

Built on a Strong Partnership

Maui Arts & Cultural Center and Hawai'i Department of Education, Maui District, joined the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts' program Partners in Education in 1995. Professional development of teachers by national and Hawai'i teaching artists resulted in a cadre of educators adept at integrating drama, dance, visual arts, music, and creative writing across the curriculum. In 2007, Pōmaika'i School opened as the first public whole-school arts integrated model in Hawai'i. Their vision is "Learning is a journey for all. Each person plays a critical role." Professional development of teachers, including collaborating with teaching artists in the classroom, continues to be foundational for success at Pōmaika'i.



“ The culture of caring, of learning, of growth that the teachers have created as a community of colleagues has been translated to the culture of the classroom. ”

— Pōmaika'i Teacher



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The Inspired School

A Story of Success Through Arts Integration

The partnership in Hawai'i between Maui Arts & Cultural Center and Pōmaika'i Elementary School is proving effective in preparing students for the future.

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THE NEED

What **skills** should be taught to children today so that they can be successful in the workforce of

tomorrow? How will **technology** shape the way people relate to one another? What will **citizenship** look like in a global society?

Business leaders are increasingly calling for employees who are creative, able to collaborate with others, think critically, and communicate effectively.



THE SOLUTION

A large body of research has revealed that involvement in the arts provides unparalleled opportunities for learning that enables young people to reach for and attain high levels of achievement. The evidence indicates that arts education contributes to positive attitudes and habits of mind such as grit and resilience. Neuroscience tells us experience in the arts has the power to influence the brain's neurons, circuitry and networks. Yet, the arts struggle for curricular existence in America's public schools where they are often found on the margins.

Pōmaika'i Elementary School in Kahului, Maui, is an exception to the systematic decline of the arts in schools across the nation, and has answered a call to invest in developing tomorrow's innovators by providing content instruction through the arts.



Walk into Pōmaika'i classrooms and you will see students actively engaged, collaborating to solve creative challenges, and learning strategies that they can use for the rest of their lives.

"Happy and vibrant, kinda like a cartoon... like everything was perfect."

— *The response of a recent Pōmaika'i graduate when asked what feeling he gets when he thinks of his school.*

THE RESULTS

In order to answer the question, "How does school-wide arts integration in an elementary setting impact student success as they transition to middle school?" we asked Dr. Jamie Simpson Steele, associate professor at University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, College of Education, to conduct research. In spring 2013, she collected data on eight recent Pōmaika'i graduates. A range of both qualitative and quantitative information from test scores, school records, surveys, focus groups, and parent, student, and teacher interviews informed the findings. The research suggests that students who attended Pōmaika'i Elementary School for at least four years demonstrated success in the following areas:

Academic mindsets, or the psychological and socially related attitudes a student holds with respect to academic goals. Pōmaika'i graduates felt the arts helped them to cultivate persistence, experience belonging, and develop an intrinsic value for learning.

Learning strategies, or strategies that support thinking, remembering, or understanding concepts. The study's participants felt arts integrated learning experiences helped students develop metacognitive control through visualization, a variety of options for engaging content, and creative problem solving.

Social skills or inter-personal behaviors such as interacting with others in socially acceptable ways through cooperation, assertion and empathy. Teachers, parents, and students in this study held Pōmaika'i's arts integrated curriculum responsible for the graduates' high levels of self-confidence, capacity for positive connections with peers and teachers, and advanced abilities to communicate effectively to a variety of audiences across contexts.

"The arts can no longer be treated as a frill... Arts education is essential to stimulating the creativity and innovation that will prove critical for young Americans competing in a global economy."

— Arne Duncan, Secretary
United States Department of Education

"He's just fully engaged. He really enjoys people and learning and being at school and that comes through the arts."

— *Parent of a Pōmaika'i Graduate*

 Maui Arts & Cultural Center