"It Makes a World of Difference"

This mural was created by students from Stark County ESC High School in collaboration with Artist BZTAT in Canton, Ohio as a part of Art Possible Ohio's Adaptation, Integration, and the Arts Program. Funding provided by the Ohio Department of Education and Workforce; mural installed in the ODEW lobby.

ART POSSIBLE OHIO

MAKING CREATIVITY ACCESSIBLE

Adaptation, Integration, and the Arts Performance and Impact Evaluation

2023-2024

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Executive Summary

Art Possible Ohio's Adaptation, Integration, and the Arts (AIA) residencies support the mission to make creativity accessible for all. The AIA program is a collaboration of educators and teaching artists (TAs) to implement an arts-integrated curriculum for Ohio students with and without disabilities. Historically, the AIA program has significantly and meaningfully impacted students' 21st-century, personal-interpersonal, and engagement skills. Additionally, the residency allows teaching artists to learn strategies to support creativity and inclusion throughout the class. The keys to a successful residency have been strong communication and collaboration between artists and teachers, as well as adaptation to the unique needs of students.

Teaching artists implemented several elements into their residency plans to foster student learning and engagement. Through engagement, the residencies were designed to improve the personal-interpersonal, communication, academic engagement, and learning skills of the students they served. This evaluation highlights some of the strategies teaching artists used to foster a positive and effective learning environment that aligned with the needs of their students.

Both teaching artists and classroom teachers had highly positive experiences with the AIA residency. Furthermore, many educators learned how to successfully deliver arts education to students by adapting their teaching to their unique needs.

Based on the results of this year's evaluation, the following recommendations/areas of focus are:

- Adopt evidence-based practices to engage teachers in the AIA program.
- Encourage or mandate meetings between teaching artists and teachers to lay out objectives, desired outcomes, and preferences in the residency.
- Re-design and develop the AIA evaluation process.

BY THE NUMBERS

24

Sites

118

Classes

2,092

Students Participated

77%

Of students displayed being skilled in personal expression and creativity in the classroom

76%

Of students expressed ideas clearly or demonstrated pride in their work

100%

Of teaching artist were satisfied with the level of communication between themself and the classroom teacher

Overview

Art Possible Ohio has a mission to make arts and arts education more accessible and inclusive for people with any disability and their support networks. Through Art Possible Ohio's Adaptation, Integration, and the Arts (AIA) residencies, educators and teaching artists partner to implement an arts-integrated curriculum. By bringing together teachers and students of all abilities, Art Possible Ohio's AIA program provides a unique opportunity to experience the power of the arts to support student creativity, social-emotional skills, and learning. Additionally, the residency allows educators to learn strategies for creating a more inclusive environment in the classroom.

Previous evaluations have demonstrated the significant impact of AIA's integration of art and education on students' 21st-century, social-emotional, and life skills. Each residency, unique in its duration (up to a year) and the number of classrooms involved, is led by professional artists from the community who are passionate about arts education and integration with academics. The AIA program, fully inclusive and accessible, is designed to support a comprehensive education for all learners.

This evaluation project captures the journey of the AIA program through this year from the point of view of teaching artists and classroom teachers, highlighting the methods and adaptations to instruction delivery that meet desired student and classroom outcomes.

"I'm thankful and grateful for all the opportunities we've been provided with. Everything good that has happened this year is a testament to our ability." - Teacher

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The 2023-2024 AIA programming resulted in 2,092 students receiving long-term (average of 84 hours per student, including planning and student contact), accessible, arts-integrated instruction (Table 1). The AIA program was held at 24 schools throughout Ohio in the 2023-2024 program year, 14 of which hosted AIA residencies in previous program years (Table 2), and all of which participated in this evaluation. This year, 14 of the 24 participating AIA school sites are specialty schools that primarily serve or have programs that primarily serve children who have developmental disabilities and students who experience learning impediments due to significant emotional and behavioral challenges (Table 2). Students of all ages and grade levels were served, ranging from PreK to 12th grade.

Table 1. AIA Program Outreach Performance

	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Number of school sites	21	17	16	10	15	11	14	16	24
Number of classes provided by visiting artists	116	67	69	71	61	82	85	93	118
Number of students who participated in at least one class	2,004	1,141	1,191	989	849	803	971	1,220	2,092
Students with disabilities and/or IEPs who participated in at least one class	611 (30%)	416 (36%)	615 (52%)	378 (38%)	647 (76%)	634 (79%)	642 (66%)	758 (62%)	1119 (53%)
Average contact hours per student	69.6	76	82.5	79.3	82.5	82.5	82.5	67	84

Note: The 2018-2019 evaluation was a qualitative project, and quantitative data were not included in the evaluation report for that school year.

Table 2. Participating AIA Program School Sites by Region of Ohio[1]

	Specialty School	Grade Levels	New/Returning Status
Central Region			
Berwick Alternative	Yes	PreK-8th	New
Dublin Scioto High School	Yes	9th-12th	Returning
Forest Rose School	Yes	PreK	Returning
Graham Elementary and Middle School	No	5th-8th	Returning
Olentangy Orange High School	No	9th-12th	Returning
Parkmoor Elementary	No	K-5th	New
Reynoldsburg Summit High School	No	9th-12th	Returning
The Juniper School	No	K-6th	New
Westerville North High School - North Pointe Program	Yes	9th-12th	Returning
Northwest Region			
Graytown School	Yes	K-12th	Returning
Great Day Academy at Marimor	Yes	PreK-12th	Returning
Marimor School	Yes	PreK-12th	Returning
North Point Educational Service Center (ALC Building)	Yes	K-12th	Returning
RG Drage Technical School SCESC Program	Yes	9th-12th	Returning
Wayne Trace Junior/Senior High School	No	7th-12th	New
Northeast Region			

[1] Teaching artists completing residencies at all of the above schools participated in the evaluation. Additionally, the residency at all schools was a full year, except Olentangy Orange High School, which was a semester-long duration.

	Specialty School	Grade Levels	New/Returning Status
Akron Secondary	Yes	9th-12th	New
Sunbeam School	Yes	PreK-8th	New
Urban Community School	No	PreK-2nd	Returning
Southwest Region			
Hayward Middle School	No	7th-8th	New
Lincoln Elementary School	Yes	K-6th	New
Snyder Park Elementary School	No	K-6th	New
Southeast Region			
Beacon School	Yes	PreK-12th	Returning
Bundy Elementary	No	PreK-2nd	New
Carleton School	Yes	PreK-12th	Returning

Evaluation Method

A mixed-method evaluation design was used to evaluate the success of this year's Art Possible Adaptation, Integration, and the Arts (AIA) program. Measurement Resources Company engaged as an external evaluator for the ninth consecutive year. Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected to understand the teaching artists' and classroom teachers' experiences and perceptions of outcomes. All teaching artists, regardless of when their residency began during the 2023-2024 school year, were asked to participate in this evaluation, and despite the time and capacity limitations of busy teaching artists, all 19 teaching artists (in classrooms at 24 sites) participated. Eighteen of the 24 residencies completed in schools across Ohio were held for the entire school year. They began in September, October, or November of 2023, whereas the remaining six were semester-long and began either near the start of the school year during these three months or in January 2024.

To evaluate the impact of the AIA program on students and educators, teaching artists provided observations and feedback at the beginning and the end of the residency in the form of a program satisfaction and evaluation survey. All 19 teaching artists filled out a mid-point classroom evaluation survey about halfway through their residency, while 16 of these teaching artists also filled out an end-point residency evaluation survey.

Past results show that the TA-teacher relationship is essential for a successful residency. To provide further details about successful and unsuccessful relationship dynamics/strategies, three TA and classroom teacher pairs were interviewed. One pair had a "poor" working relationship, one had a "good" working relationship, and the third had a mixed experience. Additionally, three more classroom teachers were interviewed and asked about their working relationship with their TA and overall experience with the residency.

Given that much of the data collected through this evaluation was qualitative and derived from open-ended responses, this figure summarizes how the data is presented and how to interpret it:

How to Read Data Tables for Open-Ended Survey Responses

- **"Themes"** represent how respondents answered the question.
- **"Count"** represents the number of individuals who mentioned the theme in their response.
- The total "count" can be larger than the "n" because individuals may provide responses included in more than one theme.

Responses from Teacher Interviews:

- **"n"** identifies the total number of individuals that responded to the open-ended survey question.

Responses from TA Surveys:

- **"n"** identifies the combined number of times one teaching artist mentioned the theme in their responses to the mid-point and end-point survey.
- If one teaching artist had more than one residency, each residency was considered independent of the other, and counts were not combined.

Limitations

This year's program evaluation consisted solely of conversations and insights of teaching artists and classroom teachers and did not reflect students' experiences throughout the residency. Additionally, this evaluation does not directly measure changes or improvements in student creativity, personal-interpersonal skills, engagement, 21st-century skills, and learning. All measures of success, achieved outcomes, and communication levels derive from teaching artists as they provided their satisfaction with and perceptions of the residency's impact on students, with any changes in skill-building or engagement comparable from the mid-point and end-points of the residency and from classroom teachers who reflected on their experience with the residency and the development of skills and enjoyment students experienced through the program at the end of the school year.

Three of the 24 schools that provided an AIA residency in Ohio were not captured in the end-point evaluation, limiting the end-point data to represent just 88% of the teaching artists' experiences. Additionally, although six teaching artists were invited to participate in an end-point interview, only three had the capacity to participate, further limiting the sample size.

Lastly, although all 19 teaching artists providing AIA residencies in the 2023-2024 school year evaluated their experiences at some point throughout the school year in the mid-point or end-of-residency survey, only 16 of these 19 responded to the residency end-point survey in April 2024 (while 19 responded, with 24 responses to highlight all 24 residencies, to the midpoint survey distributed in January through March 2024), limiting the sample size.

TA and Teacher Working Relationship

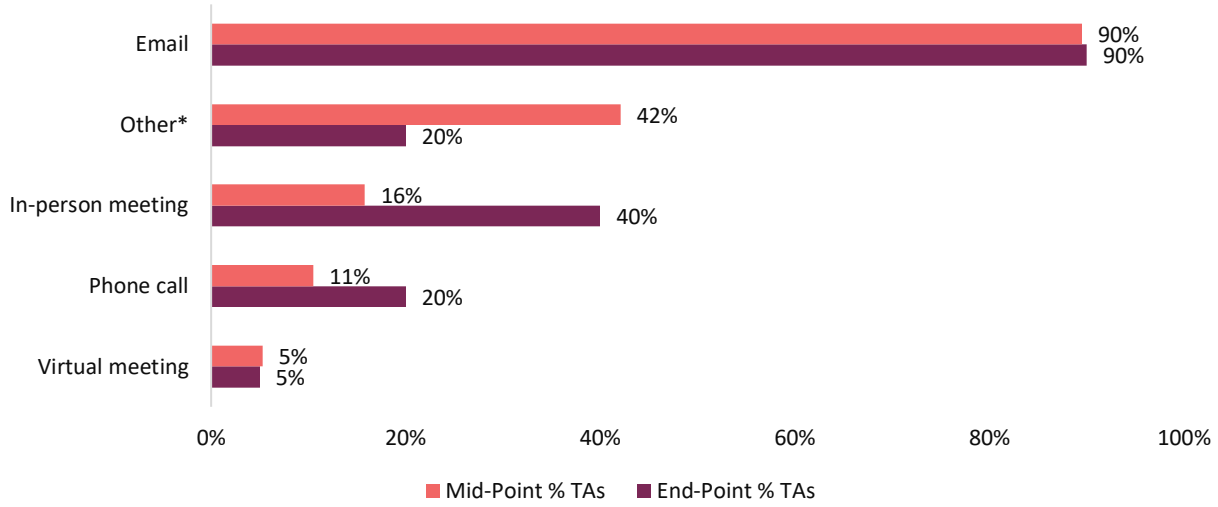
Surveys with TAs and interviews with TAs and teachers revealed key insights into their working relationships. Teachers widely praised the effective communication, strong collaboration, and mutual support of teaching artists. They reported frequent, meaningful interactions that enhanced both creative and educational efforts. While teaching artists were highly satisfied with teacher engagement and communication, there was a noted decline in teacher engagement by the end of the year, possibly related to TA's reports of schools being understaffed and/or teachers having busy schedules (Figure 7). Both groups emphasized the **importance of early planning and coordination** to improve their collaborative experience. Despite some challenges, the partnerships were generally positive and productive.

TA and Teacher Communication

In the mid- and end-point surveys, teaching artists most widely shared that the primary method for communicating with their classroom teacher(s) was via email (Figure 1). Of note, the second most commonly used method for communicating with the teachers at the mid-point was texting or instant messaging, which dropped by the end-point. There was an increase in the percentage of TAs who communicated with teachers in person at the end-point, which could indicate a shift towards more direct, personal interactions as the collaboration deepened. At the mid-point of the residency, most teaching artists reported communicating with teachers outside of sessions one, three, or four times a month (Figure 2). However, by the end of the residency, teaching artists' communication frequency diverged, with the majority communicating once or four times a month.

Figure 1. TA and Teacher Methods for Communicating

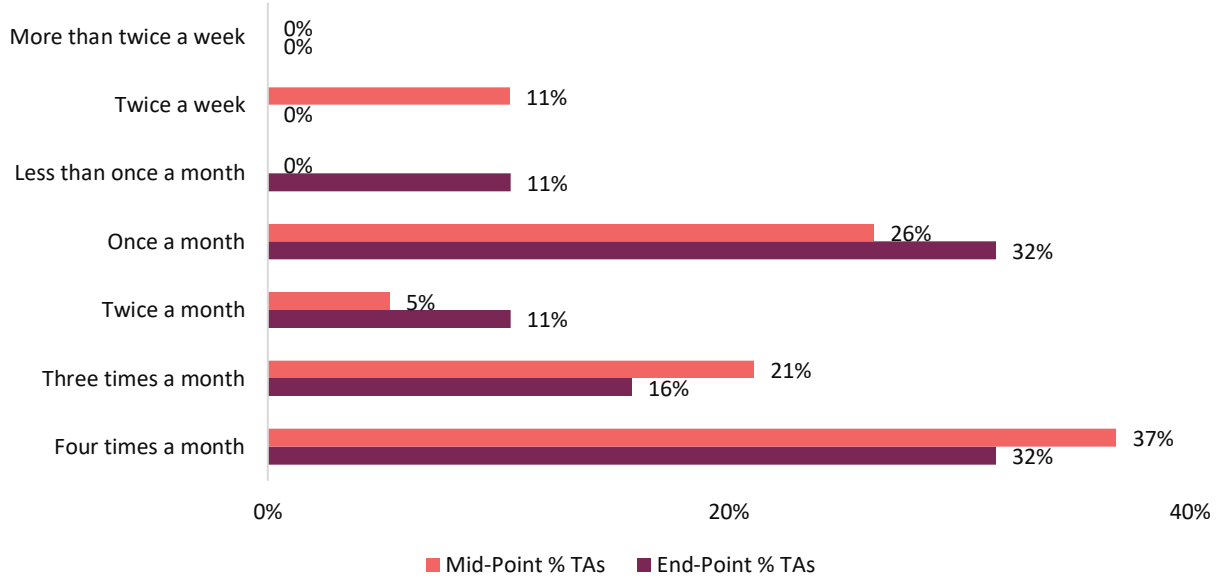
What is your method(s) for communicating with your classroom teacher(s) outside of your session in a classroom? ***(TA survey; mid: n = 19, end: n = 20)***



*At the time of conducting the mid-point survey, five teaching artists reported communicating with teachers via text or instant messages, and two teaching artists reported communicating with teachers before and after sessions in the classroom. At the end of the school year, four teaching artists reported communicating with teachers via text or instant messages.

Figure 2. TA and Classroom Teacher(s) Communication

How frequently have you and your teacher(s) communicated outside of your session in a classroom? ***(TA survey; mid: n = 19, end: n = 19)***



In interviews, teachers characterized their partnerships with TAs as having effective communication, strong collaboration, and mutual support. According to teachers, they engage in **frequent, meaningful interactions, professionally and personally, with TAs, enhancing** their creative and educational efforts. TAs are appreciated for their dedication, helpfulness, and ability to understand and address the needs of students and staff. The planning process is highly collaborative, with both parties equally involved, leading to productive and positive outcomes in various projects. Overall, the dynamic is positive and supportive, with several teachers hoping to have ongoing and future collaborations with their TA.

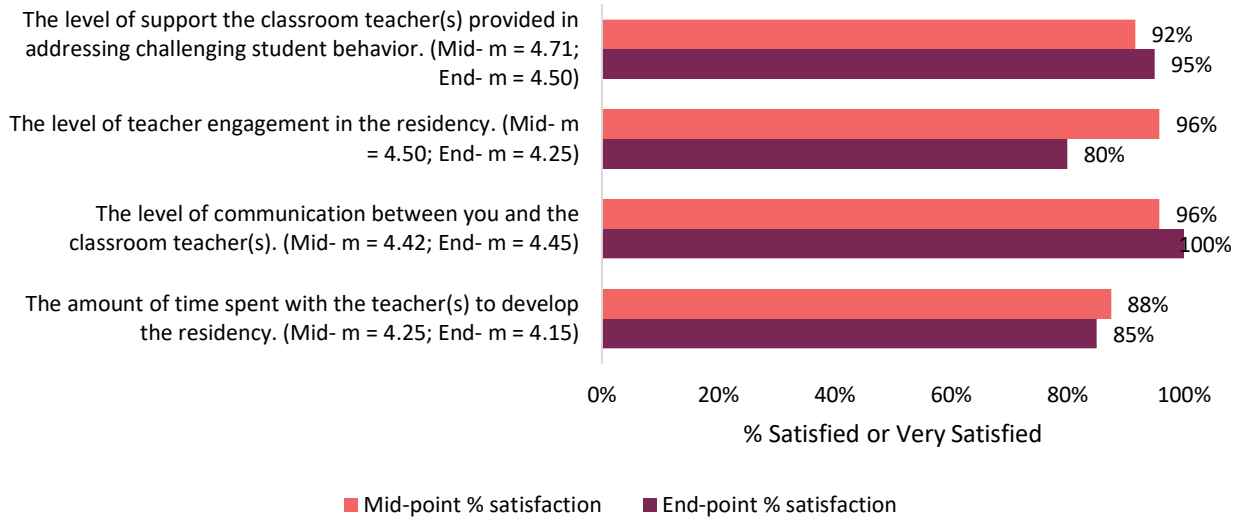
Also, when asked, "Is there anything that could improve the working relationship between you and the teaching artist?" all six teachers who participated in end-point interviews expressed little room for improvement regarding their relationship with TAs. Teachers emphasized that they have experienced **excellent, reciprocal communication** with their TAs and that their TAs had meaningful connections with their students. Only one teacher provided a suggestion on what could be improved, stating that the TA could benefit from some "down time" either on their own or with the classroom teacher, either to relax a bit at some point in the TA's incredibly busy schedule (which improves the delivery of curriculum, according to this teacher who has experience in writing education standards for the ODE), or to assess or plan out the residency with the classroom teacher.

TA Perceptions of Teacher Engagement and Support

In years past, obtaining or maintaining engagement from teachers in the classroom, whether helping manage students' challenging behavior or acting as support to students throughout AIA activities, has been an area of improvement for some teaching artists. At the mid-point of this school year, teaching artists had relatively high perceptions of the engagement, planning time, and communication from teachers – 96% of TAs were "satisfied" or "highly satisfied" with the level of teacher engagement and the level of communication with the residency (Figure 3). Nearly all TAs are satisfied or very satisfied with the working relationship with their classroom teachers. However, Figure 3 shows that the TA satisfaction with teacher engagement dropped from 96% at the mid-point to 80% at the end-point. On the other hand, many TAs reported in an open-ended survey question that their experience with the classroom teacher(s) was good and that meetings with teachers to lay out plans and goals for the residency would have been beneficial (Table 3).

Figure 3. Teaching Artist Satisfaction with Teacher Working Relationship

How satisfied have you been with the following elements of the residency?
(TA survey; mid: n = 24, post: n = 20)



Teaching artists reported spending an average of 2.05 hours with the classroom teacher(s) in planning and developing the residency, compared to 2.21 hours at the mid-point.

Figure 4. Teacher Communication, Engagement, and Presence

(TA survey; mid: n = 24, post: n = 20)

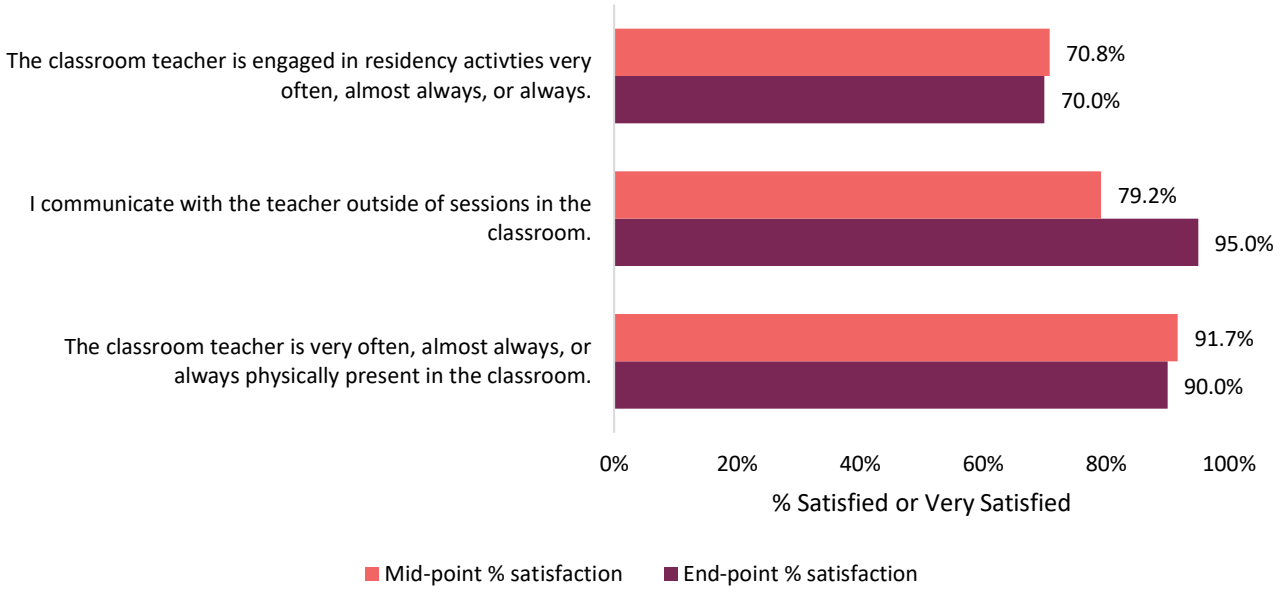


Table 3. How could your experience with the classroom teacher(s) be improved? (TA survey; mid: n = 22, end: n = 16)

Theme	Count
My experience could not be improved; I am having a great/positive experience with teachers and/or assistants; teachers are highly engaged or communicative	14
If I had the opportunity to meet/connect with the teacher or other school coordinators before the residency to lay out concise plans, objectives, and/or expectations*	6
If teachers lead aides or paraprofessionals to be more immersed/engaged in the experiences with the students to support students 1-on-1**	2
If there was more information or collaboration about connecting curriculum with arts education or AIA projects	3
The school is understaffed, or staff have a lot on their plates, leading to limited involvement from teachers	2
Support to minimize some attitude/behavior issues in after-school classes, such as only permitting students who request to attend to attend or having another staff member to help run the class	1
More consistent help from teachers to address behavioral issues (each time I remind them to help, they do so for a little bit but then stop)	1
Challenges with scheduling/availability: Teachers show resistance to my schedule despite communication; teachers do not make availability for check-ins and express that have "more important" schedule priorities	2
Nothing; I could make a better effort to schedule meetings or check in with teachers***	2
If I had a better understanding of which student behaviors the teacher should step in for	1

*In an interview with a teaching artist, it was shared that they would have had an improved experience with the teacher if they had gotten together prior to the school year to build face-to-face rapport and set expectations, such as the expectation to receive ideas from the school in what art projects should be completed as it was very difficult to understand the interests and wants of the school without input. Another teaching artist stressed the importance of setting expectations and even establishing a contract with expectations early on with teachers, such as whether students should engage through movement in a music class or sit down quietly, an issue that came up this past school year.

**One teaching artist who participated in an interview shared that smaller classrooms are calmer and more controlled, and projects thrive in these circumstances. However, when there are more children in a classroom, and especially when the teacher is uninvolved, it is "crazy" and difficult to handle.

***Additionally, a teaching artist reported in an interview that they could be better about communicating their parameters with the teacher, such as what behavior from students helps the flow of the lesson and what behaviors need to be intervened by the teacher.

Furthermore, one teaching artist reflected on collaboration with the classroom teacher to focus on how a particular behavior is a response to challenges a student faces, how that might complicate things in a future career, and how the educators work on that, in addition to helping students find their growth potential. This TA, whose residency is located within a career program for students with disabilities, shared*:*

"I credit the teachers a lot for using opportunities in our sessions to expand on what their potential growth is, and how they can use skills from our sessions."

In previous years, teacher engagement in AIA sessions has been a challenge for a few teaching artists, but there has been somewhat of an improvement this past year. However, teaching artists continue to experience various issues in handling a population of students with special needs on their own, without the support of their traditional classroom teacher (Table 3). One teaching artist shared:

"I've always seen that once I'm in the picture, teachers kind of zone out. What they're trying to do today is really, really hard. I totally respect that they need that; but at the same time, it's really difficult that they're zoned out and I'm constantly having to take care of behavior issues with this population of students."

Another teaching artist shared that the lack of planning and coordination between themself and the teacher led to challenges, especially since this TA prefers to have plans methodically ready for the school year.

On the other hand, teaching artists also reflected on productive and great partnerships with classroom teachers this past year. In one interview, a teaching artist shared that if they experienced anything with the classroom teacher that could be improved, it wouldn't be an issue because they feel on their basis of **mutual respect**, they **acknowledge each other's needs and would feel comfortable communicating any issues** to them. This teaching artist also shared that they feel lucky that the classroom teacher (and his aides) they work with is engaged, committed, and cares deeply for and understands the students, noting that teachers in this school specialized for students with disabilities are highly trained, skilled at working with children at their level and trauma-informed.

Another teaching artist told a story of how a student who has autism was argumentative and belligerent when the class was drumming, likely due to a lack of time to get to know the teaching artist in addition to his auditory processing sensitivity. This teaching artist shared that providing the student with noise-canceling headphones, which improved his reactions to activities, was an a-ha moment for the school coordinator, understanding that she had expected things that weren't fair, and she was amenable and recognized his needs.

Impact on Students

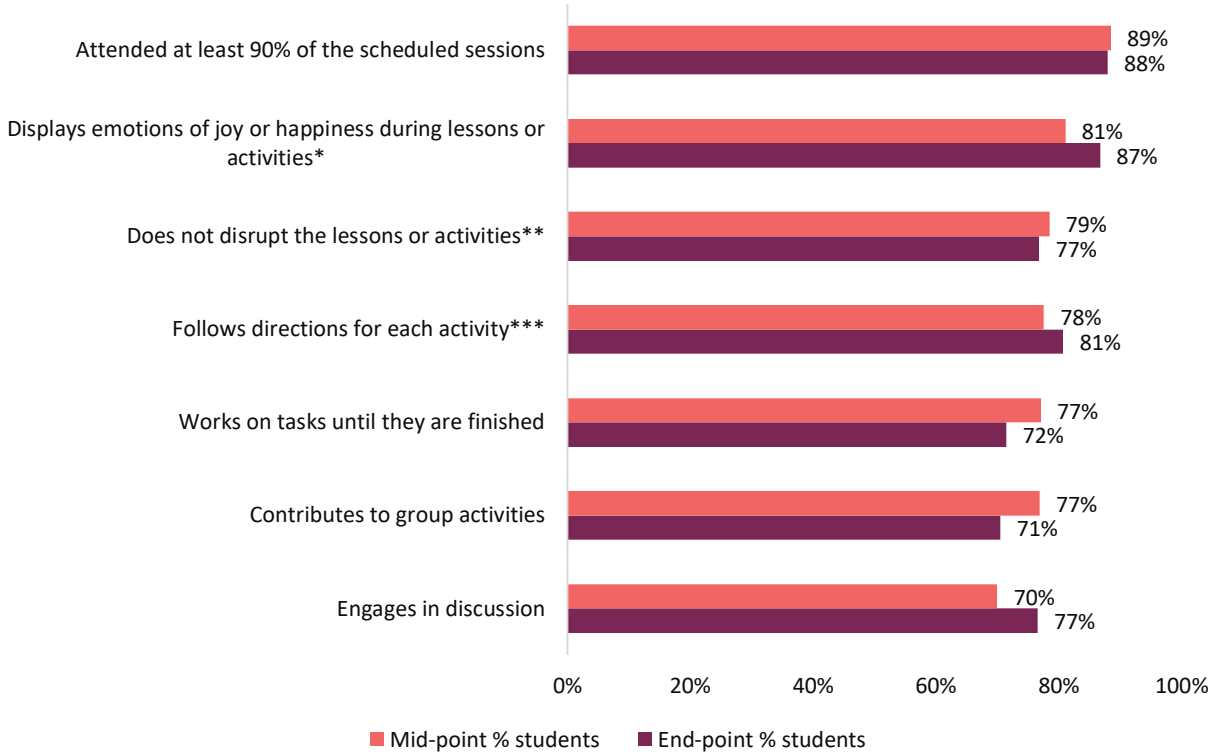
In addition to providing valuable arts education to students with unique needs, one goal of the AIA program is to promote students' skills that indicate success socially and personally. This evaluation used the TA's perspective on the impact of the program on students' **engagement skills** (like following directions, attending, engaging in discussions, or being happy during lessons), **21st-century skills** (like creativity, collaboration, social skills, leadership, etc.), and **personal-interpersonal skills** (like demonstrating pride in work, contributing and communicating in the classroom, or self-expression).

Key Elements and Levels of Student Engagement

The AIA program promoted and/or enhanced student engagement, as evidenced by teacher and TA observations. TAs' enthusiastic energy has increased excitement among students, resulting in more creative and high-quality project outcomes (Figure 5). Student engagement in classroom behaviors remained mostly stable with slight variation from the mid-point to the end-point of the evaluation, with notable increases in displaying joy or happiness and engaging in discussions (Figure 5). Teaching artists and teachers attributed the program's success to incorporating students' interests, encouraging fun activities, building personal connections, and involving hands-on and real-life activities (Table 4). Additionally, students in many classrooms who initially struggled to focus for short periods of time remain engaged for much longer periods during AIA sessions.

Figure 5. % Students in Classrooms Demonstrating Engagement

What percent of students in your classroom display the following concepts?
(TA survey; mid: n = 23, end: n = 20)



*One classroom teacher shared that their TA's enthusiastic energy creates excitement in the students as they work on projects, which helped projects turn out "beautiful."

**One classroom teacher noticed that before the residency, some students couldn't focus on an activity for more than 5-20 minutes (depending on the student) but has observed an improvement in student focus in AIA sessions as they stay engaged for much longer.

***When reflecting on some of the impacts that the AIA program has had on students, one TA in an interview shared that students have developed a stronger ability to follow through with directions.

"The program has improved my students' ability to follow through with directions. Also, I was really impressed that they were retaining a lot of the knowledge from the beginning of the school year using some skills." - Teaching Artist

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Table 4. From your observations, which specific elements of your residency, if any, have supported student engagement? (TA survey; mid: n = 23, end: n = 17)

Theme	Count
Using students' own interests and skills or unique levels of ability into projects, like having them be creative or contribute to songs	8
Encouraging students having fun or being excited about the activities, such as by naming movements after the student who invented it	7
Connecting or checking in with and getting to know the students or how they're feeling each day	7
Hands on activities, like playing a variety of instruments (like guitars or percussion, which has a calming element)	6
Allowing students to engage in the world or using real-life examples (like doing community-building activities, visiting art studios, or expressing themselves)	6
Engaging through movement or dance	6
Working on emotional regulation (like providing verbal acknowledgements or encouraging them to try new things), understanding unique communication or engagement styles, or providing feedback	5
Using songs that are popular or engaging with display of emotions	5
Utilizing verbal or written creativity, like writing or having discussions on poetry, or using storytelling to build community	4
Specific art activities or supports, like self-portraits with oil pastels, using props, or providing visuals	4
Teachers and assistants engaging with the students and activities before class to prepare students, or during class to encourage them	4
Whole group or team-building activities; having students take turns	4
Letting students be leaders or guide activities	4
Moving on to different activities or offering multiple activities as students' engagement and focus wanes after time; using differentiated movements	3
Helping students understand what to expect from the class, such as routines, which helps builds trust in TA	2
Students helping or demonstrating to other students	2
Having the budget to provide instruments, books, and manipulatives for student interventions	1
Learning about new languages, dance moves, and history*	1
When students are proud of the work that they've done**	1

*One TA who participated in an interview reported that when the curriculum topics presented through the program explored different drumming rhythms of West African, Brazilian, and Japanese cultures, the students were very excited to learn more about cultures of places in the world and display an "open curiosity".

**Another TA interviewee shared that they have built trust in the students, reporting: *"I've loved working with the children, even in the school that's difficult to manage – when I go in, they give me hugs, and they're happy to see me."* This TA shared that they are proud of their work because of setting the bar high and helping students persist in creating a large permanent art piece.

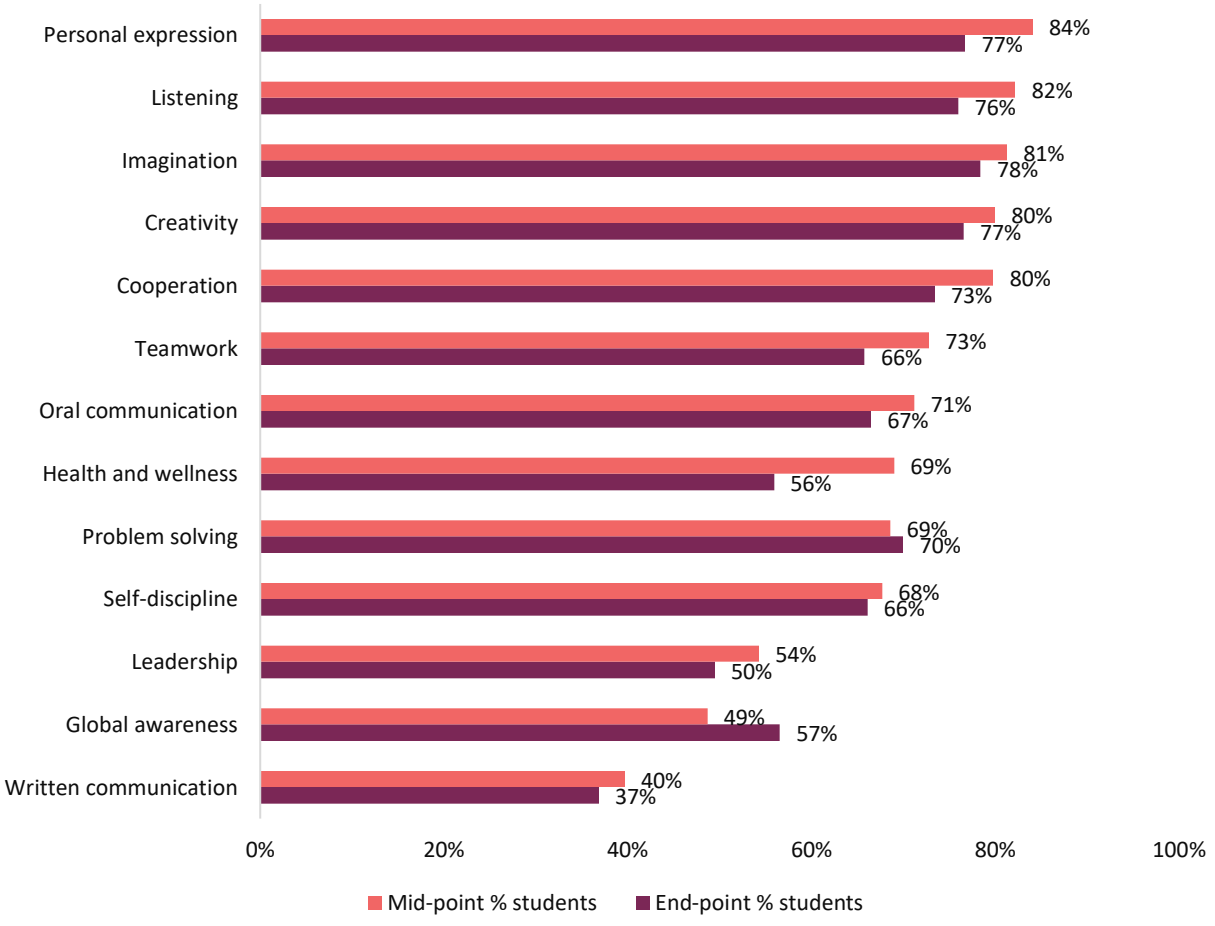
21st Century Skills

The evaluation of the AIA program has shown mixed results in improving students' 21st-century skills. Notably, teaching artists observed that by the end of the residency, more students were displaying global awareness (+8%), which could be attributed to exposure to new perspectives or teaching methods like interactive learning to collaborative projects (Figure 6). Some skills remained relatively steady among students from the beginning to the end of the program, like problem-solving or self-disciple. Other skills saw slight declines, particularly written communication, leadership, oral communication, teamwork, cooperation, and listening – the largest decrease was in the percent of students in the class who display skills in health and wellness (-13%). Despite these variations, qualitative feedback from teachers and teaching artists in interviews highlighted positive impacts on students' social skills and communication (Table 5), enthusiasm for arts, teamwork, and leadership, indicating beneficial effects on students' personal and social development.

Figure 6. % Students in Classrooms Demonstrating 21st Century Skills

What percent of students in your classroom display the following skills?

(TA survey; mid-point n = 24; end-point n = 20)

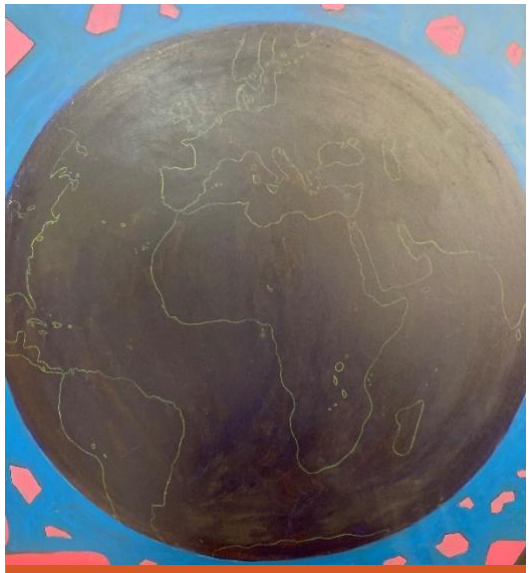


In interviews, TAs reflected on what they liked about the program and/or why they would likely recommend it to another school. In their comments, they shared that the residency is:

- Very helpful for students as a part of their learning process and coping strengths.
- Able to impact students by having 1-on-1 time with them and having extra time for a new kind of education that's still in their traditional classroom.

Classroom teachers similarly shared that the residency is:

- Inclusive and impactful.
- Helpful in aiding student collaboration with peers and building excitement about new projects (Table 5).



This image, shared by a teacher interviewee, displays a globe drawn from memory by a nonverbal student for a mural to be installed temporarily at the ODE's headquarters. The teacher shared: *"It was an amazing thing; we were all impressed. It's fascinating to me, he played at his strengths despite the fact that he doesn't talk at all. These things are happening with our TA."*

Furthermore, when asked about what changes they have observed in their students since the start of the residency, two classroom teachers also shared that students have been using prosocial skills, like interacting with each other more, which helps them work collaboratively or get to know each other.

"They have a lot more confidence, they can communicate better to me - I feel like I know them better, I can talk to them more, and they communicate what they want to. For me as an art teacher, I don't typically know what they're thinking, whether they like projects, but I do here."
- Teacher

In interviews, teaching artists also said they saw improvement in students' 21st-century skills, like solving problems, facing challenges, taking risks, and developing coping strengths. TAs said that students also show that they:

- Want to commit themselves to projects,
- Have grown in their awareness of themselves and with others in group work settings,
- Are more comfortable with each other and participating in teamwork,
- Show curiosity, interest, and knowledge in new topics, and be leaders in supporting or repeating instructions to other students.

Two teaching artists who participated in interviews shared that they have seen changes in students' ability to listen and pay attention, demonstrating the social growth that this program has offered to its students. One of these teaching artists shared:

> *"At the beginning of the drumming class, one child could not play anyone else's rhythm, only his own. But by the end, he could play everyone's rhythm. That shows the impact of listening – you don't think a remedy to that individual development to be drumming because it's a community thing. They've developed skills to listen to others."*

Table 5. In what ways has the program improved your students' 21st-century skills? (e.g., life skills relating to their future career or relationships) (Teacher interviews, n = 6)

Theme	Count
Students display improved communication and social skills with others; nonverbal students learning alternative communication, like communicating through art	5
Increase in technical skills or career paths, like technology, studio language, full-time artistry, or stage production	5
Students are team building, forming relationships with each other, or collaborating with peers and educators	4
Students are visibly enthusiastic or excited about music or art, with positive energy in sessions	2
Awareness of others, like following through on commitments, helping others who are falling behind, or displaying empathy and compassion	2
Overcoming challenges with disabilities, like sensitivities to sounds or hesitance in interacting with new people	2
Students stepping up as leaders in guitar or drumming clubs and in performances for the school	1

The artwork in this photo, shared by a TA interviewee, was created by students of the AIA program and will be a permanent installation in their school's library.

> *"I just think the world of the program. I love to see it grow, do more things, work with more students, and have more impact. It's deeply needed. I think creativity is a way to get to nontraditional students who don't fit into usual programming to use the arts and become more invested in their school."* – Teaching Artist

Personal-Interpersonal Skills

According to both teachers and TAs, the AIA program has positively impacted students' personal-interpersonal skills by:

- Increasing their confidence
- Inspiring them to take on new projects
- Encouraging them to share their work at home

Teachers have also observed students overcoming perceived differences and engaging more willingly in new activities (Table 6). In survey responses, the majority of students reportedly express their ideas, demonstrate pride in their work, and volunteer for activities (Figure 7). Additionally, by the end of the residency, a smaller percentage of students disrupted class with inappropriate behavior.

Figure 7. % Students in Classrooms Demonstrating Personal-Interpersonal Skills

What percent of students in your classroom display the following skills?

(TA survey; mid-point n = 24; end-point n = 20)

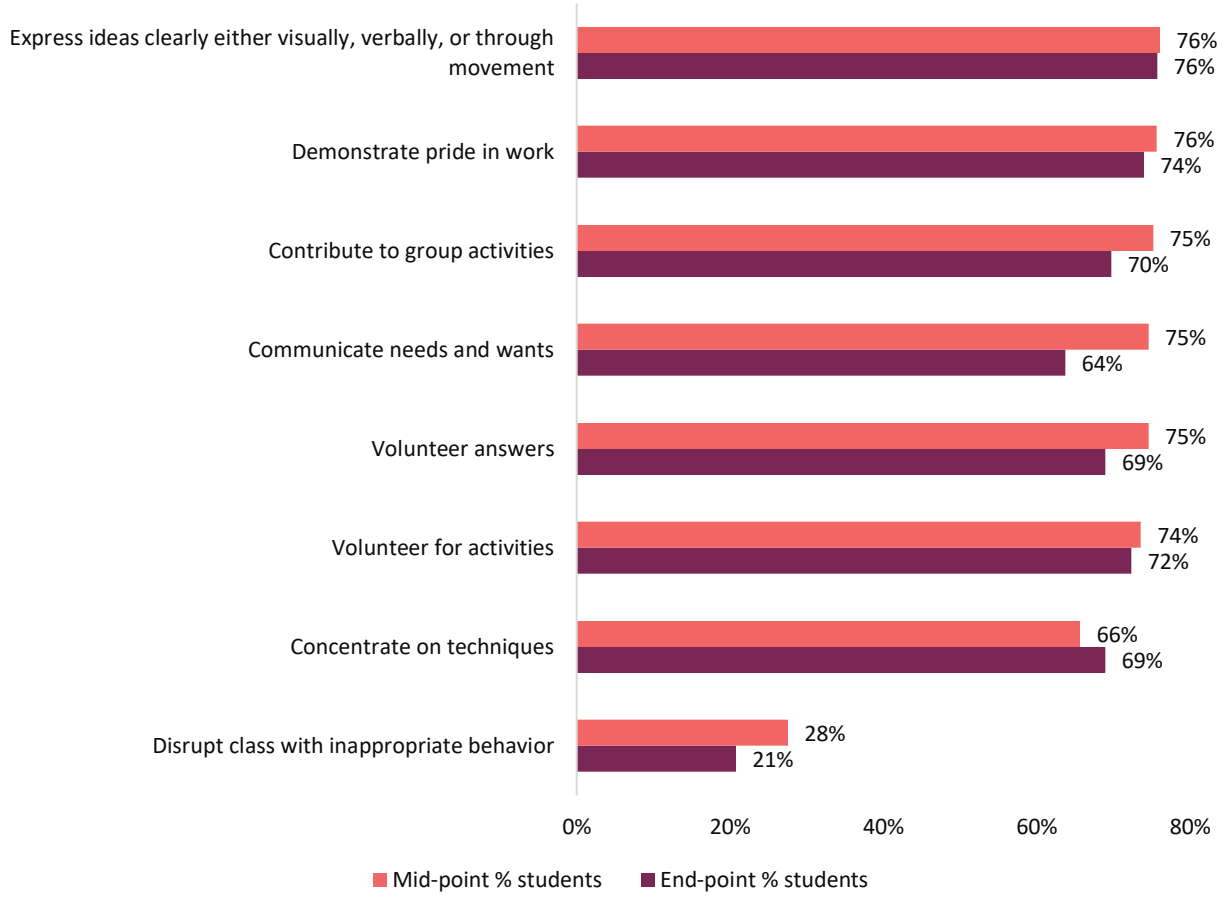


Table 6. In what ways has the program improved your students' personal and interpersonal learning skills? (Teacher interviews, n = 4)

Theme	Count
Students display an increase in confidence in themselves and/or their abilities	3
Teachers are incorporating inclusive art education that is observably impactful for the students	2
Students take on aspects of projects that match their own abilities or interests; students overcome their perceived differences	2
Students are more willing to do new things or are inspired and motivated to jump into new projects, like story boxes or visual art poetry	1
Students share the projects that they did at home based on things they learned in the AIA classroom	1

> *"We have been focusing on our mural project as it's related to students' differences, like what students can do to overcome their perceived differences. There's been a huge growth in students' ability to communicate effectively and put it into words. It's been great to see in a different way."* – Teacher

In interviews, all three TAs emphasized the impact of arts integration education on students' knowledge and learning. One TA shared that they were impressed by how much knowledge and skills students had retained from the beginning of the school year, whereas another TA shared that students have a sense of accomplishment in learning the guitar, ukulele, or drumming, and share how much they learned with the TA. Another TA noted that students have grown artistically, have grown in confidence in their artistic abilities, are patient and deliberate instead of casual in their projects, and have learned to articulate difficulties through both artistic and verbal means. One TA shared:

> *"I have definitely seen changes in internal emotional growth as a result of what they've done with music."*

AIA's Impact on Schools

The AIA program positively impacts schools by providing inclusive and unique educational opportunities for students with disabilities. According to teachers, it has fostered students' excitement, community involvement, and empathy (Table 7). Both teachers and teaching artists agreed that the program brings arts education to special education programs in schools that typically don't have this education, extracurricular options, or direct access to learn from professional artists, which has enhanced student learning, engagement, and participation.

Table 7. How likely would you be to recommend the AIA program to other schools providing programs to students with disabilities? Please explain. (Teacher interviews, n = 6)

Theme	Count
Very/definitely/extremely likely	6
It has been a great, inclusive opportunity for our students with unique needs; they wouldn't have received this type of education without this program; all students are treated and included equally	4
Students with disabilities were inspired and excited to jump into a new project and do a great job	2
Students have been able to get out into the community and be a big part of projects, which is beneficial for them	1
Students worked well together, and the program fostered empathy among them	1

One teaching artist highlighted that the program brings the arts to schools and creates inclusive situations for students with and without disabilities. The AIA program is provided at no cost to the school, and its students get exposure to an actual artist who helps them be creative. In an interview, one teacher also shared that the residency has provided their school with an additional club for percussion, which expands the opportunities students have to participate in an activity they are interested in. Another teacher reported that this program gives students with disabilities the opportunity to be exposed to the arts in a way typical peers get in a regular school setting, with a specialist to teach them and get them excited about learning about art.

> *"The program promotes not only diversity and inclusion but there's a fostered empathy among these kids. They work closer than they have ever done before, and it includes everyone in these projects."* – Teacher

Classroom Teacher Experience

Teachers were specifically asked about the impacts the residency has made on them and their students. They shared that it enriched their teaching and elevated students' unique strengths and abilities in projects. They also suggested opportunities for pre-session meetings, student community experience, TA training, and more funding.

Program Impact on Teachers

Teachers shared some testaments on how they or other teachers have been impacted by the residency:

- Other instructors in the school have adopted some of their TA's techniques in the classroom to guide them through activities effectively.
- One teacher feels that the collaboration with their TA has enriched their pedagogy, providing deeper insights into working one-on-one with kids and has inspired this teacher to pursue how to provide higher level artmaking lessons to their children.
- The residency's work has pushed one school to be in the community more often with students, which has connected this school with other community agencies and sparked the school's work in four or five more projects.
    - The teacher who shared this also learned that their students are more capable than people give them credit for and how to better serve their strengths. The TA has focused on the strengths of students labeled as "troubled and troubling," which has led to amazing things they have created in the art studio.
- One teacher reported that their eyes have been opened to more things that they didn't think possible:

> *"We celebrate little things now every day, like someone saying their first words or pulling up their pants for the first time, while the devices and pictures the TA uses help these students pull off little plays in the classroom."*

- Students have also shown talent in public speaking or acting out scenarios for different life skills in this teacher's classroom.
- This opportunity refreshed one teacher's abilities to support teachers in providing art education to help students feel they have what they need. This teacher was excited to get back into the classroom, which inspires and motivates them to excel in educating students with disabilities.

Feedback and Suggestions from Teachers

When asked, "Is there anything that Art Possible can do to improve your experience with the residency, or to improve other teachers' experiences with the residency (to help with working relationships, engaging students, to help teachers feel more engaged, etc.)?", three teachers did not have any suggestions for improvement because they liked everything about the program The remaining teachers provided unique suggestions for how Art Possible could improve their experience or students' experiences with the AIA residency, including:

- Have a brief meeting with staff and the teaching artist before each AIA class session so everyone understands where everyone is coming from.
- Create more opportunities for students to get out into the community, which was integral for students in only some classrooms in a school (although there are barriers, such as permissions, transportation, flexibility, etc.).
- Provide workforce training/development/education for teaching artists, highlighting the importance of arts integration education for students with disabilities and the expectations and objectives of the AIA program.
- Provide more money and resources to prevent teachers and teaching artists from spending money out-of-pocket on expensive art supplies.

"It's been the best experience we've had so far. We've had other programs in our school, with art and dance, but this one has been the best by far. It was a great experience for the staff, and we'd like to be a part of it again. We appreciate the opportunity to be a part of this." – Teacher

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Teaching Artist Experience

A sample of three teaching artists participating in residencies this year were interviewed at the end to reflect on their experiences and impact stories, as well as their perceptions and experiences of working with both classroom teachers and AIA administration.

Teaching artists were specifically asked about the impacts the residency has made on them and their students. They highlighted the positive experiences of engaging with young students and the challenges of managing disruptive behavior while acknowledging their courage and growth despite difficulties.

Program Impact on Teaching Artists

When asked, "What impact has the residency had on you as an educator?" teaching artists shared some challenges and positive experiences. One TA shared that it has acted as a refresher on engaging and what teaching methodologies to adopt with younger kids after being away from educating this age range for many years. Another teaching artist shared that perfecting their craft by working with young students has not always been easy, but it has been good to learn. This teaching artist experienced major challenges with students' behavior in one site, with students refusing to share or being extremely disruptive, leading the teaching artist to report to students the conditions for the TA to return each week and provide fun activities instead of being done with coming to their school. The teaching artist had brief successes until behaviors worsened again and shared that no visiting artist, regardless of how flexible and inclusive they try to be as they did, will ever have control over this particular group of students.

Another teaching artist shared that they feel they've been highly impacted by the students they taught through this program and that she has learned so much. She shared:

> *"They have so much courage in confronting and dealing with complicating factors in their lives, and I'm often moved after our sessions because of their strength, courage, and growth despite all these challenges."*

Teaching Artist Perceptions and Satisfaction with AIA Administration

In survey responses, teaching artists praised the Art Possible administrative staff of the AIA program. TAs were satisfied or highly satisfied with Art Possible's communications and availability and had a positive experience with Art Possible (Figure 8). However, four teaching artists reported that monthly check-ins with AIA would support them (Table 8).

Moreover, parallel to what has been heard in past evaluations of this program, teaching artists in interviews and one who took the survey this year shared that they would like a larger budget to get more supplies and resources for the activities they want to complete with students (Table 8).

> *"I think Art Possible is doing an excellent job. I feel like they're very supportive, and very responsive. Any time I've reached out with any questions, I get a quick response. I'd tell them to keep doing what they're doing."* – Teaching Artist

Figure 8. Teaching Artist Satisfaction with AIA Administration

How satisfied are you with the following? ***(TA survey; mid: n = 24, end: n = 20)***

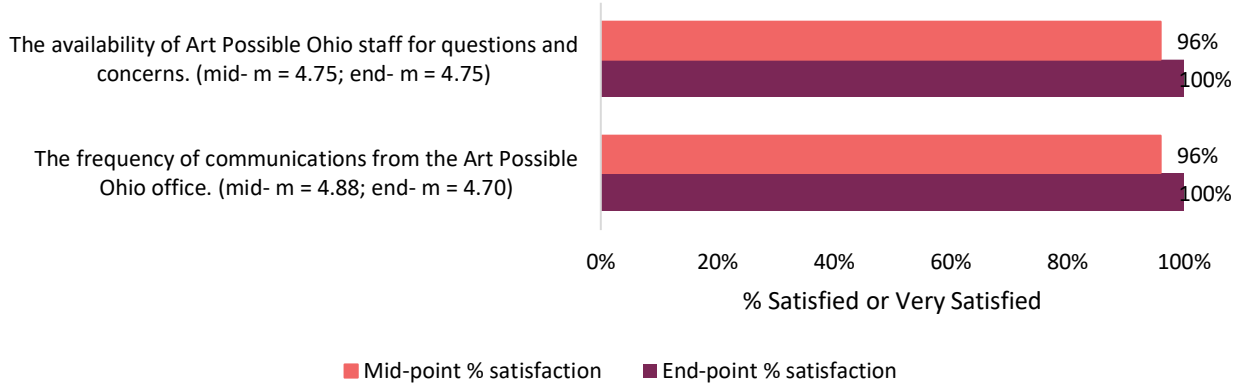

Table 8. How could your experience with AIA administration be improved? (TA survey; mid: n = 14, end: n = 11)

Theme	Count
My experience could not be improved; I'm satisfied with AIA administration; I've had a positive or supportive experience	15
Implement monthly check-ins	4
I need more money for supplies	1
Nothing; my own scheduling conflicts has limited my ability to attend check-ins, to which I should accommodate more to improve communication with AIA administration	1

Conclusion

Even with the expansion of the program into several more sites in the current year, Art Possible's AIA continues to deliver impactful arts education to schools and programs serving students with disabilities. Overall, testaments of teaching artists and TAs indicate that the AIA program has supported students' engagement and skills by incorporating students' interests, built meaningful connections with them, and doing activities that are hands-on (like playing instruments). Additionally, TAs' and classroom teachers' observed students' excitement, focus, and joy during lessons. The AIA curriculum has also positively impacted students' global awareness, engagement in discussions, social skills, and interest in art. The collaborative relationship between the TAs and educators highlighted the importance of early planning, effective communication, and access to resources to support creative and educational outcomes in high-need classroom settings.

Recommendations

To allow for continuous improvement, the following recommendations can be made:

- **Adopt evidence-based practices to engage teachers in the AIA program**. Teacher engagement in AIA activities, according to TAs, is crucial for student engagement (Table 3). Consistent with past evaluations, teacher involvement declines when TAs are present, creating difficulties for TAs to manage behaviors and immerse students in the curriculum (Table 8). While about 70% of TAs reported teacher engagement in AIA at both the mid- and end-point, satisfaction with teacher engagement dropped (by 16%) from the start to the end of the residency (Figure 7). Past research shows that practices (that AIA could adopt) such as:
    - Providing regular feedback in formal and informal check-ins (such as a beginning, middle, and end touchpoint with TAs and AIA administration).
    - Facilitating mentorship and peer support between educators, empowering teachers to lead by including them in decision-making processes.
    - Promoting a collaborative teaching model between teachers and TAs (see the following recommendation) which would leverage individual expertise and teaching styles.

  Furthermore, when asked about their working relationship with each other, teachers and/or TAs shared that the following elements worked well in maintaining educator engagement in the program:
    - Consistent communication
    - Collaborating closely to develop curriculum
    - Connecting with and understanding students
    - Being receptive to new pedagogy
- **Encourage or mandate meetings between teaching artists and teachers to lay out objectives, desired outcomes, and preferences in the residency.** Prior to or throughout residencies, TAs and classroom teachers should meet to define objectives, desired outcomes, expectations, and preferences for assessing the residency or for

communication during the residency to foster a productive and cohesive partnership and improve AIA's effectiveness. TAs reported in surveys and interviews that they would benefit from connections with key school staff to build rapport, plan, or set objectives (Table 3); the amount of time spent to develop the residency could also be improved (Figure 3). Two teachers had parallel insights, wishing to connect with TAs so plans and points of view are reciprocated.

- **Re-design and develop the AIA evaluation process.** Next year, data collection for the evaluation could occur only once at the end of the residency, in which TAs and teachers can provide their experience working with each other and with AIA (similar to this year's evaluation), but also more generalized perceptions of the program's impact on students. By asking questions directly related to the perceived impact of the program on students' skills and behaviors, MRC will be able provide an accurate, easy to interpret evaluation on the perceived impact of the AIA program. The constructs and skills deemed important and relevant to this program will still be measured, and TA's will be asked to rate the impact they believe the program had on the students' growth in those skills and behaviors.