



U.S. Department of Education  
Grant Performance Report (ED 524B)  
Project Status Chart

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FINAL REPORT

**Objective 1**

**The PEAK program will impact students' academic performance in reading and writing, and non-academic performance in terms of behavior, attitudes, and engagement.**

**Accomplishments**

The PEAK program did impact student academic performance in reading and writing. The teachers representing the grades below scored Advanced on the PEAK Classroom Observation Rubric during the 2006-2007 school year. In other words, these teachers were the best at implementing the PEAK strategies.

Student Advanced & Proficient Scores 2007 vs. 2006 on CSAP

Bishop 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade reading - largest % increase in district (13%)  
Bishop 3<sup>rd</sup> Grade writing – largest % increase in district (18.7%)  
Maddox 4<sup>th</sup> Grade reading – largest % increase in district (15.5%)  
Clayton 4<sup>th</sup> Grade reading – second % increase in district (13.3%)  
Maddox 4<sup>th</sup> Grade writing – highest % increase in district (13.2%)

3<sup>rd</sup> Grade 2006 vs. 4<sup>th</sup> Grade 2007 Advanced & Proficient Scores on CSAP

Maddox Writing – highest increase in the district (7%)  
Maddox Reading – second highest increase in the district (8.6%)

PEAK schools scored higher than non-PEAK schools in terms of % change in 7 of 10 CSAP comparison categories (combined Advanced and Proficient scores). These are:

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading (Bishop 13.9%)
2. 3<sup>rd</sup> grade writing (Bishop 18.7%)
3. 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading (Maddox 15.5%)
4. 4<sup>th</sup> grade writing (Maddox 13.2%)
5. 2006 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading vs. 2007 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading (Clayton 9.2%)
6. 2006 3<sup>rd</sup> grade writing vs. 2007 4<sup>th</sup> grade writing (Maddox 7%)
7. 2006 3<sup>rd</sup> grade reading vs. 2007 4<sup>th</sup> grade reading (Maddox 8.6%)

Non-PEAK schools scored higher in terms of % change in 3 of 10 comparison categories (combined Advanced and Proficient scores). These are:

8. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade reading (Hay 11.8%)
9. 5<sup>th</sup> Grade writing (Hay 19.4%)
10. 2006 3<sup>rd</sup> grade writing vs. 2007 4<sup>th</sup> grade writing (by just 2%) (Cherrelyn 11.4%)

In addition, focus group data shows that student engagement and motivation were impacted by the program.

**Excerpts from Student Focus Groups:**

- Students described how the use of arts based strategies helped them stay engaged in their learning. One student commented that the arts based strategies “help us learn in a fun way so we don’t get bored and lose focus.”
- “Music makes your mind burst with ideas and then you can get them down on paper.”
- Students reported that if they were to lose the arts based strategies learning would be “less fun” and that they would not learn “all the things they need.” Others commented that their ability to use their imagination would stop and “our brains won’t be as able to learn.”
- Students also discussed how the arts strategies made them “want to come to school more.” They stated that the strategies “seem less like work” and made “learning more fun.

**Excerpts from Teacher Focus Groups:**

- Teachers felt that the arts based strategies encouraged active learning from their students. Increased engagement led to increased instructional time on task.
- The arts based strategies helped students develop and express their creativity and increased many students willingness to take risks with their learning.
- Based on their perceptions of the positive impact on the learning environment, teachers would like to see PEAK extended to all teachers, at all grade levels.

**Excerpts from Principal Focus Group:**

- Principals believed that students were more motivated and connected to the learning process, which significantly impacted learning outcomes.
- Principals felt that the arts integration touched all types of intelligences and learning styles.

**Excerpts from Parent Focus Group:**

- Parents noted that PEAK activities presented more options and strategies for students and promoted better engagement.
- Parents believed that PEAK had a positive impact on the learning culture because it made learning more fun and interesting for students.

**Objective 2**

**The PEAK program will impact students’ knowledge, skill, participation and appreciation within the arts.**

**Accomplishments**

At the end of the 2006-2007 school year, over 150 students had completed three years of weekly recorder instruction and over 150 students had completed three years of weekly

piano instruction. In addition, 200 students completed two years of piano instruction. Approximately 300 students participated in after school violin and cello lessons. 21 recitals and concerts were held to showcase student efforts, four of these were held in a professional venue.

Over 400 students participated in dance residencies over the course of the three years and nearly 100 students rehearsed and performed in original theater productions. 15 dance and theater performances were presented to parents and community members, three of these were held in a professional venue.

400 students participated in daylong arts immersion experiences hosted by the Englewood Cultural Arts Center Association in which students made art, danced and listened to live music performances.

Eight artists from the Englewood Cultural Arts Center Association visited PEAK classrooms on a regular schedule throughout the school year and presented lessons in the disciplines of art, music, dance and theater. In focus group data, students reported that they learned about different types of art; about rhythm, beat, and movement; to look for shape, texture, and color; and to examine detail including background and foreground elements of artwork. They also noted their increased understanding of different forms and types of art including painting, sculpting, photography, dance/movement, and the production of music. Students wrote about their increased understanding of different artists, their lives, the forms of art they choose to create, and what drives artists' creations.

The art and music teachers at Clayton Elementary taught both PEAK and nonPEAK students and, consequently, were in a unique position to observe the impact of arts instruction. In an interview with these teachers it was revealed that PEAK students were quick to jump into art and music assignments. They approached tasks with confidence, requiring very little if any coaxing. NonPEAK students, especially those in the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> grades, were more timid and require additional instruction and assurance before approaching a task.

The teachers also noted that the PEAK students were more creative in their responses to assignments. The music teacher noted that one week the 3<sup>rd</sup> graders were to create rhyming poems to the tune *Hey Diddle Diddle*. The students worked together in small groups. The PEAK groups of students created 3 and 4 poems during the class period. Students in the nonPEAK classes struggled to complete 1 poem.

The art teacher worked with 3<sup>rd</sup> graders on the concept of exaggeration. PEAK students responded quickly by creating oversized paper objects to reflect the idea. NonPEAK students struggled with the concept and were not as productive. She went on to comment that she sees students using higher level thinking skills in the PEAK classrooms. Consequently it was easier for her to achieve her teaching points with the PEAK kids. They could comprehend and even expand instruction. She purposely altered the projects

she presented to the 5<sup>th</sup> grade PEAK classes, making them more intricate and intensive. She said the PEAK students responded well to this increased challenge.

### **Objective 3**

#### **Participation in the PEAK program will impact teachers' use of arts integration techniques in the regular classroom.**

##### **Accomplishments**

At the conclusion of year one, the PEAK Coordinator conducted a teacher needs assessment and designed a professional development plan that provided for these needs. Teachers participated in two days of training prior to the beginning of the 2005-2006 school year and in five days of training throughout the course of the year. (Six substitute teachers were trained in PEAK techniques and were used to fill in for PEAK teachers in order to minimize disruption to the class.) The focus of each training day was one specific reading comprehension skill and a variety of arts integration techniques that support that skill. Teachers left each session with all of the materials necessary to implement each specific lessons including art transparencies, music CD's, books and art supplies. This greatly facilitated the increased frequency of arts integration practice in the classroom and contributed to the overall quality. In addition, teachers participated in one-on-one coaching sessions with the PEAK Coordinator and set monthly goals for incorporating arts integration techniques within their teaching practice.

During 2006-2007, the professional development model had to be changed to after school workshops but a two-day training kicked off the year and a full release day in November was used for training as well. (See Statutory Requirement #2 for further explanation)

At Bishop Elementary, the staff meeting scheduled for the first Tuesday of every month was devoted to PEAK professional development. Strategies for using the arts in the classroom were explored and practiced. Again, all materials associated with the model lessons were provided to teachers including art transparencies, music CD's and books. This greatly facilitated the implementation of lessons in the classroom.

Another vehicle designed to facilitate the quality and frequency of PEAK arts integration techniques was the PEAK Monday Minute Message. This was a weekly email newsletter designed to take one minute or less to read that featured ideas and instructions on how to use the arts to support reading comprehension in the classroom. The e-newsletter was distributed to elected officials, professional organizations, school administration and teachers outside of the PEAK project as well as to all PEAK staff.

Teachers were also required to set periodic personal goals and to report on the extent to which these goals were achieved. Written goal progress reports were submitted but oral presentations before peers were also required. This created a subtle peer pressure as teachers strived to have something positive to report to their fellow colleagues. As a result, the frequency and quality of arts integration practice in the classroom was impacted. In 2007-2007, 30% of the PEAK teachers report that they use PEAK strategies

on a daily basis, 40% report use on a weekly basis. 97% of the teachers reported that they either achieved or somewhat achieved their goals as compared to 88% who reported the same last year. In addition, just 3% of teachers reported not having achieved a goal during 2005-2006 compared with 12% in 2004-2005. Due to the change in professional development model in 2006-2007, it was not possible to set and track goals and teacher implementation suffered, down by 50%.

An innovation in 2005-2006 and 2006-2007 was to supply teachers with assessment practice sheets that were modeled after those that appear in the state standardized test (CSAP). Students could practice answering CSAP type questions after looking at a piece of art, role-playing a specific text, or listening to music. Practice tests were also provided for related texts so that the transfer of skills from looking at art to reading a text was facilitated. The practice assessments also helped students gain skills in test taking and boosted their confidence in ability to perform on standardized tests.

Another factor that impacted implementation was the development of arts strategies to accompany the Rigby literacy curriculum. Every Rigby guided reading lesson in grades 2 through 5 had an accompanying arts activity that supported the Rigby reading or writing learning objective. Teacher manuals were coded with colored dots that directed teachers to a specific arts activity within the PEAK Arts Integration Kit for Rigby. The kits included complete directions for implementation as well as all collateral material needed such as art prints, music CD's and art supplies. This kit greatly enhanced a teacher's ability to implement quality arts integration experiences in the classroom and was used on a regular basis by approximately half of the PEAK teaching staff in one school and 75% of the staff in another. (One school in the PEAK study does not use the Rigby curriculum.)

Because of the reduced hours of professional development allocated in 2006-2007, attempts were made to mitigate the impact by implementing lessons that paired teachers with professional artists from the Englewood Cultural Arts Center Association. The reasoning behind this decision was that a collaborative model supported quality lesson implementation as each member of the team provided expertise in his/her discipline. More importantly, it ensured that at least one day a week was devoted to some type of arts integration activity within the classroom. Artists were trained in how to support reading comprehension and writing. All eight artists participating in this collaborative teaching model scored proficient or advanced on the PEAK implementation rubric so this strategy was effective in minimizing the impact of the reduced professional development opportunities for teachers.

#### **Objective 4**

**Participation in the PEAK program will impact parents' attitudes regarding the place of the arts in their children's formal and informal education.**

#### **Accomplishments**

PEAK did impact parents' attitudes regarding the place of the arts in education as is evidenced by focus group data.

#### **Excerpts from Parent Focus Group**

- Parents believed the PEAK related activities opened their children's imaginations and increased their use of descriptive words in their writing—making their writing more exciting.
- Parents noted that PEAK activities presented more options and strategies for students and promoted better engagement.
- Parents believed that PEAK had a positive impact on the learning culture because it made learning more fun and interesting for students.
- Parents appreciated the most recent PEAK implementation model.
- The end of the grant was discussed. Parents do not want to see a decrease in the use of the PEAK strategies.

In addition, principals noted that PEAK “helped parents connect” and showed parents more of what their children were capable of doing.

#### **Objective 5**

**Rate and quality of implementation of the PEAK program will impact degree of student gain.**

#### **Accomplishments**

Teachers who habitually used the PEAK teaching strategies experienced a 13 to 16% increase in student reading scores and 9 to 19% increase in writing student scores on the state assessment test. See Objective 1 for more information.

#### **Excerpts from Student Focus Groups**

- Plays and tableaux were used to help them to “jump in a story” and picture it in their minds. The students thought this strategy worked well for poems that are sometimes “hard to understand.”
- Students believed that drama and tableau helped them visualize and understand a story and its characters, increasing the likelihood they would remember the information.
- Tableau was used to help students decipher what they were reading by allowing them to connect with the characters and what the characters (fictional or non-fictional) were experiencing. One student commented tableau helps us “get into their world.”
- Students talked about how drama helped them find good adjectives and verbs for their writing.
- Students noted that they had to pay attention to support what they drew in a picture or pointed out in a piece of artwork.
- Students also described creating music to match and explain a story as well as the use of music to give them ideas for their writing.

#### **Excerpts from Teacher Focus Groups**

- Using PEAK strategies helped the teachers feel “more energized” and engaged in their teaching.
- PEAK strategies allowed teachers to reach different types of learners and increased the likelihood that instruction met the needs of all students.
- Teachers felt that the arts based strategies encouraged active learning from their students. Increased engagement led to increased instructional time on task.
- The arts based strategies helped students develop and express their creativity and increased many students willingness to take risks with their learning.
- Students were “able to see the whole picture as well as its parts, and therefore had more retention.”
- These strategies required students to use higher level thinking skills and become better problem solvers.
- Teachers saw evidence of students’ increased ability to remember, express, and think about their learning.
- Teachers stated that they would like to continue to use PEAK strategies because of the impact on student learning.

**Excerpts from Principal Focus Groups**

- Principals felt the professional development provided to teachers was high quality. The program director’s work with the teachers—her strategies, applications, and interaction style—contributed significantly to the success of the program.
- Principals believed that students were more motivated and connected to the learning process, which significantly impacted learning outcomes.
- The principals also noted that PEAK activities added a “more comprehensive side to the children’s education,” providing students with skills that had wider applications, many beyond the school day.
- Principals felt that the arts integration touched all types of intelligences and learning styles.

**STATUTORY REQUIREMENT #2: REASONS WHY ESTABLISHED GOALS WERE NOT MET, IF APPLICABLE**

The following impacted the extent to which the PEAK project did not meet its goals:

**1. Length of Project**

Research indicates that in order for sustainable change to occur, implementation of reform initiatives must take place for a minimum of 5 years. In accordance with the AEMDD guidelines, the PEAK project was implemented on a 3-year timeline. Even though the grant has come to an end, PEAK teaching practices are still being taught and utilized. A significant impact on data over a 5-year or longer period is anticipated.

**2. Unanticipated Change in Professional Development Model**

In year three of implementation, the district policy regarding professional development and release time for teachers was modified. Prior to this, PEAK professional

development relied on a monthly full day model that included teaching new arts integration strategies, a time for teacher dialogue about their practice, goal setting and planning. Teacher focus group data indicates that this model was effective.

With the shift in district focus regarding release time, the majority of PEAK professional development had to take place in monthly after school workshops. Consequently, some teachers did not implement PEAK strategies in their classrooms to the degree that they did in prior years. Focus group data indicates that this did have an impact on teacher implementation.

### **3. Competing Initiatives**

There have been three changes in district leadership throughout the life of the PEAK project. This introduced shifting agendas and, to some degree, competing initiatives in the district, which did have an impact on PEAK implementation in some classrooms.

### **4. Student Mobility/ESL Impact on Data**

The district student mobility rate continues to rise. Over 35% of the student population changed annually over the course of the PEAK project. Consequently, longitudinal data was impacted. In addition, the number of ESL students nearly doubled over the course of the study.

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENT #3: OTHER PERTINENT INFORMATION**

### **Dissemination**

Since one of the purposes of the Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination is to distribute information and best practices to other educators across the country. To that end, PEAK did the following:

- Maintained a website that included lesson plans, a unit template and exemplars of implementation in the classroom.
- Produced a PEAK DVD containing examples of the most popular and effective PEAK teaching techniques, interviews with teachers and students, and brain research data.
- Presented workshops to the staff of KidQuest, a before and after school child care program.
- Presented numerous workshops for teachers within the Englewood School District and beyond including schools in the metro districts of Denver and Littleton and in the mountain community districts of Gunnison and Loveland. In addition, workshops were held at the University of Northern Colorado and as a part of the Colorado Council for the Arts statewide Arts Summit 2007.
- Scheduled additional monthly workshops in Englewood Schools for the remainder of the school year.

- In process of scheduling workshops in other districts as part of a Colorado Council of the Arts initiative in 2007-2008 and 2008-2009.
- Presented the findings of this study to the Englewood School Board and the Englewood Cultural Arts Center Association, and have made copies available for the media and others interested in the outcomes.
- PEAK strategies will be featured in the 2008 Colorado State Arts Summit as the PEAK Coordinator serves as keynote speaker for the event.

## **STATUTORY REQUIREMENT #4**

### **UNANTICIPATED OUTCOMES**

One unanticipated outcome was the strength of the collaborative planning model utilized in years one and two and the overwhelmingly positive response to the modeling of lesson strategies. Teachers appreciated seeing the strategies in action and welcomed the opportunity to spend quality time discussing implementation and experiences with their peers. This had a powerful impact on implementation.

Due to the strong partnership formed between Englewood Schools and the Englewood Cultural Arts Center Association for the purposes of this grant, the school district and city government have enjoyed an improved and increasingly cooperative working relationship. Representatives of the city served on the school district's Strategic Plan Committee and worked with administrators, teachers and parents in generating a plan that benefits the community as a whole.

While we expected that interest for PEAK within the district would be generated, we did not anticipate that school districts and even universities outside of Englewood would be intrigued with the PEAK teaching strategies. As was mentioned in Statutory Requirement #3, presentations on PEAK have been made in numerous schools including the University of Northern Colorado with a workshop at Western State College coming up this summer. Requests for future presentations are received on a regular basis as Englewood's reputation for effective use of the arts grows.

Another unanticipated outcome is how momentum for the project continues to grow even after the federal funding has ended. One of the PEAK schools has committed itself to the arts and has been designated as the district's school of arts and technology. The Hiring Committee assigned to interview candidates for Superintendent this spring are including a number of questions regarding the arts and arts integration for each applicant. This is the first time the arts have had such a focus in this process. Monthly teacher workshops that combine PEAK teaching strategies with character education are consistently at capacity registration.

### **CONCLUSIONS**

PEAK has had an impact on the Englewood School District. Teachers report feeling motivated and reinvigorated about their teaching practice and students in classrooms where the PEAK strategies are consistently utilized are out scoring their nonPEAK peers in on standardized tests in terms of percent change. The study has provided an excellent foundation from which to increase implementation and therefore build capacity.

In addition to its impact on teaching and learning, PEAK demonstrates another strength – sustainability. Once teachers are taught how to use the arts in their classrooms to support their lessons in reading and writing, no additional funding is necessary. Teachers can utilize the strategies at any time and in any place. The PEAK model for learning through the arts does not rely on visiting artists or residency programs in order for it to continue. That is perhaps why it has been so popular within the district and without, attracting attention from school personnel across the state.

Englewood Schools began implementing a five-year Strategic Plan in 2006. The plan calls for the development of essential learning targets, identification of guaranteed and viable curriculum and implementation of best practice instructional strategies. PEAK is on the district's short list of best practice instructional strategies. Consequently, as the federal grant comes to an end, PEAK seems destined to continue to impact teaching and learning in Englewood for years to come.