

Arts for Children and Youth in Philadelphia
Programs Subcommittee
Tuesday, May 20th 2008

Key Areas of Discussion

- Exclude non-arts cultural institutions (like the zoo and the Franklin Institute)
- Strategically identify opportunities in feeder schools with receptive teachers and principals
- Align existing arts programming with existing curriculum standards
- Identify options for implementation

Meeting Minutes

Vision-- singles out and identifies “creativity”, which is a component of every field- science, engineering... Maybe “creativity” is too broad, and we should keep focus on the arts. According to a new study conducted by The ImagineNation, <http://www.theimagination.net/resources.htm> creativity is an essential 21st century skill along with innovation. **Not every child will be an artist, but their jobs will likely require “creativity”. We should focus on building skills and capacities through the arts**, so should we include the word “*imagination*” instead of or in addition to creativity?

Does the word “*unique*” belong in reference to this effort? This initiative is unique to Philadelphia, but not to other cities.

10-Year Projection—grades and ages are specified because this initiative is for *youth*; we don’t want to ignore kids who have fallen through the cracks. This initiative is not just about schools, it is about **connecting arts and youth**.

The Programs Subcommittee will be responsible for determining parameters for participation, and believes that **non-arts cultural institutions, (such as the Zoo and the Franklin Institute) do not fit into this initiative**; the focus is on the arts.

Sequential, professional development is stated for teaching artists, but not for students. **“High quality, sequential instruction in arts disciplines” should be a stand-alone bullet**, but recognizing that there are intentionally finite opportunities, like attending a single performance.

Add institutions of higher education to “Business leaders, arts organizations...” bullet.

12-24 Months Stakes—

- *Philadelphia*— No opposition.
- *Public Schools*—As long as they can meet criteria and capacity issues, any public school can participate including charter schools.
- *K-8*—The Policy Subcommittee identified **current high school reform as an opportunity** to include this initiative. Preference will also be given to elementary schools with a Pre-K component and to feeder schools so that we can monitor progress.

We must identify opportunities in a few schools where principals and teachers are open to the initiative. The number of schools we target will be addressed in implementation plan—work that lies ahead within the next 9 months. Research Subcommittee will conduct a gap analysis, and the existence of services, quality, etc. will indicate criteria to include schools. We are going to **do focus groups with teachers and principals** in developing the blueprint, and we will include their voices in school selection.

- *A mix of “high arts need schools” and “lower arts need schools”* – The Steering Committee explored breadth vs. depth implementation of the initiative, and selected a mixed approach.

Low hanging fruit for early success and case-making, but have opportunity to showcase the infusion of arts in schools that have limited arts instruction. The ratio of low vs. high needs schools will be determined later.

Definition of “high arts need” up for discussion, but we must **consider the city policy environment and be savvy in schools we select.**

- *Focus on supporting schools &*
- *FTE policy and breadth strategy* – These final two bullets begin to address arts education from a systemic perspective. Breadth and Depth.

The Policy Subcommittee is going to develop an advocacy and communications infrastructure to being to address the major cultural shifts necessary.

Funding for the initiative will come from public, private, individual constituents; it is too expensive for one entity. When the blueprint takes shape, Steering Committee members will build goodwill and fundraise. We will have to price this initiative out among all subcommittees

Programs Discussion

Developing **thresholds of readiness** is a task for Programs Subcommittee, perhaps with the addition of a School Selection Subcommittee.

Our charge is to **align arts education with already-existing curriculum standards**, not rewriting curricular policy. We are setting standards for how external providers engage and supplement what happens with schools.

- Curriculum alignment with existing arts programming
- shared educational goals
- In school programming
- Outside arts providers working within schools
- Cohort teams
- Teachers should be collaborators with outside organization, and be present in the room and share planning time with the resident artist.

The Research subcommittee is working towards building a survey for schools administrators, teaching artists, and art providers to get a sense of quality, penetration, who is doing what where. From this information we will be able to **select schools, identify assets and determine the holes to fill.** There are a few proposed ways of going about this task:

1. **Give teachers a choice** of art form. Teachers can identify disciplines as 1st, 2nd, and 3rd preference, and the teaching artist can implement by grade level. Students can stay with same artist to next year so that instruction is sequential and builds a sense of cohort team.
2. Some districts have dedicated **Arts Education Coordinator** with responsibility of coordinating and aligning organizations, but principals can also play this role. Expectation will eventually be that when an arts organization engages with a school, the principal has a template and can tell you what assets the school has and which organizations are working within the school.
3. **Arts 4 Youth evaluates a school and determine which arts forms are absent.** In order for a school to have a strong arts component, they have to have all arts at least an introductory level, and then they can maintain that while focusing on one or more disciplines of their choice.

“Common Program Parameters” Table —

- Add professional development
- Add sustainability—changing culture in schools so programs are sustainable
- Add student body—engage students in planning. Have them at the table and not just at assessment level. **(Pick up on this concept next time)**
- Add parents and family members— promote awareness and can provide OST opportunities
- Teaching capacity
 - Add buy-in partnership from teacher and principal
 - Add organization works to increase cultural competency of instructors.
 - Add build competency to work with diverse populations, like bringing artists from different cultural backgrounds

Reminders

- **Next meeting date is June 17th.** 9-11am University of the Arts
- **Please bring your calendar** so we can determine upcoming meeting dates.
- No formal homework, unless you have additions to the “Common Program Parameters” table. If so please email these to Meg (meg@omgcenter.org) by June 12th.