

Increasing Access to Music Education for Youth in Greater Minnesota

MacPhail Center for Music

The MacPhail Center for Music has been working to increase access to high-quality music education for youth across Greater Minnesota for the past decade. Two of these efforts are their Online School Partnerships and Sing Play Learn with MacPhail® Online Early Childhood Music Partnerships program. MacPhail partnered with Wilder Research to evaluate these programs to better understand how they are being implemented and what outcomes youth achieve through participation in these programs. The following is a summary of what we learned when evaluating the Sing Play Learn program.

Sing Play Learn with MacPhail®

The Sing Play Learn with MacPhail® Online Early Childhood Music Partnerships strives to increase access to high quality music education for early childhood students in Greater Minnesota. The virtual musical play experiences are customized to support classroom goals via collaboration with the early childhood classroom teachers and taught by MacPhail-trained early childhood music specialists.

▶ Participation in the program was found to have 3 major outcomes for students:

1. Increase in student engagement through personalized music learning experiences

Being able to call [the students] by name helped them stay engaged on a daily basis. Some songs were sung throughout the year, which the kids liked because they knew the songs, but [our Teaching Artist] added new seasonal or theme songs during the year to keep things fresh and interesting.”

–Classroom teacher at a participating school

2. Increase in student listening skills through sung directives, musical routines, and familiarity of teachers and teaching approach

“We do things like build emergent math skills and literacy skills. On the music education side of things, they’re memorizing things and pitch matching. Kids are able to identify the song. That’s a concrete musical memory skill we’re building, which has huge benefits – categorizing a sound as meaning something and dedicating something to memory.”

–Teaching Artist

3. Increase in student regulation skills through:



Musical transitions in the classroom to reduce chaos and instability



Teaching bodily/positional awareness



Increased complexity of songs and instructions over the year to cement existing skills and build new skills

“Throughout my several years with MacPhail I’ve seen my special education students engaged at a higher level during our music time together. They connect with the music and it changes them and draws them out. There are fewer behavioral concerns during this time as well, and they feel successful. It is wonderful to see!”

–Classroom teacher at a participating school

Participation in the program increases access to music instruction throughout the state and provides a resource for partner schools

Schools in Greater Minnesota have access to music education, which they might not otherwise be able to provide.

In the 2020-21 school year:

4 SCHOOLS

partnered with the Sing Play Learn program

283 STUDENTS

participated

245 HOURS

of instruction were provided

"With the partnerships, we're in smaller communities where they don't have a music program in the school. It's a great opportunity to get music instruction in their classroom."

–Teaching Artist

Partner schools benefit from the additional resources provided to them through the program

Classroom educators have additional strategies, tools, and resources to use in the classroom that they get through Sing Play Learn. This includes:



Songs they can use to teach skills, including math and literacy skills



Songs to use to transition between activities or otherwise indicate how students should act or behave



Time to provide one-on-one support to students who need help while the Teaching Artist leads the full group



The opportunity to be engaged in the lesson from the students' point of view

"We use [new vocabulary] when singing songs and poems, and use music as a transition, or extension to math and literacy (i.e. using scarves to practice one-to-one counting)."

–Classroom teacher

