

**Arts for Children and Youth in Philadelphia
Community Meeting
Work Group Synthesis**

Group: Programs I	Facilitator: Victoria Dougherty, OMG Center
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Part I. Ideal Vision

Several issues were prevalent in the “ideal vision” discussion including:

- The need to **define “every child”** to include young people from diverse economic and racial groups, but also youth who have dropped out of the school system.
- The need to **define “arts”** broadly and creatively, to include all art forms, but also to refer to the **full range of arts experiences** including arts exposure, aesthetic awareness, discipline-based arts instruction, integrated arts, the process of art-making - the active production/creation of art, and the opportunity for deep immersion sustained development of artistic practices
- The necessity to emphasize the **link between the arts and community building**. For the purposes of this vision it is important to stress **who** in the community needs to be involved in this work including teaching artists, arts teachers, artists, arts counselors, cultural organizations, schools, the school district, community groups, after-school providers, business, and equally importantly student and care-givers.
- The community members involved in this work must get better at working together, with a **shared stake in the planning and implementation** of this work. Those who have traditionally been removed from the planning process need to be engaged in meaningful ways. This includes eliminating barriers to **equitable access**: limited resources, information, etc.
- The link between **arts and humanity**. The discussion about the arts should extend beyond education and learning. **Arts are core to promoting self-awareness and personal growth**.
- There is a need to **empower communities to value arts** as both makers of art and consumers of art.
- The arts can serve as vehicles to address key community issues. One of the more prevalent **community issues** in the discussion was **violence**.
- The ideal vision needs to strategically use **data** and information about the arts to change beliefs and move arts-supportive policies. The arts need to be framed as **essential**. In order to do this we need to get better at documenting our work and the impact of the arts on key issues such as youth development, violence reduction, student academic performance, etc.
- The only element of the vision that the group suggested removing or augmenting is the statement about “traveling to the other side of town” for arts experiences. It is necessary to showcase to young people and their care-takers what **arts opportunities** are available in their **communities**, not just what is available in other parts of the city.

- It is necessary to pay **teaching-artists a living wage**, not just to increase their income, but moreover as a statement about how much arts are valued.

Part II. Work Group Questions

What are the elements of a quality education in and through the arts?

- **Adequate resources** for instruction including appropriate length of time, materials, quality clean and safe space
- A variety of **qualified and trained instructors** including artists, teaching artists, arts teachers.
- An **infrastructure** to manage school-based arts programs including an arts coordinator who is responsible for linking the work of school based arts-teachers, artists, and classroom teachers. These school arts providers have shared planning time and share in the decision-making about what arts resources should be available to the school. Buy-in from principals, administrators, and student input in planning are key for a school-based model.
- Quality **professional development** for all arts stakeholders including administrators and coordinators. Professional development should engage participants in art-making, as well as arts exposure opportunities such as visits to cultural organizations.
- Quality, meaningful **assessments** including strong rubrics that can provide immediate **feedback** about how to improve the quality of instruction.
- Accommodating students and adapting arts programs through **differentiated learning** is an important element of quality programming.

What are the gaps?

- Teaching artists are undervalued and it is hard for artists to sustain life-long arts careers.
- Connections between teaching artists, classroom and discipline-based arts teachers are limited. Need to find ways to meaningfully engage student voice.
- Need to strengthen shared thinking and action, not just continue focusing in on individual programs. Need to develop a structure to facilitate this shared vision. (*The community meeting is a good first step*).
- Need to create opportunities for the integration of wider cultural and ethnic backgrounds in the arts that are reflective of the diversity of the youth.
- Gap in resources for youth in alternative and disciplinary schools.
- Need to improve the variety and options of life-long learning opportunities in the arts.
- Need to mix age groups and levels of artistic know-how and experiences to promote peer to peer learning and coaching.
- Need to come together as a community to conduct research and identify what the real gaps are.

Parking Lot

None noted