

Staffing for Arts Education

Staffing for Success in Arts Education

The student population, budget considerations, and available facilities are all factors school leaders must consider as they address the NYSED requirements for arts education and work to implement a high-quality program based on the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*. Full-time certified arts teachers are the backbone of an excellent arts education program. The arts should be taught by highly qualified personnel, consistent with all other subject areas. At the secondary level (grades 7 through 12), only arts courses taught by licensed arts teachers are considered to be credit-bearing. All Title I schools are required by law to utilize qualified teachers in all subject areas.

Licensed, Certified Arts Specialists

The most reliable means of ensuring developmentally appropriate, graded, sequential arts instruction is with licensed, certified arts teachers on staff. The federal mandate of No Child Left Behind requires that all subject areas be taught by a teacher licensed in the subject. New York State now confers K–12 licenses in Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts. These licenses are accepted by the City of New York, and converted to an equivalent NYCDOE code when a teacher is hired by a school (e.g., New York State license 1200, Dance K–12, converts to NYCDOE license 702C, Dance Day School).

Certified arts teachers have spent many years studying and refining their expertise in an art form. A classroom teacher generally cannot match the arts specialist with respect to the depth and scope of knowledge of the subject area content. Many arts teachers often also bring a background of professional experience to their teaching. These teachers are a resource to both students and staff, and can offer skills-based and/or interdisciplinary curriculum-integrated arts studies to students. Working with the students from year to year, they can build scaffolded, multi-year curricula that promote a high level of student achievement in the arts. Their effectiveness is further magnified when they work in collaboration with classroom teachers and/or teaching artists from arts organizations and cultural institutions.

The OASP directors of the four art forms can share additional teacher resumes, and are available to assist you in finding suitable candidates. In addition, during the “open market” period there are arts teachers who are seeking new positions. If you are seeking an arts teacher, please post the vacancy with Human Resources.

Professional Development for Arts Teachers

The arts teachers in your building benefit tremendously from professional development targeted specifically to their issues in arts pedagogy. Arts teachers are likely to be either the only teacher of their subject or few in number at their school. Citywide workshops and courses offered by the OASP directly address their needs and are offered on a regular basis. These events, planned for Chancellor’s Staff Development Days and at other times during the school year and in the summer, are announced in *Principals’ Weekly* and on the OASP Website. Additional workshops, inter-visitations, and other valuable professional development opportunities may also be offered by your Network or Cluster, as well as by cultural organizations.

It is vitally important that arts teachers be released from their instructional duties to attend these events several times a year. You will see the investment amply returned in improved instruction and classroom management, enhanced teacher knowledge base, and implementation of assessment strategies that will help both you and the teacher evaluate the effectiveness of both their teaching methods and their students' achievement in the arts. For information about upcoming professional development opportunities, contact the Office of Arts and Special Projects or check the NYCDOE's arts Website: <http://schools.nyc.gov/artseducation>.

Cultural Partners: Teaching Artists

Teaching artists are working professional artists who also teach in schools on behalf of arts and cultural organizations. These visiting artists play a vital role in rounding out the delivery of arts education, representing a range of expertise that can complement the skills and training of your in-school staff.

When choosing arts organizations to work with your school, several factors are important to take into account:

- Which art forms are already being taught at your school?
- Which grades/classes are receiving this education?
- How will the arts organization's skills and mission fill the gaps and help you comply with ArtsCount so that all students have access to arts learning?
- How can the work of various organizations and school arts staff be coordinated to complement each other and ensure that students are building their skills, knowledge, and understanding sequentially in an arts discipline from year to year, consistent with the *Blueprints*?

Questions to Ask Arts and Cultural Organizations

Before you employ the services of an arts organization, there are a few important questions that should be brought up in your discussions with them:

- What is your familiarity with the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*, and how does your program address it?
- What is your familiarity with the Common Core? How do your arts learning experiences support Common Core learning?
- How will your work advance my students' arts learning and progress them toward the *Blueprint* benchmarks?
- What assessment and evaluation tools will you use to measure student learning and your program's effectiveness?
- In what ways will you work with my arts and classroom teachers to extend my students' learning?
- In what ways will this work advance and support my school's overall goals?

Partnerships are most effective when the school schedule and the schedules of the arts and cultural organizations are coordinated. Especially when the school testing schedule is in effect, arts partners need to be considered so that the time and resources expended in making these programs available to your school are not wasted because of scheduling conflicts. Clear lines of communication between schools and arts education providers are crucial to fostering successful partnerships. Some principals recommended creating a

master arts learning schedule that includes partnership activities organized by grade and aligned with the testing calendar. In general, meeting time for planning and evaluation (pre, midpoint, and post) should be built into any arts residency to prevent scheduling conflicts and assure consensus regarding instructional content and allowing for timely program evaluation.

Cultural Partners: Field Trips

Students should have multiple opportunities every year to leave the school building and visit the world-class museums, concert halls, theaters, and dance performance venues that New York City has to offer. Many of these institutions offer free or low-priced tickets to both school-time and out-of-school-time performances. Sometimes these are stand-alone experiences and sometimes they are built into a residency program. There are hundreds of arts organizations and cultural institutions offering services to the public schools. A listing of these organizations with links to their Websites can be found in the *Arts and Cultural Education Services Guide* on the OASP Website at the following link: <http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/resource-guide2.html>. Over 100 of these organizations have multi-year contracts that simplify purchasing their services. This list can be found on the DCP Web pages on the DOE Website at <http://schools.nyc.gov/Offices/DCP/default.htm>.



Classroom Teachers

Integrating the arts into daily instruction enriches student learning across all subject areas. Your classroom teachers and teachers of subject areas other than the arts can provide a vital support for the arts learning in your building. In particular, they can address strands 2, 3, 4, and 5 of the *Blueprint*—all strands of arts learning except the Arts Making strand, which often are more effectively taught by certified arts specialists and teaching artists.

The classroom teacher can support the arts curriculum and extend the work of the arts teacher or visiting teaching artist in the following ways:

- Collaborating with teaching artists or DOE arts teachers to co-design units of study that satisfy both arts standards and other core curriculum standards
- Reading, research, writing, and discussion about the arts to support the Arts Literacy strand of the *Blueprint*
- Studying the arts of a culture or period of history to support the Making Connections strand of the *Blueprint*
- Field trips to performances and exhibitions to support the Community & Cultural Resources and Careers & Lifelong Learning strands of the *Blueprint*

Classroom teachers are better prepared to work effectively with arts education providers when they have received basic preparation in the arts. Professional development in the arts is available for classroom teachers from a variety of sources, including the Office of Arts and Special Projects and a range of arts organizations. The licensed arts teachers in your school may be your most valuable asset for leading peer professional development in the arts on-site for your staff.