

**Partnering for Success:
Kensington Parkwood Elementary School and the AEMS Alliance/Arts Integration
Institute at Towson University**

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I. HISTORY OF THE LLSN PARTNERSHIP AT KENSINGTON PARKWOOD ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

In 2001, a group of arts supervisors, curriculum specialists, and principals from Montgomery County (MD) Public Schools began to study the benefits of arts integration and the possibility of implementing an arts integration initiative in select elementary schools in the county. John Ceschini, principal of Kensington Parkwood (KP) Elementary School in Kensington, MD, had experienced the benefits of integrating the arts into the curriculum in his previous school and believed that similar results were possible at KP. He approached a core group of staff members with the idea of beginning an arts integration initiative at the school. These dedicated staff members, committed to student achievement, had never really considered integrating arts with instruction apart from illustrating book reports and singing the ABCs. While the students were already doing well on county and state assessments, John wondered if maybe they could do even better, and if perhaps some of the students who struggled with more traditional instructional models would benefit from a more hands-on and creative approach.

But was it worth the risk? Some reasonably wondered if it would make more sense to keep doing what they had been doing, to stay with a system they were comfortable with and with which they had managed to be moderately successful with. Indeed, what if the arts integration initiative failed? Would this result in a setback that both the school and the students would find difficult to overcome?

Finally, the school community decided the possible benefits of such a program outweighed the risks, and a core team of teachers began their immersion in arts integration through professional development courses sponsored by Changing Education

Through the Arts (CETA) at the John F. Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. This program brought KP teachers together with other teachers and artists to learn how to integrate the arts into their instruction. Back at KP, as the team began to implement arts-integrated lessons in their classrooms, other staff members observed model lessons, checked hallway displays, and asked about the process during informal team meetings at lunch. Some lessons contained meaningful connections between the arts, but in the beginning some could be best described as using the arts to support the other content area. The principal continued to support the philosophy of arts integration at KP by providing time for peer observations, dissemination of materials, focused staff meetings, and visiting artists. Meanwhile, some KP teachers continued to implement a more traditional approach to learning, teaching every subject as a discreet content area. At this point, teachers were encouraged to move at their own pace.

During that first year, the principal, staff development teacher, arts specialists, and a growing cadre of dedicated teachers began to see for themselves the ways in which arts integration could change the way students and teachers thought about learning. Teachers realized they didn't have to be accomplished artists and would only be expected to infuse the arts into their lessons where natural connections existed. As one teacher put it, "Arts integration allows me and my students to enjoy the learning process." As integrated lessons became more the norm, students were no longer checking the clock to see if a language arts lesson was over; on the contrary, there was a rising sense of enthusiasm and pride about their studies. Students would flag down the principal and ask him to stop by their classrooms to see, for example, how they had created a musical pattern to give a new dimension to a poem they had written. Some students created tableaux to dramatize the key points in a social studies lesson, while others generated artistic pieces to reinforce mathematical concepts. Students in one of the special education classrooms used dance to learn about scientific concepts, and, when they demonstrated their understanding in classroom performances, their peers in turn learned from them. As one fifth grade student reflected, "The arts help me learn when I don't understand things when they are written on paper. If I don't understand what it means, the arts will help me by another way. You just have fun or if you don't understand the arts help you."

Although initially there was some parental resistance to integrating the arts, the teachers presented their beliefs in an open forum that demonstrated to the parents the teachers' passion and commitment to the process. Through a voluntary meeting, teachers from every grade level and subject area were represented and spoke with enthusiasm of their dedication to the program. Since that time, parents have overcome their concern that the program was going to be about 'arts and crafts' and have seen how it has supported learning for all students. As one parent noted, "The learning experiences that stand out in my daughter's mind are those that used an arts-integrated approach."

Then in the summer of 2002, twenty-one teachers committed to participating in a week-long professional development program, the Maryland Artist Teacher Institute (MATI). KP teachers have often cited this experience as the turning point for the school. Teachers with experience levels ranging from beginners to thirty-year veterans joined forces with a common focus: to learn how they could better meet the needs of their students through

the integration of the arts. These teachers spent their days working with artists—experiencing arts integration from the students’ perspective—and their nights working in teams to tailor their learning to their own grade levels and curriculum goals. By the end of the week, teachers who had never before worked together had not only discovered the power of the arts, but also the power of taking risks and working together for a common goal. A true professional learning community was beginning to take root within the school. “MATI is by far the best professional development experience I have had,” one KP teacher commented. “I love the week-long immersion in the arts with these wonderful artists.”

During the next school year (2002-2003), an additional seven teachers took courses through CETA. The KP school improvement plan and mission statements were rewritten with a commitment to arts integration. Students began to talk about ways the arts helped them to remember things, made learning more interesting, and how it was not just ‘okay’ but ‘expected’ to try new ways of learning: “When we integrate the arts with learning it makes learning more interesting. When learning is interesting, I want to learn more.” Parents saw what their students were accomplishing, and even those who had been resistant to this ‘arts and crafts’ program began to feel the new energy in the building: “Arts integration has made this school the place to be. We are very happy to have our children in this school.”

To support the model, the county drafted (2003) and received (2004) an “Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination Grant” from the U.S. Department of Education. The early efforts at KP had been recognized and the school was one of three schools to be named a Montgomery County Arts Integration Model School. KP teachers embraced the opportunity to look at teaching and learning through this new lens made possible by the resources the grant would provide.

Throughout this process, it became apparent that many teachers lacked knowledge of, and comfort with, music as an academic discipline. However, believing in the compelling nature of music to provide equitable access to learning, teachers wanted to be more proficient in music integration. They needed more targeted professional development, and they also made a commitment to develop, document, and disseminate multiple instructional and assessment strategies.

Growing Capacity

With the hiring in 2004 of Mary Whalen, an arts integration lead teacher with a background in music education, the teachers began to explore opportunities to integrate music into their curriculum. Along with the music specialist, Fran Beatty, teachers explored the integration of music and math, music and early reading readiness, and music listening and descriptive writing among other topics.

At the same time, KP teachers were able to study arts integration in depth and to implement their learning in their classrooms through partnerships with various institutions (including CETA and MATI). In 2004, the arts integration model schools

partnered with the Arts Integration Institute (AII) at Towson University led by Susan Rotkovitz and Kay Broadwater. Courses taught by AII professors introduced teachers to principles and strategies of arts integration. Many of the courses were designed to meet specific needs of staff in the school, including “Arts Across the Curriculum,” “Enhancing Reading Through the Arts,” “Teaching Thinking Through Art,” “Integrating Drama in the Classroom,” “Art Forms,” and the “Capstone Project – Action Research.”

Training provided through the Metropolitan Opera Guild brought the Creating Original Opera program to KP in 2004 as well. Teachers, students, parents, and community members have been enthusiastic in their support of this program every year. Students form an opera company, choose a theme and thesis for their opera, and work in job groups to accomplish all of the tasks necessary to produce an original opera. Through connections to the reading/language arts, social studies, math, and science curricula, the opera program has positively impacted students’ academic and social-emotional development over the course of a school year. In their roles as writers, composers, performers, managers, historians, set and lighting designers, makeup and costume designers, and public relations agents, students have taken on the responsibility associated with their jobs and worked collaboratively to create a wonderful opera production each year. (To cite a recent example, during the 2006–2007 school year the third grade students at KP produced an opera set in the Brazilian Rainforest, entitled “Change is What You Get Back.” The theme of “change” was related to their Language Arts curriculum, and the setting was part of their Social Studies curriculum. Students were able to explore the theme and setting through multiple opportunities to conduct research and apply their knowledge in artistic ways).

The partnership with the Kennedy Center’s Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA) program continued and was also tremendously beneficial in providing high-quality arts integration professional development for teachers at KP. These courses are taught by some of the country’s foremost teaching artists. Teachers have been able to choose from courses integrating science and dance, music and math, drawing in the curriculum, music in the early childhood curriculum, visual arts and writing, drama and language arts, and more. Evidence of student learning in the arts is displayed throughout the school and on the school website.

Every summer, a large group of KP teachers continued to attend the aforementioned Maryland Artist/Teacher Institute (MATI), in which teachers studied dance, music, drama, visual art, poetry, playwriting, and creative writing with artists in these fields. At the end of the week, they developed “lesson seeds” to expand and implement in their classrooms during the next year. The school team also developed an action plan for arts integration that guides decisions during the course of the year.

In addition, smaller groups of teachers began working with artists-in-residence to integrate various art forms with their classroom curricula. Many of these residencies were made possible by grants from the Maryland State Arts Council and the Arts and Humanities Council of Montgomery County. All of these opportunities were enormously

beneficial; however, many teachers still expressed hesitancy in integrating music into their classrooms and in assessing student learning in and through the arts.

Becoming A Learning Laboratory School

At a 2004 Chorus America meeting to discuss arts integration, John Ceschini met Larry Scripp, the director of the Music-in-Education National Consortium's Learning Laboratory School Network, and discussed KP teachers' interest in learning more about music and music integration. The research-based nature of the Consortium appealed to many at the school as a way of studying and documenting the impact of the arts integration program. In addition, the focus on music learning was important to increasing teachers' comfort levels with music in the classroom.

Ultimately KP teachers decided to become part of the Consortium in order to learn from others and to share creative ideas for integrating music into the curriculum. Those attending the first LLSN conference in Boston in 2005 included the principal (John Ceschini), the music/arts integration lead teacher (Mary Whalen), the staff development teacher (Rose Ann Schwartz), a classroom teacher (Julie Carmean), the coordinator of general/choral music from MCPS (Lillian Pailen), and university partners from the Arts Integration Institute at Towson University (Susan Rotkovitz and Kay Broadwater). At that conference, the group developed a greater understanding of the nature of research concerning the integration of music in the classroom. They learned about the variety of approaches that were being implemented across the country and benefited from the interaction with others exploring this concept. The conference inspired the group to form a school-based LLSN study group of teachers interested in exploring the integration of music in their classrooms. The group reviewed the LLSN Guiding Principles to determine those that were of most interest. They also revised some of the MIENC rubrics to fit the needs of the elementary school setting (For a discussion of MIENC principles and Rubrics, see Scripp and Aprill, 2007, "Interlude" in *JMIE* 3, pp. 177-181, and Scripp 2007, "Embracing the Challenges of Complexity," in *JMIE* 3, pp. 184-201). The core group assisted teachers in implementing their lessons and provided support for the changes in the school's instructional program.

The LLSN group at KP chose to focus on ways in which music learning could enhance the language arts curriculum in various grades. Mary Whalen assisted several teachers in the development, implementation, and documentation of music-integrated lessons. The music teacher, Fran Beatty, designed and implemented action research projects concerning integrating early reading skills in the kindergarten music class and using drumming techniques to increase linguistic fluency in at-risk students. Third grade teacher Julie Carmean adapted Artful Thinking strategies (from Harvard's Project Zero) to employ music in encouraging students' descriptive writing. Another third grade teacher, Marlo Castillo, worked with singer/songwriter Sue Trainor to have students compose songs about curricular topics. Fourth grade teacher Rachel Boorman teamed with music teacher Fran Beatty to help students understand historical fiction and the history of the Underground Railroad through the study of "Follow the Drinking Gourd" and other spirituals. The students composed original spirituals using their own symbolic

language. The entire third grade class worked together to create an original opera. The process was integrally related to both the language arts and social studies curricula. These action research projects were then shared at the annual LLSN conferences.

The core group attended LLSN conferences every year and as a result have expanded the instructional model and have documented the student learning about and through music. Each summer, they have shared various projects using the LLSN template as a guide. LLSN conferences have also provided an opportunity to collaborate with other schools in the Consortium. In May of 2006, Rose Ann Schwartz and Susan Mackey traveled to Minneapolis to meet with the LLSN team at the Ramsey School. Teachers from both schools shared information about the Creating Original Opera programs in their schools. Ramsey teachers noted that the opera program was originally directed by outsiders and that the program made few connections to the school curricular goals. Since that time, the teachers have taken over the process and inextricably linked the program to every part of the curriculum. The teachers also shared data collection processes and assessment instruments related to the opera program. Since that time, teachers at KP have also connected the opera process to the curriculum and adapted some of the assessment tools shared by Ramsey.

By utilizing all of their partners, Kensington Parkwood is becoming a model LLSN school and professional development center where music education is an integral part of the school program. Through the leadership of the principal, John Ceschini, teachers at KP have been able to share arts integration with others in the school, county, state, and nation. Teachers have formed study groups at the school to examine student work related to arts integration. The supervisors of art and music for neighboring Howard County schools have been frequent visitors to KP, bringing teachers, principals, and central office administrators to learn more about integrating the arts and to observe model lessons taught by KP's teachers. The fine arts supervisors from across the state held an annual meeting at the school and heard a performance by the school chorus, learned about arts integration, and heard about various arts integration lessons KP teachers had planned and implemented. In the spring of 2007, KP was one of three schools to present an overview of arts integration to the superintendents of every school system in Maryland at the State Superintendent's Summit. KP has provided direction for schools in Baltimore City and other Maryland counties interested in arts integration. To date over twenty-five schools from the county, state, and country have visited KP. In 2007, Over 80 people attended a regional conference on arts integration held at KP for schools in Maryland, Virginia, and the District of Columbia.

Kensington Parkwood has shared the results of their program through the use of the LLSN network, the school website, and presentations at numerous conferences. It is the goal of the teachers to become mentors to other teachers and schools interested in using music as a means of serving the arts learning and arts integration goals of public school communities.

II. KENSINGTON PARKWOOD LEARNING LABORATORY SCHOOL ACTION RESEARCH PROJECTS

In 2006-2007, the research team at Kensington Parkwood conducted three action research projects integrating music and language arts: *Integrating Music and Writing*, *“Follow the Drinking Gourd,”* and *Rhythm and Poetry*.

Integrating Music and Writing

This project was designed by third grade teacher, Julie Carmean, based on her knowledge of the Project Zero Artful Thinking routines. She realized that her students were having difficulty using descriptive language in their writing. In order to spark their enthusiasm and elicit more interesting word choices, she adapted an Artful Thinking strategy called “10 times 2.”

With her adaptations, students listened to a piece of music and allowed themselves to notice as many things as possible during the initial listening. During the second listening, they were asked to generate a list of ten words or phrases that described either the music or something it brought to mind. Students listened to the selection a third time and developed a second list of ten words or phrases. After this process, they wrote a story using as many of the descriptive words and phrases from their lists as possible.

Ms. Carmean found that her students’ ability to use descriptive words improved dramatically. Not only were their stories lengthier, they showed more imagination and contained more interesting word choices. The success was most obvious with previously reluctant writers. Their writing went from one or two sentences to paragraphs and even pages filled with imaginative and descriptive stories. This ability transferred to other settings as well. Those teachers that taught Social Studies, Science, and Math to these students remarked on their new enthusiasm for writing. The parents were thrilled with the success their children were experiencing as young writers.

Because of the success of this project, Ms. Carmean adapted other Artful Thinking strategies to music. She believes that all students are able to experience the joy of learning when given the opportunity to integrate the arts.

“Follow the Drinking Gourd”

This project was developed by fourth grade teacher Rachel Boarman and music teacher Fran Beatty to meet curricular goals in language arts, social studies, and music. Ms. Boarman believed that having students write their own stories about the Underground Railroad would help them use consistent perspective and tense in their writing. She also asked them to research the history of the Underground Railroad and the use of symbolism in songs and stories of that time period. Ms. Beatty hoped that students would become more familiar with African American spirituals and be able to match rhythm patterns to lyrics in composing their own song of the Underground Railroad.

Students researched the history, music, and symbolism of the Underground Railroad in order to compose their own spirituals, create storyboards in the style of Jacob Lawrence, and write historical fiction. Students researched the historical period of slavery and read biographies of important figures of that time. Next, the class brainstormed character ideas, and each student developed a historical fiction story that was set in the time period of the Underground Railroad. Students then researched spirituals of the time period and learned about the symbolism in the songs. They wrote their own spirituals using self-created symbols in the lyrics.

In music class, students worked on placing important words on the emphasized beats in the music and matching the rhythm to the text (prosody). Some students included their songs within their stories. Following the style of Jacob Lawrence, students then created story panels to illustrate their stories/spirituals. Color choices in story panels were based on the mood and tone of their stories/spirituals.

Ms. Boarman collected baseline data to determine present level of performance in writing. Throughout the process, she assessed students' responses to prompts including graphic organizers, brief constructed responses, and students' ability meet demands of specific tasks. Ms. Beatty helped to familiarize students with spirituals as a musical style. She found that after this project, the students' ability to match emphasized lyrics to the strong beats and rhythms to lyrics improved. They also improved their use of proper musical notation to write their melodies.

The teachers discovered that the students needed modeled examples of the type of writing and composition expected of them. The music connection helped to fully engage students in the writing process, and they were able to meet the expectations of the rubrics for both writing and music composition. Students were able to match the emphasis points within the music, placing their most important lyrics on the second and fourth beats. Finally, they were able to make connections between the history, writing, music, and art representative of the time period.

Rhythm, Reading, and Poetry

This project was developed in collaboration between the music teacher, Ms. Beatty, and the Special Education Resource teacher, Ms. Lewis. Ms. Lewis was working on improving reading fluency with a group of fifth grade students. In looking for ways to engage the students, she and Ms. Beatty discussed ways in which learning to read and perform drum rhythms could improve reading fluency. Considering that this small group was singled out due to their reading problems, they also hoped to improve the students' self-esteem through the composition and performance of the students' original compositions. Finally, they wondered if this program were successful, would this new learning transfer to other classes?

Initially, the two teachers worked together to teach students to play simple drum rhythms and to perform them with text. When students were able to perform more challenging

rhythms, Ms. Beatty taught them how to play the drum set. They practiced various rhythmic patterns and set them to words when appropriate.

In music class, students studied the 12 Bar Blues, learning about both harmonic and lyric patterns in the Blues. Then they wrote their own poems to fit the lyric pattern and created their own 12 Bar Blues song. Lastly, they rehearsed the rhythms and harmonic patterns and performed their original work for their peers.

Learning to play the drum set elevated the status of many of these students and led to a sense of accomplishment. This success made them more likely to take risks in other subjects. One student said, "I like the drums because it is fun and it teaches me how to read faster." Another created a Blues song about learning to play the drums:

Another significant outcome of this project was the greater teacher communication and mutual understanding between the two teachers. Ms. Lewis was inspired to use music with other small groups of students, and Ms. Beatty gained a clearer perspective on students with special needs.

The Drum Blues

I love to play drums
I keep my fingers on the sticks
I love to play drums
I keep my fingers on the sticks
I feel happy when I play
I'm learning lots of "licks"

Learning to play the drum set elevated the status of many Kensington Parkwood students and led to a sense of accomplishment, making them more likely to take risks in other subjects. One student said, "I like the drums because it is fun and it teaches me how to read faster." Another created a Blues song about learning to play the drums

Higher Education Partner Reflection on Classroom Teacher Professional Development:

Changing Teaching Practices: Teacher Achievement and Changed Teaching in the Classroom

**Observations by Susan Rotkowitz, MFA and Kay Broadwater, Ph.D.,
Arts Integration Institute, Towson University**

One of the most heartwarming aspects of working with the Kensington-Parkwood teachers has been watching their growth as educators, both personally and professionally.

It has been a privilege to learn right alongside them as they have rounded out their expected roles as either classroom teachers or fine arts specialists. They have discovered the excitement of research and have taken on the additional persona of the MIENC's Artist-Teacher-Scholar framework (see Scripp, "Prelude" in *JMIE* 3, 2007). What is most gratifying to the observer is their awakening to this facet of teaching—that they now recognize, acknowledge, and utilize skills that had previously been hidden or latent.

These are teachers who have committed considerable time and energy to assessing their own approaches to curriculum, standards, and classroom learning. They have dedicated themselves to developing action research projects, focusing on questions that seek links between infusing the arts – most notably, Music – within the daily curricular program, with a focus on higher student achievement. Significantly, they have also realized that action research projects are not one-time events. These teachers recognize that in order to truly effect change in the classroom and in their students, the "experiments" must not only be replicable in their original settings, yielding significant results with their original students; they must also be transferable to other classes, with similar enough results to offer proof of their positive effect upon teaching practice.

What is so impressive is that some of the very teachers who one year ago hesitated at the prospect of engaging in action research are the same teachers who have since embraced the work with enormous passion. At the culminating session of their Capstone projects, we heard many comments that confirmed our observations. One teacher commented that because of her experience, "Teachers can see how a full-time classroom teacher, or specialist, can work the research into their day. It is important for teachers to see what it [action research] could look like from their own perspective." Another acknowledged how difficult the process was at first, but recognized that "Now that it's done, it was well worth the time, effort, stress and hard, hard work!" More importantly, these educators unanimously declared that they wouldn't choose to go back to their old style of teaching; now they look forward to the new school year so that they can continue to explore the possibilities of using music as a way to enhance and provide collaborative opportunities throughout their teaching.

We are pleased to report that several of the KP teachers have now been hired by the Arts Integration Institute to develop new curriculum and to teach for the Institute as Towson University adjunct professors. Over the last year, several others have expanded their teaching effectiveness by presenting their findings at national conferences. This change in the perception of what should, and can, occur in and beyond the classroom has not only affected the teaching staff of KP, but has encouraged self-empowerment in their students, who are also beginning to see themselves as active artists-researchers-scholars. Each of the final Capstone presentations testified to the positive change in student engagement, evidenced through their awakening curiosity and personal investment in determining their own research questions. One KP student wrote, "I liked being able to choose a musician to study that I could relate to. I learned so much more about him through the research I did. It was fun to videotape my presentation and see it on KP TV!"

Several of the projects are notable for the level of teacher reflection that resulted regarding the teachers' own learning. Teachers committed themselves to continuing the action research process. They also began to consider input from other sources: colleagues, students, and parents. They wrote about ways in which this research will change their teaching practices in years to come. (See Teacher Reflections: Transforming Practice through Active Learning).

These reflections demonstrate the leadership we look forward to. Here is the access to scaling out; here is a sharing of responsibility for creating a positive environment in order to effect positive change in the classroom.

Kensington Parkwood Teachers Reflect: Transforming Practice through Action Research

“My action research was an incredible learning experience. I enjoyed the opportunity to do a literature review and to get in touch with the professional community of educators who are trying to integrate the arts, specifically music and drama. Working together with another colleague was also very valuable, considering that teaching can be a lonely, solitary experience. By engaging in an action research project, I was given a reason to reflect deeply and put into practice the amazing professional development I had received from MATI and CETA.”

“The impact that my action research will have on my teaching practice, I believe, will be great. I will frame each new question about anything I am doing using the lens of action research. I will listen to my own questions more carefully and realize that by doing so, creative problem solving can occur. I will be a more careful observer of my students, using videotaping as a way to assess. I will also solicit parent feedback more frequently as a valuable contribution to assessment of what students are taking away from the arts activities. As the new year begins, I am adding a music area to my kindergarten classroom, which will include the following: a floor mat with a piano scale that can be pushed by the feet, a music listening station, musical instruments, paper and markers for writing ‘musical scores,’ musical instruments, and music books. My dramatic play area, which previously consisted of a house corner, will now include props and puppets for retelling stories.”

“Although my action research project was an incredible amount of work, it was worth it in the end. I feel that by engaging in action research, my interest in teaching was rekindled, and I want to share that with all who will listen. While I was giving a university talk this summer about adapting the curriculum for students with special needs, I couldn't do it without encouraging the teachers in the class to engage in their own action research and to check out arts integration. I have also become a more adamant supporter of arts integration.”

III. Expanding with New LLSN Scale-out Proposal

The former principal of Kensington Parkwood has accepted a job as Executive Director of Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS). With this development comes an opportunity to expand the LLSN/Kensington Parkwood model to schools across the state. A survey of the Maryland Artist/Teacher Institute participants (over 50 schools) was completed, and arts integration mentoring and consulting were an identified need in each of the schools.

This proposal addresses this need by providing shared MIE curricula and guided assessment methods.

- Consultants from the LLSN network and staff from identified LLSN schools will serve as mentors to staff at these various state schools.
- The Executive Director of AEMS will be the point of contact for the target schools, with Kensington Parkwood serving as the model music-in-education school within the district's LLSN network.
- Consultants from other network schools and from LLSN leadership will work with school district leadership to develop protocols and instructional strategies for music-integrated curriculum and assessment.
- A professional development course focusing on music teachers as agents of change will be developed with assistance from LLSN consultants.
- LLSN consultants will work with Kensington Parkwood and assist in its development as a mentor school.
- A regional conference, led by LLSN members, will be convened to discuss the role of music in expanding the scope and diversity of integrated instructional programs at the identified schools. The conference will be held in late fall or winter of 2007 as a follow-up to the summer MATI programs.
- The Arts Integration Institute at Towson University, along with partnering universities (University of Maryland College Park, University of Maryland Baltimore County, and Johns Hopkins University) and AEMS Alliance, has created a post-baccalaureate certificate in arts integration (PBC-AI) which can serve as a model for a similar certificate to be awarded through the MIENC.

Kensington Parkwood is in position to become an LLSN Nexus School for the state and nation. In partnership with the LLSN, the administration and staff at the school, their Towson University partners, the coordinator of general and choral music for Montgomery County Public Schools, and the Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance are prepared to bring the benefits of music integration to the forefront of the national educational community.