

Designing the Arts Learning Community: a Handbook for K-12 Professional Development Planners



Synthesizing extensive research of arts education practice across the United States, this handbook is a guide to designing arts education professional development for K-12 classroom teachers and provides a searchable database of 50 arts learning communities. Explore this interactive resource online or [click here](#) to download the full handbook.

How to Begin [▶](#)

Start by orienting yourself. What is an arts learning community? What are the Big Ideas guiding the field?

Assess Your Need [▶](#)

Take a moment to reflect. Inquiry is at the heart of professional development. Where are you and your teachers now? Where do you want to take arts education in your schools?

Explore the Handbook [▶](#)

Read the guide to find which chapters will serve your professional development goals and circumstances. Then explore, reading some chapters and browsing others. Take detours into the recommended tools, bibliographic sources, or model programs.

Search the Models [▶](#)

Go deeper to explore how the characteristics, structures, findings and lessons from existing arts learning communities inform your professional development practice.

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To Learn More:
Project Background
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How to Begin

Assess Your Need | Explore the Handbook

This handbook is both a guide and a reference resource for professional development planners for K-12 arts education. It is based on extensive research of arts education practice across the United States. The results of the research have been synthesized into a series of chapters to help you design professional development that meets the needs of your arts learning community.

What exactly is an arts learning community? An arts learning community is a group of people who, sharing common values and beliefs, are actively engaged in working on, examining, sharing and improving educational practices supporting instruction in music, dance, theatre and visual arts. The arts learning community may focus on students internalizing the skills, processes, and concepts of a particular arts discipline. It could also concern itself with how arts can help students learn content across the curriculum

The arts education workforce providing young people with learning experiences in and through the arts has many faces. Educators from within schools and individuals from across the community may participate.

In building an arts learning community, consider:

- Aides and paraprofessionals
- Arts and cultural organization educators
- Arts educators (pre-K- 12) in and out of your system
- Arts teacher professional associations
- Classroom teachers learning to include arts
- Community members who know young people, particular cultures, and how to connect them
- District level arts, curriculum, and assessment specialists
- Entertainment and arts-related businesses
- Governmental agency personnel involved in arts, education or community development
- Higher education researchers and professors preparing upcoming teachers and artists
- Legislators and state officials
- Parents, parent associations, and families
- Philanthropic officers
- Principals and superintendents
- Retired arts teachers
- School board members
- Social services workers
- Special educators
- Students and student groups
- Teaching artists

As your arts learning community moves forward, emerging themes from research provide useful insights. Consider these ideas while charting the arts education professional development path for your specific circumstances.

Keep students at the core. Keep students, their work, and their learning journeys front and center. Help educators find ways to practice applying what they learn to their work with students. Check your professional development priorities and look for evidence that the students benefit. Involve students and recent graduates as partners in the learning community; they have tremendous insight into teacher effectiveness. Young people can inform the design of learning systems or co-teach in institutes.

Grapple with performance-based assessment. The ongoing work of crafting useful assessment of learning in and through the arts provides rich and meaningful professional development. Grappling with authentic performance along with more standardized assessment helps communities internalize the transitions in student work as young people develop proficiency. Teachers, partners and students understand what proficiency looks and feels like.

Encourage teachers to lead. True professional growth is ongoing. Provide opportunities for educators and their partners to ask questions about their practice, discover answers and resources, and apply what they learn to their teaching and leadership. Empower educators to lead, organize, plan, communicate, advocate and shape policy. Teacher-driven professional development taps educators to no longer be just “beneficiaries” as they co-construct systems that meet the needs of teachers and students. Master teachers lead formal development, sometimes working in partnership with valued partners, and the community develops ways to assess the learning.

Tap arts processes. Arts integration also works for adult learners. Arts education professional development can tap arts processes that bring people together and build community. The powerful content innate to arts learning can help people focus on each other, creating a productive adult learning environment. Educators learn and use arts content to create a productive learning mindset.

Think systemically. Plan to cultivate multiple levels of support with teachers, district and school administrators, elected officials, and state leadership. Then, look externally for potent community allies. Teachers benefit from advocates creating space, time, and incentives for them to risk changing their practice and trying new ways of teaching. Consider whole school professional development for greater sustainability of a permissive, arts-infused learning community.

Continually adapt and improve. Once you’ve built a structure and program, prepare to knock it down and build it all over again. Structures are subject to what’s needed to adapt to changing student and educator needs. Combine inquiry with leadership to support flexible structures and adult learning opportunities. Continued adaptation helps the professional development remain relevant to the changing learning community.

With these big ideas from the field in mind, take some time to reflect on the arts education professional development needs in your school and district. The **Assess Your Need** section can help guide your thinking.

Assess Your Need

[How to Begin](#) | [Explore the Handbook](#)

Take a moment to write and reflect on the following questions:

- What is the current state of arts education professional development in your school system? What classroom instruction is happening? What professional development is happening?
- Who are your current partners in supporting and delivering instruction in dance, music, theatre and visual arts?
- What school or district goals have been set for the coming year?
- What are your community's current strengths?
- In what areas is more work needed?
- What are some of the root issues underlying these challenges?
- What additional information or evidence is needed to better understand the needs of the community?
- What values around arts education does your community holds?
- If you could do one thing over the next year that would improve arts education professional development, what would that be?
- What knowledge, skills or resources do you need to move forward?

Handbook Guide

How to Begin | Assess Your Need

This handbook is divided into 7 chapters. Each chapter includes a section on Lessons Learned, Promising Practices and Useful Tools. The Your Turn section at the end of each chapter offers reflective questions to help you map your next steps. Print an entire chapter by using the printer icon in the upper right corner. Where you enter this resource depends on your own goals and circumstances. (Visit [Assess Your Need](#) to help define your goals.)

This quick guide will help you find your best entry point.

Inquire: *How can systematic inquiry strengthen arts education professional development?*

When the educators and other members of your learning community ask questions and seek to improve their practice, they have more investment in finding out the answers. When educators and administrators design professional development opportunities around such relevant questions, they encourage continuous improvement. Inquiry sits at the heart of the deeper arts learning communities, offering renewal.

Plan: *How can developing a vision and a plan help improve teaching in or through the arts?*

Planning offers an important opportunity to bring a learning community together to develop goals, objectives, and timelines and to challenge communities to commit to a long-term process to create change.

Rally: *How can building collaborations with others in and out of schools strengthen teachers' capacities to offer arts education?*

For some communities, change depends on creating coalitions with diverse groups working together toward a common purpose. Some communities have a variety of stakeholders ready to support the school system. How can these resources of interested community members be optimized so that their involvement benefits teachers and students?

Deepen: *How can arts education professional development be deepened to serve the unique needs of novice, specialist and generalist teachers?*

With a plan in place and partners on board, you may seek strategies for deepening existing professional development to support your teachers. Perhaps you're trying to combat arts specialist isolation. Or, you aim to connect specialists and generalists teaching the arts across schools, disciplines, and various levels of standards implementation.

Connect: *How can high quality professional development translate theory into classroom practice in authentic, meaningful ways?*

Professional development is only effective if teachers connect it back to their classroom. What strategies can be a part of your professional development plan to help teachers bridge the gap between theory and practice?

Transform: *How can arts-based professional development be an integral part of education reform?*

Arts education professional development can be a catalyst for education reform. It's not just about helping teachers who teach the arts, but changing whole systems. If you have education administrators, stakeholders, and partners prepared to commit to a sustained effort, this may be your entry point.

Sustain: *How can the professional growth of an arts education community be supported over time?*

New challenges arise as a community evolves and expands. How can the efforts be maintained over leadership, funding or policy shifts? How can the members of the community continue to be invested beyond the initial waves of interest?

Inquire

Strategies From General Education

How can systematic inquiry strengthen arts education professional development?

Wonder about your work. Ask the burning question. Inquiry is at the heart of professional development. It provides direction and focus. By reflecting on what helps teachers and students learn and systematically seeking answers, you can improve the structure of your professional development. Inquiry can help you plan the professional development framework. You assess needs and find out more about teachers' current capacities and interests while envisioning possibilities. A culture of inquiry helps educators, their partners and supporters connect the dots among professional development, teacher growth, and student learning.

In inquiry-based learning communities, the boundaries blur between professional developer and educator as well as between teacher and student. Everyone contributes to collective learning and improved education. Teachers participating in professional development actively craft the learning community, the questions, and ultimately, help colleagues and students grow. With ongoing professional development and a culture seeking continuous improvement, periods of planning and implementation in inquiry-based communities flow together and are flexible.

The burning question may look at your process and help you adapt your approach. **Example:** *How can we better support teachers when we're not meeting face-to-face?*

You might ask a summative question to help you take stock. "Did we or didn't we?" **Example:** *To what extent are students developing dance literacy from our classroom teachers' arts integration?*

The inquiry cycle for educators

Ask, explore, find out something, contemplate what you find, adapt accordingly and ask again.

When teachers pursue the answers to thoughtful questions about their practice and are ready to use what they find out, it's sometimes called 'action research.' Questions could include, "How can I measure and improve student music skills when choral work takes place in groups?"

The inquiry cycle for professional development designers

Ask, apply answers to inform structure, implement, collect data, reflect, apply changes, and ask again.

When people planning professional development ask questions about the services and broader learning community, it may be called evaluation or research, depending on the question's scope. Questions could include, "How effective are we in delivering the services we intended?" And, "What differences has it made for students?"

Strategies from General Education

In general education, inquiry, data and research are common themes. They help keep professional development focused on student learning and teacher growth. Helpful approaches include:

- Research-informed professional development strategies grounded in theory and practice
- Data monitoring of professional development effects on teaching and student learning including tracking dispersed data to encourage a focus on all student.
- Evaluating professional development quality through multiple information sources, enabling designers to adapt to differences in teacher and student learning.
- Employing user-friendly distillations of research to help educators apply that research to daily practice.
- Empowering teachers to embrace research-based instructional approaches and assessment that can help students meet rigorous academic standards.

See McREL Insights Professional Development Analysis, National Staff Development Council, Westchester for Human Services Research.

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Promising Practices: *Inquiry* | *Strategies*

The inquiry-based arts learning communities referenced in this handbook talk about renewal. Excitement for teaching and learning expands over time rather than wanes. Individuals in inquiry-based learning communities pursue their own questions as well as broader questions formulated by the collaborative group. At the same time, these communities study teachers and students' deepening understanding. In inquiry-based learning communities, assessment transcends the common culture around standardized testing. Assessing student work unites community members around common goals and leads to framing overarching questions arising from practitioners' needs. Strategies for adopting inquiry-based approaches include broadening the community to include external partners, developing 'low stakes' environments that encourage risk taking, and using process results to increase transparency and public engagement.

Inquiry-Based Professional Development

Arizona Artist Teacher Institute

Traveling institutes for rural educators teach classroom teachers how to reflect on arts-making processes, while helping them learn to teach dance and theatre.

Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators

Annual weeklong institute for arts specialists focuses on areas of need and interest identified by evaluator partner. While teaching about authentic assessment, it also gives educators multiple opportunities to assess and analyze the institute itself, adapting mid-course as needed.

Perpich Center for Performing Arts

Arts Quality Teaching Networks: Minnesota teachers involved with this network develop research questions about their practice during their first year with the group. Over the second and third years, they design and use assessment tools to help collect information to answer that question. Their network colleagues serve as sounding boards; each network meeting has time for formal and informal discussion. At the end of the school year, the full network breaks into small groups of four to five people. Each teacher spends 15 minutes presenting their investigation and findings to their group. The network facilitators provide prompts to help guide both the sharing and ensuing discussions.

Center for Arts Education (CAE)

This large New York City network of classroom teachers, arts specialists, principals and district administrators, teaching artists, and arts education administrators started off grappling with authentic assessment of learning in and through the arts. The questions continue to change over time. Among the veteran members of their learning communities- including Center staff and longtime school-cultural community partnerships—questions like, “What does it mean?”; “How do we do it?” and “How do we know what works?” have gradually shifted to “What protocols do we need to capture and authentically assess student performances?”; “What do we need to know about media to well document student work—in dance, in theatre--so that we can assess the learning after it is long over?”; and “How can we adapt protocols that are useful in looking at and reflecting on the visual arts for use in the performing arts?” While trying to find ways to assess the effects of cultural partnerships, the network moved the whole community forward into a deeper discussion of student work.

Inquiry Strategies and Results

It takes time to see the growth of the inquiry-based learning community. Over time, inquiry produces a pathway of data that makes it very easy to chart and share growth with others and galvanize support for continued improvement.

Inquiry Strategy	Sample Learning Communities	Results
<p>Long-term partnership with research(s) to both evaluate and study more general questions</p>	<p>A+ schools</p> <p>Big Thought and Dallas Public Schools</p> <p>Comprehensive Arts Education</p> <p>Discipline-Based Arts Education (DBAE)</p>	<p>The long term commitment to rigorous looking helps build the learning community: teachers and partners become better able to recognize and document educational progress. These partnerships helps the learning community improve professional development over time.</p>
<p>Develop or link to existing assessment networks to answer "How can we better assess student learning in or through the arts?"</p>	<p>Arts as Basic Curriculum (ABC)</p> <p>Washington State's Classroom-Based Performance Assessments</p>	<p>The asking of the question and deep looking at student work can improve teacher practice.</p> <p>Using authentic assessments inclusive of arts learning and more complex skill sets provides a better picture of student learning and change in arts infused and arts education.</p>
<p>Support teachers in pursuing action research (i.e. teachers answer questions then use what they find out)</p>	<p>ArtsSmart Institute</p> <p>Perpich Center for the Performing Arts</p> <p>Wisconsin Arts Assessment Project</p>	<p>Educators pursuing individual action research questions can help each other refine the inquiry or understand the findings. Small discussion groups sharing and discussing their questions and findings-in-progress on a regular basis can develop the quality of interaction needed to help the whole group grow.</p>
<p>Develop or utilize specific inquiry protocol for the learning community to help educators and others improve their practices.</p>	<p>Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE)</p> <p>Perpich Center for Performing Arts</p> <p>Traverse City Area Public Schools & (Harvard) Project Zero: Artful Thinking</p>	<p>Educators involved as teacher leaders help other colleagues learn. Specific protocols simplify, clarify and standardize the shape of the process. Prompts linked to questions of teacher interest give a framework for teachers to move more deeply into improving practice with increased ownership and investment in the process.</p>

Lessons Learned

Focus on student work. Looking deeply at student work with a group of colleagues is professional development. Learning happens while educators work together to develop and adapt tools to help them teach and understand what students are learning. When whole networks work on these questions, well structured groups can develop a shared language about the kind of learning that can take place in and through the arts. See [Center for Arts Education \(CAE\)](#), [Vermont MIDI Project](#).

Let teachers' questions drive inquiry. When teachers' burning questions drive inquiry, they may be willing to put in the extra time to find out the answers. See [Perpich Center for Performing Arts](#), [Traverse City Area Public Schools](#).

Develop a theory of action. Sketch the sequence of events that you think will happen. How will the professional development affect teachers? What will teachers be able to do as a result? How will that change the learning environment for students? What will students be able to do as a result? Your theory of action can help you look for the intermediate steps along the way, to reveal whether you are moving towards your intended result in the way you imagined. Your ideas about this sequence may evolve as you reflect on actual events. See [ArtsSmart Institute for Learning](#), [Perpich Center for Performing Arts](#).

Read, internalize and use evaluation of professional development to improve the program. Otherwise, it's a report on the shelf, a tool for public relations or a tremendous amount of money missing the mark. When the information changes hands but doesn't enter heads, no practices change, leaving improvement to individual idea and chance.

Energize learning communities through long-term research partnerships. Communities trying to change teacher practice who collaborated with long-term research-based partners learned how to think like researchers. Teachers, administrators, secondary and post-secondary students and partners internalize the questions and learn to identify and make sense of evidence. Groups work together to share that evidence with others in the community and the public. See [Big Thought: A Learning Partnership](#), [Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education \(CAPE\)](#), [Traverse City Area Public Schools](#).

Allow outside eyes to improve the quality of knowledge about teaching and practice. What we think we know may change when others help us see. Arts Connection's video assessment protocols helped teachers and their partners step back from the experience and examine teaching and learning in a new way. Looking through the eyes of the group helped a teacher see past her personality bias to recognize the strengths of a student involved in storytelling. What may have been seen initially as too much talking looked gregarious and engaging with the help of the assessment team ([Arts Connection](#)).

Make the evaluator an early partner in the work. A researcher/evaluator who joins the team of planners early in the process can help integrate reflection into the professional development program itself. With a long-term commitment, the evaluator can help the program shift, change, grow or reduce, all the while moving closer towards its intended goals. When evaluators come in midway, opportunities to align design and data capture may be lost. See [Big Thought: A Learning Partnership](#), [Perpich Center for Performing Arts](#).

Use critical friends to help stay on track. Whether gained from a formal evaluation or interaction with critical friends, feedback from knowledgeable people outside of your learning community can help you see the work differently. If your original theory of action or goals overreached the possible, outside perspective can help you see how to reformulate your approach. See [Comprehensive Arts Education](#), Perpich Center for Performing Arts.

Practice and refine developing skills with a partner. Work with a partner who can observe, trade places, share in the experimentation and debrief. See [Arts Impact & Puget Sound Education Service District](#), [ArtsLit: The Arts Literacy Project](#), [Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education \(CAPE\)](#).

Involve stakeholders in the process. Think creatively about how your diverse stakeholders can be involved and incorporate this into your ongoing learning community discussions/work. The educators, administrators, artists, parents, activists, and students in your network can be much more than people you serve. Beyond shaping original questions, they can help you improve professional development. See [ArtsLit: The Arts Literacy Project](#), [A+ Schools](#), [Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators](#).

Useful Tools

Artful Thinking

Protocols and processes to help develop thinking habits and capacities.

See specifically: Thinking Routines, Teacher Think Track

Arts PROPEL : An Introductory Handbook

Winner, Ellen. Harvard Project Zero, 1991.

Protocols for facilitating student-directed arts learning. A collaborative framework for approaching the pathways to learning the arts.

Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI)

Tool rating levels of arts integration based on the inquiry process of teachers and researchers.

Critical Links: A Professional Inquiry Process

Online facilitated guide to action research in arts and education practice.

Chicago Arts Partners in Education Planning and Assessment Tools

Research-based practices simplified into user-friendly checklists for educators and their partners.

Moving Toward a Culture of Evidence: Documentation and Action Research Inside CAPE Veteran Partnerships

Burnafor, Gail. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, 2006.

Report on CAPE partnerships that have a developed arts integration practice and have made a multiple-year, collective commitment to documentation and action research.

Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts integration and Meaningful Learning

Burnafor, Gail et.al., eds. Lawrence Erlbaum and Associates, 2001.

Frameworks, advice, checklists, rubrics, CAPE case studies on developing arts education partnerships that make a difference for teachers, schools, and students.

Wisconsin Arts Assessment Project: A Guide to Connected Curriculum and Action Research

Peppard, Julie. Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction, 1997.

A guide to action research that helps teachers investigate their teaching practices with the goal of improving student learning.

Your Turn

- What is my burning question about teaching and learning?
- What is the arts learning community's current question about improving teaching practice?
- If the arts learning community could look at only one question for the next three years, what would it be?
- What information and tools do I already have that can help me answer that? (e.g., peer observations, partner reports, teacher journals or papers for prior classes, faculty presentations, student final projects, student achievement scores, student conference notes, individualized education plans).
- What other information or tools could help?
- What structures will I use for teachers to engage in inquiry? (e.g. networks, partnerships, protocols)
- Who could help me make sense of this? (e.g., colleagues in same discipline, different discipline; education administrator, artist partner, arts organization partner, mentor, retired educator in same discipline, parent with arts skills)
- What will teachers be able to do as a result?
- How will that change the learning environment for students?
- What will students be able to do as a result?

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Plan

Building the Plan

How can developing a vision and a plan help improve teaching in or through the arts?

Developing a vision is professional development. Think beyond what's being done today. From general education, researchers Hyde and Pink recommend a shift in the way we think about professional development. In their cross-study analysis of the topic, they challenge us to stop thinking of professional development as a series of activities and consider it a consistent component of a cohesive plan for long-term change. They challenge communities to commit to a long-term process, both to plan and to change.

Envisioning new possibilities can happen at any level. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education Director Arnold Aprill asserts, "The actual collaboration and co-planning between people of different expertises is a significant piece of the professional development." Planning for stronger arts education can be done on a large scale where colleagues, communities, even states from across the country come together in framed discussions to articulate a shared vision. Or, it can happen on a very small scale, as an educator-mentor pair or a study group of colleagues imagine change in classes across a school. Much like the individual educational planning meetings in special education, big thinking can also involve the student.

Articulate your shared philosophy and belief systems. The commonly used intensive institute that brings together the whole learning community offers the opportunity to build a shared vision and language. In some learning communities, the institute seeks to help teachers learn and arrive at a particular philosophy. If they adopt the approach, an important part of their understanding is comprehending the assumptions underlying that philosophy. The time together, away from the regular day-to-day work, can help educators step back, think, learn and consider how these ideas merge with their own conceptions. See [HOT Schools](#).

When planning, bring together the people who care about and can be involved in change. Educators involved in large scale planning efforts have the professional development opportunity to take charge of their learning. If their input is included and honored, they can help structure learning plans and environments while also developing their own leadership skills. See [Arts Education Collaborative](#).

Within your arts learning community, develop your shared vision and chart how to get there. When figuring out your strategy, refer back to your vision. Ask "What needs to happen to make this a reality?" Maximize group assets by jointly selecting areas to strengthen while being clear and upfront about your challenges. Together, you can plan, implement, and revise your strategies.

Building the Plan

Planning offers an important opportunity to link to your inquiry process. Are you asking questions that will help you move closer to your vision? Perhaps you've collected information already that can shed some light on progress and the possible. What have you been able to do already? How did you achieve it? Identify the road bumps. Imagine what you can do differently to move closer to your goals and objectives.

When developing a plan, consider charting some or all of the following:

- **Credo:** A written belief shared by the group or coalition of people/ organizations participating in the professional development. It's a starting point for your assumptions. Post it everywhere, as if it were the mission of an organization.
- **Goals:** Key threads. These are the commitments that arise from your belief system.
- **Objectives:** The smaller, measurable steps that move you toward your goals.
- **Implementation Plans:** Sequential timeline of action steps. Ongoing planning sits at the center of inquiry and implementation.

With key driving questions in mind, your learning community can plan to collect information on indicators, and develop a baseline, even before beginning or changing professional development. When putting the plan to work, monitoring this information can help you adapt, both now and in later plans.

Keep in mind this work takes time, discussion, and willingness to give and take. But, it can be well worth it. Hammering out goals, objectives, and timelines can bring a learning community together when its members share commitment to the most important areas.

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Promising Practices: *Arts First Partners (Hawai'i) | Rhode Island Arts Learning Network | Additional Planning Models*

Across the country, learning communities are charting the path to strengthen the quality and availability of fine and performing arts education. Some plan to improve schools by situating arts in the center of learning. In keeping with a culture of inquiry, communities consider the planning and implementation of professional development as works-in-progress, whether they've been working on it for a year or a decade.

ARTS FIRST (Hawai'i): Partner's Responsibilities | Results

In 1999, the Hawaii State Legislature mandated a collaborative planning process to create a strategic plan for arts education across the state. In 2001, the resulting plan brought together the state arts agency, department of education, two higher education institutions, the alliance for arts education, the association of independent schools and a handful of cultural not-for-profit organizations into an arts education coalition called ARTS FIRST Partners.

The overarching vision for improvement of arts education in the state uses development of a standards-based arts curriculum and professional development as a key change strategy. Codified by legislature approval, the plan helps each partner integrate their missions, resources and opportunities to create a web of policy and professional development that supports changes in schools. Each partner takes the lead in implementing specific parts of the plan.

Partner's Responsibilities

Lead Partner	Professional Development Responsibility
Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts	Convening partners, oversees planning process.
University of Hawai'i at Manoa, College of Arts and Humanities; University of Hawai'i at Manoa, College of Education	Evaluation and research on changes to teachers, students, and schools. Linkage to pre-service educators and internships to expand arts teaching capacity.
Hawai'i Alliance for Arts Education Affiliates: Maui Arts & Cultural Center Honolulu Theatre for	Build ARTS FIRST K-5 Essential Toolkit: Guide to help K-5 classroom educators teach standards-based arts curricula and integrate arts with other subjects. Adopted by Department of Education as official supplement and by higher education partners as required text. Provide workshops and in-services across the state to help educators use

<p>Youth</p>	<p>Toolkit to teach arts. Summer educator institute, followed by mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-5: ARTS FIRST Toolkit • Secondary: Interdisciplinary lessons to help teach arts standards and link to other areas • Principals: linkage between arts integrated programs and Annual Yearly Progress requirements <p>Series of workshops through the year for teaching artists and teachers to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State standards usage in arts and other areas • Assessment • Classroom Management
<p>Hawai'i Department of Education; Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools</p>	<p>Guide revisions of state fine and performing arts standards.</p> <p>Provide on-going teacher professional development courses through their website on using the ARTS FIRST Toolkit K-5 as resource document, developing lesson plans.</p>

Results of Collaborative Plan

ARTS FIRST received federal funding to support two ongoing research and evaluation projects, studying effects on schools. Results include:

From pilot demonstration project, year two:

- Improved quality of teaching
- Richer artwork by students
- Higher test scores for third graders

From action research project with control groups:

- Arts integrated reading program improves learning in both cognitive and affective domains.
- Greatest growth consistently in students struggling with school.
- Teacher assessment and lesson delivery practice profoundly effected.

The partners continue to work together, pooling their shared knowledge, align services to the new arts standards, and revise the plan to adapt to changes, as part of the continuing evolution of their work.

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The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network

The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network arose from the Governor's Literacy in the Arts Task Force, charged in 1999 by Rhode Island Governor Lincoln A. Almond to examine and make policy recommendations about connections between arts and education reform. Convened by the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the highest level of representatives from these agencies sat with citizens culled from the networks of teachers, arts and culture, and higher education institutions to fulfill this charge. This task force spent a year gathering information, learning from researchers and promising practices in and out of their state to help them conceive research-based policies. As a result, Rhode Island overhauled policies and structures to include the knowledge and skills young people bring to the school environment from other arenas.

The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network emerged from the planning process as a facilitating coalition to link stakeholders and an increasingly widening circle of citizen stakeholders. Educators, community members, higher education representatives, parents, students and others continue to devise tools and strategies for helping schools, districts and teachers reorient to this more inclusive way of thinking. For instance, in-progress online tools and evidence expand outreach to engage more people in the ongoing planning and discussion. The online resource features rubrics for each art form, sample scoring sheets and a growing portfolio of student work. In addition, the coalition is mapping arts learning resources in schools and communities using geographic information system (GIS) technologies to provide location information for the range of arts learning resources for all including educators and the general public. Five geographic-specific, community-based representatives help bridge gaps between home, school, and community. Anyone with questions — teachers, students, parents, others — can speak with Regional Arts Representatives to help clarify policy changes, opportunities, and resources.

Everything is still in process, with continued planning and implementation. As they progress, educators, cultural workers, institutions, and agencies have started to change the way they do business. Schools, partners, and policymakers are learning to identify and be more sensitive to the arts learning already happening in communities.

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Additional Planning Models

Professional Development Strategy	Sample Learning Communities	What Can School Districts Learn from Them?
Small teacher - artist planning teams as professional development	Center for Arts Education (CAE) Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) New York City Department of Education	Strategies for helping generalists and arts specialists develop school - community arts learning community Incentives for principals to encourage planning teams Strategies for creating teams of arts partners working together with educators.
School district - cultural community arts education strategic planning	<i>Arts for All:</i> Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education New York City Department of Education	Realistic steps to take to create school district arts education coalition and plan Model blueprints for strong arts education for large school systems Professional development in context of large urban systems strengthening arts education Creating incentives for schools and teachers to plan for the arts
Needs assessment to develop professional development plan	<i>Arts for All:</i> Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education Prairie Visions: Nebraska Consortium for Arts Education and Statewide Arts Connection	Linking planning of arts education professional development to data Sample instruments for collecting information
Professional development services linked to master district arts plan	Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) and Civic Arts Education (CAE): ArtReach	Collaboration strategies with outside professional development partners
Intensive institutes for planning time for educators and whole school communities	Arts Impact & Puget Sound Education Service District A+ Schools	Strategies for and importance of sites and groups of educators planning how to adopt arts-based education reform approach.

	HOT Schools	
Whole learning community gatherings to reflect and plan	Vermont MIDI Project	Reflective adaptations to improve professional development through planning

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Lessons Learned

Planning communities share some of their insights from using planning to strengthen professional development.

Focus on student-centered learning. What changes need to happen for students to achieve our priority educational standards or learning goals in the arts and in other areas? What can professional development designers do to help teachers facilitate this learning? What can they do to help the other stakeholders who work with young people? Talk with students; find a way to bring their voices into the planning process. This may require a different kind of structure than those for including adult perspectives. Consider both the inspired students and the hard-to-reach students. *See Arts Literacy Project.*

Ensure significant and varied teacher participation. When professional development is created with teachers, teachers will have the investment needed to begin to make change. To the extent you can broaden this participation through committees, subcommittees, needs assessment and ongoing input, professional development will meet the needs of more teachers with greater success. *See Arts in Basic Curriculum Project, Washington State Classroom-based Performance Assessments.*

Start with a vision. Don't provide professional development to merely meet the district in-service day allocation. Instead, step back and figure out what's most helpful and important for you and your educators. Facilitate a conversation between teachers and partners, so they can collaborate in building a learning environment that works. *See ArtsLit: Arts Literacy Project, HOT Schools.*

Help teachers and their partners read and internalize relevant state standards. When teachers learn how to enter into these frameworks, they can find specific guidance. Help teachers and their partners use such frameworks to imagine what specific learning looks like. Be prepared to calm fears about standardization. The specific benchmarks, examples of student work and assessment tools that accompany these standards in some states can help educators and their partners plan beyond what they already know. *See Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), The California Arts Project (TCAP), Washington State Classroom-based Performance Assessments.*

Enable teachers to plan their individual journeys. Educators who teach the arts and take charge of their own professional development can clarify their growth path and learning needs. Ask, "What do you want to be able to do in your work? What are your big plans?" Music education researchers Colleen Conway and Paul Haack remind us that arts teachers often work in isolation, where their school-based professional development rarely takes into account arts-specific needs. Based on their studies of music teachers' needs, they recommend music specialists learn what overarching content and skills will be helpful in their work, such as organizational management. Then, identify people in the field who can help, whether music educators at a nearby district or colleagues from a conference.

Contemplate community context. The schools, the people, the place and its politics all matter. Involve allies beyond schools and cultural organizations to make professional development relevant to the environment. This not only helps strengthen the broader arts learning community, but helps potential partners understand what schools and teachers are doing. As a result, partners may better align their services to the context of schools. *See Alaska Arts Education Consortium, Big Thought: A Learning*

Partnership, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Kansas City, Kansas School District, Ysleta Independent School District.

Review relevant curricula. Does your district already have a curriculum in place for arts or integrated arts? If not, review existing curricula for relevance to your learning community. How will it need to be adapted to be aligned? What professional development needs arise from usage of this curricular approach? Identify people with content knowledge to help others become comfortable with the curriculum. *See Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County.*

Assess the needs and resources of your educators. What is currently taught and learned? What needs to change to improve how your students learn the curriculum? Data can help you look across individual needs and develop a composite understanding of what's needed and what could help. As a result, the decisions based on data will be less easily derailed by particularly opinionated divergent voices. *See Prairie Visions: Nebraska Consortium for Arts Education.*

Take advantage of useful planning tools. Use existing workbooks and planning tools to help facilitate the process. Refer to plans and blueprints from other communities, such as Los Angeles, Arkansas and New York City. *See Useful Tools.*

Write it down. Commit the vision to paper so your learning community will have a touchstone. Capture discussions, then summarize, take feedback, revise and share the written summation widely. Many communities post their vision, shared beliefs, and links to their plan on the homepage of their website. Make the vision a living document; update and amend it as the plan evolves. *See New York City Department of Education.*

Include policy makers at the beginning. Superintendents, elected officials, teacher union leaders and others with the ability to make change can be powerful allies. Take the time and energy to include them from the start so they are part of the process when the planning group agrees to certain steps. *See Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), Arts in Basic Curriculum Project.*

Plan while doing. Don't leave planning behind when you begin to implement. Instead, collect data and react to it in a continued planning process. Let what you learn help you revise strategies for helping teachers. Ensure teachers participate in the iterative planning process, as they will be able to best help you adapt to structures that really work.

Useful Tools

Artful Teaching and Learning Handbook

Thompson, Mary Jo and Becca Barniskis. ARTFUL Teaching & Learning, 2005.

A joint project of the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Perpich Center for Arts Education outlining a versatile arts education model for student achievement through the arts.

Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education

Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2004.

Provides guidance and an outline of how to achieve high quality arts education for K-12 public schools.

CAPE Arts Education Partnership Planning Guide at the School Level

A guide for teachers and administrators interested in long-term planning and leadership for arts integration.

For the Greater Good: A Framework for Advancing State Arts Education Partnerships

Ellis, Dawn M. and Craig Dreeszen. National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2003.

Shares, analyzes and summarizes five state-level arts education support networks' collective experience in advancing arts education.

A Guidebook for High Quality Professional Development in Arts Education

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2008

A user-friendly toolkit for designing and implementing professional development in the visual and performing arts to meet needs identified through "big picture" planning by schools, districts and counties.

Learning Partnerships Report and Workbook

Dreeszen, Craig et al. Arts Education Partnership, 1999.

A planning guide to Arts and Education collaboration that provides tools to create and enhance arts education partnerships.

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint(s) for Teaching and Learning in the Arts

The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts Prek-12 provides a standards-based, rigorous approach to teaching the arts.

The Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning

Burt, Margaret and Elizabeth Lindsley. California Alliance for Arts Education, 2001.

A hands-on, how-to Arts Education planning process for schools, districts and counties.

The Understanding by Design Handbook

McTighe, Jay and Grant Wiggins. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.

A framework for designing curriculum units, performance assessments, and instruction.

Your Turn

Developing a Vision

- In 3-5 years, what do you want to see in place for teachers and students?
- How would other stakeholders in your arts learning community answer this question?

Developing a Plan

- What are the action steps required to make the vision a reality? What is a realistic timeline?
- Assess the current status of professional development in your community. What are your strengths? What are your challenges?
- Who are the partners in the plan? What are their responsibilities?
- What resources will be needed?
- How will you begin to implement your plan once it is developed? What will be your starting point?
- How will you assess progress made towards achieving the vision? What are the measurable objectives?

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Rally

Partnerships | Networks | Cross-System Supports | Technology

How can building collaborations with others in and out of schools strengthen teachers' capacities to offer arts education?

Don't go it alone. People who teach and support the arts in schools and the community can fortify each other. Allies can help educators improve their capacities to teach in and through the arts. Whether within school, cross-community or around a region, meaningful collaboration with others can deepen professional development. Partners can season the mix of relationships within schools and districts, providing additional content as well as pedagogical and political expertise. Coalitions may change policies that individual entities cannot, creating more supportive systems for arts education learning and teacher professional development.

Good partnerships require persistence and patience. Understanding and trust may take time to establish... First-time partners may discover that they have only learned to work well by the time their initial joint venture is concluded. The next time they build upon their shared experience and achieve more.

- Learning Partnerships, Arts Education Partnership (Dreeszen, Aprill, and Deasy)

Creating a beneficial learning community with external partners, such as institutions of higher education, arts and cultural organizations or national art alliances, takes more than bringing people together. It requires time, investment and mutuality to make it worthwhile for teachers and students.

Create new structures. Solidify interactions by forming new jointly supported structures. Education researchers Linda Valli and David Cooper write, "Without structures to institutionalize change, innovations have nothing to sustain them beyond individual interest and commitment...without cultural and programmatic changes to bring about shared language and goals, simultaneous renewal will never occur."

Mobilize people to find solutions. To help a coalition solve problems without clear cut answers and think in new ways, leaders have the opportunity to "mobilize adaptive work", according to Ronald Heifitz, director of Harvard's Leadership Education Project. In this model, leaders don't dictate solutions; members of the group must develop their own abilities to move towards workable solutions. People can help mobilize others whether or not they have the formal authority of principals, superintendents and school boards.

Embrace the isolated educators. Be careful of alienating school-based arts specialists, a focal resource when considering arts teaching capacity. Too often they are left out of the developing arts learning community, yet, these educators have more arts content familiarity than any other educators.

Partnerships

Often more formal than networks, arts education partnerships provide a platform for people in and out of schools to structure thoughtful collaborations that help students learn. Ongoing relationships can help educators begin to combat the pervasive problem of isolation. For instance, teachers and teaching artists have found new, deeper ways to interact when engaged in a long term focus on specific classrooms and students' work.

Potential partnerships abound, particularly around more populous centers. Museums, theatres, orchestras, arts education organizations and cultural institutions have mission, funding, and audience development incentives to collaborate with schools. Colleges of education need practicum locations for student teachers. Researchers need innovative practices to examine and publish. Community schools of the arts look for ways to extend deeper arts learning opportunities. In rural communities, the partners may be individuals with arts backgrounds or involved in related businesses.

Large-scale partnerships and community coalitions can help education systems begin to address the challenges of equity and public support for arts education. For instance, vocal external coalitions and school-community committees that support arts education can maintain pressure for change. These advocates may be the levers needed to increase support to build the arts specialist teaching force and provide greater professional development for teachers and partners. Outside partners may bring a wide array of content subspecialties, approaches to arts-based education reform and connections to cultural collections and performances. See *Arts Education Partnership, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities*.

However, partnership work takes time and respect. Without it, a shared purpose may not emerge (Concerns and Considerations for Teacher Development in the Arts). Arts education partnership may be your first entry into expanded arts education professional development. If so, build in the time to plan and develop ongoing relationships among the people who teach. See *Big Thought: A Learning Partnership, Center for Arts Education (CAE)*.

Creating productive conditions for partnerships

Partnership development is not easy and does not always work. When trying to collaborate with various educators and partners involved in arts and education, professional development designers have the challenge of helping disparate disciplines, organizations, and educators pull together to improve the quality of education for young people rather than dissipate into narrowly focused efforts. The field offers a few helpful strategies:

- **Make it easy to access resources.** Help educators connect with the resources they need to address their questions. Assist them in devising strategies to interconnect learning opportunities for their students, among their peers and with the school system. With too little time and an overwhelming number of resources, lesson plans and interest groups on the web, the real service can be to help people cut through the noise to chart their pathway to growth. See *Arts for Learning, Big Thought: A Learning Partnership*.
- **Tap families as professional development partners.** Seek out the parents who are artists, researchers, cultural workers, amateur musicians, skilled in teaching, and ready to be involved in arts and education. Take the time to learn about their backgrounds and interests. Consider

providing resources to assist schools with involving parents in arts education and professional development. See *Center for Arts Education (CAE)*, *Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)*.

- **Infuse ideas and experts from other communities.** Particularly when you're in the early stages of building capacity in the arts learning community, others outside of your geographic community may provide useful content, curriculum and structures to help develop your professional development services. Help teachers learn how to apply a particular approach, such as Backward Design (McTighe and Wiggins), by going to the experts, training your master teachers and personalizing the approach with your educators. See *New York City Department of Education*.

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Networks

Individuals nurturing their own professional growth benefit from formal and informal networks (Haack). Such networks provide a forum to develop ideas, offer emotional support and help teachers navigate early challenges and career changes.

National and state professional arts educator associations provide a quick route to connect with arts colleagues. Educators involved in administration and governance of such associations may refine their leadership and organizational skills, useful for negotiating with multiple stakeholders and strengthening arts education programs.

Annual involvement in local and regional conferences may provide a source of ideas and renewal. Teachers may find that arts-based journals, student festivals and exhibitions can provide further opportunity to learn about improving student arts achievement.

National networks can help local specialists and generalists connect to a wider community. The following national service organizations and their sister state organizations bring together single discipline arts specialists of all ages and types.

American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE)
National Association for Music Education (MENC)
National Art Education Association (NAEA)
National Dance Education Organization (NDEO)

Likewise, the research, advocacy, tools, and listserv of the Arts Education Partnership (AEP) help support a larger learning community beyond those attending quarterly forums.

The Music in Education National Consortium (MIENC) brings together school communities, higher education, researchers, educators and arts education cultural managers.

Similarly, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts (Washington, D.C.) serves as a national link to various state Alliances for Arts Education and VSA Arts (formerly Very Special Arts) with its state and international affiliates. The Alliances and VSA chapters frequently provide a variety of arts education professional development opportunities, ranging from work with arts specialists, classroom teachers and teaching artists, to work with community youth workers, administrators and special educators. The

Alliances also frequently cultivate arts education coalitions and advocacy networks. The VSA chapters provide particular expertise around including students and people with disabilities in arts learning opportunities. Likewise, the Kennedy Center maintains its own [Partners in Education](#) network, with technical assistance, professional development, resources and support for cultural partners strengthening the ways the network can serve as a professional development resource for local schools.

Benefiting from committee work: Leadership opportunities for educators to shape arts and education tools, policy and protocols exist across the country. When schools, districts, and states seek prolonged input from the field, they often work with small committees. For instance, many states have convened arts assessment working groups. Involvement in committees, activities, pilots or any facet of the assessment tool development can be a tremendous professional development experience for educators. Not only do you help devise the accountability system for the arts, but you can then be called upon to be a resource for other educators.

Developing a sense of belonging: Participation in intensive learning communities associated with education reform approaches and their networks can help create a sense of belonging. Colleagues challenge themselves and each other, and an informal support system and accountability develops among the participants. *See A+ Schools*

My work in developing a professional learning community is really about building and sustaining meaningful relationships. I believe relationship building is key to our success. Every personality has a unique contribution to offer to the whole, so our goal is to honor those differences while finding common ground. Once quality relationships are built anything can happen. Improving teaching and learning is challenging – work with the willing and the rest will follow.

- Russell Granet, former Director of Professional Development/ Peer Exchange, Center for Arts Education (CAE)

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Cross-System Supports

Educators benefit from connecting with other educators working on similar practical problems and possibilities; together they can help each other find answers.

Education researcher Carol A. Mullen recommends a collaborative mentoring model that is “practitioner centered, experiential and research oriented, reflective, and empowering.” Mullen offers one such structure called the partnership support group: a collection of school and university educators coming together biweekly after school to share their action research. Together, they use storytelling and troubleshooting to help each develop leadership skills.

Developing personal connections across strategic points within the education system can help cultivate familiarity with the needs and possibilities that can arise as teachers increase their capacities in and through the arts. Take the time to identify school administrators with a background or interest in the arts. For instance, the continued support of Minneapolis Public School superintendents over the years has helped strengthen the continuity of its arts education learning community. At a different level, former

Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee's own personal involvement as a band musician helped spur him to initiate a movement to strengthen state support of arts education across the country.

Arts-related professional development for education administrators dealing with arts, education, and arts-based education reform can make the difference between school leaders as partners or barriers. The literature and the field indicate that the principal sets the tone for professional development at the school level. Guided by the school board, the superintendent and assistant superintendents steer the direction for the district. Learning communities can connect with school and district leaders to find a place for arts in the overall educational picture. See *A+ Schools, Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, Ohio Arts Council*.

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Harness Technologies to Enhance Community

The education world has been methodically exploring how to help people learn through the use of more recent technologies, including the World Wide Web, blogging, Podcasting and other interactive communication. Learning communities involved in this investigation continue to grapple with the question, "How do we best use these technologies to enhance arts education?"

Clarify purpose, provide educational protocols. Harnessing new technologies can be easier for students than teachers. The detailed evaluations of [WEB Project](#), an early online arts and humanities education community, suggest the value of clarifying the educational purpose of the work. A safe space, such as a password-protected space with structured protocols that focus participants on student needs and student work, helps. By sharing works-in-progress for feedback, the educational community encourages students to become active constructors of the learning and benefits schools.

Create face-to-face opportunities for virtual communities. Online communities can build upon personal relationships developed from in-person interactions. The [Vermont MIDI Project \(VMP\)](#) provides periodic opportunities for teachers, students, artist-mentors and colleagues to come together to learn how to teach composition, use relevant technologies, and review and assess student musical compositions. Working friendships continue in the virtual space.

Address teacher needs. Many learning communities struggle with the promise of technologies. Virtual resources are available, but teachers do not take full advantage of the possibilities (Bateman, Bransford, and Moore) (Ohio Arts Council). Some insights into professional development structures that can help educators learn while participating in virtual communities are:

- **Hands-on learning.** Complicated or unfamiliar interfaces, protocols and technologies call for specific hands-on learning and practice to help educators develop understanding and, eventually, comfort. Intensive residential institutes can offer unrestricted practice time within a supportive learning community to help teachers pass the first hurdle of figuring out how it all works. See [Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators, Vermont MIDI Project](#),
- **Offer significant access at home and school with time to explore.** Teachers need full access to technologies both at home and school to explore how the systems work, figure out questions, ask for help, and begin to integrate the potential into their teaching. Proactively addressing obstacles means anticipating barriers – such as limited computer or Internet access or not already

owning the software – and finding ways to simplify the start up for very busy educators. Work with district personnel and teachers of technology to help secure access, broaden the understanding of the arts education needs and enhance the assistance support system.

- **Follow up guidance.** Strong professional development systems provide teachers quick and easy access to overcome hurdles encountered after learning to use the technology. [Vermont MIDI Project](#) and the other online arts communities provide technical support through more advanced teacher leaders, artist mentors, project staff and even advanced students, using e-mail and threaded discussion and in-person work at institutes.

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Promising Practices

The following grid helps school districts apply lessons from arts learning communities to district professional development. See associated profiles for more information.

Strategy	Sample Communities	Suggestions for Districts
<p>Develop regional networks with their own identity that are connected via a larger system network.</p>	<p>Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC) Comprehensive Arts Education Empire State Partnerships The California Arts Project (TCAP)</p>	<p>In large school systems, connect smaller groups from your arts learning community so they can get to know, care about, and help each other; cultivate leadership for each grouping. Possibilities include: feeder patterns of arts educators, generalists, and partners; teachers in and through the arts in and out school in a particular neighborhood or town. Then, connect the smaller groups to the whole with services, opportunities to meet, share and examine practices in each others' schools.</p>
<p>Develop group opportunities to learn from practitioners, researchers and promising practices.</p>	<p>Minneapolis Public Schools: Arts for Academic Achievement Perpich Center for Performing Arts Rhode Island Arts Learning Network</p>	<p>When developing your arts learning network, either within the district or across districts or the state, provide regular opportunities for participants to share promising practices grounded in what happens with students. This could look like structured presentations on pedagogy and results, action research sharing and/or a journal club with each person digesting one piece of research for the group.</p>
<p>Learning communities refine school-based partnerships among classroom educators, teaching artists and arts specialists; focuses on student work; connects with broader network including researchers and experts.</p>	<p>Center for Arts Education (CAE) Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) Perpich Center for Performing Arts and Minneapolis Public Schools</p>	<p>Don't limit your learning community to school district staff. Work with your educators and interested partners to identify areas of need and interest to pilot partnerships. Prepare for significant planning time; it's the most important aspect. Stay focused on students across different sectors. Purposes could include developing student assessment tools or learning community protocols, or expanding district capacity to teach dance.</p>

Lessons Learned

When rallying people to help with arts education professional development, consider the following strategies:

Teams. Small teams of people can help improve the close analytical work. Site-based colleagues, working groups of community-school members, teacher-artist collaborations and mentor/mentee relationships can help people translate larger ideas into practical applications.

Internal and External. Seek allies within your own system. In schools, move up, down and across the system to find peers, colleagues, administrators, policymakers, aides and support staff who can become involved in your learning community. Externally, seek content specialists, link across school communities, find powerful people with resources, and community and family members involved in arts, young people or education.

Link networks. Each individual in the learning community can be involved in multiple networks. Work with each other to identify gaps and thread related opportunities. The connections among networks and learning opportunities reinforce the learning and can open up possibilities.

Strategically connect with existing arts learning networks. Many national networks offer conferences and provide resources for developing arts learning communities. School districts can encourage teams of specialists and generalists to participate in multiple conference opportunities. Attendees can identify resource people and specific tools as well as share model work-in-progress and receive input and feedback from the field.

Link to existing national and state general education professional development associations. Groups such as the [Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development \(ASCD\)](#) and the [National Staff Development Council \(NSDC\)](#) provide access to general professional development resources, people, and gatherings.

Joint reflection. Don't forget to reflect on the quality of the relationship, partnership, mentoring, coalition, and learning community. The attention to that structure, even if it's fluid and changing, can help sustain the web of support.

Young people as professional development allies. Young people have much to offer when helping teachers learn to improve their practice. Consider current students in the K-12 system as well as recent alumnae. See *The Arts Literacy Project*, *Hubbard Street Dance MAP Program*, *Rhode Island Arts Learning Network*.

Useful Tools

National Assembly of State Arts Agencies

Arts & Learning Resources for State Leaders

State Collaborative on Assessment and Student Standards (SCASS) Arts Education Assessment Consortium

State-based, nationally focused group developing and refining arts education assessment materials for large-scale, district-level, and classroom-based assessment and professional development around the National Standards in Arts Education.

Educator- Teaching Artist Partner Professional Development Resources:

Association of Teaching Artists

Dana Foundation

Teaching Artist Journal

John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Resources:

A Community Audit for Arts Education: Better Schools, Better Skills, Better Communities

An evaluation and planning tool for local education, community and cultural leaders to both assess arts education status in the schools and encourage community partnerships to strengthen it.

Kennedy Center Partners in Education Program

Designed to assist arts and cultural organizations throughout the nation develop and/or expand educational partnerships with their local school systems.

Links to education, arts, arts education, youth arts networks and service organizations:

The following national service organizations and their sister state organizations bring together single discipline arts specialists of all ages and types.

American Alliance for Theatre and Education (AATE)

National Association for Music Education (MENC)

National Art Education Association (NAEA)

National Dance Education Organization (NDEO)

The Music in Education National Consortium (MIENC)

Networks and Listservs:

Americans for the Arts Listserv

Subscribers receive weekly updates on arts and culture news, with an emphasis on arts policy and its effects on education.

American Symphony Orchestra League E-Mail Discussion Group

Provides online forum for orchestra leaders and music educators to swap ideas, discuss problems, and announce information.

Arts4Learning Discussions (My A4L)

Young Audiences' Arts for Learning (A4L) site provides registered users forums to develop and share lessons, curricula, and ideas with multimedia aspects; includes subcommunities based on geographic areas. See Arts for Learning.

Arts Education Partnership Listserv

Connects national network of arts education partnerships, practitioners, policymakers, philanthropies, and advocates with each other and the research, policy building, and national forum work of the Partnership.

Public Broadcasting Service (PBS) TeacherSource

A service provided by the Public Broadcasting Service, TeacherSource is an online community that serves nearly all areas of the academic curriculum providing special lesson plans and learning activities, as well as an array of professional development resources.

TeacherArtExchange

Hosted by the J. Paul Getty Trust, TeacherArtExchange provides a global network for visual art educators.

Your Turn

- What are your arts learning community's challenges? Where do you seek to build capacity?
- Who are the resources within your community that can support your goals, address challenges, and build capacity?
- Who is already teaching the arts or integrating the arts in your community?
- What key individuals or organizations outside your community have content knowledge or skill sets that could help?
- What specifically will these new partners help you to learn/gain?
- How can these key individuals and organizations be involved in professional development in your school system?
- What will planning and communication with these partners look like?
- What local, state and national networks are doing work in line with your goals?
- What lessons from these networks can you apply to our own professional development work?
- How can you use technology to support the work among the community?

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Deepen

Teacher's World | Strategies | General Education | Empowered Teachers

How can arts education professional development be deepened to serve the unique needs of novice, specialist and generalist teachers?

Students are expected to learn the arts as core subjects. Yet, in the traditional school structure, art, music, dance, and theatre are often considered “specials.” This designation can segregate credentialed arts teachers from the general learning community. General classroom teachers are often in charge of teaching music, dance, theatre and visual arts, but may have little experience or training in the arts. How can a classroom teacher without a strong arts education background teach these subjects? How can arts specialists collaborate with generalists? This is where deep and meaningful professional development can begin to help.

To deliver professional development that speaks to teachers' needs as well as those of their students, it is valuable to first consider the context for teaching in and through the arts. Through that lens, strategies for professional development can be devised to best serve your teachers. Literature on general education professional development is a rich resource for useful structural suggestions for deepening the quality of teacher learning. It should also be remembered that teachers can be empowered to take the reins to create their own learning opportunities.

Understanding the Teachers' World

When seeking to deepen professional development for arts specialists and generalists, it helps to understand the context in which they work.

Reasons for teaching. Learn why your teachers teach. The literature reminds us, for some, it's the love of the art form, where teaching provides the opportunity to continue to engage and celebrate that love, sharing it with other people every day. For some, it's the love of helping young people. The profound changes students sometimes experience through the arts can deeply affect their teachers.

What students need to know and do. Standards delineating what students should know and do in the arts provide detailed guidance on what arts education could look like; teachers no longer need to guess. The advent of national ([National Standards for Arts Education](#)) and state standards ([Education Commission of the States](#)), provide continuity and clarity across communities. Professional development can help teachers learn how to teach standards-based curriculum to students. Diane Watanabe formerly of Los Angeles County Office of Education and Mark Slavkin of the Music Center of Los Angeles County reminded the researchers that defining or selecting a written curriculum is on the minds of many districts across the country. What do teachers need to be able to teach students? See *New York City Department of Education*

Learning in and through the arts. For classroom teachers, there are many ways to bring the arts into the learning environment. Some educators find learning to use high quality arts integration helps them feel renewed in their work, makes teaching and learning across the curriculum easier, and enhances the classroom environment. Incorporating arts into teaching across the curriculum can bring new life to school reform efforts. Research continues to explore relationships between ways of thinking and working in various arts disciplines and their relevance to other disciplines. See *The California Consultancy for Arts Education, Renaissance in the Classroom, Southeast Center for Education in the Arts*.

Understanding quality arts integration. While arts specialists may have a strong grasp of arts content in a particular area, classroom teachers' backgrounds vary widely, from little to no arts content knowledge to vibrant participation in the arts community. Both arts specialists and generalists new to arts integration may benefit from understanding what quality arts integration looks like.

Scheduling roadblocks. Schedules may inhibit arts specialists' ability to plan with other teachers. Lack of joint planning time for arts specialists affects many of the professional development designers interviewed for this investigation.

Reaffirm belief. Teachers' belief systems may affect teaching and receptivity to professional development. Visual arts researcher Mary Erickson finds a frequent disconnect in research studies between what is taught and what is expected, guided perhaps by a belief system about what is important to teach. Similarly, classroom teachers new to teaching the arts benefit from developing their own content confidence as they gain the background skills to succeed. Cola MacDonald's study of educators involved in in-service dance programs describes a series of experiences that help educators reassess previously held beliefs. Stepping back and examining what they thought about their own ability to teach dance empowered the educators to identify changes to those belief systems over the course of the professional development program. See *Hubbard Street Dance MAP Program*.

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Strategies for Novice, Specialist and Generalist Teachers:

Novice Arts Specialists | Arts Specialists | Generalist Teachers

Helping teachers move to the next level in their teaching practice is situational. If your district has one arts-related in-service a year and a few arts specialists, most of whom are novice arts educators, you are starting in one place. If you have just completed the revision of the district arts curriculum in four arts disciplines and developed assessment tools, the needs of your learning community may be different.

Visual arts education researcher F. Robert Sabol summarizes important forces affecting the training of art educators in an overview of recruitment, certification and retention. He challenges professional development to stay abreast of the educational reform waves affecting the current expectations of educators, which today include the standards movement, calls for accountability and improved quality, and an intense focus on assessment. Issues in the field include retention negatively affected by lack of support for quality standards and other professional development programs and continued teacher complaints about scarce and irrelevant professional development opportunities.

Novice Arts Specialists

Should you find you have a cadre of teachers new to the classroom, consider the following structures from the literature and practice.

Ease the transition from college to teaching. In the first years of their careers, arts specialists' most pressing needs relate to learning how to teach. In recent years, with arts standards in place, pre-service teachers may already have an introductory awareness of the frameworks for what students know and can do in the arts. Making the transition from college programs and student teaching to working with hundreds of children every week can be overwhelming. A great deal of energy goes into classroom management, assessment and applying the concepts of educational learning theory and technique.

Accordingly, professional development for newer arts specialists should be sensitive to their needs. Music researcher Jerry Kupchynsky suggests novices need to:

- Learn "the lay of the land", including physical surroundings and key support staff.
- Establish good relations with supervisors: learn about educational philosophy, politics and how you will be evaluated.
- Set up expectations for students. Get to know them and establish discipline and the ways to work together.
- Meet the community and learn about its culture, priorities, demographics and religions.

Kristine Alexander, director of [The California Arts Project \(TCAP\)](#) suggests that during the early years of standards-based arts teaching, new teachers need to focus on the development of a course outline aligned to the standards. Developing the professional development sequence for teaching grade level content and benchmarks for measuring student success can help novice teachers align their practice to district and

state frameworks.

Optimize mentor programs. New arts educators may have more students and logistics to juggle and fewer opportunities to interact with colleagues than general education counterparts. Using mentors may be a helpful strategy to lessen the challenges. Music education researcher Paul Haack offers recommendations from the Project 2000: Mentorship and Professional Development - The Minnesota Model study of music education mentors. When identifying mentors, consider availability and expertise as well as interest. Haack suggests mentors may offer struggling novice teachers guidance in artistic, educational, logistic and political areas while serving as advocates within the system. In this study, Haack finds that new teachers prefer someone close to their own age and experience with a similar grade level to teach; someone who can empathize with their situation. Findings suggest cross-district mentoring may be helpful, as it provides fresh perspectives and ensures the mentor will not be officially evaluating the teacher.

Arts Specialist

Combating isolation and addressing needs, professional development communities find ways to help renew, empower and improve the teaching of arts specialists in the field.

Mentoring mentors. Successful mentors can benefit from the often neglected support of mentor orientation and training. Even the best teachers may need to learn how to effectively mentor their counterparts. Clearly defined expectation and training for mentors helps. Involved mentors attend to their charges' needs in informal as well as formal ways. For instance, some trainings advise regular phone calls, lunch meetings and monthly dinner meetings to keep the pair well connected, as the Society for Music Teacher Education of Music Educators National Conference learned.

Structures for co-mentoring. Some individuals and learning communities turn to co-mentoring as a more formal way for colleagues to help each other grow and reduce the hierarchy. Peers can provide structured, helpful support to each other across location and perspective. For instance, music educators Frances Kochan and Susan Trimble advise that each co-mentor needs to be proactive and willing to take responsibility. Their four phases of growth in co-mentorship consist of moving through groundwork and self-assessment; warming up by selecting a co-mentor and establishing norms; working with that co-mentor with criticism shared openly; and moving to long-term status, where the co-mentorship transcends disruptive changes, such as a move.

Including arts specialists in school leadership capacity. By bringing arts perspectives to integrated general education committees, advancing arts specialists can broaden their systemic understanding and effect. School-wide leadership teams provide a particular opportunity for change, adding value to non-arts educators who learn about the perspectives and possibilities of the arts. *See New York City Department of Education, Alaska Arts Education Consortium.*

The goals of (the) Alaska Arts Education Collaborative Project center on the development and support of a cadre of arts educators as a statewide leadership team, in order to sustain the role of the arts in Alaskan schools. The Focus is on Title One Schools, increasing the capacity of K-12 teachers to provide high quality, research-based arts education, and increasing the performance and achievement of students in Language Arts through their active involvement in the arts.

- Annie Calkins, Lower Kuskokwim School District (LKSD) and Alaska Arts Education Consortium (AAEC):
Alaska Arts Education Collaborative Project Evaluator

Self-assessing teaching can empower the educator. Teacher isolation remains a challenge across all subject areas, particularly in the arts. Developing tools to self-assess pedagogy and cultivating peers and partners for low-stakes “critical friend” networks can provide insight into the effects of various teaching strategies. In an encouraging learning community environment, you can see what’s working or not working and become more empowered to adjust. The challenge for school districts and professional development designers is to encourage teachers to look critically at the development of teaching skills that challenge students when the current overall educational environment around teacher quality is high stakes.

Supporting individual goals. The different pathways to professional growth need to be remembered when envisioning long-term learning opportunities for arts specialists. Remember to look for different benchmarks in different people. One educator may become a master teacher involved in assessment development while another may become an arts supportive superintendent.

Developing authentic arts assessment communities. Since very few large scale standardized assessments measure arts learning, many communities looking deeply at student learning in the arts develop tools for themselves. Learn and borrow from what’s out there already to avoid starting from scratch. As you adapt the approach or tool to your specific situation, the results can be stimulating, rewarding and empowering. See *Arts in Basic Curriculum Project, Center for Arts Education (CAE)*.

Nurturing and challenging the artist. Helping specialists refine skills in their disciplines and develop strategies for teaching across arts disciplines offers renewal and reconnection to the artist within each educator.

Supportive structures from the field

- Peer networks across arts-based education reform schools
- Intensive summer institutes for selected arts specialists (different offerings for emerging or seasoned)
- Master teachers involved in helping peers learn
- Whole school networks to share promising practices and troubleshoot with other education colleagues and administrators
- Site-based institutes including specialists and other educators to adapt professional development to school needs

See Arts as Basic Curriculum Project (ABC), Arts Education Collaborative, Arts Impact & Puget Sound Education Service District, A+ Schools, Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators.

Generalist Teachers

To introduce classroom teachers to quality arts education, professional development designers take a variety of approaches including:

Modeling with teacher as learner. Often used in summer institutes or workshops, the master teacher or teaching artist walks teachers through the same steps a student would take in a strong, content-based arts class.

Pros: Teachers get to experience everything, from the risk taking to the art making that their students might also undergo; experienced teacher demonstrates content mastery, familiarity.

Cons: The skill gap between the arts experienced master teacher and participating teacher may be perceived to be too wide. If so, teachers stop processing and assume they can't teach in the same way.

Observation of mentor modeling with teachers' students. Often used as a follow up to summer institutes, frequently through artist-in-residence structures.

Pros: Teacher can stand back and witness new possibilities in own students.

Cons: Disparity in arts backgrounds may encourage teacher to give over the reins, doing less rather than more teaching of the arts.

Co-teaching. Sometimes done in teacher's home classroom, sometimes in neutral location, such as during summer school or after school program.

Pros: Levels hierarchy, respects existing teacher's experiences, can adapt to on-the-spot needs of students and co-teachers, provides a graduated level of support for new forms of teaching.

Cons: Shifting from a solo teacher to team teaching mindset is difficult for some educators; it takes more time to work out how two people will teach together than to do it alone.

See Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County

Seeing standards as opportunities. Continue to spread deep awareness of the arts standards frameworks, which provide very specific guidance on what students at various grade levels should know and be able to do in the arts. These guides are a deep and broad piece of work that can inspire and inform educators, especially in districts without strong arts programs or personnel.

Assessing and differentiating instruction. Plan for different teacher backgrounds. Allow teachers to self-assess their prior experiences, belief and confidence in the arts before participating in a structured learning opportunity. Professional development providers can use that data to offer different levels or entry points into the learning opportunity. A dance in-service program studied by Cola MacDonald encourages participating teachers to self-select their level of participation; observing is an option, as the program develops a safe space. The Center for Arts Education (CAE) continues to develop new structures for classroom teachers, school leaders, parents and cultural personnel to learn from each other. Innovations include a principal leadership network with grant resources open only for experienced leaders, according to Russell Granet, former Director of Professional Development/Peer Exchange. See *Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County, Arizona Artist Teacher Institute*.

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Strategies from General Education

Literature on professional development provides useful structural suggestions for deepening the quality of teacher learning, particularly as it relates to improved student learning. In addition to research-based approaches, the analyses recommend offering professional development opportunities which:

Connect to the specific professional development needs of the education community by:

- Deepening educators' content knowledge
- Helping teachers develop instructional strategies
- Aligning with school and district goals or plans
- Helping educators create safe, supportive learning environments

Provide significant time to:

- Allow teachers to practice and apply the learning
- Encourage continued growth through on-going professional development

Practice principles of adult learning, such as:

- Integrating professional development with teacher goals and needs
- Creating collaborative professional development settings, which help teachers' work with colleagues in and out of school
- Tapping social needs of learners, such as reading, reflection, research and analysis, with colleagues can provide positive challenge for teachers
- Respecting teachers' own capabilities to direct their own learning by encouraging active involvement
- Expanding the definition of professional development to include a continuing learning mindset
- Varying professional development formats. Small groups can help teachers analyze individual student progress while large groups may align a staff to an education reform. Individual study can

help teachers go deeper into specific learning areas, such as voice study for music or theatre specialists

Provide a supportive context for learning, which may include:

- Cultivating supportive educational leaders, who shape the culture of continuous instructional improvement
- Securing resources, which provide time and money to support professional development. Too often, the resource incentives support in-service workshops which introduce new, unrelated ideas without connection to practice or continued learning opportunities
- Helping educators learn to involve families and other stakeholders appropriately

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How Teachers Can Create Their Own Opportunities

Both the arts specialist and the classroom teacher have things they can do to take their professional development into their own hands.

Be proactive. When teachers take charge of their own evolving needs and progress, it can benefit both individuals and the arts education community. Draw from existing components even if they are not closely linked; don't wait for a fully-baked professional development program.

Develop personal networks. Have a list of people to consult for outside advice to provide a fresh perspective or help in professional advancement. It may include colleagues, students, parents, administrators, artists, professors or researchers. Expand the network over time.

Identify discipline colleagues elsewhere. Bring teachers in the same discipline together across schools, districts and grade levels through joint in-service opportunities or working with professional arts teachers' associations.

Cross-arts identification. Persist in trying to create larger communities across arts disciplines. There can be professional development growth and a decrease in isolation when teachers see themselves as "the arts" not just as "music, dance, theatre, and visual arts."

Interdisciplinary networks. Engage educators in other subject areas in a broader group looking at how teaching in and through the arts can help transform schools. Arts integration can be a meeting place in the middle of disciplines that helps every educator learn more about education. See *Stockton Unified School District (SUSD)*.

Escape boundaries – the arts teaching workforce. People who teach the arts, whether in or out of the school, form a natural affinity network. Places like [Center for Arts Education \(CAE\)](#), [Chicago Arts Partnerships for Education \(CAPE\)](#) and [New York City Department of Education](#) help cultivate the school-based arts partnerships that include arts specialists and generalists as well as teaching artists.

Culture of giving back. Over time, as teachers grow and learn, passing the hurdles of the novice years, their needs change and they have more to give back. For instance, music teachers who are more involved in their arts education communities and take active leadership roles experience greater renewal.

Simple can be effective. Community can be built within a school district. Some of the simplest things - the meeting together, the looking deeply at and discussing student work - can offer professional development. And, they are more sustainable than the big grant.

Participate in authentic assessment groups. To figure out what student achievement in classrooms looks like when students learn in or through the arts, join an existing groups improving their capacity to assess the arts. Look at networks across the state or the country if none exist locally or start your own.

Practice teaching the arts in low stakes environments. Explore after school or summer opportunities to practice teaching an art form or unit before bringing it to the school day. *See Washington State's Classroom-Based Performance Assessments.*

Deepen knowledge and skill in an art form. Identify an artistic area in which to improve. Chart a multi-year course using individual resources, such as coursework, community arts school classes, individual study, collaboration, videos, books or film. Learn an instrument and join a community band. Learn how to draw, then start going to weekly model drawing sessions. Discover raku, or weaving, or tap. Learn how to improvise. Take a theatre class, then audition for plays in the summer. Link this with a larger arts education learning community so you can share and receive feedback and support. Create opportunities to try, reflect and develop questions and the experiment in the classroom with what is learned. Regardless of whether the art form is new or an expansion of knowledge within or between arts disciplines, a focused course of study can build a solid arts literacy foundation in a new area. *See Perpich Center for Performing Arts.*

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Promising Practices: *The California Arts Project (TCAP) | Arts Impact & Puget Sound Educational Service District | North Carolina A+ Schools | Looking to Other Communities Looking to Other Communities*

Communities across the country are addressing ways to serve the distinct needs of the novice and experienced teacher and the arts specialist and generalist teacher. Some communities start by building experience and competency in the art for their teachers. Others are best served by artist mentor relationships. Others use summer institutes or a focus on a single art form. The diversity of approaches serve the unique needs of each community.

The California Arts Project (TCAP) ***Journey Toward an Arts Understanding***

With classroom teachers, the Project rests on the idea that there is deep and worthwhile content in the arts. While no replacement for a strong basic foundation in the arts, the professional development services work to nurture a growing awareness, interest, and capacity in teaching the arts. With the classroom teacher new to the arts, Director Kristine Alexander explains, “We help them first see that there is content, and get over the idea they have to be talented, or have special gifts, at the same time, we work to build their confidence that this can be taught.”

Once TCAP helps teachers connect the familiar idea of the standards with the arts, they start building academic vocabulary, beginning artistic skills and processes in an arts discipline. Then, teachers have the words, basic skills and personal experiences to draw from to teach, explain and help others learn. From there, the next level deals with managing the content, as teachers ask, ‘How do you get 30 kids to move around and not hurt themselves?’ Programs become more tailored and specific as teachers move forward in expertise. Longer learning cycles move from standards to assessment and the use of criteria to clarify the process. Alexander adds, “We also believe that for the generalist... once they grasp the art (form) content and pedagogy, they are masters of the interdisciplinary.”

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Arts Impact & Puget Sound Educational Service District ***Side-by-Side Mentoring***

Puget Sound Educational District and the arts education cultural coalition called Arts Impact worked together to help increase classroom teachers’ capacity to teach the arts. An intensive summer institute bringing together teachers and artist-mentors starts the process. Teachers receive follow-up support through a 10-week side-by-side mentoring program, with one of the institute’s artist mentors working closely with them, modeling arts instruction. As educators begin to teach their own arts lessons, the mentors analyze and help teachers improve their understanding of the content and pedagogy. Together, the teacher and artist-mentor assess teacher and class development using Arts Impact rubrics. Centralized professional development and coordination of the artist-mentors helps maintain a high level of

mentor quality. Through in-services and retreats, artist-mentors learn to improve their own teaching, as well as use and guide others in performance-based arts assessment techniques. Evaluation of this work found participating teachers improved their content and skill knowledge in the arts. Concurrent with the teacher change, students' arts achievement also improved. As the state readies for statewide performance-based assessment in the arts, this professional development collaboration helps Tacoma area students move forward.

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North Carolina A+ Schools

Differentiated Approach to Teacher Learning

Sample A+ School Communities	Approach	Result
Nearly all schools participating in A+	Intensive whole school participation in summer institute to begin; flexible onsite and centralized institutes in years to follow.	All staff on same page with shared vocabulary, language, helping them develop the school approach to A+, part of the bottom-up reform. Encouraged changes in school identity.
Teachers from across the network	A+ Fellows: network of A+ experienced teachers, including arts specialists and classroom teachers developed internal capacity to teach and facilitate less experienced educators	Empowered teachers; stabilized; kept more experienced teachers growing, involved, and connected.
Creekside Elementary	Experimented with arts specialists team teaching in 90-minute blocks with generalists, eventually rotating through classrooms for daily teaching over nine intensive weeks. Teams sometimes worked together or broke in half for 2x45 minute smaller classes, allowing arts teachers to include elaborate projects.	Team teachers develop smooth working relationship, reduced isolation, gave teachers student-focused dialogue partner, and educators developed instructional flexibility. Arts teachers learned more of grade-level curriculum and classroom teachers learned more about potential of arts instruction, reducing the marginality of the arts.
Albany Woods Elementary School	Teaching through two process: A guest or school educator teaches an integrated arts lesson many times in the morning; many teachers observe. Afternoons, students are dismissed while teachers discuss and analyze the lessons, considering how to personalize for their students.	Builds on A+ Summer Institute intensive exposure, giving teachers direct connection between ideas and practice.

Source: Creativity, book 3 of 7 in the A+ Series, A+ North Carolina Schools Program: Schools That Work for Everyone.

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Looking to Other Communities

Target participants of the professional development	Sample communities	Lessons for school districts on deepening
Arts specialists and artist-mentors	Vermont MIDI Project	Pick one area to strengthen and form a community of teachers and others that delves deeply into learning that one area (music creation and response here). Create a culture of inquiry to improve the work. Develop the capacity within the community to help those with questions explore new avenues.
Generalists learning to teach the arts	Arizona Artist Teacher Institutes	Travel to remotely located teachers; bring the opportunity to them. Have them structure an inquiry and reflect on their practice while learning initial concepts. Focus on most needed arts disciplines (dance and theatre in here).
Interdisciplinary networks of arts specialists, educators, artists, education administrators, researchers.	Perpich Center for Performing Arts: Arts Quality Teaching Networks	Create a larger inquiry-based community of people involved in teaching in or through the arts. People have their own questions to make the professional development specific. The group helps each other learn and troubleshoot, assess and understand.

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Lessons Learned

Mentor teachers. Look cross-district to identify arts mentors and provide formal and informal mentoring opportunities.

Support teachers' needs. Create a culture across the education faculty to promote awareness and support to meet teachers' needs and ease burdens rather than pile on more challenges.

Provide opportunities for peer exchange. Develop peer-exchange structures that use small groups of both novices and seasoned professionals to support educators while they move ideas to practice.

Encourage collaborative planning. Teachers working together to plan curriculum for the school offer important opportunities to integrate the arts into school environments. Participating arts specialists can shape not only the curriculum, but may also help their colleagues deepen their understanding and value of arts in education.

Attend summer intensive arts institutes. Use intensive institutes to kick off ongoing work in pairs and small groups, as teachers learn to deepen their learning and apply concepts to practice.

Useful Tools

Education Commission of the States

Offers state profiles, analysis, and comparisons on school leader professional development, parent involvement in professional development, state arts education policies, standards, teacher certification, licensure, and other areas.

Handbook of Research and Policy in Art Education

Day, Michael D. and Elliot W. Eisner. eds. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2004.

Summarizes research in pertinent areas including teacher preparation, retention, assessment, and curricula.

National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)

The NAEP arts assessment presents a broad view of how well America's students can respond to, create, and perform works of visual art, music, and theatre.

National Staff Development Council (NSDC)

Includes NSDC Standards for Staff Development and links to research library and resources on teacher professional development and learning.

No Subject Left Behind: A Guide to Arts Education Opportunities in the 2001 NO CHILD LEFT BEHIND Act

A resource created jointly by a consortium of national arts and arts education service organizations. Includes sections on grant programs such as professional development for arts educators grants, Title I opportunities, and answers on frequently asked questions about arts teachers and high quality teacher requirements.

State Arts Education Policy Database by Arts Education Partnership

Includes state arts standards, assessment measures, graduation and college entrance requirements, licensure/certification requirements for arts teachers; implementation of arts standards, licensure/certification requirements for general (elementary) classroom teachers, pre-service and professional development requirements for arts teachers, and relevant state-appointed task forces or commissions relevant to arts education.

Your Turn

- What's happening now? What are the strong and weak areas of your system?

Students: What should students be able to do? To what extent do your educators help them do that? Who provides the instruction? Which students are receiving arts instruction? What level of equity do you have across the arts education program?

Arts Specialists: Where are the arts specialists in your school system? Where and when do they teach the arts? What are their professional development needs and interests?

Classroom Teachers: What capacity do your classroom teachers have to teach the arts? To integrate the arts with other subjects across the curriculum?

- How can professional development address the needs of your arts specialists, general classroom teachers and novice teachers (as opposed to other interventions such as space, scheduling, personnel, budget, or curriculum)?
- How can your current professional development be enhanced to align with the teachers' needs you have identified?
- What structures (mentorships, institutes, co-teaching) can best support your teachers' needs?
- Who can you partner with to deliver professional development that meets your teachers' needs?
- How can you use your strongest teachers to help others?
- How can you support teachers in creating their own professional development opportunities?

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Connect

How can high quality professional development translate theory into classroom practice in authentic, meaningful ways?

It's one thing to listen to experts lecture on teaching or watch a master artist create a masterpiece in front of the class. Distilling ideas to use in the classroom from those presentations requires a different kind of processing. Professional development can help educators internalize new habits. The challenge comes when we try to bridge the gap between concepts and practice.

Design teacher-driven professional development. What do educators want to know how to do? What do they want to improve? What needs do they perceive for students? In their analysis of multiple general education studies, Hyde and Pink reaffirm the need to encourage teachers to shape professional development. Researchers Fred Korthagen and Tom Russell remind us to "Pay attention to the voices of the people that do the work." The practitioners in the classroom bring an important reality check, creativity, and humility to theoretical work.

Investigate and engage with concrete, practical ideas. To get started, select something manageable. Your success in step one may lead to something larger. Likewise, educators appreciate strategies they can use in the classroom right away. Professional development balances the introduction of valuable tools teachers can use the next day with cultivation of the complex big idea that can improve education in the long-term. See [Arts Education Collaborative](#).

Transform theoretical concepts into planning tools. Teachers can connect ideas to practice by using of a variety of educational tools including action plans, lesson plans, curricula, assessment tools, integrated units, co-teaching strategies, and checklists. See [Chicago Arts Partnership for Education \(CAPE\)](#).

Practice. Teachers benefit from multiple chances to practice new concepts and skills. When teachers have the opportunity to try out a teaching or leadership skill, reflect with others to improve the practice, and try again, they can begin to connect the dots from idea to what really works. Some structural approaches include having educators teach each other in small groups, piloting a teaching concept at a summer school when team teaching with someone more experienced at the technique, refining an unfamiliar arts area during after school classes taught with a partner, and meeting with colleagues across the year to share and refine approaches. See [Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County](#), [Perpich Center for Performing Arts](#).

Reflect and assess. Don't just try it and move on. Create opportunities for teachers to process how it went, with questions such as: "What did students learn from this? How do I know they learned it? How is this different from the way I normally teach, if at all? How comfortable did I feel teaching this way, this topic, this lesson? What would I do differently next time? How can I deepen the intent of the unit to challenge students and myself further?" Such self-analysis happens effectively in small discussion groups with people who have learned to be critical friends ([Arts Connection](#)). In such a group, ideas are

welcome, hierarchy is minimal, the stakes are low, and it's everyone's job to raise questions for one another. See *Perpich Center for Performing Arts, Rhode Island Arts Learning Network*.

Encourage a risk-taking, “try and try again” environment. Educational change can be risky business. Professional developers can help create incubators that encourage learning from failure as well as success. This gives teachers permission to try new things. With time, they can adapt content and approaches until they find what works for their situation. Districts and learning communities that can support this risk-taking allow teachers time for growth and improvement. However, given the current high stakes accountability environment in selected other subject areas, such support cannot be taken for granted. Rather, it needs to be cultivated with people who have the authority to create buffers from the pressures of the larger system.

Encourage ongoing learning opportunities. Planning, risk-taking, reflection and practice all take time. It is unrealistic for this sort of change to occur after one workshop. Instead, consider an experimentation cycle where educators test the waters with new ideas, teaching approaches and skills, buoyed by a group culture of reflection. See *Arts in Basic Curriculum (ABC), A+ Schools, Chicago Arts Partnerships (CAPE), Stockton Unified School District (SUSD)*.

Promising Practices

Peer-to-peer teaching and mentoring. When you learn from someone who does what you do, you can get specific answers. Colleagues will have their own experiences and stories to illustrate an approach. Some learning communities cultivate teacher leaders who can offer formal professional development that bridges theory and practice for colleagues. Experts come in only for the occasional infusion of ideas. See [Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education \(CAPE\)](#), [Empire State Partnerships](#), [The California Arts Project \(TCAP\)](#).

Educator teams. Working teams of educators involved in the same professional development journey can create an accessible support group as people try out their new skills and ideas. Such teams may be ongoing or formed for a limited time. These groupings vary, and can include specialists, classroom teachers, education administrators and others such as aides, special educators, and teaching artists. A team can provide a ready sounding board for reflection. One research team notes that when teacher educators write back and forth with their peers about their work as it evolves, they create a document of their teaching development which helps chart their growth. For teams to work, they need upfront support from administration and scheduled time to meet regularly. Together, they plan and monitor putting new ideas to practice. See [Discipline-Based Arts Education \(DBAE\)](#), [Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County](#).

Research digested for practice. Busy teachers do not have the time to slowly peruse all the source material that could help them improve their practice. One professional development service gives educators digests. Arts specialist service organizations offer specialized journals, targeting particular audiences within an arts education discipline. National networks summarize research findings and disseminate to practitioners and local partners. Brokering organizations help local school people and cultural partners develop habits of inquiry through protocols, checklists, diagrams and regular lunch box sessions to discuss practice. See [Arts Education Partnership \(AEP\)](#), [Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education Resources for Schools and Communities](#), [Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education \(CAPE\)](#), [National Art Education Association](#), [National Association for Music Education](#), [National Dance Education Organization](#).

Lab school environments. You might think of before school, after school and summer school as extracurricular. But, when key curricular people work with others, like teaching artists, youth leaders and mentoring teachers, these external teaching environments can provide laboratories to try new ideas in a lower risk environment. Teachers can experiment with new teaching theories while team teaching and working in smaller classrooms with fewer children. See [Arts Impact & Puget Sound Education Service District](#), [ArtsLit: The Arts Literacy Project](#).

Higher education-school collaboration. Structured collaborations between schools and teacher education programs allow teachers in training, current educators and those who teach teachers to work and learn from each other. One such interaction consisted of a music specialist, a university teacher educator, and a handful of college students who co-taught an elementary general music class or high school choir. When examining their own learning community, they found the arrangement encouraged exemplary practice, joint investigation of questions and shared responsibility for music teaching over the long term.

Lessons Learned

Collegial dialogue and reflection are important professional development tools. Time must be dedicated for teachers to process information and new ideas and reflect on issues, concerns, problems, options, opportunities, needs and celebrations. *See Arts Education Collaborative.*

Support the inquiry process. Support teachers and artists so they can ask questions about their practice and find ways to seek the answers. *See Chicago Arts Partners in Education (CAPE).*

Specialist/generalist collaborations are essential. Collaborations are most important between classroom teachers and fine arts specialists. Give teachers opportunities to make decisions that affect their work. *See Stockton Unified School Districts (SUSD): Pavala Tutti.*

Sharing. Teachers involved in professional development opportunities should share what she/he learned from the process and what the outcomes were. *See ArtsSmart Institute for Learning.*

Mixing educator backgrounds supports risk-taking. Mixing participants across grade levels (K- 12) and urban -rural sites leads to unanticipated collaborations. At first teachers tend to want to stay with those who they know, or those who teach the same grades as they do. The mixing has been important for teachers truly learning from each other and moving out of their comfort zones. *See Alaska Arts Education Consortium.*

Useful Tools

Arts Impact Teacher Training Video

See the Arts Impact program in action as teachers participate in the summer institute and teach the arts in their classrooms.

Evaluating Professional Development

Guskey, Thomas. Corwin Press Inc., 2000

Advises reader of ways to assess, understand, and maximize professional development benefit for students and their learning. Offers processes and tools.

From Promise to Practice: Stories From the Regional Education Laboratories

Kober, Nancy. U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1996.

Case examples of professional development that makes the connection to in classroom work.

Teacher's Autonomy for Arts Instruction Protocol

Assesses level of educator's ability to teach core arts concepts; useful for professional development for generalists teaching the arts.

Your Turn

When considering new ideas and theories to present to teachers through professional development, consider:

- If this professional development is successful, what will the classroom look like?
- What will teachers know and be able to do?
- What will students know and be able to do? How will I know they understand?

To connect theory to classroom practice, ask yourself:

- What planning tools can you provide your teachers to support their ability to turnkey professional development theories into actual classroom practices?
- What structures can you put in place in which teachers can practice applying new ideas and developing skills?
- What opportunities can you provide for teachers trying out new ideas and skills to reflect on and assess their experience?

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Transform

General Education | Whole School | Partnerships | Research | Arts Integration

How can arts-based professional development be an integral part of education reform?

In certain learning communities, the interest in arts extends beyond its role as a single subject area in the curriculum. For these educators, the arts provide hope and evidence that public schools can educate the whole child. These communities embrace reading, writing and math, along with a wide array of disciplines. Art, music, dance, theatre, creative writing, multimedia arts, and arts concepts are integrated across the curriculum. Project-based and student-centered learning become the norm. The focus shifts to helping young people learn in vibrant, effective educational environments, giving more children a greater number of chances to learn. In these learning communities, arts education professional development fits into a bigger picture of strategies to improve public schools.

Strategies From General Education

Education research continues to clarify important lessons for professional development and school change, although these lessons may not be widely applied. Researchers William Pink and Arthur Hyde recommend the following systemic approaches:

- **Proactive approach to change the system.** Shift from reactive responses to perceived problems to proactive approaches based on visions, models and conceptions of change. Professional development plans should focus on organizational change rather than individual teacher remediation. Redesigning the structure of schools to support and sustain change is as equally important as instructional change.
- **Involve a wide array of stakeholders including community.** Involve all relevant stakeholders in the school community in planning, educating and evaluating learning successes. Support of influential central office personnel and a vision of systems change are key. Invite input and collaboration from university educators. This collaboration can help conceive, implement and evaluate professional development seeking to promote positive school change.
- **Change the many cultures.** Rather than treating school culture as monolithic, consider it as a composite. Pay attention to the cultures of teachers, classrooms, schools, the district and school-community interactions.
- **Flexibility.** Adapt, depending on the goals of the educational reform: one size does not fit all. Incorporating theory, research and practitioner reflection can help frame the context.

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Engage Whole School Communities

...By whole school, I mean every teacher, every teacher assistant, and every specialist, and everyone who interacts with the children in that building... The reason for this is so that everyone gets the same dose of whatever it is that they are doing. It's a common shared experience, not just the information or the instruction. It is about sharing the understanding and shape of it.

-Gerry Howell, A+ Schools

In whole school approaches, the entire educational site adopts a particular philosophy of education arising from the arts. Significant segments or entire faculties, staff and support staff participate in professional development. Those moving the reform forward induct the school's educators to the philosophy. Teachers, administrators, principals and aides learn about the reform's background content, approaches, and assumptions. In some cases, others participate. These partners could include parents, student leaders, teaching artists, cultural organization administrators, or researchers. Specific commitments are expected from the school, such as:

- Participation over a minimum number of years
- Specific resources (space, materials, equipment, release time, support of substitute teachers, coordination, participation in evaluation, funding)
- Specific benchmarks of good practice (such as core philosophical principles or a particular curriculum).

Gerry Howell, Executive Director of A+ Schools, insists the frequent practice of involving a few key educators in reform and expecting them to come back and teach the rest is simply ineffective. Recent comparative research by [Arts Impact](#) suggests that having the whole school peer network including school leaders provides more resilience to the changes that can derail education reform.

Educators who find the arts-based, whole school approach effective become energized by the extra attention, the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in their schools and across a network and the influx of resources; they help shape the approach. Arts specialists may move from the periphery to a more central role in curriculum development, teaming with other educators and advising the school community on the quality component of the arts portion of the reform.

Some communities seek to change a critical mass of schools across a district. Some of these communities experience transformation of school identity. See [Center for Arts Education, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education, Fairfax County School District & The Kennedy Center, Greenville County School District](#).

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Deepen School-Cultural Community Partnerships

The arts in a true partnership become a primary part of the life of the school and the community, and the life of the school and the community become a primary part of the life of the arts learning.

-Gail Burnaford & Arnold Aprill, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education

Long-term relationships among educators and the cultural community expand upon the arts-in-education approach of the early days of the National Endowment for the Arts. A brief artist exposure may not change the way a teacher teaches, but a sustained relationship over time can make a difference. Often, longer term relationships among elementary classroom teachers and teaching artists are catalyzed by cultural organizations. Here, artists may bring a rich understanding of a particular art form while the generalists come with a sophisticated understanding of their students and, in many cases, proficiency with student learning and assessment strategies. A few common professional development elements in many of these partnership learning communities include:

- Flow among teachers and teaching artists, who take turns teaching, modeling and observing
- Significant time spent in planning, debriefing after teaching and observation; more planning
- Joint examination of student work where partners come together to build a learning community around student work in the arts and other subject areas
- Refining the assessment of student work together

See Arts in Basic Curriculum Project, Big Thought: A Learning Partnership, Center for Arts Education, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Kansas City, Kansas School District.

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Cultivate Researcher Relationships

A researcher can offer a practiced ability to step back from a situation and analyze it. Researchers from many backgrounds can be useful. Sociologists help see the big picture and put things in context. Art, music, dance and theatre researchers bring a depth of arts content knowledge, familiarity with the literature and knowledge of authentic assessment to each discipline. Statisticians help specify indicators and develop methods to capture and quantify evidence. Qualitative researchers help dig deeper than the 'whether or not' questions to develop theories about why things happen in learning. Education researchers ground theory with their understanding of the shifting, complex nature of educational practice.

Harvard Graduate School of Education's Project Zero has formed research partnerships with a variety of school districts, such as Traverse City Area Public Schools in Michigan or Alameda County in California, to explore how lessons from arts learning can shape our understanding of the thinking and learning. Networks such as the Arts Education Partnership, Music in Education National Consortium (MIENC) and Perpich Center's Arts Quality Network integrate researchers within the group.

Center for Arts Education (CAE) and Perpich Center for Performing Arts makes a point to cultivate relationships with local university professors or graduate students. The practitioners and theoreticians help each other make sense of the learning journey. The relationships outlast specific funding initiatives and each partner looks out for the other formally and informally.

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Reform Through Arts Integration

Arts integration is... A powerful vehicle to cross the boundaries of core subjects and arts concepts, affective and cognitive modes of expression, form and content, processes and products, the self and the world.... A search for the rightness of fit between domains of knowledge across the boundaries of disciplines.

-Gail Burnaford, Arnold Aprill, Cynthia Weiss, *Renaissance in the Classroom*, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE)

What does arts integration look like?

Many arts-based education reform efforts adopt strategies that include integrating the arts with each other and among other subjects. What does arts integration look like? The Civil War offers a ripe topic for interdisciplinary learning through arts integration, as Susanne Burgess, Tennessee's Southeast Center for the Arts' Director of Music Education, finds. Teachers can bring out both the history of the war, its reasons and effects, and the arts learning from the ways people expressed themselves during that tumultuous time.

One of Burgess' lesson plans walks students through two folk songs from the era as jumping off points for deeper arts understanding. What might the composer have been talking about? How do the minor key and the form affect our perception of the song? Students compose part of a ballad in response to historical information, putting themselves in the shoes of an artist from another time.

University of Minnesota's Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement developed useful tools to characterize and rate arts integration in collaboration with Minneapolis Public Schools and the Perpich Center for Performing Arts. At the most basic level, minimal arts content assists learning in other subject areas. For example, when a class studies Egypt and celebrates with a festival showcasing student-made dioramas about building the pyramids, that's arts integration missing the arts. The teaching focuses primarily on the history content; visual arts standards are not intentionally addressed although a visual arts activity is incorporated.

A lot of people want to jump to integration, without ever teaching teachers what is in the art form. Then you get superficial [arts education].

-Kristine Alexander, The California Arts Project (TCAP)

In Stockton Unified School Districts, generalists and music educators moved beyond a basic level of integration. Together, educators increased their proficiency in teaching music using the Orff-Schulwerk method in combination with the adopted language arts curriculum. In such arts-based education reform efforts, the development of skills in advocacy, thinking across the curriculum and envisioning collaborative possibilities helps participating educators work with the system to support arts integration.

At more complex levels of arts integration, referred to as two-way or authentic integration, a synergy exists among the arts content and other subject areas. The content and instruction focus both on skills and understanding within the arts disciplines as well as the learning in other core subjects. For instance, students could learn about both science and music as they make simple string and box instruments while exploring how longer strings make lower sounds and shortened or shorter strings ring higher. To encourage this more authentic interconnection among disciplines, the Consortium of National Arts Education Associations recommends:

An interdisciplinary focus promotes learning by providing students with opportunities to solve problems and make meaningful connections within the arts and across disciplines. Interdisciplinary curriculum encourages students to generate new insights and to synthesize new relationships between ideas. The Consortium recommends that arts specialists seek a balance between disciplinary and interdisciplinary learning emphases in their classrooms and in their work with other teachers in the schools.

-Consortium of National Arts Education Associations

See Big Thought: A Learning Partnership, Dramatic Results & Long Beach Unified School District, Hubbard Street Dance MAP Program Theatre, Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County.

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Promising Practices

A+ Schools. This decade-long whole school reform effort views “the arts as fundamental to how teachers teach and students learn in all subjects.” The North Carolina A+ Schools reform effort, now based out of the University of North Carolina-Greensboro, relies on a strong, involved, active network of classroom teachers, arts specialists and education administrators to adapt and improve the work. Applying cognitive research, including Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences, to their learning environments, A+ Schools work to integrate the arts into all instruction and strengthen the arts disciplines offered as discrete subjects in the school. This comprehensive education reform strategy focuses on improving the learning opportunities for all students.

An intensive weeklong summer institute attended by the entire school community – from teachers, principals and secretaries, to key community partners – inducts schools into the A+ Network. Master teachers experienced in this arts-infused approach comprise the A+ Fellows, who help to teach and support the increasing collaboration among educators. Both classroom teachers and arts specialists learn to foster two-way arts integration, support hands-on learning and approach the curriculum in a thematic way. A principal’s network supports the education administrators who need to navigate this reform throughout the changing educational climate.

According to *The Arts and Education Reform: Lessons from a Four-Year Evaluation of the A+ Schools Program*, a summative report of four years of evaluation results include:

- Adaptations in A+ schools: A decentralized approach leads to each A+ School’s application of the general tenets of the reform, while making the particulars work for its community. School changes include legitimization of the arts, increased communication within and across schools and community, as well as an increased organizational capacity and a more focused educational community identity.
- Changes in teachers: Participating educators increased ownership of the A+ core principles. Also, teachers developed their own repertoire of A+ strategies they were comfortable using in the classroom. Overall use of these strategies increased, including employing:
 - hands-on instruction
 - integration of arts activities with other core subject content
 - thematic units
 - multiple intelligence connections in lessons

Effects also included: greater collaboration among educators, increased involvement in leadership positions and development of appropriate, substantive assessment models that could better measure the learning than the existing high stakes standardized assessments. As evidence of the increasing entrepreneurial capacity of the network itself, the A+ Network assessment committee secured a Goals 2000 grant from the U.S. Department of Education to support the efforts, kicking off a continued commitment to developing relevant assessment for this burgeoning community.

Student changes related to the adoption of A+ teaching practice include: increased opportunities to experience core concepts in the curriculum, to connect with and use them; increased student engagement in learning, offering a path to learning for a greater number of the students and therefore more equity;

improved attendance and behavior; and students holding their own or demonstrating improvements on the North Carolina accountability system introduced during the pilot.

Other communities of interest:

HOT Schools. For more than a decade, Connecticut Commission on the Arts' education reform effort has integrated arts into school reform. Strategies include a network of schools learning to infuse the arts into teaching, incentives to deepen arts and cultural partnerships, and a philosophical commitment to support democratic practices for the whole school community. HOT Schools supports a culture of sharing and showing works of art and learning in progress to the wider school and family community as a demonstration of the learning process. They offer an intensive summer institute open to core HOT Schools and outsiders. This helps schools learn from each other as they work to retain their identity and commitment within this reform.

ArtsLit: The ArtsLiteracy Project: Brown University This arts-infused literacy education program's long relationship with Central Falls School District offers a research and development arm for both partners.

See also Arizona Artist Teacher Institutes, Lincoln Center Institute, Minneapolis Public Schools: Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA), Rhode Island Arts Learning Network.

Lessons Learned

Think more broadly than a workshop or institute. Think of support for educators and their learning community to allow for big changes over time. Consider a broad vision of reform that includes the arts. Create opportunities for whole site-based school staffs to learn from each other, explore an integrated, thematic approach to teaching and learning, and support their practice and adaptations needed to try it in practice. Link this to overall education reform efforts, where the arts can offer a key learning strategy. Support arts as a core discipline along with other subject areas of importance.

Learn from existing arts-based reform efforts. Perhaps an existing network has a philosophy that fits well with your educational community and welcomes new members. Explore it by sending a reconnaissance team of educators, administrators and partners to an intriguing, intensive, and formal professional development session. Then, assess relevant and important elements from the approach and investigate resources for joining, adapting, and cultivating your own approach. Recruit arts specialists as central members of the faculty, so they share their skills throughout the educational planning and reform effort. Create the time, resources and incentives for them to develop the capacities to participate at this higher level.

Evaluations and reflections of various arts-based reform efforts yield helpful lessons, particularly useful for the main professional development stakeholders interested in improving their efforts:

- Flexibility and adaptability to the specific needs of the school community is critical. It is the ownership of educators and those that work with them that translates the concept into practice. Develop tenets, then expect variability as local stakeholders run with what works for them. Whole school reform may be more sustainable than working with pockets of staff
- Time + Depth + Commitment = Change. With ABC schools, the more time involved in the arts learning community, the higher the level of arts achievement.
- With HOT Schools, the closer to attainment of the core goals, the more measurably successful the school reform.
- The momentum of a larger arts-based education reform effort can help inspire leadership capacity and entrepreneurial activity in educators.
- Educators may develop and apply skills as grant writers, leaders, public relations experts, grassroots organizers and policy experts to help shepherd change in their communities.
- Remember to integrate arts disciplines with other arts disciplines, creating a peer network among arts forms. Music, dance, theatre and visual arts have much to offer each other. See [Mt. Diablo Unified School District & Civic Arts Education](#).
- Build on an existing whole school reform effort. See [Greenville County School District](#).

Useful Tools

Arts Integration:

Arts Integration Frameworks, Research and Practice: A Literature Review

Burnafor, Gail et al. Arts Education Partnerships, 2007.

Describes the research related to arts integration teaching and learning as it exists in published and available studies and reports written between 1995 and 2007.

Authentic Connections: Interdisciplinary Work in the Arts

Consortium of National Arts Education Associations, 2002.

Guide on levels of interdisciplinary teaching and the arts with examples

Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development

Deasy, Richard. Arts Education Partnership, 2002.

Details the relationship between learning in dance, drama, music, multiple arts, and visual arts, and the development of fundamental academic and social skills.

Renaissance in the Classroom: Arts Integration and Meaningful Learning

Burnafor, Gail, Aprill and Cynthia Weiss. Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2001.

A nuts-and-bolts guide to arts integration, across the curriculum in grades K-12.

Education Reform:

Arts for Academic Achievement: Summative Evaluation Report

Ingram, Debra and Karen R. Seashore. Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement, 2003.

Report summarizes findings from longitudinal evaluation of the Arts for Academic Achievement program.

Third Space: When Learning Matters

Deasy, Richard J. and Lauren M. Stevenson. Arts Education Partnership, 2005.

Describes the process of transformation in ten elementary, middle, and high schools serving economically disadvantaged students in urban and rural regions of the country.

Your Turn

- How can the arts support and catalyze the educational mission of your school community?
- What role can the arts play within the current and future priorities of your school community?
- What stakeholders and leaders do you have already invested in the arts learning community's vision; who could be cultivated?
- What opportunities exist to deepen existing partnerships with the cultural community?
- What strategies could increase the visibility and legitimacy of your efforts?
- What funding sources could enhance your efforts?
- How can you piggyback on any existing general education reform efforts in your school or district?

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Sustain

Reflect | Educators Evolve | Expand Wisely | Equitable Delivery

How can the professional growth of an arts education community be supported over time?

A longtime arts learning community has the challenge of sustaining itself. Keeping alive the initial waves of energy, and excitement requires new strategies. People know what to expect, because you provide dependable services. But it's easy to get out of touch with changing needs. It may be time to reflect and ask, "Where do we go from here?" As the members of your arts learning community get smarter, it is time to address how their relationships and roles can evolve.

Such established arts learning communities often finds that growth beckons, especially when building on initial successes. Education, philanthropy, and government stakeholders often encourage expansion. But selecting the right direction for sustainable growth is difficult and often requires specific, defined, gradual steps. Expansion may lead you beyond the initial willing participants, towards insuring programming is equitably reaching all teachers and all students. Scaling up could mean connecting feeder schools, serving a whole district, or linking communities across the state or the nation.

Yet remember, progress doesn't always mean breadth. Through a reflective approach, you will find the most effective way to sustain the work of the community.

Reflect and Adapt Structures Based on Results

A strong learning community changes over time. Policies and practices that worked yesterday may need to be examined tomorrow. Some approaches grow dated and irrelevant.

When a learning community continues to ask "What's working, and what's not?", the answers can guide change. Prioritize. Brave adaptation includes letting some approaches go in order to put more energy into the most fruitful endeavors. Reflection at the end of a school year or the close of a funding cycle can provide natural opportunities to consider changes. When looking ahead at your five-year plan, leave room for flexibility. Time is required for teachers to learn and become comfortable with new ways of teaching.

Pamela Paulson of the Perpich Center for Performing Arts gamely explains, "We dropped the MAX program (one of their original arts education exposure and awareness projects)... it was too superficial. We are now working on long term commitments to teachers and administrators."

Lincoln Center Institute invited its teacher college partners to reflect on their collaborative work in the public forum of a book. By sharing the strengths, challenges and possibilities of their teacher education work, they have created a living document of the evolving learning community.

Sharing findings in open forums can help the public understand what is happening and make informed decisions as well as generate resources for arts education and related professional development. As school board members, parents, voters, legislators, researchers, philanthropists, community leaders and families engage the possibilities of promising work they can become allies, as seen in some arts-based reform efforts.

See Arts Education Partnership (AEP), Arts in Basic Curriculum Project (ABC), A+ Schools, Big Thought: A Learning Partnership, Center for Arts Education (CAE), Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), HOT Schools, Music in Education National Consortium (MIENC), Perpich Center for Performing Arts, Wisconsin Arts Assessment Project.

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Educators Evolve: Differentiation | Cultivate Relationships | Cultivate Leaders | Incentives

Lessons on sustaining professional development work point towards adaptability and structural investment. Support the needs of the different levels of experience across your arts learning community. Cultivate the capacity of your individuals and systems to move this work forward themselves. When funding and policies change, a strong decentralized structure can help. Entrepreneurial teachers, administrators and their partners can continue to move professional development forward at the local level. Find incentives for members of the community to continue to evolve.

Differentiate: Challenge Old and New Members of the Learning Community

With effective professional development, educators' needs evolve over time. Longtime arts education learning communities help original members reach new levels of capacity and depth. With shared language and understanding, seasoned members may focus more on components such as assessing or managing politics and change. At the same time, word spreads when learning communities work. New educators and schools may line up to take part, bringing resources, interest and strikingly familiar questions from the original members' earlier stages. These multiple levels of experience require differentiation. Strategies for this include:

- Cultivate master teachers from the seasoned members. These educators gradually take over primary responsibility for teaching content in professional development.

The California Arts Project (TCAP) identifies, supports and hires master teachers to lead its professional development seminars. Likewise, the Arts Education Collaborative (AEC) focuses its formal professional development on furthering the leadership capacity of arts specialists. Similarly, the Alaska Arts Education Consortium nurtures a leadership cadre of arts specialists and generalists

who teach art in order to offer professional development to their peers across the rural areas of the state.

The key component of the Artful Thinking professional development structure is teacher study groups. These are cross-grade groups of 6-10 teachers who meet bi-monthly and follow a protocol that supports teachers as they look at documentation of student work and consider issues around the development of students' thinking dispositions. In the first two years of the program, the professional development structure also included regular workshops with Harvard Project Zero staff. As planned, now that the program is fully developed and has a core of teachers who are well-trained in its practices, the professional development structure is shifting to a mentorship model, in which experienced teachers are conducting workshops and supporting newcomers to the program.

-Alison Arnold, Traverse City Area Public Schools

- Provide multiple levels of learning opportunities, such as tracks or specialized cadres. See Center for Arts Education (CAE), Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators, The California Arts Project (TCAP).
- Attend to the needs of the education administrator in the arts learning community. Create relevant learning opportunities for them, such as monthly principal network meetings, special administrator leadership groups and grants, institutes geared to the specific needs of school leaders. See A+ Schools, Center for Arts Education (CAE), Ohio Arts Council: Summer Institute for School Leaders.
- Develop mentorship programs for novices to learn from seasoned members of the learning community. See Greenville County School District.
- Don't assume the needs of novice and experienced members of your learning community will match the length of time they've taught. As pre-service education programs update their coursework with standards-based approaches and arts education coursework, newer teachers may be more familiar with those concepts than their veteran peers. See A+ Schools, Comprehensive Arts Education, Fairfax County School District & The Kennedy Center: Changing Education Through the Arts (CETA), Lincoln Center Institute for the Arts in Education.

Cultivate Relationships Over Time

Focused relationships, maintained over time, among educators, their colleagues and partners can provide intensive professional development. If the interactions are both personally and professionally rewarding, interest and relevance can help keep the professionals engaged. People who care establish informal accountability, as when a colleague asks, "How's it going?" Even when funding is gone, those relationships remain and continue to be rekindled. When trying to figure out where to go next or moving into unfamiliar terrain, long-time collaborators and compatriots can lend support, stability and predictability to changing times. See ArtsLit: The ArtsLiteracy Project, Center for Arts Education (CAE), Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) and Civic Arts Education (CAE): ArtReach, Vermont MIDI Project.

Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) collaborators Arnold Aprill and Gail Burnaford recommend collaborators spend focused time together, whether after school, in summer institutes or making art in alternative settings. They explain, “partners have to have the good will to talk across boundaries of training, practice, socialization and experience. They need to understand each other’s intentions and expectations.”

Longtime learning communities can also stay connected with their members as they move on in their careers. Proactive learning communities find ways to keep the door open so experienced members continue to contribute and carry their learning forward into new communities. See [Arts in Basic Curriculum Project \(ABC\)](#), [ArtsLit: The Arts Literacy Project](#), [A+ Schools](#), [Empire State Partnerships](#), [The California Arts Project \(TCAP\)](#).

Cultivate Leadership Capacity

Provide the forum for cultivating leadership and ownership within the educator community. Special leadership tracks help arts educators and integrators learn to think and influence the systems in which their classrooms sit. In certain cases, that leads to an entrepreneurial spirit, where teachers and principals proactively pursue the people, funding and intangible resources to improve teaching and learning.

In general education, the [National Association of Secondary Principals](#) describes the set of leadership skills needed in education as follows: decisiveness, educational values, judgment, leadership, oral and written communication, organizational ability, personal motivation, problem analysis, competency in a range of interests, sensitivity, and stress tolerance.

Curricula for the development of arts education leaders vary.

Music education researchers Dennis Thiessen and Janet R. Barrett identify skill goals for the “reform-minded music teacher”:

- Moving beyond their personal experiences to help them teach a wider variety of students and in a range of classroom structures
- Developing the capacity for joint work and collaboration
- Inquiry-focused teaching to participate in larger inquiry-based communities
- Understanding and navigating the web of stakeholders who share the responsibility for student learning
- Improving capacity to work in interdisciplinary situations and community-based learning environments

Art education researcher Gretchen Boyer analyzed leadership skills visual arts educators needed to improve art programs in relationship to a study of the Arizona Model School District program of the mid 1990’s and another study citing lack of formal leadership training for visual art educators in the state. She recommends art specialist leadership development helps teachers learn to:

- Develop and apply leadership skills to real life situations
- Set goals and develop strategies and action plans to achieve them

- Improve communication, including learning to think like education administrators and articulate overall educational priorities
- Participate in program, curriculum and staff development design

Provide Incentives

We compensate educators for participation in our long-term (professional development) programs, as well as those involved in curriculum development and strategic planning teams (\$500-\$1,000 per year, depending on the time commitment). We encourage our participating school districts to adopt this practice, as well. This is intended to demonstrate a respect for their expertise and contribution, and is very well received by the teachers.

-Dana Powell, Ed.D., Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley

Provide educators incentives for continued participation in learning communities. If teachers find the professional development renews them, they will want to come back. When they are involved in designing and delivering the program, theory remains connected to practice. Other incentives also help, such as credits and resources. Teachers need continuing professional development credit for recertification and graduate credit for higher degrees, which often translate into higher earnings.

Delaware Professional Development Clusters create incentives for partnerships and services to offer substantial educator professional development. When services pass the review process and are listed, teachers completing the 90-hour sequence and final portfolio demonstrating skill proficiency earn a 2% base salary increase for five years.

Arts 4 Learning and its local partners made funding available for materials, supplies and field trips for participating education teams.

Several profiled organizations have provided grants or mini-grants to educators or schools participating in professional development including Center for Arts Education (CAE), Ohio Arts Council: Summer Institute for School Leaders.

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Expand Wisely: Grow Slowly | Scaling Up | Flexibility | Large Systems

New issues emerge when the scope of a professional development initiative expands from classroom to school, school to district, district to state or across states. This expansion can be elusive and challenging, causing education reforms to suffer during the process. The quality of relationships and the culture of challenging learning can often be lost, both for teachers and students. As the scope expands, figuring out how everyone is doing requires systems of accountability at multiple levels.

Education reform is too often known for flurry followed by failure because systems resist change. The rapid turnover of school leaders and types of education reform works against real and lasting change. Harvard University's Richard Elmore analyzes what it takes to expand good educational practice to scale.

He argues that organizational structures and educator incentives fail to encourage the system to change its ideas about what quality education looks like. At the same time, the system continues to consider knowledge as discrete information bits and teaching as a solo-practitioner profession. This leads to lecturing, worksheet tests, regurgitation, and uninteresting teaching.

Elmore encourages large-scale education reformers to:

- **Pay attention to incentives for change.** What are they? How do schools and educators respond to them, if at all? Intrinsic motivation alone has not moved educators to large scale. Create structures that promote learning new practices.
- **Create “external normative structures”** that reinforce what the new practice should look like. The structure could be standards, guidelines, models, tools or anything that helps teachers less disposed to try new things.
- **Create structures that gather and focus intrinsic motivation** to change practice and encourage doers to influence skeptics. Regular face-to-face time, people-focused interactions around student learning and focus on student work can help.
- **Experiment with specific ways of spreading success.** Suggestions include “cumulative growth.” Annually, educators who are more challenged by reform are included and placed with exemplary practitioners in concentrated settings.

Grow Slowly

Scaling up slowly helps your learning community find out what “bigger” feels like without being completely subsumed by population changes. Piloting allows a reflective period as new faces appear. With an inquiry-based culture, results from the pilot periodically inform both local and larger system development. For instance, A+ Schools learned from growing pains that moving up in scale is important, but it requires specific, defined, gradual steps. As it adapts, A+ seeks to honor the distinct politics and cultures of each participating community. As the national A+ coalition grows, it shares and learns from its membership across states. See A+ Schools, Center for Arts Education (CAE), Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE).

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Scaling Up

Interested, willing educators make better partners for the development of an idea or approach than educators overwhelmed with requirements. Still, beware the easy default of helping the “have” and abandoning “have not” classrooms. Some communities create targeted incentives for school communities with greater needs, such as focusing only on specific high poverty schools. Others work with the willing and create an expansion plan to include others, moving towards full participation.

Greenville County School District houses a successful arts-based reform elementary- middle school feeder system complete with an arts integration institute. The “willing” developed the approach for the county. Now, while scaling up the model, Greenville CSD has targeted all Title I schools in the district for intensive arts-based professional development and resources.

The former Community School District #25 in Queens, New York, used the approach of making limited resources available competitively for one-third of its district – the most willing signed up for participation in intensive arts partnerships. Success piqued interest in non-participating educators and schools. Each year, another third was added. By year 3, and with enough resources available, everyone became involved.

On a different scale, Washington State is moving toward a required statewide arts assessment in 2008. Using its steering committee, a core of educators spreading the word across the state about participation in the development assessment items, the state cultivated exponentially more schools – and 16,000 items – as part of its voluntary pilot.

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Leave Room for Flexibility in Implementation

Having an overall vision for the work helps keep the learning community moving in the same direction and focused on young people, but each site the community expands to may look a little different as structures shift to address the specific needs, challenges and opportunities in that school community.

A+ Schools work towards a shared goal using the arts to create enhanced learning opportunities for all students. But, rather than promote a cookie cutter model across these schools, they take a different approach.

The A+ Schools program made a strategic choice to build the creativity of the arts into the implementation of education reform, empowering participating schools to develop their own creative approaches to applying the reform's core principles....there is no one “model” or checklist of the components for schools wishing to implement A+. Instead, based on intensive study of actual reform practice in the 24 pilot schools, the evaluation team has identified nine “wise practices” that A+ schools used in a variety of ways to make the reform work for them.

- North Carolina A+ Schools

The A+ community attributes sustainability of its changes in teaching, learning, and school culture in part to high expectations, experiential professional development, collaborative support and the vibrant A+ network.

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Strategies for Large School Systems

When expansion happens across large systems, creative strategies are needed to sustain the quality of the arts learning community. Statewide and multi-state approaches cross local organizational and political boundaries and may offer lessons useful for large school districts. Approaches to serving expansive education communities include:

- Provide planning support for technical assistance and grants to help develop and implement. See [Big Thought: A Learning Partnership](#).
- Establish regional service offices or representatives to link more closely to the field. See [Empire State Partnerships](#), [New York City Department of Education](#), [Pennsylvania Governor's Institute for Arts Educators](#), [Rhode Island Arts Learning Network](#), [The California Arts Project \(TCAP\)](#).
- Rotate geographic locations of face-to-face professional development opportunities to increase access. See [Arizona Artist Teacher Institutes](#), [Perpich Center for Performing Arts](#).
- Link a centralized provider with partners closer to the field. See [Comprehensive Arts Education, Fairfax School District & Kennedy Center: Changing Education Through the Arts](#), [The Kentucky Center](#), [VSA Arts of Texas](#).
- Build a philosophically driven, multi-state network supporting teachers and those who can help them or learn from them. See [A+ Schools](#).
- Create a centralized administrative hub that can help facilitate the professional development progress of the people working in its smaller entities (such as schools, school/cultural organization partnerships, feeder units, state partners). See [Arts in Basic Curriculum Project \(ABC\)](#), [Comprehensive Arts Education](#), [Rhode Island Arts Learning Network](#).
- Support professional development as part of overall arts education advocacy and reform; involve multiple state stakeholders. See [Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance \(AEMS\)](#), [Arts First Partners](#), [Arts in Basic Curriculum Project \(ABC\)](#), [Rhode Island Arts Learning Network](#).

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Equitable Delivery: Across Ability | Across Distance

General education professional development studies point to the importance of considering equity in the design of professional development, according to numerous syntheses of studies and compilations. Two key themes emerge:

- Support the collective learning of at least most of the school's teachers

- Help educators learn to appreciate and hold high expectations for all students.

By defining professional development to include the system rather than the few, you may be helping provide a more sustainable environment for change, according to comparative research conducted by Arts Impact in Washington. In their multiple case study analysis, *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, Stevenson and Deasy recount how teachers report that “through their school arts programs, they were progressively able to remove qualifiers to (their) belief...” that all students can learn “...as the students revealed themselves more fully in their art making.”

Some of the more exciting, holistic arts learning communities also take the time to pay attention to equity and have devised ways of reaching all teachers involved in the arts in all classrooms.

- Begin by developing, committing to and implementing a plan and rhetoric inclusive of all teachers and all students and keep that goal front and center in all decisions. See [Big Thought: A Learning Partnership](#), Rhode Island Arts Learning Network.
- Mobilize partners, including departments of education, school districts, higher education and the cultural community, to help create a plan that can work for all teachers, schools, and districts. See [Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education](#).
- Spend extra effort and partnership energy on the schools most in need. In the long haul, schools with the greatest need may have the most to benefit from intensive arts education professional development. See [ArtsLit: The ArtsLiteracy Project](#).
- Tap expertise outside the common arts education learning community to teach teachers and their partners and to serve as mentors. Consider arts therapists, special educators, paraprofessionals, aides, resource room specialists and community organizations dealing with specific populations as arts education professional development allies. See [Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance \(AEMS\)](#), [ArtsLit: The Arts Literacy Project](#), Kansas City, Kansas School District, Rhode Island Arts Learning Network.

To help educators include all students in the arts, regardless of ability or location, certain professional development approaches draw a wider circle.

Equity Across Ability

Make special efforts to identify resource people who share students' varied backgrounds and perspectives. Seek educators, community leaders and experts from various communities who can help educators develop strategies and a broader understanding of how to help all students learn in and through the arts. Consider locale and environment and work with partners to make choices that help educators improve their sensitivity and abilities to strategize.

Professional development can work formally and informally. A seminar taught by a team of master educators, some of whom have physical or learning disabilities, can model accommodation, including use of adaptive technologies, differentiation and inclusion in that specific learning situation, while discussing broader content and philosophical issues at a macro level.

Numerous opportunities already exist for educators to learn more about inclusion and differentiation. Seminars, courses and experiential work beyond the traditional didactic workshops can help internalize new ways of thinking about all students. Educators and their partners can become involved with communities focused on inclusion or organizations that serve specific sub-communities. By volunteering, participating, or even observing other targeted learning opportunities with inclusion expertise, educators can move from conceptual to pragmatic understanding. Special education meetings, Americans with Disabilities Act task forces, even special participation in relevant Individual Education Plan meetings for students can help teachers gain perspectives on inclusion. See [Kansas City, Kansas School District](#), [Rhode Island Arts Learning Network](#).

Equity Across Distance

Most urban and suburban schools can easily visit local cultural and higher education institutions. For rural schools distances may be too great. The field offers a variety of alternative access strategies to make resources readily available.

- Nebraska's Prairie Visions aligned its 2005 summer institute offerings to the content of Statewide Arts Connection's traveling exhibit with mini-institutes moving throughout the state.
- Discipline- Based Arts Education, Comprehensive Arts Education, and their former regional institutes such as the California Consultancy for Arts Education have provided large, high- quality reprints of visual art work to educators in order to help bring arts resources into the classroom.
- Loaning libraries share the wealth. Lincoln Center Institute, California Consultancy for Arts Education loan materials such as music scores, theoretical books, videos and art books to people who sign up to be part of their communities. Using e-mail or the World Wide Web, they ensure educators can borrow materials without physically visiting the library.
- Professional arts educator associations, such as [National Association for Music Education \(MENC\)](#) and the [National Art Education Association \(NAEA\)](#), offer hundreds of relevant books for purchase and include subscriptions to discipline-specific arts education journals with membership.
- Public resources like the Internet and interlibrary loans greatly expand free access to cultural resources. [Arts 4 Learning](#), [Arts Education Partnership \(AEP\)](#) and [Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education Resources for Schools & Communities](#) help lead educators and their partners right to what they need.

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Promising Practices

Differentiated Support:

Minneapolis Public School's Arts for Academic Achievement (AAA) professional development model applies the concept of differentiated instruction for student learning to teachers. With significant teacher mobility among schools, teachers from their arts integration learning community may find themselves in a school with no experience in arts integration. AAA provides Differentiated Support to teachers to implement arts integration in their classrooms, including:

- Job-embedded professional development through teaching artist/teacher collaborations
- Courses and workshops in specific arts-integrated teaching strategies; Modeling and coaching
- Continued inclusion of teachers formerly from AAA school sites in district arts integration professional development

Slow Growth:

Chicago Arts Partnerships on Education (CAPE) expanded slowly. Two grades started with arts partnerships. Each year added two or more grades. The buzz spread. Slow implementation allowed review and revision before full school adoption. Quality matters – don't expand so quickly you lose it. Artist- teacher partners need to like each other to develop ongoing relationships.

The CAPE "snowball effect" showed how powerful positive word of mouth can be within the education community. The pioneer teachers lead and gain praise, notoriety and good principal support. Interest peaks, other educators sign on, and slowly the value of the arts changes in the system. Evaluator James Catterall wrote "...CAPE has grown by word of mouth because many teachers and artists truly like what they are doing, and see results for children."

Link to existing frameworks and pull across governmental borders:

Stockton Unified School District fine arts specialist first joined existing networks, including the California Alliance for Arts Education, which led to involvement in a state network of model arts school districts. Similarly, the district linked professional development involvement in The California Arts Project to support it received from the U.S. Department of Education. The professional development reform in progress now includes generalist educators learning, growing and team teaching with arts specialists. By strengthening the capacities of arts specialists and generalists to teach arts standards – particularly music – and language arts standards, this arts learning community was able to connect to the complete district restructuring of K-8 education. See also Professional Development Clusters from Delaware, Rhode Island Arts Learning Network.

Lessons Learned

To sustain high quality arts education learning communities, identify network possibilities and pursue longer relationships. Assess your needs for arts specialists and generalists. What are your most pressing professional development priorities across the district? Support individual educators and teacher leaders in identifying key partnering organizations, educators and education leaders in nearby districts, existing state and national networks. Then, rather than send them off for a one-shot conference, create incentives for your educators to attend, take leadership roles and become involved in developing your own arts learning community. See [The California Arts Project \(TCAP\)](#).

Recognize and reframe planning opportunities as professional development. The committees of educators and others working to change policies, develop assessment tools in districts and across states, plan advocacy and affect other systemic aspects of change learn deeply from this work. Even though this experience can profoundly change the ways educators conceive of teaching and learning, it is not perceived as professional development and often only a few master teachers participate. Districts should create incentives for more teachers to be included. See [Rhode Island Arts Learning Network](#), [Washington State's Classroom-Based Performance Assessments](#), [Arts Education Collaborative](#).

Provide assistance and support to help teachers continue to develop relationships using virtual technologies. This doesn't mean just creating a listserv and expecting teachers to use it. Too often these are built but no one comes. Virtual communities need to fulfill the needs of users to be worth the time investment. If needed, work with partners to develop safe spaces that allow teachers and others (students, artists, partners, teacher leaders, resource people) to reflect on student work, share strategies and continue the conversation. Empower teacher leaders to figure out which existing networks are valuable. They can help determine modes that work best for your educators, such as e-mail, telephone conference calls, listservs or threaded discussions. Give these leaders credit for further investigation of protocols that work in other communities. Identify and remove barriers to participation. Where do teachers have limited access to the Internet? How can participation in virtual and live communities be integrated in the in-service structure? What general education/ technology education resources can help support this arts learning community?

When expanding professional development programs, develop priorities, considering breadth, depth, inclusion and geography. Slow growth provides time to maintain quality. Plan for multiple levels of need among both novice and seasoned members of the community. Include content and expertise from outside the district to develop relationships with teachers, planning to broaden conceptual framework as well as strategies. Use the developing expertise within your own network to help the next wave of educators learn. As needed, create regional and local centers of leadership to help manage quality, involvement and individual attention in the growing network. Use ongoing evaluation and reflection to better understand and adapt to the growing number of participating educators who may not be well served through the professional development. Openly demonstrate adaptability in addressing the emergent needs of the network.

Connect Arts and General Education. Assist classroom teachers with articulating the various reasons and research support for the role of arts in learning. Reveal the opportunities embedded in district and state standards in the arts and other areas. Support arts specialists becoming more involved in general planning in schools. When education stakeholders perceive the complementary approaches in general

education and arts education, professional development can promote a larger ecology of arts education in the schools. See Arts Education Collaborative, A+ Schools, HOT Schools, New York City Board of Education.

Change Policy. School, district, state and national policies can support or discourage arts learning communities and deeper professional development. Involvement in arts education coalitions specifically concerned with policy can create a structural support for change and evolve into arts learning communities. Initiatives such as Hawaii's ARTS FIRST Partners, Maryland's Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS) and South Carolina's Arts as Basic Curriculum (ABC) project intertwine professional development leadership and improvement with overall arts education policy and practice reform. Individuals highly involved in such coalition work have the opportunity to develop the next level of leadership, as they develop proficiency in improving the systems that improve practice. Such systemic level of change provides impetus to make change lasting.

Useful Tools

ARTS SURVIVE: A Study of Sustainability in Arts Education Partnerships

Seidel, Steve, et al. Harvard Project Zero, 2001.

Shares findings and provides perspectives for Arts Education Partnerships to consider as they seek to build their capacity to survive and to thrive over time.

Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value the Arts

Longley, Laura. President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities and Arts Education Partnership, 1999.

Identifies the critical factors that must be in place to implement and sustain comprehensive arts education.

<http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/GAAReport.pdf>

<http://www.aep-arts.org/files/publications/GAAMoreLessons.pdf>

Partners in Excellence: A Guide to Community School of the Arts /Public School Partnerships From Inspiration to Implementation

Guttman, Jacqueline Sideman. National Guild of Community Schools of the Arts, 2005.

Presents insights and best practices of current practitioners of Arts Education Partnerships.

See specifically Sustaining Partnerships.

Your Turn

- What ideas do you want to explore to help sustain your work?
- What are your three greatest challenges in sustaining arts education professional development over the next five years?
- If you had to cut back dramatically tomorrow, what would go? What is essential or integral to the work?
- What are your priorities if you were to consider expanding your professional development efforts? Why?
- Who could help you expand in these areas?
- What checks and balances can you put in place to grow carefully?

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Background

Los Angeles County Arts Commission (in partnership with the Los Angeles County Office of Education), the Santa Clara County Office of Education (having adopted the former Creative Education Program of Cultural Initiatives Silicon Valley) and the San Francisco Arts Commission are all involved in ambitious strategic initiatives to create systemic change and to restore dance, music, theatre and visual arts to all students attending public school in each respective community. The common element of these initiatives is technical assistance provided to local school districts to help them build their capacity to provide district-wide sequential arts education through the development and adoption of a long-range budgeted plan for arts education.

A critical factor to the success of all districts in implementing sequential arts education is the ability to provide high-quality professional development in dance, music, theatre and visual arts to teachers throughout the district. However, currently, there is no central compendium of information about models and best practices in professional development for arts education to guide these efforts. The three partner organizations secured public and private support and hired Dawn M. Ellis, a national consultant, to serve as lead researcher and author for a handbook designed to meet this need. Ellis facilitated background research, conversations with advisors, and field interactions.

Designing the Arts Learning Community: a Handbook for K-12 Professional Development Planners provides school districts with access to information and criteria to help them develop a high-quality professional development program in the arts for their K-12 teachers. This online resource synthesizes documents, interviews, responses from promising practices in the field and literature regarding professional development and arts education. The Handbook benefits from the collective wisdom of all participating in the research process. The Models provide profiles of fifty arts learning communities through a searchable database. The professional development programs profiled on this website fit one or more of the following criteria:

- Addresses the scale, scope, or perspectives of school districts.
- Provides evidence of evaluation, research, and/or reflective practice.
- Provides insights into approaches relevant to a variety of communities, students, and arts disciplines.
- Involves education reform that includes a strong arts component.

While broad, we do not suggest that this resource is all-inclusive. It does not focus on higher education, written curricula available for teaching the arts in schools nor does it include many vibrant learning communities who could not respond within our timeline because they were simply too busy doing good work. Rather, this publication offers insights into a larger arts learning community, with promising practices and reflective lessons on arts education professional development. Continue the discussion of this learning community as you, your teachers, and their partners strengthen your collective capacities to help young people learn in or through the arts.

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