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**Washington, D.C.** – The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities announced that Perpich Center for Arts Education in Golden Valley has been selected to direct the Minnesota program of the national arts education initiative, Turnaround Arts, to help turn around school performance.

The Turnaround Arts initiative is a public and private partnership designed to narrow the achievement gap and improve student engagement through the arts. Minnesota is one of three states and three city school districts in the country chosen through a highly competitive national selection process to participate in the second phase of the program. The program will be funded through monies from the state legislature and the Minnesota State Arts Board along with community support.

"We are honored to have the opportunity to be involved in the Turnaround Arts program," said Sue Mackert, executive director of Perpich. "We have always been a force for arts education in Minnesota's schools and we have worked intensively with teachers, administrators and teaching artists since our beginning to establish strong arts programs and arts integration practices. Just like our national partners in this endeavor, we know that arts education facilitates greater learning and academic success."



Serving on the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities since 2009 is Minnesota State Sen. Richard Cohen, chair of the Minnesota Senate finance committee. Turnaround Arts has been a centerpiece endeavor of the committee.

"We have extensive research suggesting the correlation between arts education and academic achievement," said Cohen. "We've seen it here in Minnesota through the work that Perpich is doing. The committee has collected both anecdotal and empirical evidence showing the difference the arts can make in a school. It is significant and can truly turn around a school's trajectory. It's very rewarding to know that four Minnesota schools are going to benefit from this program."

The selection process of participating schools in Minnesota will be completed within the next

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month. The first year of the Minnesota program will begin in July and will involve four schools that encompass a diversity of student demographics – urban, suburban and rural – that have applied, met the criteria and chosen by Perpich through a stringent, nationally-vetted process.



Schools in the program receive intensive arts education resources and expertise and the schools' communities will be involved in strategic planning processes with guidance from Perpich. The President's Committee has appointed high profile artists – Clarence Greenwood (aka Citizen Cope), Doc Shaw and Sarah Jessica Parker – who will "adopt" Minnesota Turnaround Arts during the next two years to support the schools' educational reform efforts. Local Minnesota artists and cultural organizations also will participate with funding from the Minnesota State Arts Board.

Perpich Center in Minnesota was selected by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, in partnership with the U.S. Department of Education, the National Endowment for the Arts and several private foundations. Other locations chosen for the second phase are in California, Louisiana, Boston, Chicago and Des Moines. The first phase of Turnaround Arts was launched in May 2012.

First Lady Michelle Obama, honorary chair of the President's Committee, said, "The Turnaround Arts program has exceeded not just our expectations, but our wildest hopes and dreams. With the help of this program and some School Improvement Grants, math and reading scores have gone up in these schools ... attendance is up, enrollment is up, parent engagement is up, suspensions have plummeted and two of the schools in our pilot improved so dramatically that they are no longer in turnaround status. And today, the students in these schools are engaged in their education like never before."

Mackert and Cohen led a Minnesota delegation of educators to the White House to participate in a Turnaround Arts event hosted by Michelle Obama and the President's Committee. The delegation included two 3rd graders from McKinley Elementary STEM School in Owatonna, Carter Strawmatt and Lauren Waypa, and their art teacher, Amanda Gislason. They demonstrated a Claymation activity used to engage McKinley students in a science project in their classroom. The Owatonna contingent was chosen as a result of participating in Perpich's

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professional development network in arts integration for the past two years. Bob Olson, principal at McKinley, also attended.

"We are proud to be involved in the kick-off," said Olson, whose school focuses on STEM—science, technology, engineering and math—but has essentially become a "STEAM" school through its work with Perpich, integrating arts into its STEM curriculum. "We believe very strongly in integrating arts at our school. It fits perfectly for us and we're happy that two of our students will be able to demonstrate our success with it."

"Arts integration is a proven way to get the kids excited about what they're learning," said McKinley art teacher Gislason. "It motivates them and at the same time allows our teachers to address multiple standards and outcomes."

Research shows that when students participate in the arts they are four times more likely to be recognized for academic achievement, have higher GPAs and SAT scores and show significantly higher levels of mathematics proficiency by grade 12.

In its first year, the Turnaround Arts piloted the program in eight schools around the country. Each of the eight locations was a public elementary or middle school in the lowest-achieving five percent of its state that was receiving School Improvement Grants (SIG) through the U.S. Department of Education.

The pilot phase tested the hypothesis that strategically implementing high-quality and integrated arts education programming in high-poverty, chronically underperforming schools adds significant value to school-wide reform.

Perpich Center for Arts Education is a state agency serving all schools, students and educators in Minnesota. Created in 1985 by the Minnesota state legislature, the agency seeks to advance K-12 education throughout the state by teaching in and through the arts. Perpich staff and faculty experts provide outreach, professional development, research, curriculum and standards development. Perpich is home to a public arts education library and an innovative, two-year, statewide residential high school that serves as a living laboratory for creative development in the arts.

Created in 1982 under President Reagan, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities is an advisory committee to the White House on cultural issues.