

Arts for Children and Youth in Philadelphia

Ten Year Vision

Arts, culture, and creativity are essential for the development and education of our youth, the health of our families and neighborhoods, and the economic and civic well-being of the Philadelphia region.

The time is *now* to affirm the arts as essential to the education of the whole child. The time is *now* to make quality arts and cultural experiences and learning *in and through* the arts central to *every* young person's life.

The Arts for Children and Youth Initiative is a community-wide endeavor to better support and coordinate current efforts to increase quality, equity, access, and diversity of arts offerings, during the school day and after-school, for our children and youth, families, and communities.

If we are successful, in 10 years we will be able to track the following through ongoing assessments:

- **Arts and cultural experiences are viewed and treated as central to a quality education** that reaches the whole child. Arts are recognized as core subjects. Arts are acknowledged as building core 21st century skills, including problem-solving, abstract thinking, team-building, innovation, disciplined practice, and creativity. We will know that this is the case when:
 - School districts and schools allocate adequate **budget line items** for certified arts teachers, space and materials for instruction.
 - **Every young person has access to an established baseline of arts experiences and opportunities in all disciplines.**
 - Every young person receives high quality sequential **instruction in arts disciplines over time.**
 - Every student benefits from a **curriculum that integrates the arts** with other core subjects.
 - In-school **instruction is supplemented** by artists, teaching artists, artists-in-residence, and outside arts providers. This **supplemental instruction is adequately funded**, values artists and their craft, and offers opportunities for their professional development.
 - Teaching artists, certified arts teachers, and classroom teachers have shared **planning time and high quality, sequential professional development** that is supported in the budget.
 - Teacher **certification** requires coursework in arts education and **strong linkages to higher education** exist.
- **Strong and active relationships exist between in-school and out-of-school time providers.** These relationships enable children and youth to connect in-school and out of school arts

opportunities. In every neighborhood, **community-based organizations work closely and seamlessly with arts organizations, schools, and families** to provide rigorous arts experiences that continue to strengthen young people's artistic aspirations, develop their talents, and celebrate the diversity and cultural heritage of the Greater Philadelphia community.

- Diverse opportunities exist for **families and caretakers to engage in the arts**, both as arts-makers and as consumers of art and culture. Parents support arts education experiences for their children and are well organized to advocate against budget cuts or policies that may undermine their children's arts and cultural opportunities.
- Every young person in Philadelphia has the **opportunity to explore, attend, and participate in quality arts and cultural programming** in all forms (theater, music, dance, opera/musicals, visual arts, media arts, multidisciplinary arts, and others) both in Center City and in their neighborhoods.
- Arts are viewed and celebrated by residents, visitors, businesses as **central to the economic prosperity of the city** of Philadelphia and the greater Philadelphia region, as well as to the health of its communities. Students in the Philadelphia region are increasingly equipped with innovative 21st century skills as a result of increased arts and cultural experiences.
- As a result of their engagement in this initiative, **students' motivation and educational attainment increases** in the arts as well as other core content areas. Student attendance rates improve.
- Business leaders, arts organizations, public schools, parents, students, and politicians **share the same vision** of high quality, arts and arts education experiences in and out of school time for EVERY child.

Our vision statement embodies the following definitions:

- Arts education is understood to include **both discipline-based and integrated instruction** and programming in a range of arts disciplines. Arts education encompasses all the visual and performing arts delivered in a standards-based, sequential approach by a qualified instructor as part of the core curriculum. The most common courses provided in schools include Art (visual art), Band, Drama, and Choir.
- A **comprehensive definition of arts** that includes visual arts, music, theater, dance, media and literary arts, digital media, multicultural, interdisciplinary and emerging arts experiences. "Arts" includes the full range of arts-related experiences: arts exposure, aesthetic awareness, integrated arts education, discipline-based arts instruction, art-making, and deep immersion and sustained development of artistic talent. Cultural institutions that participate in this effort provide educational enrichment programming that includes arts integrated instruction.

- An **expanded definition of children and youth** encompasses all individuals between Pre-K and 12th grade (ages three to 21) including those in public and parochial schools, charter schools, in alternative educational settings, home-schooled children and youth who have dropped out of the formal educational system. Children and youth have equal access and opportunity in the arts and cultural experiences regardless of race, ethnicity, socio-economic status, or physical ability.
- The vision has been realized across the Greater Philadelphia **region defined** as 5 county area encompassing Philadelphia, Bucks, Chester, Delaware, and Montgomery Counties.