

Arts for Children and Youth in Philadelphia

Areas of Focus for Years 1 and 2

Over the next 12 to 24 months the Arts for Children and Youth Initiative will focus on*:

* At this stage the purpose of selecting some concrete areas of focus is to help guide the subcommittee discussions. As more information is gathered it may be necessary to shift the focus, so the parameters below are not set in stone.

- Philadelphia.
- Movement building throughout the community: two years from now, the subcommittee members should be more than the usual suspects. In two years, we should see a shift in the dialogue so that **as a city we have a shared understanding of why arts are essential** for the development and education of our youth.
- Public schools and linking in-school programming with after school providers.
- Pre-Kindergarten through Grade 12, with an emphasis on schools with pre-Kindergarten programs and those elementary and middle schools that serve as feeder schools to specific high schools.
- A mix of schools that currently have very limited access to arts programming (“high arts need schools”) and schools that have pre-existing arts programming (“lower arts need schools”). The number and ratio of “high arts need schools” and “lower arts need schools” will be determined at a later date once more data is gathered. In advance of selecting schools, some guiding principles (equity, access, location, socio-economic and racial diversity, academic standing, etc.) will be identified to steer the selection. The city policy environment will also be taken into consideration when determining school selection principles. A school selection committee will be formed from members of each subcommittee to make selection decisions.
- Once these schools are selected, the idea is to really focus on supporting these schools. This means starting with existing school assets, and linking them to arts and cultural providers, teaching artists, out-of-school time providers, professional development opportunities, district level supports, and other services to strengthen and deepen the arts programming within the school. These schools will then be used to make a case about what is needed to bring arts and cultural programming to scale, and what supports are needed to make it sustainable in a variety of schools.
- In addition to the “depth” strategy that will focus on the above described schools, the district has very recently adopted a policy that sets minimum required FTEs of visual arts and/or music teachers per school, based on the number of students.

This “breadth” strategy is also important for the Arts for Youth Initiative and can be used to show some early success if indeed schools find and hire high quality certified arts teachers.

- Art and music teachers are placed in all schools in accordance with the School District of Philadelphia’s art education policy. The Arts for Youth Initiative advocates and ensures that this policy is implemented expediently and accurately so that all students in Philadelphia have access to an art and/or music teacher.