

**Arts for Children and Youth in Philadelphia**  
**Policy & Advocacy Subcommittee Meeting #1**  
William Penn Foundation, Board Room  
April 10, 2008 9-11am

## **1. Overview of the Planning Process**

### **Steering Committee**

The Steering Committee is intended to be a diverse guiding and decision-making group to guide the Arts for Children and Youth initiative. In the near-term the Steering Committee will be responsible for:

- Refining the Arts for Children and Youth vision (which some of us began to refine during the community meeting)
- Identifying a process to select a leadership team or organization to lead the Arts for Children and Youth effort, potentially through an RFP process.

As the initiative unfolds the Steering Committee will become the “face” of the Arts for Children Initiative and will be increasingly responsible for fundraising and communications work. The Steering Committee will have two chairs per sub-committee in addition to other key community stakeholders.

### **Sub-Committees**

There are currently four sub-committees, each with a defined role for the initial three months of the nine to 12 month planning process:

- Leadership: Recap leadership characteristics and criteria and help develop an RFP for selection
- Programs: Will help define quality program in / out of school, using existing frameworks. Develop criteria for organizations to participate through programming, in both after- and in-school partnerships.
- Policy & Advocacy: Identify and collect current policy data, and discover what else we need to know. Identify what Federal, State and City policies currently support and create barriers to arts education, and what might be needed in the near term and long term. Identify near term political windows we can position ourselves for and broad community linkages across other issues to mobilize other groups; develop an advocacy strategy.
- Research: Look at other city arts education assessments, not only the common indicators, but also the framework, including systems assessment questions.

### **OMG’s role**

OMG will staff this process, and assure that information is shared across sub-committees and with the Steering Committee. All meeting and background information will be posted on the Website ([www.omgcenter.org/Arts4Youth](http://www.omgcenter.org/Arts4Youth)) and will be distributed to those involved.

The goal is not to replicate Big Thought, but to learn from their lessons and decide what work for our city and region.

## 2. Discussion about the vision

The group revisited the vision discussion begun during the March community meeting. Members of the sub-committee wanted to get clear on the “big goals” or the “big ideas” before attempting to lay out an advocacy strategy.

Below is a synopsis of the perceived vision for this work:

- Increased funding for the arts, teachers, allocated time for instruction
- Increased access to quality arts experiences in after-school
- This work is *not* about re-instating the arts education experience from 50 years ago, just by returning to 45 minutes of music, and 45 minutes of art in elementary school. That is limited and conventional this is about better coordination, increased access, and making the arts central to a quality education – linking the arts with the education agenda.
- This process should provide the community with a framework for making decisions of what gets funded and what doesn't.
- Link the work in the schools with future audience building as a way to increase support for the effort.
- “Equity” was identified as a tricky word, because it doesn't necessarily mean responding to need. Expanding access to all kids is important.

Additional areas of discussion included the importance of messaging as a way to build public support and generate funding for the work.

### Revised Vision:

After further discussion the vision was revised to:

***The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, the City of Philadelphia, the School District, and the Community supports (or endorses / commits / mandates / pursues) quality education in and through the arts as an essential in the development of children to allow them to thrive in their communities and the 21<sup>st</sup> century global workforce.***

*It should be noted that the Vision will be refined by OMG based on the feedback from the break-out sessions during the March meeting and this sub-committee discussion and will be approved by the Steering Committee.*

Long-term vision expressed by William Penn, when prompted by sub-committee members:

- Vision is large” What do we want for our children and youth in region / city in the way of arts? WPF's look is broad, and we're looking to community process to help define and carry out this vision. We want a 5 year work plan that moves us towards the bigger vision, and in 5 years we all will revisit and freshen that for the next 5 years.
- Arts in education *and* arts education, both in- and out- of school, and focusing on the whole child.

- We know schools can't probably provide everything; you have different things you want to cultivate in a child, like basic awareness. If they have talent, we should cultivate it. We also know that arts are a powerful tool to teach other subject matter too.
- These 3 moving parts should be addressed in any larger vision, because that is how we want it for adults too, and that is what WPF has a long-standing investment in over time.
- Audience development is also important.
- Philadelphia used to be a rich source for that type of talent, but it needs to be cultivated.
- In this period of de-funding, there is growth of neighborhood based arts for kids, but it is not equitably distributed between neighborhoods. ”.

### 3. Discussion of Tasks for this Sub-committee

**We need to get clear on Federal, State and City policies across the full set of issues and concerns to arts and education.**

- **Existing resources:**
  - School Reform Committee has articulated arts education as a policy. Things could be changing—people might be finally paying attention. It's clear that lack of arts in schools is a direct threat to community, economics, (tourism, etc.)
  - Tessie Varthas provided a lot of data on the current state in the school district. This data will be synthesized for the next meeting and shared with sub-committee members.
- **Necessity of hard evidence:** There is a need to do a good assessment of not only policies, but really degree of penetration, level of numbers of infrastructure? What's out there? Where are the gaps and opportunities? Yet, all agreed that this ought to be done rather strategically and quickly, using existing reports and data as much as possible. *This is also the topic of discussion for the research sub-committee.*

Another useful study would be— how communities, places, practitioners have used art as a tool to facilitate quality education. *(It was confirmed that the Programs and Research Committee would probably lead/overlap with this).*

- **Increased knowledge about the political landscape of NCLB and the quality education conversation:** what is being understood, how can the arts education agenda better align with the NCLB discussion?
- **Need to understand the context for the budget process with the State and City, and consider other funding options:** In FY09 the Governor proposed \$89 million more; its is already assumed and allocated, and that still leaves us with \$39 million deficit to make up next year. It is not likely that there will be short term

reprogramming at district. We also need to think beyond the education budget to generate new ways of finding money.

- We need a formalized office/process in the district or preferably an organization outside of it **to monitor / assess learning and creativity.**

**We need to be thinking across many settings, not just public schools.** If this is about engagement in every child, reaching every child, that is where we need to start. Look at places where we can engage. Public schools are huge, but not the only place. We have to recognize that children are not always in schools that are managed by the district. 1/3 of Philadelphia children are not in any public school or charter school. Need different strategy for each one of those places.

**We need a smart organizing strategy, both short and long term.** Identify who in the political landscape should be part of this process, and then bring them in. If average person doesn't have this on their top 5 list, then it doesn't matter how many politicians on are board; we need average person to engage.

- **Our framing needs to be broader to influence decision-makers.** The creative economy may create a lever since Philadelphia has been trying to figure out how to market itself in this way. Tie arts education in to economic development, and an educated workforce is part of that. Funnel it down, and say this is how we get there. This may allow us to tap into other sources of revenue. Putting it in context of creative economy puts more pressure on organizations / programs to step up to the plate.
- **The most important thing in policy / advocacy agenda, how do we create the imperative and public awareness of that imperative?** We have to be able to frame the importance of arts education and bring it back to the center of our culture.
- **It is important to get clear on the value of this work and to communicate it:**  
Some suggested values and in some cases justifications included:
  - Why arts have valuable-impact on kids.
  - Engaging every child in the arts. Arts for all children. Access for all children. Quality for all children, equity, sustainability, and regeneration.
  - Cross-cultural understanding, diverse communities. Value art for its ability to promote cross-cultural understanding and identity.
  - Value artistic quality and education quality.
  - The arts provide different venues for people to interpret the world. Arts engage people to problem solve.
  - Different ways of knowing.

#### **Other summary points from the discussion**

- There is this notion of “buckets” - please refer to notes from policy break-out session from Community Meeting

- City, state, community, arts community, in school, universities.
- There is a need to develop firm standards in arts education
- Importance of individual districts (not states) as leaders
- NCLB presents both an obstacle and an opportunity.
- There is a need to develop a strategy to increase the capacity of the arts community including growing the available funding: private dollars, creative funding sources outside of traditional education resources.

#### **4. Agreed on actions and next steps**

**1) Send all existing studies and data to Gerri/OMG; they will compile it and put it in a central place for access and circulation prior to the next meeting.**

**2) Homework for next meeting:**

- **All sub-committee members identify linkages of this agenda with cultural community, creative economy and other salient trends in the city. How do we get excitement that was at the core of WPF's decision to do this? How do we awaken citizenry? Why, and how, and in a new way.**
- **Do a quick overview of City, State and Federal Policy Environment and Issues: what is and what might be barriers. (there may be holes, and gaps and that is understood, but at least we will have a beginning point)**
  - **Dennis, Tessie** will put together summary, core what is, standards, curriculum, professional development, assessment at city / state level, flesh out where budget lines, opportunities are for advancing our agenda.
  - **Gretchen:** will do the same at national level, and identify financial resources we can tap into.

**3) Everyone will need to email their homework to Gerri a week prior to the meeting, so she can compile it ahead of time and distribute it ahead of time for a more productive discussion**

**Please email homework tasks to Gerri ([gerri@omgcenter.org](mailto:gerri@omgcenter.org)) by May 6.**

**Gerri will turn it around and send it to people by May 12<sup>th</sup>.**

**The next meeting is May 15<sup>th</sup> from 9-11 at the William Penn Foundation.**

**Next meeting:**

- Sub-committee members will come with a sense of what is and what hasn't been thought of, based on their review of the distributed materials.
- From this we will strategically select advocacy opportunities, and that will give us a policy objective and potential message points.