may include a discussion about rhythm in Dance and Music while an English lecture may show connections between Theatre or Creative Writing by role playing or allowing students to compose short plays while using the content that is under classroom discussion.

Achievement: MHSA students earn top honors in prestigious academic and artistic competitions including: The National Arts Recognition and Talent Search, Advanced Placement Scholars, National Merit Scholarship Program and Afro-Academic, Cultural, Technological and Scientific Olympics (ACT-SO). The International Network of Schools for the Advancement of Arts Education has recognized MHSA as a "Star School" (one of eleven in the world). MHSA's nationally renowned Jazz Studies Program has earned numerous accolades including several Downbeat Magazine outstanding performance awards as well as invitations to national and international jazz competitions. The Chamber Orchestra was recognized by Downbeat Magazine as the 2005

Performing Arts High School Winner. The Milwaukee High School of the Arts Concert Chorale, Vocal Jazz Ensemble and Chamber Orchestra swept the first place category in their respective divisions and received the Sweepstakes Trophy with the highest scores of all schools entered in the Heritage Festival in Toronto, Canada and Florida. MHSA students placed 1st, 2nd and 3rd in the 11th and 12th grade category and 1st in the 10th grade category during the 2009 Martin Luther King writing contest. MHSA also placed 1st in the 2009 Martin Luther King Speech contest. MHSA also had first and second place winners in the 2006 National Civil War Essay contest as well 2nd and 3rd places in 2007 and 2008, which was sponsored by the Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History (*See Attachment #3 and #6*).

Criteria #2: Distinctive and credible special program or area of study.

MHSA demonstrates that the specialty is part of an effective educational program in which learning and achievement occur in a non-traditional manner. MHSA is currently celebrating its 25th year in existence. We are very proud of our proven success with educating students and preparing them for their next endeavors after high school. Many of our student continue to demonstrate success after graduation. They have had great success in the fields of architecture, engineering, education and artists including leading roles on television shows and on/off Broadway. Just recently a few of our alumni returned to MHSA to share their experiences while on tour with artists such as, but not limited to Eric Benet, Angie Stone, Usher and Sean “P Diddy” Combs (“Making His Band”). Alumni have also starred in roles on television programs such as, Aliens In America” and “Caroline In The City” and contributed to the theatrical soundtracks for “Batman”. Many of our visual art students go on to display their works in gallery showings and in print around the world.

A growing body of studies presents compelling evidence connecting student learning in the arts to a wide spectrum of academic and social benefits. These studies document the habits of mind, social competencies and personal dispositions inherent to arts learning. Additionally, research has shown that what students learn in the arts may help them to master other subjects, such as math, reading, or social studies.

Learning in the arts is comprehensive in the truest sense of the word. Integration of the arts as a critical component of the school curriculum affords students a complete education. The benefits associated with study of the arts are *inclusive* of all students, although they can be greatest for those students who are educationally or economically disadvantaged. An arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community.

Positive signs of support for the arts in education are everywhere. Consider these recent developments from Sandra Ruppert’s 2006 study from, “*Critical Evidence*”:

In the federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), the arts share equal billing with reading, math, science, and other disciplines as “core academic subjects” which can contribute to improved student learning outcomes.

Schools integrating the arts into the curriculum as part of a comprehensive education reform strategy are documenting positive changes in the school environment and improved student performance.

The American public, by an overwhelming margin, believes that the arts are vital to a well-rounded education; more than half rate the importance of an arts education a “ten” on a scale from 1 to 10.

As a nation, we are close to reaching a collective understanding that **all** students benefit from the opportunity to learn about and experience the arts. Study of the arts, in its many forms- whether as a stand-alone subject or integrated into the school curriculum- is increasingly accepted as an essential part of achieving success in school, work, and life.

However, in schools across the country, opportunities for students to participate in high-quality arts instruction and activities are rapidly diminishing, the result of shifting priorities and budget cuts. Poor, urban and rural schools, bear a disproportionate share of the losses. Studies show that students from low-income fami-

lies are less likely to be consistently involved in arts activities or instruction than children from high-income families.

The arts schools offer effective educational programs in which learning and achievement occur in a non-traditional manner. The arts school model is recognized nationally. The MPS arts schools have been recognized nationally and internationally for their arts and academic achievements. The arts schools learning model directly correlates with the DPI “Wisconsin Task-force for Arts and Creativity” and the MPS Arts Advisory Board on 21st Century Learning, led by MPS School Board Director, Peter Blewett.

According to a 2000 report, “*The Arts and Academic Achievement: What the Evidence Shows*”, schools that treat the arts seriously institute other kinds of innovations that are favorable to academic learning. These schools become more inquiry-oriented, more project-based, more demanding of high standards, and more focused on processes that lead to excellence.

Criteria #3: Enhance opportunity for less privileged populations (includes strategies to reduce the achievement gap).

MHSA demonstrates that it’s specialty has success in improving academic achievement for students often described as “At Risk”. MHSA expects all students to participate in the arts specialty programming, regardless of social or economic status or academic status (i.e. special or reg. education). All students are afforded the opportunity to audition, which is based upon their area of interest. All students who successfully complete the audition process are selected based solely on their strengths in the selected art area and successful completion of audition requirements.

A guiding principle for MHSA is the belief that the power of the arts can change lives. Our centrally located campus allows the school community to keep in touch with the richly diverse, professional arts community of Milwaukee so that in theory and practice, academics and art will be powerfully integrated. The location and close relationship with the arts community help MHSA accomplish the goal of becoming a center for innovative arts and education. This collaboration promotes a unique learning community where students can become well-rounded scholars and capable citizens, as well as arts lovers and budding artists. The centerpiece of the educational program is a strong cohesive, integrated curriculum that challenges students to connect learning across disciplines. All students are treated equally. All students are programmed with an arts major.

MHSA provides opportunities for students identified as “At Risk” to improve academically. MHSA aggressively addresses the needs of our “at risk” population by offering students that are less proficient in academic areas additional resources and support. Specific strategies implemented include a math camp, which allows students to receive additional tutoring in math, and Project “Code Read”. “Code Read” is an all school reading initiative with a focus on improving literacy among all students. This initiative requires teachers to allot 20 minutes of recreational reading within his/her classes per week. Teachers are also modeling reading for the students. Programs such as these in addition to our tutoring programs, credit recovery programming and enrichment programming before and after school, help to create opportunities for students to accomplish success in all of their academic and artistic endeavors at MHSA (See Attachment #23).

Criteria #4: Skilled instructional staff qualified for the specialty.

MHSA has a highly qualified arts specialty faculty consisting of 16 teachers certified by the Department of Public Instruction in their specific art area. 62% of MHSA’s arts faculty holds a masters degree or doctorate in their field of teaching. In addition MHSA’s non-arts faculty members are required to have 15 credits in art areas of their choice.

Areas of certifications for arts faculty include:

Creative Writing Specialty: 2 Teachers (DPI #300 English), Dance Specialty: 3 Teachers (DPI #536 Dance): Music Specialty: 5 Teachers (DPI # 511 Choral Music or 506 Instrumental Music), Theater Specialty: 2 Teachers (DPI # 325 Theater), Visual Art Specialty: 4 Teachers (DPI #550 Art).

MHSA arts faculty members are also active in their fields outside of the school setting. Faculty members set works and direct for companies as well as perform themselves in the arts community. Some of these artistic pursuits include, gallery showings in New York, Iowa, New Mexico, and Arizona, performing spoken word poetry, work with companies such as the Milwaukee Repertory Theater, Knightwind Ensemble, Milwaukee Symphony Chorus, Milwaukee Symphony, Skylight Opera, Ko Thi Dance Company, Bauer Contemporary Ballet, Dancecircus and the Florentine Opera. Teachers who are also active artists serve as working role models for our students.

MHSA's arts faculty members also instruct or have instructed at several universities including the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee, Alverno College, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, Savannah College of Art and Design, University of Arizona Tucson, and the University of California San Diego.

Criteria #5: Leadership Strengths (administration, staff, parents, community)

MHSA demonstrates that the school, at all levels, has the vision, skills, and management capacity to insure the specialty is maintained at high levels currently and in the future. As indicated below, MHSA has strong staff participation and parental involvement in school operations. Historically, MHSA has retained highly qualified/certified staff. Our staff turnover rate is less than 5% in any given year, and 80% of those replaced retire from the system after teaching for over 25 years.

MHSA's mission of "*Intellectual Growth through Creative Expression*" continues to be the driving force of our School's Governance Council as well as our staff, leadership team, learning team, department chairs, and support personnel. With the belief that it takes the entire school community to make a difference in a child's education, we believe that everyone must lead at MHSA in whatever capacity that they employ. In order to develop leadership, MHSA is working in partnership with Cardinal Stritch University in The Courage to Lead Project. In this project all leadership team members are being trained to become instructional leaders for their departments. We have a good formula that works for the students and staff; however we constantly look for ways to grow. Leadership has to flow throughout the entire school community.

We believe that the arts are as much a part of an individual's development and success as they are a part of a meaningful and enlightened society. Artistic expression opens young minds to the realms of "what if" and "why not," stretching the imagination in ways that influence every aspect of learning and leading. It is for this reason that we make the arts an integral part of every student and staff's core curriculum. It is our goal to lead and develop our staff and student's toward achieving at the highest levels in a global society.

Moreover, the intellectual and communication proficiencies developed through arts-based education are fast becoming the quintessential skills needed in the global economy. Best-selling author and noted business strategist Daniel Pink describes the skills required to succeed in the merging "Innovation Age," in his book *A Whole New Mind*. Pink notes that these skills include the ability to synthesize as well as analyze, the ability to communicate, and the ability to create. In short, students, workers and leaders must now be prepared to engage the right brain as fully as the "Information Age" has engaged the left brain. Arts-based education offers the perfect vehicle for combining the left and right sides of the brain, which cultivates such critical, creative thinkers. For all of these reasons we believe it is critical for Milwaukee to maintain and develop its successful and nationally recognized arts-based education programs.

The combined efforts of our entire staff, students and parents make a difference in the educational lives of our children. MHSA has offered many students over the years excellence and rigor in it's curriculum. Administration is proud of our high attendance for staff and students, our high graduation rate, continued high AP testing results and being the number one arts school in the city and state.

MHSA has a history of strong parent organizations/involvement. Our PTSO has an integral part of organizing and partaking in over 35 events per year, bringing in hundreds of volunteers and family members to our building and programs. MHSA's PTSO provides thousands of dollars in extra arts projects requested by our staff. The PTSO helps to funds field trips, student transportation, supplies, and provides beautifying additions to our school.

MHSA also has a strong parent/community fundraising group, Catch A Rising Star (CARS) who has a goal of eliminating the constraints that lack of funding has placed on MHSA and arts-based education in Milwaukee Public Schools has successfully written and received grants from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Hertzfeld Foundation, and many other local philanthropic representatives over the years.

MHSA partners with UW- Milwaukee, Cardinal Stritch, UW- Whitewater, Lawrence University, Columbia University, MIAD, Milwaukee Area Technical College and Alverno to give real world experience to student teachers and field students.

MHSA has nurtured and developed many Professional Art Community ties that we maintain with ongoing curriculum related projects. These include, but are not limited to: Milwaukee Art Museum, First Stage, Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, Rexnord, Danceworks, Milwaukee Ballet, Skylight Theatre, Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra, Piano Arts, Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, UW Milwaukee, Alverno, Cardinal Stritch, Milwaukee Children Choir, Present Music, AWE, contracted artists-in-residence, Ko-Thi, Dallas Black Dance, Shell Lake, Birch Creek and the Florentine Opera Company (*See Attachment #3*).

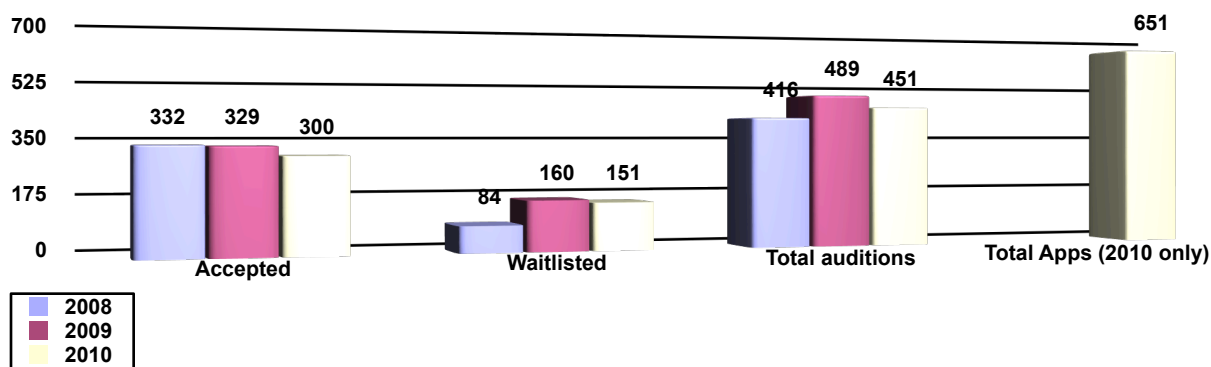
Criteria #6: High achievement (high attainment and/or value added) Demonstrate that student assessments EXCEED district averages. Provide evidence that the school scores high on Value-added Metrics.

Currently, MHSA is high attainment, but low value added according to the MPS chart. Understanding that our students come to us at a high level, it is our goal that all students' achievement continue to grow all four years at MHSA. While MHSA is currently low-value added, we are in the midst of confronting this concern by assessing our curriculum and initiating Understanding By Design. It is important to note that attendance levels at all arts schools have held steadfast at 91%-96% and MHSA has increased its overall achievement levels of students over the last three years. Our suspension levels remain low and our student mobility rate remains low. MHSA has continued to draw students from other schools throughout the school year with the promise of our high quality arts education and our ability to meet student academic needs. WKCE and benchmark test scores are consistently above the district average for all students and students with special needs (*See Attachment #5, #9-#22*).

Criteria #7: School meets/generates demand

MHSA has demonstrated that our specialty has success in enrolling and retaining students. MHSA is fully enrolled every year through the Early Enrollment and the Three Choice Processes. Long wait-lists are generated at MHSA as well as all other Arts Schools. MHSA has a low mobility rate of 3-4% yearly. Students from outside the district attend all of the Arts Schools. At MHSA, we have over fifty 220 students.

Audition Trend:



Fall 2008 Early Enrollment and Spring Comp Auditions: *Accepted 332, wait-listed 84 with a total Auditions 416.*

Fall 2009 Early Enrollment and Spring Comp Auditions: *Accepted 329, Cross-enrolled (attended other MPS schools) 61, Attrition 27, Wait-listed 160 Total Auditions 489*

2010 Early Enrollment Auditions ONLY: *Accepted 300, wait-listed 151 and a total audition 451. MHSA had a total of 651 applications for the first round of auditions. We will have two additional auditions that are traditionally set for students that come from outside of the district and spring auditions for those who missed the first audition and those who would like to re-audition (See Attachments #2, #3, #4, #7 and #8).*

#8 Fiscal Viability

MHSA has become fiscally viable under the current district funding mechanism. During the last 10 years MHSA acquired a fairly large deficit, but has managed to pay this deficit down while keeping it's doors open. It is rather difficult operating a school of the arts under the auspices of a traditional school funding mechanism; however, we have to be creative during times of budget restraints. With this in mind, innovative initiatives such as: increasing our enrollment, being careful with supplies, sharing resources with other schools that are a part of our Arts Based Collaborative, raising funds through out performances, having an active PTSO, utilizing our Catch A Rising Star Foundation and cultivating our partnerships with community arts organization assist in meeting our budgetary demands. Even with our increasing enrollment, MHSA continues to have a wait-list of approximately 200-300 students per year.

As stated previously, we nurture the support of our PTSO who has an integral part of organizing and partaking in over 35 events per year. We are proud of the fact that our PTSO ushers hundreds of volunteers and family members to our building and programs. MHSA's PTSO provides thousands of dollars in extra arts projects requested by our staff, and funds field trips, busses, supplies, and beautifying additions to our school. Also, our Catch A Rising Star (CARS) Foundation who's goal is to eliminate the constraints presented due to the lack of funding, has successfully written and received grants from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation, Hertzfeld Foundation, and many other local philanthropic representatives over the years. Funds received through CARS has helped subsidize approximately \$125, 000.00 in programming, artists-in-residencies, supplies, etc...at MHSA just in the last four years.

Final Comments:

MHSA is a member of the Arts Based Collaborative. The teachers and administrations have worked together to create an aligned K-12 curriculum. The principals have met monthly for the past fourteen years. The Arts Based Collaborative has worked with the teachers and administrations to develop a K-12 arts curriculum aligned to MPS, State and National Standards.

The five arts schools work in partnership with each other. For example, Roosevelt shares teachers with Elm to give added high level of arts experiences. The ABC Schools share their production and guest artists with each other. The arts schools work together to utilize resources, share strategies, and align curriculum.

Attachments

1. Note Worthy Quotes
2. MHSA Recruitment Brochure
3. MHSA Local Recruitment Postcard
4. MHSA Arts Based Collaborative Recruitment Postcard
5. MHSA Report Card
6. MHSA Teacher Roster/Programming Scaffold
7. MHSA 220/Open Enrollment Report
8. MHSA Suburban Enrollment Report
9. MHSA 07-08/08-09 Comparison: Dashboard Proficiency Rates (Math, Reading and Science)
10. MHSA 08-09/09-10 Attendance by Grade Level Group and Student Group
11. MHSA Attendance by Grade Level
12. MHSA Dashboard Attendance Comparisons 08-09/09-10
13. MHSA 09-10 Suspension Rate Comparisons
14. MHSA 08-09/09-10 At A Glance Comparisons: Attendance, Suspension Percentages, Proficiencies and Over Age
15. MHSA Attendance by Grade Level Group and Student Group
16. MHSA Benchmark 2 Year Comparison Summary- Math 2009-10
17. MHSA Benchmark 2 Year Comparison Summary- Reading 2009-10
18. MHSA Benchmark 2 Year Comparison Summary- Math 2008-09
19. MHSA Benchmark 2 Year Comparison Summary- Reading 2008-09
20. MHSA Benchmark Tier- Math and Reading
21. Attendance Rate vs Benchmark PL 2009-10
22. Attendance Rate vs Benchmark PL 2009-10 (Percentages)
23. MHSA Literacy Strategy for All

Note Worthy Quotes

“The arts are not a luxury; they are essential”

State Superintendent Elizabeth Burmaster

“Arts education increases interest in academic learning, cognitive and basic skills development, and the development of academic achievement skills.”

Konrad, R.R., Emphathy, Arts and Social Studies, 2000

“A Columbia University study revealed that students in the arts are found to be more cooperative with teachers and peers, more self-confident and better able to express their ideas. These benefits exist across socioeconomic levels.”

The Arts Education Partnership, 1999

“Students at risk of not successfully completing high school cite their participation in the arts as a reason for staying in school. Factors related to the arts that positively affected the motivation of these students included a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one where it is safe to take risks.”

The Role of Fine and Performing Arts High School Dropout Prevention, 2002

“In any job-almost all jobs these days-and especially jobs that involve management or supervisory positions, you spend most of your time finding solutions to problems that arise or thinking of ways to take advantage of opportunities. People that tap into other parts of their brain are those who survive and thrive at those jobs. Those are exactly the kinds of skills fostered by an arts curriculum or arts in education.”

Dave A. Howell, Vice President, Wells Fargo