



ADDING DRAMA TO EVERY SCHOOL DAY:  
PARTNERSHIP TO EMBED THEATRE IN SCHOOL

Caroline Leipf

Major paper submitted to the faculty of Goucher College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
Master of Arts in Arts Administration

2016

## Abstract

**Title of Thesis:** ADDING DRAMA TO EVERY SCHOOL DAY:  
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A growing field of research shows that arts in schools have positive impacts on students, teachers, the whole school environment, and even extend to families and the community. The National Endowment for the Arts has also documented that childhood arts education is a leading contributor to a young person's propensity for future attendance and participation in the arts. Yet, trend data shows that arts education is declining in public schools.

Both school systems and arts organizations have a vested interest in young people receiving a well-rounded education which includes the arts. Both face challenges and possess unique strengths in facing the challenges. This paper explores the potential benefits of combining those strengths and questions how to do so in a deeper, more long-lasting way than existing partnerships. One alternative is considered: a partnership of a theatre for young audiences company embedded within a school system would produce a

hybrid teacher-artist model, improving arts education while building current and future audiences for theatre.

There are many ways to deliver arts education in public schools, and many ways to do so in partnership with arts organizations. This paper does not examine feasibility, but demonstrates that arts education would be improved through an embedded partnership by delivering theatre education with quality, equity and longevity. It also demonstrates a critical need for more attention, exploration and testing of how schools and arts organizations can create deeply collaborative partnerships, to permanently embed theatre, or any of the arts, in schools.

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This paper is dedicated to John C. Paino, who took his daughters to theatre and taught us to work hard pursuing our dreams; to Betty Jo Paino, who “schlepped” us to many years of dance classes, giving us the confidence to pursue those dreams; and to my son Aaron Leipf, who inspires me every day.



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## Introduction

“We stand on the back of a whale fishing for minnows.” Eric Booth uses this Inuit saying to describe the status quo of teaching artistry. In his words, “This enormous educative force that active learning with an arts energy inside it and the particularly compelling pedagogy of teaching artists is so much bigger than the tiny little vessels it is given an opportunity to work within” (Telephone interview).

It has become widely accepted that students who experience arts education in kindergarten through twelfth grades have higher school attendance rates and graduation rates than those who do not, and also develop creativity, self-confidence, problem solving skills, an ability to collaborate, and other important traits. All of these are characteristics, which the arts are uniquely qualified to deliver, are valued by society and contribute to successes in school, career, life and community.

Both educators and policy-makers acknowledge positive contributions the arts make to well-rounded, innovative students, yet availability of the arts in public elementary and secondary schools across the United States is on the decline. In the past few decades the culture of education and education policy have increasingly diminished the importance of arts, relegating them to the shadows of other subjects, namely test subjects like reading and math. Four arts disciplines of music, visual art, theatre and

dance are mandated core subjects (Seidel et al. 6), but in practice they are not attributed the same validity as subjects in literacy and numeracy.

Witnessing this new reality, motivated educators have found creative ways to make arts available during and after school, arts organizations have developed programs for schools, federal and institutional funders have created grants and incentives for arts education to fill in gaps as arts were cut from public school curriculum. The result is a colorful landscape of arts education organizations, programs, partnerships and initiatives delivering arts differently across the country. Some schools have lost the arts entirely, others have suffered cuts. At the other end of the spectrum, there are charter and magnet schools fully focused on the arts. Such inconsistency feeds the notion that arts are extra or special, that arts are complementary not compulsory, that when budgets need to be cut, the arts are expendable.

Delivering arts education for every student in every grade will take education policy reform, national perspective shift and, most of all, time. So what can individual school systems and arts organizations do now? How can they address the inequity of access by providing quality arts education where it is lacking, and to all the students of a district for all their years in school? If students benefit from the arts and their schools and communities, including the arts organizations within them, are impacted positively as a result, what responsibility should school systems and arts organizations take? How can the two partner in a serious way to surpass the capabilities of existing short-term residency, touring enrichment and other visiting arts programs, to make a place for arts education in every school day?

Questions like these led to the consideration of one alternative, that a partnership of a theatre for young audiences company embedded within a school system would produce a hybrid teacher-artist model, improving arts education while building current and future audiences for theatre.

## Chapter I

### THE SCOPE OF THIS PAPER

The subject of arts education is a veritable rabbit hole, the likes of which even Lewis Carroll could not have imagined. Like the arts themselves, teaching them answers questions while raising others. While there are theories, techniques and practices to every art form, they are also highly individualized by artist, teacher and student, and can be influenced by environment, perception and many other conditions. All the complexities of arts education cannot be addressed in this paper. The scope is described in brief here.

#### True Partnership

Schools and theatres may both feel that they are already partnering to bring arts to students. Many are indeed working together to bring workshops, touring assembly programs, guest artists, residencies and other arts education programs from professional nonprofit arts organizations into schools and classrooms, and to bring students into theatres. The term partner is frequently used to describe a wide variety of cooperation of schools with artists and organizations in their communities. Everything from a single performance at a school by a traveling performing arts group, to a multi-week artist-in-residency program, to an afterschool program may be called a partnership. However, these short-term arts education programs and arts experiences are not the partnerships discussed in this paper.

The Merriam-Webster definition of partnership suggests something deeper: “a relationship resembling a legal partnership and usually involving close cooperation between parties having specified and joint rights and responsibilities.” While packaged



arts enrichment like workshops, assembly programs, many artist residencies and other programs are called partnering, these are finite, transactional arts experiences and not the deeper partnership to which this paper will refer. Neither visiting a school with artists nor having a school visit an organization for a performance is a partnership in the spirit of this paper. The partnership described will be one in which school administration and arts organization collaborate to develop curriculum; join some human, financial and physical resources; and develop and employ the strengths of both certified arts specialist teachers and professional performing artists for the benefit of students.

### What Makes It Embedded?

The focus of this paper is on delivering theatre arts education to students where they already are, their schools, and when they are already there, during the school day. It suggests one way to accomplish this by inserting a theatre for young audiences company into the school. At one end of the spectrum, this could be taken to mean that the entire organization is located within the school system, working with and within its school(s) while also maintaining its own separate organizational status. In a less extreme, more practical version, this could mean that one program, a group of teaching artists, certain productions or some component of the theatre company is a permanent fixture in the school system. Understanding that every school system, theatre company and partnership is unique, this paper will neither suggest one permutation, nor suggest that this is a model that could be dropped into any school system.

Embedded will be used to express the idea that some part of a theatre for young audiences company could establish a permanent residence within a school system, thus

taking company and artists beyond visiting or guest artist status. It is envisioned that an embedded partnership would satisfy several qualities including that some or all of the theatre company operates within one or more schools in a school system, and that theatre—both the resident company and academic subject—will have dedicated space and time in school.

As part of being embedded, said company will also participate in teaching theatre arts, also commonly referred to in schools as drama, and in school-wide collaboration to integrate theatre arts. According to the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations,

Research in arts education typically examines two kinds of arts instruction. Discrete arts classes involve individual arts disciplines that are taught by school arts specialists. Integrated arts programs in which arts instruction is delivered in tandem with instruction in another academic subject. Integrated instruction is often co-taught by a classroom teacher and an artist who work together to help students make “authentic connections” between their disciplines. (Stevenson 4)

Any debate on value of learning in the arts versus through the arts is irrelevant here. Both have shown correlation to academic success (Gullatt). In the scope of this paper, an embedded partnership will embrace both arts instruction and arts integration.

### Hybrid Teacher-Artist Model

Hybrid teacher-artist model is not a term; it is an amalgam of ideas used to serve this thesis. It is meant to communicate the idealistic single educator that fulfills the special qualities of both certified arts specialist teachers and professional teaching artists.

Debate in the field swirls around who is best qualified to teach the arts, a certified teacher or a professional practicing artist. Not all arts teachers are practitioners, and not all artists have the ability to teach their craft. A hybrid individual satisfying the best traits of both is ideal, but current school structure does not encourage or develop these. It is also uncommon for great practitioners to also be certified to teach, though Lincoln Center Education has just begun the Lincoln Center Scholars program to do exactly that (Lincoln Center Education). If the idea succeeds, the verbiage will follow. For now, a hybrid teacher-artist model as described in this paper would include both certified arts specialist teachers and professional teaching artists working together to create and deliver arts curriculum. It is a model that eventually encourages, develops and expects teachers of the arts to straddle both expertise—certified teacher and arts practitioner—hence the teacher-artist hybrid.

### Theatre for Young Audiences

The big questions suggested here include: What is the role of arts organizations in assuring America's youth receive quality arts education and, what can schools and arts organizations achieve together in arts education that neither can achieve alone? This paper will not have the breadth to explore partnerships between school systems and all the various forms of performing arts organizations. Therefore, it will focus on one very

specific, deeply collaborative partnership between a school system and a theatre for young audiences company.

While it is an individual arts discipline itself, theatre also employs the other primary art forms, music, dance and visual arts, which may allow it to appeal to the widest possible spectrum of students and educators. Theatre for young audiences companies, whether independent or nested within a parent theatre company, have existing interests in and connections to education that make them an ideal focus. The young audiences framework also lends itself to immediate building of current audiences from site-specific work in a K-12 school environment.

Recognizing that there are theatres with excellent education departments and programs for young people that do not specifically produce or present performances for young audiences, the term will be used in the broadest sense. TYA is often the designation for children's theatres and others which are members of Theatre for Young Audiences, or TYA/USA, the United States Center for the International Association of Theatre for Children and Young People (ASSITEJ). This paper is inclusive of a broad range of theatres engaged in education programs and performances, thus it uses theatre for young audiences rather than Theatre for Young Audiences or TYA.

The narrow focus is not meant to indicate that theatre is any more important to arts education than other art forms. To the contrary, arts education advocates and the federal mandate recognize the importance of all four. Through examination of one type of arts organization, one approach that may be transferable to partnerships between school systems and other types of arts organizations will be illustrated. To that end, research will

call upon examples from other art forms, specifically current examples existing in music, to infer the possibility of embedding a theatre for young audiences company in a school system.

## Chapter II

### VALUE OF QUALITY ARTS EDUCATION IN PUBLIC EDUCATION

*“Arts education isn’t something we add on after we’ve achieved other priorities like raising test scores and getting kids into college. It’s actually critical for achieving those priorities in the first place.”-First Lady Michelle Obama (Turnaround Arts)*

All of the arts, visual art, music, dance and, especially the collaborative art of theatre, cultivate 21<sup>st</sup> century skills that many curricula now seek to achieve as valuable contributors to student success in school, career, life and community. These include the learning and innovation skills of creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, communication and collaboration, as well as life and career skills of flexibility, adaptability, initiative and self-direction, social and cross-cultural skills, productivity, accountability, leadership and responsibility. These skills emphasize deep understanding over shallow knowledge and require the integration of inquiry- and problem-based approaches (P21).

In the last two decades, a strong collection of literature has amassed that documents the many benefits of arts education and supports correlations between the arts in school and positive student outcomes.<sup>1</sup> To sum up the scope of such resources, the

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on this topic, see *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* (Fiske), *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development* (Deasy), *Critical Evidence: How the ARTS Benefit Student Achievement* (Ruppert), *Third Space* (Stevenson and Deasy), *Transforming Education through the Arts* (Caldwell and Vaughan), *The Arts and Achievement in At-Risk Youth* (Catterall, Dumais and Hampden-Thomson) and any of the other sources cited in this paper.

President' Committee on the Arts and the Humanities' 2011 report *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools* states:

A Remarkably consistent picture of the value of the arts in a comprehensive PreK – grade 12 education emerges from a review of two decades of theory and policy recommendations about arts education. Over the past decade, the National Governors Association, the Education Commission of the States, the National Association of State Boards of Education, the SCANS Commission (Department of Labor), and the council of Chief State School Officers—professional groups with a broad education interest—have begun promoting the value of arts education using the same arguments as traditional arts advocates such as the National Endowment for the Arts, the Arts Education Partnership, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, and Americans for the Arts.

(15)

The benefits of arts education are numerous and diverse; they do not conform nicely to a single comprehensive list. One of many excellent summations is gleaned from these excerpts of Roman C. Cortines' introduction to the report *Gaining the Arts*

*Advantage: Lessons From School Districts That Value Arts Education:*

To establish the value of an arts education's consequences, its "real world" benefits, many people point to the wonderful skills and habits that artistic appreciation and production help form. Indeed, the arts stimulate, develop, and refine many cognitive and creative skills; they contribute significantly

to the creation of the flexible and adaptable “knowledge workers” so many business people say will be crucial to the 21<sup>st</sup> century economy; and they draw upon and draw out the multiple intelligences of students. (5)

The arts help children build a value system in which they learn self-discipline and responsibility; they learn to value effort and to get enjoyment and inspiration from its results. (6)

Business leaders tell us they want higher-order thinking skills in the 21<sup>st</sup> century—specifically, critical thinking and nimbleness in judgement, creativity and imagination, cooperative decision making, leadership, high-level literacy and communication, and the capacity for problem posing and problem solving. This is exactly what the arts help produce. (6)

Research confirms what we always knew intuitively: The arts teach all of us—students and teachers alike—innovation, novelty, and creativity. (6)

Jessica Hoffmann Davis, a cognitive developmental psychologist and expert in arts in education, suggests there are five features that “make arts learning different from learning in other subjects and essential to our children’s education.” There is a tangible product, the work of art, from which imagination and agency are learned; there is a focus on emotion, through which expression and empathy are learned; there is ambiguity in the existence of “many valid meanings (not one right or wrong answer),” through which



interpretation and respect are learned; there is an emphasis on process, which teaches inquiry and reflection; and the arts make connections that foster engagement and responsibility, which Davis equates to, “I care” and “I care for others,” respectively (*High Schools* 87-89; *Schools* 48-78).

In the 2009 study and resulting report, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, a team from Harvard’s Project Zero observed that, “The question of what constitutes high quality arts education is inextricably linked to the question of why the arts are taught” (Seidel et al. 8). They emphasize that there are multiple purposes of arts education and categorize them into seven broad goals: foster broad dispositions and skills, especially the capacity to think creatively and the capacity to make connections; teach artistic skills and techniques without making them primary; develop aesthetic awareness; provide ways of pursuing understanding of the world; help students engage with community, civic, and social issues; provide a venue for students to express themselves; and help students develop as individuals (Seidel et al. 17-27).

Such as it has many purposes, arts education also comes in many forms. Students exposed to a discrete arts program such as theatre, develop skills that enable them to become literate in that particular art form. Learning also takes place when arts are integrated into other subject areas to enhance instruction. Arts can be the entry point through which other material is learned. Learning occurs in and through the arts; that is to say, arts instruction and arts integration are both valuable.

Arts programs in school are correlated with positive behavior in students. Referring to studies compiled by The Arts Education Partnership (AEP) for *Champions*

*of Change*, the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities points out that "Earlier studies about the benefits of arts integration reported that arts integration approaches were successful in producing better attendance and fewer discipline problems, increased graduation rates, and improved test scores; motivating students who were difficult to reach otherwise; and providing challenges to more academically successful students" (*Reinvesting* 19). Similar correlations were affirmed with at-risk youth in a 2012 report by the National Endowment for the Arts:

In middle school, high school, and beyond, they [socially and economically disadvantaged children and teenagers] tend to do better on a host of academic and civic behavioral measures than do at-risk youth who lack deep arts backgrounds. To varying degrees, those outcomes extend to school grades, test scores, honors society membership, high school graduation, college enrollment and achievement, volunteering, and engagement in school or local politics. (Catterall, Dumais, Hampden-Thomson 24)

There are also neurological and developmental benefits of the arts to be noted for children and adolescents. Connections in the human brain develop from the back to the front; areas of physical response and senses develop first, followed by feeling and emotional response areas, and finally by the executive functions of decision making, planning, organization, prioritization and completing tasks. The brain is not fully developed and functioning until an individual is in his twenties or even early thirties. Adults process information with the rational part of their brains, whereas adolescents

process information with the emotional part, and younger children are busy developing physical and sense awareness (Jensen). Theatre and other arts disciplines allow students not only to exercise these functions, but give them an outlet in their day to experience, express, explore and reflect on their feelings and emotions using all their senses. These are unique qualities of arts learning noted previously from Davis and Project Zero.

Additionally, arts offer a unique entry point for learning by all types of learners. The theory of multiple intelligences codified by Howard Gardner identifies eight intelligences of human beings: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal. Every person has a unique profile of these intelligences (Davis, Christodoulou, Seider, and Gardner 2). The arts, especially theatre which also encompasses elements of visual art (scenery), movement (blocking and dance) and music (especially musical theatre), are particularly accessible for students' various intelligences. Education in and through art forms like theatre has a unique ability to allow students to learn in the way that their brains are wired during childhood and adolescence and allows them to learn across multiple intelligences.

Another, more profound, effect has been documented in the presence of arts in schools—a positive change to the learning environment. It is the basis of the book *Third Space*. In an article for *Principal's Research Review*, the book's co-author Lauren M. Stevenson summarized research discoveries documented by the book:

Third Space finds that the arts offer authentically student-centered learning experiences—experiences that are meaningful and engaging to students. Such experiences support not only youth development outcomes

such as resilience, self-efficacy, and self-concept but also learning. The arts offer a way for students' experiences to enter into the classroom. Teachers, the research describes, are then able to recognize and help students build their new knowledge and connect it to their prior experience and knowledge. Cognitive scientists suggest that allowing students to construct knowledge in this way is important if learning is to be deep and long lasting. (qtd. in Stevenson 4)

Third Space also documents changes for teachers, administrators, and members of the community surrounding the school. In particular, it finds that when schools make the arts a part of the fabric of the curriculum, the whole school may become a kind of third space of potential for all within it—teacher satisfaction and efficacy increase, school culture and climate improve, and schools become better connected with parents and others in their local community. These findings echo and extend whole school outcomes of arts-centered curricula identified in earlier research studies. (qtd. in Stevenson 5)

For these very reasons, the arts are a central element in several school reform initiatives across the United States. One example, Turnaround Arts is the direct result of recommendations made by the 2011 President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities report *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning America's Future Through Creative Schools*. It is a public-private partnership between the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, US Department of Education, the National Endowment for

the Arts, local partners and private foundations that “focuses on improving school climate and culture, deepening instruction, and increasing student and parent engagement, as a pathway to improving academic achievement” by leveraging “intensive arts education resources and expertise, including professional development, school-wide strategic planning, principal coaching, partnerships with local arts education and cultural organizations, community engagement events, arts supplies, musical instruments, and the involvement of high-profile artists” (*Key Findings 2*). Turnaround Arts was piloted in eight of the lowest performing 5% of America’s elementary and middle schools between 2011 and 2014, and has since expanded to reach over 22,000 students in forty-nine schools in twenty-seven districts and fourteen states and the District of Columbia (Turnaround Arts).

In addition to attempts to improve arts education with those schools that are underserved or low-performing, the arts are, in fact, the central focus to many excellent examples of charter, arts academy, vocational and other specialized public schools across this country. Boston Arts Academy, is the eighteen-year-old pilot school that was formed through the collaboration of Boston public schools and the six arts colleges in Boston (Berklee College of Music, Boston Architectural College, the Boston Conservatory, Emerson College, Massachusetts College of Art and Design, and the School of the Museum of Fine Arts). It was the city’s first and remains its only public high school for the visual and performing arts, and is one of many schools, in America and abroad, highlighted in Ken Robinson’s 2015 book, *Creative Schools: The Grassroots Revolution That’s Transforming Education* (Robinson and Aronica). In an interview for this paper,

two of the school's founding advisory board members emphasized that the school's mission, though grounded in the arts, is and always was focused on preparing students to succeed in any career and in society (Warner and Chui Webex interview).

Without going into further detail, the message is clear: There is recognized value in quality arts education within public education. Defining the complex scope of quality in arts education could occupy the remainder of this paper, but as already referenced, a team of researchers from Project Zero has tackled this in *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*. The study identifies four dimensions, it calls lenses, that are different but overlapping, through which quality in arts education reveals itself: student learning, pedagogy, community dynamics and environment. Central to quality arts education is providing students experiences “with quality—with excellent materials, outstanding works of art, passionate and accomplished artist-teachers modeling their artistic process—and experiences of quality—powerful group interactions and ensemble work, performances that make them feel proud, rewarding practice sessions, technical excellence, and successful expressivity” (Seidel et al. III). Quality in arts education is about the journey, or process, as much as it is about the destination, or product.

Returning to the Booth's analogy quoted at the beginning of this paper, the great potential of arts education is the whale, and it is often overlooked for the minnows, the one-off, finite arts enrichment activities that schools can catch more quickly and easily to say that they met the arts education mandate. When schools simply check arts off a list of requirements, they do not explore bringing these additional known values of the arts into

their walls and, therefore, do not serve the best interests of their students. Schools that seek ways to deliver long-term, sequential, quality arts education to all students will have the advantage of unleashing more of these positive effects.

### Chapter III

## CHALLENGES IN DELIVERING ARTS EDUCATION

*“Some advocates argue that the attraction that the arts provide works against them, making them seem like arenas for fun rather than for serious learning. Shouldn’t serious learning be fun? The move toward marginalizing the arts by reserving them for children with demonstrated artistic talent, or for children with demonstrated risk of failure in other areas, overlooks the basic need of all of our children to gain facility with making and finding meaning in the heights of human expression.” – Jessica Hoffman Davis (Davis, *Schools* 31).*

Federal legislation identifies visual art, music, theatre and dance as core academic subjects. Arts were first established as required subjects in the 1994 *Goals 2000: Educate America Act*, following which, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations developed the National Standards for Arts Education. The 2001 No Child Left Behind Act and its 2015 replacement, the Every Child Succeeds Act, both upheld the status of the arts as core subjects (Seidel et al. 6).

Despite the benefits and despite the federal mandate, availability of arts in public elementary and secondary schools across the United States is on the decline. The report *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*, which draws from the Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts (SPPAs) conducted in 1982, 1992, 2002 and 2008, cites “a long-term pattern of decline since 1985, a decline first documented with the 1992 SPPA.” It also notes that “declines were greatest in music and visual arts, the two arts subjects taught most in schools, while theater and dance actually recorded small increases” (Rabkin and Hedberg 14).



A more recent study by the US Department of Education's National Center for Education Statistics shows the percent of schools offering instruction in each of the four arts disciplines decreased for visual arts, dance and theatre from the 1999-2000 to 2009-10 school year (Parsad and Spiegelman 5, 9). Take theatre for example. Four percent of public elementary schools offered drama/theatre instruction in the 2009-10 school year. This was a significant decrease from the last survey in 1999-2000 when 20% of elementary schools offered designated drama/theatre. In the 4% of elementary schools offering drama/theatre, 42% reported employing arts specialists to do so. 45% of secondary schools offered drama/theatre instruction in the 2008-09 school year (down from 48% in 1999-2000) and 73% of the teachers teaching the subject were specialists. (Parsad and Spiegelman 46, 49). Assuming there has not been a dramatic reversal in these trends, theatre education is not adequately delivered as a required core subject.

Music and visual art are far more prevalent in schools than dance and theatre, but none of these core academic subjects is universal. Six percent of elementary and 9% of secondary schools do not offer music, 17% of elementary and 11% of secondary schools do not offer visual art, 96% of elementary and 55% of secondary schools do not offer theatre, and 97% of elementary and 88% of secondary schools do not offer dance. Even in schools where the arts are present, many report a decline of instruction time (Americans for the Arts, *Navigator* 16-19).

What is more significant than the decline itself is the inequity of the decline. Arts education is distributed disproportionately across the United States population. Data from the National Endowment for the Arts Surveys of Public Participation in the Arts from

1982 to 2008 show “the decline of childhood arts education among white children is relatively insignificant, while the declines for African American and Hispanic children are quite substantial—49 percent for African American and 40 percent for Hispanic children” (Rabkin and Hedberg 15). Citing a 2009 report, the President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities states:

...the U.S. Government Accountability Office conducted a survey of access to arts education and found that there was a significant difference among the percent of teachers reporting decreased time spent on arts education. In schools identified as needing improvement and/or with higher percentage of minority students, teachers were much more likely to report a reduction in time spent in arts instruction” (2).

The downward trend in childhood arts education is a strong indicator that public schools in America are challenged to deliver the arts to all students. It is easy, especially for arts administrators, to assume that arts organizations do not have these same challenges in delivering arts education. After all, theatre companies are the experts on theatre. The spirit of this paper does not suggest that schools face the only challenges and theatre for young audience companies can come in and save them; it acknowledges that challenges exist for both schools and theatres in delivering arts education and suggests that through partnership they may overcome them together. First let us acknowledge the challenges.

### Challenges Faced By Schools

The primary challenges that public schools face in delivering arts education are challenges of resources, specifically resources of money, time and people. The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities describes a "climate of heightened accountability" in public education today, and draws attention to the challenges of being an educator:

The implications for educators are daunting. They must find ways to reach and motivate more students and, at the same time, teach more challenging content and 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills. The expectation is that they must create an exciting climate of relevant learning tasks for students who are increasingly turning to digital devices and not teachers, texts, or each other for learning new information and expressing ideas. For teachers and principals who continue to be constrained by rigid curricula, the pressures of standardized testing and ever-increasing budget cuts, the demands seem overwhelming. (*Reinvesting* 29)

Public schools are continuously being asked to accomplish more with fewer resources.

Amidst increasing mandates and expectations, it is difficult to meet the federal arts mandate with existing personnel, time and money. One way is to assign arts curriculum to teachers who do not specialize in an art form, but have time in their schedules. A dance unit taught by a certified physical education teacher or a unit on drama taught in the context of English are examples. This is a particularly prevalent approach in elementary schools. The US Department of Education reported that, "in

2009-10, dance was incorporated into other subjects or curriculum areas in 61 percent of public elementary schools, and drama/theatre was incorporated into other subjects or curriculum areas in 53 percent of schools” (Parsad and Spiegelman 6). School administrations forced to treat the arts as add-ons or to phase them out of curriculum are not providing the quality or depth of arts education that is most beneficial to students and most impactful to the communities in which those students participate.

A deeper look at education finance reveals a conundrum that all schools face in how they budget for the arts, not just how much they allocate. The decisions have to do with hard and soft money—hard money being that which is part of the school district budget and soft money being funding from sources other than the school or district.

In virtually every district with strong arts education, resources from the community or other sources supplement the regular district arts education budget in the form of grants, contributed services, equipment and supplies and the like. Personnel in these districts are entrepreneurial in their search for these supplemental funds and, in the strongest districts, treat that quest as a regular part of their professional responsibility. Fundamental support must come from the regular school district and school budget, but the strongest districts further enliven their programs with these supplemental funds. (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership 10)

Fundraising takes time and effort. Grants and contributed funding can be uncertain and finite, designated for a certain project or program and for a defined period

of time. Schools, arts organizations and funders grapple with the challenge of sustaining programs that are funded through grants. However, in an interview, Katy Mayo-Hudson, director of education for Turnaround Arts, pointed out that she finds arts education to be more sustainable when schools are in the position to raise funds and not entirely dependent on the school budget from the district. She pointed out that arts are often at risk of being cut from district budgets, making hard money as unreliable as soft money (Telephone interview). Hence the advantage of funding arts education with both.

Underscoring the competing priorities vying for financial, time and human resources, there has been increased prioritization of subjects other than the arts in public education. The demands of standardized testing and school proficiency ratings amplify focus on literacy and numeracy. “According to most teachers, schools are narrowing curriculum, shifting instructional time and resources toward math and language arts and away from subjects such as art, music, foreign language, and social studies” (Americans for the Arts, *Navigator* 16-17). Referring to the challenge of quality in arts education, Harvard’s Project Zero states,

What actually takes place in arts programs—in or out of school—despite the presence of countless excellent teachers and programs, is all too often uninspired. Woefully inadequate materials, inauthentic tasks..., and inadequate time (now not only squeezed, but often entirely replaced, by test preparation sessions) still characterize arts education. (Seidel et al. 7)

Policy and practice do not always align for arts education. Despite the increase in academic achievement measures, *The Nation’s Report Card on Arts 2008*, the *National*

*Assessment of Educational Progress* (NAEP), tested only music and visual arts.

According to the report, the NAEP arts framework “specifies that students’ arts knowledge and skills be measured in four arts disciplines: dance, music, theatre, and visual arts,” yet the introduction for the report acknowledges that, “Due to budget constraints, only the responding process in music and both the responding and creating processes in visual arts were assessed in 2008” (Keiper et al. 4). Theatre and dance were also mandated subjects but cut from evaluation. According to the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities, “in this climate of heightened accountability, some believe that schools will give instructional time only to subjects that are included in high stakes testing. While almost all states have arts standards, fewer than a third have required arts assessments—so there is scant opportunity to demonstrate student learning in the arts” (*Reinvesting* 31).

Regardless of policy, schools are challenged by the perception that arts are not valuable subjects in their own right. Because today’s parents are the result of limited or non-existent arts education in the 1990s and 2000s, they may have lost the perception of arts as subjects of equal importance. This has actually shaped the advocacy efforts to carve out a place for arts in public education. A desire has arisen to quantify the value of arts, to justify teaching them. In 2000, Dennie Palmer Wolf wrote:

To win a place—any place—for the arts, programs and presenters have sought to integrate the arts into instruction and place instruction in the hands of classroom teachers. Researchers...investigate the handmaiden effects of the arts, rather than the learning that comes directly from arts

training. Thus, there is more support and interest in studies that demonstrate effects of music on infants' concentration or on high school academic performance than there is on what allows children to stick to being young musicians. (23)

Jessica Hoffman Davis pointed to the continued need to reverse this perception in 2012:

I am not arguing here that the arts in education cannot serve various educational ends. They necessarily do...What I am suggesting is that when explaining or defending the role of the arts in education, we should resist the temptation to package the arts as in-service to non-arts subjects—as a way to help teach math or chemistry or physics. The history of arts education advocacy teaches us that even as the integrative nature of the arts allows us to wrap and rewrap arts education in many colors, the wrapping and rewrapping has made the field seem soft, undirected, and dispensable rather than strong, focused, and essential. (*Schools* 6)

The act of justifying the arts allows them to lose footing as subjects themselves.

Mixed messages between federal legislation and prioritization of arts in practice in combination with the misperception that arts only enrich other subjects contribute to school culture in which arts can be overlooked. In the face of competing priorities and limited resources, school administrators have been forced to prioritize some subjects over others, and an atmosphere has developed in which arts seem extra and optional.

### Challenges Faced By Arts Organizations

As arts have become increasingly optional in schools, arts organizations have responded by creating education programs, departments and initiatives that deliver arts education both to schools and in the community. Their very livelihood as an organization depends upon qualified artists. However, even professional organizations with devoted missions and specialization in the arts face challenges in delivering long-term, sequential arts education. They cannot shoulder the entire responsibility of delivering arts education to all students.

The decline of importance in schools reflects in the minds of parents and, subsequently, their children who become less inclined to participate in the arts as students and patrons. Dennie Palmer Wolf calls this “cultural amnesia,” stating that “because most parents of children now in school had no arts education, there is little to no collective memory of the importance of cultural education” (23). Furthermore, family support and exposure to the arts are important factors in young people’s engagement in the arts (Martin, Anderson, Adams 317). This is a key challenge for arts education programs that rely on choice, for example the choice by a parent or child to attend classes at a nearby theatre.

A theatre’s largest challenge in delivering arts education is access—access to students and students’ access to the theatre. Theatres are limited by the geography, leisure time and money of their community. For theatre to reach young people, physical access to a class requires transportation or proximity. It may also require home and theatre to be located with no unsafe areas or neighborhood lines between them. Students have other



responsibilities including homework and family, which may not allow the flexibility to invest time in an art form. Plus, attending classes outside of schools takes resources. The socioeconomically challenged students that research indicates benefit most from the arts (Catterall, Dumais, Hampden-Thomson 24) are the ones unlikely to be able to afford instruction. Even well subsidized programs have financial limits, for example, the maximum number of children they can serve during a given period; and scholarships and subsidies often require motivated adults in support of their child's application.

Long-term, sequential delivery for all age children may also be a challenge. A theatre will offer a class for a set period of weeks. There are usually breaks between sessions. The students from one session to the next may vary, particularly from school-year to summer. Enrollment determines which offerings can be held. Very few conditions allow for the arts to be practiced every day outside of school. It is difficult to provide a good progression for a student to excel when the sessions and classmates are inconsistent and disconnected.

If we value arts as core subjects and part of a well-rounded education, they deserve long-term, sequential delivery to all students. A theatre can provide this instruction, but only the most motivated students will take advantage of it. There is a large, underserved population of children and adolescents that theatres cannot reach on their own. "While arts education in the community is there for self-selection by aware individuals, those who know least of the arts and need most to be exposed to them will only encounter them if they are part of the school curriculum" (Davis, *Schools* 42).

There are wonderful examples across the country of theatres providing outside classes, afterschool programs, extracurricular arts, enrichment programs, class trips to patron the arts and other supplemental education programs. The Arden Theatre Company, Seattle Children's Theatre, Children's Theatre Company of Minneapolis, Roundabout Theatre Company, Albany Park Theater Project and The 52<sup>nd</sup> Street Project, to name a few. These programs are extremely important for building and expanding the arts learning and experiences of many children. However, "while non-school arts education programs are vital resources in communities all across the country, schools are the only institutions that have the potential to deliver arts education experiences to virtually all children" (Rabkin and Hedberg 20).

### Who Should Teach the Arts?

Where the arts do exist in public schools, there is debate around who is best qualified to teach them, certified teachers or professional artists (Seidel et al. 50). There is a bit of contentious history that still resonates in this question, from the rise of arts organizations in response to arts education cuts in schools:

New York's Studio in a School, like Chicago's Urban Gateways, and the national organization of Young Audiences, stepped up to the challenge of providing schools with high-quality artist residencies and performances. At the time, these alternatives, excellent as they were, were seen as threatening by school arts specialists. With cause in many cases these specialists worried that if the community offered alternatives to in-school

arts education, the few arts teachers and hours for arts learning that persisted would be eliminated from the scene. (Davis, *Schools* 42)

Delivery of arts education is inconsistent in American schools. One study in *Champions of Change* “found pockets of different kinds of arts instruction existing side by side in single schools, even across single grade levels” and “that children in many schools received unequal arts provision, sporadic teaching, and unevenly sequenced instruction” (Fiske 38). Over a decade later in 2011, the Presidents Committee for the Arts and the Humanities “found enormous variety in the delivery of arts education, resulting in a complex patchwork with pockets of visionary activity flourishing in some locations and inequities in access to arts education increasing in others” (v).

In a “mix of delivery models that includes standards-based sequential arts curricula taught by arts specialists; formal and informal arts integration strategies; and short and long term teaching residencies for artists” (President’s Committee on the Arts and Humanities 10) no one teacher fits all. There are important strengths that each brings to the work of arts education. Katy Mayo-Hudson points out that certified arts specialists and teaching artists have different primary responsibilities. Specialists build students skills through the structured mastery of a subject, while teaching artists provide insight into the outside world of an art form (Telephone interview).

The President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities finds teaching artists are “essential to many model arts education programs,” but makes this concession:

They have long had an important place in the arts education delivery system, but have been limited by insufficient resources to work long term

and systemically, a lack of information and structure in the profession, and inconsistent training and certification. However, they have potential to play a much stronger role in the future in expanding arts opportunities for more students. (41)

The question then, is not whether a certified arts specialist or a teaching artist is best suited to provide arts education, but how to create a model with the strengths of both. The hybrid teacher-artist possessing training, expertise and experience in both a specific art form and education, one who is a practitioner and a teacher, is ideal.

## Chapter IV

### CASE FOR PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN SCHOOL SYSTEM AND THEATRE

The President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities suggests that "too often an undue focus by advocates on the *method* of delivery of arts instruction, rather than the *quality* of that instruction and the *flexibility* to adapt to the needs of the community, has hindered effectiveness of those advocates, and the overarching cause of getting more arts into schools" (4). One recommendation it makes for addressing the many challenges of delivering arts education with quality and flexibility is to do so through collaborations.

A partnership between school and arts organization would deliver the strengths of both and combat the challenges that each faces as a separate entity, all to the benefit of children and maintaining alignment to its individual mission, goals and objectives. Arts administrators and their organizations have a vested interest in students receiving quality primary and secondary arts education. After all, it is within these students' current and future communities that arts organizations exist. It is not surprising that arts education in elementary and secondary schools is one variable that contributes to an individual's propensity to become patrons of the arts (Rabkin and Hedberg 9). By experiencing arts education in kindergarten through twelfth grades, students become current and future audiences for the arts. Arts organizations not only have a stake in the quality of arts education, they have expertise to contribute to it. To be truly effective and accessible, arts organizations have a role to play in delivering arts education to students where they

are. That is, in their own schools. To do so calls for partnership between arts organization and school system.

In *Collaboration Handbook*, Winer and Ray suggest there is a continuum of levels at which individuals or organizations can work together. At the lowest level of intensity there is cooperation, in the middle lies coordination and at the top is collaboration. Cooperation includes information sharing. Coordination is slightly more formal, involving a shared objective, some joint planning and assigning of responsibilities. Collaboration is the most intense and formal arrangement:

A more durable and pervasive relationship marks collaboration.

Participants bring separate organizations into a new structure with full commitment to a common mission. Such relationships require comprehensive planning and well-defined communication channels operating on all levels. The collaborative structure determines authority, and risk is much greater because each partner contributes its resources and reputation. Power is an issue and can be unequal. Partners pool or jointly secure the resources, and share the results and rewards. (22)

The latter relationship, in which participants are stakeholders with a common mission, contributing resources and carrying out a program together, is the type of partnership considered in this paper—a deep collaboration between school system and theatre for young audiences company.

Winer and Ray define collaboration as “a mutually beneficial and well-defined relationship entered into by two or more organizations to achieve results they are more

likely to achieve together than alone” (24). “Collaboration is the most intense way of working together while still retaining the separate identities of the organizations involved. The beauty of collaboration is the acknowledgement that each organization has a separate and special function, a power that it brings to the joint effort” (23).

This very idea is the foundation of the position statement *Arts Education for America’s Students: A Shared Endeavor*, which the National Education Association, American Alliance for Theatre and Education, Americans for the Arts and ten other organizations developed at the 2013 National Arts Accord Summit. The statement says this about partnership:

The American public values a quality arts education in our schools. When America’s public schools invest in certified arts educators, students gain the opportunity for a sequential, standards-based education in the arts. Certified non-arts educators in schools expand students’ opportunities for arts learning by providing curricular connections among the arts and other subjects. Furthermore, students gain deeper, additional standards-based arts learning experiences through America’s cultural organizations, community arts organizations, and teaching artists. It is the convergence of the contributions of all partners and opportunities that provides a quality arts education for our students. (1)

Touring assembly programs, short-term residencies, workshops by visiting artists and other theatre enrichment programs are minnows in a sea of arts education possibilities. They are valuable, nourishing; catching one is better than none at all.

However, there is a deeper, more powerful, more meaningful arts education opportunity to be realized if only we do not overlook it right beneath us. That whale is the profound impact arts education could have if it is permanent, sustainable and embedded in a school system for all students. The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities report echoes this idea:

Arts education is a solution to many of these problems that has been hiding in plain sight. This is largely because it remains siloed, from the macro to the micro level. At the policy level, arts education advocacy is seen as something different and separate from the larger conversation of educational reform. And in schools, arts specialists classes are too often marginalized as something that gives the classroom teachers a planning period, while teaching artists are asked to parachute in and out in two or three week residencies, without ever being able to build relationships and integrate into the school community. But in fact, the potential of arts education lies in exactly the opposite—a seamless marriage of arts education strategies with overall educational goals, a vibrant collaboration between arts specialists, classroom teachers and teaching artists to create collaborative, creative environments that allow each child to reach his or her potential, using all the tools at our disposal to reach and engage them in learning. (3-4)

The first of five recommendations made by the 2011 President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities report summary of *Reinvesting in Arts Education: Winning*



*America's Future Through Creative Schools* is “Build robust collaborations among different approaches to arts education” (4). The third recommendation is “Expand in-school opportunities for teaching artists.” It goes on to say that “Teaching artists are an untapped and important resource for enriching our schools with the arts. This is particularly true when they are given the resources and the time to build real collaborations with schools, classroom teachers and their students.” (6). Even if a collaboration succeeds in bringing theatre arts into a school, it is not enough to create a “seamless marriage.” Embedding all or part of a theatre for young audiences company into a school system has the potential to fully realize the recommendations of the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

The embedded theatre company serves students where they are. Recall here all the obstacles that get in the way of children seeking outside arts education. A theatre can mount productions and offer classes, but that does not mean the students are inclined or able to attend. Delivering theatre education at school levels the playing field, allowing all students to benefit from the type of learning and skills that arts nourish.

### School Systems and Outside Services

Schools are very familiar with and comfortable contracting services to outside providers. Efforts to conserve budgets and administer various aspects of education systems have led to the privatization of many education support services in districts across the nation. Outsourcing, and other contractual arrangements for school system services, strive to achieve both cost efficiency and preservation of the core competencies

of the school and those of its service provider. The same can be applied to the partnership model for arts education.

Arrangements with specialized private sector companies such as Sodexo and Aramark for food services, or First Student for student bussing are examples (Mezzacappa). Some of the most frequently contracted services include transportation, energy management, technology, computers and networks, food services, security, accounting and custodial services (McClure). Recent articles show that the Philadelphia School District even attempted cutting school nurses to privatize health services and outsource substitute teaching to non-union providers in May of 2015 (Mezzacappa).

In practice however, these arrangements do not always deliver on the benefits they promise. The National Education Association argues against the privatization of school services on the grounds that quality and control are lost and hidden costs do not realize any real budget savings (Arnold). To honor the core competency of a school system and incorporate the expertise of a professional theatre in theatre education, the relationship must go beyond contracting out. Education is what schools do best. Theatre is what a theatre for young audiences company does best. The concept of an embedded partnership stresses a collaborative partnership that would employ the strengths of both, and the potential to achieve more together than either school or organization is capable of alone.

In a multi-year examination of the role of public-private partnerships (PPPs) in education focused on contracting models for primary and secondary education, The World Bank found these favorable arguments that also may apply to the embedded

partnership between school and arts organization: public-private partnerships create competition in education, which in turn, increases the quality of education; public-private partnerships may offer selection by an open bidding process that considers quality and cost of proposals; and public-private contracts increase risk-sharing, which can “increase efficiency in the delivery of services and, consequently, to induce the channeling of additional resources to the provision for education” (Patrinos, Barrera-Osorio, Guáqueta 4).

#### Examples of Partnerships between Schools & Professional Arts Organizations

It is important to acknowledge the wide range of school system and professional arts organization partnerships that exist throughout the country. Organizations such as Arts Education Partnership, the National Guild for Community Arts Education, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Big Thought, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Schools (CAPE) and countless others have programs dedicated to the formation of partnerships. The programs and partnerships are unique and diverse. “There is no one model that works best for every community, and no single solution for a host of economic, pedagogic and logistical challenges faced by arts education” (President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities 11).

It is not surprising that a series of interviews and conversations with arts education experts yielded many leads, examples and stories, but no existing partnership between a professional theatre for young audiences company and school system in the United States exactly like the embedded one being considered. There was, however, one example that very closely resembles the embedded partnership suggested in this paper: an

orchestra and school sharing a building in Germany. The outcomes have been astounding for both school and arts organization alike. In his next book, Eric Booth will bring attention to this embedded partnership. School and professional orchestra share the same building, enabling students and musicians to interact daily in classroom, rehearsal and social situations. Following is an excerpt shared by Booth from his unnamed book:

In 2007, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Orchestra of Bremen, Germany needed a new rehearsal space just at the time that a public secondary school in the high-crime indigent neighborhood of Tenever had just been renovated, with space to spare. At first, the school seemed an unlikely place for this topnotch classical ensemble to call home. But the orchestra has a strong collective sense of social mission, and the musicians decided to make the school its “Future Lab” for exploring “new social perspectives through music.” Early in its residency there, the orchestra worked with the school to create a series of projects that would bring musicians and students together.

The result is that students and musicians are together every single school day. Musicians visit classes and talk to pupils; pupils visit rehearsals, sitting not in front of but in between musicians. In the lunchroom, musicians sit and eat with pupils. The musicians and the students write an opera together every year.

For the schoolchildren and their community, the effects have been profound. The school’s dropout rate has fallen to less than 1%. The

academic achievement rate has soared. According to a co-head teacher, Annette Rueggeberg, the atmosphere of the school has been transformed. “There is no more fighting or aggression or graffiti,” she said. Students are now proud of their school and more confident about themselves. Families in well-to-do neighborhoods of Bremen who would never have dreamed of coming to this neighborhood are now competing to send their children to school there.

Eight years into this future lab, the Deutsche Kammerphilharmonie Orchestra is known throughout Germany for its demonstrated social commitment. In 2009, the Minister of Culture pronounced it the nationwide model project in the field of cultural education. And the musicians say their orchestra has improved for the better. Cellist Stephan Schrader is quoted as saying, “When the children sit between us at rehearsals, our concentration is better. We can actually see their eyes grow wide with excitement when we play certain chords or play quickly. It reminds us of the reason we make music, which is sometimes easy to forget.”(Booth, “great”)

The BBC article cited by Booth speculates about the application of this embedded model to other arts organizations and beyond: “So should other top orchestras, cultural organisations or even sports teams consider moving into a school? Mr. Schrader thinks so. ‘The experience has actually improved us as an orchestra,’ he says” (Pickles). It is reasonable to deduce that an embedded partnership between a theatre for young

audiences company and school would have similar positive results as they share educational, rehearsal and project-based experiences in the same space.

Youth orchestras have been placed at the center of schools in Venezuela since 1975. The El Sistema movement, credited as the model for embedding orchestras in public schools, now has over 500,000 students in Venezuela involved; and in the past decade, this model has spread around the world to approximately one thousand programs in fifty-five countries (“El Sistema USA”). In the United States, there are sixty-two confirmed El Sistema-inspired programs, of which forty-five are in public schools and fifteen are in charter schools (National Alliance of El Sistema Inspired Programs).

Arts education initiatives in the United Kingdom and Australia have recently made partnerships between schools and professional arts sector central to their endeavors. Creative Partnership is a series of programs for whole-school change in the UK, and a research partnership between Arts Victoria and the Department of Education and Early Childhood Development, have reported positive impacts by these partnerships on schools (Imms et al. 34) and students (Imms, Jeanneret, Stevens-Ballenger 6-8), respectively. A comparable program that addresses whole-school change by creating arts-rich schools in the United States is Turnaround Arts, mentioned earlier in this paper. All three programs conducted their first evaluations after the arts education partnerships and programs had been in schools for two or more years, which points to the benefits of longevity in such initiatives.

In the study and resulting report, *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, the President’s Committee on the Arts and

the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership investigated “the factors that make it possible for a district to reach the entire student population, to treat the arts as a subject comparable to math, science, or social studies” (9). The central finding is, “If there is a single, overriding lesson they teach it is that the presence and quality of arts education in public schools today require an exceptional degree of involvement by influential segments of the community which value the arts in the total affairs of the school district: in governance, funding, and program delivery” (4). The report profiles ninety-one districts in forty-two states, and includes stories of three school systems that leverage theatre resources as a component part of delivering arts education: Performing Arts Center in Charlottesville High School (43), The James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School in Maryland (53), and a district-wide children’s theatre program in Robbinsdale, Minnesota (73). The full descriptions of these three examples are included in Appendix I of this paper. The report goes on to state, “Formal ‘partnerships’ of school and community arts organizations providing arts education programs to students can be found in many of these districts, and the creation of those partnerships is a strategy a number of districts use” (11).

### The School Benefits

The most basic benefit of a partnership between school system and theatre will be for its school(s) to meet the federal mandate of delivering theatre instruction to all its students in all grades and to demonstrate that theatre arts are incorporated into the “A” of the Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts, and Math, STEAM, learning that is taking place in classrooms. Qualitatively, it will also be fulfilling 21<sup>st</sup> century learning principles

like the ones that suggest “engaging students with real world data, tools and experts,” and “encouraging the integration of community resources beyond school walls” (P21).

Finally, as mentioned in Chapter II, the engagement, environment, and overall achievement of the school’s students will improve.

The coexistence of school and theatre facilitates joint participation in curriculum development for theatre arts. It puts school and arts administrators together throughout planning, implementation, evaluation and continued growth of the program. It puts certified arts specialists, certified non-arts teachers and professional teaching artists together, not just in the classroom, but throughout their days. It facilitates discussions on the successes as they take place and joint problem-solving when problems arise.

An embedded partnership will create opportunities for the professional development of teachers and artists. As they work side by side, benefiting from the expertise of the other, they will learn from one another and be inspired. Mitch Mattson of the Roundabout Theatre Company education department believes the result of teachers and artists working together is better teachers (Telephone interview).

The consistent presence of a resident theatre company will change the school atmosphere. From the impacts reported by arts-based school reform models, it can be inferred that an embedded partnership like this will have similar effects, including improving school attendance, increasing motivation of students and educators, enhancing creative pedagogies, enhancing the school’s image/profile, unifying the whole school in a common purpose, enabling the school to focus on creativity, forming cross-curricular



links, broadening the school's approach to teaching and learning, and improving provision for the arts (Imms et al. 30, 34).

### The Theatre Benefits

Reciprocally, the theatre company will also gain. The most meaningful benefit—the one that is the real reason for a theatre to partner with school—lies with access to the students, their families and community. Identifying audiences, creating and telling stories for audiences, engaging audiences, broadening audiences, diversifying audiences, deepening relationships with audiences, this is primary work of a theatre. For a theatre for young audiences company, the opportunity to get to know every child and adolescent in its school system is the *pièce de résistance*—an outstanding goal, albeit hard to achieve with only its own resources.

This is audience development through propinquity—the social theory that nearness or proximity in time or space provide an opportunity to develop more meaningful relationships. “The importance of social similarity and propinquity in producing strong ties has been established for a number of characteristics, including...education,...as well as for a number of propinquity indicators, including classrooms,...neighborhoods,...and seating arrangements” (Reagans 835). A theatre embedded in a school, will have every opportunity to develop strong relationships with students, parents and educators as its company members and teaching artists cross paths in the hallways, work together on lessons and projects and observe one another in passing. The significance of these relationships is identified in the recent book, *Young Audiences, Theatre and the Cultural Conversation* documenting a six-year research study

into what attracts, engages and sustains the participation of young people as theatre audiences: “Our study has highlighted the theatre preferences of young people both at school and post-schooling. It underscores the importance of dialogue and effective relationships between theatre companies, young people and their families, and teachers” (O’Toole et al. 10).

What a theatre for young audiences company gets from being embedded in a school system is built-in audiences. Theatre Communications Group executive director Teresa Eyring, recently wrote of her time spent as managing director of Children’s Theatre Company in Minneapolis, “While some would say children’s theatre is important for developing the audience of the future, I learned that young people are a phenomenal theatre audience today!” (6). The continuous expansion of understanding of the population it serves, through direct frequent contact with children and parents and the ongoing feedback loop that this generates would be invaluable to a theatre company. Insight into the daily lives, the concerns, the feelings, the problems, the triumphs and the ever-changing social behaviors and language of children and adolescents has the potential to improve the very art the theatre creates.

#### School System and Theatre Share Benefits

The planning and implementation of theatre arts education will be fed by the shared expertise and strengths of both school and theatre administrators. The theatre gets a partner with historical and practical knowledge of delivering structured education to large groups of students in all grades. School system gets a creative planning partner with

deep knowledge of the art in practice. The sharing of strengths will also manifest at the individual teacher level among certified teachers and theatre teaching artists.

There are practical and logistical benefits that both school and theatre would enjoy from partnership. Following the initial up-front commitment of resources to establish the partnership, governance, and objectives, the partnership model should encourage cost efficiencies. These include personnel, administrative and overhead costs of productions, subscriber and membership, facilities and capital assets.

One notable benefit is space. Space is a coveted asset to theatres of any shape or size. Theatre requires physical space for performances, rehearsal, storage (costumes, sets, props), and administration, as well as classes offered by most theatres for young audiences. Such space often comes with a lot of overhead expenses and requires maintenance. What spaces theatres need, most schools have in the form of auditoriums, classrooms and offices.

There are many arrangements possible. As in the previously mentioned case of Bremen East comprehensive school in Germany (Booth, “great”), the entire performing arts company could be housed. Alternatively, perhaps only the theatre’s education department, or only the program and some staff associated with this partnership reside in the school buildings. The theatre could use a school auditorium for some or all of its professional productions. In any arrangement derived to suit a particular school system and theatre, residing partly or wholly in one or more school buildings would defray costs in some way for the theatre company.

## A Win for Students

The benefits of this particular partnership will extend beyond the concrete objectives of the partners themselves to more important stakeholders, a group that will have no say in how this partnership plays out, but is its key beneficiary. The reason above all others that a school system and theatre should consider such a partnership is its benefit to students. The focus on student education is critical because the effects of quality improvements in education are far-reaching; a high quality education contributes to the future advancement of the arts, the community and the economy as a whole.

The position statement *Arts Education for America's Students: A Shared Endeavor*, envisions the partnership in this diagram, “Arts Education for All Students”:

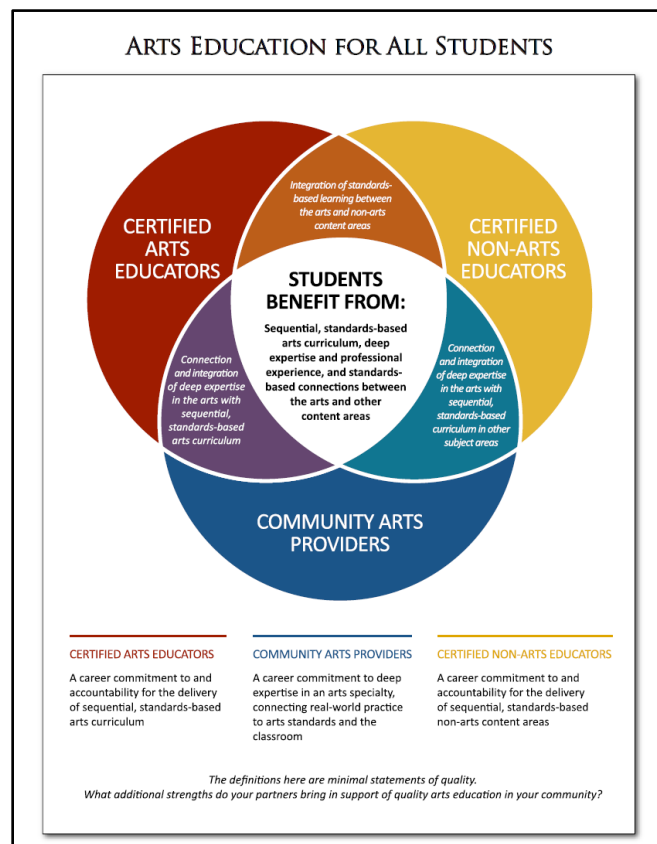


Fig. 1. Arts for All Students Diagram from Americans for the Arts, *Arts Education for America's Students: A Shared Endeavor* (2013; PDF file; 2).

All the benefits of arts education discussed thus far in this paper are benefits most keenly felt by students. This partnership will provide access to theatre arts education in school that students may not have the means to obtain outside of school; and for students with the means, it will complement and build on whatever arts exposure they already have. Research on partnerships between schools and the professional arts sector shows that, “evidence enabled the findings to go beyond the programs having an ‘impact’, with researchers being able to observe an ‘improvement’ in student engagement, student voice and social learning outcomes and a positive impact on arts related knowledge and skills as well as creative skills” (Imms et al. 6).

This partnership will create an environment and opportunity for students to develop professional artist mentors.

Teachers are far more crucial in instilling a love of theatre and facilitating theatre attendance than some theatre venues and companies are aware. The research identified for the first time the crucial significance of individuals acting as facilitators who generate theatre attendance. Old assumptions about the impact of socio-economic factors on young theatregoers are seriously challenged by the theatre literacy evidence. (O’Toole et al. 10)

The presence of theatre in a school will engage the adults in students’ lives on multiple levels. Parents, family members and friends will support their students by attending performances they create. School theatre programs may also generate volunteer opportunities for parents. Furthermore, there will be opportunities for students and

parents to share experiences attending the professional productions of the resident theatre company together. Students benefit from stronger relationships with the adults in their lives as a result of the partnership to embed theatre in their school system.

In school, students will benefit from a project-based approach of theatre and the intrinsic motivation it develops and nurtures. Students will have the advantage of structured lessons building toward mastery of a subject provided by certified theatre specialists and insight into the outside world of the art form provided by professional teaching artists. Students who learn in different ways are likely to be drawn to some element of theatre, as it is an art form accessible to most, if not all, intelligences: linguistic, logical-mathematical, spatial, musical, bodily-kinesthetic, naturalistic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal.

The school day is fragmented (you go to the separate spaces reserved for science, math, etc.), but the arts provide an opportunity for students to come together and connect the various strands of their learning. This happens not only among the various strands of arts learning, but also across all subjects.

The school musical, for example, obviously brings together learning and students in the visual arts for set design, musical training for vocal and band performance, and theater mavens contributing dramatic expertise. But students doing tech theater are putting to use physics and mathematical concepts and acumen, just as the theater students are using the analytic skills they've acquired in their humanities classes to make

sense of the script. Undoubtedly the entire ensemble has considered the history of the show, both when it first was done and how, as well as its impact on and reflection of the period in which it was first produced.

The arts provide a nexus for a range of disciplinary understandings...The arts connect disciplines not only by bringing disparate subjects together in a work of art, but also by their impact on individual domains. (Davis, *High Schools* 92-93)

The partnering of school and theatre will not only provide exposure, instruction and experience in theatre, but do so with consistency and stability. Students will be able to trust that theatre arts are in their schools to stay and for everyone. Every student will be important enough and lucky enough to participate—not just the class or grade specified in a grant, and not just for the finite period of time funding is available. Students will reap these and all the benefits of a transformed learning environment.

Add these student impacts to both lists above, the benefits that will be felt by school and theatre. There are compelling reasons for a school system and theatre for young audiences company to form a collaborative partnership to embed theatre in school.

## Chapter V

### HOW ARTS EDUCATION IMPROVES AND AUDIENCES DEVELOP

*“The statement that schools make by including the arts in the curriculum is clear: ‘The arts matter. They matter to education; they matter to society; and they will matter to you.’ There is no equivalent for a school’s endorsement of the arts—a school’s endorsement of the need for students to gain the vocabularies and to make and tell their own stories through the language of the arts. School is a microcosm of society; it reflects, but it also affects. Let our schools speak to and through our students of the importance of art to life.” – Jessica Hoffman Davis (Schools 42)*

#### Improving Arts Education

The collaborative embedded partnership between school system and theatre company strives for deep, long-term delivery of theatre education that reaches all the students of a school or district during every year of their K-12 education. It offers access and consistency of delivery that à la carte artist residencies and visiting theatre education programs may not be able to achieve.

Teaching artists are no longer visiting artists. When a theatre company is embedded in a school its artists and the company itself transition from outsiders to insiders. This adds validity to their work in the eyes of school administrators, parents and the community, and endows them with greater authority over the students they teach. When all theatre teachers—specialists, teaching artists, those that are both, those that are neither—are part of the same staff, they are part of the same team.



Positive effects on teachers, teaching artists and pedagogy have been reported from recent studies of schools partnering with professional arts organizations:

Some artists enjoyed and welcomed the opportunity to facilitate and share their art-making with students, others commented that they had gained a better understanding of time management, learning how to better share processes and deliver school/arts programs...A number of artists felt involvement with the program had been a valuable personal learning experience, with one artists commenting that the program forced her to re-evaluate her own practice and that she was the richer for it. (Imms, Jeanneret, Stevens-Ballenger 29)

Teachers commented specifically on the opportunities presented for wide ranging and ongoing professional learning, the way in which they made different connections with their students, and the affirming capacity of the programs. (Imms, Jeanneret, Stevens-Ballenger 29)

An embedding theatre in school has the potential to improve teaching in this way.

One of the key findings of *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education* is that “reflection and dialogue is important at all levels,” and this “continuous reflection and discussion about what constitutes quality and how to achieve it is not only a catalyst for quality but also a sign of quality” (Seidel et al. IV). A deeply collaborative partnership will necessitate this level of communication throughout all stages of forming, implementing and assessing the partnership.

Finally, this deeply collaborative partnership offers the potential for school and theatre to meet all five of the recommendations of the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. They would "build collaborations among different approaches," "develop the field of arts integration," "expand in-school opportunities for teaching artists," "utilize federal and state policies to reinforce the place of arts in K-12 education," and "widen the focus of evidence gathering about arts education" (48-54). Embedding theatre in schools will elevate arts education from optional enrichment to compulsory in practice, putting policy in action.

### Building Audiences

The value of arts education and the correlation of arts education in school to arts participation are well supported. It is quite reasonable to believe that improving the quality of arts education in public schools will build future audiences. In fact, existing research is leading some to believe that arts education is a critical component to building future audiences. The National Endowment for the Arts report *Arts Education in America: What the decline means for arts participation* suggests that "Any serious strategy for mitigating or reversing the decline of arts participation must consider the role that childhood arts education can play in rebuilding and structuring audiences." Also that, "school-based arts education is of particular importance because schools are the only institutions that reach vast numbers of children, particularly low-income children, who are unlikely to receive arts education any other way" (Rabkin and Hedberg 52).

When a theatre is embedded in a school system, when it is part of the everyday fabric of a child's world from kindergarten through twelfth grade, theatre will become familiar, an important factor in determining future theatre engagement:

Students' development as confident and engaged audience members is related to an active performing arts culture in their school and a drama/theatre curriculum taught by teachers with an awareness and appreciation of theatre. We found that whether a school culture is what we call 'theatre-active' or 'theatre-restricted' influences students' responses and attitudes to live theatre. A 'theatre-active school' provides an educational environment that promotes participatory theatre making and develops young people as informed theatre-goers who are involved in the broader cultural conversation. In a 'theatre-restricted school' drama is a limited curriculum option and students have few opportunities to attend live theatre or to engage with diverse performance culture. (O'Toole et al. 66)

There are many more variables than arts education involved in determining current and future audience behavior. Demographic factors, socio-economic status, extracurricular involvement and family factors all play a role (Martin, Anderson and Adams 318). In addition, there are obstacles to young people's engagement with performing arts events. "Major barriers to participation include lack of adequate transport, inconvenient location of activities, possible fees involved, and lack of access to materials" (Martin, Anderson and Adams 316), as well as advance planning, perception,

risk of being bored and the cost associated with that risk (O'Toole et al. 37-40). Bringing the theatre to where young people are, in school, is one way to diminish many of these challenges.

Family support comes up again, with strong correlation to childhood participation in the arts:

The role of family in the cultural engagement of young people has been well documented in research. Several studies have indicated that family support for the arts translates into young person's continued involvement in the arts through to adulthood (Costantoura 2000; Instinct and Reason 2010). In fact, family involvement seems to have a greater impact on whether a young person continues to attend theatre than other experiences do, such as attending on a school excursion or as a result of curriculum requirements (Kolb 1997). (qtd. in O'Toole et al. 41)

Recall here Dennie Palmer Wolf's idea of "cultural amnesia" (23). The decline of arts education leaves no guarantee that parents value, teach or expose their children to the arts. Neither educators nor policy can influence what a child learns at home, but both can provide access to students at school. Further, a collaborative partnership that embeds a theatre company in school uniquely provides both in-school theatre education and family engagement with the art form, possibly filling in arts where they are missing at home while increasing prospects for future participation.

### Revisiting Quality

Support shows that improving the quality and quantity of arts education will correlate to building audiences, whether by the embedded partnership suggested here or other models of delivery. While the argument presented in this paper is somewhat linear, the subjects of increasing quality arts education and building audiences are complex and intertwined. Theatre audiences, arts audiences, are not the final product, but merely part of a large cycle. Rabkin and Hedberg “think of arts education as a particularly important dimension of the nation’s cultural ecosystem.” In this ecosystem, arts education helps build an audience for the arts, which develops cultural infrastructure, in which arts organizations grow and employ artists who produce works of art for audiences and share their expertise with students (51). Audiences are developed, and young people with all the benefits and advantages of arts education are developed. Many young people will go on to become audiences, artists and patrons, but more importantly, all of them will be offered “pathways...to finding meaning in life and to understanding our place in the world; to exploring and developing our national character; and to representing ourselves to others in all our complexity” (Rabkin and Hedberg 21-22).

## Chapter VI IMPLICATIONS

This paper explores one alternative for delivering long-term, consistent, quality theatre arts education in schools that face challenges in providing it and in schools that are inclined to improve their current offering. In doing so, it does not mean to imply that four arts organizations, one for each arts discipline, should or could be embedded in a school or district. Nor does it mean to imply that every school or district should embed a theatre for young audiences. It merely suggests that this idea of a partnership, embedding a theatre company in a school system, may be capable of delivering an art form for all students in all grades of one school system. This may provide quantitatively and qualitatively more arts education than the school system can provide on its own or the theatre can provide through theatre education programs that reach only select classes or grades.

The relevance of an embedded partnership may extend beyond theatre for young audiences companies. As seen, the best existing examples are in music. This line of reasoning would work for a professional arts organization specializing in any of the arts. Again, this is not an implication that four arts organizations should or could be embedded in one school. Each school or district needs to understand and embrace the strengths of the form or forms of arts organizations that are available in their community. On the

other side of the partnership, each arts organization must determine if teaching aligns with its mission.

In a 2016 National Center for Arts Research podcast on program offerings Ben Cameron said this about arts organizations that feel compelled to extend beyond their mission, specifically citing arts education as an example:

I think it's the rare organization that has the discipline and the fortitude to actually pull back, and to say basically, let's do less. Because certainly the pressure in virtually every way is always to do more. ... We all share a great concern that so many school systems are cutting arts education programs, or have eliminated them. In the wake of the loss of those programs, many nonprofits are picking up the burden of doing arts education in addition to doing mainstage shows. ... It's the rare organization that in that place says you know it's not our role to provide arts education, ... The discipline to be absolutely clear and absolutely faithful to what needs to be done rather than this kind of ivy-like expansion, trying to cover more and more and more ground, which is totally understandable, is a hard one for many organizations to do. It's a hard equation to balance. (Cameron)

In the scope of the argument for an arts organization to partner with a school system, this is an important reminder that those best suited to do so are those whose missions or programmatic offerings already involve education and young audiences.

There is merit in the argument for such a site-specific embedded partnership between theatre for young audiences company and school system, though the proposition is very specific and suited for particular school systems, theatre companies and circumstances. This is not a model that can be repeated by just any school or any arts organization, but an option that could be examined case by case. In fact, this idea could be the basis of a request for proposals to consider the myriad of ways to form such a deeply collaborative partnership.

The partnership being suggested is profoundly deep, intentional, meeting-intensive, process-intensive and time-consuming. Both organizations must contribute physical, human, financial, expertise and other resources. It would involve a memorandum of understanding (MoU) and significant joint planning, administration, execution and evaluation. There are many documented characteristics and circumstances that may lead to or take away from the success of such a partnership. See for example: *Learning Partnerships: Improving learning in schools with arts partners in the community* (Arts Education Partnership) or *Partnerships Between Schools and the Professional Arts Sector: Evaluation of Impact on Student Outcomes* (Imms, Jeanneret, Stevens-Ballenger 30-41), from which excerpts are included in Appendix II.

Feasibility would need to be assessed. This varies for every proposed partnership, hence it could not be speculated about in the scope of this paper. The honest evaluation of the partners' abilities to fulfill their roles and close examination of a school system's schedules, physical space, active parent-teacher association membership, board of education and governance; a theatre's mission related to education, programmatic



capacity, roster of teaching artists, ties to local government and community outreach capabilities; as well as available funding and goals would all help to inform the viability of a partnership.

Sustainability needs to be addressed in initial and long-rang planning to merge resources as this partnership requires. Although there is a sizable investment in time, money, and administration during the planning and initial implementation phases of a partnership, the benefits must be viewed on a long term scale. Upfront investment will show greater benefits the longer the partnership lasts.

More research is needed. Research leading in a direction that would identify the essential elements correlated to successful partnerships of the deep, collaborative nature suggested in this paper. Such a survey should be broad, examining as many partnerships as possible, representing all arts disciplines, many geographic regions, socioeconomic populations and multiple kinds of schools across the nation. It should also explore terms of agreement of the partnerships, how the partnerships came about, how the partnerships operate, how they share resources, how responsibilities are assigned, and the outcomes achieved.

In the wake of education policy revisions transforming No Child Left Behind to Every Child Succeeds, putting arts on par with science, technology, engineering and math in STEAM, the United States may be on the brink of an opportunity to conceive and test new ways for providing in-school education in all the arts, to all students with consistency and permanency. The opportunity is present to reimagine and expand the learning opportunities being provided to students. Individual states and school systems

have leeway to determine how to rebalance the curricular offerings for students. Research and new federal education policy suggests that arts are a part of that balance.

As school boards, administrators, teachers and parents consider the options, it is important to also consider the professional arts organizations in their communities that may be able to help. Every aspect of this exploration and evolving knowledge needs to involve educators, arts administrators and those that straddle both worlds. Many theatres, especially those that specialize in theatre for young audiences, long to engage their immediate communities in order to deepen the relationship with their audiences, build future audiences and further the arts in general. Such arts organizations are the natural allies of schools.

## CONCLUSION

Because arts education is recognized for its positive impact on students, schools and arts participation, administrators in both fields should be encouraged to experiment and assess various models together. What is most important is exploring new and different ways for arts organizations and school systems to work together to develop that “third space”, to create circumstances that intrinsically motivate students, foster learning, teach students how to apply learning, and access all of the other documented benefits of in-school arts education.

At the local level, arts education is improved through the embedded partnership by delivering theatre education with quality, equity and longevity within one school system. Quality in this partnership is achieved by joining the strengths of school and theatre in planning, implementation, ongoing evaluation and continuous improvement of the program. Equity is derived when the partners commit to provide theatre instruction and integration to every student in the school system in every grade. Longevity is suggested by the perceived and real permanency of embedding the theatre in the school system.

Local arts education is improved when such an embedded partnership fosters conversations and collaborations between students, teachers, teaching artists, administrators and parents that involve the arts and all subjects. Local arts education is

improved when a theatre for young audiences in residence in a school produces work that engages parents and the community, thus building current and future audiences for theatre and civic and school pride. Local arts education is improved when a construct is formed in which students gain by learning from both certified arts specialist and professional teaching artist—they get the best of both worlds in a relationship where the two can work together, not as adversaries.

With time, changes in how arts education is delivered at the local level, changes that address quality, equity and longevity, may influence an improvement in arts education across the nation. How an embedded theatre company in one school system changes the bigger picture is by example. The more schools and theatres partner at this deeply collaborative level, the more they will set higher standards for delivering quality arts education, not just delivering it and certainly not checking it off the list of mandates through the quickest, cheapest method available.

As previously acknowledged, a partnership to embed a theatre company in a school system is an idea, not a model that would be the same in any two school systems or theatre companies, but it is an idea that could be explored by any school and theatre company willing to discover how its unique partnership could play out. What is more valuable than identifying one solution for delivering quality theatre education, is using this investigation to demonstrate a critical need for more attention, exploration and testing of all the ways in which schools and arts organizations deliver arts education, both individually and in partnership. Embedding a theatre in a school would change aspects of

how the school functions. With the right partners, willing to test it, such partnership offers great potential.

There is strong support that both school systems and arts organizations benefit when arts education is a part of in-school curriculum. Further examination is needed to define the roles best played by school systems and professional arts organizations in the delivery of quality arts education. It appears that the responsibility is shared, that school systems and arts organizations both play a role in taking arts education beyond enrichment, elevating it to compulsory and together, in partnership, they are able to accomplish some things that neither can on their own. Let us believe in the possibility of delivering arts education to the students of America in a way that neither field can do on its own.

## Appendix I

### EXAMPLE SCHOOL DISTRICTS USING THEATRE TO CONNECT SCHOOLS TO COMMUNITY, ARTISTS AND AUDIENCES

The 1999 report *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education*, by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership, profiles 91 school districts across the United States that were identified for outstanding arts education throughout their schools. The study investigated "how these districts developed and sustained arts education in the face of the enormous pressures on them to prove the success of their schools by accountability measures that focus largely on reading, math, and writing" (4). Sprinkled throughout the report are narrative examples that correspond with district profiles. Following are three stories that involve partnerships between school districts and outside organizations or theatre professionals to operate theatres and administer theatre education in schools.

#### **"If You Build It..."**

"If you build it, they will come" is an axiom that does not necessarily hold true for an arts center. All across America well-meaning arts leaders have built local and regional arts centers only to wonder where to find audiences to support them. That, in part, is how many an 'education outreach' program began to help build the next audience. Then there are communities like Charlottesville, Virginia.

Charlottesville has a fine 1,276-seat Performing Arts Center in Charlottesville High School. This is not the standard high school auditorium retrofitted for occasional concerts. The Center was built with a separate entrance to provide the feeling of a separate performance venue. The school districts' performing arts groups perform here, to be sure, but so do local, state, national and international performing arts groups, such as the Moscow Ballet.

The school district employs a full-time theater manager and assistant to run the theater day to day, separately from other school facilities, and charges for the use of the hall at different rates for various groups. Everyone benefits, particularly the students. The school

system gains revenues, the students gain a great space to perform and display their talents, and the community gains a center for the arts as well as a tangible manifestation of the link between the arts and education, school and community, future artist and future audience.

(President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership 43)

### **The James Rouse Theater at Wilde Lake High School**

Redefining the mission in the early 1990s, the Howard county Arts Council wanted to strengthen its dedication to the schools in Howard County. With the district's acceptance, the two groups sat down to figure out a way to reach the students as well as the community. The solution was to renovate the auditorium at Wilde Lake High School into a state of the art teaching facility that also could serve as a community theater. Home to more than a million people, Howard County is situated between Baltimore and Washington, D.C. The council hoped the renovated auditorium would appeal to performing arts groups that often did not have the financial means to rent theater space in Baltimore or Washington. The schools, meanwhile, would acquire an impeccable arts learning facility and direct access to the performing artists.

In further discussions, the school district and the arts council identified a need to form a governing committee "to guarantee an appropriate sharing arrangement among the parties and to maintain the quality of the performing arts space." The committee would be made up of representatives of the community, the arts, and the Maryland Department of Education. It also was determined that "priority will be given to arts and educational objectives of the Department of Education" followed by Howard County arts and sponsoring organizations. However an outside management team would oversee the day-to-day operations of the theater, such as contracts, box office, scheduling, and publicity.

After studying the costs of constructing a new facility, the two groups decided it would be far more cost-effective to renovate the Wilde Lake High School's theater for a tenth of the cost of a new facility. In order to pay for the renovation, the groups relied on a public/private partnership. The public partners included Howard County, the State of Maryland, and the National Endowment for the Arts through a grant to the Howard County Arts Council. The private supporters, both individuals and corporations, include James Rouse and his firm, the Rouse Company, developer of Baltimore's Inner Harbor, Boston's Fanueil Hall and Columbia, MD. Rouse personally donated \$100,000, although he asked that his gift be kept anonymous until the opening of the facility, which he attended with his grandson, actor Edward Norton.

(President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership 53)

## **Theater in Robbinsdale: “The Art of the Present”**

Robbinsdale Area Schools was honored by the Children’s Theater Foundation of America as the recipient of the first-ever Medallion Award given to a school drama program. Honoring “continuity and artistry,” the following award citation says a great deal about what constitutes excellence in theater for young people:

Occasionally, amid the maelstrom of controversy that surrounds public schools today, a beam shines out from a lighthouse steadfast in the storm, sending inspiration and hope to those who struggle with the tides of protest, financial problems, and societal changes that sweep the nation’s schools.

Based on a curriculum taught by certified theater professionals, extended to the community through an annual season of productions, with special attention to senior citizens, with traveling shows for children, and including student-directed one-act plays, the performances of the Robbinsdale high schools have been recognized by experts in the field through the Minnesota drama competition where at least one of the three district schools has reached state level in 19 out of the last 30 years.

Lest one think that Robbinsdale is Nirvana, where pain and worry have been extinguished, District 281 has weathered the difficulties of population growth and decline, moving from on high school to three and now to two. It has an ethnic and economic distribution close to that of the nation and faces the financial and social pressures common to communities everywhere.

The French actor and director Jean Louis Barrault called theater “The Art of the Present.” Presently, education is sailing on a “sea of troubles,” wherein some schools have lost course and even foundered. District 281 has continued to make way, providing its generations of young people with a present experience in art, a present platform to study the human condition, a present opportunity to acquire skills important to personal future, a present concrete adventure in jointly solving mutual problems—a headlight example of theater in education.

(President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership  
73)



## Appendix II

### QUALITIES OF EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS BETWEEN SCHOOLS AND ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

In the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) guide to arts and education collaboration, *Learning Partnerships: Improving Learning in Schools with Arts Partners in the Community*, the factors identified leading to effective and sustainable arts and education partnership include:

- The partners understand shared goals that ultimately enhance student learning,
- The individual partners' own goals are met within an effective partnership,
- In sustained partnerships, leadership becomes shared,
- Partners within effective partnerships assume a shared sense of ownership in the collaborative program,
- Effective partnerships are creative,
- The organization and structure of sustainable partnerships must be flexible,
- Strong partnerships survive setbacks,
- Effective partnerships engage multiple community sectors,
- Good community arts and education partnerships involve multiple artistic and academic disciplines,
- The arts are valued for themselves and for their capacity to enhance student learning,
- Sustained partnerships are concerned comprehensively with education,
- Partnerships are best sustained when there is support at all levels of the partner organizations,
- Effective partnerships invest in the professional development of their personnel,
- Partner institutions learn and change,
- Evaluation and documentation helps achieve partnership goals,
- Sustained partnerships create an infrastructure that supports community/school learning relations,
- Effective partnerships attract sustained funding, and

- Good partnerships require persistence and patience.

(Arts Education Partnership 5-14)

The 2011 report *Partnerships Between Schools and the Professional Arts Sector: Evaluation of Impact on Student Outcomes* identifies the following “characteristics common to effective school/arts partnership programs”:

#### Student engagement

- Authentic encouragement of students
- Active student participation
- A light-hearted approach to learning
- Relevancy and a sense of purpose

#### Student voice

- Student-driven programs
- Student input
- Support for student-centred learning

#### Social learning

- Working in groups
- Working in multi-age groups
- Community involvement

#### Creative skills

- Student choice
- Modelling of creative behaviours by arts professionals

#### Arts-related knowledge and skills

- Prior exposure and/or experience in art-making
- Providing hand on production orientated activities

(Imms, Jeanneret, Stevens-Ballenger 30-36)

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