



HIGHER ORDER THINKING SCHOOLS NETWORK  
strong arts arts integration democratic practice

## HOT is the Way

—Meghan Wildstein, Parent, Jack Jackter Intermediate School

What is a Teacher Artist Collaboration (TAC)? Do we as parents fully understand this term and are we aware of the integration of the arts and academic subjects? As parents of a nine-year-old child, my husband and I did not, nor did we know that arts integration would allow our daughter to make extremely personal connections with the academic curriculum.

My husband and I have had the pleasure of sharing in such connections over the past two years with our oldest daughter and with Jack Jackter Intermediate School. Due to her involvement with several artists, and especially Connecticut Office of the Arts Teaching Artists Leslie Johnson and Betsy Davidson, she has honed her critical thinking skills, her ability to analyze herself in a self-portrait which then allowed her to ask open ended questions of her classmates – driving forward conversation so that the students would get to know one another better. During this period we started to notice that she was making personal connections with certain subject matter, thus self-directing her learning. This is thrilling for parents, as we know this can lead to life-long learning – something we wish for all of our children.



Meghan Wildstein with her children

As a parent it is gratifying to have a child, a student, return home excited, eager and wanting to express all the details of that day's TAC. Writing plays, painting and otherwise exercising creativity helps a child, a student, to develop leadership, passion, dedication and self-confidence. HOT is the way all schools should be!