



Perpich Center for Arts Education

Update to 2017 Evaluation Report

February 2018

Problems Identified

- **Weak Agency Leadership.** The agency's governing board was not very active, particularly in its oversight of the agency's schools. The board was not complying with key policies and bylaws, and it did not have a recent strategic plan. Agency employees had significant concerns about the executive director, whose performance had not been annually reviewed by the board.
- **Declining School Enrollment and Test Scores.** The agency's two schools (a high school and middle school) had experienced enrollment declines in recent years. Standardized test scores for the middle school (Crosswinds) were low and declining.
- **Insufficient Arts Education Outreach.** Some of the agency's outreach to school districts showed promise, but these efforts reached a small portion of the state's teachers.

Changes Implemented

- **New Board Members and Executive Director.** The Governor has appointed 9 new members to the 15-member board since mid-2016, and the board hired a new executive director in June 2017. The new executive director has a superintendent's license, which the previous director did not have.
- **Crosswinds School Closed.** The 2017 Legislature directed the Commissioner of Administration to sell Crosswinds School, and the school closed in June 2017. The St. Paul school district expressed interest in buying the school from the state, and the Department of Administration hopes to close the sale in early 2018.
- **Agency Priorities Adopted.** At a two-day strategic planning session in mid-2017, the board adopted priorities for the agency. The board intends to have further discussions in early 2018 about implementation and measurement of key goals.
- **Changes in Board Operations.** The board implemented various changes to comply with its policies and improve transparency. For example, the board has initiated an executive director performance review process, is holding more frequent committee meetings, is providing opportunities for public comments at meetings, and is reviewing school enrollment and test scores periodically.

Action Needed

- **Increase Arts High School Enrollment.** Fall 2018 (first-day) enrollment at the high school was 161. This continued the downward trend of recent years, and enrollment is well below the school's statutory limit (310).
- **Continue Implementing Changes in Arts Education Outreach.** The agency is phasing out some outreach programs and revamping its outreach strategies. It plans to start using regional service cooperatives as training hubs. The agency intends to hire a music education outreach coordinator in early 2018 (this position has been long unfilled), and it will consider hiring additional content area specialists to help with outreach.