



Creative Learning

Pre-K-12 Education Programs

Annual Report 2025-26





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About the Barnes Foundation

The Barnes Foundation was established in 1922 by Dr. Albert C. Barnes (1872–1951) to advance education and foster appreciation of the fine arts and horticulture. Its collection—among the world’s most distinguished holdings of impressionist, post-impressionist, and early modern European painting—includes major works by Renoir, Cézanne, Matisse, and Picasso, displayed in the distinctive wall arrangements known as “ensembles,” alongside African art, Native American pottery, Pennsylvania German furniture, old master paintings, metalwork, and antiquities.

Dr. Barnes believed art could expand minds and create opportunity. Having built his fortune through his pharmaceutical company, he brought art and philosophy directly to the workers in his factory, challenging the exclusionary norms of his time. He conceived the foundation he established in Merion, Pennsylvania, as a place where people from all backgrounds could learn through close, sustained engagement with original works of art—and with his colleague Violette de Mazia, he developed the Barnes Method, a teaching approach grounded in observation, reflection, and critical thinking.

That commitment to education and social justice reached well beyond the classroom. Dr. Barnes supported young Black artists, writers, and musicians through scholarships and worked with leading Harlem Renaissance thinkers, including Alain Locke and Charles S. Johnson, to champion the significance of African art. The same spirit of access shaped an educational partnership with Lincoln University—the country’s first degree-granting Historically Black College and University—begun in the 1940s and continuing today. Since relocating to Philadelphia in

2012, the Barnes has expanded its capacity to serve students, teachers, and families while preserving Dr. Barnes’s original vision for the collection. More than 133,000 schoolchildren, most from Philadelphia public schools, have participated in pre-K–12 programs in that time, a measure of the institution’s enduring commitment to making art and cultural learning accessible to all.

Institutional Highlights

- Over 2.9 million visitors since 2012
- 20,000+ member households as of June 2026
- 133,000+ schoolchildren have participated in pre-K–12 education programs since 2012
- 2,300+ teachers served through professional development programs since 2012
- 400+ Art for All Activity Kits and nearly 3,500 special-exhibition activity booklets distributed to families to date
- One in five Visual Experience Platform (VXP) users to date is a scholarship recipient or Art for All Community Pass holder
- Nearly 2,600 learners enrolled in adult education courses, with 12% receiving scholarships
- 50+ ongoing cultural and educational community partnerships citywide
- \$161 million endowment as of December 2025



Pre-K–12 Education at the Barnes



Education is at the core of the Barnes mission. Throughout the year, the Barnes’s pre-K–12 programs reach young people where they already learn—in their classrooms, online, and in their neighborhoods—connecting school, home, and community through interest-driven, hands-on, and socially engaged learning.

During the 2025–26 school year, the Barnes continued its commitment to serving under-resourced schools. Approximately 75% of the students served came from the School District of Philadelphia, with additional

groups from public, private, and parochial schools in Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Delaware, New York, and beyond. Through a strengthened partnership with the School District of Philadelphia’s Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP), the School Programs team identified schools in need of arts programming and reached out to school leaders to bring Barnes programming into their classrooms. The team also continued to participate in the OSP’s Cultural Institutions Community of Practice, a quarterly convening of Philadelphia’s cultural organizations

focused on sharing information, resources, and strategies for engaging schools and students. Asked about their primary goals in integrating visual art into lessons, participating teachers most often cited facilitating creative thinking, teaching critical-thinking strategies, and providing arts experiences to students. Their responses underscore a shift seen locally and reported across the field: museum-based learning is most powerful when it is woven into standards-aligned classroom instruction, rather than treated as an add-on.

Programs in the 2025–26 school year included:

- **Partner Programs** Curriculum-aligned, three-touchpoint programs designed to offer an extended arts-education experience to students in grades 3, 5, and 7.
- **Single-Visit Field Trips** Individually tailored for each school group and available to pre-K–12 students, with stops in the collection and special exhibitions including *Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets*, *Freedom Dreams*, and *Sky Hopinka: Red Metal Dust*.

- **Teacher Programs** Professional development opportunities and Act 48 continuing education credits for area educators, including nine workshops and a three-day Summer Educator Institute focused on integrating art across the curriculum.
- **Virtual Learning** A growing library of free on-demand videos—now 14 in total—in which Barnes educators deliver short, engaging lessons using our interactive Visual Experience Platform (VXP), each connecting a curricular content area to the collection.
- **Special Initiatives** Programs such as the Art of Math Challenge, our annual STEAM-based competition, which celebrated its 10th anniversary this year, and a new Student Art Show developed by a Barnes educator and piloted with Central High School.
- **Informal Learning Initiatives** Programs such as Toddlerpalooza, PECO Free First Sunday Family Days, Art for All Activity Kits, and Barnes Art Club that extend arts education beyond the classroom.

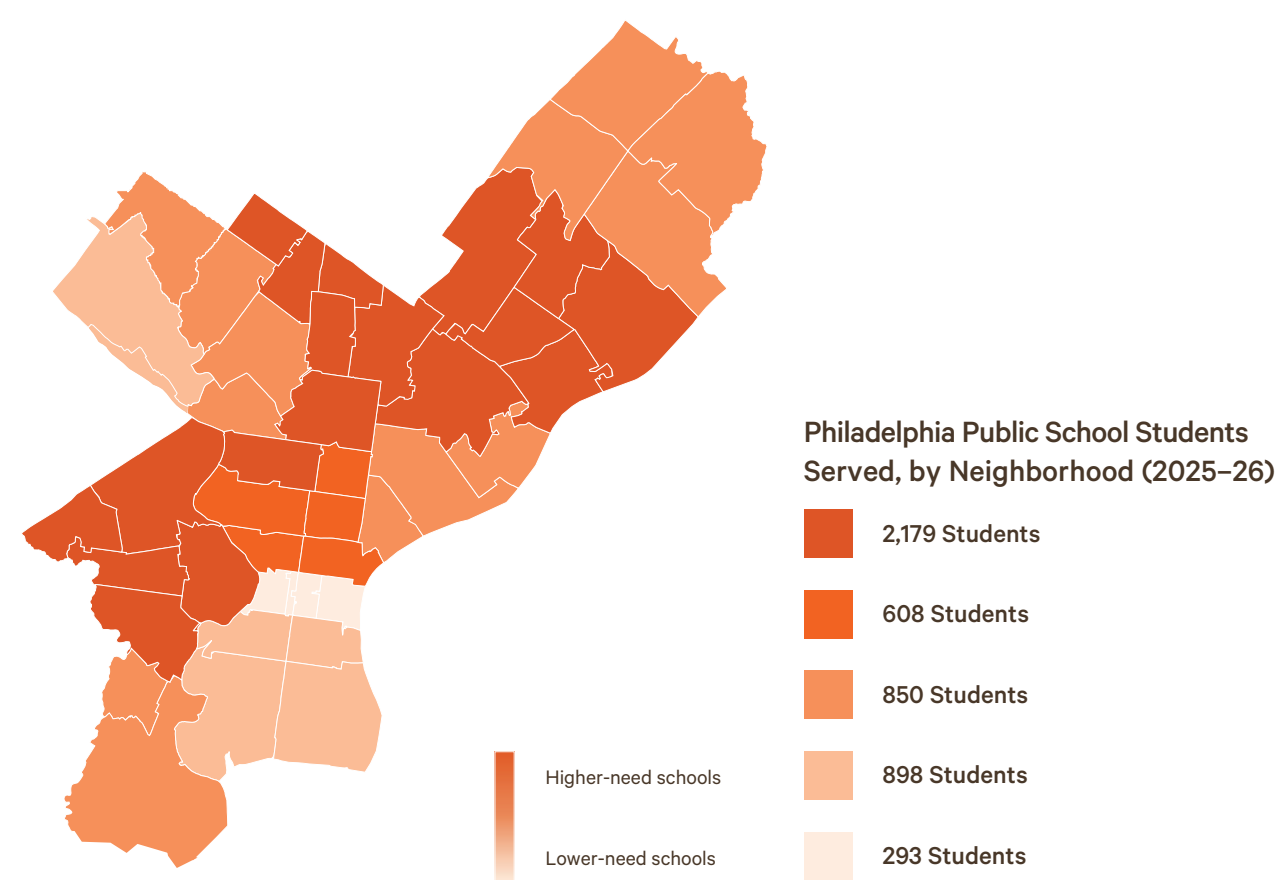


These programs are overseen by Martha Lucy, deputy director for research, interpretation and education. The School Programs team, led by director Stephanie Stern, delivers interactive, curriculum-driven programming for students and teachers in Philadelphia and beyond. This programming is supported by a robust slate of professional development workshops and resources that help teachers incorporate art into lessons across content areas. Informal learning initiatives, led by the Community Engagement and Family Programs team,

complete a holistic approach to engaging students, teachers, and caregivers.

In 2025–26, the Barnes served 8,085 students and 269 teachers, and informal learning initiatives engaged 4,287 participants. Whether in-gallery, in the classroom, online, or within neighborhoods and communities, these programs remain central to our mission of making art and cultural experiences a part of everyday life for learners of all ages.

Reach of Barnes Programs* in the School District of Philadelphia



*Partner programs and field trips
Academic performance data aggregated by the School Progress Report on Education and Equity.



School Programs

For the Barnes, school programs are a core expression of the educational mission—a coordinated set of multi-visit partnerships, single-visit experiences, and classroom resources that link the collection to what pre-K–12 students are learning every day. Across every program type, Barnes educators share a single signature practice: close looking, guided discussion, and backing up ideas with evidence from the artwork. Through that lens, students become more attuned to their own environments and to different cultures, places, and time periods.

Educational Impact

In the 2025–26 school year, school programs served 8,085 students from 170 schools across 35 districts, supporting learning in English language arts, math, science, social studies, world languages, and STEAM.

All visits and busing are free for public and charter schools in the School District of Philadelphia and for

Catholic schools across the Delaware Valley; this is a deliberate step to remove the transportation barrier that most often prevents under-resourced schools from accessing cultural institutions.

Why This Work Matters

A growing body of research validates what Barnes educators see in the galleries every day. A widely cited study of art museum visits found that students who participated in a guided visit demonstrated significantly stronger critical-thinking skills when writing about unfamiliar artworks, with the largest gains among students from under-resourced schools. The American Alliance of Museums summarizes broader evidence from the field, stating that museum experiences support student achievement in reading, math, and science, again with the strongest effects for students in higher-need schools.

Goals and 21st-Century Skills

Five overarching goals define the Barnes’s school programs, framed as 21st-century skills that travel with students well beyond a museum visit:

- Increase capacity to think critically (*critical thinking*)
- Reveal the relevance of art to one’s own life (*creativity, self-expression*)
- Broaden understanding of art professions and pathways (*career awareness*)
- Develop a sense of belonging in art spaces (*collaboration, community*)
- Deepen historical and cultural empathy, sharpening a sense of community-mindedness (*empathy, perspective-taking*)

School programs connect classroom curriculum with museum visits and projects that students take back into their schools and communities. In 2025–26, that connection took shape through three developments that share a single through line: belonging and empowerment as the organizing principle. Multi-visit partnerships continued to scale through the School District of Philadelphia’s Office of Strategic Partnerships, with 26 new school partnerships this year. The newly piloted Student Art Show gave students the experience of seeing their own work shown in a public art space. And in the team’s newly revised mission and vision, belonging is the anchor for how programs are designed, taught, and evaluated.

“Engagement with art helps students sharpen their observational and critical-thinking skills, abilities that are increasingly important in today’s world. Through the lens of art, students learn about different people, places, and times, developing empathy for others and their own abilities to agree and disagree with others respectfully.”

—Stephanie Stern, Director of School Programs

Teachers report that a Barnes visit impacts their students’ . . .

(% selecting “high” or “extremely high” impact, n=184 teachers)



Values, Mission, and Vision

- The School Programs team is guided by the department’s recently refined core values, mission, and vision:
- **Core Values** Belonging, Joy, Hope, Respect, Curiosity, Creativity, Empowerment, Intention, Authenticity, DEAI.
 - **Mission** Our pre-K–12 School Programs team empowers students and teachers to embrace curiosity, foster meaningful connections, and be change agents through culturally relevant teaching, learning, and art making. In partnership with local educators, we cultivate inclusive, anti-bias, and anti-racist teaching practices to nurture a sense of joy and belonging in art spaces while promoting visual literacy skills for students to access the possibilities in art.
 - **Vision** To enrich lives and communities through radically imaginative and inclusive arts-learning experiences that elevate student voice, support educator growth, and shape the future of arts education.

Equity and Inclusive Pedagogy

School programs are grounded in anti-racist, anti-bias teaching practices, Universal Design for Learning, and trauma-aware approaches. In practice, this means providing accessible materials, structured opportunities for students to share their cultural backgrounds and lived experiences, and participation options that ensure students with different abilities—including Deaf and hard of hearing students, nonverbal students, and English-language learners—can fully engage alongside their peers.

“This was the first time my class [of Deaf and hard of hearing students] visited a site where staff were readily available to provide accessibility and support. The guided tour led by Matt and Lauren was highly interactive and aligned with my students’ comprehension levels. I appreciated that they used visuals to explain the gallery rules, which greatly supported my students’ understanding. I wish every location offered the same level of inclusion and awareness as the Barnes.”

—Teacher, Bache-Martin School



Partner Programs

Partner programs are three-touchpoint, curriculum-aligned experiences for students in grades 3, 5, and 7. Each program pairs a structured visit to the Barnes collection with two interactive classroom lessons taught by Barnes educators, sequenced to ensure that observations made in the galleries inform students’ work back at school. The Barnes designed these programs in consultation with the School District of Philadelphia to align with district needs and curricular frameworks and ensure that teachers receive material that supports what they are already teaching. Partner programs sit within a wider ecosystem of school partnerships that also includes single-visit field trips, teacher professional learning, and virtual resources, giving many public schools multiple ways to engage with the Barnes each year.

Each partner program is built around a core curricular area: English language arts at grade 3, math and science at grade 5, and social studies and history at grade 7. This approach positions the Barnes as a place where students do core academic work, not just enrichment on the side. The American Alliance of Museums has explicitly noted that museums that use this approach help schools teach foundational subjects like math, science, language arts, history, civics, and social studies.

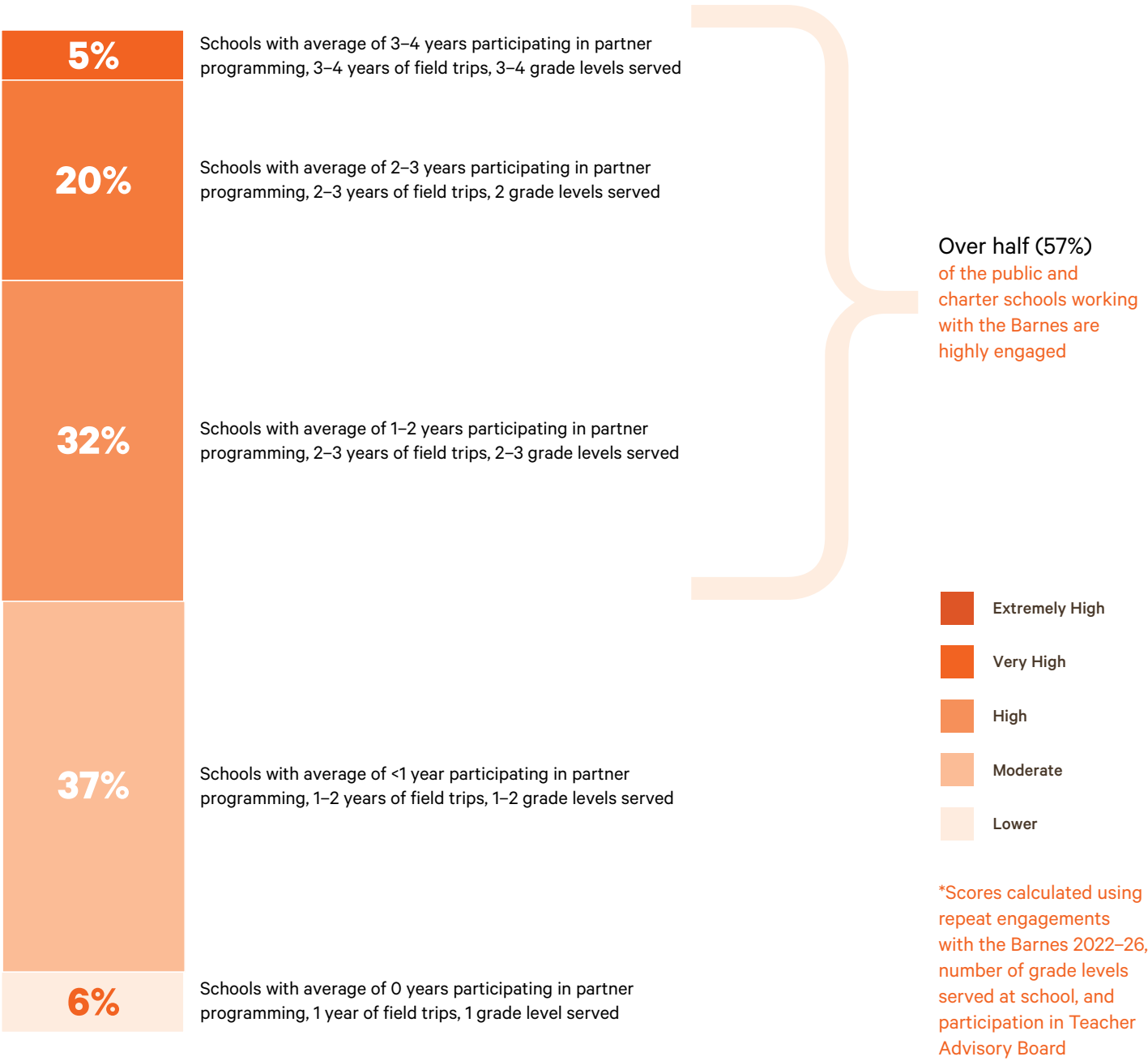
Across all three grades, partner programs share the Barnes’s signature pedagogy. Students slow down to notice details, compare works, support their interpretations with evidence from the artwork, and connect what they see to personal experiences.

Partner programs also serve as the backbone of long-term relationships between the Barnes and individual schools, often in combination with field trips and teacher professional learning. Many participating schools return year after year, with some engaging across multiple grade bands and program types. To understand that landscape, Barnes staff track a composite engagement score for each public school served, considering years of participation in partner program and field trips, the number of grades served, and participation in the Teacher Advisory Board. The visual on the next page shows engagement tiers for the 88 public and charter schools the Barnes partnered with this school year: over half (57%) are highly engaged, and the most engaged schools return across multiple years and grade levels. The Barnes works alongside other Philadelphia museums and cultural organizations, through a citywide effort led by the School District of Philadelphia, to strengthen and sustain arts and cultural partnerships.

In 2025–26, partner programs served 2,332 students from 50 schools across Philadelphia.

Each grade-level partner program is designed by a dedicated program specialist who builds new lessons every school year around their grade’s core subject—English language arts, STEAM (this year’s focus is science), and social studies. The profiles that follow trace how each specialist designs a program, from the standards they start with to the artwork and activities they build around them.

Philadelphia Public / Charter School Engagement with the Barnes*





Grade 3 Partner Program

When Lauren Ray, pre-K–12 program specialist at the Barnes, sat down to build this year’s third-grade program, she started where her students’ teachers start: the School District of Philadelphia’s English Language Arts standards. Third grade is the year students shift from learning to read to reading to learn—a pivot that runs through every part of the curriculum and that shapes the kind of looking and talking Ray asks them to do in front of a painting.

When a student hesitates to say what they see in a painting, Ray doesn’t push for a “right” answer. She makes room for them to try anyway.

“I’m trying to plant the seeds for critical thinking. I tell students it’s okay if they’re wrong—being wrong leads us closer to the right answer. I don’t want them to be afraid of asking a silly question. I answer all the silly questions.”

—Lauren Ray, Pre-K–12 Program Specialist

From those standards, Ray built Change Through Storytelling, focusing on the Barnes’s African art holdings and the work of self-taught American artist Horace Pippin. It asks students two questions: how can art tell a story, and how can you tell yours? In the gallery, students hear Pippin’s story in front of his paintings, then pick a work and tell its story in words or pictures. Students learn that the program expects respect for one another, respect for the cultural material in the room, and a willingness to be wrong out loud. The two classroom lessons build on that foundation. Students define the elements of a story through discussion of Pippin’s work and a movement activity, then design and make a collage bookmark—each student’s own answer to the program’s central question: who are you and how would you tell someone?

The shift to collage materials this year was deliberate. Ray, a product of the School District of Philadelphia herself, remembers being happiest working with unfamiliar materials, so instead of pencil and lined paper, her students get beads, feathers, and colorful paper to cut up and transform. Reading a painting the way one reads a text involves the same comprehension work that anchors third-grade literacy. Program objectives are presented as “I can” statements that put the work in the student’s own voice. This year’s examples include:

- I can use descriptive words to describe what I see in a work of art.
- I can write full sentences to express my likes, dislikes, and feelings.
- I can make art independently and collaboratively.
- I can tell my own story through the materials and images I choose.

Ray recalls one student in particular from this year. After a lesson, a third-grader approached Ray and said she had planned to be a YouTuber when she grew up but now wants to do what Ray does.



In 2025–26, the Grade 3 Partner Program reached 893 students from 22 schools.

Grade 5 Partner Program

This year, fifth graders explored printmaking, collage, and leaf rubbings, layering them into a wearable badge that imagines a world shaped by an environmental solution they care about. Students were asked to work like an artist and a scientist at the same time: observe carefully, make a claim, back it up with evidence, and take their time. For Diamond Gray, pre-K–12 program specialist, that overlap is the point. Both disciplines, she explains, demand research, patience, and consulting with experts.

Gray developed the program through what she calls reverse design: she chose the students’ art-making project first, then designed the gallery and classroom lessons around it. Pennsylvania’s grade 5 standards for

both environmental science and arts and humanities ask students to look closely, make claims and support them with evidence, and experiment with materials. The New World Badge project allows students to practice all of these skills together.

The lessons are anchored in the Barnes’s land acknowledgment of the Lenape, which led Gray to a deeper study of Lenape environmental practices and the long Indigenous history of stewardship in this part of the country. In the galleries, students study a ceramic water jar by Zia Pueblo artist Rosalia Toribio, where crosshatch marks read as rainfall; in the classroom, they learn about Lenape mural artist Denise Bright Dove Ashton Dunkley, whose painting of Turtle Island—a Lenape name for the Earth—places every part of the environment on equal footing. The two classroom lessons turned that looking into making: students warm

Opposite: Horace Pippin. *Supper Time*, c. 1940. The Barnes Foundation, BF985

up by drawing what climate change looks like to them, pull leaf rubbings from natural materials, and then design and assemble their badges. “I can” statements specific to this year’s program include:

- I can use natural and recycled materials to make a work of art.
- I can describe how an artist represents an environment.
- I can make a claim about an artwork and back it up with what I see.
- I can design a response to an environmental problem and explain my reasoning.

When a student asked if the story of Turtle Island was based on a myth, Gray researched the question and shared her findings in the next lesson. Students saw their questions taken seriously, and the work of looking, asking, and finding out became theirs to do too.

After a program visit, Gray used a feelings chart with emojis and asked students to select one that matched how they felt. One student chose the heart-eye emoji and shared that she felt a sense of belonging at the Barnes.

In 2025–26, the Grade 5 Partner Program reached 801 students from 23 schools.

“Museums can be isolated places, especially for kids—especially kids of color. So it was really wonderful that she felt like she had a sense of belonging. As a team, that’s something we’ve been really focusing on, so all students have that experience.”
—Diamond Gray, Pre-K–12 Program Specialist

Grade 7 Partner Program

When Matt Howard, pre-K–12 program specialist, developed this year’s seventh-grade program, he started from Pennsylvania’s social studies standards, which ask students to compare the rights and responsibilities of citizenship, examine how citizens resolve conflicts in government, and trace the contributions of people across world history. Howard’s specialty is history, and he focuses on current events; he wants students to be comfortable engaging with politics while gaining a basic grasp of the political structures that shape art.

Howard drew upon the collection to illustrate the concept of political control by contrasting Chinese literati (scholarly) painting with traditional court painting—that is, images made in resistance to power against images made for rulers. He also shared Joan Miró’s paintings in response to the Spanish Civil War as well as African masks and sculptures that carry themes of cultural identity and resistance. Together, these works became The Art of Protest, a program that asks students: what does political control look like, and what would your protest look like?

The gallery visit introduces the idea that art can reflect both the struggles and celebrations of a society and sets up the question driving classroom lessons: what does political control look like in your neighborhood today? Each lesson opens with the same signature prompt, inviting students to imagine a change they would make in their community.

In the classroom, students create landscape fans inspired by Chinese painting, picturing their own city or block and saying something about the political climate where they live. Some students draw the park, some draw a trash bag on the corner—and both belong. Then, after looking at how Miró used surrealism and abstraction to respond to war, they design symbolic protest artworks using abstract shapes and chosen symbols and explain the meaning

behind them. These moves align with Pennsylvania social studies standards on citizenship, conflict, world history, and geography, as well as visual arts standards on symbolism, abstraction, and personal expression. Program objectives are presented as “I can” statements; this year’s include:

- I can compare literati and traditional Chinese painting and explain how political climate shaped the difference.
- I can describe how African masks and sculpture carry cultural identity and resistance.
- I can show the place I live in a landscape fan that says something about its political climate.
- I can make a symbolic protest artwork that expresses a personal or social belief.

Choosing political control as a middle school theme was a real risk: partner teachers span a wide range of political views, and Howard was careful never to bring his own positions into the room. What made the risk pay off was the art making—the lesson never asks a student to endorse a particular stance, only to look honestly at the place they live and put that reality on



“Empowerment is my main pillar. I put students in a position of power immediately—if you were the mayor, what would you change? We open it up to be silly. That gives students comfort, which leads to more involvement.”
—Matt Howard, Pre-K–12 Program Specialist

paper in a way that feels safe to share. The focus shifts from the self to the surrounding world.

Howard’s clearest memory from this year took place in a partner school classroom that had already gotten away from everyone. He taught the lesson anyway, and by the end of his visit, the students were focused on their work and teachers were leaning in from the hallway to see what had changed.

In 2025–26, the Grade 7 Partner Program reached 638 students from 13 schools.

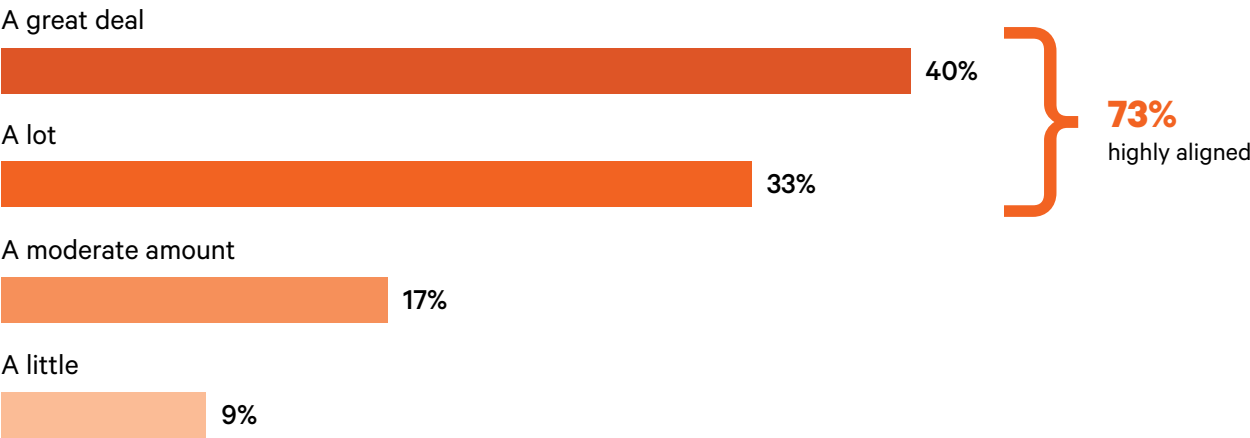
Field Trips

A Barnes field trip is more than a museum visit—it is a structured, curriculum-aligned learning experience grounded in the same close looking and critical-thinking practices at the core of the Barnes’s educational approach.

Before every trip, teachers share what students are currently studying and identify any support needs (for English language learners or students with disabilities, for example) so that gallery lessons can connect to the learning already underway in the classroom rather than detour from it. Students practice careful observation and discovery-based discussion, and teachers receive supplemental materials to carry the learning forward after the visit.

How well did your Barnes field trip align with your teaching and learning goals?

(n=203 teachers of students attending field trips)



In 2025–26, 5,753 students visited the Barnes on field trips, including 2,542 from the School District of Philadelphia. Through our collaboration with the district’s Office of Strategic Partnerships (OSP) and the use of the PA Future Ready Index, we’re actively working to ensure free visits reach schools with the greatest need, not just those already well connected to cultural institutions.

Single-visit field trips are one part of a broader learning ecosystem. And for students who visit on a field trip, school passes sent home afterward invite them back for free with up to five family members, extending the experience into informal learning for the whole family.

“I brought a group of art history students for a guided tour, and everyone we encountered was kind, knowledgeable, and engaged with our students. From the front desk to our greeter to the docents, the staff went above and beyond. The positive interactions my students had around art—and the consideration they experienced—give them more reasons to be lifelong museumgoers with a deep appreciation for art.”

—Art Teacher, Conestoga High School

“I wanted to thank the Barnes for a wonderful experience. The clear directions before, during, and after our visit helped me set myself and our scholars up for a successful trip. Our guide made the tour highly interactive and age-appropriate for our eighth graders, and several students shared that they really enjoyed the visit. We look forward to returning again soon.”

—Teacher, Saint Malachy School



Special Exhibition Programming

Special exhibitions at the Barnes expand on the permanent collection and create new opportunities for school programming. School groups visit the Barnes to experience and learn from these exhibitions, and Barnes educators lead exhibition-related gallery activities and provide free classroom resources for flexible pre- and post-visit learning. In 2025–26, students engaged with exhibitions that strengthened close-looking and interpretation skills while exploring identity, power, representation, memory, and cultural history. These experiences also advanced the Barnes’s commitment to equitable, culturally relevant learning by bringing a wide range of artistic voices and perspectives into dialogue with the collection.

Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets (October 19, 2025–February 22, 2026)

In fall 2025, the Barnes presented *Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets*, a landmark exhibition devoted to the self-taught French painter. Students who toured the exhibition practiced close looking as they explored Henri Rousseau’s imaginative paintings and considered how artists create meaning through composition, color, scale, and detail. Exhibition-related activities and classroom resources supported connections to visual literacy, storytelling, and interpretation, helping students build critical-thinking skills through sustained engagement with original works of art. *Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets* was visited by 3,026 students during the 2025–26 school year.



Freedom Dreams (April 12–August 9, 2026)

In spring 2026, the Barnes presented *Freedom Dreams*, an exhibition of film, video, and installation works that explored Black history, archives, and cultural memory through contemporary art by Arthur Jafa, David Hartt, Garrett Bradley, Ja’Tovia Gary, and Tourmaline. Students participated in discussions about identity and power, analyzing how artists use moving image and installation to examine identity, history, and the possibility of a more just future. Building on the close-looking and interpretation practices our educators use in the permanent collection, exhibition-based lessons encouraged students to think critically about representation, resilience, and the role of art in shaping historical and cultural empathy. Because some works addressed challenging themes, guided tours were offered specifically for high school groups. *Freedom Dreams* was visited by 833 students during the 2025–26 school year.

Sky Hopinka: Red Metal Dust (March 21, 2026–January 18, 2027)

Sky Hopinka: Red Metal Dust presented a new site-specific installation by Sky Hopinka (Ho-Chunk Nation/Pechanga Band of Luiseño Indians), whose work centers personal perspectives on Indigenous homelands and landscapes. Students explored how Hopinka uses photography, copper sheeting, and scale to reflect on land, time, and memory, inviting deeper consideration of the American experience and its histories. Through close observation and discussion, the exhibition offered meaningful opportunities for students to engage with Indigenous perspectives and consider how art connects past, present, and future. *Sky Hopinka: Red Metal Dust* was viewed by 3,145 students during the 2025–26 school year.



This page, from top: Installation view of *Freedom Dreams*. Visitors with *Sky Hopinka: Red Metal Dust*.
Opposite: Installation view of *Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets*.

Art of Math Challenge

The Art of Math Challenge, the annual STEAM-based competition organized and hosted by the Barnes and led by Leslie Fishel, senior coordinator of pre-K–12 programs, invites K–12 student groups in the Philadelphia region to build 3D models of artworks from the collection. The challenge connects math, problem solving, and creative thinking with close looking at works of art. This year marked the challenge’s 10th anniversary and engaged 378 students from 15 schools, a new record for participation.

For the 2025–26 challenge, students devised mathematical strategies to design and create 3D scale models of 2D works, including a painting by Henri Matisse. Staff encouraged the use of recycled, upcycled, and repurposed materials in their designs. Working in teams, students applied math concepts and documented their thinking in written statements

“Thank you! The feedback I received from parents and students was amazing. This is such a wonderful opportunity for students, and I’ll be sharing this contest with colleagues across the district. It’s clear how much thought, time, and effort you put into organizing the Art of Math Challenge, and I truly appreciate it.”

—Teacher, Penn Wynne Elementary School

that explained the formulas, measurements, and strategies used to develop their models, reinforcing the challenge’s emphasis on collaboration, spatial reasoning, and creative problem solving.

The competition culminated on Sunday, May 3, with student projects exhibited at the Barnes during PECO Free First Sunday Family Day. This year’s event featured a record-setting 79 submitted models with 2,033 students and family members registered to see the work in person. The celebration included two performances by teen DJ Long Legs and scavenger hunts for visitors to explore the galleries. Students, families, teachers, and community members gathered to celebrate the projects and enjoy the interactive programming.

Projects were judged in the categories of Creative Math Strategy and Artistic Design by veteran School District of Philadelphia teachers and administrators with decades of experience teaching and supporting students. Teachers of winning student groups received \$100 gift cards to Blick Art Materials as a classroom prize, and all projects were included in the Barnes’s online student art gallery.

In the Art of Math Challenge, students encountered math not as a set of isolated rules, but as a creative tool for observation, collaboration, and design.



“The students are very engaged with materials and enjoy the challenge of transforming 2D into 3D. The teamwork experience is valuable, teaching them patience, tolerance, distribution of tasks, and acceptance of differences. The teams slowly transform into cohesive units and begin to depend on each other after a lot of initial grumbling. It’s really a positive experience for all of us.”

—Teacher, Julia de Burgos School

Student Art Show

Launched as a first-year pilot, the Student Art Show offered Philadelphia students the opportunity to present original artwork in a professional museum setting, extending the Barnes’s commitment to making art and cultural learning accessible and relevant to young people. The program also connected classroom art making with the public through a presentation at PECO Free First Sunday Family Day and inclusion in the Barnes’s online student art gallery.

In fall 2025, the Barnes partnered with Central High School to engage 16 students in six after-school watercolor lessons led by Matt Howard, a pre-K–12 program specialist at the Barnes, in partnership with a teaching artist. Students developed watercolor techniques while exploring artworks from the Barnes collection, using the medium for observation, experimentation, and self-expression to share stories about themselves and their communities.

The project culminated in a presentation of students’ final works during the PECO Free First Sunday Family Day in December. An exhibition on the Barnes’s lower level, along with student presentations in the Comcast NBCUniversal Auditorium, allowed families and other visitors to experience the students’ work in a public setting.

The pilot also extended beyond the live event by featuring the students’ work in the online student art gallery, reinforcing the Barnes’s broader use of public-facing platforms to celebrate student achievements and strengthen connections between in-school learning and engagement with the arts beyond the classroom.

Student Reflections

“I’ve learned some new watercolor techniques, more about my peers around me, and more about myself and what I’m driven to make art about.”

“I have learned how to work with others and share ideas, and I met a lot of new people with different art styles.”

“I got to meet a lot of people at my school that I otherwise wouldn’t have been able to meet!”

“Making art makes me feel free and in control. It is the one subject that gives me so much freedom in expressing myself. It is just a calm and forgiving environment.”



Teacher Programs



By supporting educators as they bring visual art into their classroom practice, the Barnes extends the reach of pre-K–12 programs to every student these educators serve. As an Act 48 continuing education provider, the Barnes has engaged more than 2,300 teachers since 2012, including 269 educators through nine professional development offerings in 2025–26.

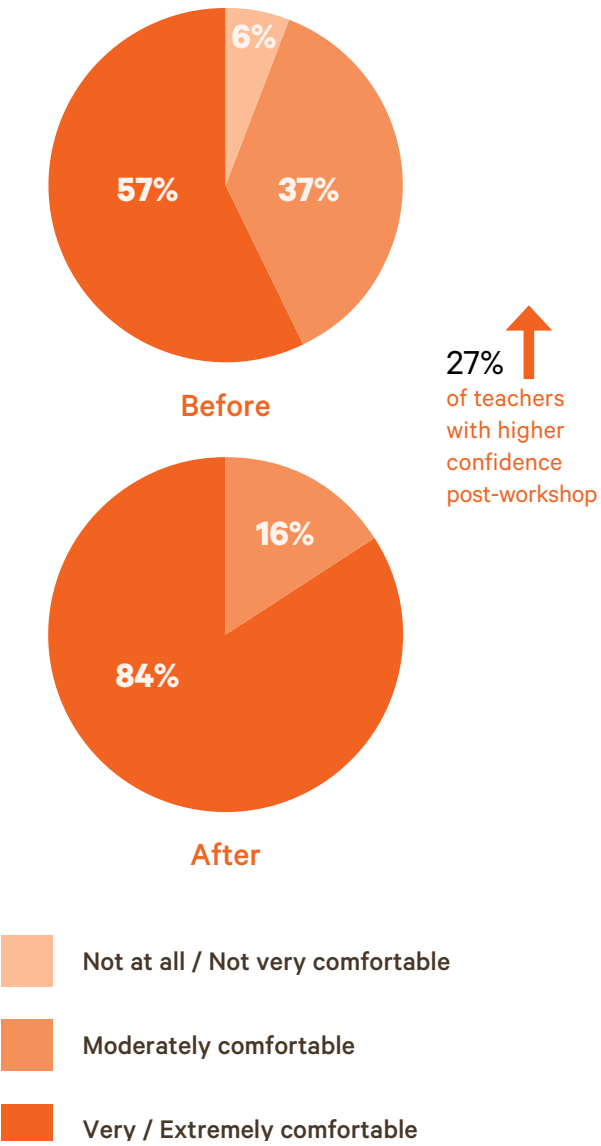
In 2025–26, the Barnes continued to deepen its support for teachers, particularly through close collaboration with the School District of Philadelphia. This year’s offerings included:

- Three-day Summer Educator Institute, which welcomed 20 educators in July 2025.
- Four on-site Art Goes to School sessions on asking good questions, engaging the senses, and movement, which reached 117 educators.
- On-site and virtual workshops for School District of Philadelphia art teachers that served 72 educators.
- ArtistYear workshop for 27 participants.
- Barnes-led sessions in the School District of Philadelphia’s Tune Up Tuesdays virtual professional development series that engaged 33 teachers.

These programs reflected partnerships with district offices such as the Office of Arts and Creative Learning and the Office of Professional Learning. Broader collaboration with the Office of Strategic Partnerships further strengthened connections with schools most in need of arts resources.

The Barnes’s teacher programs combine in-person and virtual professional development with access to classroom-ready materials that support arts integration. In addition to workshops and institutes, the Barnes offers lesson plans, exhibition materials, and on-demand content to extend learning beyond a single session. The Barnes also provides free general admission to pre-K–12 teachers from the School District of Philadelphia and Philadelphia Catholic schools. Our recent Act 48 recertification, along

Level of Comfort Facilitating Inquiry-Based Teaching (Before and After Session)



with the addition of Act 48–eligible adult education classes—The Elements of Art and The Traditions of Art—makes Barnes programs accessible to educators seeking professional development credit.

The Summer Educator Institute remains central to this work. Reinstated in 2024 for the first time since 2019, the institute continued in 2025. This year's theme, Museums Uncovered: Careers, Creativity, and Community, encouraged educators to explore

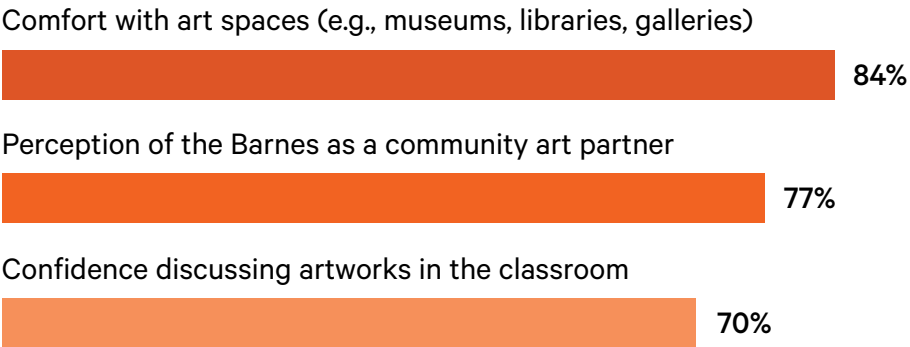
how museums can help students connect creativity, community, and future pathways.

The Barnes's teaching practices shape teachers well beyond formal professional development. In addition, teachers who bring their students for field trips and observe Barnes educators report greater comfort in arts spaces, increased confidence discussing artworks in their own classrooms, and a stronger sense of the Barnes as a trusted community partner.



Teachers report that Barnes programs impacted their ...

(% selecting “high” or “extremely high” impact, n=179 teachers)



The Teacher Advisory Board, now in its third year, continues to help shape this work. In 2025–26, 14 area educators served on the board, providing feedback on professional development offerings, online materials, and educational resources. Their input helps Barnes staff align support for teachers with classroom needs and practice. By investing in teacher learning, the Barnes expands arts access and improves outcomes for students throughout Philadelphia and beyond—a reach that multiplies with every teacher trained.

2025–26 Teacher Advisory Board Members:

- Justin Becker, South Philadelphia High School
- Julia Bergson-Shilcock, Cupola Academy
- Miranda Clark-Binder, Norwood Fontbonne Academy
- Heather Durkee, Central High School
- Kelly Ford, Philadelphia Virtual Academy
- Courtney Fox, Penn Treaty School
- Elinor Graf, St. Hubert Catholic High School for Girls
- Tyriese Holloway, Overbrook High School
- Aaron Kalinay, Southwark School
- Kristin Kelly, James Rhoads School
- Juri Kim, Thomas Edison High School
- Maureen O’Hara, Holy Rosary Regional Catholic School
- Lucia de Sousa Serro, Frances E. Willard Elementary School
- Jason Symonette, Friends Select School



Virtual Learning

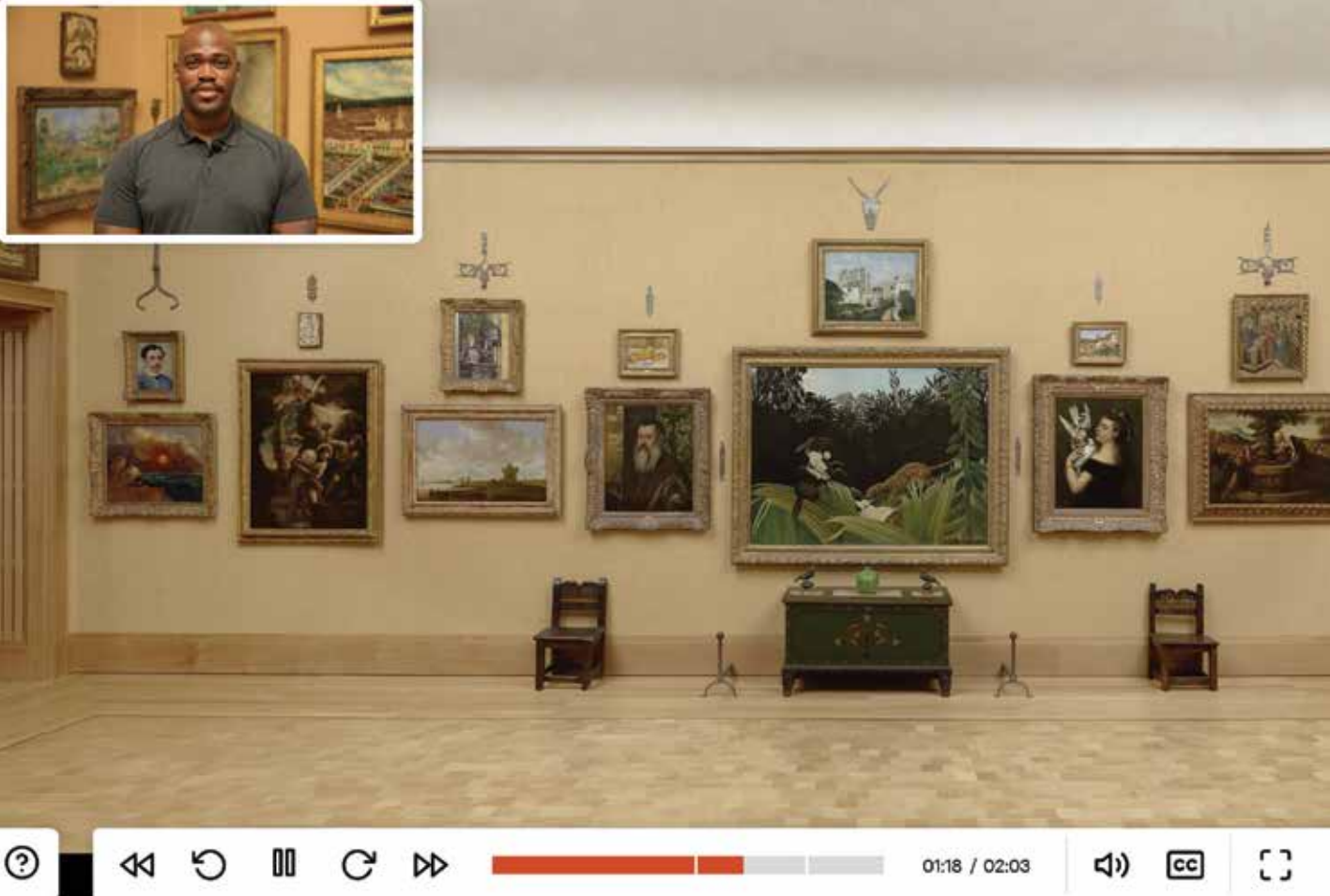
The School Programs team continues to expand virtual offerings, which are designed to broaden the reach of the Barnes’s educational mission and meet teachers and students wherever they are. During the 2025–26 school year, the team focused on growing our library of asynchronous digital lessons, incorporating feedback from the School District of Philadelphia and the Teacher Advisory Board. Launched in October 2024, and available on the Barnes website, the library grew to 14 lessons this year with the release of five new videos. These free videos are short, interactive, and engaging, each featuring a Barnes educator leading a lesson that brings in works from the collection. New additions expanded the library’s reach into the earliest grades and into new content areas, with lessons designed for classrooms and at-home use.

This asynchronous content is delivered through our Visual Experience Platform (VXP), the field-leading videoconferencing technology created by the Barnes specifically for the study of art and other visual material. The VXP magnifies objects in real time, revealing an astounding level of detail not visible in person. It empowers young learners to explore a work of art on their own and conveys a sense of materiality that enhances their perceptual experience.

- New on-demand videos released this year include:
- **Color Lesson** For students in grades pre-K–1 to learn how artists use color in their works.
 - **Shapes Lesson** For students in grades pre-K–1 to learn how artists use shapes in their works.
 - **Impressionism Lesson** For students in grades 2–6 and grades 7–12 to learn about impressionism and create their own impressionist-style artwork.
 - **Henri Rousseau and Proportions Lesson** For students in grades 5–8 to learn about Henri Rousseau and use math to study how he and other artists use proportions in their work.

The full library (available at barnesfoundation.org/school-programs/virtual-learning) offers lessons on individual artists, art and art making, STEM and STEAM, literacy, and world languages, as well as teacher training. Every lesson is built around the interactive capabilities of the VXP, prompting students to zoom in on details and practice close looking rather than passively watching—an essential distinction from standard streaming video. To support classroom use, the Barnes has created new resources for teachers, with downloadable worksheets available for most lessons. These materials extend the lesson beyond the screen, offering teachers ready-made tools for hands-on activities, discussion, and student reflection.

Since the library’s launch, Barnes on-demand lessons have been viewed more than 2,400 times.



Opposite: Screenshot from an on-demand lesson about impressionism.

Informal Learning Initiatives

The Barnes extends arts learning beyond the school day through informal programs that reach children and families in community settings, at partner schools, and at home. Led by James Claiborne, Fleischner Family Vice President for Engagement, the Community Engagement and Family Programs team deepens the Barnes’s educational reach through offerings that support literacy, social-emotional development, belonging, and access to culturally responsive arts experiences across Philadelphia. This year, the team concluded a multiyear research and strategic-planning process; its findings—the importance of learner choice, trusted and familiar community spaces, and reciprocal partnerships—now guide how each initiative is designed.



Toddlerpalooza

The Barnes’s early learning initiatives center childhood curiosity and experience, bringing together local partners and our youngest Philadelphians through play-based educational projects. This work has grown through partnerships with a citywide network of cultural organizations committed to bringing free neighborhood-based opportunities to children five and under and their families.

A free celebration of childhood, our annual Toddlerpalooza reflects the team’s family-centered approach, bringing young learners and their caregivers together at the Barnes for live music, interactive storytime, art-making stations, and movement activities. The 2026 event featured Yoga 4 Philly, Thembi Palmer (Imagine More Story Adventures), Let’s Jam, Baby! (Ninth Planet), Fleisher Art Memorial, The Clay Studio, Tree House Books, Smith Memorial Playground & Playhouse, LEMUS, Ivonne Pinto-García, and Peter Oravetz. Event registration included free access to the collection and *Freedom Dreams*. This year’s event drew 362 children and caregivers—the highest attendance in its history. Among the attendees were about 20 Latine families connected to Ñuuxakun, a children’s Mexican folkloric dance troupe and Barnes community partner. Several of these families were visiting an art museum for the first time; this growing collaboration enables these families to feel part of the Barnes community.

Barnes Art Club

Barnes Art Club offers sustained, sequential arts learning that supplements existing afterschool programming. In 2025–26, the program served more than 25 students at Community Partnership School, an alternative school in Brewerytown. Teaching artist Jillian M. Rock worked with site facilitators and students to design weekly sessions grounded in trauma-responsive teaching. These sessions—taking place across the entire school year and culminating in a trip to the Barnes—combined art making with guided social-emotional activities such as circle time. Students in K–2 and 3–5 grade bands gained creative confidence, practiced independent and group work, and developed self-expression and emotional regulation skills that carry beyond the program space.

Art for All Activity Kits and Special Exhibition Activity Booklet

For over five years, Community Engagement staff have developed and distributed activity kits to promote continued learning at home and in the community. Art for All Activity Kits provide arts-based resources and bilingual (English/Spanish) activity sheets inspired by works in the Barnes collection, special exhibitions, contemporary artists, and global cultural traditions. The kits emphasize themes of joy, communal healing, and collaborative change. This year, as local communities faced reduced access to economic,

housing, and food resources, the team began to add shelf-stable snacks and emotional-regulation tools. Over 400 kits were distributed to children and families through programs such as Barnes Art Club, Barnes North, Barnes Create & Connect, and special group tours.

For *Henri Rousseau: A Painter’s Secrets*, the team created a bilingual (English/Spanish) activity booklet to support young audiences in exploring the exhibition through play-based activities rooted in the Barnes Method, including slow looking, embodied-learning practices, grounding exercises, and literacy-building prompts. Nearly 3,500 booklets were distributed to visitors during the exhibition’s run.





2025–26 Creative Learning Donors

The Barnes Foundation gratefully acknowledges the generous supporters who, through farsighted endowment investments and vital annual program funding, ensure our service to young learners across the Philadelphia region and beyond.

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*POSTHUMOUS RECOGNITION

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Christian R. and Mary F. Lindback Foundation
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The following donors generously support
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This list reflects gifts of \$5,000 and above made between July 1, 2025, and June 30, 2026.

Participating Schools and Partners

The list below includes public, charter, parochial, and independent schools that registered a total of 8,085 students for pre-K–12 programming during the 2025–26 academic year. It also includes informal learning partner programs that served 4,287 participants.

Partner Programs

Grade 3

Philadelphia
15 schools, 741 students

School	Students
Albert M. Greenfield School	80
Bache-Martin School	76
Christopher Columbus Charter School	57
Dr. Ethel Allen School	22
Eliza B. Kirkbride School	60
Frances E. Willard School	80
General Philip Kearny School	10
Isaac A. Sheppard School	24
Jenks Academy for Arts and Sciences	40
John B. Kelly School	54
Julia de Burgos Elementary School	42
KIPP Philadelphia Octavius Catto Elementary	90
Robert Morris School	26
Rudolph Blankenburg School	26
Wissahickon Charter School—Awbury	54

Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Independent Catholic Schools
7 schools, 152 students

School	Students
Blessed Trinity Regional Catholic School	24
Holy Redeemer School	11
Nazareth Academy Grade School	20
St. Athanasius School	25
St. Dominic School	26
St. Peter the Apostle School	21
Waldron Mercy Academy	25

Grade 5

Philadelphia
17 schools, 620 students

School	Students
Abram S. Jenks School	23
Bache-Martin School	4
Bayard Taylor School	50
Francis Scott Key School	50
Henry C. Lea School	43
Inquiry Charter School	37
James J. Sullivan School	38
Jay Cooke Elementary School	30
John B. Stetson Middle School	50
John H. Taggart School	53
John Moffet School	30
Julia R. Masterman School	15
Kennedy C. Crossan School	50
Martha Washington Academics Plus School	16
Overbrook Elementary School	22
Potter-Thomas School	34
Russell Byers Charter School	75

Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Independent Catholic Schools

6 schools, 181 students

School	Students
Blessed Trinity Regional Catholic School	39
Holy Redeemer School	10
Nazareth Academy Grade School	40
Presentation BVM School	21
St. Laurentius School	21
Waldron Mercy Academy	50

Grade 7

Philadelphia

12 schools, 614 students

School	Students
Albert M. Greenfield School	82
AMY Northwest Middle School	55
Andrew J. Morrison School	65
Bache-Martin School	40
Charles W. Henry School	60
Honorable Luis Muñoz-Marín School	40
James G. Blaine School	25
KIPP North Philadelphia Academy	50
Louis H. Farrell School	60
Mastery Charter School—Gratz Campus	93
Penn Treaty School	20
Warren G. Harding Middle School	24

Archdiocese of Philadelphia and Independent Catholic Schools

1 school, 24 students

School	Students
Nazareth Academy Grade School	24

Single-Visit Programs

133 schools, 5,753 students

3,792 students from 74 schools qualified for free admission.

Philadelphia

73 schools, 3,715 students

School	Grade	Students
Anna L. Lingelbach School	2, 8	87
Arts Academy at Benjamin Rush	9–10	112
Bache-Martin School	6–8	8
Benjamin Franklin School	2–4	39
Blair Christian Academy	K–8	34
Christopher Columbus Charter School	7	100
Clara Barton School	2	92
Community Academy of Philadelphia Charter School	11, 12	22
Community Partnership School	K	15
Constitution High School	11, 12	20
Cook-Wissahickon School	K–2	46
Cristo Rey Philadelphia High School	11	139
Curtis Institute of Music	8–12	11
Deep Roots Charter School	3–6	29
Dr. Ethel Allen School	5, 7	29
Esperanza Academy Charter School	10, 11	26
Frances E. Willard School	3–5	38
Francis Scott Key School	4	58
Frankford High School	10–12	30
Friends Select School	Pre-K, 10–12	51
Furness High School	9–12	38
General Philip Kearny School	6–8	20
Gilbert Spruance School	7	58
Greene Towne Montessori School	1–3	13
Hill-Freedman World Academy	8	22
Holy Redeemer School	K–4, 6–8	91
Home School Cooperative	Pre-K, K, 2, 3, 5, 7	7
John H. Taggart School	1	50
Julia R. Masterman School	6, 9, 10–12	205
Juniata Park Academy	6–8	22
Kenderton Elementary School	K–2	88
Kensington High School	11	30

School	Grade	Students
Little Flower Catholic High School for Girls	11, 12	24
Louis H. Farrell School	6	45
Mastery Charter School—Pickett Campus	6–11	15
Mastery Charter School—Smedley Campus	4–6	5
Middle Years Alternative School	7, 8	50
Moonstone Preschool	Pre-K	22
Nazareth Academy Grade School	3–6, 8	75
Olney Charter High School	9–12	60
Our Mother of Consolation School	4–6	50
Overbrook Elementary School	1–3, 7	27
Penn Treaty School	6–12	62
Philadelphia High School for Girls	9–12	35
Philadelphia Military Academy	9	30
Philadelphia Performing Arts Charter School	11	36
Philadelphia Virtual Academy	6–8	12
S. Weir Mitchell School	K, 1	33
Sadie Alexander School	1, 2	146
Samuel Powel School	2	75
Solomon Solis-Cohen School	1	271
South Philadelphia High School	10–12	11
Spring Garden Academy	3–7	10
Spring Garden School	7	28
Springside Chestnut Hill Academy	11, 12	34
St. Francis Xavier School	K–4	96
St. Hubert Catholic High School for Girls	10	28
St. Malachy School	8	17
St. Peter’s School	2, 4	26
St. Philip Neri School	4, 5	94
Stephen Girard Elementary School	1–4	109
Strawberry Mansion High School	9, 10	32
Swenson Arts and Technology High School	9–12	81
The Crefeld School	10–12	5
The LINC	9–11	19
Thomas A. Edison High School	11, 12	24
Thomas Holme School	7	75
Thomas K. Finletter School	8	70
Vare-Washington School	6, 7	57
William M. Meredith School	K	71
William Penn Charter School	K	32
William W. Bodine High School	10, 12	87
YouthBuild Philadelphia Charter School	12	6

Greater Philadelphia Region
39 schools, 1,361 students

School	City, State	Grade	Students
Abington Friends School	Jenkintown, PA	9–12	13
Agnes Irwin School	Rosemont, PA	1	30
Baldwin School	Bryn Mawr, PA	6–8, 10	64
Central Bucks High School-West	Doylestown, PA	12	14
Cherry Hill High School East	Cherry Hill, NJ	9–12	40
Cherry Hill High School West	Cherry Hill, NJ	9–11	30
Christiana High School	Newark, DE	10–12	49
Conestoga High School	Berwyn, PA	10–12	74
Creative Arts Academy	Camden, NJ	9–12	19
Darby Township School	Glenolden, PA	5–12	20
Downingtown High School West	Downingtown, PA	9–12	43
Family Management Center Shelter	Chester, PA	Pre-K, 1–7	10
Friends Central School	Wynnewood, PA	6–8	21
Gateway Regional High School	Woodbury Heights, NJ	10–12	25
Good Shepherd Catholic Regional School	Ardsley, PA	4, 5	29
Gwynedd Mercy Academy High School	Lower Gwynedd, PA	10–12	23
Haverford School	Haverford, PA	5	49
Haverford High School	Havertown, PA	9–12	88
Highland Regional High School	Blackwood, NJ	11, 12	24
Holland Middle School	Holland, PA	7	35
Holy Ghost Preparatory School	Bensalem, PA	11, 12	23
Holy Rosary Regional Catholic School	Plymouth Meeting, PA	5–8	41
Kennett High School	Kennett Square, PA	10–12	6
Maple Shade High School	Maple Shade, NJ	9–12	44
Mastery High School of Camden	Camden, NJ	9–12	60
Mother Teresa Regional Catholic School	King of Prussia, PA	3	28
Mount Pleasant High School	Wilmington, DE	9, 10	35
Norristown Area High School	Norristown, PA	11, 12	40
Padua Academy	Wilmington, DE	11, 12	7
Pennridge High School	Perkasie, PA	10–12	103
Pennsauken High School	Pennsauken, NJ	12	21
Plymouth-Whitemarsh High School	Plymouth Meeting, PA	9–12	22
Pope John Paul II High School	Royersford, PA	10	15
Radnor Middle School	Wayne, PA	6	40
Souderton Area High School	Souderton, PA	9–12	7
Strath Haven High School	Wallingford, PA	11, 12	44
Unionville High School	Kennett Square, PA	10–12	45

School	City, State	Grade	Students
Wallingford-Swarthmore School District	Wallingford, PA	5, 8	77
Westtown School	West Chester, PA	12	3

Other Districts
21 schools, 677 students

School	City, State	Grade	Students
Algonquin Regional High School	Northborough, MA	9–12	64
American Home Life International	Lancaster, PA	9	35
Atlantic Christian School	Egg Harbor Township, NJ	9–12	45
Barnegat High School	Barnegat, NJ	10–12	25
Bronx High School of Science	Bronx, NY	10, 11	20
Cape May County Technical High School	Cape May Court House, NJ	10–12	44
Creekside Learning Cooperative	Pennington, NJ	3–10	18
Ephrata High School	Ephrata, PA	10–12	48
Grover Cleveland High School	Ridgewood, NY	11	24
Hempfield High School	Landisville, PA	10–12	15
Lititz Christian School	Lititz, PA	9–12	18
Lux Classical Christian	New Holland, PA	Pre-K–7	28
Mainland Regional High School	Linwood, NJ	10–12	29
Manheim Central High School	Manheim, PA	10–12	17
Maret School	Washington, DC	8	51
Oneonta High School	Oneonta, NY	9–12	33
Palmyra Area School District	Palmyra, PA	9–12	32
Princeton Day School	Princeton, NJ	11	19
Rye Neck High School	Mamaroneck, NY	9–12	16
Thomas Dale High School	Chester, VA	9–12	28
Woodbridge Academy Magnet School	Woodbridge, NJ	12	68

Informal Learning Initiatives

4,287 participants, Philadelphia

Early Learning	Age	Participants
Toddlerpalooza	0–5	362
Art Activity Kits & Booklets Distributed	0–5	3,900

Barnes Art Club	Grade	Participants
Community Partnership School	K–5	25



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