

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

Group: Programs II	Facilitator: Meg Long, 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 and youth”** to include young people from diverse economic and racial groups, young people with disabilities, but also youth who have dropped out of the school system, or are engaged in alternative instruction.
- The need to **define “arts”** broadly and creatively, to include all art forms and perhaps terms such as “creativity”, 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 presentation, and the opportunity for deep immersion and sustained development of artistic practices.
- The need to **broaden** the term **“parents” to include families and caretakers**, and insure that they take an active role in this initiative *and* in art making, so they are not just consumers.
- Need to **simplify the vision** to two or three big ideas, but also to **reframe the vision differently for different stakeholders**: the school district is interested in different aspects of the vision, than say the business community or the arts and cultural players. It is important to be flexible and be able to present the vision differently to different stakeholders to get their attention and support.
- The vision should stress that this process is about **community building** and is a unique approach to build relationships and linkages among the very diverse set of players that have a stake in the viability of the arts in Philadelphia. *“Make Philadelphia the next Dallas”* as a model for using the arts to build a community.
- Need to **emphasize professional development**, and moreover shared and high quality professional development for arts providers, teaching artists, classroom and arts teachers, administrators, but also out of school time providers.
- Emphasize the **arts as essential** to the human experience and student development and not an elective, or add on that is the first thing to be cut from budgets.
- Emphasize the role of **teaching artists** as key providers and players in this initiative.
- Emphasize **high quality** as the standard of arts experiences, not the exception.

Things to remove:

- Not just two teachers per school – since this is the ideal vision, aim for right proportion of teachers and time for quality instruction for all of the students in the building.

- We don't want this funded necessarily through a "bond" since that notates a deficit. We just want it funded.

Part II. Work Group Questions

To answer the question "Given the vision, what are the gaps in programming?" the group divided the discussion into two sections:

1). How to go about identifying what programs already exists and what the gaps are (*this work links to the research group*); and 2). Discussion of existing gaps

1. How do we identify gaps?

- **Work with existing resources** to identify what type of programming is already happening during the school day and during out-of-school-time. Places to start: school district, Philadelphia Arts Education Partnership, Pennsylvania Council on the Arts, Philadelphia Safe and Sound, Out of School Time Resource Center (OSTRC), Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance.
- Use a "**snow ball**" **survey method** to have survey respondents identify additional organizations to contact, who are providing arts-related programming.

2. What are the gaps?

- Need to be able to link engagement in the arts to reduced **violence**. Violence is such a key community issue that we have to address it somehow.
- Need to build a "universal format" to define **quality arts programs** and experiences include observing arts, learning arts skills, performing and producing. Need to identify what quality looks like – building off of existing research such as the work completed by the Surdna Foundation.
- There are opportunities to build on **multi-disciplinary** approaches to our work.
- Schools and teachers are bogged down with the need to meet Annual Yearly Progress – need to identify who can change that **conceptual shift**, to allow the arts back into the school day. Need to identify "**enabling constraints**" (*Gigi Antoni's term*) of policy and practical challenges that we have to navigate – such as AYP.
- The Out of School Time (OST) field is a professional field rooted in youth development. There is a need to **link OST** time meaningfully with the arts offered during the school day, while being respectful of their expertise – out of school is not just about "filling the gaps" for activities that cannot be "fit" into the school day.
- Need to create a **common language**, in part as a way to break down the silos in which we work.
- Lack of **funding** is a constant issue.
- Need for **data to make a case for change**. Data about academic achievement, violence reduction, youth development, workforce development and other indicators so we can present these to policy and decision-makers to sway them.
- This is about creating a **movement**. Not everyone will be, or should be engaged in the same way. This work should insure that organizations are meeting their

goals, while building relationships and changing the environment in which they are working.

Parking Lot

- There was a strong and repeated emphasis for the need for a **communications and media strategy** to move this work forward, including target stakeholder messaging.