

Report on Public Arts Education Charettes

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On April 22 and May 6, 2008, Trinity Restoration Inc. (TRI) hosted 2 charettes on public arts education in an effort to engage community persons, non-profit groups, and potential end users of space at Trinity theater in discussions “to create a process and a vehicle for ongoing creative artistic expression and community building on Providence’s Southside.” Thirty-one (31) persons participated in a dialogue about the arts in the public schools and the feasibility of opening a school for the performing arts on the Trinity site.

The Providence Public Schools have been cited by the Rhode Island Department of Education for offering less than the mandated arts curriculum to students. Simultaneously, the Department placed the school district under corrective action for making insufficient progress in increasing student achievement as determined by performance on standardized tests as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act. Despite the data research studies have produced on how effective the arts are in strengthening student performance in other academic courses, the district continues to emphasize literacy and math instruction to the detriment of students having enriched arts opportunities.

Charette participants discussed the ways the arts benefit students socially and intellectually. One example in Rhode Island is the Pawtucket School Department Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts, located in a historic facility with the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theater. All Rhode Island students, wanting to attend, audition for admission to the school, have a longer school day and a challenging curriculum and often perform in local arts productions as well as school performances.

The participants recommended that a smaller group begin immediately to plan for a school for the performing arts at Trinity Square by:

1. Developing and documenting community support for the establishment of an arts center and a school for the performing and visual arts is important.
2. Visit the Pawtucket Armory Association and The Arts Exchange, home of the Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing Arts and the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theater to explore how they developed.
3. Develop a comprehensive vision and mission that encompasses all the spaces in the parish hall and the proposed academy.
4. Develop a timeline for program development including fund development and marketing plans.
5. Work with the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts to attract tenants who will agree not only to practice their craft in this facility but also agree to be artist partners in education.

6. Identify a critical core group to meet and plan. More time should be spent discussing the kind of school needed and wanted. A few issues important to the community are a) should school be public, charter, or private?; b) the focus of the program; c) methods of admission of students to the program; and d) the gradual opening of the school.
7. Students to be served by the Program will represent many different cultures more complicated than the 5 simple institutional divisions (Native American, Asian, Black, White, Hispanic) used by school districts, the census and government agencies. TRI will have a unique opportunity to focus on ways to utilize the cultural mix of the youth in an academically rigorous environment. *In essence, this project can be innovative in defining what is critical knowledge for success in the global society.* This focus will not only help youth to understand each other better and the intricacies of their different cultures, it will also encourage them to utilize the cultural knowledge of their parents and elders to further cultural/global understanding.
8. Using our human resources (youth, families, staff, artists, community) define what is this base of *critical knowledge*. What knowledge should not be lost? For survival in the global community, what must youth know and be able to do, etc.?
9. Identify leadership with energy and passion to direct the effort.

I. Introduction

Trinity Restoration Inc. (TRI) hosted 2 charettes on Public Arts Education on April 22 and May 6, 2008 respectively. Twenty-five persons were formally invited to participate. Others were invited informally. Thirty-eight persons participated in the charettes that were offered at different times to maximize participation. The first on April 22 was from 2 pm to 5 pm and 21 persons attended; the second on May 6 was a breakfast meeting from 7:30 am to 9:30 am and 17 persons attended.

Both sessions were facilitated by Joyce L. Stevos, Ph.D. Dr. Stevos is an adjunct professor in educational studies at Rhode Island College. Her areas of interest are youth civic engagement and discourse. Dr. Stevos is a retired administrator from the Providence School Department where she led school reform, developed small schools, and supervised social studies and music.

The purpose of the 2 meetings was to engender interest from artists, educators, community persons and non-profit groups and potential end-users of space in relation to one of the goals of TRI:

“to create a process and a vehicle for ongoing creative artistic expression and community building on Providence’s Southside.”

At the first charette, architect Don Richardson shared the vision of the proposed Performing Arts Center utilizing both the present building (Parish Hall/Annex Building) which includes the original Trinity Theatre with seating for 300 and a new structure that would be built and located adjacent to it on the grounds. The 2 buildings together would be a center or academy to support teaching the performing arts to young people in the area. The participants were

informed that 2 meetings on the energy efficiency features of the TRI project preceded the arts education charettes. There was a strong consensus to make the theater and any new construction associated with the arts academy “green.” This would make it a very timely and relevant project.

The dramatically rising cost of energy is putting tremendous strain on the budgets of schools; especially public institutions that are municipal/state supported but underfunded, and cannot raise additional operating capital via higher tuitions. The motivation for recommending such an energy emphasis was that it would likely help with fund development and that efforts should be made to design a structure that can serve as a local and regional model of sustainability. Another recommendation from those meetings was adding courses on environmental science, design and stewardship, concepts young people seem to understand and embrace easier than the older generation, to the arts-intensive curriculum.

The rationale for TRI supporting the creation of a Performing Arts Center is:

The Southside currently lacks a community theater of the size and configuration that Trinity affords. The performing (and visual) arts continues to be regarded as essential components of a well-rounded education, yet funding constraints often result in these programs being curtailed or eliminated, especially in the public education arena.

We believe that a logical approach would be to establish the original Trinity Theater as a site for an after-school arts enrichment program supported and run by one or more existing educational institutions. Here students could experience and experiment with artistic expression in traditional and non-traditional ways, with a focus on developing the cognitive and affective skills needed for success in the performing arts.

In this context, the performing arts are defined as theater/drama, music, dance and audio/visual technology.

Education in K – 12 schools includes educating the “whole person,” yet, too often, school leaders have delivered a compartmentalized school curriculum, overemphasizing cognition in reading, language arts, writing and mathematics and often neglecting instruction and practice in the arts. This stance has been legitimized with the pressure on schools to show progress based upon student performance on standardized tests in language arts, reading, writing and mathematics skills and reasoning. Although the arts are an integral part of our everyday life, often little thought is given in schools to arouse in our youth the awareness of how the arts shape our daily lives and how each of us is a creator, a critic and a consumer of the arts, despite the fact that the texture, color, shape, and design of objects used daily in our environment make using them easy and enjoyable.

Some educators recognize that learning does not happen in neat little compartments. The more researchers find out about the human brain and how it works, the more we are assured that one of the most effective strategies of teaching and learning is to use the arts to enhance teaching the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Left-brain and right-brain work together to develop knowledge and understanding, not only of academics (left brain), but also of self and others (right brain).

II. What Research Says

The NASAA (National Assembly of State Arts Agencies), an advocacy organization for the arts, published Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement (2006) to report on the multiple benefits associated with students’ learning experiences in the arts. The

conclusions are based on sound educational research previously summarized and reported in Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development (2002).

In a 2005 public opinion poll by Louis Harris Associates,

- 93% of Americans believe that the Arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children
- 86% agree an arts education encourages and assists in the improvement of a child's attitudes toward school
- 83% believe that arts education helps teach children to communicate effectively with adults and peers
- 79% agree incorporating the arts in education is the first step in adding back what is missing in public education today
- 54% rated the importance of arts education a "ten" on a scale of one to ten
- 79% believe that it's important enough for them to get personally involved in increasing the amount and quality of arts education.

Since 2000, the national education agenda has included the arts as part of the core academic curriculum. Over the last 10 years federal support of arts education in the public schools continued with partnerships between schools and community organizations, professional development for teachers and teaching artists, and research and evaluation in the arts supported by the United States Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts. The

NCLB (No Child Left Behind) Act (2001), the most significant federal education legislation since 1965, expands the federal role in education in order “to close the achievement gap between disadvantaged and minority students and their peers.” Although the arts are included as part of the core academic curriculum, states have only had to develop plans to increase student achievement in reading and mathematics by 2013 – 14. However, NCLB also stresses that in allocating federal resources for education decisions should be grounded in evidence-based research. A large body of critical research exists supporting learning academics through the arts. However, schools in some states report the amount of time devoted to reading, writing, math and science has increased while for the arts it has declined. (Critical Evidence, p. 6). In other states, NCLB has provided leverage for strengthening efforts to raise student achievement and improve school climate through integration of the arts.

A growing body of studies presents compelling evidence connecting student learning in the arts to a wide spectrum of academic and social benefits. Research studies document the habits of mind, social competencies and personal dispositions inherent to arts learning. Research also has shown that what students learn in the arts may help them to master other subjects such as reading, math or social studies.

In Critical Evidence (pp. 12-15), some findings from research studies are summarized.

Examples are:

Student Achievement and Success

- In a study of 2500 middle and high school students, those with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement. The high arts-involved students also watched fewer

hours of TV, participated in more community service and reported less boredom in school.

- Multiple independent studies have shown increased years of enrollment in arts courses are positively correlated with higher SAT verbal and math scores. High school students who take arts classes have higher math and verbal SAT scores than students who take no arts classes. In one 2005 study, students who took four years of arts coursework outperformed their peers who had one half-year or less of arts coursework by 58 points on the verbal portion and 38 points on the math portion of the SAT.

Mathematics Skills

- An analysis conducted of multiple studies confirms the finding that students who take music classes in high school are more likely to score higher on standardized mathematics tests such as the SAT. Musical training in rhythm emphasizes proportion patterns and ratios expressed as math involved relationships.
- Students consistently involved in orchestra or band during their middle and high school years performed better in math at grade 12. The results were even more pronounced when comparing students from low-income families. Those who were involved in orchestra or band were more than twice as likely to perform at the highest levels in math as their peers who were not involved in music.

Thinking Skills

- In an experimental research study of high school age students those who studied dance scored higher than nondancers on measures of creative thinking, especially in the categories of fluency, originality and abstract thought. Whether dancers can use their original abstract thinking skills in other disciplines is an important area of exploration.

Social Skills

- Dance can affect the way juvenile offenders and other disenfranchised youth feel about themselves. One study demonstrated that when a group of 60 such adolescents, ages 13 to 17, participated in jazz and hip-hop dance classes, twice weekly for 10 weeks, they reported significant gains in confidence, tolerance and persistence related to the dance experience.

Motivation to Learn

- Students at risk of not successfully completing their high school educations cite their participation in the arts a reason for staying in school. Factors related to the arts that positively affected the motivation of these students included a supportive environment that promotes constructive acceptance of criticism and one where it is safe to take risks.

III. Providence School Department Demographics

The major characteristics of the Providence Public School student population are shown comparatively in Figure A. The base year is 1997. This chart shows the increase of school choice, poverty as determined by free and reduced lunch, English Language Learning Support, and Special Education services. It also shows Dropout and Graduation Rates and the changing

ethnic divisions of the population. The information represents demographic data submitted to the Rhode Island Department of Education and released in Information Works (www.ride.ri.gov).

Beginning in 2004, the data show a dramatic decrease in the percentage of city children attending the public schools. In 2004, that percentage dropped from 81.8% to a low 76.10%. Although it rose in 2005 to 85.10%, it again decreased to 79.9% in 2006. In 2004, the non public school population rose, decreased in 2005 and rose again in 2006. Charter school population also became a factor in 2003 in attracting young people away from the public schools. The percentage of children educated at home fluctuated only minimally, remaining less than 5% since 2000.

During the 10 year period from 1997 – 2006, the Hispanic student population in the public schools increased by 15%. Both the white and Asian population decreased by 11% and 5% respectively. The Black and Native American populations remained stable at 22% and 1%.

Approximately 20% of the students receive special education services, an increase of 7% since 1997. Sixteen percent of the students receive ESL or bilingual services. This number remained constant for the 3-year period 2004-2006, but represented a 9% decrease since 1999 when 25% received these support services. The dropout and graduation rates fluctuated during the decade; however, both have improved by 13.54%.

The chart in Figure B compares the projected student enrollment to the actual student enrollment from 1998 to 2008. The projected enrollment figures were based upon the expected birth rate and do not factor in the effect of immigration upon the student enrollment. From 1998 until 2006, the actual enrollment was higher than was projected for each year. Only in 2007 did the projection exceed the actual enrollment.

	Year									
Demographic Data	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006
Public Schools	84%	84.40%	84.60%	84.20%	85.40%	81.20%	81.8%	76.10%	85.10%	79.90%
Non-Public School	16%	15.6%	15%	15.7%	14%	18.7%	14.8%	18.7%	8.9%	14.3%
Charter School	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	0%	3.3%	5.1%	5.8%	5.6%
Home School	0%	0%	0%	0.2%	0.2%	0.2%	0.1%	0.0%	0.2%	0.3%
Free/Reduced Lunch	75%	77%	80%	77%	77%	78%	76%	75%	74%	66%
Not Eligible Lunch	25%	23%	20%	23%	23%	22%	24%	25%	26%	34%
ESL Non Recipients	78%	81%	75%	79%	77%	81%	82%	84%	84%	84%
ESL	14%	12%	16%	13%	13%	11%	9%	8%	8%	8%
Bilingual	8%	7%	8%	6%	7%	6%	9%	8%	8%	8%
Other Programs	1%	1%	1%	2%	3%	2%	0%	0%	0%	0%
Special Education Non-Recipients	87%	86%	83%	80%	80%	84%	83%	80%	100%	81%
Self-Contained	7%	6%	7%	8%	8%	8%	8%	8%	0%	9%
Resource	6%	6%	8%	9%	9%	8%	8%	9%	0%	10%
Other Sp Prog/Homebound/Hospitalization	0%	2%	2%	3%	3%	0%	1%	3%	0%	0.1%
Drop-Out Rate	31.54%	28.58%	36.96%	36.26%	28%	34%	38%	27%	29%	18%
Graduation Rate	68.46%	71.42%	63.04%	63.74%	72%	66%	62%	75%	71%	82%
NA	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Asian	11%	10%	10%	9%	9%	8%	7%	7%	6%	6%
Black	23%	23%	23%	23%	23%	22%	22%	22%	22%	22%
White	23%	21%	19%	17%	15%	16%	15%	14%	13%	12%
Hispanic	43%	45%	47%	50%	52%	53%	55%	56%	58%	59%

Figure A: Characteristics of Students in Providence School District 1997-2006

Year	Projected Enrollment	Actual Enrollment	Difference
1998	24,154	26,147	1993
1999	24,554	26,427	1873
2000	26,147	26,937	790
2001	26,428	27,159	731
2002	27,135	27,580	445
2003	26,853	27,899	1,046
2004	26,445	26,741	296
2005	25,204	25,615	411
2006	24,688	25,190	502
2007	24,685	24,494	(191)
2008	24,808		
2009	24,932		
2010	25,057		
2011	25,182		

Figure B: Difference between Projected and Actual Enrollment

Student enrollment peaked during the 2003-2004 school year at 27,899 students. In the five years following, the student enrollment has decreased consistently with a loss of 3,405 students. The cumulative change in student enrollment over that ten-year period is -1,653 which represents the difference in population between 1998-1999 (26,147) and 2007-2008 (24,494). However, the most dramatic changes in the student population are in the racial/ethnic divisions (see Figure A).

IV. Providence School Department Dropout Data

The number of students who have dropped out decreased over the 10-year period and the graduation rate has increased (See Figure A; Student Characteristics). The graduation rate was lowest (62%) in 2003 -- the same year the dropout rate was the highest (38%) -- while the graduation rate was the highest (82%) in 2006 when the dropout rate was the lowest (18%). Figure C (PSD Dropouts by Ethnic Group 1998-2006) indicates how each racial/ethnic group is affected. Analysis of the data indicates how they reflect both the enrollment trends and the demographic trends. Asian and White dropouts decrease as their enrollment decreases. The number of Black dropouts remains constant while the number of Hispanic dropouts increases.

Years	NAm	Asian	Black	White	Hispanic
1998-99	1%	10%	24%	22%	40%
1999-00	.5%	8%	22%	18%	49%
2000-01	.8%	11%	23%	17%	48%
2001-02	.6%	7%	22%	19%	50%
2002-03	.7%	7%	22%	19%	52%
2003-04	1%	9%	22%	15%	52%
2004-05	1%	6%	22%	16%	53%
2005-06	4.6%	6%	21%	15%	55%

Figure C: Dropouts by Ethnic Group

V. Why an Arts Academy at Trinity Square?

Trinity Restoration Inc. (TRI) cares about the welfare and future of youth. Its site at 393 Broad Street is physically located at the nexus of 3 Providence neighborhoods – the West End, Elmwood, and South Providence. The demographics of these neighborhoods represent the future of Providence. They also symbolize challenges to the City and its posterity.

The population of Providence was listed as 173,618 in the 2000 census. Thirty (30) percent (52,979) lived in these 3 neighborhoods (02907 and 02905 zip code areas).

- 38% of the population was white; 21% African-American/Black; 5.3% Asian; and 38.9% Hispanic
- 1 out of every 3 persons was foreign born
- 1 out of every 2 persons spoke a language other than English at home
- 1 out of every 4 families lived below the poverty level
- 62.1% of those 25 years and older had graduated from high school compared to the national figure of 80.4%

Approximately 8,000 culturally different youths between the ages of 8 and 17 reside in these neighborhoods. They are at a vulnerable age and their opportunities to select arts-related activities both in and after school are very limited. In addition, they attend school in a district that has been repeatedly cited for insufficient progress and has been placed under corrective action by the Rhode Island Department of Education to increase student achievement.

In his opening remarks on April 22, Joseph Newsome, lead consultant, shared some assumptions about the status of Providence Public Education. He hoped all in attendance could agree.

- The state of public education is not good.
- The adults in public education are failing the majority of our children by not acting as if they are our future.
- Race is defining the client.
- No bold solutions are on the horizon and/or the bureaucracy is not letting them surface.
- The level of expectations in classrooms is low as is self-esteem.

He closed with the question “Can arts education change and/or challenge these bleak realities?”

A. Benefits of Arts Education

At the first charette, the participants discussed the benefits of the arts in a child’s education. Most agreed that the arts enrich our lives. One participant said that integrating the arts with the core courses is one of the benefits. Others agreed, adding ideas like “this approach allows teachers to teach with passion because they believe they have the support of the school.” “The arts provide a place and a sense of belonging for graduates to come back to and they create a sense of pride in the school.”

Another participant counseled that the arts do not benefit youth only when they are young, but learning about the arts involves how they will continue to practice the arts in their future and how they will share their knowledge with others. Therefore, he emphasized the importance of incorporating a connection between students and their elders as they learn and practice the arts. He also emphasized the importance of having a deeper knowledge base, an idea

that clearly fits with integrating the arts into the core curriculum. We were reminded that media should be included in the arts. Media is part of the everyday existence of our youth, yet they must be taught to use it in deep, critical ways. The New Media Literacies (<http://newmedialiteracies.org>) website at MIT was recommended as a resource.

The arts are more than performing; they also involve economic opportunity. This broad view includes the idea of managing and appreciating the arts. As the group discussed the benefits of the arts, someone emphasized the importance of “Knowing the kids and what they want and need.”

B. State of the Arts in Providence Public Schools

In referring to arts, we include the visual and performing arts. To provide context for the discussion Dr. Stevos presented some facts about the state of the arts in the Providence Public Schools. Earnest Cox, who supervises the arts in the Providence Public Schools shared the data and report he had prepared on the condition of the arts and the plan to upgrade the arts in the curriculum of the public schools.

Elementary Schools. During the 2006-2007 school year, each of the 25 elementary schools offered art and music for 30 minutes a week or 60 minutes biweekly to 12,134 students. A few schools offered instrumental instruction or chorus to a minimal number of students. Those are:

Violin:	Kizirian (12 children)
	Reservoir (18 children)
Guitar:	Carnevale (6 students)

Sackett (5 students)

Chorus: Carnevale (48 students)

Lauro (40 students)

Sackett (48 students)

Chimes: Fogarty (10 students)

Bell Choir: Sackett (10 students)

Middle Schools. The 7 middle schools offer an elective in Music, Art, or the Performing Arts. The class meets for 48 minutes on a 2-3 day rotation. However, not all three electives were available at all schools for students to choose. Two of the schools offered Music; 6 schools offered Art; and 3 schools offered the Performing Arts. From a student point of view, 4,382 students were in the middle schools but, obviously, they did not have equal access to the arts.

In 2006, the school district was found out of compliance with the Regents Basic Education Plan in music and art. That state mandate is stated below as it was listed in a publication on the State of Arts Education published by the Arts Education Partnership.

The Rhode Island Basic Education Program (BEP) established these “standards.” There shall be an art education program, K-12...” The effect of these mandates is that art and music instruction is received by all public school students in K-6. Beginning with middle school grades and through high school, art and music are offered in all public schools. In middle schools, practice varies throughout the state; art and music are required subjects in many, and electives in some. No specific hours or time are required by statute or regulation. Dance is referenced in the BEP as a component of physical education in K-6; drama appears as an area of study in high school language arts/English.

Actions to bring the district into compliance were implemented beginning in the 2007-2008 school year. Five middle schools added a full-time music teacher position each and one added a full-time art teacher position.

High Schools. At the high school level, one of the graduation requirements for each student is 6 electives in the Fine Arts and Technology. The high school enrollment in 2006 was 6,966. Of the 13 high schools, 7 offered Music, 12 offered Art, and 7 offered the Performing Arts. These courses are offered for 53 minutes or 85 minutes for double periods. Hope High School offers the only band program in the district. Music is not offered at 6 high schools. During the 2007-2008 school year, Adelaide Avenue High School added music to its schedule. The district has yet to propose a timeline to address the addition of music at all high schools.

C. Shaping the Performing Arts Center at Trinity

Charette participants agreed that the school district does not offer sufficient access to arts education. They then addressed the idea of establishing a school for the Performing Arts at Trinity Square. Together they shared visions of what the school should be. Melody Thompson, one of the participants, briefly discussed 3 ways to incorporate a focus on the arts. They are:

1. Use art as a vehicle to discover other talents
2. Provide basic exposure to the arts (similar to what the public schools are doing)
3. Art as an intense specific study

Another said that the Trinity Arts Academy Program should create a social outlet for the students where they can be comfortable. Considering that the school age youth represent so many different cultures, another suggestion was made to incorporate culture as a key component in the program. Such an inclusion could be done through folk arts. The process

could include integrating adults with folk arts experiences into the school program. The benefit of this process is that through this exchange of cultural knowledge and experience people living in the community and going to school together will begin to understand one another better.

The Program should include both film and the visual arts and design. This idea takes advantage of the vast experience youth have as consumers of media –television, film, music, video, DVD's, and CD's, graffiti, rap, hip-hop. In order to understand and create sophisticated thoughtful media messages, youth must possess a broad knowledge base which demands that all the persons involved with this experience always have high expectations of them. Finally, the Program should build in financial and employment opportunities. This objective recognizes that after graduation, some youth may pursue a career path in the performing arts but others may find interest in pursuing careers that support the arts. Others may make a different career choice but will choose to feed their passion for the arts as an appreciative member of the audience.

D. Two Rhode Island Performing and Visual Arts Schools

Two programs in Rhode Island focus on providing youth with opportunities to develop their artistic talents while they complete their high school education and are worthy of mention here. One is the newly developed school for the performing and visual arts in Pawtucket and the other is the long-existing but recently renewed arts magnet now known as the Hope Arts Academy, one of the 3 academies at Hope High School in Providence, a school reforming under state oversight.

The Hope Arts Academy offers students the opportunity to delve into the visual arts, theatre, dance or music. In addition to the required academic courses, each arts student takes arts courses each of the four years. Approximately 500 students belong to the Academy. The arts academy has community partnerships with Theatres like Trinity Repertory, Rhode Island School of Design and Brown University. It offers an after school theatre program and after school activities such as dance, art club, music production, capoeira club, piano club, and hip hop dance.

The Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing and Visual Arts, a public high school in Pawtucket, has been in operation for 3 years in leased space in the Pawtucket Armory, a historic preservation landmark, now known as the Arts Exchange and owned by the Pawtucket Armory Association. The school is the educational partner of the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theater, located at the same facility. The school received a federal omnibus grant of \$292,000 on April 28, 2008.

The mission of the school is to provide an intensive high quality conservatory style education in and through the arts for students with exceptional talent in the arts. The plan is for a student body of 120 -180 students. The school is open to all students in the state with the understanding that those students residing outside of Pawtucket will pay tuition. Only 1 tuition student presently attends. Seventy students, grades 9-11, comprise the student body that will next year expand to include grade 12.

Admission is based on an audition and portfolio process. The school day is 7 1/2 hours long, 8 am to 3:30 pm., which is 1 1/2 hours longer than the public school day. It is divided into 8 instructional periods. During periods 1-4, the core academic courses except for electives, science and foreign language classes are scheduled. Students take their major arts area courses, some

electives, science and foreign language during periods 5-8. The major arts courses are offered in double periods (5 & 6 or 7 & 8).

Each arts area offers courses in content background and application. Examples of the coupled offerings are Dance Composition and Dance Technique II, Music Ensemble II and Solfege II, Theatre History II and Acting II, Art History II and Figure and Anatomy. Electives offered are film studies, theater appreciation, comic illustration, numeracy, geography and body basics.

As more artists locate in the Arts Exchange, the plan is for them to act as artist educators to the school. Following this model, the Arts Exchange will be a premiere example in Rhode Island of an arts community. Pawtucket is well on its way as a leader in the arts in Rhode Island.

VI. How Do We Begin to Build an Arts Academy at Trinity?

The charette participants pondered what our next steps should be to start a school for the performing arts at Trinity Square. That discussion focused on 1) Grade level, 2) Size of school, 3) Standards, 4) Funding, 5) Marketing and community connections/support, 6) projected timeline.

Size of School

The participants recommended, “Start small less than 100 and build up to 150 - 175 students.” They also recommended that the planners look other schools like The Met and the Boston Arts Academy (<http://www.bostonartsacademy.org>) to find out how they started and how they are structured to involve the community.

Grade Level

Two different levels were discussed for the school. One group suggested grades 4-8 and the other suggested grades 7-12. There was also a suggestion to begin with grade 6. The rationale for beginning early was to provide the students with a solid foundation in the arts. One of the problems in beginning at the high school level with students from the district is that the arts education experiences provided in the district are minimal. Young people have few opportunities to explore and develop their artistic talents unless they are fortunate enough to participate in a community-based after school enrichment experience.

Standard of Excellence

Repeatedly the group emphasized that a standard of excellence must be established at the school. They have a reasonable expectation that students will be able to locate on a map the country from which they or their families or friends immigrated. They have a reasonable expectation that students will be able to connect literary and historical allusions used in media presentations (television, film, music videos) to the literary work so that they can communicate more effectively. Examples of literary/historical allusions:

- “The Die is Cast”

These words spoken by Gaius Julius Caesar in 49 BC after leading his troops across the Rubicon into Rome, against Roman law, to confront Pompey and his army and establish himself as the leader of Rome. Once he crossed the Rubicon, he could not turn back.

- “All the world’s a stage and all the men and women merely players; they have their exits and their entrances.” Jacques Act II Scene VII, As You Like It, Shakespeare

- “A Pyrrhic victory”- A victory with devastating cost to the victor

The army of King Pyrrhus of Epirus suffered irreplaceable casualties in defeating the Romans at Heraclea in 280 BC and Asculum in 279 BC during the Pyrrhic War.

- He is expected to be “Solomon” in his decisions or She has the wisdom of “Solomon.”

Solomon, a Biblical figure in the Old Testament, son of David, was portrayed as great in wealth, wisdom and power.

- Insha'Allah

An Arabic term meaning “God willing” or “If it is God’s will.” This term derives from Islamic scripture in the Qur’an.

- “I demand my ‘pound of flesh.’”

In the Merchant of Venice by Shakespeare, Antonio borrows money from Shylock, who demands “a pound of flesh” when Antonio is not able to repay the loan.

Recommendations were made as to where some academically rigorous approaches to instruction could be found. In addition to the aforementioned MIT (Massachusetts Institute of Technology) New Media Literacies website, the Harvard Project Zero website (www.pz.harvard.edu) that features activities based upon Howard Gardner’s theory of multiple intelligences was also suggested.

Funding

The question of how this school should be funded must be determined. The first question to be answered is whether the school will be a public, private, or charter school. The status will determine the nature of the fundraising required to start the school.

Another option is to consider is to be a satellite school providing instructional experiences in the performing arts and operating during and after the public school day.

Someone suggested that one way to begin would be to collect donations from art supporters.

Marketing and Community Connections/Support

The discussants agreed that this project must be marketed so that it is visible and has a voice in the community. Obvious community partners in this endeavor should be the colleges

and the universities. Peter Lee, Director of the John Hope Settlement House, offered to conduct surveys in the neighborhood to determine what the “authentic demand” is for a Performing Arts School to garner community support for this educational option.

Time Line

Finally, the discussants agreed that a project timeline must be developed. Participants were very supportive of the idea of opening a school for the performing arts using the present space at Trinity Square and the existing and new building. Their demand was for beginning action now and less preliminary discussion. Immediate planning steps involving the direction of the project and community involvement were suggested by the group.

- Develop a collective vision with a mission statement
- Develop a business plan for the project
- Survey the neighborhood to determine the “authentic demand” for the Project
- Involve local groups and social service organizations in the Project as stakeholders.

Some groups to involve are:

- Mayor’s Office
- Providence Plan
- Dorcas Place
- Casey Family Services
- Kids Count
- Providence Youth Collective
- PASA
- AfterZone
- Trinity Repertory Company

- Another suggestion was for the group to decide on the top 3 program priorities in beginning this project and determine “What kind of facility would best serve these priorities?”
- Find operating programs that want to be located in the facility, and then build from there to design and fund a school.
- Begin to host quality arts-related activities at the site (*note: since the 2 charettes, the Children’s Theater Company has run a successful arts camp for 15 students at Trinity, and a Neighborhood Arts Festival is being planned for Trinity Square on August 23rd. In addition, there is considerable interest in producing a REBORN II concert in December 2008 as a TRI fundraiser.*)

VII. Recommendations

The following recommendations are based upon the substantive contributions from charette participants:

1. Developing and documenting community support for the establishment of an arts center and a school for the performing and visual arts is important. Talking to and receiving input from area youth, community agencies and organizations, and residents are crucial to determine a need for the Project and the success of the Project.
2. Visit the Pawtucket Armory Association and The Arts Exchange, home of the Jacqueline M. Walsh School for the Performing Arts and the Sandra Feinstein-Gamm Theater. They have much to offer TRI, Inc. as both a historic preservation and a community arts project. This project developed in planned phases with a well thought out fund development plan.

The artists, the theater, and the school have a symbiotic relationship according to the plan and vision of the project.

3. Develop a comprehensive vision and mission that encompasses all the spaces in the parish hall and the proposed academy. Then develop a timeline for program development including fund development and marketing plans. Simultaneously, work with the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts to attract tenants who will agree not only to practice their craft in this facility but will agree to be artists in education.
4. Identify a critical group to meet and plan. More time should be spent discussing the kind of school needed and wanted. A few issues important to the community are a) Should school be public, charter, or private; b) the focus of the program, c) admission of students to the program, and d) the gradual opening of the school.
 - a. What are the nuances of difference in a public school, a charter school, or an independent or private school? Are there advantages in becoming a charter school which offers an alternative to public schools to families, yet the public funding follows the child and parents do not have to incur a cost?
 - b. The arts should be integrated into all areas of the curriculum. As much as possible subject matter in the curriculum should be integrated, although course concepts often must be taught separately. Flexible scheduling, however, will enhance integration of the curriculum.
 - c. Careful consideration should be given to admission by audition and/or portfolio.

- d. A new school should be opened gradually by adding a grade a year to give the staff and students time to develop the culture of the school and to adjust to the demands of a developing school.
5. Students to be served by the Program represent many different cultures more complicated than the 5 simple institutional divisions (Native American, Asian, Black, White, Hispanic) used by school districts, the census and government agencies. TRI will have a unique opportunity to focus on ways to utilize the cultural mix of the youth in an academically rigorous environment. *In essence, this project can be innovative in defining what critical knowledge for success in the global society is.* This focus will not only help youth to understand each other better and the intricacies of the different cultures, it will also encourage them to utilize the cultural knowledge of their elders to further cultural and global understanding.
6. We must break out of the industrial age inspired model of education and embrace a reflective, research-oriented approach to design a mutually effective education that meets the needs of our youth, recognizes the “funds of knowledge”(Moll, 1990) they bring to their educational experience, and prepares them to succeed in a society that is constantly changing and redefining essential knowledge. Using our human resources (youth, families, staff, artists, community) define what is critical knowledge. What knowledge should not be lost? For survival in the global community, what must youth know and be able to do? What historical, literary, and cultural allusions must we know to be successful in the global community/society? What are the historic facts and ideas that must not be lost from each culture? These are essential questions to be addressed in curriculum development. The challenge will be to integrate the cultural knowledge of the Haitian,

Liberian, Nigerian, Dominican, Guatemalan, Mexican, Hmong, Cambodian, Puerto Rican, African-American, Portuguese, Cape Verdean, Irish, Greek and Italian students with the Western European slanted curriculum, making the curriculum more global, rather than national. The diversity of the community should be embraced both academically and artistically. Such a program will result in community support, individual self-esteem and mutual respect, in addition to youth better prepared for their life as world citizens in the global society of the 21st century. And, it will make the Arts Academy at Trinity Square a unique and relevant institution within our Capital City.

7. Identify leadership with energy and passion to direct the effort.

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List of Participants

Affiliation

Erin Anthony	TRI intern, Mt. Ida Collage
Perter Bortolotti	SWAP and community resident/musician
Dan Corley	Community Preparatory School
Earnest Cox	Providence School Department
Janice DeFrances	unknown
Dr. Robert DeRobbio	Opera Providence
Richmond Flowers	John Hope Settlement House
Kim Hammann	Providence Black Repertory Company
Wayne Holland	Community Resident/Musician
Carolyn Jayne	CVS Highlander School
Denise Jenkins	Rhode Island Foundation
Dr. Mator Kpangbai	Providence School Department
Peter Lee	John Hope Settlement House
Elisabeth Macauley	Trinity United Methodist Church
Meg McGovern	Sophia Academy
Joseph Newsome	TRI and Ecolodgic Group LLC
Richardson Ogidan	TRI and SWAP
Keith Oliveira	Rhode Island Department of Education
Adeola Oredola	Youth In Action
Bernadette Pitts-Wiley	Mixed Magic Theatre
Ricardo Pitts-Wiley	Mixed Magic Theatre
Stephanie Preston	Trinity United Methodist Church & GENS
Donald Richardson	DSR AIA & Associates

Sebastian Ruth	Community Music Works
Anna Shapiro	Firehouse 13
Dr. Joyce Stevos	TRI
Melodie Thompson	Artist Educator, MET School
Kim Trusty	CVS Highlander/Sophia Academy
Kurt Van Dexter	Landscape Architect
Ronnie Young	Providence School Board, GENS



Mini-charette held on April 22 to discuss public arts education and community needs

