

FOLWELL PERFORMING ARTS COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL



SCHOOL OVERVIEW

Folwell School, Performing Arts Magnet, is an art-focused school in Minneapolis Public Schools (MPS) that serves students in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade. Folwell strives to infuse arts into the curriculum and offer a variety of performing arts opportunities such as orchestra, band, choir, theatre, dance, media and visual arts. The school staff team believes that learning through the arts increases achievement in math, science and literacy.

WHY COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIP SCHOOL STATUS?

Folwell is pursuing Community Partnership School status to fully implement an arts-integrated model in an effort to close the achievement gap and meet the needs of all students and families. The school seeks to become an example for the state of Minnesota in narrowing the achievement gap between white students and students of color.

Currently, even with a steady increase in overall student proficiency in math and reading, Folwell's students of color are not making the yearly gains necessary to decrease the school's achievement gap.

- 2014 math proficiency
 - 68 percent of white students were proficient
 - 24 percent of students of color were proficient
 - 18 percent of students receiving English learner services were proficient
- 2014 reading proficiency
 - 61 percent of white students were proficient
 - 20 percent of students of color were proficient
 - 10 percent of students receiving English learner services were proficient

Folwell's leadership team believes implementation of a comprehensive arts-integrated program will result in positive gains in reducing the achievement gap. As a Community Partnership School with autonomy related to academic program, schedule, calendar, staffing and resource allocation, Folwell plans to:

- Foster a unified focus on driving student achievement in and through the arts
- Recruit and hire staff members who embrace the mission and vision of the school
- Develop curricula and assessments aligned to the academic model
- Extend the student school day and year to fully meet the needs of all students
- Provide additional time for teacher collaborative planning and reflection
- Design a professional development program to support professional growth in arts integration instruction
- Offer innovative learning opportunities to students and lower class sizes in fourth and fifth grades
- Expand and establish partnerships with arts and business organizations
- Develop a technology plan to address student and program needs
- Explore alternative intervention models
- Increase site council governing capacity over time

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SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS

Folwell's student population is 58 percent Latino, 28 percent African-American, 9 percent white, 3 percent American Indian and 2 percent Asian.

- Students eligible for free or reduced-price meals – 85 percent
- Students receiving English learner services – 51 percent
- Students receiving special education services – 13 percent
- Students receiving homeless and highly mobile services – 6 percent

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

As a cornerstone of the school's design, arts-focused partnerships have been established with many local organizations to provide expanded learning opportunities for students, including:

- Perpich Center for Arts Education
- Music Out Loud (Minnesota Opera)
- SteppingStone Theatre

Folwell will evaluate all current partnerships to ensure alignment with the school's vision and goals and seek new partnerships to address gaps in programming, such as a partnership with the University of Minnesota Dance Education program.

STAKEHOLDER SUPPORT

Folwell formed a volunteer design team that included representatives from administration and staff to complete the Community Partnership Schools application process. Stakeholder input was gathered through a series of feedback sessions with students, families, staff and community members.

After information and feedback sessions, the staff voted to approve the plan, with 81.6 percent voting in favor of the plan. In the fall of 2015, Folwell will begin to establish a governing body with staff, community partners and parent-based subcommittees for decision-making and managerial functions. To foster continued buy-in, the school will use committees and multimedia communication tools to keep families and staff apprised of activities and decisions.

