

Cultural Arts Council of Douglasville – Douglas County
Updated Plan for Arts in Education / Education in the Arts

Consultant's Review:

Highlights of Progress through 2007

The Cultural Arts Council (CAC) has made significant progress toward realizing the Strategic and Organizational goals in its original Action Plan for Arts-in-Education / Education in the Arts. The CAC's in-house leadership, Board, Arts Education Committee and Teaching Artists are to be commended for maintaining high quality standards, expanding the quantity of programs and participants served, and not least of all, for its innovation in response to new challenges and opportunities [*Strategic Goal #1*]. The consultant's review is based upon a variety of data on the Cultural Arts Council's programming from 2004 through 2007. ¹

One of the most exciting success stories in the CAC's education plan is the Arts After School program. The CAC is commended for undertaking a thorough evaluation the first year of the program, in order to fine-tune it and to demonstrate immediate results to funders and participants alike [*Strategic Goal #2*]. Another stellar achievement is the Public Art mosaic at the Aquatic Center demonstrating that high quality art classes can create high quality artwork [*Strategic Goal #3*].

Based upon its proven track record for maintaining high standards, and for encouraging inclusiveness and collaboration, the CAC has secured funding from previously untapped or under-utilized sources to perpetuate the gains achieved and plan for campus expansion [*Organizational Goal #1*]. Another prime example is the renovation of the Wynn Building to better serve students and teaching artists, alleviating overcrowding and scheduling conflicts inherent when limited to the main house basement or community room [*Organizational Goal #2*]. Expanding into Saturday mornings also makes classes more accessible. The anticipated implementation of Pay Pal will solve another thorny problem that impedes class, workshop and ticketed event registration.

Since the original Arts in Education/Education in the Arts Plan was released in 2004, the CAC has made great strides:

- Board adopted and began implementing Master Strategic Plan
- Board adopted and began implementing Arts in Education Action Plan
- Cultural Facilities Needs Assessment completed with Lisa Mount
- Campus Expansion Master Plan completed with Lord Aeck & Sargent
- Fundraising Capacity Study completed with Alexander Haas Martin

The Cultural Arts Center is now poised to take Phase I, Classroom Expansion, from Vision to Reality. Because Phase I of the Campus Expansion Plan focuses on increasing classroom/studio capacity within a 3-year projection, this Update of the CAC's Action Plan for Education in the Arts/Arts in Education will project through 2010.

Context of the Updated Arts Education Plan, 2008 – 2010

Building a Stronger Community through the Arts

We know that the arts can engage students' attention and participation even when traditional class work has failed to interest them – because the arts speak to the different ways students learn. We know the arts help prepare students to respond intelligently and creatively to a multi-faceted, quickly changing world. Test scores may help one get into college, but employers don't focus on test scores. We know that employers in Georgia and nationwide seek workers who are creative, good team-players, and "out-of-the-box" problem solvers, and we know that the arts develop these character traits. We know that our students face a future where anything that can be quantified and scripted can be outsourced to foreign soil,² and only those who can think, analyze, and *invent* will gain employment that contributes to our growth at home.

Students in Douglas County Schools are part of our constituency, as individuals and as part of families. They need and want access to high-quality experiences in the arts. The school system recognizes this, and it held out as long as it could before the demands of No Child Left Behind (NCLB), with its emphasis on testing, combined with shrinking State funding, necessitated cuts to its fine arts staff. The Douglas County School System welcomes Cultural Arts Council assistance in providing our young scholars with a broad menu of educational experiences in the arts.

This discussion may surprise some readers who cannot imagine students going through K-12th grades without art classes, who may not be aware that for some students, a CAC dance or music assembly might be their only exposure to a real, live artist or artistic program for several years. There are few field trips these days, and the old model of an artist-in-residence working with pull-out groups doesn't fly outside of existing art classes. This is because all time in class must be spent on core, to-be-tested, academic subjects (the consultant could argue that the arts are themselves academic disciplines).

It is not the role of a local arts council to teach the languishing State "QCC's"³ in the arts. Cultural Arts Council classes and programs are for personal enjoyment and enrichment - for adults as well as youth. Yet community programs in the arts can be a beacon to those students, young and old, who have an artistic talent, or a passion to create, or an interest in exploring the arts of dance, theater, literature, music, drawing, painting, sculpture, and more. The CAC can help bridge the gap for its school-aged constituents between what the students want to learn and what the school system can afford to provide with its limited resources. In doing so, the CAC will build future arts patrons. Classes for adults serve our current patrons, reintroducing them to the joys of learning in the arts, and elevating the artistic literacy of our community as a whole.

Supporting Growth, Vision to Reality

The Cultural Arts Council's original Two-Year Plan for Arts in Education / Education in the Arts, with its Strategic and Organizational Goals and Strategies, is the foundation of this Update. Some areas of the plan need more attention than others over the next three years, and new ideas must also be given room to prove themselves. These priorities are presented as Expanded and Refocused Strategies, with Action Items, for 2008 – 2010.

Plan Strategic Goal #1: *Build on the CAC's current programming strengths, identify untapped educational resources and opportunities, and grow audiences to capacity.*

Expanded & Refocused Strategies, 2008-2010

A. Conduct Comprehensive, Real-Time Program Evaluation

How do we know programs are strong and responsive to public interests? Evaluation needs to be comprehensive, on-going, and concurrent with program development. Dynamic evaluation informs program development – rather than producing statistics at the end.

- Action Item: Develop a **universal observation tool** for CAC programs with a section specific to each type of educational component and audience (e.g., questions specific to parent involvement in the Arts After School workshops).
- Action Item: Enlist **Arts Ed Committee members** to attend CAC educational programs and complete observation forms. Pilot-test the tool in the *November* assembly program and December activities, then refine it, and roll it out in January.
- Action item: Develop **evaluation forms** for school assemblies and workshops: principals and teachers to submit evaluations as a condition of receiving the program. Provide copy of form to presenters to ensure clarity re: expectations to be met. Status: In Process.
- Action Item: Make it easy to complete forms on-line, using **Zoomerang**; provide hard copies of forms upon request.

B. Conduct Annual S.C.I.D. Analysis – with Program & Exhibition Committees

- Action Item: Arts Ed Committee has conducted a review through 2007; share results with Program and Exhibition committees. Status: In Process.
- Action Item: Set aside time annually for committee and staff to review educational component of all CAC programs to applaud, strengthen and/or suggest refocus.

C. Conduct Annual Community Environmental Scans – with Program Committee

How do we know CAC programs are not duplicating the effort/competing with other organizations' programs, which may be affecting attendance? We believe that a diverse community is a strong community, therefore we support inclusive programming which emphasizes the value of various learning styles, reaches diverse participants of all ages, ethnic backgrounds, and abilities.

- Action Item: **Update** the list of community programs in all arts discipline areas, noting age levels or special constituencies served. Status: Needs to be done.
- Action Item: **Cross-reference** the list of other arts programs in the community with the CAC's schedule of programs; recommend adjustments to Program Committee if needed.
- Action Item: **Look for the gaps.** Is an art form or age group consistently under-served by the CAC *and* other community providers? Is there a need for education in the arts that is routinely overlooked? Provide information, recommendations to the Program Committee based upon this objective data.

Plan Strategic Goal #2: *Explore new ways to integrate the arts with the school system's academic curriculum, K-12.*

Expanded & Refocused Strategies, 2008-2010

A. Strengthen Curriculum Connections of In-School Programs (arts in education):

1. **Assembly programs** presented by touring artists.

- Action Item: The CAC is commended for obtaining **study guides** from presenting artists prior to in-school programs to help teachers prepare their classes.

2. **Workshops to help classroom teachers** integrate the arts into the core curriculum.

- Action Item: The CAC is commended for its initiative in developing professional development opportunities for **middle school music teachers**. The 2007-2008 workshops by Elise Witt in vocal coaching, and by Laughing Matters in theater improvisation, are innovative and responsive to the teachers' expressed needs.

3. **After-school programs** in the school facilities.

- Action Item: The CAC is commended for expanding the 21st Century **Arts After School** and providing workshops for teachers and parents to facilitate transfer of the knowledge from after-school classes and workshops into home life and regular academic classes. [Ms. Bowers-Rheay's report shows this transfer is taking place.]

B. Strengthen Curriculum Connections of Community-based Programs (education in the arts *and* arts in education):

Many of the CAC's in-house classes, gallery exhibitions, and chamber concerts, plus outreach classes in the Parks, family programs and festivals on O'Neal Plaza and the Clinton Nature Preserve reflect the aesthetics of different geographical parts of our country and the world, and are produced with materials and techniques that demonstrate various principles of science, math, and literature. By identifying and strengthening the educational components of its community-based classes, exhibits and programs, the CAC can expand its role as a resource to Douglas County educators and contribute to our constituents' intellectual and creative growth.

- Action Item: Enlist members of the Arts Ed Committee who are savvy about curriculum development to **brainstorm natural connections** between the school curriculum, K-12, and the CAC's exhibitions and programs in the community. Placing special focus on aspects of the curriculum that teachers and administrators have identified as *particularly challenging* will make CAC resources more useful.
- Action Item: Appoint members of the Arts Ed Committee to serve as **liaisons** to the CAC's Program and Exhibition Committees to ensure timely and effective communication regarding potential curriculum connections and ways to build enrichment activities and/or resource materials around this content.
- Action Item: The CAC is commended for strengthening the educational component of its exhibitions with **Artists' Talks**; seek opportunities to add educational content to ticketed events as well; for example, a pre-concert lecture by the performer(s).

- Action Item: The CAC is commended for initiating a **Music Appreciation** class. Consider "art appreciation" classes in other disciplines to bridge the gap for adults.
- Action Item: The CAC is commended for expanding the **Art on Loan** Program into multiple community facilities including the Red Cross and WellStar Hospital. Explore ways to inform visitors at these locations about the value of education in the arts.

Plan Strategic Goal #3: *Strengthen community support for education in the arts / arts in education.*

Expanded & Refocused Strategies, 2008-2010

A. Convene a Youth Advisory Council to Give Students a Direct Voice in CAC Educational Program Planning and Evaluation

- Action Item: Arts Ed Committee to **structure the Youth Advisory Council**:
 - Composition - how many students from each high school, grade distribution; will student selection criteria include prior coursework/experience in the arts?
 - How many times/year, when and where should And when the YAC meet?
 - Will there be an annual service project? If so, how will it be funded?
 - How will this service be recognized, e.g., obtain approval from school system as an authorized multi-school club (with yearbook photos, etc.)? Will students receive community service credit, letters of recommendation for college applications?
 - To whom will the YAC report directly? Will there be a student representative on the Arts Ed Committee?
- Action Item: Youth Advisory Council will be charged with creating a **survey tool geared for students** to ascertain how well they are being served by the CAC in their schools and in the community, and gaps that the CAC could address.

B. Increase the Value of the Arts Experience for Participants in All CAC Programs

The best practitioners are continually renewing their skills and knowledge, and recharging their creative batteries through interaction with peers and experts in the field. This promotes lively teaching and learning and strengthens the CAC's core.

- Action item: Add value to teachers' experience – The CAC has enlisted Kim Bowers-Rheay to draft a Professional Learning proposal, which Mitzi Teal will put into the prescribed format to submit to the school system, to enable teachers participating in CAC professional development workshops to earn **PLU credits**.
- Action Item: The CAC is commended for adding value to the annual Christmas Card contest (to be piloted in 2007-2008) by rewarding each winning student artist and his/her teacher with a **Cultural Field Trip** to the High Museum of Art to see a world-class exhibit. The CAC will pay for the substitute teacher and arrange a luncheon on-site. Future rewards could include visits to other arts venues.
- Action Item: Add value to Teaching Artists' experience - Collaborate with CAC's retinue of Teaching Artists to develop a **rubric for self-assessment**, to identify areas in which they wish to build their skills and understanding. Results will guide CAC in structuring workshops and peer sharing.

- Action Item: Develop “Creative Arts Resource Notebook” for elementary school classroom teachers, covering 10 months of activities (bulletin board ideas, 2 songs, 2 games, 1 poem, 1 play, 2 books & 1 art project idea)
- Action Item: Add value to volunteers' experience - Encourage CAC volunteers, including Board and committee members, to **enroll in arts classes** for personal enjoyment (perhaps at a reduced fee) and to expand volunteer leadership's first-hand knowledge of what the CAC has to offer.
- Action Item: Add value to CAC community-based education participants by using the CAC's **web site** to promote the class schedule farther in advance; build confidence by keeping it an up-to-date reflection of changes; include class location and materials lists and a form for mail-in registrations. Explore PayPal system to allow **on-line registration** after business hours.
- Action Item: Explore ways the CAC can add value for K-12 students taking in-house classes. For example, we could recognize class participation with **certificates**, following the practice of the continuing education programs at community colleges.
 - Refer to Youth Arts Council: Would certificates **documenting their work** in CAC classes over their K-12 school years add weight to their college and art school applications? Research what similar youth art councils around the state have done.

C. Expand and Refocus Communication about the CAC's Role in Arts Education

The high quality of CAC programs and exhibitions has been recognized by funding agencies such as the Georgia Council for the Arts, the Metropolitan Atlanta Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. As the CAC embarks upon fundraising efforts for Phase I of its Campus Expansion, it will be important to maintain the visibility, transparency and accountability of CAC educational programs in order to build public trust and support. We must continually challenge ourselves to raise the bar for ourselves and our community. **Showcasing high standards** requires attention and effort on the part of staff and volunteers, and cooperation among the CAC's committees.

- Action Item: **Expand the Arts Ed Committee**; bring on additional members with knowledge of the arts, the value of education in the arts, and the community.
- Action Item: Appoint **liaison** from the Arts Ed committee to the CAC's Marketing committee to expand and refocus the message re: the value to the community of the CAC's high quality standards in its educational programming.
 - Refer to Marketing Committee: Create **banners** announcing CAC sponsorship to be taken to each host school during assembly programs and workshops, and to the Parks and other outreach venues to increase visibility.
 - Refer to Marketing Committee: The CAC is commended for upgrading the quality of its **publications** announcing programs. The quarterly newsletter (Sentinel supplement) with a full color front page has plenty of room for all of the news. The flyer grouping together all student-oriented programs is a great idea. Because the public may infer the quality of a program from the quality of the promotional piece, hard-to-read photocopied flyers can be a weak link.

-- Refer to Marketing Committee: Design a **survey** to assess the public's *awareness of CAC programs and services and of its planned campus expansion*. Offer an incentive to respond. A carefully worded survey will educate respondents about the whole spectrum of CAC programs and services.

-- Refer to Marketing Committee: Add educational content to the CAC's **website**, as feasible; see Two-Year Plan. Post the touring artists' Study Guides and exhibition hand-outs on the web site in printable format.

-- Refer to Marketing Committee: Send **e-mail alerts** about upcoming classes to Satellite members, CAC Board, general membership, Arts Ed Committee and active CAC volunteers - with a request to pass the word long to friends and colleagues.

SUPPORTING ORGANIZATIONAL GOALS

Updated CAC Action Plan for Arts in Education / Education in the Arts

Plan Org. Goal #1: *Increase funding for educational programs in the arts.*

-- Outstanding progress made in this area (e.g., unprecedented grant funding).

Plan Org. Goal #2: *Expand the facility.*

-- Outstanding progress made in this area (e.g., Wynn Bldg., Campus Plan).

Plan Org. Goal #3: *Increase board, staff & volunteer confidence in delivering a unified message.*

-- Continue building the message along with skills and opportunities to deliver it.

Expanded & Refocused Strategies, 2008-2010

A. Expand and refocus the message to provide **optimal support** for Phase I of Campus Expansion, as part of the CAC's multi-phase plan to increase services to the community.

- Action Item: As mentioned above, identify **liaisons** from the Arts Ed committee to the CAC's Program, Exhibition and Marketing Committees to assure timely communication and collaboration.
- Action Item: Keep all "**eyes on the prize**." Assess all educational programming proposals 2008-2010 based on their potential to advance the goal of expanding classroom space. Any initiative that distracts the attention of staff, supporters, or members of the community from the need to build new classroom/studio space at the Cultural Arts Center over the next three years should be put on hold for later.

B. Develop a **Speakers Outreach Program** comprised of the Board and members of Arts Ed and other CAC Committees; make educational/awareness presentations to community groups, such as a civic club lunch meetings. The success of any fundraising effort rests upon laying the groundwork of public awareness, appreciation, and understanding of the need - which can be done without asking for money; first tell people what the CAC has done for them. Volunteers can expand the reach of the Executive Director and spread a unified message with many voices.

- Action Item: If volunteers are shy, perhaps engage the services of a drama teacher such as Larry Boon of Chapel Hill HS to offer tips to **build confidence**. Perhaps

offer a regular CAC class and encourage Board and Committee members to enroll; or design a one-time "Public Speaking" workshop is tailored for this purpose.

- Action Item: Instruct volunteers in the effective use of the **CAC PowerPoint show**. Do a dry run to make sure the speakers are confident presenting as well as answering questions about the CAC's programs and plans.
- Action item: Update and summarize **research** on the value of an education in the arts to students and adults; correlate the message to Douglas County Schools' goals; provide as hand-outs at community meetings – and on the web site.

Concluding Comments: We often hear the term "pride and joy" used to describe grandchildren or objects of great worth. Cultural institutions possess the capacity to be the pride and joy of the community. Imagine it is the year 2010. Look around you. Ground has been broken for the new classroom space at the CAC. Imagine the sense of great pride you will take in Phase I completion and the years of joy this will provide for people in our community as they see and create work that adds beauty and meaning to our world.

Footnotes:

¹ Data reviewed includes "Achievements 2004 – 2006," which responded point for point to the initial two-year plan; a quantitative picture of CAC programs through 2007; the in-depth outside evaluation by Kim Bowers-Rheay of the 21st Century after-school program; and the class schedules, descriptions, teaching artist profiles and program flyers for the current year.

² Discussed in the book, *A Whole New Mind*, by Daniel H. Pink, Riverhead Books, NY, © 2005, 2006. The chapter entitled "Abundance, Asia, and Automation" points out that one in four US IT jobs will be "off-shored" by 2010. Pink posits that we are exiting the Information Age and entering the "Conceptual Age," where the right-brain skills of creativity and empathy must be integrated with the linear, quantitative left-brain skills in order for us to succeed. The arts develop right-brain capacity.

³ The state's Quality Core Curriculum, developed in 1985, includes criteria for instruction in all four art forms - music, dance, theater, and visual arts. These QCC's still inform instruction in the arts where such instruction exists. As the overall Quality Core Curriculum is being replaced by the Georgia Performance Standards in all core academic areas, the arts are being left behind. Though a recent initiative is reportedly crafting Performance Standards for the arts, which are aligned with National Standards in the Arts, the State Department of Education is not promoting training in implementation of arts standards the way it has with social studies, math and science standards.