

Plan

Building the Plan

How can developing a vision and a plan help improve teaching in or through the arts?

Developing a vision is professional development. Think beyond what's being done today. From general education, researchers Hyde and Pink recommend a shift in the way we think about professional development. In their cross-study analysis of the topic, they challenge us to stop thinking of professional development as a series of activities and consider it a consistent component of a cohesive plan for long-term change. They challenge communities to commit to a long-term process, both to plan and to change.

Envisioning new possibilities can happen at any level. Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education Director Arnold Aprill asserts, "The actual collaboration and co-planning between people of different expertises is a significant piece of the professional development." Planning for stronger arts education can be done on a large scale where colleagues, communities, even states from across the country come together in framed discussions to articulate a shared vision. Or, it can happen on a very small scale, as an educator-mentor pair or a study group of colleagues imagine change in classes across a school. Much like the individual educational planning meetings in special education, big thinking can also involve the student.

Articulate your shared philosophy and belief systems. The commonly used intensive institute that brings together the whole learning community offers the opportunity to build a shared vision and language. In some learning communities, the institute seeks to help teachers learn and arrive at a particular philosophy. If they adopt the approach, an important part of their understanding is comprehending the assumptions underlying that philosophy. The time together, away from the regular day-to-day work, can help educators step back, think, learn and consider how these ideas merge with their own conceptions. See [HOT Schools](#).

When planning, bring together the people who care about and can be involved in change. Educators involved in large scale planning efforts have the professional development opportunity to take charge of their learning. If their input is included and honored, they can help structure learning plans and environments while also developing their own leadership skills. See [Arts Education Collaborative](#).

Within your arts learning community, develop your shared vision and chart how to get there. When figuring out your strategy, refer back to your vision. Ask "What needs to happen to make this a reality?" Maximize group assets by jointly selecting areas to strengthen while being clear and upfront about your challenges. Together, you can plan, implement, and revise your strategies.

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Planning offers an important opportunity to link to your inquiry process. Are you asking questions that will help you move closer to your vision? Perhaps you've collected information already that can shed some light on progress and the possible. What have you been able to do already? How did you achieve it? Identify the road bumps. Imagine what you can do differently to move closer to your goals and objectives.

When developing a plan, consider charting some or all of the following:

- **Credo:** A written belief shared by the group or coalition of people/ organizations participating in the professional development. It's a starting point for your assumptions. Post it everywhere, as if it were the mission of an organization.
- **Goals:** Key threads. These are the commitments that arise from your belief system.
- **Objectives:** The smaller, measurable steps that move you toward your goals.
- **Implementation Plans:** Sequential timeline of action steps. Ongoing planning sits at the center of inquiry and implementation.

With key driving questions in mind, your learning community can plan to collect information on indicators, and develop a baseline, even before beginning or changing professional development. When putting the plan to work, monitoring this information can help you adapt, both now and in later plans.

Keep in mind this work takes time, discussion, and willingness to give and take. But, it can be well worth it. Hammering out goals, objectives, and timelines can bring a learning community together when its members share commitment to the most important areas.

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Promising Practices: *Arts First Partners (Hawai'i) | Rhode Island Arts Learning Network | Additional Planning Models*

Across the country, learning communities are charting the path to strengthen the quality and availability of fine and performing arts education. Some plan to improve schools by situating arts in the center of learning. In keeping with a culture of inquiry, communities consider the planning and implementation of professional development as works-in-progress, whether they've been working on it for a year or a decade.

ARTS FIRST (Hawai'i): Partner's Responsibilities | Results

In 1999, the Hawaii State Legislature mandated a collaborative planning process to create a strategic plan for arts education across the state. In 2001, the resulting plan brought together the state arts agency, department of education, two higher education institutions, the alliance for arts education, the association of independent schools and a handful of cultural not-for-profit organizations into an arts education coalition called ARTS FIRST Partners.

The overarching vision for improvement of arts education in the state uses development of a standards-based arts curriculum and professional development as a key change strategy. Codified by legislature approval, the plan helps each partner integrate their missions, resources and opportunities to create a web of policy and professional development that supports changes in schools. Each partner takes the lead in implementing specific parts of the plan.

Partner's Responsibilities

Lead Partner	Professional Development Responsibility
Hawai'i State Foundation on Culture and the Arts	Convening partners, oversees planning process.
University of Hawai'i at Manoa, College of Arts and Humanities; University of Hawai'i at Manoa, College of Education	Evaluation and research on changes to teachers, students, and schools. Linkage to pre-service educators and internships to expand arts teaching capacity.
Hawai'i Alliance for Arts Education Affiliates: Maui Arts & Cultural Center	Build ARTS FIRST K-5 Essential Toolkit: Guide to help K-5 classroom educators teach standards-based arts curricula and integrate arts with other subjects. Adopted by Department of Education as official supplement and by higher education partners as required text.

<p>Honolulu Theatre for Youth</p>	<p>Provide workshops and in-services across the state to help educators use Toolkit to teach arts. Summer educator institute, followed by mentoring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-5: ARTS FIRST Toolkit • Secondary: Interdisciplinary lessons to help teach arts standards and link to other areas • Principals: linkage between arts integrated programs and Annual Yearly Progress requirements <p>Series of workshops through the year for teaching artists and teachers to improve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • State standards usage in arts and other areas • Assessment • Classroom Management
<p>Hawai'i Department of Education; Hawai'i Association of Independent Schools</p>	<p>Guide revisions of state fine and performing arts standards.</p> <p>Provide on-going teacher professional development courses through their website on using the ARTS FIRST Toolkit K-5 as resource document, developing lesson plans.</p>

Results of Collaborative Plan

ARTS FIRST received federal funding to support two ongoing research and evaluation projects, studying effects on schools. Results include:
 From pilot demonstration project, year two:

- Improved quality of teaching
- Richer artwork by students
- Higher test scores for third graders

From action research project with control groups:

- Arts integrated reading program improves learning in both cognitive and affective domains.
- Greatest growth consistently in students struggling with school.
- Teacher assessment and lesson delivery practice profoundly effected.

The partners continue to work together, pooling their shared knowledge, align services to the new arts standards, and revise the plan to adapt to changes, as part of the continuing evolution of their work.

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The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network

The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network arose from the Governor's Literacy in the Arts Task Force, charged in 1999 by Rhode Island Governor Lincoln A. Almond to examine and make policy recommendations about connections between arts and education reform. Convened by the Rhode Island Department of Education and the Rhode Island State Council on the Arts, the highest level of representatives from these agencies sat with citizens culled from the networks of teachers, arts and culture, and higher education institutions to fulfill this charge. This task force spent a year gathering information, learning from researchers and promising practices in and out of their state to help them conceive research-based policies. As a result, Rhode Island overhauled policies and structures to include the knowledge and skills young people bring to the school environment from other arenas.

The Rhode Island Arts Learning Network emerged from the planning process as a facilitating coalition to link stakeholders and an increasingly widening circle of citizen stakeholders. Educators, community members, higher education representatives, parents, students and others continue to devise tools and strategies for helping schools, districts and teachers reorient to this more inclusive way of thinking. For instance, in-progress online tools and evidence expand outreach to engage more people in the ongoing planning and discussion. The online resource features rubrics for each art form, sample scoring sheets and a growing portfolio of student work. In addition, the coalition is mapping arts learning resources in schools and communities using geographic information system (GIS) technologies to provide location information for the range of arts learning resources for all including educators and the general public. Five geographic-specific, community-based representatives help bridge gaps between home, school, and community. Anyone with questions — teachers, students, parents, others — can speak with Regional Arts Representatives to help clarify policy changes, opportunities, and resources.

Everything is still in process, with continued planning and implementation. As they progress, educators, cultural workers, institutions, and agencies have started to change the way they do business. Schools, partners, and policymakers are learning to identify and be more sensitive to the arts learning already happening in communities.

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Additional Planning Models

Professional Development Strategy	Sample Learning Communities	What Can School Districts Learn from Them?
Small teacher - artist planning teams as professional development	Center for Arts Education (CAE) Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE) New York City Department of Education	Strategies for helping generalists and arts specialists develop school - community arts learning community Incentives for principals to encourage planning teams Strategies for creating teams of arts partners working together with educators.
School district - cultural community arts education strategic planning	<i>Arts for All:</i> Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education New York City Department of Education	Realistic steps to take to create school district arts education coalition and plan Model blueprints for strong arts education for large school systems Professional development in context of large urban systems strengthening arts education Creating incentives for schools and teachers to plan for the arts
Needs assessment to develop professional development plan	<i>Arts for All:</i> Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education Prairie Visions: Nebraska Consortium for Arts Education and Statewide Arts Connection	Linking planning of arts education professional development to data Sample instruments for collecting information
Professional development services linked to master district arts plan	Mt. Diablo Unified School District (MDUSD) and Civic Arts Education (CAE): ArtReach	Collaboration strategies with outside professional development partners
Intensive institutes for planning time for educators	Arts Impact & Puget Sound Education Service District	Strategies for and importance of sites and groups of educators

and whole school communities	A+ Schools HOT Schools	planning how to adopt arts-based education reform approach.
Whole learning community gatherings to reflect and plan	Vermont MIDI Project	Reflective adaptations to improve professional development through planning

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Lessons Learned

Planning communities share some of their insights from using planning to strengthen professional development.

Focus on student-centered learning. What changes need to happen for students to achieve our priority educational standards or learning goals in the arts and in other areas? What can professional development designers do to help teachers facilitate this learning? What can they do to help the other stakeholders who work with young people? Talk with students; find a way to bring their voices into the planning process. This may require a different kind of structure than those for including adult perspectives. Consider both the inspired students and the hard-to-reach students. *See Arts Literacy Project.*

Ensure significant and varied teacher participation. When professional development is created with teachers, teachers will have the investment needed to begin to make change. To the extent you can broaden this participation through committees, subcommittees, needs assessment and ongoing input, professional development will meet the needs of more teachers with greater success. *See Arts in Basic Curriculum Project, Washington State Classroom-based Performance Assessments.*

Start with a vision. Don't provide professional development to merely meet the district in-service day allocation. Instead, step back and figure out what's most helpful and important for you and your educators. Facilitate a conversation between teachers and partners, so they can collaborate in building a learning environment that works. *See ArtsLit: Arts Literacy Project, HOT Schools.*

Help teachers and their partners read and internalize relevant state standards. When teachers learn how to enter into these frameworks, they can find specific guidance. Help teachers and their partners use such frameworks to imagine what specific learning looks like. Be prepared to calm fears about standardization. The specific benchmarks, examples of student work and assessment tools that accompany these standards in some states can help educators and their partners plan beyond what they already know. *See Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), The California Arts Project (TCAP), Washington State Classroom-based Performance Assessments.*

Enable teachers to plan their individual journeys. Educators who teach the arts and take charge of their own professional development can clarify their growth path and learning needs. Ask, "What do you want to be able to do in your work? What are your big plans?" Music education researchers Colleen Conway and Paul Haack remind us that arts teachers often work in isolation, where their school-based professional development rarely takes into account arts-specific needs. Based on their studies of music teachers' needs, they recommend music specialists learn what overarching content and skills will be helpful in their work, such as organizational management. Then, identify people in the field who can help, whether music educators at a nearby district or colleagues from a conference.

Contemplate community context. The schools, the people, the place and its politics all matter. Involve allies beyond schools and cultural organizations to make professional development relevant to the environment. This not only helps strengthen the broader arts learning community, but helps potential partners understand what schools and teachers are doing. As a result, partners may better align their services to the context of schools. *See Alaska Arts Education Consortium, Big Thought: A Learning Partnership, Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education (CAPE), Kansas City, Kansas School District, Ysleta Independent School District.*

Review relevant curricula. Does your district already have a curriculum in place for arts or integrated arts? If not, review existing curricula for relevance to your learning community. How will it need to be adapted to be aligned? What professional development needs arise from usage of this curricular approach? Identify people with content knowledge to help others become comfortable with the curriculum. *See Music Center: Performing Arts Center of Los Angeles County.*

Assess the needs and resources of your educators. What is currently taught and learned? What needs to change to improve how your students learn the curriculum? Data can help you look across individual needs and develop a composite understanding of what's needed and what could help. As a result, the decisions based on data will be less easily derailed by particularly opinionated divergent voices. *See Prairie Visions: Nebraska Consortium for Arts Education.*

Take advantage of useful planning tools. Use existing workbooks and planning tools to help facilitate the process. Refer to plans and blueprints from other communities, such as Los Angeles, Arkansas and New York City. *See Useful Tools.*

Write it down. Commit the vision to paper so your learning community will have a touchstone. Capture discussions, then summarize, take feedback, revise and share the written summation widely. Many communities post their vision, shared beliefs, and links to their plan on the homepage of their website. Make the vision a living document; update and amend it as the plan evolves. *See New York City Department of Education.*

Include policy makers at the beginning. Superintendents, elected officials, teacher union leaders and others with the ability to make change can be powerful allies. Take the time and energy to include them from the start so they are part of the process when the planning group agrees to certain steps. *See Arts Education in Maryland Schools Alliance (AEMS), Arts in Basic Curriculum Project.*

Plan while doing. Don't leave planning behind when you begin to implement. Instead, collect data and react to it in a continued planning process. Let what you learn help you revise strategies for helping teachers. Ensure teachers participate in the iterative planning process, as they will be able to best help you adapt to structures that really work.

Useful Tools

Artful Teaching and Learning Handbook

Thompson, Mary Jo and Becca Barniskis. ARTFUL Teaching & Learning, 2005.

A joint project of the Minneapolis Public Schools and the Perpich Center for Arts Education outlining a versatile arts education model for student achievement through the arts.

Arts for All: Los Angeles County Regional Blueprint for Arts Education

Los Angeles County Arts Commission, 2004.

Provides guidance and an outline of how to achieve high quality arts education for K-12 public schools.

CAPE Arts Education Partnership Planning Guide at the School Level

A guide for teachers and administrators interested in long-term planning and leadership for arts integration.

For the Greater Good: A Framework for Advancing State Arts Education Partnerships

Ellis, Dawn M. and Craig Dreeszen. National Assembly of State Arts Agencies, 2003.

Shares, analyzes and summarizes five state-level arts education support networks' collective experience in advancing arts education.

A Guidebook for High Quality Professional Development in Arts Education

California County Superintendents Educational Services Association, 2008

A user-friendly toolkit for designing and implementing professional development in the visual and performing arts to meet needs identified through "big picture" planning by schools, districts and counties.

Learning Partnerships Report and Workbook

Dreeszen, Craig et al. Arts Education Partnership, 1999.

A planning guide to Arts and Education collaboration that provides tools to create and enhance arts education partnerships.

New York City Department of Education's Blueprint(s) for Teaching and Learning in the Arts

The Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts Prek-12 provides a standards-based, rigorous approach to teaching the arts.

The Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning

Burt, Margaret and Elizabeth Lindsley. California Alliance for Arts Education, 2001.

A hands-on, how-to Arts Education planning process for schools, districts and counties.

The Understanding by Design Handbook

McTighe, Jay and Grant Wiggins. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, 2005.

A framework for designing curriculum units, performance assessments, and instruction.

Your Turn

Developing a Vision

- In 3-5 years, what do you want to see in place for teachers and students?
- How would other stakeholders in your arts learning community answer this question?

Developing a Plan

- What are the action steps required to make the vision a reality? What is a realistic timeline?
- Assess the current status of professional development in your community. What are your strengths? What are your challenges?
- Who are the partners in the plan? What are their responsibilities?
- What resources will be needed?
- How will you begin to implement your plan once it is developed? What will be your starting point?
- How will you assess progress made towards achieving the vision? What are the measurable objectives?