

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

Group: Research	Facilitator: Anita Baker
------------------------	---------------------------------

Part I. Ideal Vision

What would they add to the vision?

- Change “art” to “artS” in bullet # 2
- Add something about cultural diversity and multiethnic education in curriculum; something that specifies that it should be a part of the curriculum during school time, as well as after school
- Add something about parents and using the arts as a powerful tool for reconnecting parents to schools (especially when most of our schools need to mend relationships with parents badly)
- Last statement is most comprehensive. Perhaps from that one, move to community benefits. Taxpayers are paying for this, so they could argue against it especially if they don’t have kids in school – what are the benefits for them?
- Add a statement that says we need to have more education and research in schools, academies, etc. so we can support these statements with findings – perhaps add “...and we are capable of articulating why through qualitative and quantitative means” to bullet # 6
- Our universities graduate many arts teachers. Add something about a cycle that has children grow up, become arts teachers, come back and work in community - “graduating arts teachers to provide a talented work force for our future children.”

Was there anything they thought should be removed from the vision?

- Bullet # 14 (“New businesses flock...”) – Can the arts take credit for such large-scale changes? We need research. Consider revising this statement to include the phrase “contributes to.”

Part II. Work Group Questions

What questions did they choose to address?

- What do we know about the current landscape of arts ed in and out of school in Philadelphia?
- What else do we need to know to make case for our vision?
- What kind of data will be needed to monitor our progress?

What were the major themes of the discussion?

- We don’t currently know what the landscape looks like because people and orgs are working in isolation. Is data being collected? Who has access to it? We need to identify the answers to these questions specifically about schools and also about community orgs. We might be posing questions where the answers already exist. This will also help us identify our gaps. That’s when we know where to focus.
- We need an organization to be the data-collecting source from all these non-profits, orgs, schools, etc. We could partner with the area universities to

accomplish this – they should be more involved. This is a capacity that Dallas didn't have.

- Complete research/audit plan including looking at different slices of information. For example - look at the landscape in terms of sections like zip code. We have some neighborhoods/districts that have more resources than others; the financial situation of that district/neighborhood can have an impact on what/how many arts programs are being offered
- It's important to recognize the specific **why** in the schools where there's no programming. There's a reason it's not an arts environment. Get to that before tossing money at them and telling them to go teach arts.
- It's important that everyone values the mission. We have to make sure we're asking the right questions and taking the right steps to lead to the specific vision we've outlined. Everyone has to have an idea that this will be important and meaningful to kids, schools, etc.
- It's important to develop a list of things we are looking for to increase with our initiatives – effects in children that we will measure to show success. Suggestions:
 - Attendance in school
 - Engagement in other core subjects
 - Active learning behaviors
 - Self esteem
 - Self efficacy
 - Self confidence
 - Communication
 - Attendance at arts events outside of school
 - Parent engagement in school activities
 - Teacher engagement, commitment
 - Skills (need to define what this actually means and need to think of broad ways to measure it)
- Use vocabulary that is accessible to all – not just something that someone who is arts-specific would understand.
- The way they measured it in Dallas showed us how it was aligned to curricular goals but also a scaled approach to the arts. We pay our money for schools so children do become literate, become prepared for workplaces, are ready. That gives us a template of what we need to track without making exaggerated claims about the impact of the arts specifically.
- We have to make a bigger investment in professional development for everyone – principals, teachers, pre-teaching professionals (students in schools of education). In the schools where they don't have as much, they don't have arts groups coming in because it's so much extra work for teachers.

Were there any issues that the group was very conflicted over?

- How important is it that students have “skills” (in the traditional sense) at the end of arts education curriculum? If we treat it like any other core subject, a student “should have something to show for it” after going through it. Can we look at improvement over time (comparison someone against themselves)?

Were any next steps agreed upon?

- If this process is going to be data driven, this group should meet first. Before anyone else can do anything, we need to think about what we have before making the next steps. For example – in one month.
- Frequency depends on how we can get an org like a Big Thought or a Cultural Alliance involved, and as needed determined by the other group's processes.
- Composition is an important aspect of this group. We need to include researchers from universities.

Parking Lot

Note issues that were put in the “parking lot” so that we can make sure they are brought to the appropriate committee

- What region are we talking about? City? Suburbs, included? – Arguments made for both sides, even making it statewide. Some thoughts included:
 - It depends on research.
 - The need is greatest in the city of Philadelphia. It's a place to start.
 - The region (5 counties – Delaware, Chester, Philadelphia, Bucks, Montgomery) should do things together. Look at the problem with public transportation. The more we're segregating, the more we're going to keep segregating.
 - We could first start locally. Then, our strengths could be a model for other areas (ex suburbs) to look to us. (This may be something we want to include in the ideal vision document, as well).
 - Parents who choose to educate children out of district usually have other resources. We should focus on Philadelphia public schools first.
 - Kids in other counties (ex: Chester) have very comparable resources to Philadelphia kids.
 - Camden, other parts of NJ – up for discussion.