



## Arts Education Partnership

One Massachusetts Avenue, NW  
Suite 700  
Washington, DC 20001  
[www.aep-arts.org](http://www.aep-arts.org)

# The Art of Collaboration:

## *Promising Practices for Integrating the Arts and School Reform*

By **Andrew L. Nelson**

*This second publication in the Arts Education Partnership's Research and Policy Brief series focuses on the implementation and practice of eight demonstration sites participating in The Ford Foundation's Integrating the Arts and Education Reform Initiative. The brief describes a number of strategies identified by site directors at this early stage of the initiative as useful for building and managing a collaborative organization that works toward integrating the arts into public education in an urban area.*

### Introduction

In June 2007, the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) convened the directors of eight collaborative entities to discuss promising practices for integrating the arts into the lives and curricula of urban public schools as a means of fostering system-wide educational improvement. The seven school-community collaboratives and one higher education collaborative represented at the one-day seminar at Oklahoma City University were selected based on their participation in The Ford Foundation's *Integrating the Arts and Education Reform (Arts-Ed) Initiative*. Each collaborative is partially supported, and in some cases was initiated, by grants from The Ford Foundation.

This research and policy brief describes some of the strategies discussed during the directors' roundtable discussion. At the seminar, as the directors talked candidly about challenges and opportunities they face in managing their organizations during this start-up phase of the initiative, a general consensus emerged about particular approaches and practices that may be helpful to others in the

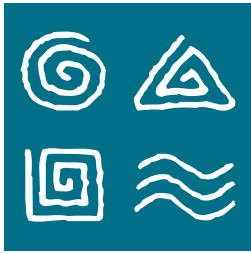
field. The purpose of this brief is to share these ideas with a broader audience of those engaged and interested in using community-based arts education collaboration as an agent for system change.

The Ford Arts-Ed Initiative is a national, multi-year effort launched in 2004 and guided by two overarching goals: (1) to significantly improve the quality of students' education by providing integrated arts education opportunities across urban school systems, and (2) to foster the widespread belief that the arts are an essential part of a high-quality education. The initiative supports the demonstration sites in achieving these goals by assisting efforts that build strong, sustained district commitments to arts education and develop comprehensive advocacy strategies.

The Arts Education Partnership, a national coalition of education, arts, government, and philanthropic organizations, receives support from The Ford Foundation to convene and provide technical assistance to the Arts-Ed demonstration sites. One of AEP's goals is to provide the site participants with opportunities, such as the seminar in Oklahoma City, to learn from one another's experiences and exchange ideas and strategies. Also, Douglas Gould and Company and the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning participate in the initiative as partner organizations that provide assistance to and evaluation of the sites.

The seven school-community collaboratives participating in the initiative are: the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership (Alameda County, CA); Ask for More Arts (Jackson, MS); Baltimore Partners for Enhanced Learning (Baltimore, MD); Dallas Arts Learning Initiative (Dallas, TX); the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative (Cleveland, OH); the

*The mission of the Arts Education Partnership is to demonstrate and promote the essential role of the arts in enabling every student to succeed in school, life and work in the diverse and global economies and societies of the 21st century.*



DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative (Washington, DC); and Interchange (St. Louis, MO). The eighth demonstration site, the Arts Education Initiative (AEI), is somewhat different than the others. Hosted by the University of California at Berkeley, AEI is a consortium of six California institutions of higher education that infuse arts education into their preservice curricula and integrate the arts into the professional development of new teachers and school leaders. For the purposes of this report, the eight sites that make up the Arts-Ed Initiative are collectively referred to as collaboratives.<sup>1</sup> A profile of each is found in the appendix.

The strategies described below are based primarily on the directors' conversation in Oklahoma City, but they are also informed by the collaboratives' written materials, discussions with collaborative leaders, and observations by AEP, as one of the technical assistance providers to the Arts-Ed Initiative.

<sup>1</sup> In the fall of 2007, The Ford Foundation added Arts for Academic Achievement in Minneapolis, MN to the initiative, making it the ninth demonstration site.

## THE DC ARTS & HUMANITIES EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

### *An Inclusive Committee Structure*

The DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative uses a committee structure that allows its membership to work with staff and the board of directors to guide the organization's programming and governance. An Operational Performance Committee addresses organizational infrastructure issues; a Financial Sustainability Committee provides fiscal oversight; and a Communications Committee leads marketing efforts. The collaborative also created mission accomplishment committees dedicated to topics such as programming, professional development, and teaching artists. These various committees help to develop the collaborative's programming and make recommendations to the board of directors. Staff members, board members, and partners such as teachers, teaching artists, and school administrators sit on the various committees, giving all collaborative partners a role in governing and managing the initiative.

## Promising Practices for Integrating the Arts and School Reform

The promising practices are organized according to four capacity areas that guide the Arts-Ed Initiative: (A) Organizational Infrastructure and Planning; (B) Partnership Development; (C) High Quality Integrated Arts Education; and (D) Communications and Advocacy.

### A. ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING: BUILDING THE INTERNAL CAPACITY TO GUIDE THE WORK

The success of the Arts-Ed collaboratives is founded on well-defined goals, a plan for achieving these goals, and an organizational infrastructure that provides effective governance and management. Described below are four approaches the Arts-Ed collaboratives use to build organizational capacity.

**Develop an organizational infrastructure and refine it over time.** A sound organizational infrastructure is crucial to the success of each Arts-Ed collaborative. Components of such an infrastructure include well-defined roles for the people who make up the collaborative—staff, board of directors, community partners, and others—and policies and procedures that guide governance. Although most of the collaboratives are community-based partnerships, each one has identified or created a lead organization to provide staff support and manage day-to-day operations. For example, Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio serves as the managing partner and fiscal agent of the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative. The principal fiscal agent and managing partner for the Arts Education Initiative—the higher education collaborative—is the University of California at Berkeley.

The directors of all eight collaboratives noted that building an organizational infrastructure is an ongoing process and stressed the importance of being willing to make modifications as lessons are

learned and in response to changes in the local educational or political climate.

**Form committees to manage different aspects of the work.** Almost all of the Arts-Ed collaboratives use committees as part of their organizational infrastructures. These committees focus on specific aspects of the work and are staffed by various stakeholders such as staff members, board members, arts providers, teachers, and school and district administrators. Examples of the types of committees formed by the Arts-Ed collaboratives include strategic planning, professional development, communications, and finance.

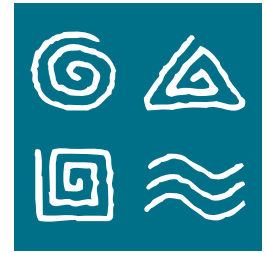
Committees offer partners a viable way to participate in collaborative governance and give specialized groups the opportunity to take part in program development. For example, a representative from a partnering arts organization may not sit on the board of directors if there is a possible or perceived conflict of interest, but may serve on a professional development committee and play a significant role in the design of training opportunities. Similarly, a board member who is a marketing professional may share his or her expertise by joining the Communications Committee. In the end, the specific design of a collaborative's infrastructure and the context in which it operates should guide the organization of its committees.

**Draft a strategic plan that includes long- and short-term goals and activities.** One Arts-Ed director quipped that on her first day on the job she asked two questions: "Where is my office and when does strategic planning start?" In order to have a road map for direction and growth and a timeline for the achievement of goals, many of the Arts-Ed collaboratives took several months to develop a three- to five-year strategic plan and, importantly, involved their various stakeholders in the planning process. As one director stated, "The strategic planning process gave us consensus on what we are about."

Although members of the collaborative should ultimately write the strategic plan, it can be helpful to use an outside facilitator to lead planning meetings, ask questions, and provide objective comments and feedback. At the beginning of the planning process, it is important to consider the local context and use the plan to speak to existing state and district education policies that need to be

addressed. The final strategic plan is a document that guides a collaborative and describes its mission and goals to interested parties.

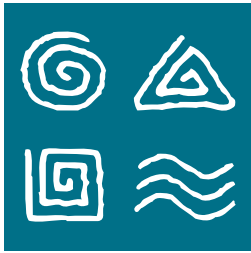
**Leverage existing grants and community support when fundraising.** An essential goal of the Arts-Ed collaboratives is to combine grants and donations with more long-term support—such as district or state funding—that will institutionalize their work by making it part of the education system. As one director noted, "The bottom line is that you have to raise the money." One strategy is to use existing grants and support as leverage for fundraising. For example, when approaching the school district or potential funders, the collaboratives point to their Ford Foundation grant as an indication of national support for their arts education efforts. They also leverage support from community partners. Every year Big Thought, the managing partner of the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative, asks its partners to provide it with an estimate of the percentage of their budget dedicated to arts education. By quantifying the contributions of



## THE ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

### *The Strategic Planning Process*

In the spring of 2006, the Arts Education Initiative (AEI)—a consortium of higher education institutions in northern California—formed a planning committee that was charged with developing a five-year strategic plan for the initiative. The committee contracted a local strategic planning consultant and worked with her to design two planning retreats. The consultant facilitated the one-day retreats at which AEI partners identified their major desired outcomes for the collaborative and strategies to achieve them. Planning committee members then drafted and edited a strategic plan that was approved at an initiative-wide meeting. The result of this process is a 27-page "living, working document" that AEI will use to guide its work and assess its efforts over the next five years. Additionally, the plan includes statements regarding AEI's vision, mission, and guiding principles, indicating that the involvement of initiative partners in the planning process helped them reach consensus on the collaborative's goals and activities.



these partners, Big Thought is able to demonstrate to funders and the school district that many local organizations are committed to arts education.

## B. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: CREATING AND MAINTAINING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

Community partners are the driving force behind the Arts-Ed collaboratives. In addition to being part of a collaborative's organizational infrastructure, they play significant roles in activities such as professional development, teaching the arts in schools, advocacy, and fundraising. The collaboratives strive to partner with the appropriate individuals and organizations and to manage these relationships in a manner that helps them achieve their goals. In this early stage of the initiative, the collaboratives use the following partnership strategies to build "community capacity" for their work.

### ASK FOR MORE ARTS

#### *Increasing Community Capacity*

After spending years building relationships with teachers, school administrators, arts organizations, and community members, Ask for More Arts (AFMA) developed a strategy for further strengthening its existing partnerships and bringing new organizations into the collaborative. As a first step, AFMA contracted with an experienced arts education consultant to facilitate this process. AFMA and the facilitator then held stakeholder meetings with key constituents such as school administrators and teachers, arts and culture organizations, businesses, teaching artists, and parents. AFMA's primary goal was to listen to these constituent groups. The meetings focused on issues such as the rationale for partnership; what the constituent groups seek from collaboration; and how each group can contribute to the collaborative. The consultant will summarize the results of these meetings in a final report that will be presented to the potential collaborators.

**Explore the community landscape to identify potential partners.** Many of the Arts-Ed collaboratives study their communities at length to learn which local arts organizations, foundations, and corporations support arts education and have programs that align with the collaborative's goals. For example, Baltimore Partners for Enhanced Learning sent an electronic Call for Cultural Organization Partners to area arts organizations to gauge interest in joining the collaborative and to find organizations that share arts education goals. Similarly, the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative began an asset mapping initiative to locate potential partners in Dallas communities. The strategy is to find both organizations and individuals that fit naturally with the collaborative's mission. In the words of one director, "We found some great teaching artists by working with individual artists as well as large, well-established arts organizations."

**Define partnership levels and the benefits and responsibilities associated with each.** After identifying partners, a collaborative faces the challenge of structuring them in a manner that enables organizations of different sizes and with different individual missions to work together to guide the initiative. To accomplish this task, many Arts-Ed sites design a collaborative structure that includes different partnership levels and responsibilities. For example, the DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative uses three membership categories—organization, individual, and affiliate—and describes the benefits and responsibilities of each on its website and in membership recruitment material. Some partners may play an external programmatic role in a collaborative, some may serve on committees, while others may sit on the board of directors or serve in another governance capacity. Regardless of their role, partners should understand what they are expected to contribute and what the benefits of collaborative membership are.

**Coordinate the work of partnering arts providers.** Each Arts-Ed collaborative strives to make in-school arts specialists a partner in their integrated arts programming. However, due to a variety of factors, many schools do not have arts specialists on staff or even in the school district. The collaboratives therefore partner with arts providers—arts and culture institutions and teaching artists—that deliver arts instruction to students in the classroom.





After recruiting arts providers as programmatic partners, a collaborative must coordinate their contributions to the initiative. Some collaboratives use committees to design an arts education program and assign arts providers to work with classroom teachers to deliver the program to the classroom. In other collaboratives, arts providers lead professional development workshops. For example, teachers participating in the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative attend Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio's professional development workshops and its Summer Institute. The goal is to make the most of the assets of each arts provider while also equally distributing the influence of each.

**Work to make the school district an active partner.** Since one purpose of the Arts-Ed collaboratives is to influence education policy and foster systemic change through the arts, gaining the support—both financially and programmatically—of the local school district is critical. As one director noted, “You have to link what you are doing with the school district’s educational priorities.” The strategy is to find the avenue that works best for a collaborative’s unique context. For example, Ask for More Arts in Jackson, Mississippi formed a strong relationship with teachers that eventually led to a relationship with district administrators and regular meetings with the superintendent.

Since staff turnover is especially prevalent in urban school districts (the average tenure of an urban superintendent is two to three years), garnering district support can take time. The directors find that, during a period of district transition, it may be best to focus on other areas of the work—such as professional development or community engagement—while the new administration gets settled. When the time is right, reengage the district and focus again on building that relationship.

### C. DESIGNING AND DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY INTEGRATED ARTS EDUCATION

In order to address standards-based testing and accountability requirements under NCLB, many urban school districts focus heavily on increasing student proficiency in math and reading. High-quality arts integration can support this effort while also engaging students in the learning

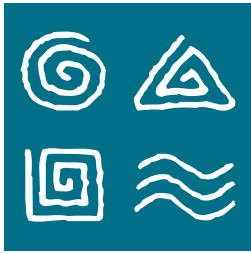
process and deepening their knowledge of a particular art form. The quality of an integrated arts program is tied not only to a passion for the work, but also to a collaborative’s plan for delivering the arts to the classroom. The following four practices are among those that the Arts-Ed collaboratives use to design high-quality integrated arts programs.

**Develop a theory of arts integration and a plan for delivering it to the classroom.** As an early step, many Arts-Ed collaboratives design or adopt a theory or definition of arts integration that serves as the foundation of their integrated arts program. For example, the DC Arts & Humanities Education Collaborative defines arts integration as “Artists, arts educators, or classroom teachers present les-

### CLEVELAND INTEGRATED ARTS COLLABORATIVE

#### *Navigating a Time of Transition*

The Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative’s (CIAC) willingness to delay programming and instead focus efforts on building trusting relationships with new officials allowed it to quickly adapt to an administrative transition and regain necessary district support. In the summer of 2006, the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD) hired a new CEO, cut numerous administrative positions, and made several changes to the elementary school curriculum. As a result, CIAC found itself—weeks before its integrated arts program was to be piloted—with neither the third-grade English Language Arts curriculum its program was designed for nor many of its supporters in the district office. The organization chose to delay its pilot program for a semester to focus on building relationships with new district administrators. CIAC partners met with these officials and demonstrated the educational intent of the integrated arts programming, as well as its connection to state standards. Meanwhile, CIAC’s Curriculum Committee adapted its old program to fit the new English Language Arts curriculum. As a result, the CIAC program was implemented in 14 Cleveland schools in the spring semester of 2007.



sons with dual objectives—in both an art form and in another content area—to enhance students’ learning in both areas.” The collaboratives then construct a long-term strategy to bring integrated arts opportunities to schools.

Most collaboratives begin by working in a manageable number of pilot schools and incrementally add more schools over time. The directors emphasized the idea that engaging the schools’ principals and garnering their support is a significant step when working in pilot schools. Also, a plan for improving the quality of programming in existing pilot schools while continuing to add new schools is a key component of this work. Ask for More Arts

### BALTIMORE PARTNERS FOR ENHANCED LEARNING

## *Forming Effective Teaching Relationships*

Baltimore Partners for Enhanced Learning’s inaugural professional development workshop was a one-day event dedicated to building working relationships between classroom teachers and teaching artists from the city’s arts and culture organizations. At the workshop—which was designed and facilitated by an arts education consultant and the organization’s executive director—teachers and artists created a shared foundational statement about the role of arts integration in the classroom; discussed the goals of a unit of study; and learned different strategies for teaching in pairs. The facilitators then put the teachers and artists in pairs according to their interests and levels of experience. The teachers and artists spent the second half of the workshop working in pairs and discussing their experiences and perspectives on teaching as well as challenges they face such as planning time and scheduling. After the workshop, each teaching pair designed and co-taught a 10-day integrated arts lesson that was tied to Baltimore’s middle school curriculum. Later in the year, the teachers and artists attended two additional professional development events that addressed assessment and documentation and evaluation and reflection.

addresses this issue by offering advanced professional development opportunities for a select number of schools that have been participating in its programming for some time and are thus likely to have more experience than newer schools.

**Align arts education programming with state or district standards.** According to the Arts Education Partnership’s 2007-08 State Policy Survey, nearly every state has adopted statewide content or performance standards in one or more art disciplines. Additionally, many districts have developed their own local standards that exceed the state standards, as well as curriculum frameworks and lesson plans for teaching and assessing arts learning. To ensure consistency and quality, the collaborative directors recommend that arts integration programming be aligned with state or district standards in both the arts and in other associated content areas.

As an example, during its summer Teaching Artist Institute, the Alameda County Office of Education’s Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership leads a session that familiarizes teaching artists with the California State Visual and Performing Arts Standards. This session helps teaching artists develop integrated arts lessons that meet state arts standards. Similarly, the St. Louis collaborative Interchange links its arts education programming to the state of Missouri’s *Grade Level Expectations*. Since districts occasionally make changes in the curriculum, tying integrated arts work to standards allows the collaboratives to adapt to a new curriculum without a complete overhaul of their programs.

**Use professional development to build strong relationships among classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists.** The Arts-Ed collaboratives emphasize the development of relationships among non-arts classroom teachers and arts specialists and teaching artists. Since they often work together to teach integrated arts units, it is important that the parties understand one another’s experiences and strategies. Several collaboratives partner with arts education consultants to design and lead professional development workshops for teachers, teaching artists, and arts specialists. Such workshops help participants gain an understanding of how each operates in the classroom and provide the opportunity to design integrated arts units they can teach as a team.

**Collect data to measure progress and then document the work.** Most of the Arts-Ed collaboratives are developing a means to collect formative data to assess their process for delivering arts education to the classroom, and summative data to measure the effectiveness of their integrated arts program. If possible, the directors suggest partnering with a professional evaluator or a local university to collect information and evaluate the program. For example, the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative partnered with Cleveland State University, which developed benchmarks and indicators to measure the effect of CIAC's integrated arts program on student learning in English Language Arts and Visual Arts. Some collaboratives also gather useful information quickly by developing and distributing surveys that are completed by students, classroom teachers, arts providers, and school administrators.

In addition, teachers and artists in the collaboratives document integrated arts lessons and units to share processes and results with other teachers and the public. Such documentation can act as an advocacy tool. After completing an integrated arts unit, many teachers in the school display examples of student work, student writing about the work and the process, and a teacher's description of the value of the unit.

#### **D. COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY ISSUES**

In addition to increasing the role of arts education in schools, building public support for arts education is a major goal of the Arts-Ed Initiative. Indeed, an arts education collaborative's success and longevity depends on the buy-in and continuing support of the various constituent groups in a community. A thoughtful advocacy strategy and communications plan are essential. At the Oklahoma City seminar, the directors focused more on the objectives of their communications plan rather than on the processes. The following practices reveal the directors' emphasis on understanding and reaching a variety of audiences.

**Design evidence-based communications and advocacy strategies.** In order to increase public support for arts education, the collaboratives work to tie their communication efforts to data that demonstrate the benefits of the arts in schools. Data regarding the effect of the arts on student

#### **ALAMEDA COUNTY ALLIANCE FOR ARTS LEARNING LEADERSHIP**

### *Exploring Documentation Methodologies*

Teachers and teaching artists participating in the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership (Alliance for ALL) document the process and results of their integrated arts units and display them in a variety of formats. For example, a teacher may use a wall in a school hallway to display student artwork or a description of the student's process in making the work, how the project links to state standards, and a statement from the student describing how she feels about her art. This type of documentation moves beyond "art on the walls" by also including the goals of a unit and the process for meeting them. The Alliance for ALL is currently redeveloping its website to make such documentation the basis of an online professional community. Teachers and artists will be able to use video and other media to document their work and use it to begin a conversation in which they share strategies and approaches to teaching and learning.

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#### **INTERCHANGE**

### *Communication with a Specific Audience*

The St. Louis collaborative Interchange identified teachers as one of its primary audiences and structured communications accordingly. When the collaborative developed a catalogue of close to 50 arts education organizations that teachers could partner with in the classroom, it did so in hard copy form instead of an online database, knowing that many teachers in its pilot schools rarely use email or the Internet. After mailing the catalogues, the Interchange director personally met with each teacher to help select the appropriate arts education experience for his or her class. Interchange's website includes a page designed specifically for teachers that describes how its program is tied to state standards and also provides bios of teaching artists. These practices demonstrate the collaborative's commitment to understanding one of its key audiences.





engagement, student achievement, the school environment, and other outcomes bolster communications by providing the audience with evidence of the arts' effect in schools.

It is common for arts education collaboratives to use student exhibits or performances to promote their integrated arts programs. When doing so, the directors emphasize the importance of “connecting the dots” between a student’s artwork and what he or she learned while producing it. For example, at student exhibits or performances, the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership posts artist statements in which students describe their artistic process and what they discovered while creating the work of art.

**Identify target audiences and communicate on their terms.** Collaborative directors agree that it is important to design a communications plan aimed at various audiences, including teachers, administrators, parents, community members, and potential funders. A collaborative’s communication with a specific audience should speak to that audience’s particular concerns. For example, parents may be interested in arts education as a means of “educating the

## DALLAS ARTS LEARNING INITIATIVE

### *Working In and With the Community*

A crucial component to the work of the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative is its efforts to coordinate arts programs in the city’s communities. The Initiative forges partnerships among community service providers. It listens closely to community members and identifies existing programming. Then it connects schools, libraries and neighborhood arts and service agencies to fill the gaps with programming that meets the needs and aligns with the interests of the people who live there. In one neighborhood in the summer of 2007, the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative integrated hands-on arts experiences into a well-attended annual health fair. In another neighborhood, the collaborative brought together individual artists and organizations to create an arts camp on the campus of an elementary school whose principal was interested in holding a summer program.

whole child,” while members of the business community may be more attracted to the arts’ ability to prepare students for work in the “creative economy.”

Although tailoring communications to the concerns of a specific audience is important, a collaborative should stay consistent with its overall message. To most effectively reach different constituency groups, the directors recommend the use of outside communications experts who can take complex information and make it understandable to a variety of audiences.

**Engage community members and understand their values.** The collaborative directors find that active listening leads to a deeper understanding of an audience’s values and to the development of strong relationships with community members. As one director noted, “When engaging the community, we start every conversation with the question, ‘What do you value?’” This approach informs collaboratives about the role art plays in the community and the language that community members use to talk about it. For instance, one director interviewed community members who said that “the arts” are not a significant component of their daily lives, however, later in the conversation, people mentioned that they play the piano at church. Therefore, art may be an important part of people’s lives while the term “art” may not. Listening can help a collaborative and community members build a common language for talking about the arts, which increases the collaborative’s ability to garner public support for its work.

**Enlist supporters as messengers.** Since understanding community values and tailoring messages to specific audiences are useful practices, the Arts-Ed collaboratives find that enlisting audience members—school administrators, principals, teachers, artists, business leaders, government officials, parents, and others—as messengers can be an effective communications strategy. In the words of one director, “The messenger matters as much as the message.” Several collaboratives train advocates to be consistent in their messaging and communicate the initiative’s overall goals while speaking to an audience of their peers. For example, the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership convened a Belief Statement Workshop for parents in the county who support arts education. At the workshop, parents wrote a joint statement of support for arts education and received materials to help them discuss the significance of arts education with other parents.



## Conclusion

The experiences of the collaboratives participating in The Ford Foundation's *Integrating the Arts and Education Reform Initiative* demonstrate that a systems approach to arts education is a complex endeavor that requires persistence, collaboration, and flexibility. This research and policy brief describes some practices used by the collaboratives that show promise in using the arts as a tool for bringing about educational systems change and improving student achievement and success. In addition, the collaboratives represent solid education-community partnerships that strengthen the cultural health and vitality of the community, and foster stronger relationships among students, parents, schools, and community organizations.

## Acknowledgments

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This publication was also made possible by the inspiring work and words of the following directors of the Arts-Ed demonstration sites who attended the June 2007 seminar: Paul Ammon, Gigi Antoni, Marsha Dobrzynski, Varissa L. McMickens, Louise Music, Trudy Palmer, Joan Weber, and Susan Womack. Special thanks to Sandra S. Ruppert of the Arts Education Partnership for her consistent support, feedback, and mentorship. Thanks also to Richard J. Deasy of the Arts Education Partnership for his leadership and guidance.





# Promising Practices for Integrating the Arts and Education Reform

The directors of the demonstration sites participating in the Integrating the Arts and Education Reform Initiative identified the following 16 strategies as useful for collaboratively integrating the arts into public schools and building community support for arts education.

## ORGANIZATIONAL INFRASTRUCTURE AND PLANNING: BUILDING THE INTERNAL CAPACITY TO GUIDE THE WORK

- Develop an organizational infrastructure and refine it over time
- Form committees to manage different aspects of the work
- Draft a strategic plan that includes long- and short-term goals and activities
- Leverage existing grants and community support when fundraising

## PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT: CREATING AND MAINTAINING A NETWORK OF SUPPORT

- Explore the community landscape to identify potential partners
- Define partnership levels and the benefits and responsibilities associated with each
- Coordinate the work of partnering arts providers
- Work to make the school district an active partner

## DESIGNING AND DELIVERING HIGH QUALITY INTEGRATED ARTS EDUCATION

- Develop a theory of arts integration and a plan for delivering it to the classroom
- Align arts education programming with state or district standards
- Use professional development to build strong relationships among classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists
- Collect data to measure progress and then document the work

## COMMUNICATIONS AND ADVOCACY ISSUES

- Design evidence-based communications and advocacy strategies
- Identify target audiences and communicate on their terms
- Engage community members and understand their values
- Enlist supporters as messengers

# Sharing the Lessons Learned Thus Far

## *An AEP Seminar for Ford Grantee Sites' Executive Directors*

June 9, 2007 • Oklahoma City, Oklahoma



### DIRECTORS

**Paul Ammon**

*Principal Investigator*  
Arts Education Initiative  
University of California,  
Berkeley

**Gigi Antoni**

*President/CEO*  
Big Thought  
Dallas, Texas

**Marsha Dobrzynski**

*Executive Director*  
Young Audiences of Northeast  
Ohio  
Cleveland, Ohio

**Varissa L. McMickens**

*Executive Director*  
DC Arts & Humanities  
Education Collaborative  
Washington, DC

**Louise Music**

*Project Director*  
Alameda County Alliance for  
Arts Learning Leadership  
Alameda County, California

**Trudy Palmer**

*Director*  
Interchange  
St. Louis, Missouri

**Joan Weber**

*Executive Director*  
Baltimore Partners for  
Enhanced Learning  
Baltimore, Maryland

**Susan Womack**

*Executive Director*  
Parents for Public Schools/  
Ask for More Arts  
Jackson, Mississippi

### AEP STAFF

**Richard J. Deasy**

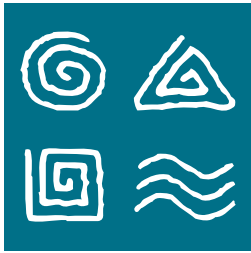
*Director*

**Andrew Nelson**

*Associate for Research and  
Policy*

**Sandra S. Ruppert**

*Senior Associate for Research  
and Policy*



## APPENDIX

# Profiles of the Collaboratives Participating in the Integrating the Arts and Education Reform Initiative

The following profiles of the Arts-Ed collaboratives are informed by their websites and printed materials, conversations with collaborative members, and the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning's collaborative progress reports.

## ALAMEDA COUNTY ALLIANCE FOR ARTS LEARNING LEADERSHIP

Convened and managed by the Alameda County Office of Education, the Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership (Alliance for ALL) is a network of school district officials, teachers, school administrators, and arts professionals that aims to “advance arts learning for all children in the county.”

One of the Alliance for ALL's several programs is the Arts Learning Anchor Schools Initiative, in which 31 schools in three districts work together to develop common frameworks for teaching and learning in the arts. These schools—and the Alliance for ALL as a whole—adopted Harvard Project Zero's *Studio Habits of Mind* and *Teaching for Understanding* frameworks as the foundation of their efforts. An arts learning, teaching, and coaching exchange allows teaching artists in the pilot schools to share strategies for improving arts teaching. Furthermore, principals of the pilot schools take part in professional development opportunities that focus on issues such as partnerships, assessment, and curriculum development.

The Alliance for ALL school districts also participate in the Model Arts Program (MAP) Network, which is a statewide initiative to assist district leaders in assessing and improving arts education programming. Each of Alameda County's 13 school districts has a MAP leader, and these individuals meet quarterly to discuss one another's efforts and to help the county office of education stay in touch with the districts' needs.

The Alliance for ALL's community engagement program, Art IS Education, connects various community members and promotes the idea that the arts are a key component of a child's education. The Art IS Education website promotes upcoming arts learning events for students as well as professional development opportunities for teachers. The collaborative's online Arts Active Parent Newsletter is printed in both English and Spanish and works to keep parents informed about arts education in the county's schools.

[www.artiseducation.org](http://www.artiseducation.org)



## THE ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Hosted at the University of California at Berkeley's Graduate School of Education, the Arts Education Initiative (AEI) is a consortium of six California institutions of higher learning and one K-5 demonstration site. With a planning grant from The Ford Foundation, AEI was formed in 2003 and its partner institutions have since worked to infuse arts education into their preservice curricula so that their education students graduate with a firm foundation for the practice of teaching and school leadership, including the ability to effectively support integrated arts methods in the classroom. AEI also strives to provide preservice education students with field placements where they can experience arts-integrated approaches to instruction. Beyond its own partner institutions, AEI is also working to promote arts integration in the education of teachers at colleges and universities throughout California and beyond.

While AEI members use Harvard Project Zero's *Studio Habits of Mind* and *Teaching for Understanding* as frameworks to guide their work, each partner institution is developing multiple strategies for adding integrated arts instruction to its preservice curriculum. The institutions convene on a monthly basis to discuss ideas and strategies and share practices. Among these strategies are professional development opportunities for teacher education faculty to teach integrated arts methods and to use integrated arts methods themselves in teaching the foundations of educational practice.

AEI also awards mini-grants to its partner institutions to take on specific arts integration projects. For example, Humboldt State University (HSU) formed a partnership with the arts-based Civicorps Elementary School (CES), in which HSU Elementary Education students have the opportunity to student teach at CES. Some HSU students also have year-long paid teaching internships at CES.

<http://gse.berkeley.edu/outreach/aei/aei.html>

## ASK FOR MORE ARTS COLLABORATIVE

The Ask for More Arts Collaborative (AFMA) in Jackson, Mississippi works to “integrate the arts into Jackson Public Schools (JPS) elementary classrooms, enrich the lives of families through increased exposure to the arts, and strengthen public value for the arts and arts education.” AFMA was created in 2005 with an implementation grant from The Ford Foundation. The Jackson parent advocacy organization Parents for Public Schools serves as the collaborative's managing partner. AFMA created a school-based integrated arts program that has been implemented in 18 of the 38 elementary schools in the district. In this model, the principal and teachers of each pilot school work together to determine how the arts will be integrated into their existing curriculum.

A key component of AFMA's program is professional development opportunities that include both intensive arts integration training by the Mississippi Arts Commission Whole Schools Institute and sessions facilitated by JPS teachers who are successfully integrating the arts in their classrooms. A planning team of teachers, principals, and district administrators meets on a regular basis to design monthly professional development workshops for teachers that focus on integrated arts strategies. These workshops are thematic—each one focuses on a non-arts subject such as reading, math or science—and are aligned with the JPS curriculum and pacing guides.

A high level of involvement at the school level also led to district support of AFMA. AFMA has regularly scheduled meetings with the superintendent and the district adopted some teaching tools developed by AFMA's pilot schools and encouraged their use in all elementary schools.

In partnership with the Mississippi Museum of Art (MMA) and local artists, AFMA created the LifeShards community arts project, which attracts a diverse mix of local families and provides quality arts experiences for all ages. LifeShards meets monthly at the MMA to engage families in creating works of art.

[http://www.jackson.k12.ms.us/departments/curriculum/ask4more/ask4more\\_arts.htm](http://www.jackson.k12.ms.us/departments/curriculum/ask4more/ask4more_arts.htm)





## BALTIMORE PARTNERS FOR ENHANCED LEARNING

Formed in 2004 with a planning grant from The Ford Foundation, Baltimore Partners for Enhanced Learning is an arts education collaborative whose mission is to “lead a community-wide collaborative effort using Baltimore’s arts, cultural, educational and leadership resources as the vehicles to transform Baltimore’s middle grade schools into powerful learning communities.” Partners in the collaborative include local arts and culture organizations, area businesses and the City of Baltimore. Baltimore Partners also signed a Memo of Understanding with Baltimore Public School System (BPSS) in which the school district agrees to provide funding to Baltimore Partners and a variety of supports to the organization’s work in the city’s middle schools. BPSS also has designated Baltimore Partners as an important collaborator as part of its Fine Arts Master Plan.

Baltimore Partners is developing a multi-faceted arts education program for middle school students that aims to provide both in-depth integrated arts experiences and access to a large number of arts education opportunities in the community. One component of the program is integrated arts instruction that takes place in five pilot schools. In these “leadership schools,” non-arts teachers and teaching artists from area arts organizations work in pairs to design and deliver 10-day integrated arts units tied to the district curriculum. Baltimore Partners also offers professional development opportunities that give classroom teachers and teaching artists the tools needed to work as a team to develop and teach the units and assess their work.

In addition, Baltimore Partners is developing an online database that will list the education opportunities offered by the city’s arts and culture organizations. Teachers in the middle school will be able to use this database to choose arts education experiences for students. Baltimore Partners will provide schools with funding to pay for these opportunities.

[www.baltimorepartners.org](http://www.baltimorepartners.org)

## CLEVELAND INTEGRATED ARTS COLLABORATIVE

In March 2004, Young Audiences of Northeast Ohio (YANEO) used a planning grant from The Ford Foundation to form the Cleveland Integrated Arts Collaborative (CIAC)—a coalition of more than 30 arts and culture organizations dedicated to using the arts to improve educational outcomes for Cleveland’s students.

With YANEO as managing partner, CIAC developed a curriculum-based approach to integrated arts education. A group of classroom teachers, arts specialists, and staff from participating arts organizations developed a curriculum that infuses a variety of art forms into the district’s third-grade English Language Arts curriculum. The goal of this curriculum is to improve students’ knowledge of the art forms implemented and to help them meet state standards in the English Language Arts. With the support of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District (CMSD), CIAC successfully piloted its curriculum in 19 third-grade classrooms in the spring of 2007.

CIAC also provides third-grade teachers with integrated arts professional development opportunities such as a YANEO’s annual summer institute and after school workshops led by teaching artists that focus on the English Language Arts curriculum.

[www.artiseducationcleveland.org](http://www.artiseducationcleveland.org)

<http://www.yaneo.org/what/artisedu.html>

## DALLAS ARTS LEARNING INITIATIVE

In 2003, the Ford Foundation awarded a three-year grant to Dallas ArtsPartners, laying the foundation for what is now a city-wide arts learning partnership. The Dallas Arts Learning Initiative (DALI), formed in 2007, is an expansion of Dallas ArtsPartners, which integrates community arts and cultural programs into every Dallas public elementary school.

DALI is a partnership of the City of Dallas, Dallas Independent School District (Dallas ISD), the Wallace Foundation, and local arts and cultural organizations. DALI's goal is to raise the quality of and access to arts learning for all children and teens in Dallas, both in and out of school. Big Thought, a non-profit creative learning organization, serves as the collaborative's managing partner.

DALI began working in three neighborhood hubs in 2007; six additional hubs will be added over the next three years. DALI's goal is to coordinate the abundant arts opportunities that already exist in the city's neighborhoods while finding new ways to enhance and better those experiences. DALI also provides parents with the tools and information they need to learn more about arts education and to advocate for additional resources.

In the city's schools, DALI's purpose is to provide increased arts education experiences for students and to improve the quality of existing arts education opportunities. In 2006, Dallas ISD made the commitment to provide all elementary school students with 45 minutes of arts instruction per week in both visual arts and music. Furthermore, Dallas ISD is adding 140 additional certified art and music specialists to district schools.

DALI's third component is to partner Dallas ISD schools with arts and culture organizations to integrate the arts with other school subjects. Building on Ford Foundation's significant investment in Dallas ArtsPartners, the goal of these integrated arts experiences is to increase student's knowledge of both the non-arts subject and the art form that they are studying.

<http://www.bigthought.org>

<http://www.dallasartslearning.org>

## DC ARTS & HUMANITIES EDUCATION COLLABORATIVE

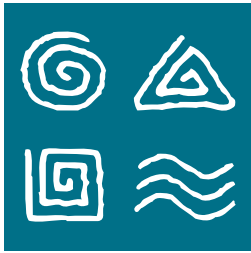
Formed in 1998, the DC Arts & Humanities Collaborative (DC Collaborative) is a community based-coalition of arts and cultural organizations, schools, businesses, and individuals that "works to promote quality arts and humanities education for all DC public and chartered public schools for the growth of the whole child." With funding from The Ford Foundation, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities and others, the Arts Education Initiative (AEI) is a DC Collaborative project that works with area schools to meet the DC Collaborative's goals.

The foundation of AEI is its *Arts Education Continuum*—a theory of arts education that combines arts experiences, arts learning, and arts integration. Using the continuum to guide its work, the DC Collaborative partners with eight schools that will serve as models for arts integration as a vehicle for school reform. Teachers and principals in these schools participate in professional development opportunities such as the DC Collaborative's Arts Education Summer Institute, where they develop integrated arts units and work with arts consultants and teaching artists to explore techniques for integrating the arts into their classrooms.

Other components of AEI include communications work to garner community support for arts education, the development of a strategic community advocacy plan, and the creation of an arts education plan being developed with the support of DC Public Schools and the Office of the State Superintendent for Education. The plan includes district standards for music, dance, theater, and the visual arts.

[www.dccollaborative.org](http://www.dccollaborative.org)





## INTERCHANGE

Created in 2004 by the Center of Creative Arts (COCA) in St. Louis, Interchange is a coalition of arts and culture organizations that works “to improve the academic achievement of St. Louis Public Schools students by providing them with an expanded arts integrated curriculum.”

Currently, Interchange provides arts-integrated programming to 1,400 children from pre-kindergarten to 8th grade. Programs range from short-term residencies and in-school performances to trips to theaters and museums.

Future programming will build on lessons learned in the pilot year. Interchange plans to emphasize professional development in order to deeply embed arts learning in the school culture and curriculum and to introduce a new program delivery structure that encourages longer-term engagement for both teachers and students. All teachers in new Interchange schools will be actively engaged in program design choices. With a focus on creative thinking and flexibility for both teachers and students, Interchange will not set guidelines for classroom content or lesson design, but will instead provide teachers with the resources they need to create the arts-integrated instruction best suited to their own students and contexts. It is the goal of Interchange to create a strong, district-wide understanding and support of arts-integrated learning.

Interchange staff will recruit teaching artists through collaborative partner organizations. These “Interchange Teams” of three to five artists will be in residence in the school for the full academic year, providing teachers and students with sustained contact and assistance. As a means to support and sustain teachers’ professional development throughout the school year, Classroom Coaches—experienced educators and former educators—will serve as mentors and coaches for program teachers. One classroom coach will be assigned to each school and will visit classrooms regularly to help teachers adapt concepts gained during training sessions for classroom use, help “troubleshoot” lessons or units and assist in identifying potential improvements, and help facilitate interactions among teachers and teaching artists across program schools.

[www.interchangestlouis.org](http://www.interchangestlouis.org)

*For more information about the Arts-Ed collaboratives, visit [www.keepartsinschools.org](http://www.keepartsinschools.org). With funding from The Ford Foundation, Douglas Gould and Company developed and manages Keep Arts in Schools, a website dedicated to promoting the arts as a crucial component of the education system.*

## Arts Education Partnership

*The Arts Education Partnership is a national coalition of arts, education, business, philanthropic and government organizations that demonstrates and promotes the essential role of arts education in the learning and development of every child and in the improvement of America’s schools. The Partnership includes more than 100 organizations that are national in scope and impact. It also includes state and local partnerships focused on influencing education policies and practices to promote quality arts education.*

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