

September 10, 2020

Dear Sir or Madam,

Please accept this letter of support for Vincent Academy's charter renewal application. Vincent Academy has built a supportive and growth-oriented learning community that addresses the needs of the whole child while engaging families in innovative ways. They have laid a strong foundation from which to support student growth. Turnaround Arts: California (TACA) strongly supports their charter renewal.

TACA is a non-profit organization that leverages the arts to spark transformation in the state's high-need, high-promise schools. We are a part of the nationwide Turnaround Arts program at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Washington, DC. TACA acts as the strategic thought partner to each of our partner schools, including Vincent Academy. Our organization provides strategic planning, capacity-building, financial and implementation support to both principals and teachers — all of which help our partners develop a sustainable model for change responsive to their school's unique needs.

Studies of public school transformation¹ highlight five key levers of change that are precursors and predictors of improved student outcomes: a unifying vision; shared, effective leadership; ambitious instruction; a supportive and collaborative environment; and involved, connected families. Schools strong in these five areas are 10 times more likely to improve student outcomes. Through the TACA partnership, Vincent Academy has used the arts to fuel growth in each of these areas.

The strategic use of the arts at Vincent is yielding profound results²:

- Increased student engagement, excitement, and confidence;
- Student expressive language development;
- Increased family involvement; Families seeing their students in new lights through the arts;
- Teacher collaboration;
- Culturally responsive practices; and
- Engaging, arts-integrated teaching strategies.

In this unprecedented time of widening inequality caused by the pandemic, Vincent Academy has demonstrated exceptional commitment, creativity and responsiveness to student and family needs. They incorporated art supplies into the instructional materials and technology sent home when schools closed this past spring. They created innovative ways to include the arts in remote learning in ways that captured and sustained student engagement, supported standards-based learning, and provided

¹ Byrk, Anthony S. (2010). *Organizing Schools for Improvement: Lessons from Chicago*. The University of Chicago Press.

² Spring 2020 Turnaround Arts: California Teacher Survey Evaluation; 2018-20 Vincent Academy TACA Reports

students and families with SEL support during a difficult time. In fact, Vincent Academy was one of just two schools invited to present in statewide Turnaround Arts professional development during spring closures based on the strength of their work.

This comprehensive approach, using the arts as a tool to build capacity school-wide, takes time to grow roots. We are confident, given the foundation that Vincent Academy has created through the past two years of our partnership, that they have laid the groundwork for continued student growth.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if I can provide any additional information via email at tiffany@turnaroundartsca.org or at 323.229.3266.

Sincerely,



Tiffany Siart
Executive Director
Turnaround Arts: California