

Sound Learning

Arts education has proven vital, not only for its own sake, but also as a key to enhance intellectual development, physical wellness, and improved academic achievement. Schools with strong arts programs reap important benefits, such as increased student motivation, improved attendance, increased graduation rates, and enhanced development of creativity and problem-solving ability.

In response to the research evidence that the arts make a difference in student learning, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, Georgia State University's Center for Educational Partnerships in Music, Fulton County Schools, and Atlanta Public Schools implemented *Sound Learning*, an innovative, integrated arts education program.

2005-2006 marks the seventh year of the *Sound Learning* program. This program enhances core curriculum study and expands learning opportunities through the infusion of music into all subject areas. *Sound Learning* allows students, teachers, and musicians to explore the connection between music and the general curriculum, utilizing Atlanta Symphony Orchestra artist residencies and music curriculum materials developed by the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Education Department.

Sound Learning is operating in seven metro Atlanta schools during the 2005-2006 school year: Barnwell Elementary School and Bethune Elementary School in the Fulton County School; Centennial Place Elementary School in the Atlanta Public Schools; Clairemont Elementary School in the Decatur City Schools; Fernbank Elementary School, Pleasantdale Elementary School, and the International Community School in the DeKalb County Schools. Over 1,500 students in the *Sound Learning* Partner Schools received a total of more than 6,000 musician contacts, in addition to a trip to Symphony Hall to see an Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Young People's Concert.

The curriculum theme for the 2005-2006 school year is "Music=Patterns". Students explore all types of patterns: those in music and those in the world around us. From jump-rope chants to symphonies; from molecular life to planetary life; from seashells to the tides that wash them to the shore – students learn that patterns are everywhere.

The *Sound Learning* program has been awarded a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts, and there are plans now being made to expand into more schools in the coming years.

For further information about this effective and exciting program, contact Brenda Pruitt, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Assistant Director of Education, at (404) 733-5038 or Dr. David Meyers, Director for the Georgia State University Center for Educational Partnerships in Music at (404) 651-1721.

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