



# Press Release

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## Lynwood Unified Elementary School Accepted to National Arts Education Support Network

**Lynwood** – Abbott Elementary School will expand its arts curriculum to include a 45-minute art lesson per week for all K-6 students and add harmonica classes for third-grade students as part of a partnership with Turnaround Arts: California, which will provide up to \$10,000 in annual financial support to help ensure arts education for every Abbott student.

Turnaround Arts is a national program of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, created in 2011 under the leadership of First Lady Michelle Obama. Turnaround Arts: California, co-founded by renowned architect Frank Gehry, is the regional administrator of the program and will provide teacher training, a regional coach to facilitate Abbott's strategic arts plan and coordinated support for public arts events.

"Abbott's partnership with Turnaround Arts: California is a huge step forward for our visual and performing arts curriculum, allowing us to spread arts education evenly and equally across all grade levels while creating exciting new opportunities that will have a positive impact on classroom learning," Abbott Principal Adolfo Herrera said.

Abbott's commitment to the arts is exemplified by its annual student performances at the Lynwood Unified Winter Concert, coordinated by third-grade teacher Gwendolyn Spears. Despite a limited budget, Spears directs three stage performances a year, with considerable assistance from Abbott staff and community members.

Abbott's arts curriculum provides introductory programs exploring art history, playwriting and dance through Meet the Masters, the BRIDGE Theatre Project and Conga Kids. District partnerships with The Music Center and P.S. ARTS provide arts support for kindergartners and second-graders. Additional art resources are provided by Abbott teachers and the Abbott PTA.

"Lynwood Unified recognizes that arts education is a critical element in developing students who are creative thinkers," Lynwood Superintendent Gudiel R. Crosthwaite said. "By joining the Turnaround Arts network, Abbott Elementary is providing its students a nurturing environment that will spark innovation and ingenuity."

Turnaround Arts: California was created in 2014 with financial support from Berta and Frank Gehry and the California Arts Council. The program recently received a \$2 million investment to expand its network to include 27 schools and more than 17,000 students across California, providing art resources, musical instruments, high-profile mentors and teacher training.

"Over the last 40 years, I've spent time with kids in the classroom using architecture and art to get engaged, focus their attention, and even introduce mathematics, civics, and other subjects that they might not have otherwise been receptive to," Gehry said. "This inspired me to create the same opportunities for the California students who need it most through Turnaround Arts: California."

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The **Lynwood Unified School District** is dedicated to offering students a world-class education to prepare them for success in college and career in the 21st century. Under its Achieving Greatness Initiative, the district is realigning all aspects of its organization to strengthen and expand instructional programs, enrichment and extracurricular activities, and support system for students and staff. For more information, visit [www.lynwood.k12.ca.us](http://www.lynwood.k12.ca.us).

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Turnaround Arts partner schools have seen increases in English language arts and math proficiency, better student engagement for arts-integrated instruction, improved attendance, declining suspension rates and increased family participation in art events.

“Abbott Elementary School’s determination and resilience provides a template for success that resonates throughout the District, bringing much-needed support and resources to students who are eager to show their creative artistry,” Lynwood Board President Alfonso Morales said. “It is an honor to welcome Turnaround Arts to the Lynwood community.”

#### PHOTO CAPTIONS:

**050718\_LUSD\_TURNAROUNDARTS1:** Abbott Elementary School will expand its arts curriculum as part of a partnership with Turnaround Arts: California, which will provide funding and teacher training to the school.

**050718\_LUSD\_TURNAROUNDARTS2:** Abbott Elementary School students execute a dance performance in front of classmates. Abbott is set to expand its arts curriculum as part of a partnership with Turnaround Arts: California.

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The mission of **Lynwood Unified School District**, the cultivator of innovative thinkers, is to ensure each student fearlessly achieves his or her highest academic and personal aspirations while contributing to the greater society through a unique system distinguished by:

- ★ People of great character who inspire and lead by example
- ★ The instilling of courage to be creative
- ★ The transformative uses of technology
- ★ Safe and clean environments
- ★ The honoring of all voices of our community