

**DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL AND CULTURAL RESOURCES
NORTH CAROLINA ARTS COUNCIL**

BUDGET CODE 24812 A+ Schools Special Fund

BEGINNING BALANCE			14,122.64
REVENUE			
	STIF Interest		945.52
	Non Capital Gifts		500,000.00
	General Revenue, Misc.	Training Revenues	<u>258,490.20</u>
		TOTAL REVENUES	759,435.72
EXPENDITURES			
	Personal Services		181,936.66
	Purchased Services	Training Contracts	572,452.30
	General Admin Supplies		<u>1,263.64</u>
	Other Materials & Supplies		<u>5,932.23</u>
		TOTAL EXPENDITURES	\$761,584.83

Brief Description of the Program

A+ Schools of North Carolina is a whole school reform model that began in our state as a public-private partnership in 1995. The central vision of A+ Schools is to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students by using arts-integrated instruction that incorporates Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, recent brain research findings and dance, drama, music, visual art and creative writing.

In 2010, A+ Schools moved from UNC-Greensboro to become a part of the North Carolina Arts Council and the Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The state allocation that transferred to DNCR for the program was just over \$56,000, and the Arts Council has secured support from the private sector that, combined with state support, allows the program to currently serve 64 preK-12 schools in 36 counties in all regions of the state. We impact over 30,000 students and 2,000 teachers/administrators annually. North Carolina has helped to train other states to implement the program; at present there are A+ networks in Oklahoma, Arkansas and Louisiana.

Although the majority of A+ Schools are designated Title I, they continue to demonstrate achievement at or above the state average, while teaching a much fuller curriculum than many other schools. Years of evaluation conclude that when a school is highly engaged in the A+ process, teachers are more satisfied and effective, students are more engaged, and there is more community and parental involvement.

Currently, A+ Schools of North Carolina has four full-time dedicated staff positions, three of which are receipts-based. Over 50 contracted A+ Fellows, a cohort made up of master teachers and professional teaching artists, serve the professional development needs of the schools in the network. The lion’s share of expenditures goes directly for professional development for schools, teachers, and administrators through summer training institutes, school-based training workshops during the school year, and school leadership meetings in the fall and spring.

Highlights from 2019-20

- Our network of schools continues to expand. In the summer of 2019, four new schools joined A+: Sandy Ridge Elementary (Durham County), W.A. Bess Elementary (Gaston County), W.B. Wicker Elementary (Lee County), and Iron Station Elementary (Lincoln County). At that time, our team hosted five conferences, and they trained just under 1,000 educators and administrators who came from 28 different schools. Five new schools joined the network in the summer of 2020; however, the professional development conferences required for their full engagement were postponed for a year due to the pandemic. The five new schools include: Pinewood and Ida B. Rankin Elementary Schools (Gaston County), Inborden Elementary and Enfield Middle Steam Academie (Halifax County), and Aberdeen Elementary (Moore County).
- **Since A+ Schools moved to the North Carolina Arts Council in 2010, we have brought 42 new schools into our statewide network. We began the 2020-21 academic year with a network of 69 preK-12 schools in all regions of the state, impacting over 25,000 students and nearly 2,500 teachers and administrators.**
- Before the pandemic shut down operations in March, A+ had provided more than 35 on-site professional development sessions to schools across the A+ Network during the FY19-20 school year. These on-site sessions include whole staff training, one-on-one coaching, and studio classrooms. A+ also provided professional development for over 100 new A+ teachers in the fall of 2019 and to hundreds of arts educators from across the state at the NC Department of Public Instruction's ArtsR4Life Conference. In addition, A+ provided 3 leadership trainings for A+ leadership from across the state.
- The pandemic pushed us to create new and innovative ways to support our schools. We designed a series of virtual professional development activities that has been well received by the network. In June, we offered "job alike" sessions, allowing educators from across the state to share best practices and resources for distance learning. In July, we began hosting Tuesday Talks, topic-based sessions where A+ teachers participate in directed learning followed by application and reflection. In August, we launched A+U, our new on-line professional development portal. Individuals, small groups, and whole schools can take advantage of fourteen units of A+ study intended to support and strengthen our schools until face-to-face training can resume.
- Each A+ school participates in our twice annual leadership meetings and new teacher trainings. Each school also has an A+ Liaison who connects regularly with the faculty to provide information, assess needs, and offer support. All schools benefit from web-based resources, including our podcast series entitled "A+ Essentials" and our LiveBinder, a portal with documents, sample lessons, articles, and other tools that support arts integration. Despite the disruptions of COVID-19, these opportunities will continue into the next school year.