

The Fund for Public Schools: Arts Education Priorities

The Need

Extraordinary things happen when schools are empowered to deliver high-quality, sequential learning opportunities in the arts. A study by the Arts Education Partnership, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, found that schools with large populations of poor students can be transformed into vibrant hubs of learning when the arts are infused into the school culture and curriculum. The arts reach students not otherwise engaged, uniquely bridging a broad spectrum of learning styles --- English Language Learners and children with special needs often become high achievers in arts-rich settings. And the arts equip all students with a competitive edge; a recent Conference Board Report shows that 74 % of employers believe that creativity is increasingly important in the American workplace.

The Opportunity

The Fund for Public Schools (The Fund) and the NYC Department of Education's Office of Arts and Special Projects (OASP) have identified four programs in need of private funding, driven not only by Chancellor Walcott's priorities and timeline for enhancing arts education in NYC schools, but also by catalytic work already in place.

The first two initiatives are ones that the Arts Committee recommended to the Panel for Educational Policy (PEP). Both of these are three-year programs and identified as being top priority.

I. Bringing Best Practices to the Arts

Of NYC's 1,700 schools, some excel in delivering arts instruction, while others fail to meet instructional requirements.¹ Importantly, there are schools struggling in the arts that are not *otherwise* low performing and have significant strengths in core areas. Among these, we will target up to 75 (emphasizing middle schools) that are ready to focus on improving their arts programs.

- Three-year incentives will build capacity in schools, funding materials, resources, equipment, space renovation, parent involvement initiatives and/or arts partnerships based on hiring part or full-time certified art teachers.
- A pool of schools has been identified through the 2011-12 Annual Arts in the Schools report and will be invited to participate in the RFP. Preference will be given to schools that demonstrate commitment to the program's sustainability beyond the first three years by offering plans to devote school budget funds and/or hire new arts staff.
- OASP will track the chosen schools via third-party research and evaluation to ensure best practices are documented and potentially scaled citywide. The effort will include bi-annual school visits and convening focus groups to identify trends and possible challenges across sites.

The Fund seeks support to offer tiered down direct funding to schools (\$10,000 in Y1, \$5,000 in Y2 and \$3,000 in Y3, per school) to cover program management, research and evaluation costs. For the planned 75 school cohort, the program is projected to need **\$1.5M** over three years.



II. Arts Achieve i3 Grant Partnerships

OASP, with its innovative *Arts Achieve* concept, was one of only three arts organizations nationwide to be awarded a federal i3 grant. These funds, bolstered by OASP's Arts in Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) federally funded grants, will support the creation of and research around performance assessments in the arts.

OASP has partnered with five organizations to implement this groundbreaking work: Studio in a School, Carnegie Hall, Arts Connection, the 92nd Street Y and Cooper-Hewitt. These partners will work with OASP to build authentic, Common Core-aligned arts assessments in schools --- and then help translate the standards and information gleaned from the assessments into classroom practices that support improved arts achievement for all students. Further, *Arts Achieve* assessments will inform and lead to the creation of online educational resources that will be made available nationwide. With some of the top names in the NYC arts industry as our partners, *Arts Achieve* will bring the highest caliber of instruction into the field to train our educators.

To ensure the sustained impact of this work, The Fund seeks \$900,000 in additional funding to support our partner organizations in up to 40 schools over three years, as well as for the technology needed to document best practices.

III. Summer Arts Institute (SAI)

Summer Arts Institute (SAI) is a public-private partnership that brings together New York's best cultural and arts education providers to provide 300-350 auditioned New York City students with a four-week summer arts program, free of charge. SAI offers dance, drama, instrumental music (band), vocal music, film, photography and visual arts, led by experienced certified master arts teachers and professional teaching artists to help students develop literacy in various art forms, explore careers and encourage lifelong learning in the arts. The Institute, administered by the DOE and held at Frank Sinatra High School in Queens, is designed in partnership with American Ballet Theatre, Theatre for a New Audience, Tribeca Film Institute, Young Audiences New York and Roundabout Theatre. Students admitted to the program exhibit the very best talent in New York City and tend to advance into colleges and or professional careers in the arts. SAI partners these promising students with the highest caliber arts professionals who provide industry-specific mentorship and guidance. The Institute culminates with a showcase for the public the last week of July that includes art and photography exhibitions, as well as two live performances by music, dance and drama students. The Fund has raised approximately half the amount needed for the upcoming July 2012 program and seeks approximately \$50,000 to complete funding.

IV. Chancellor's Arts Endorsed Diploma Reception

Each June, the Chancellor and City host a picnic at Gracie Mansion to celebrate all seniors who will be receiving an Arts Endorsed Diploma --- more than 900 students in 2011. The Arts Endorsed Diploma is a prestigious designation: recipients must have completed a minimum of nine semesters of arts study and display a demonstrated mastery of dance, music, theater or visual arts. These budding artists include some of the city's top new talent, and the picnic represents both the culmination of high-school and an entrance into the broader NYC cultural community. The Fund seeks \$17,000 to sponsor the Arts Endorsed Diploma Reception for 2012.

ⁱ As measured by the Annual Arts Survey.

