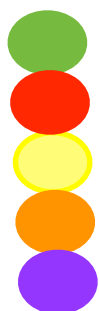


# CHICAGO ARTS LEARNING INITIATIVE



## Collaborating for Change: Expanding Arts Learning in Chicago

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JPMorgan Chase & Co.  
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Lloyd A. Fry Foundation  
And the dedication of more than 250 community leaders

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## Arts Education for Chicago's Children

Parents, educators, community leaders, and elected officials all want to make sure that Chicago's children get the education needed to lead meaningful, productive lives. But "reading, writing, 'rithmetic" – the 19<sup>th</sup> century formula to prepare students for industrial jobs – is no longer enough. Schools need to foster creativity, critical thinking, problem solving, collaboration, and communications – skills essential to participating in our democracy and succeeding in the emerging global economy.

The arts arm students with these essential skills. The arts encourage and give expression to students' creativity, desire to communicate, and appreciation for beauty. Producing works of art, from third-graders' self-portraits to the high school play, demands problem solving, critical thinking, discipline, and collaboration. Because they access multiple human intelligences and engage a variety of learning styles, the arts support and enhance education for all students. They enrich the school environment, foster appreciation for different cultures, and add a whole new dimension to students' lives.

But instead of expanding arts to develop students' full potential, since the 1970's schools have gone in the opposite direction. Facing budget cuts and shorter school days, districts throughout the nation have reduced support for arts education. The trend accelerated in 2002, when the federal government's No Child Left Behind policy began emphasizing accountability of schools for achievement in math, science and reading. As a result, schools concentrated on areas of learning for which they were held accountable and other subjects received less attention, thus narrowing the curriculum and the learning experiences of students.

In Illinois, the school code specifies that every school provide adequate instruction in the arts to all students. Chicago Public Schools set minimal levels: in order to graduate students must take two credits in the fine arts, which they define as music and “art or drafting”. But we do not have accurate information about how these minimal requirements are implemented in schools. Chicago schools for many decades have had local decision-making power in terms of curriculum and instruction . As a result, actual arts instruction across schools and its impact on students’ learning are not known at a system level. Without solid evidence about the actual amount of arts education students in Chicago are receiving, it has been difficult to report how arts education affects academic achievement or supports school success.

*“We are educating people out of their creative capacities. Picasso once said that all children are born artists. The trick is to remain an artist as we grow up. I believe this passionately: We don't grow into creativity; we grow out of it. Or, rather, we get educated out of it. Creativity now is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it with the same status.”*

Sir Ken Robinson, TED conference, 2006

What we do know suggests that few Chicago students receive a comprehensive arts education that is both discipline-specific and integrated into their broader educational experiences. Only in schools where the value of the arts is clearly understood, and where infrastructure, resources, and relationships between educators and the arts community are strong, do Chicago students receive a comprehensive education in the arts. Everyone else is left behind.

To give our students the best chance of developing the skills to succeed in the global economy and lead rich, productive lives, we must expand arts learning opportunities for all Chicago Public School students. Over the last year, Chicago arts groups, educators, civic and philanthropic leaders have been meeting through the Chicago Arts Learning Initiative to lay a roadmap for doing that. This report presents their recommendations. We invite parents, educators, community and corporate leaders, and public officials to begin working with us to make that happen.

## How We Got Here

In its 2001 survey *Arts Education in the Chicago Public Schools*, The Chicago Community Trust found that Chicago schools offered widely different levels of arts education. Some schools had no arts instruction, while others offered two or more hours a week; the average was 45 minutes of art or music instruction per week. Eighty-six percent of elementary schools taught only one art discipline; only 6 percent included anything beyond visual arts and music. One third of elementary schools offered no performance opportunities – no chorus, band, drama, or dance.

As a result of this research, a group of funders and civic agencies joined together to explore how to build sustainable access to sequential arts instruction for all students. This collaborative, now known as the Chicago Arts Education Collaborative, helped establish and fund the Chicago Public School Office of Arts Education, an important step toward securing system-wide commitment to arts as a core area of learning. They also supported the creation of Illinois Creates, a state advocacy agenda run by Arts Alliance Illinois. These efforts created an important base of knowledge and helped establish a stronger arts education infrastructure in Chicago.

By 2008, however, it became clear that the effort to expand arts education still lacked several critical elements:

- a coordinated effort to build the capacity of arts educators and schools
- reliable benchmarks and accurate data on the availability of arts education
- an organized local advocacy effort

To take up this challenge, in 2009 the Collaborative launched the Chicago Arts Learning Initiative also known as CALI. CALI is a community-wide effort bringing together large and small arts and cultural organizations, Chicago schools, the district's Office of Arts Education, and funding organizations. Its goal is to leverage existing assets, including Chicago's strong community of cultural institutions and the work of hundreds of dedicated arts

*We found little collaborative effort [in Chicago] other than that of a group of foundations supporting the school district's newly hired [Director, Office of Arts Education]. The city's many other networks of providers and influencers were involved in their own efforts, but there was little coordination across them."*

*RAND Corporation, Revitalizing Arts Education through Community-Wide Coordination, 2008.*

teachers, to ensure equitable and sustainable access to innovative arts learning for all Chicago Public School students.

CALI began by taking stock: it surveyed the arts education community, convened over 200 individuals through four community forums, and held a daylong retreat of sixty arts and education leaders. Through these efforts, Chicago's arts education community identified opportunities and gaps that can be addressed through increased collaboration and coordination, thus making it possible to improve and expand the delivery of arts education in Chicago.

In June 2009, CALI formed workgroups of teachers, principals, parents, artists, funders, and representatives from higher education and cultural organizations to create action plans. The groups developed recommendations on how to identify and fill information gaps, create a stronger network of arts educators, and build the capacity of schools and school leaders. They were able to leverage the Chicago Public School Office of Arts Education's *Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*, which was still under development but offered a standards-based, developmental framework for teaching and learning in the arts and a platform for greater coherence and quality in arts education for students.

Finally, the groups were able to articulated a set of shared values and goals for arts education in Chicago, and established a set of desired outcomes for CALI:

- Increasing information and understanding about the levels and availability of arts education in Chicago Public Schools
- Creating a strong, evidence-based case and a unified message about the importance of investing in arts learning
- Establishing effective arts leadership within schools and communities, particularly in areas where students receive little or no arts instruction
- Identifying, understanding and leveraging models and best practices to promote more effective, innovative arts instruction by well-prepared and empowered educators
- Pursuing equitable distribution of arts resources and services in schools across the city

# CALI Action Plan

## **Our Shared Vision for Chicago Public School Students**

*From the day they start school until the day they graduate, all Chicago Public School students will have access to innovative and engaging arts education both in and out of the classroom. This education will provide opportunities for our youth to develop as innovative thinkers and creative problem solvers who are capable of expressing themselves, understanding others and contributing to the culture of their time.*



## What We Believe

The following core values guide our individual and collective efforts to expand access to and improve the delivery of arts learning in Chicago:

### INSTRUCTION

- Arts teaching and learning should be standards based, developmentally appropriate, and built on a scope and sequence as suggested in *The Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*. It should be deeply engaging and relevant to students and school communities.
- Arts should provide students and classroom teachers with opportunities to deepen learning in other subjects through an interdisciplinary approach and project-based, hands-on experiences.
- Arts instruction in every school should embrace the cultural diversity of the city and its neighborhoods.
- All students and teachers should have access to Chicago's multifaceted and vibrant cultural arts community.
- Arts learning opportunities should be available during the school day, before or after school, and during the summer at schools and other sites.

### EDUCATORS

- Dynamic and committed principals should serve as leaders in their schools for developing, sustaining and heralding the arts.
- In every school, credentialed arts teachers are essential to providing depth and breadth of instruction in the arts as part of the core curriculum
- In collaboration with credentialed arts and classroom teachers, arts partners and teaching artists should strengthen and expand arts learning in and outside the classroom.

### COMMUNITY

- Students, educators and parents, through their participation in and through the arts, should build engaging classrooms and school communities that serve the needs of diverse learners.
- Active community participation and collaboration are needed to support, enrich and expand arts learning for students.

### ADVOCACY

- Building public will for comprehensive arts education should be the collective responsibility of our schools, communities, elected officials, and arts sector.

### MEASUREMENT AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- Meaningful arts education data should be reported, collected, analyzed and shared.
- All arts programs should have specific benchmarks that measure achievement at both the student and school levels.

## Recommendations for Change

Drawing on the workgroup recommendations, the CALI advisory group has developed the following Action Plan. The plan identifies five priorities for expanding arts education, and calls for a renewed public commitment and dedicated collaboration among educators, teachers, artists and arts groups, funders and public officials to achieve these goals.



### Knowledge

#### **PRIORITY 1: CREATE ACTIONABLE KNOWLEDGE**

To improve arts education in Chicago, we must start with a clear picture of what currently exists, respond to gaps or inequities, and then track the results as we go forward. We need reliable data to prioritize the distribution of resources and services, identify opportunities, make the case to key decision makers for equitable access to arts education, and document the results. ***Our goal is to make reliable data widely available about the status and quality of arts education in Chicago Public Schools (CPS).***

We will pursue the following strategies in support of this goal:

**Action 1: Analyze data that currently exist within CPS and create a reporting mechanism to track progress.** Working with CPS, baseline data will be analyzed to determine current arts education programming supported by the district. To further transparency, a reporting mechanism will be created using key performance measures. School-based results will be posted online to create benchmarks, plan appropriate technical assistance, and track progress.

**Actions 2: Create an online tool to market the services of arts providers and track their programs in schools.** The Arts Alliance Illinois is launching a robust, new online Arts Education Provider Directory. This online tool will help match schools with arts partners, provide data about where and how arts partners are serving schools, and iden-



tify gaps and opportunities for programs and professional development to serve specific needs.

**Action 3: Create an online map on the availability of arts education in CPS.** Utilizing the data from CPS and the Arts Alliance directory, map arts education throughout the district, correlate the information with school performance data, and identify patterns and trends. Populated annually with up-to date information, this map will be an incredibly useful resource to identify schools that could benefit from expanding arts learning.

**Action 4: Develop a research agenda.** Research has presented compelling evidence linking student learning in the arts to various academic and social benefits. Making the case for increased investment in arts in every school requires further evidence demonstrating the impact of rigorous in-school and out-of-school arts programs on students, schools and communities. A citywide taskforce will be assembled to develop a Chicago-based arts education research agenda that would include documenting measures of quality and identifying best practices in instruction, assessment and evaluation.

**Action 5: Create an online knowledge center.** To make it easier for people to find information, we need a centralized source for and about Chicago's arts education sector. We will create a resource and communication hub that includes information and research, instructional tools, directories of people and organizations, and online conversations to help schools and arts education providers enhance the delivery of arts education. This will be a place to share successes, challenges, and best practices. It will also be a platform for discussion in which arts educators will be invited to post information, write articles and engage in online dialogue.



Advocacy


**PRIORITY 2: INCREASE DEMAND FOR ARTS EDUCATION**

In a time of scarce resources and fierce accountability pressures, we need to affirm the value of arts education and make the case for extending it to all children as a fundamental part of their education. To do this, we need to build demand for arts education supported by a compelling argument and effective advocates who speak out in support of expanded arts learning. ***Our goal is to have a coordinated advocacy effort that advances arts education in CPS.***

We will pursue the following actions in support of this goal:

**Action 1: Make the case for arts education for all CPS students.** An advocacy task force will be formed to develop a compelling case and advocacy strategy for arts education using new and existing research, testimony from students, and examples from Chicago's arts community. The task force will:

- Lay out a policy agenda for arts education in Chicago that supports high quality education for all CPS students and seek broad endorsement from the arts and education communities, parents, elected officials and civic leaders for those policies. Policy priorities might include school compliance with the current CPS-CTU contract that provides allocations for credentialed arts teachers at 0.5 or 1.0 FTE levels according to school size or maintaining the CPS Office of Arts Education and the Office of Academic Enhancement's Fine and Performing Arts Magnet and Magnet Cluster Program Schools.
- Launch a campaign to educate and engage parents and education decision-makers. A targeted awareness building and advocacy campaign will be launched to influence the Chicago Board of Education, chief area officers and principals to expand resources for arts education. The campaign will also help build awareness and demand among parents, so that they will seek out arts education in selecting schools for their children and advocate for arts education in schools their children already attend.



Leadership

**PRIORITY 3: BUILD AND SUPPORT SCHOOL LEADERSHIP**

Comprehensive arts education is most likely to happen in schools where its value is clearly understood, and where infrastructure, resources, and relationships between the district, schools, arts educators, and arts providers are aligned. To encourage all schools to truly commit to arts education, we seek to encourage and support dynamic and knowledgeable leadership by chief area officers and principals, who play a pivotal role in allocating resources for arts education. We also hope to support and train teachers, who often lead collaborative efforts among their peers, parents and external arts partners. ***Our goal is to have effective and committed arts leadership in every CPS school.***

We will pursue the following actions in support of this goal:

**Action 1: Develop an Education Leaders Institute for school leaders.** In partnership with the district and arts organizations, the institute will provide coordinated training and support for chief area officers, principals, and other school leaders. The Institute will show participants:

- How to embed the arts in school-level planning, including how to incorporate the arts into the School Improvement Plan for Advancing Academic Achievement (SI-PAAA)
- What students should be able to know and do, based on *The Chicago Guide for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*
- How and why to establish a school-based arts instructional leadership team that can help make decisions about the arts program and coordinate professional development
- How to identify and incorporate arts partners into their strategy for delivering arts instruction
- What resources are available to help them bring arts education to all of their students

**Action 2: Publish the Five Fundamentals of Arts Learning, a framework for school-level planning in the arts.** Successful schools focus their improvement efforts on a few key areas. The Five Fundamentals of Arts Learning, based on the CPS Five Fundamentals for School Success model, give guidance for Instruction, Instructional Leadership, Professional Capacity, Learning Climate, and Family & Community Involvement. The Fundamentals should be incorporated into the Education Leaders Institute and broadly distributed to help CPS practitioners and stakeholders focus on what matters most in developing arts programs.

**Action 3: Document models of best practice in CPS.** District leaders, principals, teachers and members of the arts community all want to know about successful models of arts education delivery, but few models are documented and shared. In an effort to demonstrate how arts education is already effectively implemented in many schools, best practice models will be identified and shared.



Quality

**PRIORITY 4: IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING**

In order to enhance learning we must ensure arts educators have the tools to succeed including information, training and support. Building on the platform CALI has already established, new opportunities must be developed to bring certified arts educators, arts partners, teaching artists and others together to develop mutual understanding and trust, refine their practice, support their commitment, and inspire new ways of meeting the needs of students.

***Our goal is to have an organized learning community for arts educators supported with professional development opportunities to improve the quality of teaching and learning.***

We will pursue the following actions in support of this goal:

**Action 1: Create an arts education professional development consortium.** Formed with diverse representation from arts educator groups, the consortium will design and support the coordination of citywide learning communities and professional development that is cohesive, consistent, challenging and relevant. Arts educators will be empowered to define professional needs and develop strategies to improve curriculum, teaching methods, and the school environment. The professional development consortium will:

- Track, develop and publicize professional development programs. Information will be shared online and include a calendar of arts education professional development and networking opportunities linked to the online knowledge center (see Priority 1, Action 5).
- Create learning communities focused on inquiry and improvement. A professional network will bring together certified arts educators, classroom teachers, teaching artists and directors of arts education programs who wish to enhance their practice and improve student outcomes. Through learning communities, novice and experienced arts educators can take advantage of opportunities for professional growth, be inspired by their peers, and become more effective teachers and school reformers.

**Action 2: Develop a program to advance the practice of teaching artists.** Drawing on the leadership, expertise and resources of Chicago arts community, we propose to advance the practice of teaching artists through a program or set of programs that provides mentoring, peer-to-peer training, and possibly a certification or endorsement. These training opportunities will be rooted in both educational philosophy and artistic practice; and will target practicing artists interested in building their capacity to provide rigorous and effective arts instruction in the classroom.



Coordination

## **PRIORITY 5: COORDINATE, ALIGN AND SUSTAIN**

No one organization or individual will be able to bring about systemic change to expand access and ensure the sustainability of arts education for all Chicago children; that requires sustained commitment and collaboration by many people working to build public understanding, improve policies, and increase the capacity and coordination of the entire arts education field. In particular, we need greater coordination and alignment around advocacy, information management, professional development and resource distribution. ***Our goal is to have an aligned and supported arts education system to maximize opportunities for students.***

We will pursue the following actions in support of this goal:

**Action 1: Develop an appropriate structure to support and coordinate the CALI recommendations and actions.** A taskforce will be assembled to recommend an appropriate structure to support the work of CALI and build adaptive capacity for the arts education sector. The taskforce will consider other models and develop recommendations on an organizational structure, startup plan, staffing, leadership structure, budget and long-range planning to sustain the effort. Community input will be collected and incorporated before the recommendations are finalized.

**Action 2: Improve the distribution of arts education resources.** Much like after-school programs, arts education programs provided by external arts partners are spread unevenly across the city, and there is no effective mechanism to ensure all students have access. Using data and information outlined in Priority 1: Create Actionable Knowledge, schools with the greatest opportunity for growth will be identified and offered technical assistance to inform them of arts resources and help them select an arts partner who can support their school goals.

**Action 3: Partner with local and national funders to build the capacity of Chicago's arts education sector.** In order to expand arts learning in Chicago, investors need to be committed to supporting arts education, there needs to be greater efficiency in the way resources are distributed and utilized, and new resources need to be identified and cultivated.

## Our Charge

Over the years there have been a number of efforts to strengthen arts learning in Chicago. These efforts helped to advance arts education and contributed to Chicago's many arts education strengths that are highlighted on a local and national stage. Building on the lessons of the past, the Chicago Arts Learning Initiative has established a climate of shared purpose and respect, fostered greater communication among key stakeholders and identified pragmatic solutions to sector-wide challenges.

Given the ever-changing education landscape and the uncertainty of the economy, it is important now, more than ever that we work together to build a stronger, more adaptive infrastructure to support arts learning in Chicago. Making quality arts education available to all Chicago students will require the commitment and involvement of many people. Together we must:

- ... set aside our individual agendas and **work as a system**
- ... maximize and leverage existing resources with **greater efficiency**
- ... **coordinate, collaborate and align** in order to expand access
- ... put **students at the center** of all decision making

For those who have committed their valuable time and resources to participate in CALI, we are deeply grateful and hope that you will continue to guide this effort. For those who have yet to get involved, we ask you to join us. Now is our time to come together to reinvigorate arts education in Chicago Public Schools. Together, we can and will ensure that all children have access to innovative and engaging arts learning experiences that they deserve and need in order to succeed in the future.

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



## List of CALI participants

### **CALI Co-Chairs:**

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Tracey Eisman, JP Morgan Chase & Co.  
Amanda Farrar, Barrel of Monkeys  
Ari Frede, Palmer Elementary School  
Pam Glynn, Hancock High School  
Hallie Gordon, Steppenwolf Theater  
Joan Gray, Muntu Dance Theater  
Lynne Pace Green, American Theater Company  
Marilyn Halperin, Chicago Shakespeare Theater  
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Lauren Boylan, Smart Museum of Art  
Amy Campbell, Little Black Pearl  
Margaret Caples, Community Film Workshop  
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Kristy Peterson, Smart Museum of Art  
Joanna Pinsky, Art Encounter  
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Gladys Santiago, Unitivity, Inc  
Heidi Saunders, Barrel of Monkeys  
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