

THE PRACTICE OF PARTNERSHIP

“The Practice of Partnership: High-Impact Arts Education Partnerships with K-12 Schools,” is a report that documents observations and effective practices from the National Guild’s nine-year MetLife Foundation Partners in Arts Education (PIAE) program. Between 2005 and 2014, PIAE provided grants, training, and technical assistance, and documented and disseminated best practices to advance partnership practice across the community arts education field. PIAE developed out of a shared belief that access to arts education must be universal, must address issue of inequity, and must take place over a sustained period of to have durable impact.

Below are key elements the PIAE program found necessary to create and sustain successful K-12 partnerships and develop high-impact programs. The full report also discusses the unique roles funders play in supporting equitable education for all students.

CREATING AND SUSTAINING EFFECTIVE PARTNERSHIPS

UNIFYING MULTIPLE STAKEHOLDERS	Maintaining clear, regular communications engages the full array of stakeholders (staff, school admin, teachers, teaching artists, parents).	Brooklyn Conservatory of Music’s “Arts Partnership Committees” sets goals for its school’s partnerships and art endeavors, and ensures programs run smoothly and are valued by all.
SHARED RESPONSIBILITY FOR PROGRAM FUNDING	Finding funding for partnerships often falls on orgs, especially when working with underserved schools. Schools provide support such as materials, space, and professional expertise.	Community Music Center of Boston subsidized programs during the first year then required increased co-payment to continue programs while helping partners with grant writing to fund programs.
CULTURAL AND COMMUNITY RESPONSIVENESS	Respecting life experiences, strengths, and cultures helps address challenges such as high teacher turnover, emphasis on ELA and math, absenteeism, disciplinary problems, and high numbers of ESL students.	Children’s Theatre Company (Minneapolis) employed bilingual interns in classes, encouraging ESL students to express themselves more fully, connect more deeply, and gain ground in other subject areas through arts learning.
PROGRAM EVALUATION	Besides gauging effectiveness and student and teaching artist work, evaluation informs program design, goal setting, appropriate tools, partnership development, and future decision making.	MacPhail Center for Music worked with a research firm to develop detailed logic models to track program outcomes, including parent involvement, student retention, and ensuring students tested well in math and literacy.

DEVELOPING HIGH-IMPACT PROGRAMS

FOSTERING EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION BETWEEN TEACHING ARTISTS AND PUBLIC SCHOOL EDUCATORS	Co-Creating Curriculum blends the cultures of the organization and the school so that students experience them as one.	Luna Dance Institute works with school districts to write a blueprint for dance learning in the district, offering weekly instruction and coaching teachers on delivering the curriculum.
CREATING MEANINGFUL CONNECTIONS BETWEEN TEACHING ARTISTS AND STUDENTS	Joint Professional Development for TAs and school faculty promoted new understanding, skills, and the vital relationships needed to make partnerships successful.	Fleisher Art Memorial provides training for TAs including meetings, observations, a day-long retreat, and support from program staff, as well as being paired with an experienced classroom teacher.
	Through their work with TAs, students are often able to express themselves more fully, reveal different learning capacities, and adjust their assumptions about adults in the classroom.	WritersCorps has TAs maintain a presence on campus outside classroom hours (as mentors, coaches, and role models), building trust and respect with students and the community.



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