

Arts in Education Focus Group

Date: August 12, 2008
Location: Maryland State Arts Council
175 W. Ostend Street, Suite E, Baltimore
Forum: Focus Group Meeting
Facilitator: Morrie Warshawski, Theresa Colvin, Chris Stewart, Pamela Dunne,
Lauren Dugas-Glover
Scribe: Elizabeth A. Bentley-Smith

MAJOR THEMES

People value Maryland:

- affordable connectivity
- tapestry of culture
- land of pleasant living
- accessibility
- diversity

Issues of concern to arts educators:

- widening economic divide
- impact of No Child Left Behind on curriculum
- lack of public understanding of the value of the arts

5 years from now:

- more economic impact data
- higher profile for the arts
- model schools in every county
- better coordination and connectivity across the field
- more funding for arts in schools
- better continuity of in-school and after-school activities

Suggestions for MSAC:

- be more flexible about residency requirements
- increase pay to artists
- standardize performance criteria for county arts councils
- keep convening

SOME SAMPLE QUOTES

“Growing concern statewide of definitions regarding art integration; it isn’t there to replace but to augment science and math and all the different ways it is implemented...the process needs to be more rich.”

“The extension of the problem of NCLB [No Child Left Behind] is that once s/he is disengaged, s/he never re-engages...so once the art is left behind the student is now lost to the arts. We shouldn’t have to make choices between language, arts, and technology courses.”

“MSAC’s Arts in Education grant programs are models relative to other states in the region ... I applaud the flexibility of the funding practices and would like to get more to those in greater need. The challenge is the arts in education residency programs are somewhat limiting in that they are particular models for the way they are run; visual arts requires 60 meetings...would like more exploration of different models leading to more flexibility. I would like more funding for the artists pay, just too little for many artists.”

“We need a standard for arts councils at the county level....wish all arts councils would be part of the Arts in Education process/focus group.”

“Communication, collaboration, continuity.”

“Network and share.”

RAW TRANSCRIPT

Introduction by Chris Stewart, MSAC Arts in Education Staff Member

- Welcome to the event
- What is Imagine Maryland?
 - Strategic plan...provides details regarding timeline
- Introduces MSAC Staff: Theresa Colvin, Janel Cohen, Elizabeth Bentley-Smith, Pam, Lauren Dugas-Glover
 - TC: Discusses the purpose of topic forums and regional meetings; public opinion surveys...please let the general public know about this survey and ask them to participate in the survey to collect data
- Please be sure to collect the informational sheets before leaving and be sure to sign-up

Morrie Warshawski, Consultant

- Introduces himself as an arts educator...did poetry in the schools

- Assignment in Lacombe, Oregon....spent two weeks in the schools at all levels...the California program in the schools mandates that the host is to manage where you stay, but here was scheduled to live in community members homes...members of the community said they would host for just a couple of days but when they met Morrie they were happy to host but he still had to move around
- Discusses outline of the forum and what the process is about
 - Will be asking a set of questions at all meetings to ensure continuity
 - A very thorough process
 - 1st phase: information gathering
 - ◆ Map out stake holder groups which leads to the focus groups
 - ◆ Public opinion survey
 - ◆ Regional meetings
 - ◆ Internal data review
 - ◆ 23, 1-on-1 interviews
 - 2nd phase: leads to planning and deciphering of ideas to determine goals/mission
- ❖ Discusses protocol of meeting
 - Series of questions that are asked at every meeting.
- ❖ **1ST QUESTION → WHAT ABOUT THE STATE OF MARYLAND MAKES IT SPECIAL TO YOU? WHAT DO YOU LIKE/LOVE ABOUT MARYLAND? WHAT DO YOU APPRECIATE ABOUT THE STATE?**
 - America, Maryland are intertwined; Maryland is in miniature of America; live on eastern shore because of surfing; Maryland is a beautiful state; can just appreciate the beauty of the shore and the cities
 - The land of pleasant living
 - Native Baltimorean; would like to bring Baltimore back to the glory; don't just want the New Yorkers and DCers to get the benefit of what makes Baltimore great
 - Lived all around in urban cities; affordable connectivity and tapestry of culture, would like to build a legacy here for children and arts here is much easier without the cynicism that is found in other cities; this area has great diversity
 - Baltimore has great potential to be a great city because of our great art opportunities; can see the grandeur of the area; have so much to offer in this area
 - Being a military family have lived all over the world and when deciding to stay we chose Maryland because of all of the opportunities for children through education and the arts in comparison to other areas
 - Diversity of land and the people and the state; can easily show visitors what is available in the State of Maryland as everything is so close
 - Maximize resources within the NE corridor; great urban planning; Baltimore is a wonderful hub to everything...access to so many cities, museums, art in

- general...but also concerned about what is going on with the working-class poor of those who live in Baltimore (i.e. the vanishing middle class)
- Grew up in Baltimore County and lived in L.A. for many years, but value most about MD were the arts education opportunities afforded me as a student and want to make sure that continues; was inspired to be an artist through those opportunities of pumpkin theatre and the symphony; meaningful to give it back
 - 6th generation Marylander; look at Maryland as an anchor of what America is; very deep passion of legacy...technology immersed leads to concern of how the students will learn about what Maryland has to offer including the arts and the state in general; a rich place for anyone to evolve
 - New Yorker who came here for college and wanted to come and provide for self, but appreciated that in NYC everything is available for everyone but in Baltimore that hasn't quite evolved to that level yet and want to bring that to the students of Maryland and providing that for the next generation
 - A strength of MD is its accessibility of the area and its great diversity
 - (sidebar: force field exercise; driving and restraining forces)

❖ **2ND QUESTION → WHAT ARE THE MAJOR ISSUES FACING YOUR COMMUNITY AND ARTS IN EDUCATION? WHAT ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT THAT YOU KNOW NEEDS TO BE DEALT WITH IN A FEW YEARS?**

- *(broke out in groups to discuss)*
- Widening economic divide
- The essential connection between the artist and the humanist connection in both the schools and the homes
- Industrial design...combination of arts and engineers...the disassociation of arts and a person's soul/role
- The concept of arts and integration is a legitimizing arts alongside education rather than actual part of education
 - No true integration of field trips...same as arts
 - Next step in advocacy process is showing them that this is not the best practice
- Conversation focused on schools and school systems that are failing their students and therefore we are losing teachers...found often in Baltimore
 - Cultural community wants to help work with the schools but it is a moving target...need a sustainable idea since the principals in
- Gaps in neighborhood planning...forgetting the artistic needs of those areas that are lacking
 - Provide it for those new/revitalized communities
- Impact of NCLB on curriculum
 - Narrowing of curriculum
- Funding issues...choices are made based on policy decisions rather than students and therefore the focus is in a negative mindset

- Growing concern statewide of definitions regarding art integration; it isn't there to replace but to augment science and math and all the different ways it is implemented...the process needs to be more rich
- The extension of the problem of "No Child Left Behind" is that once the student is disengaged, s/he never re-engages...so once the art is left behind the student is now lost to the arts
 - Shouldn't have to make choices between language, arts, technology courses
- There are so many artists locked up in jails...outcome of disconnect
- Lack of recognition of creative class and its economic impact (Richard Florida's book, *Rise of the Creative Class*)
 - Formula to determine how much creativity is worth
- The idea that the arts builds community
 - Helps to focus people and build the link
 - Recognize how to do that
- Helping to inform people how to learn the value of the arts (i.e. the value of the arts)
- Need to design curriculum with a focus on how to teach arts within the environment
- Justifying the arts and making it sound practical as something that will lend itself to something else...the arts is not valued singularly
- More of a societal idea that needs to be changed...sustained activity...short-term society...students have such short focuses that need to focus the perception and value

❖ **3RD QUESTION → WHAT WOULD THINGS LOOK LIKE IN 5-YEARS? A POSITIVE OUTLOOK ON CHANGES FOR THE FUTURE WITH POTENTIAL/ACTUAL OUTPUTS.**

- *(Divide into groups to discuss and choose top five)*
- Group 1
 - Needing economic development data for the arts/arts education
 - Getting school administrators (both k-12 and higher ed) made more aware of the assistance of arts
 - Training for administrators to learn more about the usefulness of the arts
 - A new societal definition of arts...a new slogan...focus on the discipline of the arts...better advocacy and marketing
- Group 2
 - Celebrating the inner/outer-space of the human being
 - State funded programs for all communities to be more active in the arts...perhaps a black community in Baltimore
 - Celebrate life through the arts...economic impact of the arts in the arts...helps to lead students to a life choice (i.e. job, etc.)
 - Building community through the arts
 - Model schools, best practices, learning outcomes and assessment
 - To have these in every county, which can then lead to all schools in
 - Art/artists tool kit used for rural communities in MD

- Remove stigma from the arts
- Group 3
 - Better coordination, better connectivity across the field
 - NJ/MI just conducted a statewide arts census in the schools and would like MD to mirror the data/census
 - Best practices
 - Need to identify emerging artists for arts rosters to ensure there is no gap
 - Resources developed to build the capacity for the arts...need better coordination of those resources
 - Better continuity of the in-school and after-school arts activities
 - Better/more funding for the arts in schools
 - Leveraging our passion and will and unleashing it on Annapolis
 - Have arts armies
 - Understanding that connecting the arts is more complex due to the diversity of Maryland (not just Spanish)

❖ **4TH QUESTION → WHAT EXPERIENCE WORKING WITH MSAC DO YOU HAVE AND HOW HAVE THEY HELPED YOU? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO SEE THEM DO?**

- Arts in Education grant programs are models relative to other states in the region...MD is by far the best in the region and in the State
 - Applaud the flexibility of the funding practices and would like to get more to those in greater need
 - Challenge is the arts in education residency programs are somewhat limiting in that they are particular models for the way they are run; visual arts requires 60 meetings...would like more exploration of different models leading to more flexibility
 - Would like more funding for the artists pay, just too little for many artists
- Would like more debriefing about what is required for the grants specific to after they get turned down...need more focus on what else they can do to get that grant (especially those of smaller groups)
- Need a standard for arts councils at the county level
 - Major issues specific to PG county...would like help from MSAC
 - Wish all arts councils would be part of the Arts in Education process/focus group
- MSAC creates a great atmosphere of partnership
 - Would like to see more work with the teaching artists...provide additional training as the teachers work with the schools
- Would like more of a state-wide conversation on a regular basis for Arts in Education
 - Can be short-term, topic specific...allows for greater coordination of advocacy process
 - On-going dialogue
- Question the need for an arts council in every county in those that have something else organized

- Perhaps the arts council directors during their quarterly meetings lead to mentorship
 - Development of arts education programs with the University of Maryland System
 - Amazed by how passionate and committed the MSAC staff are; listen to the needs of their colleagues
 - Appreciate commitment to the Arts in Education grants as access
 - Flexibility extend to the residency grants and compensation increase to the artists in schools
 - Resource to help build the small orgs capacity of organization and would like to see it also move to the mid-size
 - Art Architecture and Design Education Network...would like MSAC to work with them
 - Theresa Colvin: reiterated some of the programs the MSAC already has and want to focus on that
- ❖ **5TH QUESTION → THREE WORDS TO SUM HOW YOU FEEL ABOUT THE MSAC/PROCESS?**
- Remove arts stigma
 - Keep working on it
 - Communities and arts
 - Communication, collaboration, continuity
 - Census, thank you
 - Thank you everyone
 - Thank you
 - Network and share
 - I'm going to pass
 - Keep moving ahead
 - Everyone an artists
 - Slogan: arts everywhere
 - Life should be beautiful
 - Arts for everyone
 - Infuse the arts
 - Open everyone's mind
 - Arts in education
 - Collab-or-ation
 - Ditto, ditto , ditto
- ❖ Thank you for coming...