



## ***Let's Make a Plan to Support Arts Education***

An Advocacy Plan for “School District X” to stop cuts in arts education programs.

### **1) Identify the issue.**

Projected budget deficits in two years may lead the board of education of “School District X” to reduce its arts education program.

### **2) Identify a goal and strategies.**

Prevent reductions in the arts education program through the following strategies:

- Establish relationships and trust with key policy makers in the district and the community, i.e. members of the board of education, superintendent, administrators, teachers, students, parents, artists in the community, business community, higher education, civic leaders, faith-based community, media, etc.
- Build support for arts education among policy makers and the community.
- Position the arts as an instructional method to improve student achievement and close the achievement gap among students.

### **3) Gather information and data.**

- Determine if cuts are needed to balance the district’s budget, and the process and timeline that will be used for deciding when and where cuts will be made.
- Determine if your district will be in compliance with Operating Standards for Ohio’s Schools if budget cuts are made.
- Document the following: student achievement and recognitions in the arts; the number of students choosing careers in the arts; the number of students enrolled and earning graduation credits in the arts; and, the personal and economic value of the arts to the community.
- Document the impact of budget cuts on the following: opportunities for students in the arts; the quality of the arts education programs, including impact on recognitions and awards; and, district reform efforts for closing the achievement gap among students, keeping students in schools, and reducing the dropout rate.
- Determine the depth of support for arts education in the district and community.
- Identify strengths, challenges, opportunities, and threats regarding arts education.

- Identify decision makers, stakeholders, friends, allies, and opponents. Are they important because of their power, influence, networks, or resources?

#### **4) Develop strategies and opportunities.**

- Organize - Organize a steering committee to do research and coordinate implementation of strategies. Define roles and responsibilities, and how decisions will be made. Include stakeholders and allies in the district and community, and involve teachers from other disciplines, artists, arts organizations, the faith-based community, and volunteers (PTA/Boosters) in the schools. Identify a spokesperson or chair, who is respected and known in the community, and who has relationships with decision makers in the district.
- Network - Develop contacts and relationships with policy/law makers, colleagues in school, parents, artists, business contacts, the media, etc. Provide them with information on arts education and data on student achievement, which supports continued funding for arts education programs in the district. Invite them to arts events. Encourage voters to approve levies, and lawmakers to reform Ohio's system for funding schools.
- Encourage arts educators to participate on district budget, curriculum, and assessment committees, and accept leadership roles on these committees to advocate for the arts.
- Communicate - Develop and implement a communication plan. Conduct a briefing for the board of education and the media on the status of arts in the school and community, and the impact of the budget cuts on arts education. Include information about how the cuts will impact student achievement, career opportunities for students, and the quality of life in the community. Distribute this information to the parents and community members. Write letters to the editor, schedule presentations before community groups, and distribute information at arts events.

#### **5) Implement and assess your achievements.**

- There is an organized advocacy effort in support of arts education in the district that includes a variety of stakeholders. That effort is visible in the schools and community, and is led by a respected member of the community.
- Networks and relationships have been developed that support arts education. Arts educators are members of key district committees, and advocate for arts education on these committees.
- Information about the personal, economic, and academic value of arts education has been shared with the district and community. This information is reaching the community through letters in newspapers, information at arts events, news releases, etc.
- Voters approved a levy, which will temporarily eliminate the budget deficit. The arts are saved.

#### **6) Revise and adjust the plan based on its progress, and remember to recognize supporters and celebrate successes along the way.**

For more information contact the Ohio Alliance for Arts Education at 614.224.1060 or by email at [dcollins@oaae.net](mailto:dcollins@oaae.net) Visit the website at [www.OAAE.net](http://www.OAAE.net)