

## Educational Improvement Tax Credit Approved Program Summaries

2017

### Program 1 – ARTS IN EDUCATION PROGRAM

PROGRAM 1 OF 2

The Arts Academy Charter Middle School (AACMS) provides an innovative approach to education by tapping into the students' existing passion for the arts to enhance their traditional academic studies. The AACMS integrates the arts in classrooms by using concepts and techniques learned in arts classes to reinforce academic materials. New academic materials are presented in a multi-sensory manner, so students can link the information to arts concepts they already know and understand. Students are encouraged to use creative ways to approach assignments, presentations and problem solving, and learn valuable time management skills to balance their academic and arts classwork. They also learn the value of creative problem solving, discipline, hard work, teamwork, the phases of project management, and how to improvise. They establish life skills and habits that will help them succeed in higher education, and whatever they choose to do in the future. AACMS students thrive in an innovative atmosphere with like-minded peers, and attain a broader view of the world around them through their study of the arts alongside traditional academics.

During a student's fifth through eighth grade experience at the AACMS, the students explore the following art forms in addition to all traditional academic disciplines: Dance, Vocal Music, Instrumental Music, Theater, Visual Art and Figure Skating. Students are able to study each of the six art forms and determine where their talents and interests are best applied. Each art form includes instruction in the history, science, math and language in addition to teaching advanced arts skills.

Beginning in fifth grade, the STEAM program is incorporated, applying the fact that science, math and technology are enhanced by artistic thought, and the two worlds are not opposites. Academic and arts faculty at all grade levels collaborate to integrate concepts into the academic classrooms. For example, students learn American Indian dances and artwork, instrumentalists and vocalists learn the mathematics of music, visual artists learn the science of color and materials. By eighth grade, students focus on their chosen art form, and have opportunities to employ their artistic skills, such as theatrics, movement or music, when assigned traditional academic tasks and presentations.

The AACMS' academic and arts courses are taught by Pennsylvania certified teachers and highly trained and experienced arts professionals in areas such as figure skating, where no certification is available. Master classes are conducted throughout the year by visiting artists, who demonstrate and teach their innovative artistic methods.

The AACMS is one of the few schools in the country offering this level of arts and academic integration and arts exploration to middle school students. The AACMS provides an innovative tuition-free arts-infused educational alternative for many students that would not otherwise have exposure to the arts, and the means to pursue their artistic interests and passion. These students are often viewed as "different" by their peers in traditional public schools, and as a result, often to lose their ambition to succeed in the classroom. While at the AACMS, the students' enthusiasm for the arts propels their success in academic classrooms, provides them with a renewed interest in their education, and opens their eyes to how they can apply their talents and knowledge in the world around them. The integration of the arts in academics adds value to the academic core curriculum because students become more invested and engaged in their academic subjects, and more readily retain information due to the innovative presentation methods. As the AACMS celebrates its fifth year of academic and arts excellence, it provides an advanced and multi-sensory learning environment through the arts-infused methods and continues to fill a void for those students that demonstrate an interest in the arts.

**The Arts Academy Charter Middle School is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization.**

**Mission:** The Arts Academy Charter Middle School provides opportunities for students to explore their artistic passions and talents in a supportive, challenging and rigorous academic and artistic environment.