

## ***Arts Education Committee to the PEP***

### **A Blueprint for Art Education: 2011-2014**

**This is not the late seventies. Yes, we face a period of fiscal uncertainty in our schools and yes, the stability of arts education in our schools is part of that uncertainty. But unlike the seventies, we have a strong arts structure in place - arts office, discipline directors, *Blueprints*, an *Annual Arts in Schools* report, Arts Count, the development of performance assessments in the arts, a larger contingent of certified arts specialists in the schools, a supportive arts community – that can withstand any short term challenges.**

**We believe that this is a time to act. It is the time to put in place a three year plan to get us through the short term challenges, to build on our strengths and the infrastructure already in place and to finally create an arts education program in all our schools that is based on access and equity for every student, that meets the state standards for arts education, and that ensures that all children growing up in the cultural capital of the world will finally receive a world-class arts education.**

#### **Background**

A child's education is not complete unless it includes the arts. In fact, the current iteration of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act of 1965 (ESEA) lists the arts among the core academic subjects, requiring schools to enable all students to achieve in the arts and to reap the full benefits of a comprehensive arts education. A vast body of scientific research shows that children who have comprehensive arts education as a part of their curriculum experience improved success in their studies, show better ability to work in teams, think creatively and critically, stay in school and go on to graduate from college.

#### **The Arts Prepare Students for School, Work, and Life**

Fostering creativity and innovation has never been more important for our nation's students. As this country works to strengthen its foothold in the 21st Century global economy, the arts equip students with a creative, competitive edge. The arts provide the skills, knowledge, and understanding students need to develop the creativity and determination necessary for success in today's global information age. A recent Conference Board Report revealed that 74 percent of employers agree that creativity, a key component of arts learning, is increasingly important in U.S workplaces. In addition, teamwork and critical thinking skills ranked in the five most important skills for new work force entrants. Yet, more than half of employers stated that the recent workforce entrants were deficient in these skill sets.

Ensuring that students have the opportunity to engage in sequential, standards based arts curricula can help close this gap.

#### **The Arts Strengthen the Learning Environment**

Where schools are delivering high-quality, sequential learning opportunities in the arts for children, extraordinary results occur. A study by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, finds that schools with large populations of students in economic poverty can be transformed into vibrant hubs of learning when the arts are infused into their culture and curriculum. Additionally, studies have found that 8th graders from under-resourced environments who are highly involved in the arts have better grades, less likelihood of dropping out by grade 10, have more positive attitudes about school, attend school at a higher rate and are more likely to go on to college.

## **The Arts Help Close the Achievement Gap**

The arts make a tremendous impact on the developmental growth of every child, leveling the "learning field" across socio-economic boundaries. The arts reach students not otherwise engaged, uniquely bridging the broad spectrum of learning styles. English Language Learners and children with special needs often become high achievers in arts learning settings. Their success in the arts classroom often transfers to achievement in other subject areas.

Students who participate in the arts outperform those who do not on virtually every measure.

- Researchers found that sustained learning in music and theater correlate to greater success in math and reading, with students from lower socio-economic backgrounds reaping the greatest benefits. It is now accepted that the arts are uniquely able to boost learning and achievement for young children, students with disabilities, students from under-resourced environments, and students needing remedial instruction.
- Students in high-poverty schools benefit dramatically from arts education. The arts teach children the skills necessary to succeed in life, including learning to solve problems and make decisions; learning to think creatively; building self-esteem and self-discipline; articulating a vision; developing the ability to imagine what might be; and accepting responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish.
- The College Board's National Task Force on the Arts in Education recommends that, "greater access to arts education can serve as an effective tool in closing the achievement gap, increasing the number of underserved students that achieve at the highest level in education."

## **Goals:**

- By 2014, **all** schools will meet the instructional requirements in the arts as designated by NYSED and aligned with the NYC-DOE compliance metrics and as delivered by certified teachers of the arts, classroom teachers (when appropriate) and in sustained arts residencies.
- By 2014, all elementary schools will offer **all** four art forms with instruction in at least two of the four disciplines being offered by licensed certified teacher of the arts. **All** middle and high schools will be in compliance and offer the required arts by licensed, certified teachers of the arts. (2013-14 school year.)
- By 2014, in order to assure and measure the quality of the instruction, **all** schools will participate in the arts performance assessments being developed under though *Investing in Innovation: Arts Achieve* project. (2013-14 school year)
- **Recognizing that reaching these goals is a critical need for our city's schools and our city's school children, the Fund for Public Schools will make finding the financial resources to meet these goals one of its core priorities.**

**Challenge:** *Some schools consistently fail to meet the instructional requirements in the arts and fall within the lowest 5% (75 schools) as revealed in the Annual Arts Survey. These schools are not providing their students with a complete education and are not preparing them for next steps in their school, college or career.*

- Target excessed arts teachers to be strategically placed in the low 75 schools. (Fall 2011)
- Provide extended arts leadership training for low arts school principals through an enhanced *Shubert Arts Leadership Institute* (Spring 2012)
- Provide tiered down, three-year incentives to low arts schools for arts materials, resources, equipment, space renovation or arts partners based upon hiring a part or full time certified teacher of the art. Project funds to be allocated; Year one 10k/Year two 5K/Year three 3K. (Spring 2012)

**Challenge:** *The DOE will be hard pressed to sustain the level of arts instruction provided by certified teachers of the arts in this time of constrained resources. With constricted school budgets, principals may need to terminate arts programs and in the process will arts teacher may be excessed. We need to maximize the impact of all teachers of the arts across school sites to assure that certified teachers are reaching as many students as possible.*

- By July 1, 2011, put in place a system that allows for matching teachers of the arts with school leaders who are seeking to share teachers of the arts across school sites.
- By October 2011, survey all existing NYCDOE teachers to ascertain which teachers would be eligible for additional arts teaching certification. All candidates would be existing DOE teachers with a minimum bachelor's degree in the arts (dance, music, theater, visual arts). The program would support teachers through workshop preparation for the Content Special Test (CST), fee reimbursement for the CST and NYSED transcript review. **Higher education partners will prepare additional course work to prepare them to take on this new instructional responsibility.** This initiative could substantially increase the number of teachers of the arts within the existing talent pool.
- In 2011- 2012, work with higher education and arts partners to devise a plan for sustaining the arts teacher pipeline for assuring that DOE positions exist for certified teacher of the arts; **and to plan for the necessity of increased numbers of arts teachers to meet the 2014 goals.** Models might include a *Teaching Fellows for the Arts* or another program to transition professional artists and graduates of arts education certification programs into the field while supporting and improving existing higher education programs and actively encouraging DOE schools to hire arts teachers. Model plan in place by the fall of 2013 **and activated depending on the need at that time.**
- In 2011- 2014, continue to support and ramp up arts professional development to assure that existing and new arts teachers are effective, innovative and maximizing their instructional potential. This would require a shift in current DOE fee-for-service PD model and would need to be offset with DOE tax levy funds or private support.

**Challenge:** *In order to move beyond a purely quantitative measurement for arts instruction, we must provide appropriate arts assessments that reveal information about the quality of teaching and learning in the arts. This qualitative data is essential in helping all school understand the value of the arts and to evaluate the progress they are in assuring that all students are achieving in the arts and are career and college ready.*

- The existing Federal DOE grants (i-3 and AEMDD) support the creation, implementation and research around performance assessments in the arts. This pivotal and ground-breaking work is important as a national model, but is under-funded. There should be a sustained fund raising commitment to off-set existing expenses and to support the technology platform needed for this work to assure that the NYCDOE is able to support holistic arts assessments. (2011- 2014)

**Challenge:** *Parents are a key lever in assuring that the arts are valued and sustained in individual schools. However, we have a wide range of parent engagement in the arts from their full participation and support to parent communities that do not see the value of or participate in the arts with their children.*

- By 2012-13 and in conjunction with the Office of Family Information and Action, the Department of Cultural Affairs, cultural arts partners and the Center for Arts Education, devise a plan for sustained parent workshops, activities and arts encounters for students and parents in and out of school and at school sites and cultural organizations. Private funding would be required.

**It is critical that we meet these goals by January of 2014 when a new Mayor and a new administration are sworn in. Arts education has been a priority for Mayor Bloomberg and a strong component of the Department of Education under his watch. If we can fulfill the goals outlined in this paper -- put in place the arts specialists needed to fulfill state instructional goals for all students and begin assessing student achievement in the arts – we will have created a marvelous legacy for the outgoing administration and a standard of excellence for the new administration to maintain.**

**The direction we need to take is clear. For the sake of the children of this city, we must complete the journey.**