



LOYOLA UNIVERSITY CHICAGO

PERCEPTIONS OF VALUE AND PERCEIVED STRENGTHS OF ARTS  
EDUCATION DURING AN AGE OF ACCOUNTABILITY: CONDITIONS AND  
QUALITIES THAT SHAPE A CITIZENRY  
IMPLICATIONS FOR LEADERSHIP

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
ABSTRACT .....	ix
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Advocacy for Arts Education.....	4
Purpose.....	5
Research Questions.....	5
Rationale for the Research: The Educational and Political Journey to Present.....	7
Significance of the Study: Present Era of Accountability .....	13
Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education during an Era of Accountability.....	17
Methodology .....	19
Summary .....	23
II. LITERATURE REVIEW .....	24
History of the Efficiency Movement and the Progressive Era .....	27
History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School .....	29
Current Era of Accountability – and the Response from the Arts Community .....	35
Arts Advocacy and Development of The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education.....	41
Educational Leadership: Reason to Pause .....	49
III. METHODOLOGY .....	52
Restatement of Purpose.....	52
Research Questions.....	54
Research Design.....	54
Selection of the Sample .....	57
Procedures for Data Collection.....	58
Data Analysis .....	61
Researcher Bias.....	62
Validity and Limitations .....	63
Risks and Benefits.....	65
Summary .....	66

IV.	PRESENTATION OF THE DATA: THE ORAL HISTORY .....	68
	Introduction.....	68
	Research Design.....	70
	Research Questions.....	70
	Part I – The University of Chicago Laboratory School .....	71
	The Progressive Era .....	71
	History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School.....	72
	Today Looking Back – A Voice from Within .....	78
	Part II – Kennedy Schools of Distinction .....	82
	Selection of the Sample .....	82
	Review of Methodology .....	89
	Data from Oral History .....	90
	Summary.....	146
V.	DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	148
	Overview of the Research Project.....	148
	Discussion of the Findings.....	151
	Research Question 1A.....	152
	Summary .....	154
	Research Question 1B.....	154
	Summary .....	156
	Research Question 1C.....	157
	Summary.....	157
	Research Question 2 .....	158
	University of Chicago Laboratory School – Progressive Era .....	159
	Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction – Accountability Era .....	160
	Summary .....	161
	Research Question 3A.....	162
	Summary .....	163
	Research Question 3B.....	164
	Similarities .....	164
	Differences .....	164
	Summary .....	165
	Research Question 4 .....	166
	Summary.....	169
	Recommendations for Further Research.....	170
	Conclusion .....	172
	Discussion.....	173

APPENDIX

A.	LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM COOPERATING INSTITUTION .....	180
B.	ORAL HISTORY / INTERVIEW SCRIPT .....	184
C.	CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION.....	186
D.	CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH .....	188
E.	LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT .....	192
F.	CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT .....	194
	REFERENCE LIST .....	196
	VITA.....	203



## LIST OF TABLES

### Table

1. Graphic of Methodology.....	22
2. Research Procedures for Schools of Distinction.....	83
3. Value of Arts Education.....	158
4. Specific Character Traits.....	159
5. Era-Based Themes .....	162

## ABSTRACT

This research examines the perceptions of arts education during periods of educational efficiency and accountability focusing specifically on the arguments made by advocates for the value of arts education within the Chicago area. It is intended to help leaders understand how we can learn from our past through revealing cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how best to lead a school.

This study utilized a mixed methodology of historical documentary with oral history to compare two distinct time periods in education focusing on schools that operated in opposition to the norms of the time. Historical documentary was used to study The University of Chicago Laboratory School, led by John Dewey during the efficiency movement of the Progressive Era. Oral history was used to study three Chicago area recipients of the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction during the current era of educational accountability.

The oral history collected at each school site involved interviews with four leaders that served as a voice of advocacy and support for arts education. The participants were asked to articulate the effect that continuing to embrace arts education has had on their school as well as beliefs that have driven their action as it pertains to sustaining arts programming.

Data collected from historical documents and interviews was analyzed for themes amongst leaders' attitudes and beliefs. Comparing and contrasting the oral histories of the

Schools of Distinction with The Laboratory School brought clarity to the value of maintaining a focus on an education that supports the arts.

This study concluded that education responds to prevailing conditions, be it social, political, or economical. Regardless of the time period, qualities we desire to shape our citizenry remain common. Among the most commonly stated are: diversity of talents, curiosity, imagination, creativity, entrepreneurship, and passion.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

As a practicing public school administrator, this researcher has often struggled to balance his own beliefs and values about the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with those of what he believes to be related to contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization. Like so many school administrators, this researcher is conflicted by the notion that the only subjects that are valued in our schools are those that some believe will afford the United States a global degree of competitiveness as defined by what is measurable. In fact, as we move toward creating a culture for learning in our schools, this researcher finds himself fighting internal tension associated with the desire of some to expand math and science programs, often at the cost of coursework that he believes will support life-long learning by developing imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation. This researcher is growing more curious as to why we so often force high school students to sacrifice exploring areas of passion, such as the arts, so that they can take an extra reading class or math class.

This study explores this conflict and tension by bringing voice to the teachers, department chairs, and administrators who have elected to not compromise their beliefs about the importance of an arts education, especially during a time of great accountability. Furthermore, this investigation looks at the belief that arts education is an effective way of developing skills in imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

To appropriately set the stage, this research is grounded in comparing and contrasting two distinct eras in our nation's history. In understanding how the efficiency movement of the progressive era of more than 100 years ago is similar to the accountability era of today, valuable insight is gained about specific character traits that are sought by the citizenry of the greater Chicago area. This research identifies the manner in which The University of Chicago Laboratory School of the Progressive Era was in opposition to the efficiency era of the day, and how the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools is in opposition to the current era of accountability.

Acknowledging the importance of learning from our past, this study provides a historical context using The University of Chicago Laboratory School based in Chicago. Through studying the Laboratory School, and comparing and contrasting it to schools of today, this study identifies specific circumstances and characteristics that existed in our society both then and now. An awareness of these political and social characteristics can serve as indicators to educational leaders so that we are better able to continue to keep a competitive advantage for our students in today's evolving world without sacrificing educating the whole child.

To further understand how public education in America arrived at today's era of accountability, this researcher provides a chronology of educationally related legislation. This legislative timeline provides a basis for inquiry as to why some schools have been able to resist pressure to reduce offerings in arts education. To gain additional insight, the historical documentary is supplemented with oral history from three Chicago area public

high schools that have been awarded the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction Award.

Each year, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program, recognizes schools that have done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. Each state can accept nominations for schools to be recognized, ultimately forwarding one school to the national competition. Nationally, the program can award up to five schools for their commitment to:

- Teach the four basic art forms (music, visual arts, theater, and dance) as specific disciplines;
- Provide imaginative learning environments;
- Include parental involvement;
- Promote learning about other cultures; and
- Encourage community connections.

Both the state and national level awards programs provide a vital opportunity to credit schools and the role they play in providing a creative learning environment for outstanding student achievement.

John Dewey's experiences with the Laboratory School and advocates from the schools that have been recognized by the Kennedy Center School's of Distinction allows this researcher to bring voice, through both documents and the stories of others, to those who believe that a quality public school education should be one that is well-rounded and calls for students to be exposed to an education that develops imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

In building a greater understanding of the history of public education in America, advocacy efforts for music education, and the more recent accountability movement, this study presents a picture of a brewing, yet silent crisis beginning to form where the general trend in public schools in the United States has been a decrease in arts education. However, what appear to be absent are perceptions as to the value and strengths of an arts education, as they pertain to the qualities we may desire to see shape our citizenry.

### **Advocacy for Arts Education**

Historically, our nation has seen many prominent figures, including presidents; serve as strong advocates for the need and importance of arts education in our schools. In 1958, President Dwight D. Eisenhower created a National Cultural Center. In the early 1960s, President John F. Kennedy, who was a life-long supporter and advocate of the arts, asked for public support by saying, “I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we, too, will be remembered not for victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit” (1962, p. 84647).

Our nation has also seen a number of arts education advocacy groups emerge over the years. Specifically in music, since 1907, the National Association for Music Education (NAfME) has led our Nation’s advocacy efforts. NAfME has devoted its efforts to advancing and preserving music education as part of the core curriculum. Since 1992, when the U.S. Department of Education encouraged the formation of The Arts Education Partnership, they have been closely involved with advancement of the arts through the legislative process.

As recently as August of 2009, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan exclaimed, “I was reminded of the important role that arts education plays in providing American

students with a well-rounded education. The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively” (Duncan, 2009).

### **Purpose**

With such a persuasive and often forceful voice for arts education advocacy in our nation’s history, this research presents the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. Furthermore, clarity is provided in how these arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. The purpose of this study then is to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

### **Research Questions**

This research reflects what Stake (1995) describes as an issue. Stake explains that in using an issue to structure questions, we are able to “force attention to complexity and contextuality” and that we can then “draw attention to problems and concerns” (p. 16). Given that there is an inherent problem when a demand for achievement and accountability is placed upon the resources of time and money, school leaders are forced to choose and often reduce resources, access, and availability to arts education even when the leadership may strongly believe in the strengths and value of arts education.

Historical documentary research is necessary in order to understand and articulate the similarities and differences between the efficiency movements of more than 100 years



ago to the accountability era of today. In addition, everyone has a story to tell and oral history listens to these stories, providing for a systemic collection and living testimony of people's experiences. In *Doing Oral History* (2003), Donald Ritchie explains, "Oral History collects memories and personal commentaries of historical significance through recorded interviews. An oral history interview generally consists of a well-prepared interviewer questioning an interviewee and recording their exchange in audio or video format" (p. 19).

While acknowledging the significance of historical documentary research supplemented with oral history, this study addresses the aforementioned tension within the following four research questions:

- 1A. What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era, and specifically, The University of Chicago Laboratory School?
- 1B. What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?
- 1C. How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?
2. What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?
- 3A. According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?
- 3B. How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?

4. What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?

### **Rationale for the Research: The Educational and Political Journey to Present**

The lessons we learn from history are vast and varied, especially considering that the history of a national system of formal education in the United States developed as recently as the 19th century, when common-school reformers, such as Horace Mann in Massachusetts and Henry Barnard in Connecticut, argued a belief that common schooling could create good citizens, unite society and prevent crime and poverty (Kaestle, 1983).

Mann (1846), for example, believed that education was more than simply the responsibility of government, but a human right protected by government. He wrote,

I believe in the existence of a great, immutable principle of natural law, or natural ethics...which proves the *absolute right* of every human being that comes into the world to an education; and which, of course proves the correlative duty of every government to see that the means of that education are provided for all. (p. 63)

In part, as a result of their efforts, free public education at the elementary level was available for all American children by the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Massachusetts led the way, passing the first compulsory school attendance law in 1852. This law was then amended in 1859 to read as follows:

Every person having under his control a child between the ages of 8 and 14 years shall annually during the continuance of his control send such child to some public school in the city or town in which he resides at least

12 weeks, if the public schools of such city or town so long continue, 6 weeks of which time shall be consecutive, and for every neglect of such duty the party offending shall forfeit to the use of such city or town a sum not exceeding \$20. (United States Bureau of Education, 1914, pp. 8-9)

Following the growing belief that education was a basic human right and the duty of every government, which would help to create a good citizenry, compulsory education rapidly became the norm. However, while the value of an education had quickly become both appreciated and expected, the government failed to legislate or recommend a specific curriculum or type of education. In the absence of specificity from the government, grassroots pedagogical movements were born, creating dissonance with what had already been considered normal practice. Perhaps most notable from the time was the progressive movement.

One of the most prominent voices of the progressive movement, which focused on the belief that education was to be based on real life experience, was philosopher John Dewey. Dewey moved from the University of Michigan to the recently established University of Chicago in 1894 where he soon became chair of the department of philosophy, psychology and education. The fact that the progressive movement was so soundly grounded right here in Chicago contributes to the importance of this study as it pertains to the value of arts education in the Chicago region.

By 1919, the Progressive Education Association had been founded with the explicit goal of reforming public education. The Association encouraged schools to help in the development of independent thinkers, creative beings, and expressive communicators and to develop curriculum that was more reflective of society. Shifting

the emphasis from the institution of the school to the needs of the school's students was drastically different from the more prevalent factory model of social efficiency that characterized public education from the early 1900s until it eventually peaked in the 1930s during the Great Depression.

Shortly after the progressive movement had begun to fade, the United States entered World War II in 1941. As a result, the next four years brought with it very little focus on education while many young men and women left schools to enlist or take on other war efforts.

In 1944, with nearly eight million veterans ready to take advantage of our government's desire to kick start post war America, the Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944 (78<sup>th</sup> Cong., 1944), also known as the GI Bill, was passed and opened the door to over two million veterans to attend college. Of them, some 240,000 became teachers (Conlin, 2010, p. 722). While schools and the curriculum still enjoyed a great deal of autonomy, the progressive movement had lost momentum, as community values shifted under the government's new need to focus on building schools and making higher education accessible to a broader spectrum of the citizenry.

Emerging during the 1940s, the Life-Adjustment Education Movement, a form of progressivism, held that the main purpose of schooling was to prepare students for the world of work. In his book, *The Struggle for the American Curriculum*, Herbert Kliebard (1995), asserts, "a curriculum built around fundamental social occupations would provide the bridge that would harmonize individual and social ends" (p. 61). Furthermore, with its goal of "a curriculum attuned to the actual life functions of youth in preparation for adulthood" (p. 252) education was poised to continue along a path toward reform.

However, the Life-Adjustment Education Movement was short lived, in part because “it turned out to be the prod that awoke a slumbering giant” (p. 260). Critics argued that the attitude of the movement was merely an attack on the intellectual respectability of America.

In 1957, under assault of intellectuals and cast in the shadow of the Soviet Union’s launch of Sputnik, the government responded, signing into law the National Defense Education Act (85<sup>th</sup> Cong. [NDEA], 1958), which created a new focus on both the research and education of science. The race to be the best and have the quality of education to back it was well aligned. The years that followed would set the need to focus on a strong curriculum filled with math and science, especially as the rise of an accountability movement would begin to take shape.

In 1965, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (89<sup>th</sup> Cong. [ESEA], 1965) was passed as part of Lyndon Johnson’s “War on Poverty.” Johnson’s push brought about a series of bills and acts aimed at improving the social welfare of society. These efforts brought about a much heavier heart and openness to social justice. Meanwhile, prolific authors such as Herbert R. Kohl were writing about new ideas such as “The Open Classroom,” another progressive idea that would quickly come and go. In education, change or reactive movements became the norm, and a much stronger conservative movement appeared in the mid-1970s that was crying out for a back-to-basics model of education (National School Board Association [NSBA], 1978).

As the curriculum in schools began to narrow under the back-to-basics approach, arts education and the values it instilled were destined to suffer. John Mahlmann (1979), the executive director of the National Art Education Association, attempted to make

sense of what he called “a rather confused picture of arts education, politics, and the varied factors, agencies, and influences that are concerned with and affect policy” (p. 72).

In his research article “Forward to Basics,” Ross Taylor (1979), mathematics consultant to the Minneapolis Public Schools, cautioned educators: “The public pressure has potential for promise or peril. There is promise in the focus on learning. However, a narrow concentration on low-level skills or an attempt to apply simplistic solutions to complex problems could prove to be perilous” (p. 547).

The back-to basics-movement gained even more traction when on December 8, 1975 *Newsweek* published an article titled, “Why Johnny Can’t Write” (Sheils, 1975). Reaching over two million readers, this article helped to spark a national debate about the need for national literacy. Why did this story insight fear? Perhaps it was intentional on the part of *Newsweek*, or maybe it was just a great marketing ploy. Either way, the impact of “Why Johnny Can’t Write” was immediate. Readers were able to relate to Johnny, a white, middle class, young man. However, with the words “can’t write” stamped across his chest, it was no surprise that it hit a nerve with readers. Sheils warned:

If your children are attending college, the chances are that when they graduate they will be unable to write ordinary, expository English with any real degree of structure and lucidity. If they are in high school and planning to attend college, the chances are less than even that they will be able to write English at the minimal college level when they get there. If they are not planning to attend college, their skills in writing English may not even qualify them for secretarial or clerical work. And if they are attending elementary school, they are almost certainly not being given the

kind of required reading material, much less writing instruction, that might make it possible for them eventually to write comprehensible English.

Willy-nilly, the U.S. educational system is spawning a generation of semi-literates. (p. 58).

Mainstream media, both today and in the mid-1970s, tends to focus greater attention to negative reporting. In a special report to the Pew Research Center, Michael Robinson explains, in essence, that bad news sells. This recent synthesis of 165 separate surveys from across the United States suggests that interest in news becomes much more focused when there is a perceived threat to the reader (2007). It was this very marketing approach that *Newsweek* embraced in “Why Johnny Can’t Write,” helping to convince the reader that the nation was becoming illiterate.

In 1983, President Ronald Reagan’s National Commission on Excellence in Education published the report *A Nation at Risk*. Its principal staff writer, James J. Harvey, explicitly articulated the claims within the report in the opening pages. Harvey, a noted education author and fellow of the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington, wrote, “The educational foundations of our society are presently being eroded by a rising tide of mediocrity that threatens our very future as a Nation and a people” (p. 5). Without question, this report contributed to the sense that our schools were failing, which eventually generated a host of educational reform efforts, placing education on the defense (National Commission on Excellence in Education, 1983).

In the nearly 30 years between the launch of Sputnik to the release of *A Nation at Risk*, American society had been receiving a consistent message of fear and failure. To

the generation that grew up in this time period, this had become a very powerful message, one that would likely impact a new generation. Public education was not viewed as providing the necessary rigor to launch America into a competitive global economy.

### **Significance of the Study: Present Era of Accountability**

In the past decade alone, education has undergone sweeping changes related to the accountability movement sparked by the Nation at Risk report. As a result, education had become the target of increasing public concern with quality and equity.

In 2002, President George W. Bush pushed through a reform effort with the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (89<sup>th</sup> Cong. [ESEA], 1965), what we now know as No Child Left Behind (107<sup>th</sup> Cong. [NCLB], 2002). This law holds schools accountable for specific levels of student achievement and assigns penalties for schools that do not make adequate yearly progress toward meeting the goals of NCLB.

Since 2002, we have continued to see reform efforts squarely aimed at school improvement and accountability for teaching and learning. These efforts have created a newly anchored focus on 21<sup>st</sup> century skills and Common Core Standards. As with most any change, reform efforts draw both supporters and critics. Many within the educational profession believe that we are now taking the necessary steps in providing our young people with a high-quality education, while others believe we have become too focused on testing and accountability.

In his October 2011 keynote speech, to a large room filled with Illinois principals, Yong Zhao of the University of Oregon delivered a moving presentation titled, “What Knowledge is of Most Worth.” Zhao challenged everyone present to consider if our



current concentration on testing is the right focus. He argued that what really matters in education is diversity of talents, creativity, entrepreneurship, and passion (Y. Zhao, personal communication, October 18, 2011).

With such a tremendous laser-like focus on accountability, often as measured by high-stakes assessments, many school leaders today are struggling to effectively manage the tension associated with a desire for distributive justice or the socially just allocation of goods and resources. The result has been a staggering growth in high schools touting the rigor of their curricula, which has been tangibly seen with the astonishing growth in student enrollment in advanced placement (AP) classes.

In 2005, the National Governors Association for Best Practices (NGA Center), in collaboration with the College Board, launched the Expansion project as part of an initiative to redesign American high schools. Fifty-one pilot schools in Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maine, Nevada and Wisconsin received funding to expand AP courses to allow more minority and low-income students to participate. According to David Wakelyn, the Program Director of the Education Division for the National Governor's Association Center for Best Practices, and lead author of *Raising Rigor, Getting Results: Lesson Learned from AP Expansion*, by 2008 these schools experienced a 65% increase in enrollment in advanced placement courses (Wakelyn, 2009).

In response to such an intense push toward accountability and for students to receive college level experiences while still in high school, many schools have struggled to continue to make time for elective classes that are not directly tested on achievement exams. In hopes of making these opportunities more readily available to students, conversations have occurred at the local level relative to the length of the school day or

the number of periods offered during the day. Some have even discussed altering the structure of grading terms and semesters. With both a finite amount of time, along with tightening budgets, many schools have had to make the difficult decision to reduce or cut arts education and other elective course offerings.

An excellent illustration of this point can be seen in *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, where the Illinois Arts Alliance and their foundation partners released findings of the first statewide survey of principals and superintendents that assess the status of arts education in Illinois. This effort was driven by a desire to understand challenges in delivering arts education instruction in Illinois public schools. They found that Illinois falls well below national averages in providing instruction in each of the four arts disciplines (visual arts, music, theater or dance). In fact, twenty percent of Illinois principals, reported having no arts program of any kind in their school; 16% reported offering one arts discipline; 38% reported offering two; 18% reported offering visual arts, music and theater; and only 8% reported a presence of all four arts disciplines (Illinois Creates Coalition, 2005, p. 11).

Taking this one step further, it is important to see the connection between the push for a rigorous curriculum and college level experiences with that of the current era of accountability. In California, fewer students are participating in music courses and activities, according to *The Sound of Silence*. The report carefully documents the impact of recent budget cuts, high-stakes testing and the implementation of No Child Left Behind on student participation in music programs. For instance, while total student population had increased by 5.8%, the percentage of all California students involved in music education courses, declined by 50%. At the same time, the number of music

teachers declined by 28% (Music for All Foundation, 2004, pp. 11-15).

Even armed with the findings from *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, and *The sound of Silence*, a school administrator might find it very difficult to advocate for maintaining a strong arts education. With a growing push for America to be a competitive force in the new world economy, part of the tension felt in a school is in determining what really matters and convincing those with opposing beliefs of what matters and why.

The abovementioned struggles for arts education are exacerbated even further by a narrowing of the curriculum, which has become a concerning trend of arts advocates that believe this will bring a long-term negative impact on our society's ability to be curious, imaginative, and to think creatively. Research has emphasized the role played by working conditions, especially the narrowing of curriculum and pedagogy as a result of the high-stakes testing movement, in undermining the autonomy and creativity of teachers (Crocco, 2007).

The Center on Educational Policy, a national independent advocate for public education and for more effective public schools, found that within four years of adopting the No Child Left Behind Act, 71% of the nation's 15,000 public schools had reduced the number of instructional hours in history, music, and other elective subject areas to open up more time for math and reading (Center on Education Policy, 2006). When the report was released, Jack Jennings, president of the Washington based center, told the New York Times that "Narrowing the curriculum has clearly become a nationwide pattern" (Dillon, 2006, p. 22).

In opposition to this narrowing of curriculum, advocates such as Sir Ken

Robinson, Senior Advisor for Education Policy at The Getty Foundation, said, “America needs a workforce that is flexible, adaptable and highly creative; and it needs an educational system that can develop these qualities in everyone” (Illinois Creates Coalition, p. 28). Alan Greenspan, the Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve offered, “The arts develop skills and habits of mind that are important for workers in the new economy of ideas” (Illinois Creates Coalition, p. 29). Hearing well-known voices can be very helpful in developing a case for not abandoning the arts at a time of great accountability and push for students to have a more rigorous college level experience.

What is frustrating, however, is how limited these supportive voices of advocacy are among policymakers. As a school leader, this researcher finds the inability of many policymakers to understand the symbiotic relationship between a more rigorous college preparatory curriculum and the arts to be genuinely unacceptable.

### **Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education during an Era of Accountability**

In the seventh chapter of his landmark book, *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century*, Thomas Friedman embarks upon a discussion titled “The Right Stuff: Tubas and Test Tubes.”

Friedman (2006) outlines four skill sets and attitudes that educators and employers point to as the right stuff to make it in today’s flat world. Friedman uses this metaphor of a flat world to explain to others his realization that the global competitive playing field is being leveled and that as a result, the world has flattened. Friedman articulates this sentiment following his world travels, in which he comes to realize that change in technology and communications is taking place faster than most are able to comprehend. It is this change, he argues, of providing the power to those who were once

strangers from all over the globe with the ability to touch one another with ease at any time. This, he describes, is what has brought on a shift in the way that the world is balanced.

The four skill sets and attitudes that Friedman points to as the right stuff to make it in today's flat world begin with the ability to "Learn How to Learn." Friedman (2006) goes on to argue that it is essential to have curiosity and passion for success and contends that curiosity and passion matter more than intelligence. The third skill set is to "Play Well with Others." He explains that it is important to like people and to get along well with others because new jobs are emerging that involve human interaction. The final skill set is "The Right Brain Stuff" and that many emerging industries and job opportunities will rely on an employee's ability to think creatively and unconventionally.

The development of skills such as curiosity, imagination, creativity and evaluation has been of interest to arts advocates for years and, according to Friedman (2006), learning these skills will provide students with essential tools they are going to need to thrive and compete in the future. The notion that learning in and through the arts promotes and cultivates habits which help in developing these skills, has also been the source of much research, which will be further highlighted in Chapter II.

For example, using observations and surveys of teachers and students to collect data from more than 2,000 public school students, Burton, Horowitz, and Abeles (2000) uncovered evidence supporting the claim that arts education contributes to the development of complex thinking and learning skills. Furthermore, combining several standardized measures including the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking (TTCT) to measure creative abilities, they were able to measure the degree to which the arts

cultivate creativity. The extensive nature of this research was groundbreaking because it offered empirical and quantifiable evidence of what for years had only been suspected.

In yet another study of 1,000 randomly selected, likely voters, Lake Research Partners, in 2008, found that 88% agreed that “an education in and through the arts is essential to cultivating the imagination” necessary for competing in the global economy (Lake Research Partners, 2008, p. 7).

Faced with immense accountability and accompanying consequences when benchmarks are not met, it becomes easy to imagine how difficult it is becoming for school level leaders to balance all of the demands and interests of today’s stakeholders. For local building or district level leaders, decisions about how best to lead a school become even more difficult when confronting conflicting expectations and competing interests from such a variety of policymakers and stakeholders.

### **Methodology**

This investigative research delves into an inquiry of the perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education during progressive and accountability eras. Specifically, it compares the Progressive Era University of Chicago Laboratory School to the accountability era Schools of Distinction conducted via a historical documentary, supplemented with oral history. This research further seeks to understand conditions of the time as they may be present in a preferred citizen all while considering whether or not these conditions and characteristics recur over time.

As Flyvbjerg (2006) explains, when looking for illustrations that are unusually problematic or especially good, otherwise known as extremes, we make choices that “one might call a critical case” (p. 226). Strategically selecting believable extremes, such as

The University of Chicago Laboratory School and the Kennedy Schools of Distinction, helps to justify an ability to generalize the study of human affairs and supports not having a large random sample. Thus, identifying a very specific problem and the circumstances surrounding it becomes paramount in selecting a critical case and an extreme sample. With this in mind, it was essential to be quite deliberate in identifying specific sampling criteria. Therefore, sampling criteria involved determining school settings that have by some measure shown that they value arts education and habits that cultivate curiosity, imagination, creativity and evaluation, especially during the current era of high accountability.

In constructing a framework for educational leaders to be informed by, this study compares and contrasts extremes from the progressive and accountability eras. This includes a review of historical documentation of The University of Chicago Laboratory School of the Progressive Era supported by an oral history of three exceptional schools identified since 2007 by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction. By comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this study reveals cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how to lead a school.

Each year, “the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program, recognizes schools that have done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. The national and state level awards program provides an important opportunity to honor schools and the role they play in providing a creative learning environment for outstanding student achievement” (Recognition Programs, n.d., para. 1-3). The Kennedy

Center may recognize up to five schools each year spanning the spectrum of K-12, magnet and specialty schools alike. This study, however, focuses only on public high schools in Illinois. This limitation was set to take full advantage of the ability to compare and contrast perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assists in developing a citizen who exhibits imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation with The University of Chicago Laboratory School, which was also located in Chicago.

Since the Kennedy Schools of Distinction program began, the following three public Illinois high schools have been recognized:

- School “A” / 2009 – 2010
- School “B” / 2008 – 2009
- School “C” / 2007 – 2008

The oral history collected at each school site involved interviews with four advocates who served as the primary voice of support for arts education. Selection was sought from key administrative groups including curriculum specialists, fine arts department chairs, principals, superintendents, and board members. The researcher interviewed those advocates that held a position of decision-making at the school for at least three years prior to receipt of the award.

Interviewees were asked to supply information as to the arguments that were made for the value and strengths of arts education. They were also asked to articulate the effect that continuing to embrace arts education has had on their school during the current era of accountability, as well as the beliefs that have driven their behavior and action as it pertains to sustaining and expanding their arts program.

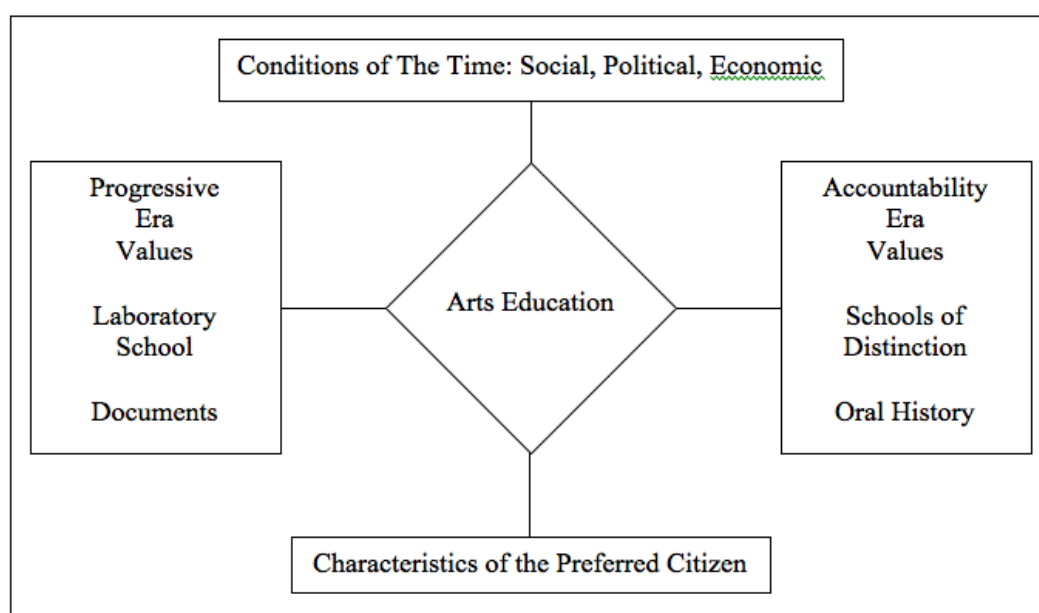


Particular attention was paid to whether or not any patterns arose between the schools. Patterns were sought out regarding whether or not there were similarities amongst the schools, given that they had all reached a set pinnacle of success in regard to the level of quality of their arts education program. Comparing and contrasting the oral histories of the Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction was done with The University of Chicago Laboratory School to tell a story of how maintaining a focus on an education that embraces independent thinking, creative beings, and a desire to develop students to be expressive about their feelings is either more or less successful on measures of education which are so carefully monitored during the eras of efficiency and accountability.

Given the complexity of the mixed methodology, this researcher has provided you Table 1 with a graphic of the research procedures.

Table 1

*Graphic of Methodology*



### **Summary**

This chapter provided an introduction to the research study. The purpose of the study was stated along with research questions. A brief overview of the educational and political journey to present day, along with voices of value and perceived strengths of arts education during an era of accountability, offered evidence for the significance of the study. The proposed methodology and sampling criteria were also included. In the following chapter, a comprehensive review of related literature presents a basis for the purpose of the study and the rationale for exploration of the relationship between The University of Chicago Laboratory School of the Progressive Era and the Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction of the Accountability Era.

## CHAPTER II

### LITERATURE REVIEW

In order for any researcher to properly orient oneself to a topic, extensive investigation into the existing research must be done. For this researcher, what appears to be absent are perceptions as to the value and strengths of arts education, as they pertain to the qualities we may desire to see shape our citizenry during eras of intense efficiency and accountability. It has been documented that arts education can be linked to increases in math and reading scores, in part, because as John Ratey (2001) argues, “The musician is constantly adjusting decisions on tempo, tone, style, rhythm, phrasing, and feeling-- training the brain to become incredibly good at organizing and conducting numerous activities at once. Dedicated practice of this orchestration can have a great payoff for lifelong attentional skills, intelligence, and an ability for self-knowledge and expression” (p. 206).

In addition, in his book, *An Intelligence View of Music Education*, Arthur Harvey (1997) documents that “While it is understood that music education can have an important impact on musical intelligence, there is accumulating a significant amount of research supporting the impact of music education on all seven of Howard Gardner’s basic intelligences” (p. 3).

We even see statistical research emerging confirming:

That music education at an early age greatly increases the likelihood that a

child will grow up to seek higher education and ultimately earn a higher salary. If you want to be a CEO, college president, or even a rock star, the message from this survey is: take music. As with reading, writing, and arithmetic, music should be a core academic focus because it is so vital to a well-rounded education and will pay dividends later in life, no matter the career path taken.

Respondents of the Harris Poll cite skills they learned in music as helping them in their careers today. Seventy-two percent of adults with music education agree that it equips people to be better team players in their career, and nearly six in ten agree that music education has influenced their creative problem-solving skills. Many also agree music education provides a disciplined approach to problem solving, a sense of organization and prepares someone to manage the tasks of their job more successfully. (Harris Poll, 2007)

As politically driven expectations for increased accountability rise, the challenges emerging from the entanglement of society, politics, and education become increasingly daunting. Educational leaders face especially difficult decisions during eras of high efficiency and accountability and therefore become the ideal vehicle to study as it pertains to related implications for leaders in the profession.

Throughout our great nation's history, public education has elicited significant voice from just about anyone with interest or experience with education. As political winds of change are infinitely evolving, bringing endless mandates as to how school will be regulated, absent are perceptions as to the value and strengths of arts education, as

they pertain to the qualities we may desire to see shape our citizenry.

What we're experiencing today is not the first time that education in the United States has encountered tension between efficiency, accountability, standardization, and a desire to grow the whole child. In fact, we've wrestled with this before. School and political leaders of today have said we have to raise accountability in our schools for the sake of our future. The people of the Progressive Era were responding to similar ideology about the needs and beliefs of that time. Nothing that happens in education does so in a vacuum. Instead, it is a response to a prevailing condition, be it social, political, or economical. Therefore, it is incumbent upon leaders to learn from those that have come before us and have wrestled with similar challenges.

To draw a more clear focus to this research, the relationship between the perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education, and The University of Chicago Laboratory School of the Efficiency Movement with the three Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction, literature is reviewed according to the following themes relevant to the questions of this study:

- The History of the Efficiency Movement and the Progressive Era
- The History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School in opposition to the Efficiency Era
- The Current Era of Accountability – and The Response from the advocates of the Arts Community
- Arts Advocacy and Development of The Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education
- Educational Leadership: Reason to Pause

Through a review of the literature, this study demonstrates that there is a gap in the educational research, and therefore, is a worthy topic to investigate.

### **History of the Efficiency Movement and the Progressive Era**

One must understand what ultimately fed Dewey's desire to create a new kind of school. In some ways, he was merely responding in opposition to the work of Frederick Taylor and an era some refer to as Taylorism, which was developed in the 1880s and peaked at some point in the 1910s. This era was sparked by a massive influx of immigrants and a need for the school system to respond to the significant growth of the time. Education was for the first time mandated for everyone, not only the wealthy. As such, a new model was necessary to serve the masses. Eventually, this new requirement brought forth what is now often referred to as the factory model.

Taylor, an American engineer, spent most of his time studying the principles of scientific management. In many ways, these principles can be seen yet today in our schools. The five cornerstones of this management model are as follows:

1. Shift all responsibility for the organization of work from the worker to the manager.
2. Use scientific methods to determine the most efficient way of doing work.
3. Select the best person to perform the job thus designed.
4. Train the worker to do the work efficiently.
5. Monitor the worker performance to ensure that appropriate work procedures are followed and that appropriate results are achieved.

(Krahn, 2011, p. 240)

As Callahan discusses, most in education believed in Taylor's principles in the early 1900s, and documents of the time speak to the reaching influence of this "Cult of Efficiency" on the thinking of educational leaders (1962). It could be argued that it is more than coincidental that standardized tests first appeared around 1910, when Taylor and his educational followers were most vocal. The Efficiency Movement was a major dimension of the Progressive Era in the United States, which flourished until 1930.

Diane Ravitch (2000), in *Left Back*, traces some of the long history of American school reform movements attempting to show how and why they have failed to produce better educational outcomes. According to Ravitch, John Dewey and the attitudes associated with political progressivism, consisted of the ideals listed below:

- That the methods and ends of education could be derived from the innate needs and nature of the child, which served as the basis of the child-centered movement.
- That assessing the needs of society, and then fitting children for their role in society could determine the methods and ends of education, which became the basis of the social efficiency movement.
- That the methods and ends of education could be changed in ways that would reform society. Proponents of this idea expected that the schools could change the social order, either by freeing children's creative spirit or conversely by indoctrinating them for life in a planned society.

### **History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School**

One of the most influential voices of the progressive movement, was philosopher, John Dewey, who in 1894 moved from the University of Michigan to the newly established University of Chicago where he became chair of the department of philosophy, psychology and education. The fact that the progressive movement was so soundly grounded in Chicago contributes to the importance of this study as it pertains to the value and perceived strengths of arts education in the Chicago region today.

Since the beginning of state systems of common public schooling in the 1830s, schools have attempted to achieve cultural uniformity and educate a dutiful citizen. As such, it had not been their mission to achieve a diverse and critical citizenry. At the same time, and perhaps as a consequence, schooling had been under constant pressure to support the ever-expanding industrial economy, establishing a competitive meritocracy while preparing workers for their vocational roles. The term “progressive” arose from a period (roughly 1890-1920) during which many Americans began to be more reflective about the political and social effects of vast concentrations of corporate power and private wealth. Dewey, in particular, saw that with the decline of local community life and small scale enterprise, young people were losing valuable opportunities to learn the art of democratic participation, and he concluded that education would need to make up for this loss (Mangan, 2007). Dewey said that he sought “to discover...how a school could become a cooperative community while developing in individuals their own capacities and developing their own needs” (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel).

In his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, where he worked between



1896 and 1904, Dewey tested his ideas and beliefs about educating the whole child.

Dewey explained the manner in which he hired “a staff and developed teaching methods that borrowed from the work of the Europeans Pestalozzi and Froebel” and the Progressive Movement that promoted efforts to “cultivate the child’s intuition and innate search for truth” (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel). During these years and those to follow, other experimental schools were established around the country, and in 1919, the Progressive Education Association was founded, aiming at “reforming the entire school system of America” (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel).

The history, as defined by the Progressive Movement, demonstrates an attitude of the public and political sectors toward public education. More specifically, it is vital to note that the Progressive Era was defined in the manner by which it followed the Efficiency Movement and what Frederick Taylor called the “Cult of Efficiency.” As a result, it can be easily understood that Dewey’s progressive ideas were not always received with an open mind and accepting attitude. This is clearly evidenced in various communications that Dewey had with then President William Harper of the University of Chicago. In fact, many of the letters exchanged between the two give voice to the strained relationship they developed. On November 24, 1903, when referring to his involvement in decisions about the Laboratory School, Harper tells Dewey that “there are several things concerning which you and I ought to talk at an early date” (Harper, Box 7, Folder 3).

Further evidence of the strained relationship can be picked up even within the tone of more routine communication about the day-to-day operations of the University. In

a letter to Dewey dated January 12, 1904, Harper is upset that “only three out of twenty-one departments have failed to send in their reports, and the School of Education is one of the three” (Harper, Box 7, Folder 5). Perhaps in the most explicit sample of their strained relationship, Harper states on February 10, 1904 “that you propose to make the philosophical work entirely elective...seems to me to be entirely wrong from every point of view” (Harper, Box 7, Folder 6).

Beyond the tension in the relationship that Dewey had with his boss, much like many have today, the economic conditions of the time were not favorable to education. During his tenure at The University of Chicago, and The Laboratory School, Dewey received consistent reminders that his budget was tight and that the Board of Trustees of the University had him on a tight leash. During the formative years, while The Laboratory School was being envisioned, it was not uncommon for Dewey to receive a letter from President Harper that would remind him that “the budget will not be able to contribute anything more next year than for the present year” (Harper, Box 3, Folder 21 – December 23, 1897).

Dewey was suggesting that they build something unique and special, and yet he would routinely get responses from the University that would suggest that he slow down and get in line with the norm. This was especially clear when Harper would comment to Dewey about a hiring decision and say things like, “I presume you think he somewhat old fashioned, but perhaps this would not do us any harm in view of the fact that we have so much of the new fashioned philosophy” (Harper, Box 3, Folder 25 – January 28, 1898).

Regardless of the significant challenges that Dewey faced in getting other, often more influential people, to embrace his ideas for making education more effective, he did

manage to get The Laboratory School up and running in January 1896. The school opened at 5714 Kimbark Avenue with only 12 students, ages six to nine, two teachers, and an instructor who was listed as in charge of manual training.

To really understand why Dewey has become such a prominent figure in education, who left such a profound impact on the thinking and philosophy of American public education, it is first important to have a more thorough understanding of his vision for The Laboratory School. Dewey had become frustrated that people had not taken the time to understand his vision, and in 1899 he wrote “it is sometimes thought that the school started out with a number of ready made principles and ideas which were put into practice at once... The teachers started out with question marks and if any answers have been reached, it is the teachers in the school who have supplied them” (Dewey, 1899, p. 115).

With this in mind, it is equally vital to understand that within the first two years of the school’s existence, Dewey had been able to explicitly articulate the vision and philosophy upon which the school was built. In *The School of Education Prospectus of the University Elementary School 1901-1902*, the general purpose for the school reads:

The work of the University Elementary School is to be based upon the proposition that the formation of character is the one end of education; that character, immediately expressing itself in terms of citizenship, of community life, of society in its best sense – in short, that complete living is the one aim and end of education for American children. (p. 11)

In addition to this general purpose, that prospectus continues on page 14 to clarify that each child is a citizen and “as a member of a cooperative community, in which each

little citizen feels himself to be influential, the child is led to become a student of the best interests of all.”

Perhaps most importantly, ten fundamental propositions are outlined here as well and are stated as follows:

1. The knowledge acquired through an understanding of its immediate value and use in society is incomparably better than that gained by making the knowledge an end in itself.
2. The true ideal of community life brings all the human energies into full play and righteous exercise.
3. That order, harmony, and brotherly love grow from within, and develop under proper environment and inspiration into spiritual life; that these inherent attributes become organized in character as necessities derived from the relationship of the outer demand to the inner needs.
4. That present good is everlasting good. The citizenship of today, if good, becomes better tomorrow.
5. That the duties of citizenship should become life-habits. Thinking, working, and doing for others cultivate those qualities, the lack of which now threatens our existence as a republic.
6. That, if time and toil are to attain the highest possible results, there must be the greatest economy of effort.
7. That the right environment of the child brings the good to him into full activity and allows the bad to die of disuse.

8. That through proper development of self-hood the tendency to selfishness may be banished.
9. That every child, through the use of his knowledge and skill in the help of others, may feel at once and always the highest purpose of life and living.
10. That such an education is absolutely moral in its every step of development. (Box 8, Folder 2 – Pamphlets and Flyers 1901-1944)

To further understand how Dewey put his fundamental propositions into practice this study turns to the Outline of Course of Study, June 1899, which includes the following statements:

The school as a whole is organized in the basis of using as many connections as possible between everyday life and experience, and the more formal work of the school. It is assumed that the processes that educate, the material that instructs, and the mental workings through which knowledge and discipline arise are the same within that they are without the school walls.

There shall be constant growth of insight into the principles which underlie experiences; and that there shall be increasing command of methods of work – of inquiry, discussion, and reflection.

It is the belief that most is learned while there is least conscious attention to the process of learning. (Box 8, Folder 2 – Pamphlets and Flyers 1901-1944)

The idea of The Laboratory Schools was one that contained practical application of skills associated with the learning process. While many may not have agreed with Dewey, and still others believed it to be a costly experiment, much can and should have been learned from the experience.

It is often said that history repeats itself, from which we should learn. The development of and philosophies associated with The Laboratory School are no different. The difficult economic and political reality of the time, along with the need to develop an educational system that could provide for the intense growth and demand for education, bear striking similarities to our world today, more than 100 years later.

#### **Current Era of Accountability – and the Response from the Arts Community**

The historical trend in education and what we learn from Dewey's experience in creating The Laboratory School demonstrates a relationship and rebounding effect in the attitude of the public and political sectors toward public education. The Progressive Era was defined in how it followed The Efficiency Movement and what Frederick Taylor called the "Cult of Efficiency." Today we have an era of high stakes accountability that many believe was sparked in 1983 by *A Nation at Risk*.

There is little debate that the ideology and goals of the Efficiency Movement of 100-years ago, which flourished in the early 1900s in America, bear a striking resemblance to the discourse and debate of today's politics, which directly influence that state of our public school system.

Our current journey toward accountability has been unrelenting. Following the publication of *A Nation at Risk*, political figures ushered in a movement toward the development of standards, which could be easily measured. McNeil (2000) refers to H.

Ross Perot, in his efforts to reform Texas schools:

Incipient in the Perot reforms was the shifting of control over public schooling away from the 'public', and away from the profession, toward business-controlled management accountability systems. These systems use children's test scores on standardized tests to measure the quality of teachers' and principals' performance and even use the aggregate student scores within a school building as evidence for the comparative 'ratings' of schools. (p. xxiv)

Soon thereafter, additional proposals began to surface from politicians. In the 1990's, Goals 2000 (103<sup>rd</sup> Cong., 2000) was a new educational initiative developed during the Bush administration and later adopted by the Clinton administration. Goals 2000 was the next phase of moving to an educational system that focused on the manageable, the predictable, and the measurable pushing us toward the current high-stakes accountability as measured by NCLB.

With this in mind, it becomes incumbent upon us to consider the arguments that have been made, challenging those in education to learn from our past and consider a new model of schooling, especially as it pertains to the perceptions of value and perceived strength of arts education during an age of accountability. Kincheloe (1999) spoke of the need for a cognitive revolution:

Such a reconceptualization will involve an exploration of the ways society-at-large undermines creativity. In this context the effects of bureaucratization and standardization must be examined, and the rules of scientific exploration must be reconceived. We must focus our energies on

the attempt to increase the number of creative people. (p. 12)

Substantial literature is available to support the notion of molding a citizenry that is able to demonstrate creative thought. Authors such as Kincheloe, Eisner, McNeil, and Greene have provided arguments against the creation of a curriculum, which aims to create a common standard for the sake of accountability. Kincheloe (1993) argued:

Devoid of a meaningful justification for the pursuit of learning, teachers and students wander aimlessly within the maze of fragmented information. Classrooms often become spiritless places where rule-following teachers face a group of students who have no conception of any intrinsic value of the lessons being taught. (p. 55)

Eisner (1998) wrote of a paradox within American education exclaiming: “Ironically, at a time when the culture at large is recognizing the uniqueness of us all and cultivating our productive differences, the education reform movement, in its anxiety about quality, wants to rein in our diversity, to reduce local discretion, and to give everybody the same target at which to aim” (p. 180). Ensuring that his position was clear, he added:

When one values individual vision and personal creativity, the specter of all fourth graders marching at the same pace to the same drummer toward the same destination is a vision that better fits the current People’s Republic of China than a nation aspiring to become a genuine democracy. In short, educational practice does not display its highest virtues in uniformity, but in nurturing productive diversity. (p. 68)

Greene, whose ideals could be described as a diverse humanity contributing to an



authentically common world, also represented these voices. Greene believed in the importance of uniqueness and equity in each child's development. Eisner (1994) wrestled with similar beliefs, which are heard in his writings:

When the curriculum of the school defines representational options narrowly – when such options are largely restricted to the use of literal language and number, for example – it creates educational inequities and, moreover, fails to develop the aptitudes that many individual students possess. This in turn exacts a cost from the society at large, since the development of aptitudes is perhaps the major means through which humans contribute to the commonwealth. (p. 86)

So, what is the purpose of public education? Should we be held accountable to merely meeting a predetermined standard for the sake of accountability or should we be keenly aware and responsible for the development of young minds that are able to problem solve and think creatively? In this era of accountability, Horn (2004) challenged educators and citizens alike, asking:

Should public schools be places where special interests can influence our children? Should the purposes of public education be centered on the preparation of children for predetermined economic and cultural roles in society, or should they be centered on the child's personal growth and development as a critical participant in American democracy? (p. 128)

If one could argue that the purpose of education should extend beyond that of meeting a set and uniform standard, then we should be seeking those opportunities, which engage our students in divergent thinking and the cultivation of creativity. Eisner (2002)

continues to suggest that our current era of accountability may have some unanticipated results. In *The Arts and the Creation of Mind*, he questions the current educational philosophy announcing that “I have some reservations” (p. 163) when referring to (NCLB) federal legislation, which ultimately has increased the accountability for schools from beyond states to a national level. He asks:

Why does a nation as diverse as ours need a common curriculum? Is there only one defensible conception of a good curriculum, a good school, or a good teacher? In a nation that boasts that one of its strengths is its diversity, are differences in the way the subjects are conceptualized exempted from that diversity? (p. 163)

Shockingly, if that wasn't sufficient cause for question about the direction and the significance related to the amount of accountability for our public system of education, Villaverde (1999) questions it as well stating: “It is imperative to develop a pedagogy of creativity within an era that almost seems apathetic to the disconnection it generates within the individuals that constitute it” (p. 175).

Can a sufficient argument be made for the value of arts within our educational system? Eisner (1994) stated:

Through music, painting, poetry, and story, we can participate in worlds that would otherwise be closed to us. The meanings secured through poetry, painting, music, and story, through the sciences and mathematics, have their own special content. They perform unique epistemic functions if we are able to ‘read’ their content. (p. 19)

He went on to say:

Clarity of expectation subjected to a common form of examination using standardized criteria meet the accepted canons of rationality and objectivity. My experience in the arts has taught me a different lesson. From the arts I have learned that not only cannot all outcomes be measured, they frequently cannot be predicted. (pp. 68-76)

Curricular decisions are often subjective and based upon local decisions that are reflective of a community. How and why then do some schools embrace the arts as necessary in the unique development of each student while others do not?

Numerous authors have written on the value of maintaining a strong focus on an arts education and have done so extensively. Dewey (1934) argued, in *Art as Experience*, that human understanding finds its foundation and realization only when theory is aligned with the aesthetic. In his writings about learning being that of experience, he further articulated, “no experience of whatever sort is a unity unless it has aesthetic quality” (p. 40). Furthermore, Eisner (1998) proclaimed that “theory without artistry is feckless, and artistry without theory is unformed” (p. 6).

Taking the debate regarding the value and perceived strengths of arts education even one step further, Greene (2001) asserted:

And this is why I believe the arts and occasions for participating in a variety of art forms are so necessary to a fully lived life. And it is why I believe that denial of the arts – through budget cuts or narrow-mindedness or one-dimensionality of vision – represents a violation of children, a deprivation of the young. (p. 151)

Inserting this belief into the development and decision-making process of

curriculum development, one would require that aesthetic considerations serve as a driving value to be at the foundation of decisions. This would be contrary to the often-narrow curriculum that has surfaced in our current era of high standards based accountability.

Greene has also been at the forefront of writing about the need that our society has for a focus on the complexity of the individual and as such, the limitations of standards aimed at creating common educational outcomes. It can be somewhat obvious that standardized testing and accountability of common standards is not the most effective means to foster a sense of individuality in children. Although many have expressed deep concern and question pertaining to the importance and need for aesthetic education, the arts continues to find itself as somewhat of a curricular afterthought in many of our public schools in today's educational climate.

**Arts Advocacy and Development of The Kennedy Center Alliance  
for Arts Education**

I am certain that after the dust of centuries has passed over our cities, we too, will be remembered not for our victories or defeats in battle or in politics, but for our contribution to the human spirit.

— President John F. Kennedy

This research is aimed at generating a more thorough understanding why a handful of very high-achieving schools, that in many ways appear to be beyond current expectations for accountability, place such a strong value on being student centered and focusing on the whole child. In some way, these schools serve as an example of today's progressive schools. An argument can be made that they mirror the values first established at the lab school. Regardless of the era, schools are a vehicle used to translate

a message of what is valued within a community.

There is little debate that one of the most powerful endorsements of the priorities of our nation can be seen in what our government chooses to embrace and support. In 1971, when the Kennedy Center first opened on 17 acres overlooking the Potomac River in Washington, D.C. the message was clear. Amidst generations of increasing accountability and standardization, President Kennedy's vision was to create an arts destination charged with "producing and presenting an unmatched variety of theater and musicals, dance and ballet, orchestral, chamber, jazz, popular, world, and folk music, and multi-media performances for all ages" (The Kennedy Center: Welcome, n.d., para. 1).

Why did the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program begin in 1998? To answer this question, it is necessary to understand the relationship between politics, arts advocacy, and music education. This relationship has been impressively summarized in a timeline of the "Milestones in the History of the Arts Education Partnership," found at [www.aep-arts.org/aboutus/milestones](http://www.aep-arts.org/aboutus/milestones):

- 1988 - The National Endowment for the Arts issues its Congressionally mandated report, *Toward Civilization*, that finds the arts in jeopardy in America's schools and makes a series of recommendations for improving arts teaching and learning.
- 1989 - President George Bush and the nation's governors agree on a set of National Education Goals, but exclude the arts. Advocates unite in a nationwide campaign to have the arts added to the goals.
- 1991 - The National Assessment Governing Board approves inclusion

of the arts in the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

- 1992 - U.S. Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander announces an “America 2000 Arts Education Partnership” to act on the recommendations in *Toward Civilization*. He also encourages the formation of the Arts Education Partnership Working Group, led by the Kennedy Center’s then chairman, James Wolfensohn, and the Getty Trust's then president, Harold Williams. The Group issues the report, *The Power of the Arts to Transform Education*.
- 1994 - The Clinton Administration adds the arts to the core subjects in the National Education Goals as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act passed by Congress and signed by the President. The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations directed by the Music Educators National Conference publishes *The National Arts Education Standards*. *The Arts Education Assessment Framework for the National Assessment of Educational Progress* is published by the National Assessment Governing Board. The *Framework* is the outcome of the National Assessment Consensus Project, coordinated by the Council of Chief State School Officers. Following a conference co-sponsored by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education, the report, *Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future*, is jointly released to stimulate arts education research.
- 1994 - U. S. Secretary of Education Richard Riley and NEA Chairman Jane Alexander convene more than 100 national organizations in a

Goals 2000 Arts Education Planning Process to address three objectives: to affirm the arts as fundamental to quality education and reform, to articulate how the arts can contribute to achieving the National Education Goals, and to identify how individuals and organizations could work together to assure that the arts become a central component of state and local education reform plans.

Participants produce a plan: *The Arts and Education: Partners in Achieving our National Education Goals*. They recommend “the development of an ongoing partnership among the participating organizations.” The U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts agree to support the development of this “Goals 2000 Arts Education Partnership.”

- 1995 - The U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts in June enters into a cooperative agreement with the Council of Chief State School Officers and National Assembly of State Arts Agencies to provide administrative support for the Partnership. The Partnership begins operations and holds its first meeting of participating organizations in October, 1995. National forums on critical issues and trends in education and the arts become a central Partnership activity.
- 1998 - The Partnership conducts a national teleconference, *Arts Literacy for a Changing America* in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education to discuss the findings of the 1997 arts

assessment conducted by the National Assessment of Educational Progress.

- 1999 - The Partnership is renamed the “Arts Education Partnership.”

The Partnership releases the first of its seminal reports and research publications *Gaining the Arts Advantage: Lessons from School Districts that Value Arts Education* at an event in a New York City public school with Hillary Clinton and Jane Pauley. The report offers case studies and profiles of 91 school districts across the country that offer arts education throughout the K-12 levels.

The Partnership releases *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning* that compiles seven major studies that provide evidence of the enhanced learning and achievement when students are involved in a variety of arts experiences.

- 2000 - The Partnership Steering Committee adopts a new strategic plan for 2000-2003. It sets a precedent for future activity as it establishes a series of goals and outcomes, priorities for collective action and guidance as to how partners can play an active role in the Partnership.
- 2002 - The Bush Administration and Congress enact the “No Child Left Behind Act,” and include the arts as a core academic subject. The U.S. Department of Education and the National Endowment for the Arts continue their commitment to the Partnership through a cooperative agreement with the Council of Chief State School Officers



and National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

The Partnership and its partnering organizations publish *No Subject Left Behind*, an analysis of the opportunities to support arts education in NCLB. The guide is updated annually with appropriation figures and featured on AEP's web site.

The Partnership releases *Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development*, a groundbreaking compendium of research, at the National Press Club in Washington, D.C. Many major news outlets featured stories on the research including *USA Today*.

- 2003 - The Partnership releases its Strategic Plan for 2004-06 which identifies priorities for collective action in public support, standards and assessment, pursuing available data, securing federal and state funds, identifying and disseminating research, increasing partnerships, targeting higher education and national education associations, and focusing on promising practices in professional development.
- 2005 - The Partnership releases *Third Space: When Learning Matters*, a book discussing the findings of a three year study of the role of the arts in transforming high poverty schools, described by commentators as “an alternative vision of both the process and result of school reform.”
- 2006 - The Partnership Steering Committee of more than forty organizations develops the AEP Strategic Plan: 2007-2009 and the

AEP Strategic Communications Plan: 2006-2008. The plans adopt assumptions that the arts can play a crucial role in the public concern for a more comprehensive educational experience for all students that prepare them for success and contributions in complex, diverse, and technologically driven global societies and economies.

The Partnership in cooperation with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies releases *Critical Evidence: How the ARTS Benefit Student Achievement*, a summary of its prior research findings, placing them in the context of current policy debates and public attitudes.

The Partnership publishes *From Anecdote to Evidence: Assessing the Status and Condition of Arts Education at the State Level*, based on the principles and practices of five states where data collection has influenced state arts education policy and funding.

Upon reviewing this timeline of political and arts related events, one can better understand that in the decade between 1988 and 1998, arts advocacy and political action were moving at light-speed in response and opposition to moves toward accountability and in an effort to stay ahead of the possibility of a loss of arts education in our schools.

With this in mind, it can be argued that the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program began in 1998 as a response to the publishing of the following five reports:

1. (1988) – *Toward Civilization* - The National Endowment for the Arts
2. (1992) – *The Power of the Arts to Transform Education* - America 2000 Arts Education Partnership

3. (1994) – *The National Arts Education Standards* - The Consortium of National Arts Education Associations
4. (1994) – *Arts Education Research Agenda for the Future* - The National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education
5. (1994) – *The Arts and Education: Partners in Achieving our National Education Goals* - Goals 2000 Arts Education Planning Process

The mission of the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN) is to promote learning in and through the arts for all students and would suggest that the timing of its establishment was no mere coincidence (Recognition Programs, [www.kennedy-center.org](http://www.kennedy-center.org)).

According to their website, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts objectives include supporting policies, practices, programs, and partnerships in an effort to ensure the arts are an essential part of American K-12 education. To guarantee that this occurs, the Kennedy Center has made a commitment to:

- **Build Collaborations:** Develop and support innovative collaborations among schools, community partners, and cultural institutions that sustain arts education.
- **Position the Arts:** Speak out on behalf of arts education to citizens, policy makers, state agencies, and others about the value and benefits of arts education.
- **Generate Resources:** Develop, publish, and/or disseminate resources for arts education leaders and practitioners.
- **Provide Professional Development:** Implement professional

development through educational programs, training, and resources.

- Recognize Innovation and Achievement: Provide awards and acknowledgments to individuals, organizations, and schools that demonstrate outstanding support for arts education. (Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network, n.d., para. 2)

### **Educational Leadership: Reason to Pause**

The study of the perceptions and value of music education in today's era of high accountability in schools should be more than a challenge to reflect upon the qualities that our society may be looking to develop among the citizenry. Instead, it should be about determining how, why, and under what circumstances we make decisions in an attempt to influence others to follow those that have provided evidence of success. This substantiates the need to research the perceptions and values that successful schools leaders have had leading, in opposition to mainstream public school leaders.

The numerous influences thrust upon school leaders are simply too abundant to mention. However, recognizing and acknowledging the complexity of leadership as it manifests itself in the curriculum is something that school leaders must not only be aware of, but need to embrace so that they are adequately able to respond. Leaders should be compelled to know what they value and reflect upon those values as they persuade those around them to make decisions that affect the learning of students.

The first part of this review explored our history and that of school leaders having and continuing to wrestle with external expectations of efficiency, accountability, and standardization. In addition, a case was built recognizing that school leaders must also

continue to fight the tension accompanied by their more innate drive to educate the whole child.

This drive toward the whole child was explored in the second section of this review in studying both the history and influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School in Chicago. Dewey's focus on developing all students to be independent thinkers had significant influence historically, which still echoes today in the call for school leaders to develop a citizenry that mirrors our diverse nation. This national call will require that schools reconsider our efforts to guide students toward character, citizenship, and community life while at the same time helping them experience a journey toward inquiry, discussion, and reflection.

The third section of this review focused much more closely on the current day climate of accountability and the manner in which arts education has suffered in our public schools even though arts education has been shown to develop these very skills. Compelling persuasions made by authors such as Kincheloe, Eisner, McNeil, and Greene, as well as organizations like MENC and Americans for the Arts, provide support for and arguments that warrant reflection against the creation of a curriculum, which aims to create a common standard for the sake of accountability.

The review of literature on the history of The Efficiency Movement and The Progressive Era, the history and influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School, our current era of accountability and the response from the music community, as well as the vision of the Arts Awards Consortium, all point to a need to develop students that are imaginative, creative, and able to problem solve. At this time, the literature on school leadership displays limited evidence of leadership beliefs and values necessary to

cultivate and maintain a value for arts education, sustaining the need for this research project.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### **Restatement of Purpose**

This researcher chose to study the perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education during the current age of accountability, because like so many school administrators, this researcher is conflicted by the perceived or real pressure of ensuring that we prepare students for high stakes assessments and thusly afford the United States a global degree of competitiveness as defined by what is measurable. To develop a deeper rationale for opposing pressure to conform, it has become clear that it becomes necessary to probe the thoughts, ideas, values, beliefs, attitudes, and experiences of those in public education who have continued to embrace arts education during times when doing so may not have been popular.

The primary purpose of this study was to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. This was accomplished through the study and analysis of historical documents of The University of Chicago Laboratory School of The Progressive Era supported by an oral history of three exceptional schools identified since 2007 by The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction. By comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this study reveals cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how to lead a school.

Clarity was sought to understand how arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. The intent was to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

In the first two chapters, an overview of research comparing and contrasting the efficiency movement of more than 100 years ago to the accountability era of today was provided. This chapter, presents the manner in which this study was conducted using a historical documentary methodology, supplemented with oral history, of The University of Chicago Laboratory School, as well as three nationally recognized suburban Chicago high schools of today. This was done while drawing particular attention to political and social characteristics. To further understand how public education in America arrived at today's era of accountability, the previous chapter also provided a chronology of educationally related legislation, which develop a basis for inquiry as to why some schools have been able to resist pressure to reduce offerings in arts education.

The following chapter details the procedures used to accomplish the purpose of this study. Sections of this chapter include: (1) Restatement of Purpose, (2) Research Questions, (3) Research Design, (4) Selection of the Sample, (5) Procedures for Data Collection, (6) Data Analysis, (7) Researcher Bias, (8) Validity and Limitations, (9) Risks and Benefits, and (11) Summary.



### **Research Questions**

This study sought answers to the following specific research questions:

- 1A. What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era, and specifically, The University of Chicago Laboratory School?
- 1B. What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?
- 1C. How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?
2. What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?
- 3A. According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?
- 3B. How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?
4. What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?

### **Research Design**

Historical documentary with supplemental oral history was selected and deemed necessary for this study due to the nature of the questions to be answered and the difficulty associated with defining value and what some believe to be a preferred citizen within a designated time period. While historical documentary research may vary in

complexity, it provides for an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of a noted phenomenon. Through comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher revealed cyclical behaviors that should guide future decisions about how to lead a school.

Historical documentary research was an essential component of this study in order to understand and articulate the similarities and differences between the efficiency movement of more than 100 years ago to the accountability era of today. In his book, *Documentary Research: In Education, History and the Social Sciences*, Gary McCulloch (2004) argues that it is necessary to obtain, read, and analyze an array of documents that when compiled, provide insight and explanation. He further contends that documents provide potent evidence of continuity and change in ideals and practice.

McCulloch (2004) says, “to understand documents is to read between the lines of our material world” (p. 1). The past can be a powerful tool to learn about the present and the future; historical research can help people learn from previous success and failure. Therefore, it is vital “...to discover how and why the document was produced and how it was received. Documents are social and historical constructs, and to examine them without considering this simply misses the point” (p. 6). Using a historical context of The University of Chicago Laboratory School against interviews with advocates for arts education in three nationally recognized suburban Chicago high schools of today, this researcher is able to better understand the beliefs and perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

This historical documentary research study involved both a review of historical documents, as well as supplemental oral history gathered from multiple interviews. It is descriptive in that it focused specifically on the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education within the Chicagoland area. It is historical in that the research focused on two distinct time periods. Each time period concentrated on schools that operated in opposition to the norms of the time. During The Efficiency Movement of more than 100 years ago, The University of Chicago Laboratory School is studied. Three Chicagoland recipients of The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction are studied relating to the current era of accountability. This dichotomy is used to further understand the nature by which we can learn from our past.

A fundamental element of historical documentary research is acknowledging the distinction between primary and secondary sources. Arthur Marwick's influential work titled *The Nature of History* (1970), which includes definitions for both primary and secondary sources, reappears in McCulloch's (2004) work. Marwick (1970) maintains that primary sources constitute "the basic, raw, imperfect evidence and are often difficult to use" (p. 30). Furthermore, these documents and physical objects are those that were written or created during the timeframe being studied, meaning that they were present and available during a specific time period, offering a detailed view of a particular event or situation. Secondary sources are the articles and books of other historians (p. 30). Historians studying the earlier period produce these documents at a later time.

Oral history was collected through in-depth recorded interviews and served as the principal tool for uncovering and illuminating the arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education that the school leader participants used to support

curricular decisions. The interviews allowed this researcher to understand individual values and beliefs, to probe and clarify, to deepen understanding, to generate descriptive data, to gather insights into the participant's thinking, and to learn more about the context surrounding decision-making. The context of the interview calls for the researcher to play a neutral role. The interviewer needed to locate suitable and knowledgeable participants, build rapport with them, and avoid expressing any opinions (Rossman & Rallis, 2003). Furthermore, the intent was to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation. To that end, the oral history plays a pivotal role within the overall methodology of this study.

### **Selection of the Sample**

Each year, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards Program recognizes schools that have done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. This study focuses on only public high schools in Illinois. This limitation was set to take full advantage of the ability to compare and contrast perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that may assist in developing a citizen who exhibits imagination, creativity, curiosity, and evaluation with The University of Chicago Laboratory School, which was also located in Chicago.

The following three public Illinois high schools have been recognized as Kennedy Schools of Distinction and therefore have been selected for this study:

- School "A" / 2009 – 2010

- School “B” / 2008 – 2009
- School “C” / 2007 – 2008

### **Procedures for Data Collection**

The oral history collected at each school site involved interviews with four leaders that served as a voice of advocacy and support for arts education. The participant sample from School “A”, School “B”, and School “C” included selection from key administrative groups such as curriculum specialists, department chairs, principals, superintendents, and board members. The researcher conducted an interview with those advocates that held a position of decision-making at the school for a minimum of three years prior to receipt of the award. Each interview was conducted at the school where the participant is employed or a convenient and agreed upon location.

Each school identified by the Kennedy Center enjoys a reputation as a school that has done an outstanding job of making the arts essential to the education of their students. Therefore, the leaders who were instrumental in ensuring this took place are looked to by other advocates for arts educators as leaders and experts within the profession.

Semi-structured interviews provided the primary source of data collection for this study. Irving Seidman (2006) asserts that, “If the researcher’s goal...is to understand the meaning people involved in education make of their experience, then interviewing provides a necessary, if not always completely sufficient, avenue of inquiry” (p. 11).

Interviewees were asked to supply information as to the arguments that were made for the value and strength of arts education. They were also asked to articulate the effect that embracing arts education has had on their school during the current era of accountability, as well as the beliefs that have driven their behavior and action as it

pertains to sustaining and expanding their arts program. The researcher interviewed each participant individually, following the interview protocol found in Appendix B.

In utilizing a semi-structured oral history interview design, the “major task is to build upon and explore [the] participant’s responses to [these] questions. The goal is to have the participant reconstruct...his experience within the topic under study” (Seidman, 2006, p. 15). Beginning with more open-ended questions, this researcher was able to ask more individualized follow-up questions of each participant in this study. This process allowed for the researcher and participant to develop a more cohesive and complex understanding of the topic.

In securing participants from each of the awarded schools, there were two instruments that served as consent mechanisms, the first was a “Letter of Cooperation” (see Appendix A). The “Letter of Cooperation” outlined the purpose of the research, invited the recipient to participate in the research, and served the purpose of gaining access to the leaders and arts advocates by the researcher. Recipients who agreed to participate in the research signed and submitted the “Letter of Cooperation” on their individual letterhead, or that of their school, prior to the scheduling of the actual interview.

Upon securing cooperative access, the researcher secured permission from each participant to audio record the interview session in the documentation of “Consent to Participate in Research” letter (see Appendix D). The “Consent to Participate in Research” letter was signed prior to the interview and again was presented to each participant upon meeting for the interview. Audio recording each interview ensured that each participant’s responses to questions was accurately reflected in the final data

transcript.

To strengthen credibility, member checking was employed with each participant. Consistent with Lincoln and Guba (1985), member checking was a critical technique for establishing credibility. This involved the researcher sharing the interview transcription with each participant requesting their input as to any corrections or additional clarification prior to data being analyzed (Creswell, 1998; Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Merriam 1998). The following steps were employed to ensure accurate member checks:

- Transcript manuscripts were e-mailed to each participant for their review.
- A hard copy of the transcript manuscript was sent to each participant's home or office via the U.S. mail. This hard copy included the "Acknowledgement of Transcription" letter (see Appendix E).
- Each participant was asked to read the transcription, determine its accuracy and return it within a two-week stipulated due date. All participants were informed of the researcher's availability to answer questions and make any corrections.
- As indicated in the "Acknowledgement of Transcription" letters, any participant not responding within the two-week stipulated due date were assumed to be accurate and approved.

These member checks allowed the researcher and participants to continue to dialogue and to clarify the intent of each of their responses to the interview questions. This also afforded the researcher the opportunity to take the data collected and to catch "tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible" (Merriam, 1998, p. 204).

### **Data Analysis**

Upon completion of gathering the oral history interviews, responses were transcribed verbatim and coded. Based on the questions and responses from the interviews, the researcher determined a method for pattern coding and information sorting to target salient categories and emergent themes. Such categories and themes included those related to school leader experience, background of the school, the school as place that values arts education, decision-making, personal experiences with tension associated with accountability, and future implications.

Particular attention was paid to whether or not any themes arose between the schools. Patterns were sought regarding whether or not there were similarities amongst leaders' attitudes and beliefs, as well as the schools themselves, given that they had all reached a set pinnacle of success in regard to the level of quality of their arts education program. Comparing and contrasting the oral histories of the Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction was done with The University of Chicago Laboratory School to further tell a story of how maintaining a focus on an education that embraces independent thinking, creative beings, and a desire to develop students to be expressive about their feelings, was either more or less successful on measures of education which are so carefully monitored during the eras of efficiency and accountability. Through comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher was able to reveal cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how to lead a school.



### **Researcher Bias**

With regard to bias, Rossman and Rallis (2003) argue that no researcher can be completely disinterested. Therefore, researchers must be aware of their own biases, as well as their beliefs and values, which they bring to the research. In contrast, Rossman and Rallis claim that as long as researchers are clear about their theoretical and methodological orientation, as well as make their purposes explicit, issues of reliability and validity are served.

Given the manner in which the researcher becomes immersed in data collection while conducting research, the importance of addressing researcher bias is evident. Therefore, it becomes essential to explain some of this researcher's experiences and the manner in which they might affect this study.

This researcher has spent four years as a public school band director. Since then, 14 years have been spent in school administration in positions spanning the scope of department chair, associate principal, and principal. Currently, this researcher is the principal at Lakes Community High School in Lake Villa, Illinois.

This researcher is the former Director of Fine Arts Division at one of the sample schools and was serving in this capacity when the school received recognition as a Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as School of Distinction. While this researcher is four years removed from employment with the district, it is possible that while gathering oral history, that this former relationship may become evident.

The professional experiences of previously working as a band director and an administrator in a variety of educational settings influence this researcher. Of equal value are the researcher's personal questions relative to best practice in educational

administration related to the political landscape and influence, which seem to affect curricular decisions at the local level. These frustrations drive this researcher's desire to understand the reasons behind decisions and choices made at the local level.

An assumption the researcher is making is that schools that maintain a focus on arts education and that have achieved national recognition might be better able to meet the needs of all students, and therefore, are credible subjects for this study.

In order to control for biases, this researcher journaled reactions throughout this study, especially when gathering oral history. In order to obtain non-biased data, journaling allowed an avenue for feelings and reactions to be addressed, rather than interfering with the gathering and interpretation of data.

### **Validity and Limitations**

Merriam (1998) outlines "six basic strategies to enhance internal validity" (p. 204) in studies. Quoted directly from Merriam, the six strategies are:

1. *Triangulation*: using multiple investigators, multiple sources of data, or multiple methods to confirm the emerging findings.
2. *Member checks*: taking data and tentative interpretations back to the people from whom they were derived and asking them if the results are plausible.
3. *Long-term observation*: at the research site or repeated observations of the same phenomenon – gathering data over a period of time in order to increase the validity of these findings.
4. *Peer examination*: asking colleagues to comment on the findings as they emerge.

5. *Participatory or collaborative models of research*: involving participants in all phases of research from conceptualizing the study to writing up the findings.
6. *Researcher's biases*: clarifying the researcher's assumptions, worldview, and theoretical orientation at the outset of the study. (pp. 204-205)

In this study, the researcher triangulated the data through comparing and contrasting values from the progressive and accountability eras. This included a review of historical documentation of The University of Chicago Laboratory School of The Progressive Era alongside supplemental oral history of three exceptional schools, with interviews of individual leaders, identified since 2007 by The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction.

Member checks were conducted by asking each research participant to review the written transcripts from the audiotaped interview. To satisfy the review of the transcript, each participant was asked to provide comments that aided in clarification from the interview. Participants were also asked to initial and date the "Letter of Acknowledgement" and return it to the researcher in a self-addressed, stamped envelope provided by the researcher for this purpose.

Limitations to this study included lack of access to, and unknown historical documentation of The Laboratory School, limited access to leaders in the sample schools from the time that the school received their national recognition by the Kennedy Center, and the limited scope to only three schools based in the Chicago area. Therefore, long-

term observation was not a strategy employed by this researcher in the course of this study.

The researcher had the good fortune to have a dissertation committee to work with. This committee provided constructive feedback on the research design prior to beginning the study. Though this researcher did not classify himself as a “peer” to the scholars who had so graciously agreed to fulfill this task, it is suggested that the dissertation committee falls under the guise of “peer examination.”

The limitations of this study were many. The participant sample was small due to the criteria required for recognition by The Kennedy Center. Hence, the sample of schools was limited to only three. In addition, access to certain records of The Laboratory School was limited. As a historical documentary study, the researcher recognizes the results of this inquiry are limited in both scope and geography and may not be generalizable in other school districts in other communities or states.

Finally, the researcher himself, as a practicing public school administrator, is a limitation because he is the primary instrument through whom data was collected, analyzed, and reported. The researcher is cognizant that his personal experiences influenced the interpretation of the data he collected from the research participants. As previously mentioned researcher bias was recorded in a journal and shared regularly with the dissertation director.

### **Risks and Benefits**

During the course of each oral history interview, participants were asked to speak to their own personal experiences relative to decision-making and the value of arts education. While this topic had the potential of evoking unpleasant memories or thoughts,

it is unlikely to be that which exceeds those experienced in every day life. Participants may have recalled times where they had been challenged as a leader within their own buildings by colleagues or superiors, or by loved ones or community members.

While there are no direct benefits to participating in this study, this researcher hopes that the benefits to both the participant and to those in educational leadership are abundant. It is this researcher's hope that by participating and sharing personal stories, each participant's contributions will provide practicing and emerging school leaders a more clear understanding of perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education, especially during an age of accountability as they pertain to the conditions and qualities that shape our citizenry.

The potential benefit identified in the study is unlimited and far outweigh any possible risk. The benefits of this research will contribute to the educational leadership arena and to the field of education.

### **Summary**

This chapter outlined the methodology used to answer the primary research questions of this study. Included in this chapter were the following details:

1. Restatement of Purpose
2. Research Questions
3. Research Design
4. Selection of the Sample
5. Procedures for Data Collection
6. Data Analysis
7. Researcher Bias

## 8. Validity and Limitations

## 9. Risks and Benefits

The research study included an extensive review of documents from The University of Chicago Laboratory School, as well as oral history derived from semi-structured interviews with leaders, and arts advocates from select suburban Chicago public high schools.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA: THE ORAL HISTORY

#### **Introduction**

The primary purpose of this study is to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. This was accomplished through the study and analysis of historical documents of the well-known University of Chicago Laboratory School of The Progressive Era supported by an oral history of three exceptional schools identified since 2007 by the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction. By comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher was able to reveal cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how to lead a school in creating a well-rounded preferred citizen.

Clarity was sought to understand how arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. The intent is to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

In this chapter, data are presented in two parts. Part I consists of The University of Chicago Laboratory School of the Progressive Era, the History and Influence of The

University of Chicago Laboratory School, and finally a section titled Today Looking Back – A Voice from Within. Part II highlights The Kennedy Schools of Distinction, including sample selection, methodology, and the data collected from the extensive oral histories.

Since the beginning of this study in the spring of 2011, it is worth noting that the accountability movement in education has continued to be on the forefront of educational initiatives at both the state and federal level. In this short time alone, the state of Illinois has applied for and is awaiting a waiver application from the Federal No Child Left Behind Act. As part of this application, Illinois has seen three monumental shifts in education. These include a move toward a new teacher and administrator evaluation system known as the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA). Also new is a move toward a different assessment system by which students, teachers, and administrators alike will be measured. The Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) presents schools with uncertainty about how to best prepare students in a fashion that will be a quality learning experience for the student, as well as bode well for the reputation of the school. The third shift is that to the Common Core, which according to the website [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org) has as its purpose to:

Provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.

The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in



the global economy. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., para.

1)

These initiatives may be pushing teachers and administrators to new levels of standardization and accountability at a time when society continues to face increased levels of social emotional challenges with our youth. As the data of this chapter is revealed these changes must be kept in mind.

### **Research Design**

Historical documentary with supplemental oral history was selected and deemed necessary for this study due to the nature of the questions to be answered and the difficulty associated with defining value and what some believe to be a preferred citizen within a designated time period. While historical documentary research may vary in complexity, it provides for an opportunity to gain a deep understanding of a noted phenomenon. Through comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher revealed cyclical behaviors that should guide future decisions about how to lead a school.

### **Research Questions**

This study seeks to answer the following specific research questions:

- 1A. What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era, and specifically, The University of Chicago Laboratory School?
- 1B. What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?

- 1C. How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?
1. What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?
  - 3A. According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?
  - 3B. How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?
  4. What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?

### **Part I – The University of Chicago Laboratory School**

#### **The Progressive Era**

One must understand what ultimately fed Dewey's desire to create a new kind of school. In some ways he was merely responding in opposition to the work of Frederick Taylor and an era some refer to as Taylorism, which was developed in the 1880s, peaking at some point in the 1910s. This era was sparked by a massive influx of immigrants and a need for the school system to respond to the significant growth of the time. Education was, for the first time, mandated for everyone, not only the wealthy. As such, a new model was necessary to serve the masses. Eventually, this new requirement brought forth what is now often referred to in education as the factory model.

As Callahan discusses, most in education believed in Taylor's principles in the early 1900s, and documents of the time speak to the reaching influence of this "Cult of Efficiency" on the thinking of educational leaders (1962). It could be argued that it is

more than coincidental that standardized tests first appeared around 1910, when Taylor and his educational followers were most vocal. The Efficiency Movement was a major dimension of The Progressive Era in the United States, which flourished until 1930.

### **History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School**

One of the most influential voices of The Progressive Movement was philosopher, John Dewey, who in 1894 moved from the University of Michigan to the newly established University of Chicago where he became chair of the department of philosophy, psychology and education. The fact that The Progressive Movement was so soundly grounded in Chicago contributes to the importance of this study as it pertains to the value and perceived strengths of arts education in the Chicago region today.

Since the beginning of state systems of common public schooling in the 1830s, schools have attempted to achieve cultural uniformity and educate a dutiful citizen. As such, it had not been their mission to achieve a diverse and critical citizenry. At the same time and perhaps as a consequence, schooling had been under constant pressure to support the ever-expanding industrial economy, establishing a competitive meritocracy while preparing workers for their vocational roles. The term “progressive” arose from a period (roughly 1890-1920) during which many Americans began to be more reflective about the political and social effects of vast concentrations of corporate power and private wealth. Dewey, in particular, saw that with the decline of local community life and small scale enterprise, young people were losing valuable opportunities to learn the art of democratic participation, and he concluded that education would need to make up for this loss (Mangan, 2007). Dewey said that he sought “to discover...how a school could become a cooperative community while developing in individuals their own

capacities and developing their own needs” (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel).

In his Laboratory School at the University of Chicago, where he worked between 1896 and 1904, Dewey tested his ideas and beliefs about educating the whole child. Dewey explained the manner in which he hired “a staff and developed teaching methods that borrowed from the work of the Europeans Pestalozzi and Froebel” and the progressive movement that promoted efforts to “cultivate the child’s intuition and innate search for truth” (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel). During these years and those to follow, other experimental schools were established around the country, and in 1919, the Progressive Education Association was founded, aiming at "reforming the entire school system of America" (University of Chicago, Education for Life, Case II Text Panel).

The history, as defined by The Progressive Movement, demonstrates an attitude of the public and political sectors toward public education. More specifically, it is vital to note that The Progressive Era was defined in the manner by which it followed The Efficiency Movement and what Frederick Taylor called the “Cult of Efficiency.” As a result, it can be understood that Dewey’s progressive ideas were not always received with an open mind and accepting attitude. This is clearly evidenced in various communications that Dewey had with then President William Harper of The University of Chicago. In fact, many of the letters exchanged between the two give voice to the strained relationship they developed. On November 24, 1903, when referring to his involvement in decisions about The Laboratory School, Harper tells Dewey that “there are several things concerning which you and I ought to talk at an early date” (Harper,

Box 7, Folder 3).

Further evidence of the strained relationship can be picked up even within the tone of more routine communication about the day-to-day operations of the University. In a letter to Dewey dated January 12, 1904, Harper is upset that “only three out of twenty-one departments have failed to send in their reports, and the School of Education is one of the three” (Harper, Box 7, Folder 5). Perhaps in the most explicit sample of their strained relationship, Harper states on February 10, 1904 “that you propose to make the philosophical work entirely elective...seems to me to be entirely wrong from every point of view” (Harper, Box 7, Folder 6).

Beyond the tension in the relationship that Dewey had with his boss, much like many have today, the economic conditions of the time were not favorable to education. During his tenure at The University of Chicago, and The Laboratory School, Dewey received consistent reminders that his budget was tight and that the Board of Trustees of the University had him on a tight leash. During the formative years while the Laboratory School was being envisioned, it was not uncommon for Dewey to receive a letter from President Harper that would remind him that “the budget will not be able to contribute anything more next year than for the present year” (Harper, Box 3, Folder 21 – December 23, 1897).

Dewey was suggesting that they build something unique and special, and yet he would routinely get responses from the University that would suggest that he slow down and get in line with the norm. This was especially clear when Harper would comment to Dewey about a hiring decision and say things like, “I presume you think he somewhat old fashioned, but perhaps this would not do us any harm in view of the fact that we have so

much of the new fashioned philosophy” (Harper, Box 3, Folder 25 – January 28, 1898).

Regardless of the significant challenges that Dewey faced in getting other, often more influential people, to embrace his ideas for making education more effective, he did manage to get The Laboratory school up and running in January 1896. The school opened at 5714 Kimbark Avenue with only 12 students ages six to nine, two teachers, and an instructor who was listed as in charge of manual training.

To really understand why Dewey has become such a prominent figure in education, leaving such a profound impact on the thinking and philosophy of American public education, it is first important to have a more thorough understanding of his vision for The Laboratory school. Dewey had become frustrated that people had not taken the time to understand his vision, and in 1899 he wrote:

It is sometimes thought that the school started out with a number of ready made principles and ideas which were put into practice at once... The teachers started out with question marks and if any answers have been reached, it is the teachers in the school who have supplied them. (p. 115)

With this in mind, it is equally vital to understand that within the first two years of the school’s existence, Dewey had been able to explicitly articulate the vision and philosophy upon which the school was built. In *The School of Education Prospectus of the University Elementary School 1901-1902*, the general purpose for the school reads:

The work of The University Elementary School is to be based upon the proposition that the formation of character is the one end of education; that character, immediately expressing itself in terms of citizenship, of

community life, of society in its best sense – in short, that complete living is the one aim and end of education for American children. (p. 11)

In addition to this general purpose, that prospectus continues to clarify that each child is a citizen and “as a member of a cooperative community, in which each little citizen feels himself to be influential, the child is led to become a student of the best interests of all” (p. 14).

Perhaps most importantly, ten fundamental propositions are outlined here as well and are stated as follows:

1. The knowledge acquired through an understanding of its immediate value and use in society is incomparably better than that gained by making the knowledge an end in itself.
2. The true ideal of community life brings all the human energies into full play and righteous exercise.
3. That order, harmony, and brotherly love grow from within, and develop under proper environment and inspiration into spiritual life; that these inherent attributes become organized in character as necessities derived from the relationship of the outer demand to the inner needs.
4. That present good is everlasting good. The citizenship of today, if good, becomes better tomorrow.
5. That the duties of citizenship should become life-habits. Thinking, working, and doing for others cultivate those qualities, the lack of which now threatens our existence as a republic.

6. That, if time and toil are to attain the highest possible results, there must be the greatest economy of effort.
7. That the right environment of the child brings the good to him into full activity and allows the bad to die of disuse.
8. That through proper development of self-hood the tendency to selfishness may be banished.
9. That every child, through the use of his knowledge and skill in the help of others, may feel at once and always the highest purpose of life and living.
10. That such an education is absolutely moral in its every step of development. (Box 8, Folder 2 – Pamphlets and Flyers 1901-1944)

To further understand how Dewey put his fundamental propositions into practice this researcher turned to the Outline of Course of Study, June 1899, which included the following statements:

The school as a whole is organized in the basis of using as many connections as possible between everyday life and experience, and the more formal work of the school. It is assumed that the processes that educate, the material that instructs, and the mental workings through which knowledge and discipline arise are the same within that they are without the school walls.

There shall be constant growth of insight into the principles which underlie experiences; and that there shall be increasing command of methods of work – of inquiry, discussion, and reflection.



It is the belief that most is learned while there is least conscious attention to the process of learning. (Box 8, Folder 2 – Pamphlets and Flyers 1901-1944)

The idea of The Laboratory School was one that contained practical application of skills associated with the learning process. While many may not have agreed with Dewey and still others believed it to be a costly experiment, much can and should have been learned from the experience.

It is often said that history repeats itself, from which we should learn. The development of and philosophies associated with The Laboratory School are no different. The difficult economic and political reality of the time, along with the need to develop an educational system that could provide for the intense growth and demand for education, bear striking similarities to our world today, more than 100 years later.

### **Today Looking Back - A Voice from Within**

While Dewey's dreams of creating a different kind of school seem admirable today, one must also ask whether or not his approach has had any lasting momentum, changing the learning experience of the students that call this school their alma mater. Catherine Bell summarizes this legacy in her 2007 dissertation, *Teaching in the Spirit of John Dewey*:

I arrived there in 1986; eighty-two years after Dewey had departed. His presence is still, however, felt. During any given year, visitors want to know, "Is this school still Deweyan?" From time-to time, many of us who work there worry about this. It is as if Dewey, himself, were looking down upon us, judging what we are doing with *his* school. Someone will

inevitably ask, “What would Dewey say about this?” (p. 2)

Dr. Bell continues her reflective journey, posing questions about Deweyan principles and how one goes about understanding and putting them into practice.

What are Deweyan educational principles? The question is not easy to answer because Dewey himself never wrote a concise statement of them. A teacher has to cull principles from the vast body of Dewey’s writings. From time-to-time, listing them proves useful, helping to foreground suggestions. When these ideas work their way into my consciousness, at the right moment, they help me think. When I reflect, they can also shape my thinking. Each time I make a list, however, the principles change, varying in number, scope and emphasis. Here are five:

1. Shape circumstances to prompt and sustain systematic reflection, so that students learn to perceive the internal relation between means and ends, doing and undergoing.
2. Connect academic subject matter to everyday life so that students appreciate the intrinsic value of applying thought to bringing out the best in immediate experience.
3. Encourage students to learn actively for themselves, shaping their own purposes, devising their own experiments and drawing their own conclusions.
4. Create a community of learners. Through meaningful social interaction, students can increase the breadth and depth of their capacities, interests and knowledge as well as their sensitivity and

responsiveness. This includes expressing themselves clearly and listening carefully.

5. Give students opportunities to contribute to the common good and in doing so, develop their own unique capacities.

These are not laws. They are merely suggestions. Applying them, involves making judgments—weighing their relevance to the specific context and particulars of the situation. (p. 114)

Of these principles, some of the philosophical underpinnings are more easily understood and reinforced in Dewey's own words from long after the inception of The Laboratory School. Dewey understood that the pervasive model of educating children was to ask them to accept others' conclusions instead of thinking for themselves. In *Democracy and Education*, Dewey (1916) is clear about how critical it is for students to do their own thinking. He writes:

Unless one does it for one's self, it isn't thinking. Only by a pupil's own observations, reflections, framing and testing of suggestions can what he already knows be amplified and rectified. Thinking is as much an individual matter as is the digestion of food. (p. 353)

Later in his career, Dewey became even more articulate about his feelings toward the importance of education and how to use the arts to improve the everyday experience. He wrote about the need to learn how to have an experience. In his essay *Philosophy of the Arts*, Dewey (1938) addresses the enlivening effects of living artfully and describes the role the arts can play in making “our experiences as complete, as full, as total in their vitality as we can” (p. 364).

When speaking of a common good created by a community of learners, Dewey also argues, “You cannot define individuality physically or externally. It is a matter of spirit, of soul, of mind, and the way in which one enters into cooperative relations with others” (p. 179). Dewey (1925) even laments over tension he felt against his beliefs and tradition. He said: “Perhaps the words soul and spirit are so heavily laden with traditional mythology and sophisticated doctrine that they must be surrendered; it may be impossible to recover for them in science and philosophy the realities designated in idiomatic speech” (p. 224). This was an ongoing struggle much like we still have today. Troubled by the dissonance between standardization, science, and soul, Dewey went on to define spirit as the moving part of the soul.

When the organization called soul is free, moving and operative, initial as well as terminal, it is spirit. Spirit quickens; it is not only alive, but spirit gives life. Animals are spirited, but man is a living spirit. He lives in his works and his works do follow him. Soul is form, spirit informs. It is the moving function of that of which soul is the substance. (p. 145)

In *Individualism Old and New*, Dewey (1930) describes American soul as external, impersonal, and superficial, the result of an emphasis on speed and standardization. He writes, “it has no ultimate inner unity and uniqueness—no true personality” (p. 52).

Documents available from The University of Chicago Laboratory School, from both when he was imaging a different kind of school as well as his later writings, were studied to better understand the beliefs that lead Dewey to desire changes to education.

His philosophical and educational beliefs and values were described, explained, and triangulate with a synthesis of his work.

## **Part II – Kennedy Schools of Distinction**

### **Selection of the Sample**

The following three public Illinois high schools have been recognized as Kennedy Schools of Distinction and therefore have been selected for this study:

- School “A” / 2009 – 2010
- School “C” / 2008 – 2009
- School “B” / 2007 – 2008

An oral history was collected at each school site involving interviews with four leaders (for a total of 12) that served as a voice of advocacy and support for arts education. The participant sample from School “A”, School “B”, and School “C” included selection from key administrative groups such as curriculum specialists, department chairs, principals, superintendents, and board members. The researcher conducted an interview with advocates that held a position of decision-making at the school for a minimum of three years prior to receipt of the award.

Table 2 includes a description of each participant from the sample schools, as well as a brief description of each school, the year in which the School of Distinction honor was earned, their per pupil instructional expenditure, and the number of courses they offer in the arts.

Table 2

*Research Procedures for Schools of Distinction*

School A	School B	School C
Northwest suburban HS district serving 4,100 students	Northern suburban HS district serving 4,815 students	Western suburban unit district serving 28,758 students
Teacher Leader-Orchestra	Teacher Leader-Art	Teacher Leader-Band
Superintendent	Teacher Leader-Theatre	Department Chair
Board Member	Teacher Leader-Orchestra	Assistant Principal
Department Chair	Principal	Principal
2009-2010	2007-2008	2008-2009
\$10,392	\$12,667	\$6,496
57 Arts Offerings	44 Arts Offerings	44 Arts Offerings

**School “A”.** School District A is a large single-school district in a northwest suburb of Chicago. The district serves 4,118 students. The demographics are 70.1% White, 1.7% Black, 7.0% Hispanic, 18.4% Asian, and 2.6% Multi-Racial. The low-income population is 4.3%. The instructional expenditure for each student is \$10,392 per year, while the operational expenditure per pupil is approximately \$16,871. Teachers in this district average 12.9 years of experience and have an average salary of approximately \$99,321. Data were obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

Students in this 9-12 district score well above the state average of 52.33% on all subjects of the Prairie State Achievement Exam. The average meets and exceeds scores from 2007 to 2012 is 85.67%. Data was obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

According to the school's 2013-2014 course guide, they offer 57 different courses in the arts. These offerings include 24 in the visual arts, 8 in theatre, 7 in dance, and 18 in music.

The following information about the participants from each school was determined through questions one, two, and three.

*Question 1: How many years and in what capacity have you been at the school?*

*Question 2: Describe your educational background.*

*Question 3: Describe your work history.*

Participants from School "A" are described below:

#1A - Participant #1A (Teacher Leader – Orchestra) is a recently retired orchestra director who taught at this school for 15 years. He was hired with explicit direction to build the orchestra and guitar programs at the school. This participant holds a diploma from Interlochen Arts Academy, a bachelor's degree in music education from University of Michigan, and a master's degree in music education from Northern Illinois University.

#2A – Participant #2A (Superintendent) has served this district for 20 years in the roles of teacher, curriculum director, assistant superintendent, and superintendent. This participant holds undergraduate degrees in political science and sociology, graduate degrees in education and curriculum, and a doctorate in administration and supervision from Loyola University Chicago.

#3A – Participant #3A (Board Member) is a serving member of the board of education, a position that she has held since 1985. During this time, her children have attended the school. This participant holds a bachelor's degree in American history from the University of Minnesota, and a master's degree from Loyola University in urban

studies. This participant has worked for the Girl Scouts of America, as a small business owner, and as a computer programmer and systems analyst manager.

#4A – Participant #4A (Department Chair) is a recently retired band director. He has served as the head band director for this school for the past 24 years and has also worked as a department leader for most of this time. This participant holds bachelor's degrees from Western Michigan University in both music performance and music education. In addition, this participant holds a master's degree in music education from Vandercook College of Music.

**School "B".** School District B is a large district in a northern suburb of Chicago. The district serves 4,815 students. The demographics are 45.7% White, 8.2% Black, 12.6% Hispanic, 30.3% Asian, 0.1 American Indian, and 2.7% Multi-Racial. The low-income population is 31.8%. The instructional expenditure for each student is \$12,667 per year, while the operational expenditure per pupil is approximately \$22,915. Teachers in this district average 13.7 years of experience and have an average salary of approximately \$107,626. Data was obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

Students in this 9-12 district score well above the state average of 52.33% on all subjects of the Prairie State Achievement Exam. The average meets and exceeds scores from 2007 to 2012 is 62.83%. Data were obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

According to the school's 2013-2014 course guide, they offer 44 different courses in the arts. These offerings include 9 in the visual arts, 8 in theatre, 2 in dance, and 25 in music.



Participants from School “B” are described below:

#1B – Participant #1B (Teacher Leader – Art) is a serving visual arts teacher who has just completed her 13<sup>th</sup> year at this school. This participant holds a bachelor of fine arts and a master’s of art in education from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and has been an art teacher since 1988. The first half of her career was spent in the city of Chicago and prior to becoming a teacher, she spent time as a drug abuse counselor.

#2B – Participant #2B (Teacher Leader – Theatre) is a serving theatre teacher. His entire 19-year career in teaching has been at this school, prior to which he worked as a professional actor and director. He holds a bachelor of fine arts degree in acting from the University of Illinois. He also holds master’s degrees in both education and educational administration.

#3B – Participant #3B (Teacher Leader – Orchestra) is a serving orchestra teacher that has spent 24 of his 29 years in education, teaching at this school. This participant holds a bachelor’s and master’s degree in music education from the University of Illinois.

#4B – Participant #4B (Principal) is a serving high school principal. This participant has been serving this district for ten years in a variety of capacities. He has been a dean of students, director of deans, summer school principal, assistant principal, and is now principal. This participant holds a bachelor’s degree in political science, with a minor in education, from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa. Participant #4B also holds a master’s in secondary education from Roosevelt University and a doctorate in administration and supervision from Loyola University Chicago. In addition, participant #4B began his teaching career in the city of Chicago where he taught social studies and

served as a department chair. Prior to working in education, participant #4B served as an intelligence analyst in the military.

**School “C”.** School District C is a large district in a western suburb of Chicago. The district serves 28,758 students. The demographics are 56.6% White, 9.3% Black, 9.8% Hispanic, 20.1% Asian, 0.2 American Indian, and 4.0% Multi-Racial. The low-income population is 14.5%. The instructional expenditure for each student is \$6,496 per year, while the operational expenditure per pupil is approximately \$10,202. Teachers in this district average 12.3 years of experience and have an average salary of approximately \$72,366. Data was obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

Students in this K-12 district score well above the state average of 52.33% on all subjects of the Prairie State Achievement Exam. The average meets and exceeds scores from 2007 to 2012 is 92.67%. Data was obtained from *Interactive School Report Card* (<http://iirc.niu.edu>).

Participants from School “C” are described below:

#1C – Participant #1C (Teacher Leader – Band) is currently serving as the fine arts department chair for this school, a position he has held since the school opened in 1997. Prior to that, participant #1C served in the same capacity at another high school in the district where he began as a band director in 1985. Prior to coming to this district, this participant held teaching positions elsewhere. Participant #1C earned his bachelor’s degree in music education at the University of Wisconsin, Madison and then upon being laid off by a school, went on to earn a master’s degree in music education from the University of Illinois.

#2C – Participant #2C (Department Chair) is currently serving this district as the coordinator for music education. Finishing his second year in this capacity, participant #2C is able to also draw upon his nine years at this specific school serving as part of the instrumental music faculty. Participant #2C holds a bachelor's degree in music education from the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign. After a five year teaching stint, participant #2C earned a graduate degree, in music education from Northwestern University. Upon completion of his graduate degree this participant also taught an additional 22 years prior to coming to this district in 2002.

#3C – Participant #3C (Assistant Principal) has been at this school since 1997 when he first began as a social studies teacher. Due to some unusual developments at the school, this participant moved from social studies teacher to English department chair in 2001, a position he held until becoming assistant principal in 2005, which is the role he holds to this day.

Participant #3C earned his undergraduate degree in broadcast journalism from the University of Missouri and began working for NBC News. Upon mounting pressure from his parents, this participant returned to school and earned a master's in business degree from Northern Illinois. After a brief stint as a substitute teacher, participant #3C attended North Central College where he earned a teaching certificate.

#4C – Participant #4C (Principal) is currently serving in the capacity of middle school principal. Prior to beginning in that role, he spent two years as the fine arts chair at another high school in the district. He then became an assistant principal at this school for seven years before moving to the middle school two years ago. Participant #4C spent 12

years working in other districts as a band and vocal teacher as well as music coordinator prior to coming to this district.

Participant #4C holds undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana. In the years to follow, he also earned his general administrative endorsement.

According to the school's 2013-2014 course guide, they offer 44 different courses in the arts. These offerings include 18 in the visual arts, 2 in theatre, and 24 in music.

Participants in this study were asked 12 questions.

### **Review of Methodology**

Four questions were asked about their experience and background in the school. Five questions pertaining to the school as a place that values arts education were asked followed by two additional questions that focused on decision-making. The questions were structured in a manner as to gain an understanding as to how the arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. The intent was to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

Each cooperating institution provided this researcher with a letter of support and the signatory official partnered with this researcher in determining the best participant sample. Upon verbal agreement, each participant signed the Informed Consent prior to the start of the interview. The questions were discussed in a face-to-face semi-structured interview format. Digital recordings were later transcribed by a third party, resulting in a

total of 378 pages of transcription. Eleven of the interviews were held at the school where the participant was employed, while the one other interview was held at a local coffee shop at the request of the participant. All interviews were conducted during the spring semester of 2013, lasting between 45 minutes and 90 minutes.

The interview questions are presented below, followed by a summary of each participant's response. Questions one through three provided background information about the participants hence, the summary of responses begins with question #4.

### **Data from Oral History**

*Question 4: What is unique and different about working at your school?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A expressed an overarching frustration that in his previous places of employment, the administration was “pretty clueless” about the incredible value of arts education. Conversely, at this school he feels “highly respected all the time as an arts teacher...from school board members, from top administration, from peers.”

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B laughed at this question, suggesting it was “loaded,” in part because he admits that they have an “institutional chip on our shoulders...and we try to live up to that standard. We’re going to do absolutely everything we can to benefit our kids – it seems that we’re always keeping kids at the center of our decision-making.”

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C began her comments by sharing that this school is her passion! She went on to say that the school is unique because, “we’ve abandoned the sort-and-select method of moving children along in their academic careers. Instead,

we try to look at our students' strengths and weaknesses and how we can help to get them to perform and learn at their best potential.”

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D admitted having a difficult time responding to this question, in part, because he has only worked at two schools in his entire tenure in education. This, he believes, limits his otherwise worldview of education. Nonetheless, he went on to speak about the unique demographic and the socioeconomic profile of the families. He described them as middle to upper-middle middle class families, giving the school a student body that's “very respectful of and appreciative of education as an important aspect of life and families and parents who are interested in their kids getting a great education.”

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A started her response to this question by speaking about how her background working in a very impoverished area of the city [Chicago] has formed her approach to people and education. Additionally, she self-discloses being a “city snob who never really wanted to work in the suburbs.” When speaking about the uniqueness of this school, she quickly turned to describing the student body. She explained, “this is a school where there are 86 different languages. I mean every single child in my classroom either speaks two or three languages, lots of immigrants, lots of working class.”

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B almost had no pause in responding to this inquiry and instantly spoke of the students, saying, “the diversity of the students is huge... we've really got quite a mix of kids coming from all over the globe. Over half of them speak another language at home.” He then went on to talk about how he sees the supportive

arts community contributing to the uniqueness of the school. He described the school community in the following way:

It is still space and money for these classes and after-school programming.

This is a place that has changed over time, and yet people above you will listen; somebody will listen. And, the board of education is pretty supportive. We have a tradition of honoring the arts and the expectation that there will always be a decent arts program.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C excitedly responded to this question by speaking of the “great opportunity for growth here, and we grow collaboratively with the understanding that it is OK to do things that are unique and different.” He attributed this to the support that comes from the community and administration and highlighted the educational backgrounds of some of the most influential leaders in the district. For example, he mentioned that:

Our superintendent is a former fine arts director. Our assistant superintendent is a foreign language teacher from her background, but in her heart and soul, she’s a musician, and she has sung in musical theatres and had leads in musical theater shows and community theaters and played flute in the Marching Illini and played flute in our summer orchestra.

Participant 2C views the great support system in the fine arts as unique. He was happy to share that “I never have to justify my existence. I have to justify my budget and the opportunities that I want, but never our existence, which is really amazing.”

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D responded without hesitation, expressing a belief that what makes their school unique is:

The extremely diverse population is what makes us unique. We speak approximately 90 languages and have an ELL population made up of refugees from every single country you can imagine, which is very much equalized amongst our population. This informs our instruction and brings an array of different talents and opportunities to really engage students at a different level.

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A offered his insight to what is unique about his school through the lens of what he had seen and experienced elsewhere. In fact, he shared a story about his views and philosophy related to how kids learn best. He spoke of an “old” model, where kids learn on their own versus a curriculum at this school that has been “developed upon the belief that we can only be as good as we deserve to be if kids have the skill.”

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B spoke of how his views and beliefs have been shaped by his experience working in unit school districts and how powerful of an effect can be had by the staffing methodology. He specifically spoke about the advantages associated with being a large K-12 program.

The size of the program necessitates staffing that is unique – at one point there were four band directors, three choral directors, and three orchestra directors. This made for a great talent pool as well as a breadth of experience. Furthermore, this meant that there existed a tremendous range



of experience, energy, and perspective, making it possible to talk about almost any problem, issue, or musical interpretation.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C lost no time articulating what he believes is the key to the success and uniqueness of this school. He explained, “The uniqueness is our collaborative environment, which is accompanied by an aggressively planning-minded faculty. This is a part of the culture because of the people and how they so willingly connect formally and informally with their peers.”

He also expressed his belief in the value and importance of relationships, as well as an appreciation for the care and dedication he sees in people wanting to do the “right thing” despite various levels of support. Participant 3C also suggested that a collaborative approach is essential to the success of the school, in part due to having approximately 380 teachers, which can make it difficult to develop relationships and trust amongst colleagues.

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D demonstrated no hesitation in articulating what he believes makes this school unique. He shared that:

Historically, the district staffed a curriculum that was intended to serve the needs of every arts student, particularly in music with a class called “technique.” This provided an immensely rigorous curriculum that had the full support of the district leadership, recognizing that something very special was occurring in the district. The increased staffing that accompanied the technique classes created a consortium of music directors that most districts don’t have.

Participant 3D bridged the value and importance of this commitment to staffing and how it developed a professional learning community, which further served as catalyst for advocacy in the arts. Then, programmatic success followed, which helped others to see the work in the arts as essential. Eventually, decision-makers began to ask what the long-term impact of these decisions might be.

*Question 5: Describe the learning culture in the school.*

*Participant #1A* - In responding to this question participant 1A expressed the privilege he felt in getting to work with some of the highest achieving kids in the school. He explained:

We have high achieving, respectful students that come to school with an expectation that they are going to be challenged. This, to a certain degree, caused me to raise my own standards as a teacher. The arts are promoted and supported as much as any other aspect of the school. We challenge our students and have the freedom to go really, really deep in helping them to explore areas of interest.

Furthermore, participant 1A spoke of the idea that students in this school expect to be challenged and welcome stepping up to meet that expectation. Interestingly, this participant spoke of the same notion of the faculty. They come to school wanting to work hard on behalf of the students they serve.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B describes the learning culture as being based upon learning theory and knowledge they have about how kids learn. He explained how this engages the faculty in more meaningful conversation about policies, programs, and

practices that are consistent with learning. He went on to talk about how this manifests itself within the culture and climate of the school:

We maintain a focus on social-emotional learning (SEL) initiatives, including finding ways of measuring kids' SEL. We have a school-wide committee that is working to create SEL targets that are aligned to the five SEL domains.

A big part of our culture is all of the co-curriculars, electives, and athletics that we offer. We have not done anything to stop the growth and expansion of programs; if anything, we've continued to plow support into them.

Ultimately, participant 1B wanted it to be clear that the culture of the school is one of learning, founded in doing what's best for the students and ensuring that the focus, especially in times of change, remains on the student. This includes a heavy academic focus, as well as significant opportunity in all of the co-curriculars, electives, and athletics.

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C explained how the learning culture has changed over the years, reflecting upon her time with the school. As she spoke of the journey the school has had in becoming one of excellence, she carefully described the current culture and associated expectations. "The culture is collaborative, comprehensive, and is a professional learning community. We have common goals and common exams. Arts education has always been a big part of the school and we work to provide a full range of activities to nurture student thought."

Participant 1C went further, expressing appreciation to the Board for their support and teacher professional development, which has been a driving force behind the establishment of the current culture.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D was succinct in his response to this question. He quickly, yet carefully articulated that the “learning culture is exemplary and is a professional learning community interested in helping every student. We focus on personalization of relationships between the faculty and students, as well as the administration and support staff and the students.” He added that much of this culture had developed around a goal of making a large school (4,000+ students) feel small.

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A began her response speaking to the ease of working with suburban kids. She spoke of developing high expectations for her students and of her confidence in their ability and desire to attain that expectation, stating “our kids are hungry to learn, want to be empowered, and to become good at something.”

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B responded that it is “changing.” He went on to describe that “there are new technologies, including social media, which are changing the way our kids communicate. We’ve moved toward a much more nurturing approach to our kids and at the same time, expect them to become global citizens with a sense of empathy.” In addition, participant 2B furthered the discussion of change as to how it impacts personal relationships, which he described as requiring an openness and willingness to let our kids stay young for as long as they can.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C began his response by expressing appreciation to the fine arts director who really seems to “get it.” He went so far as to share that in his years with the district, with the exception of one, they’ve had terrific directors. This

ultimately has allowed for a trusting relationship to develop among staff, which has helped in the creation of a “very collaborative and nonthreatening learning culture.”

He also spoke in an appreciative way for the opportunity to “participate in extensive in-service as well as a great deal of discussion and active research in the school.”

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D provided a clear and concise response to the question of the school’s learning culture. He described it in the following manner:

We are very much an academic institution with a strong culture of learning and a push from parents who expect that they are sending their children to a school where they are going to get a quality education. Our emphasis is on college readiness and yet we offer electives that provide a gateway to careers. There are very high expectations here in all of the programs that we offer. The same is true in the arts. We have a strong culture, both within and outside of the building. We have a huge alumni network to preserve the arts and to ensure we are offering quality arts programming.

Participant 2D made it clear that the parents and the community are the biggest influence in defining the expectations for the way the school looks, feels, and functions. His example was that 99% of the parents say they want their kids to go to college, making college readiness one of their primary focuses.

*Participant #3A* - As participant 3A responded to this question, he divulged his frustration with current guidelines and expectations coming from state level government. He digressed a bit to explain, and in doing so spoke of common core, 21<sup>st</sup> century

learning skills, and the perception of a failing school system that is really the driver of today's conversation about education.

And it's interesting that we would have the state change our state standards once we were achieving at high level. So we were in the 90s, you know, everybody's meeting or exceeding. The state changed the way they score so now we're in the 79-80. And that is really driving the conversation, which is germane to this conversation. And that is, what is it that students need to know and do in order to gain admission into college to be successful in the work place?

Those two things are divorced from our conversation because the benchmark that they use is a written test that we don't have the answers to, we don't know what the questions are, but we are learning what the skills are so we have to find evidence that the students are gaining the skills they need. Now that sounds like witchcraft, and we could get into a little bit of what I think is a conspiracy on the part of testing agencies to make everything test driven and have every public school fail, which is why we change the standard now. It is much lower because we were achieving what they wanted us to, surprise, so now they want us to fail, so that they can make money on starting little satellite schools that will really teach to the test and help these kids be successful.

It sounds pretty sinister, but I think you could make a pretty good novel together based on just the idea that in the United States, if you want to make money, and you're a testing company, you have to figure out how to

get everybody to value the results of the test more than they value the results of the students who are taking the test. And that's basically where the state has us.

Even more germane to the question, is his commentary on testing and that what's interfering with local efforts, is the confusion about what really matters, especially as it pertains to testing. Participant 3A summarized his thoughts in saying:

We respond to the decision-makers higher up the chain, meaning that our culture is now geared toward the common core. That said, it doesn't make much sense in that we would never give a student a target and move it while they are blindfolded and expect them to hit the center of it.

However, in the arts, we engage kids in an authentic artistic experience and must define that for people who are not artists. They must understand that we nurture the soul, give lessons of beauty, and a sense of aesthetic.

As participant 3A spoke of the behavior of testing companies, he expressed appreciation that this school, fortunately, concentrates on skills that are observable, which has been positive for the arts. Furthermore, participant 3A admits that this could be a debilitating culture, but thanks to great (collaborative) leadership, it is not. Instead, the culture remains focused on kids.

Participant 3A also voiced concern about the direct value of the arts, versus those on the periphery of the activity. More specifically, he cautions against seeing the arts merely as a place to develop skill in communicating, collaborating, and thinking creatively or critically.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B describes the learning culture of the school as that of a typical, large, and overcrowded college-prep school. However, he speaks of this not being a concern:

I attribute this success to the community, parents, type of kids, and the expectations of the staff. The superintendent was the principal when the school opened. She did a great job, along with the instructional department chair team at that time, to develop a positive, student-focused, trusting climate that remains today.

Participant 3B additionally spoke of factors that reach beyond the student. He cited “the expectations for our students are high, we have a very positive environment, and are fortunate to have an aesthetically pleasing building that is both comfortable and inviting.”

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C shared that “unfortunately, the first word that comes to mind is competitive, a culture where kids are above average, but not necessarily distinguished.” In a moment of self-reflection, participant 3C rhetorically asked what kids are taking away from their experience at the school. He indicated fear that perhaps it might be something on the line of, “I’m just not good enough.”

Participant 3C, given his history with the district, was quite reflective in all of his framing related to the learning culture. He spoke of the “autonomy in the buildings, which has afforded great flexibility for creativity.” He then added, that he sees the school, “as a place where teachers can still be creative and kids get an experience that is tremendously unique.” He added, “we have tried to keep the spirit of elective classes



alive so that our kids could live a well and balanced life. Specifically, the arts are providing our kids a place to make a personal investment in developing their whole self.”

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D spoke of the learning culture, at least in part, through the lens of being a dad of two daughters that attend school here. He describes:

The learning culture is very competitive with pockets of very rich learning that is not focused on attainment of a GPA or grade. In the arts, specifically, our kids immerse themselves in a way of thinking about education as opposed to a way of achieving in education. The current state of our learning culture also represents all that is good and ill in education. I always tell our kids, don't take your education too seriously, but seriously approach your education.

Participant 3D expressed great pride in the belief that the school is filled with deep intellectual thinkers [teachers] who teach in an artful way, and he is thrilled that his own children have had the exposure and opportunity that they've had.

*Question 6: Explain how you interpret the value of arts education in your school.*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A framed his response to this question by speaking about how he tries to express to others what it is that he does and why he chooses this work. Participant 1A feels as though it is his responsibility and that of arts education to train tomorrow's leaders. More specifically, this training comes in the form of the ways in which:

The arts are helping us to develop creativity, discipline of long-term skill development, and the skill of social interaction at an extraordinarily high level. This is done, in part, through small group teamwork where there is

an understanding of the value of arts education alongside an incredible commitment to interpersonal and team development.

When asked to provide further evidence to support these beliefs, participant 1A shared a story of observing students in rehearsal settings that demonstrate not only a love and acceptance that spending time in this activity is valuable, but also that they recognize how much they are learning by doing so. Furthermore, students have expressed to participant 1A that they participate not only because they love it, but also because they value the product or the process enough to commit the time to it as well.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B immediately confessed that his view of the value of arts education in the school has evolved significantly as he has watched his own kids participate. That said, he spoke of his belief that:

The arts create a well-rounded kid, which is sustaining and helping to bring balance to their lives. Because of their importance, we would never isolate them as we refuse to accept that any one discipline is less important than others. Specifically, the arts help to promote different ways of thinking as well as creativity.

Participant 1B admitted that he has always felt pressure to not speak out against the arts, and in fact, really never had. However, he hadn't due to pressure felt from the educational and localized communities, not necessarily due to a belief of their importance.

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C responded to this question by speaking to what she believes are the needs of the whole child, who requires an education in a variety of things. Participant 1C expressed a belief that since the arts are part of the fabric of the

school and are treated equal to other content areas, especially with a focus on developing the whole child, most any student would feel comfortable participating.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D shared a viewpoint of not feeling it his place to assess the value of arts within the school. Instead, he chose to speak to the fact that he believes the arts thrive because the school invests resources in the arts, as they do in all programs. More specifically, he spoke of the support he has felt from the administration and school board. Furthermore, he explained, this support is evidenced in the budgets the programs receive as well as the quality of the facilities.

*Participant #2A* - This question elicited a response from participant 2A that seemed to be both personal and conflicted. She spoke of the notion that the “arts are the window dressing of the school.” While she didn’t suggest this to be a bad thing, she did express frustration over her perception that “the board” still keeps us [fine arts] at bay. She went on to describe a belief that many administrators do not really know what takes place in the study of fine arts.

Participant 2A shared her hope that more school leaders would have a deeper understanding that in the fine arts students are learning higher-level thinking, allowing them to experience a side of themselves that needs to be encouraged and nurtured. More specifically, she said, we teach “discipline, tenacity, perseverance, problem-solving, and visual literacy, and students become attached to a part of themselves that allow them to release their intellect, which is good for their emotional wellbeing.”

*Participant #2B* - In responding to this question, participant 2B went beyond describing the value in his school and instead spoke to how he views the impact in society. He shared his belief that “the arts must be one of the first entities that respond to

a shift in society.” He suggested that it is the artists in society that are often the first to have the desire or ability to articulate the “tough” questions that eventually end up shaping our decisions and future.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C shared with a chuckle that one of the biggest indicators of the value of the arts in a school to be how often they are asked to provide a service to the school, sharing that at his school they are in frequent demand to perform, which in turn brings them great respect from colleagues for the work they are doing with kids. Doing so also greatly expands their audience and the knowledge that others, outside the program, have of the work that is taking place in the fine arts classrooms.

Participant 2C believes that this respect for their work can be seen in the way in which his colleagues treat him. For example, he shared that when he occasionally asks to pull a student from a class, he gets little to no complaint.

*Participant #2D* - As participant 2D spoke about the value of arts within the school culture, he did so within the framework of student engagement. He shared his perspective that a healthy student is one that is engaged, regardless of how, beyond that of the core academic area. As he focused in on arts education, he shared that like other ways of students getting engaged in their school, “the arts are helping us to create more, well rounded students that are going to have a deeper connection to the school. However, the arts are also serving to promote academic achievement, and we need to continue to find new and more innovative ways to keep up the quality of our programs.”

Participant 2D additionally spoke of the high percentage of students that find their true passion in the arts and the manner in which that provides them a deep connection to the school.

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A shared his feeling that collectively, the fine arts staff have done a very good job of getting the faculty and administration to appreciate the benefits students get from participation in the arts and specifically that “the art classroom is a place of vigorous learning.” The aforementioned beliefs stem from years of approaching learning from the lens of the needs of students, not only in the art classroom, but in the school and community as well. Utilizing this lens has helped to ensure that the arts are “part of something rather than a separate asset.”

In addition, the arts faculty have embraced being part of the evolution in education and know that the experiences their students are having are helping them in their studies beyond the arts classroom. In supporting this claim, participant 3A shared:

Our teachers are the best at encouraging collaborative instruction and people in the arts know what it takes to be passionate about something. Perhaps most importantly, as teachers, we need to help students reflect upon their experience in high school and what it was that helped them succeed, which is something as educators that we can value forever.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B began his response to this question by recognizing that in the relatively short (10-12 year) history of the school, that the academic, athletic, and arts programs have all earned significant recognition for excellence. Participant 3B went on to say that while support for fine arts in areas such as facilities are nice, that it isn't the driver of excellence. Instead, he believes the success is driven by a philosophy and district-wide long-term commitment to the arts. Of course, over time, quality programming also earns a respect that is honored by others not involved in the program. Ultimately, the respect for quality has found a way into the

culture of the building. “Always doing the best you can, trying to find out what you’re good at – the students in the building have respect for that.”

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C interpreted the value of arts in the school upon the reputation it has earned. As evidence, he indicated, “The quality of the programs feed themselves as parents want for their kids to be part of them and around other kids who will be a good influence.” Ultimately, participant 3C clarified that the value of the arts comes in the opportunity and experience that it brings our students. Specifically, the focus on creativity is huge.

Participant 3C also talked about how much fear typically surrounds change in education, which right now is often relative to Common Core. With that in mind, he shared that he often feels like he must defend this evolution, as others seem to think it may steamroll creativity. He expressed how troubling this notion is to him in the sense that it suggests that “creative people aren’t smart and that smart people can’t be creative.” It is his hope that these two ideas can powerfully coexist.

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D responded to this question not only through the lens of the value in the school, but also through that of the community. He explained how, for many, seeing the value has come from the experience of their own children, which has sparked great enthusiasm and deep compassion. Interestingly enough, he also spoke to the fact that the reputation has not been enough for some faculty, administration, and community members to embrace the value of the arts. In the end, participant 3D shared that he finds it sad that “the value of arts education is misunderstood and has even been a sore spot for some in the community that simply do not understand that value.”

*Question 7: In what ways do the arts contribute to the school culture?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A spoke of numerous initiatives where he was asked how his work with students contributed to the overall benefit of their education. Recalling a more recent effort to highlight the social-emotional well being of his students, participant 1A recalled feeling as though his very existence in the arts wouldn't function without the basic tenants of social-emotional learning.

Armed with this understanding, the arts have become a model for helping others to understand the value and importance of social-emotional learning models. Small teamwork is the basis for much of what takes place in the arts and is an essential skill when students move beyond high school, which is known to be a consistent learning platform.

*Participant #1B* - In responding to this question, participant 1B responded with a reference to a famous Bobby Kennedy quote about gross domestic product (GDP). The basis of this quote is that GDP measures all things economic, but has nothing to do with anything that matters. Participant 1B likened this to schools where we tend to try and measure everything (mostly academic achievement with test scores, and yet pay little attention to those things that matter the most; everything that kids do to bring meaning to their life. With this platform articulated, participant 1B went on to speak of how the arts (along with other electives and co-curriculars) bring rich experiences to the lives of our students. He summarized by noting that, "the arts invite us to consider things that really matter – those things that kids do to bring meaning to their life. Without the arts, our building and lives would seem bland!"

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C kept her response brief stating, "the arts are part of the fabric of the school, and they're not isolated or separated."

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D framed his response within the lens of the notion that “the arts bring a lot of art experience to the community – as an accessible hub of audience experience.” He also spoke of the visibility of the arts program, suggesting that unlike many other programs in the school, the arts are very visible and as such, the students, parents, and community alike are able to have numerous artistic encounters simply by being in and around the school.

Participant 1D also spoke to the importance of the quality of the arts program. He indicated that a quality program is more likely to have students and parents believe that there is value in the experience of participating.

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A expressed her belief that the arts help the students to be well rounded and allow us to transform our space with beauty. She went on to talk about how the arts programs contribute a lot to charity and provide great service to the school and community, in part by educating others about what happens in the arts courses. Participant 2A summarized by stating, “that it’s good for their emotional beings.”

Before leaving this question, participant 2A shared a story about her recent work with adults. She went on to talk about the idea that adults are afraid of art, as a result of always believing that there is one way of doing something. Participant 2A indicated a desire to allow ourselves to revert back to a more childlike state of mind where anything goes.

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B shared his belief that in many ways what separate the arts from other aspects of the school is that in the arts, students are being asked to be involved in a much more emotionally personal and sometimes physical way.



Furthermore, the material being manipulated is more intellectual than other similar team environments and there is more passion to it.

Capturing this sentiment, participant 2B stated:

The arts demand a mental and emotional vulnerability. We make kids develop an understanding of long-term goal setting and trust in themselves and in one another. This trust is the root of them developing strength of character helping them to become responsible adults.

Participant 2B concluded his remarks by circling back on the idea that the arts teach process. Students learn to appreciate and value trust and feedback and how together they can make for an improved product.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C expressed his perception that students are extremely respectful of one another, which he attributes to their status as leaders within the school. In addition, participant 2C was clear in that his students are not only leaders in the arts, but also in other clubs, classes, and sports. As such, when asked how many students become professional artists, his response is always to mention that more become engineers.

Participant 2C came back to the question and provided the following summary:

The arts are a part of the school community like everything else is. We're ingrained into the school culture and are not taken for granted. Being that we're not special puts us on equal footing to everyone else.

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D succinctly stated that the arts contribute greatly to the school's culture in large part due to the sense of community that accompanies the various activities. He went on to say:

The arts help us to build a sense of community and provide an opportunity for students to be part of something bigger than just themselves. The arts are transformative, give kids a place to be, help students to have pride in their school, while creating a buzz both inside and outside of the school.

Participant 2D also spoke of school spirit and the way that having involved students builds spirit in the school. Essentially, high school spirit makes school the place to be all while building a legacy of community and giving people something to talk about. This spirit is “transformative and changes the way kids walk down the halls at school.”

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A leaned on his extensive background at this school to respond by saying that the greatest contribution to the culture is our presence, participation, and service to all-school events. He went on to say that by contributing in this way we are able to connect with the community and with our history, which is essential to our development as human beings. Participant 3A didn't mind if that contribution was viewed as entertainment as long as it provided him that chance to connect with the community and with the history of the community.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B spoke to how obvious the contribution is, in the form of a visual presence. Specifically, one cannot argue that the art displays in the building really make for a certain climate of appreciation. Performances that are of high quality garner tremendous respect from the students and community, which in turn sets a tone that this place is something special.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C responded to this question first by noting that many students are not always successful in finding ways to communicate, however “the

arts give people voice.” The benefit to the culture then is that the arts help draw kids together.

The arts contribute to a higher level of engagement in school in that the arts provide for a great entry for a conversation and for great questions. Kids will pause and engage in conversation about something other than themselves...I especially appreciate when a student asks a question like “how did they even do that,” or “what is that supposed to be.” These are great questions. In the end, I hope they walk away with either their version of what they think, or either continued confusion...either is fine.

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D spoke to the value of the relationships that are developed between a teacher or coach and students who spend years together. The value of this relationship is that it becomes the cornerstone of all great teaching. Participant 3D went on to share his views on how these relationships foster trust, which in turn allow for us (teachers) to ask the difficult questions and to take risks that they might otherwise not take. The arts classroom is a place where deep, rich conversation can take place. In short, the arts bring culture to our school community.

*Question 8: What has the arts done for you?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A shared that the arts have meant different things at different times in his life as both a student and teacher. Early in his life, they provided support and social connections, as well as strength and perseverance to deal with the challenges of life. As a self-disclosed slow learner, the arts were the one place he felt comfortable and welcomed. Then later, participant 1A started to note that every time he learned something new, the first thing he wanted to do was teach it to somebody else. As

a teacher, he has felt the power to have changed lives. “It has, in many ways, been therapeutic and a blessing and has given me the strength and perseverance to deal with life. As an adult, I cannot fathom a more important career.” The story below highlights this response from participant 1A:

I think in most professions, to have somebody say: You changed my life; my involvement with you in this setting turned my life around. Or to have a parent say: Before being involved in your world, my student was struggling, not sure of themselves, but since being in your world, has really found himself and has grown. For most people, most adults, to have that happen a few times in life would be extraordinary; I've had it happen many, many dozens of times. It's humbling and inspiring.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B expressed having no “real” experience in the fine arts. Therefore, he believes that as an adult, the arts are helping him to understand his own kids. “I see how important it is for them to have experiences in the arts, as well as how much they enjoy those experiences, which are, I believe, helping to make their lives rich.” To help articulate the notion of the arts bringing richness to the lives of his kids, participant 1B shared the following anecdote:

So I was your prototypical 70s latchkey kid. My parents are divorced. I was on my own after school. There was no program like this. I sat on my ass and watched TV and played Atari all day. There was nothing for me out there like this, but I can see how with my own kids just how much more rich their lives are because of the arts. I've said to my wife many times, I want to be born again as my own kids. I can't even believe some

of this stuff that they get to do.

In addition to that of being a dad, participant 1B believes his views of the arts as an educator have evolved. Due to his personal interaction with the arts through his own children, he expressed that the arts was something “I understood intellectually, and had always supported, but mean much more now that I understand it personally.”

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C had a different perspective on this question from all other participants, in part because she was an architecture history minor in both her undergraduate and graduate work, and has a son who’s an architect. She shared that architecture has always spoken to her and brought her great levels of engagement as she has traveled the world.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D explains that the arts have been his life. He shared that he considers it fortunate that he was able “to find his passion and pursue it.” His father was a professional photographer who met many of his closest friends at the Art Institute of Chicago. Much of his love of art came from his father and family, where an appreciation for painting and sculpture was instilled in his being.

Being surrounded by a family that appreciated art was a blessing for participant 1D. He believes that it was this foundation that helped him to “understand” the art, and therefore appreciate it. He describes the relationship below:

The more you know about what you’re encountering in life, the more meaning it has, the more rich your life is. They didn't have to show me every painting in the Louvre in high school. They had to explain to me and help me understand what to look for and what to appreciate when viewing a painting or what to listen for and what to appreciate when hearing a new

piece of music. That means that every time I look at a painting or look at a piece of music, I'm getting something much more out of that than the next guy is who didn't have that.

In the end, he now looks at art in his life and sees that it has brought him exposure to a much broader, more rich educational experience and view of the world.

*Participant #2A* - Laughingly, participant 2A joked that she didn't know how to respond to this question, because she is really "just a frustrated artist who doesn't have time to do her own work." That said, she explained "art is pure release, a religion for me in terms of spirituality. It helps me to feel something greater in me, and it feeds something in me that needs to be fed, which is a very private, personal kind of scary thing."

*Participant #2B* - In responding to this question, participant 2B suggested that perhaps he takes for granted the very thing they provide him, a sense of identity. He added, "they my job, my leisure, and my pastime."

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C spoke of how fortunate he feels to be able to work hard doing what he loves. He said, "The arts have given me the opportunity to make a living and not have to work at it." Expounding on his response, he added:

How much better of a job, a career, of an opportunity can you ask for?

I'm retiring in a few years. I'm very hesitant about it. I love what I do. I don't know that I'm looking forward to retirement.

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D shared his journey from participating in plays and music as a young child to that of athletics in high school and college. He added, that regardless of his immediate involvement, his parents always took him to quite a bit of

theater. He believes that these experiences have shaped his own parenting. He explains, “now as a parent and an educator, both my sons play piano and I am certain that it is helping them to be more focused in not only their education, but in life.”

Participant 2D also asserted that he sees his work as an educator also influencing his beliefs about the arts. Specifically, he stated:

I think it is really more my seeing the kids here and just seeing how the exposure to the arts and music have assisted them along the way. Talking with music educators, reading journals about the benefits [of music], as a principal, led me to want my kids to engage early in some type of musical instrument and have that be a focus for their early childhood experiences. I have to say it's probably being in a real fine arts heavy district, fine arts heavy school where I see these kids all the time, I talk to these teachers all the time. However, I am going to be at the band concert tonight. I am going to be at the orchestra concert tomorrow. You are always at those events. I am always around those kids and knowing their academic pursuits, knowing how the arts have transformed their lives, and seeing their level of engagement as something that no one can take away from you.

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A spoke of the value of arts to him via the lens of something he sought out versus what for many others he feels may be routine. For participant 3A, the arts were the thing that gave him identity early on, especially within the noise that surrounds adolescence. He shared that “I had clarity in my life, and I had a skill that when developed at a high level gave me a positive self-image. My arts

experiences opened doors of opportunity.” For these reasons, participant 3A expected his kids (who also attended this school) to be involved in the arts.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B described himself from high school as a kid that was on the 1960’s version of the science, technology, engineering, and math (STEM) track. And, up until the second semester of his senior year, had visions of studying engineering. However, during those formative years, he also stayed involved in the music program at school. In high school, participant 3B felt blessed to perform for some terrific conductors and be inspired. Just prior to graduation from high school, he decided to change direction and study music education. From then on, the arts have served as an inspiration to participant 3B, and he shared that the arts have changed his life, allowing him to experience life at a more sophisticated level and in a much more enjoyable way. He attributes this to his background and ability to critique the medium. In addition, participant 3B spoke of the amazing good fortune the arts have brought him in providing the opportunity to travel the world and create amazing memories.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C believes that the arts have taught him to be a leader and problem solve in creative ways, while being patient and listening to feedback. Supplying evidence of this viewpoint, participant 3C shared that when approaching change in education he works at bringing candor to the conversation. That said, he explains, that it is often the art that is a blend of different things, including expression and candor.

The idea of blending black and white into the sharpest shade of gray is often more difficult than it may appear. However, participant 3C is always looking for an ideal outcome, which he says must be absent from emotion. “Emotions have a large degree of



range to them, and I think that's a good metaphor for thinking about how to solve problems." Due to the level of expressiveness within the arts, those trained are often more likely to be able to remove the emotional connection.

*Participant #3D* - Arts have brought me the indescribable feeling that you have when you connect with something that is beautiful. The arts allowed me to connect with kids from other communities and be a better father and husband.

The above quote came shortly after participant 3D explained a bit of what it was like to grow up in a family of six kids, and he got a hand-me-down record from his older sister. It was this record, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performing Tchaikovsky No. 6 Symphony that he connected to even in a house full of All-American football players on a rural farm. Thanks to a dynamite fine arts program at his school, his future would never be the same.

*Question 9: What is the value of the arts?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A expresses the value of art through the lens of "being human." He explains:

In the arts, we are given the opportunity to deeply explore who we are as human beings, individually and collectively. We get to have debates, sometimes verbal and sometimes artistic. You develop different ways of viewing the world of viewing relationships.

Participant 1A acknowledged that each discipline within the arts approaches the fact of being human differently. Nonetheless, he explains that the arts are about who we are, beyond the more typical limitations of our physical boundaries.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B summarizes his feelings about the value of art as being quite personal, existing within the eye of the beholder. As an example, he explains that the arts are something he once thought to have understood on an intellectual level. However, thanks to the involvement of his own kids, he now interprets things on a much more personal level. Participant 1B believes that if he's personally been able to experience such an evolving perspective, that anyone could, thusly making the value of art personal to every individual.

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C approached this question about value in regard to how the arts stimulate the other side of the brain, which moves us. She shared her belief that:

Live arts illicit a reaction, like it or not, and often make you think, question your own values, and wonder what you might do in a similar situation. The arts are meant to be enjoyed in a group setting so that a reaction can be shared – sometimes those arts experienced not live allow one to feel manipulated.

Participant 1C shared that she and her spouse hold subscriptions to three theaters; Northlight, Goodman, and Steppenwolf. Her opinion of live art is shaped in part due to her experiences enjoying live theatre. She would choose not to go to a movie as it lacks the opportunity for live response.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D provided a succinct sound bite as to the value of the arts. He said:

Arts provide us with a universal tool for communication. They help us to understand other cultures and other peoples' expression. Arts make us

more complete human beings, able to be more sensitive to and more understanding of other human beings.

Prior to concluding his comments, participant 1D added that regardless of the amount of arts education a person has, that he would hope that they would forever frame their thinking through those experiences gleaned from their arts studies. This comment was reiterated in his other responses where he indicated an appreciation for the study of the arts and how it alters the way in which one views the world.

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A was quick to respond to this question. She spoke of the visual culture in which we live and that the value of the arts can be found in the emotion, conversation, and engagement that get sparked by our artistic encounters. She explained that the arts are subjective and personal and make people feel unique. “They take people to their true self, bringing us joy, helping us to find our soul, and to take risks.” As an example and evidence to her perspective, participant 2A asked me to consider that everyone decorates their house the way they see it in their mind. People are drawn to a certain style of jewelry and colors. Thus, participant 2A asserts that whether we know it or not, we are making aesthetic decisions all of the time.

*Participant #2B* - Art is almost always at the forefront of major social change, often causing it, often responding and hitting on the sensibilities that are in the public and moving it forward, giving it a voice in a really practical way.

The sound bite above was the response participant 2B gave when asked about the value of art. He continued to explain that he believes art to be part of the human spirit and the desire and need to express ourselves as a people. As such, we search for answers even

if they can't be found, and to articulate publicly that there are questions and that there are human issues that we share. These are just not the typical traits found in our society.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C convincingly revisited the notion that the arts will be the measure of our society, along with the culture that we leave behind.

Participant 2C also spoke of his fear that our society might somehow be measured by the number of electronic devices we amass or the number of tragedies we've had, like 9-11.

“What is frightening is that the rate of change is accelerating to the point where our lives are more like a movie than an experience.” In summary, participant 2C shared his belief that the arts are discipline, focus, multitasking, and an understanding that we must first fail to succeed. He then shared his hope that we may be measured “by the good things and the opportunities that we had, including creating art, and not by the tragedies or the technology.”

*Participant #2D* - The value of art to participant 2D comes in the form of providing an incredible expressive and creative outlet while also providing a connection to the school and within the community. He summarized saying, “the arts are a place of talent development, self-expression, and community, which motivates and inspires others.”

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A responded to this question about the value of the arts as though he had waited a lifetime for the opportunity to respond. His response is below:

It connects to our being human. It's something that expresses our emotions; it gives people an opportunity to find a place where things don't fit. It allows people to accept ambiguity as a natural part of their existence.

It keeps a student from believing there is only one right answer and everything else is wrong. It allows people to have the idea that they can contribute in a significant way even if what they have to say is different than their friends. The arts allow for differences, for people to identify what they can do, what their skill set is, and what they love to do. The arts tap into a passion that is real and tangible and can translate into other subjects.

*Participant #3B* - "I can't imagine what my life would be like without an understanding and a value for the arts," were the first words participant 3B uttered in response to the value of the arts. He went on to speak about the notion that the arts are the enrichment of life.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C spoke to the value of the arts through the lens of what he sees them bringing to students in his school. He asserts that the arts teach balanced thinking, which helps to generate creativity and creativity helps them to think and problem solve. Participant 3C shared his personal appreciation for difficult problems as they have so many potential variables. He went on to describe a creative thought process that he likes to use in an effort to problem solve and come up with unique and different solutions to everyday challenges.

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D responded to this question by telling a story about a small activity he used to do with advanced placement music theory students. He said they were asked to define music and would ultimately come to the definition of organized sounds and silences. Without a doubt, the next question to surface was what is

art. Part of the definition was that art is created within a society therefore is a reflection of that society.

Participant 3D still believes this was a spot on definition and that when looking at art, what it tells us is that it preserves history and is “part of the science and spirit and all knowing that continues to be a basis for most of everything we do and study. Every religion that exists does so because art pushed it to the forefront. Art is about believing and being inspired.”

*Question 10: Has your decision-making process changed as accountability has risen? If so, in what ways has your decision-making changed?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A first spoke of his work history, restating that this school is the first where he has worked in the same building the entire day. He shared this history, as he believes this may color his response in that teamwork was non-existent if not impossible all together. Working alone, mostly feeling like an independent contractor, was all participant 1A knew until coming to this school.

Now, he meets weekly with colleagues and sees that these meetings have affected his decision-making process. Additionally, he gets to collaborate on projects and activity coordination with colleagues, which he believes held in creating a stronger product. As participant 1A revisits the notion of accountability then, he expresses doubt that accountability has had much impact at all on his work. In fact, participant 1A shared that he’s always had such high standards that in same ways the move toward greater accountability was just forcing others to catch up.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B was quick to note that he doesn’t think that greater accountability has had any impact upon his decision-making. To the contrary, he

said that at this school, they've been data-driven since long before No Child Left Behind and have embraced the mindset of accountability within their professional learning community culture. Participant 1B continued to explain that he believes they are still wrestling with the same things and in the same ways as they always have, just in slightly different permutations. In concluding his remarks on the topic of accountability and decision-making, participant 1B pondered that, "perhaps it's the absence of any real evidence to support my claim that is actually the evidence."

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C shared that this is more of a chicken and the egg question regarding which came first. She shared that while the board of education is looking for accountability and "bang for their buck," that they don't need to ask for it. Instead, what happens is that the faculty that present to the board are high-performing, collaborative, and data-driven. So, while she is looking for accountability from the teaching staff, she's not convinced that it is due to external factors.

She went on to add that that teachers get paid well and, in turn, work really hard. As such, the expectation is that as a result of the hard working staff, the students perform better, faster.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D said with pride that the recent increase in accountability has not really affected his thinking. He describes himself as a team player, and referred to his belief that in the arts (performing arts in particular), you can't leave any child behind. In addition, participant 1D portrays himself as being tremendously committed to ensuring that every student gets what they need. In that sense, it is the rest of the educational community just catching up to what he (and performing arts) has always had to do to ensure success of "ensemble." For performing arts, every last kid is

held accountable, and in a very public way because “there is no such thing as a good ensemble performance that contains weak individual performances.”

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A expressed her frustration relative to the more numbers-driven culture that has surfaced during the years of increasing accountability. She indicated that her decision-making has not changed. However, her frustration is growing as she becomes defensive when feeling as though she must prove that what she does is worthy, when in fact, she believes her classes to be those which save lives and keep students in school.

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B responded to this question in almost a dismissive manner toward accountability. Instead, he shared that his decision-making has not changed per se, but has become more evolved. He believes that as one becomes more and more informed, more, wise, and more careful over the years, you begin to realize that you’ve got more to lose, and therefore, begin to understand more of what’s going on around you and the impact it has on others. This then makes the decision-making process more difficult. This, he describes, is the reality with or without accountability.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C spoke about how situation decision-making can be and how most of the time has nothing to do with accountability. For example, this is participant 2C’s 24<sup>th</sup> year at this school and this year he worked with a new band director, fine arts chair, departmental secretary, and choir director. As the senior member of the department working to manage all of this change, participant 2C found himself in a new, more valued mentoring and leadership role. As such, worrying about accountability was not really part of the equation. Instead, given his experience, he is able to anticipate what is needed and where his priorities need to be.



He also talked about his ability to see things more globally now than when he was younger. Participant 2C summarized his thoughts saying that accountability has nothing to do with his decision-making. Instead, his decision-making lens comes from a desire for growth as both a musician and a teacher.

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D spoke of how “times” have changed, mostly related to new realities with financial resources and the need to “justify” our programs and their related expenses. Specifically, he said:

The one part of the conversation that has changed has to do with holding ourselves accountable to the budget. Discussions about our resources have become much more data-driven and evidenced based. We are talking about how to be more efficient in every sense of the word, especially given the significant costs associated with fine arts programs.

*Participant #3A* - With a chuckle, participant 3A jokingly said that “wow, I think my decision-making process changes almost every week.” My decision-making has been affected greatly in terms of what I can do to serve as an advocate as both a teacher and administrator. With this in mind, he said that it was an interesting challenge to think about how this may relate to rising accountability in education. He then said that accountability is an “interesting” thing, especially in the arts where accountability is inherent in virtually the entire profession.

As participant 3A moved toward articulating a more direct response, he shared that what has changed in his teaching [and leadership] is that he’s moved from a product to process model. This move was in response to wrestling with the question of how he could be sure that students were truly learning what they needed to know. Were kids

becoming independent thinkers and learners? Ultimately, the process must be great every day that kids are in class so that when they leave they know exactly what is expected of them. The evidence of this thinking then would be seen when a student is able to demonstrate that they understand a concept a teacher has presented, not that they're merely able to copying a behavior.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B explained that his decision-making has evolved, but not necessarily as a result of accountability. He clarified, "early in my teaching career, I was not focused at all on decision-making, advocacy, or anything political, in part because no one was asking me to." What changed for participant 3B was that others began to ask whether or not the students valued and understood the art form. This, of course, prompted a need for his view of education and the voice he carried to decision-making to evolve. He gave the following example of his thinking when he first began as a teacher:

I was trained as a musical doctor. My job was to create a musical ensemble that performed at a quality level; however, people wanted to define that. I was trained to bring students into the room, manage the environment, good classroom management, pick appropriate repertoire, diagnose that repertoire with the skills I had gained in undergraduate classes and then when the kids were sitting in front of me, my job was to listen, diagnose, identify, cure us, move on.

Years later, this approach to working with kids changed for participant 3C when he began to realize that the real success is when the students leave high school, what it is

that they will take with them from their experience in the arts. Participant 3B describes this transition below:

Do the students value the art form? Do they even understand the art form?

That's my job. And even if that means that I teach less technique and the band maybe doesn't play quite as technically proficient as we could have if that's all I did, but that the students have a better understanding of a particular piece, of a particular composer, a particular event or better yet, the overall concept of the art form. That's my job, is to teach the value.

And when I reach that point as a teacher, of understanding there's a difference here, that's when I became more involved as an advocate for music education; about why my class was important. Because before that, it was maybe a little bit more on the entertainment side. It was hard to argue this is a really good band and look at all the trophies in the case, and do you really want to break down this program?

With participant 3B concluding his response to this question, he gave the final transition needed to get to the heart of this response and shared that his job as both a teacher and arts advocate is about the “edification of students, the value of the arts, and the value of the various art forms.” Changes in accountability have done nothing more than to provide further clarity to the fact that participant 3B truly believes his evolving views of education are now where they should have been all along.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C, with his unique position in assessment, believes that he's become more supportive of teachers in elective areas since they seem to always be on the defense, partly because he's the assessment guy. That said, he recognizes that

much of this comes from the belief of arts faculty that they are under attack and that they are “sort of on the way out.” Participant 3B hopes he’s able to bring a bit of balance to the conversation. With this in mind, he encourages them to take risks and to display their work. He maintains a very cautious approach and acknowledges that there are some things that are beyond their control.

He also believes that we, in education, are really not measuring what our kids are really good at, and therefore, maintains a very cautious approach to the question of accountability. However, in America, we have a culture of innovation, which is creating a great deal of tension in education, given that we tend to base our success or failure about those metrics that are easily measured, which of course are test scores. Participant 3C believes we need to be more “nimble” in education so that we are better able to respond quickly and with flexibility to incoming information, situations, and contexts and process them very, very well.

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D shared that he believes accountability creates a sense of urgency for us to be advocates for the arts, allowing us to ask “why is it not important instead of why is it important.” For example, we may believe that STEM is important, however, let’s not forget that there is an art to STEM. “We must not forget that this wonderful machine that requires an engineer’s knowledge base is also a work of art.”

Presenting another viewpoint, participant 3D shared that while he is concerned about how some in education view increased accountability, he doesn’t believe it to be all-bad.

My stress level as an administrator continues to go down the more

restrictions or the more benchmarks that we're presented with. I think it just increases the level of attentiveness that everybody has. Before NCLB we didn't talk about education the way we talk about it now. Before Common Core we didn't talk about instructional practice at the level we do now. Before Danielson was adopted in this district, we didn't talk about instructional practice the way we do now.

With increased accountability, our goal and benchmark accelerate. If we expect a level of rigor and excellence, this is something participant 3D wants to celebrate because it is an opportunity for them to say – let's measure up to that!

*Question 11: What lenses do you use when making decisions?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A shared that his number one priority has always been for his students to have an honest, emotionally fulfilling artistic experience as a result of their experiences in the arts. Success with this goal would mean that students would “come out of their experience wanting more, feeling like they're better off for having learned in this environment, and want for it to continue.” If this happens, as students become adults and community members, they will volunteer and support the arts going forward.

This notion of coming full circle is where participant 1A revisited the idea of advocacy as something he'd think about often and would like to explore further so as to be able to impress upon business, cultural, and political leaders the importance of what the arts do for a community.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B sees the lenses he carries to be role specific as is the case for most. For him, the lenses are twofold. The first being, “what is best for kids.”

The second, “how is this decision going to help teachers grow professionally? How are we going to build the capacity of adults in the organization?” Participant 1B shared that he believes this perspective is uniquely different from most schools where instead, the lens is:

How do we maintain the status quo? How do we not upset teachers? How do we honor adult autonomy? How do we honor adult convenience? How do we not upset teachers with the decisions that we’re making? That just can’t be our perspective. The lens has to be instead, how do we help teachers grow in their professional practice? The number one responsibility of leaders is to build the capacity of others. So we should ask, what does that look like?

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C shared her lens for decision-making by sharing a story of a recent process of closing a photography lab, which she was part of. She explained that what really drove the process was a series of questions about the students. How many students are taking photography? Do they all use a dark room? Can the space be better used in another way? So, for participant 1C, the filter is how it impacts kids; how many kids, who’s it affecting, what is really being taught in the class, what are the expectations of the kids?

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D spoke about equity and fairness being at the forefront of his mind when making decisions. Over the years, this mindset has developed alongside the belief that we’re all in this [music group] together and that therefore, we should all have the same opportunities and tools along with being held to the same expectations and restrictions.

Participant 1D also believes that it is extremely important to try to get everybody to believe in his or her own potential for growth. He likes to share and encourage his students to be passionate, to be all in, and do a little bit of risk-taking.

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A identified two challenges that impact her lenses for decision-making. First she articulated the difficulty in the lack of leadership stability. This changes her lenses in part, as she must first understand the perspective of leadership, which if always changing is a challenge. Second, she spoke of feeling like she's in a "fish bowl" because their school tends to be out in front of educational change. With both of these in mind, she shared that their school is experiencing great change, in part due to the rapid exchange in leadership, along with the same in cultural diversity. Both of these challenges are forefront on her mind as she wrestles with decision-making.

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B shared that first and foremost he is concerned with what's best for the kids who are in front of you right now. This lens is often driven by the relationship with students and is informed by what has and has not worked in the past, which of course includes both instinct and data. In addition, there are shifts in leadership and administration that tend to influence his behaviors, which are sometimes driven by personality as well.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C begins his decision-making with asking what is best for kids. This is also influenced by whether or not it is a good and quality experience for the students. Lastly, participant 2C said, that while he hates to admit it, whether or not he has the time to do it well also becomes a deciding factor as balancing hectic work and family life schedules can be daunting. He provided an example of when he travels with students. Student travel is extremely valuable in many ways, but is also tremendously

time consuming. So, when planning for a big trip other things tend to take a back seat. The urgency of any given situation or decision may be impacted on what's already been decided.

*Participant #2D* - First, participant 2D always asks what's best for our school community and for our kids. Then, he looks at situations through the lens of being a father. And finally, he tries to use the look at a more global perspective as an administrator. In using these lenses, participant 2D explained that he often asks what will work with "kids and adults, especially if there is something emotional and meaningful for them." Then, if it is something that is program specific [the arts for example] he will consider what school population is being served and how it affects the whole. In the end, he said he believes there has to be balance, equity, and a global sense of how the pieces fit together.

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A begins his decision-making process with the lens of the student experience, which he believes to be the only lens when you're making any decisions on programs, curriculum, or schedules. You must first begin with understanding the impact on students, not teachers.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B uses two lenses when making decisions that he believes exist within certain guidelines he is given. First, he considers how this might help create the best music program to the most number of kids and second, how can he best serve the teachers and get them to develop professionally. Wrestling with these questions serves as a starting point and guide. For example, in recent years as budgets have been shrinking, participant 3B provides the following anecdote further demonstrating and supporting his limitations:



Our access to students at the middle school and the elementary level for traditional pull-out technique lessons is being challenged and restricted, so now we may be quickly approaching a point of what's better: To maintain our 5th grade beginning program, our internal technique, our pull-out middle school program that we have had forever that's been successful and our high school program? Or do we suspend our 5th grade program and have a 6th grade start?

This example helps to demonstrate that when faced with a challenging decision, trying to determine what is best for students can be daunting when you may not like either option. Nonetheless, we all have a responsibility to the whole child and at times, that might require us to use a more global perspective to understand the benefit of a decision.

*Participant #3C* - "I really do put a bit of faculty first because as a leader of adults, I want and need to win their thoughts and actions so that they will take that influence to their kids." Participant 3C continues by explaining that if teacher quality is the single greatest factor in what kind of school building we have, as well as how well students achieve, then starting here makes great sense. He concludes that if you begin with the adults that are guiding our kids, then the leadership aspect of working with these adults is very, very important. Participant 3C supports this approach with current research:

First, I need to influence thinking as Mike Schmoker suggests in his book *Focus*. This leadership approach really lends itself to any of the initiatives that are coming out now, whether it's Danielson's book about how to teach, Common Core of what to teach, you need to shrink the change.

That's kind of a Michael Fullan word: Shrink the change down to something very manageable.

How am I going to get influence and the thought of our teachers by helping shrink that change to something they will find palatable? I think once you influence teachers, our staff is one that will take that influence to their kids. And that may be a unique context where this school and maybe others where that happens, but they do transfer from sort of professional development aspects into their classrooms fairly quickly.

*Participant #3D* - When making decisions, participant 3D first explores what's bet for kids and for the situation right now. Then he says that his parent lens is always in the room as well. He explains that the parent lens can be as simple as looking at a mom that is having a tough time and letting her know that you accept, that "she knows her son better than anyone else and therefore needs to be the one to let others know what the next move should be."

*What do you believe to be the characteristics of a preferred citizen and how do the arts contribute the development of this citizen?*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A responded to this question with only an arts lens. That said, he spoke of the deeply unique human level experience and expression of respect for the fundamental humanness of an art form itself as well as for one another. He further defined this as active interaction with the deeper human elements of the people you're working with. He shared his hope that regardless of one's involvement in the arts, that our society would be about creating environments where the members of a group or organization would be more important than the individual or product of the organization.

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B hopes that the preferred citizen would have a rich, liberal arts education that would expose students to a wide variety of opportunity. That said, today's society expects kids to have science, math, technology, and mathematics. College and employers would prefer well-rounded candidates that they can train themselves.

If these assumptions about the preferred citizen are accurate, then our kids would need specific skills in critical thinking, problem solving, the ability to think creatively, as well as the ability to communicate effectively with anyone.

*Participant #1C* - Participant 1C summarized her opinion of the preferred citizen quite succinctly. She believes the preferred citizen "is well-read, well-rounded, and knowledgeable about a variety of things." She went on to suggest that his would be someone who enjoys the fine arts, sports and literature, and participates in politics.

*Participant #1D* - Participant 1D believes that the preferred citizen is culturally literate, has a valued and broad education, and great breadth and exposure to culture. He defines this as follows:

The preferred citizen has to have a moral compass that engages them in being compassionate with others, understanding that the things that distinguish individuals from one another are less important and less numerous than the things that make us really, each and all of us, the same. Fairness is high on my list of attributes for the ideal citizen. People need to be contributing members of their community in some regard and for me, ideally, people who can facilitate others getting along with others.

In addition, participant 1D believes that arts education helps us understand the

history of mankind while providing us with a means to express our feelings and emotions and communicate ideas nonverbally. Furthermore, “the arts help us to connect across cultures even while we present a culturally specific and unique manifestation of our own art form. Life without art would be much like suddenly losing your sight or hearing.”

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A doesn't see herself as the typical citizen and therefore expressed feeling unqualified to respond to this question. Nonetheless, she believes that the preferred citizen is someone that likes to explore things beyond their experience while seeking with desire to embrace nature. The preferred citizen is the person that takes risks and is willing to go outside of their comfort zone to explore creativity. These are people who like to read and discuss what they've read.

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B said that the preferred citizen is:

Informed, empathetic, able to put themselves in somebody else's shoes, able to think critically and logically, able to balance the logic and intellect of an argument with the emotional human impact of some of those decisions without letting emotions solely drive decisions. It's about having the tools, whether you're dealing with issues in medicine or the environment or the government or war or the arts of critical thinking, curiosity, empathy and a sense of responsibility to each other.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C begin his thought process by expressing his view that great societies are measured by the arts and culture that they leave behind. Based on this, he believes that the preferred citizen will be accomplished as an individual, able to work in groups, and able to learn from failure. In addition, he believes that the arts are helping others to understand how to create something of beauty, to move the soul, and to

have an opinion about things of importance. Participant 2C said that he hopes “our society will look at the culture that we’ve left behind and that we are educated human beings, not just people who had good jobs and acquired money, but that we grew as a culture and society.”

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D describes the preferred citizen as educated, literate, and able to gain knowledge. In addition, the preferred citizen is honest and trustworthy, has a strong work ethic and maintains the conviction to deal with adversity and move forward. Kids today need to be able to maintain internal motivation. He believes that the arts provide the learning environment “to learn how to build discipline and trust, how to interact and be honest with one another, how to be a leader, work hard, be motivated, practice, and achieve goals that have been established.”

*Participant #3A* - Participant 3A responded to this question first by speaking about what he believes to be missing in our citizenry. He said, “ I feel we are lacking a sense of accountability, responsibility, and civic responsibility and civic accountability....students must understand that we are part of a larger community, and that our (educational) community is a starting place for us to begin to connect with each other.” He continued to suggest that as an educator, he believes students must be curious and maintain a sense of awareness and that arts education plays a critical role in developing the preferred citizen:

I think it gives kids a sense of belonging and a sense of being centered in their education. It's something that is constant. It provides an opportunity for them to engage in authentic conversations with their peers and

teachers. It has the highest level of interest for them, and it is the greatest opportunity for students to personalize their experience.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B shared that he believes our leaders [national, state, and local] have lost their vision about what constitutes a preferred citizen. Instead, they tend to be focused on what is needed to be successful in the economic part of life. Participant 3B cautioned me to not lose sight of the students we serve and what needs they have that will help them to feel good about themselves today and into the future. He asserts that when we miss this element of the human being that we end up with tragedy like Columbine and Sandy Hook. This is characteristic one.

1. The preferred citizen is a leader and innovator in whatever their profession might be and is able to economically support himself.

Characteristic two is the ability to understand and juggle all that is coming at you. For example, participant 3B feels intellectually insufficient to keep pace with fast moving technology.

2. The preferred citizen is someone intellectually capable of dealing with lots of issues...judgments about our elections, understanding our history, and being intellectually curious about things.

Finally, characteristic three is has to do with the growing diversity in society. The preferred citizen will be tolerant.

3. The preferred citizen has the ability to interact with people ... the ability to enjoy life as an individual as well as with others that are like them and those that are not.

In summary, participant 3B shared that he believes that the arts help to develop human beings and provide another window for people to think about the world, experience the world, and communicate. The arts invite people to think, create, and process in a different way.

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C believes that the preferred citizen is engaged in whatever they see as valuable while at the same time seeking to become informed. Much like teachers asking students to be present, the preferred citizen will take on whatever they deem necessary and do so with commitment.

*Participant #3D* - “A more liberal education helps the citizenry appreciate beauty and aesthetics so as to have a more creative, inventive, intuitive side to our thinking that goes beyond function to that of being artful.” This was among the first comments shared by participant 3D when speaking about the preferred citizen. He went on to talk about having a well-educated citizenry that might best come from students taking home and sharing what they’ve learned.

*Value of Arts during Accountability (Many, but not all participants spoke about this).*

*Participant #1A* - -----None-----

*Participant #1B* - Participant 1B shared that he has the wonderful privilege travel the country in the capacity of a consultant to schools. These experiences have convinced him that increased accountability has very much impacted the arts. He said, “In schools I visit around the country they are cutting arts programs...it’s the first thing to go. For us, if and when we face tough decisions, we will not isolate any one area – we just refuse to accept that one discipline is any less important than others.”

*Participant #1C* - -----None-----

*Participant #1D* - -----None-----

*Participant #2A* - Participant 2A was willing to share her view that the arts have always been fringe in schools. As such, she believes that things [the treatment of the arts in education] really haven't changed. As an example, in tough financial times, the arts are always on the chopping block. At her school, however, they are fortunate enough to have the resources, but then struggle getting the kids to commit time to their artistic endeavors as they have such demanding course mandates.

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B responded to the notion of arts in an era of accountability to that of being a necessary luxury. He went on to describe that in a war-torn world where your next meal is in question, that you may believe the arts to be a luxury. However, at the same time, it may be this very reality where one could argue the arts are greatly needed. He described it in the following manner: "The arts push us to get outside of your own head and think of something from somebody else's perspective. It forces us to care about something other than "me," which perhaps is the definition of maturity and humanity."

*Participant #2C* - While not against accountability, participant 2C expressed concern that the things that we are measuring are being decided more from politicians than educators. He went on to say that while we are not measuring the outcome of arts education, they do track [and find interesting] the success rate in those areas being measured [math and science] against those students involved in the arts. The fear he says is that "short-sighted administrators and politicians may say that if it's not tested, it's not important."



*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D explained that the biggest change since accountability has become such a focused perspective is that enrollment numbers now must justify the amount of staff they have. While we have tried to be creative in ensuring that programs can remain strong with quality staff even when the numbers might be low, it is much more difficult than it used to be. “He shared that “Even though we have a quality fine arts program, they are not immune to the fact that we would have to restrict because we do have a certain number of teachers that we can maintain.”

*Participant #3A*- Participant 3A said in a deflated manner, “yeah...I think we’ve let it change...I’d like to conduct a longitudinal study tracking what happened to the career track of those that once studied the arts – where do they end up, and do they attribute any of their success to what they learned in the arts”? This response to how the view of the arts has evolved alongside increased accountability was not tremendously positive. In fact, participant 3A suggested that in order to shift the paradigm, he and other arts advocates will need to redirect the message to one where highly successful people are aware of how they might be able to attribute their success to their arts experience.

*Participant #3B* - -----None-----

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C spoke of his perspective that the approach to an arts education has really changed because people perceive that it should. In part, this is a response to the perceptual tsunami, which is magnified by people’s emotions, as well as to what the media convince people are of value. Instead, he argues, “we must find ways to balance out creativity and the ability for kids to express themselves regardless of accountability – the two should be able to co-exist in a productive and balanced way.”

*Participant #3D* - Participant 3D gave the following example in support of what the future needs to be responsive to today's accountability:

It's the group work that everybody's afraid of that is the most meaningful experience for our kids. The collaborative nature of problem solving can be unsettling. The unification of a team with a variety of skill sets. Finding out how the weakest team member and the strongest team member need to be on the same page for us to move forward.

There's often a battle when we say, let's cut our losses and get rid of these two or three people because we'll move much quicker without them.

Meanwhile, the fine arts embraces the notion that these two or three people are a part of the entire picture. You can't just cut them out. You've got to develop a society within which they are feeling just as productive and showing that they do have a gift, we just haven't found it yet.

*Final Open Question (Many, but not all participants spoke about this).*

*Participant #1A* - Participant 1A left me with this: "I've always asked students to give me good, consistent effort. To show respect for the arts, their peers, and the learning process. With this in mind, success will follow!"

*Participant #1B* - -----None-----

*Participant #1C* - -----None-----

*Participant #1D*- "What's inside the person who is the recipient of art? This background and understanding of the arts will mean that we interpret what we hear, see, or feel very differently." This is how participant 1D sees the world. He also has strong feelings about our citizenry. He said:

While not everyone must be a trained artist, everybody needs to be familiar enough with the art forms to understand what the artist was saying and doing and communicating. This familiarity will mean that when they hang up their violin and go off to be a computer science major, they may go across the street to Orchestra Hall and they'll get it.

*Participant #2A* - -----None-----

*Participant #2B* - Participant 2B concluded by saying that he was surprised at how philosophical he spoke given that in his daily life it [his work and views] feel so much more practical.

*Participant #2C* - Participant 2C left me with this final thought, “even when participating in the evolution of the arts, we must never forget our core and our history.”

*Participant #2D* - Participant 2D chuckled sharing his surprise that I had not asked about maintaining relationships with teachers. He shared that he thinks teachers are nervous [about the future of the arts] and that he is really trying to work with them and have conversations before action is ever taken. Participant 2D said that his goal is to continue to develop trusting relationships.

*Participant #3A* - This final opportunity for participant 3A was one he took full advantage of. His address is below:

The medium has to be the message and the personality that's driving it. So, if you don't have a spokesperson that is on fire, you're not going to have a program because no one is advocating for the arts other than people who are in the arts. So, you have to be your best advocate. People can't get their mind around how all-encompassing the arts are to our survival. We are

going to be a society of narcissists who can only focus on what they need because they are driven by the product that they produce. That's our role: to quit lamenting the demise of the arts. To quit blaming ignorant people and to begin giving them the information they need to be enlightened enough to make the right decision for the arts for our country to move forward.

*Participant #3B* - Participant 3B took this opportunity to revisit his desire to be able to ask – “what’s your vision for education, what are the qualities of a student graduating from one of our high schools, and what do you want that student to be.” He asked rhetorically:

So, how come we’ve moved away from the expected and common response? How do we get back to that, and if need be, argue louder against some of the political voices on the economic side that have pushed us into a certain narrow channel of education?

*Participant #3C* - Participant 3C sees us [the educational industry] moving more toward STEM, which creates an interesting tension in that it is tough for kids to do the pre-engineering program and an arts class because of the restrictions we place on them in school. That said, they just learned that 60% of their marching alumni are in the School of Engineering at the University of Illinois. As such, participant 3C added, “we need to discover new, highly collaborative relationships between these different parts of the pie assisting our kids in being innovative and creative.”

*Participant #3D* - -----None-----

## Summary

Documents available from The University of Chicago Laboratory School, from both when Dewey was imagining a different kind of school as well as his later writings, were studied to better understand the beliefs that led Dewey to desire changes to education. His philosophical and educational beliefs and values were described, explained, and triangulated with a synthesis of his work.

Twelve educational leaders and arts advocates were interviewed for this study. The answers to the questions they were asked have been presented in this chapter and in some cases triangulated with public documents.

As this research utilized a qualitative approach, this researcher was able to gain more insight regarding the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education using oral history gained by interviewing participants. Although the interview summaries capture highlights of responses, they do not capture every individual comment or thought. The next chapter, therefore, will provide additional insight into the value of arts education as described by each participant.

Particular attention was paid to whether or not any patterns arose between the schools. Patterns were sought regarding whether or not there were similarities amongst leaders' attitudes and beliefs, as well as the schools themselves, given that they had all reached a set pinnacle of success in regard to the level of quality of their arts education program. Comparing and contrasting the oral histories of The Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction was done with The University of Chicago Laboratory School to further tell a story of how maintaining a focus on an education that embraces independent thinking, creative beings, and a desire to develop students to be expressive about their feelings, is

either more or less successful on measures of education which are so carefully monitored during the eras of efficiency and accountability. Through comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher reveals cyclical behaviors that should guide future decisions about how best to lead a school.

In the next chapter, the interview data are analyzed and synthesized to formally answer the research questions posed for this study. The questions are:

- 1A. What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era, and specifically, The University of Chicago Laboratory School?
- 1B. What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?
- 1C. How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?
2. What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?
- 3A. According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?
- 3B. How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?
4. What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### **Overview of the Research Project**

The primary purpose of this study was to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. This was accomplished through the study and analysis of historical documents of the well-known University of Chicago Laboratory School of The Progressive Era supported by an oral history of three exceptional schools identified since 2007 by The Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts as Schools of Distinction. By comparing two distinct time periods in education, more than 100 years removed, this researcher was able to reveal cyclical behaviors that can guide future decisions about how to lead a school in creating a well-rounded preferred citizen.

Clarity was sought to understand how arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. The intent was to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

In the first two chapters, an overview of research comparing and contrasting The Efficiency Movement of more than 100 years ago to the accountability era of today was

provided. In chapter three, this researcher explained that this study would be conducted using a historical documentary methodology, supplemented with oral history, of The University of Chicago Laboratory School as well as three nationally recognized suburban Chicago high schools of today. This was done while drawing particular attention to political and social characteristics. To further understand how public education in America arrived at today's era of accountability, this researcher also provided a chronology of educationally related legislation, which develop a basis for inquiry as to why some schools have been able to resist pressure to reduce offerings in arts education.

In Chapter IV, this researcher presented the data from this research in two parts. Part I consisted of The University of Chicago Laboratory School during The Progressive Era, the History and Influence of The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and finally a section titled Today Looking Back – A Voice from Within. Part II profiled The Kennedy Schools of distinction highlighting sample selection, methodology, and the data collected from the oral histories.

This historical documentary research study involved both a review of historical documents as well as supplemental oral history gathered from multiple interviews. Upon completion of gathering the oral history interviews, responses were transcribed verbatim and responses were analyzed for salient categories and emergent themes. Such categories and themes include those related to school leader experience, background of the school, the school as a place that values arts education, decision-making, personal experiences with tension associated with accountability, and future implications.

Comparing and contrasting the oral histories of The Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction against documents related to The University of Chicago Laboratory School



tells a story of how maintaining a focus on an education that embraces independent thinking, creative beings, and a desire to develop students to be expressive about their feelings, is either more or less successful on measures of education which have been so carefully monitored during the eras of efficiency and accountability.

Not unlike what we experienced a century ago, reform continues. Since the beginning of this study in the spring of 2011, it is worth noting that the accountability movement in education has continued to be on the forefront of educational initiatives at both the state and national level. In this short time alone, the state of Illinois has applied for and is awaiting a waiver application from the federal No Child Left Behind Act. As part of this application, Illinois has committed to changes in education, which include a move toward a new teacher and administrator evaluation system as well as a new national curriculum.

The new evaluation model, known as the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), is a move toward an assessment system where students, teachers, and administrators alike will be measured. The new national curriculum is known as Common Core, which according to the website [corestandards.org](http://corestandards.org), has as its purpose to:

Provide a consistent, clear understanding of what students are expected to learn, so teachers and parents know what they need to do to help them.

The standards are designed to be robust and relevant to the real world, reflecting the knowledge and skills that our young people need for success in college and careers. With American students fully prepared for the future, our communities will be best positioned to compete successfully in

the global economy. (Common Core State Standards Initiative, n.d., para.

1)

These recent initiatives are pushing teachers and administrators to new levels of standardization and accountability at a time when as a society we are also facing increased levels of social emotional challenges with our youth. As this chapter reveals the findings of this research, these changes must be kept in mind.

### **Discussion of the Findings**

The primary purpose of this study was to access the arguments made, both past and present by advocates for the value of arts education. Specific to this study, the research questions included:

- 1A. What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era, and specifically, The University of Chicago Laboratory School?
- 1B. What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?
- 1C. How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?
2. What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?
- 3A. According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?
- 3B. How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?

4. What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?

Based on data obtained from reviewed documents and oral histories, the following was discovered:

### **Research Question 1A**

*What were arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the Progressive Era and specifically The University of Chicago Laboratory School?*

Based on the data obtained in this study, it was Dewey's desire to create a new kind of school, in part to respond in opposition of the factory model, which called for uniformity. Instead, Dewey desired to achieve a diverse and critical citizenry. Dewey was witnessing a decline in community and noticed that young people were losing opportunity to learn the art of democratic participation and as such sought for an education that could make up for this loss.

Dewey argued that a school could be a cooperative community while developing in individuals their own capacities and used the Laboratory School to test his ideas and beliefs. For example, he hired a staff that believed in and were willing to develop teaching methods that cultivated the child's intuition and innate search for truth.

Dewey's background in philosophy often meant that his beliefs and educational principles were shrouded in deeper discussions about life and community. However, one can attempt to cull principles from his vast body of writings. As such, identifying the value of arts during the Progressive Era must be interpreted. Doing so might result in a list like what Dr. Catherine Bell assembled:

1. Shape circumstances to prompt and sustain systematic reflection, so that students learn to perceive the internal relation between means and ends, doing and undergoing.
2. Connect academic subject matter to everyday life so that students appreciate the intrinsic value of applying thought to bringing out the best in immediate experience.
3. Encourage students to learn actively for themselves, shaping their own purposes, devising their own experiments and drawing their own conclusions.
4. Create a community of learners. Through meaningful social interaction, students can increase the breadth and depth of their capacities, interests and knowledge, as well as their sensitivity and responsiveness. This includes expressing themselves clearly and listening carefully.
5. Give students opportunities to contribute to the common good and in doing so, develop their own unique capacities.

In reviewing these principles, one could infer the value of arts education in the mind of Dewey was hidden in his philosophies about getting students to think for themselves and use the arts to improve the everyday experience. More specifically, Dewey often wrote about the enlivening effects of living artfully. He described the role the arts can play in making our experiences as complete, as full, as total in their vitality as we can. Furthermore, Dewey believed that individuality was a matter of the spirit, of soul, and of mind.

## Summary

According to Dewey and his vision for The University of Chicago Laboratory School, the arts are part of the intrinsic value of everyday life. They contribute to an individual who actively learns for himself, while also through ensemble, and acknowledges that the collaboration of a community of learners can create something even more powerful. The arts enliven our spirit and soul.

Dewey articulated his beliefs even in the face of opposition. While others believed in and supported the factory model so common during The Progressive Era. Dewey and supporters of his belief of educating the whole child believed that doing so would contribute to the creation of a diverse and critical citizenry much like that of today. The arts were just one ingredient in support of this goal.

## Research Question 1B

*What are arguments by advocates for the value of arts education during the accountability era by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education award recipient schools?*

In schools I visit around the country, they are cutting arts programs...it's the first thing to go. For us, if and when we face tough decisions, we will not isolate any one area – we just refuse to accept that one discipline is any less important than others. (Participant 1B)

The value of arts education during the accountability era is based on oral history data obtained from the 12 participants in this study. The primary theme and message throughout the data is that the arts bring value to the human spirit, helping us to find our soul, while reminding us of what is important in life. Clearly evident in the data is that

the value of the arts has been and always will be the ultimate measure of society, regardless of the time. This core belief serves to make the part of this question that focuses on the current era of accountability seemingly irrelevant.

The arts allow us to deeply explore who we are as human beings, individually and collectively helping us to be more sensitive and understanding of others. They provide a universal tool for communication, often helping us appreciate and understand other cultures through providing a place of talent development, self-expression, and community. They enrich life, make us happy, and help us to learn how to take risks and balance our thinking. The arts, and their value, are held within the eye of the beholder, and provide for different ways of viewing the world.

In an era of accountability, the arts can be seen as a necessary luxury. In a war-torn world where your next meal is in question, you may believe the arts to be a luxury. However, at the same time, it may be this very reality where one could argue the arts are greatly needed for us to get outside of our own head and think of something from someone else's perspective.

If the arts are the ultimate measure of a society then we must be careful in what we choose to measure. In light of this, the arts help to remind us of what is important in life. In response to today's culture of accountability, Participant 3D summarized the confusion about priorities:

It's the group work that everybody's afraid of that is the most meaningful experience for our kids. The collaborative nature of problem solving can be unsettling. The unification of a team with a variety of skill sets. Finding out how the weakest team member and the strongest team member need to

be on the same page for us to move forward.

There's often a battle when we say, let's cut our losses and get rid of these two or three people because we'll move much quicker without them.

Meanwhile, the fine arts embrace the notion that these two or three people are a part of the entire picture. You can't just cut them out. You've got to develop a society within which they are feeling just as productive and showing that they do have a gift, we just haven't found it yet.

### **Summary**

According to these advocates, the value of arts during an era of accountability is no different than any other time in history. However, its importance is truly multifaceted and can be boiled down to the exploration of who we are, what it means to be human, and how we express ourselves as a people. Therefore, as the ultimate measure of a society, the arts are a necessary luxury. The arts help us to view the world through different lenses and be more accepting of others. The arts are a universal communication tool and often serve as a place for self-expression and community, which helps to make us feel unique as we work to discover our soul.

More specifically, the participants in this study from the Schools of Distinction made the assertion that arts education is as important and necessary as any other curricular area. In fact, participants wasted no time identifying learned skills and traits contributing to the development of the preferred citizen.

**Research Question 1C**

*How are these arguments for the value of arts education between the Progressive Era, The University of Chicago Laboratory School, and the accountability era Schools of Distinction similar and different?*

The arts are helping others to understand how to create something of beauty, to move the soul, and to have an opinion about things of importance. (Participant 2C)

With more than a century separating these two eras, it may be a bit of a surprise that the arguments for the value of arts education have remained quite consistent. Table 3 below highlights four themes of each era and how they relate. Each theme speaks to what one experiences and learns through involvement in the arts.

**Summary**

Note that within the context of each era, specific language was used to define related values. Additionally, the similarities between the eras are truly powerful in speaking to the cyclical nature of these themes. For example, Schools of Distinction participants spoke about how much arts education contributes to the development of leaders in society, while documents from The Laboratory School spoke of how their unique approach of educating the whole child would create a community of learners. While these may not seem to be aligned, in fact the voices of the Schools of Distinction participants made strong arguments to the nature by which developing leaders in society is driven by tolerance and acceptance of others, and that these very characteristics are what contribute to the development of a community of learners. Hence, while using



slightly different terminology, it becomes obvious that having more than a century pass didn't do much to change the arguments for the value of arts education.

Table 3

*Value of Arts Education*

Era	University of Chicago Laboratory School	Kennedy Schools of Distinction
V A L U E	Importance in Everyday Life	Tenacity and Discipline
	Active Learning	Engaged Learning
	Community of Learners	Leaders in Society
	Spirit / Soul	Creative Mind

**Research Question 2**

*What were character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era?*

Informed, empathetic, able to put themselves in somebody else's shoes, able to think critically and logically, able to balance the logic and intellect of an argument with the emotional human impact of some of those decisions without letting emotions solely drive decisions. It's about having the tools, whether you're dealing with issues in medicine or the environment or the government or war or the arts of critical thinking, curiosity, empathy and a sense of responsibility to each other. (Participant 2B)

The articulation of specific character traits must be culled from the various documents and oral histories involved with this study. However, prior to specific

character traits identified in either era, this researcher provides Table 4 in comparison form to help articulate the big picture in regard to the numerous conditions of the time.

Table 4

*Specific Character Traits*

	<b>The University of Chicago Laboratory School</b>	<b>John F. Kennedy Schools of Distinction</b>
<b>Era Defined By</b>	Efficiency	Accountability
<b>Educational Tension</b>	Standardization vs. Whole Child	
<b>Educational Reform</b>	People / Government Seek to Reform Education	
	Enrollment Explosion / Immigration Factory Model is Born	
	First Standardized Test	Expansion of Standardized Testing
	Cultural Uniformity	Citizenry Mirrors Diverse Nation
	Compulsory Education	No Child Left Behind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Race to the Top</li> <li>• Common Core</li> <li>• New Teacher Evaluation</li> </ul>
<b>Social Conditions</b>	Strained Relationships Progressive / Liberal Ideas Find Opposition	
		Society Undermines Creativity
<b>Political &amp; Economic Conditions</b>	Tight Budgets / Cuts to Education	
	Great Depression	Great Recession
	Vast Corporate Power / Private Wealth	Income Gap Greatest in a Century
<b>Characteristics of Sample Schools</b>	Could Reform Society Whole Child School is a Cooperative Community Educate a Dutiful Citizen	Complexity of the Individual Student Centered Collaboration Responsible Citizen <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Imaginative</li> <li>• Creative</li> <li>• Problem Solver</li> </ul>
	Support Industrial Economy Develop Vocational Roles	Develop a 21 <sup>st</sup> Century Learner

**University of Chicago Laboratory School – Progressive Era.** For the first time, during the Progressive Era, education had been mandated for everyone, not just the wealthy. In addition, the heightened accountability, which brought about the first

standardized test, was also an indicator that the preferred citizen would demonstrate a specific standard. As such, it had become more evident than ever that the preferred citizen was an educated citizen.

The Progressive Era was further defined by a time in which many Americans began to be more reflective about the political and social effects of vast concentrations of corporate power and private wealth. Therefore, the preferred citizen of this era was not only dutiful as had been the expectation, but was also engaged and informed about government and as such, maintained a sense of civic and personal accountability and responsibility.

In reviewing the School of Education Prospectus from 1901-1902, Dewey highlights the general purpose of the school to include building character in terms of citizenship and community life. During the Progressive Era, and the tensions that existed between national and local governments, the duties of citizenship and community were of utmost importance. Through inquiry, discussion, and reflection, the preferred citizen would have been able to demonstrate comprehension and understanding of both.

**Kennedy Center Schools of Distinction – Accountability Era.** According to the voices of arts advocacy from the Kennedy Schools of Distinction, the preferred citizen is one that values the members of a group or organization as more important than the individual. This behavior is indicative of someone that works in groups, learns from failure, and is both honest and trustworthy. Furthermore, these characteristics are accompanied by a strong work ethic, often contributing to the development of an accomplished individual seen amongst peers as a leader and innovator.

None of the aforementioned characteristics would be possible in a preferred citizen if it were not for them having a rich, liberal arts education. They must be well-read, well-rounded, and knowledgeable about many things. In addition, this would require them to be culturally literate and be willing to explore and take risks beyond their comfort zone. Such characteristics and behaviors would contribute to their intellectual capacity, helping to provide them with the conviction to deal with adversity. Therefore, without question, and much like the Progressive Era, the preferred citizen is engaged and informed on a civic and personal, all while maintaining a sense of accountability and responsibility.

### **Summary**

Following extensive review of documents from The University of Chicago Laboratory School as well as the oral histories from the participants of the Schools of Distinction, it becomes notably clear as to cyclical nature of the conditions of the time as well as characteristics of the preferred citizen.

Table 5 below highlights eight themes of each era and how they compare to one another. Each theme speaks to what defines the character traits of the preferred educated citizen during each era. Furthermore when placing the themes side-by-side, it becomes evident that four of the themes are a direct match, coming from exact verbiage culled from the research. The remaining themes are listed aside the words most closely aligned to the philosophy. For example, the final theme of “community and connects with all people” are viewed and defined so similarly that they have been listed side-by-side.

Table 5

*Era-Based Themes*

Era	University of Chicago Laboratory School	Kennedy Schools of Distinction
T H E M E S	Educated	
	Dutiful	Conviction to Deal with Adversity
	Engaged and Informed	
	Tenacious	Takes Risks / Learns from Failure
	Civic Responsibility	
	Personal Responsibility	
	Values Citizenship	Exposure to Culture / Social Justice
	Community	Connects with All People

**Research Question 3A**

*According to the advocates, what role does arts education serve in developing the preferred citizen?*

The value of arts education in developing the preferred citizen is based on oral history data obtained from the twelve participants in this study. Summaries of some of the most salient points follow.

The arts teach discipline, tenacity, perseverance, and problem solving and serve as a forum for vigorous learning that requires collaboration and passion. They are an incubator for creativity, helping to promote different ways of thinking, contributing to the development of a well-rounded person, which helps to bring balance to life.

The arts develop discipline of long-term skill development and commitment, and high-level social interaction. They are the place in school where students experience high-level thinking, allowing them to experience a side of themselves that requires encouragement and nurturing.

Given that the arts engage students and develop a deeper connection to the school and community, it becomes the responsibility of arts education to train tomorrow's leaders. In addition, since the arts are one of the first entities that respond to shifts in society, the artists in society are often the first to have the desire or ability to articulate the tough questions that eventually end up shaping our decisions and future.

### **Summary**

According to these advocates, the value of arts education is vast, and yet most often summarized in how it helps individuals explore and grow their creative mind. In addition, participants spoke of the various character traits that help students of the arts to become well-rounded. They spoke of how the arts help people to be tenacious and develop the discipline to maintain a long-term commitment to skill development.

Furthermore, this perseverance helps students of the arts to act as problem solvers and high level thinkers who are socially vibrant. As such, the artists are often leaders and those who are able to have a positive voice to social change.

These specific traits articulated by the participants from the Schools of Distinction help to demonstrate the cyclical nature of peoples' beliefs as they have a remarkable similarity to the basic tenets of Dewey's philosophy and desire to open a different kind of school. For instance, Dewey spoke of his school being a place that would cultivate the child's innate search for truth and would be a cooperative community where the whole child would be nurtured. Much like the Schools of Distinction, his school would be the place where students would develop a spirit, soul, and mind, and would develop the tenacity to learn for themselves.

**Research Question 3B**

*How is the role of arts education similar or different between each era?*

**Similarities.** The role of arts education is similar in the sense that in both time periods there was significant advocacy related to the importance of what an arts education brings to the human spirit. On a more micro-level, in the field of education, there has always been and continues to be a voice of support to the notion that an arts education helps to develop independent thinkers, creative beings, and expressive communicators.

The historical trend in education and what we learn from Dewey's experience in creating the Laboratory School demonstrates a relationship and rebounding effect in the attitude of the public and political sectors toward public education. The Progressive Era was defined in how it followed the Efficiency Movement and what Frederick Taylor called the "Cult of Efficiency." Today, we have an era of high stakes accountability that many believe was sparked in 1983 by *A Nation at Risk*.

There is little debate that the ideology and goals of the Efficiency Movement bear a striking resemblance to the discourse and debate of today's politics, which directly influence the state of our public school system. If the entire field of education can emit such incredible similarity in response to the conditions of the time, then it comes as no surprise that the attitude toward arts education does so as well.

**Differences.** Much more legislation exists today, essentially requiring schools to provide services far greater than ever anticipated. Examples of this legislation and their primary focus are listed below:

1944 – GI Bill: Higher Education is Valued

1958 – NDEA: Greater Focus on Math and Science

1965 – ESEA: Highlighted a Back to Basics Approach

1975 – IDEA: Special Education is Mandatory for All

2002 – ESEA / NCLB: Student Achievement - Accountability

In response to the staggering amount of new legislation, John Mahlmann (1979), the executive director of the National Art Education Association, attempted to make sense of what he called “a rather confused picture of arts education, politics, and the varied factors, agencies, and influences that are concerned with and affect policy” (p. 72).

Yet another difference in the perceived role of arts education can be seen in the breadth of the voice of mainstream media. Imagery and symbolism, related to the psychology that bad news sells, is no different today than it was a century ago. However, thanks to significant advancements in technology, what happens anywhere in the world today is available to us within minutes. With a constant message of fear and failure relative to the quality of education, it is no surprise that immediate access to information is changing the way we view education altogether, let alone in the arts.

### **Summary**

The role of arts education remains in the eye of the beholder. While legislative changes continue to impact and influence leaders in education at the local level, the role of arts education continues to be seen as a well-aligned means to develop the qualities we desire to see shape our citizenry. Based on this research, those qualities include a call to have educators focus on character, citizenship, community, life, journey of inquiry, discussion, and reflection.



Regardless of era, the similarities in the role of arts education far outweigh the differences. In fact during both eras, there was significant advocacy for arts education and how exposure to the arts impacted the human spirit. In addition, the arts both then and now were viewed as an incubator for the creation of independent thinkers and creative beings.

The differences have more to do with the advancement of our society than anything to do with the arts. For example, the difference in the speed and amount of legislation has had an impact today that didn't exist a century ago. Similarly, advancements in technology have made it easier for economic and political issues to reach the consumer, potentially spreading fear and concern more quickly than ever thought imaginable.

#### **Research Question 4**

*What are the implications for today's educational leader in balancing the importance of providing every child with a well-rounded education with contemporary expectations of accountability and standardization?*

Art is almost always at the forefront of major social change, often causing it, often responding and hitting on the sensibilities that are in the public and moving it forward giving it a voice in a really practical way.

(Participant 2B)

It connects to our being human. It's something that expresses our emotions; it gives people an opportunity to find a place where things don't fit. It allows people to accept ambiguity as a natural part of their existence.

It keeps a student from believing there is only one right answer and

everything else is wrong. It allows people to have the idea that they can contribute in a significant way even if what they have to say is different than their friends. The arts allow for differences, for people to identify what they can do, what their skill set is, and what they love to do. The arts tap into a passion that is real and tangible and can translate into other subjects. (Participant 3A)

As politically driven expectations for increased accountability rise, the challenges emerging from the entanglement of society, politics, and education become increasingly daunting. Faced with immense accountability and accompanying consequences when benchmarks are not met, it becomes easy to imagine how difficult it is becoming for school level leaders to balance all of the demands and interests of today's stakeholders. For local building or district level leaders, decisions about how best to lead a school become even more difficult when confronting conflicting expectations and competing interests from such a variety of policymakers and stakeholders.

Many school leaders today are struggling to effectively manage the tension associated with a desire for distributive justice or the socially just allocation of goods and resources. The result has been a staggering growth in high schools touting the rigor of their curricula. In response to such an intense push toward accountability, and for students to receive college level experiences while still in high school, many schools have struggled to continue to make time for elective classes that are not directly tested on achievement exams. When leaders of today's education system are partaking in conversations at the local level relative to how to improve education, this researcher would encourage them to remain cognizant of the value of an arts education to the human

spirit. With both a finite amount of time, along with tightening budgets, many schools are having to make the difficult decisions related to programming. Reducing or cutting the arts is not the answer.

This point is appropriately illustrated in *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, where they found that:

Illinois falls below national averages in providing instruction in each of the four arts disciplines (visual arts, music, theater or dance)... Twenty percent of Illinois principals, however, reported having no arts program of any kind in their school; 16% reported offering one arts discipline; 38% reported offering two; 18% reported offering visual arts, music and theater; and only 8% reported a presence of all four arts disciplines.

(Illinois Creates Coalition, 2005, p. 11)

It is absolutely essential for leaders to see the connection between the push for a rigorous curriculum and college level experiences with that of the current era of accountability. Even when armed with the findings from *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student*, a school administrator might find it very difficult to advocate for maintaining a strong arts education. With a growing push for America to be a competitive force in the new world economy, part of the tension felt in a school is in determining what really matters and convincing those with opposing beliefs of what matters and why.

In opposition to this narrowing of curriculum, advocates such as Sir Ken Robinson, Senior Advisor for Education Policy at The Getty Foundation, said, “America needs a workforce that is flexible, adaptable and highly creative; and it needs an educational system that can develop these qualities in everyone” (2005, p. 26). Alan

Greenspan, the Chairman of the U.S. Federal Reserve offered, “The arts develop skills and habits of mind that are important for workers in the new economy of ideas” (2005, p. 27). Hearing well-known voices can be very helpful in supporting leaders that choose to not abandon the arts when pushing for students to engage in a more rigorous curriculum.

### **Summary**

So, what is the purpose of public education? Should we be held accountable to merely meeting a predetermined standard for the sake of accountability or should we be keenly aware and responsible for the development of young minds that are able to problem solve and think creatively?

The numerous influences thrust upon school leaders are simply too abundant to mention. However, recognizing and acknowledging the complexity of leadership as it manifests itself in the curriculum is something that school leaders must not only be aware of, but need to embrace so that they are adequately able to respond. Leaders should be compelled to know what they value and reflect upon those values as they persuade those around them to make decisions that affect the learning of students. Awareness of the importance and value of arts education should be a critical factor in making curricular decisions.

Today’s educational leader must take the initiative to learn and understand the context of our time and then assist in reframing the work at hand. They must take upcoming change as an opportunity to see specific curricular areas be maintained and potentially have resurgence. These critical discussions can’t be left to chance. Instead, leaders must inspire others that think differently and be articulate in balancing the needs of all stakeholders. Given the isolation experienced by educational leaders today, it is

critically important that they continue to work to understand the perspective of others. Much like Dewey and the participants from the Schools of Distinction, we must be the translator of this message.

### **Recommendations for Further Research**

While the primary purpose of this study was to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education, other questions also arose throughout this study. Based on the research and results from this study, other recommended areas for future research were identified and include those listed below.

- This study focused on participant voices selected in part, due to their advocacy for arts education. Through the course of this study my curiosity grew as to how the results may have been different if the participants were not arts supporters. A study listening to the voices of non-arts supporters would add significant insight to instructional leadership.
- A case study of one student from either The University of Chicago Laboratory School or a School of Distinction might better allow the researcher to develop deeper levels of understanding of how the action associated with the school impacts the life of an attendee.
- This study did not look at the specific relationship that might have existed between participants and John Dewey. Nonetheless, doing so may offer insight into the behavior of educators. Asking about the participants' knowledge of and affect by Dewey and his principles would further this study. Are participants aware of a connection between these ideals and their own behavior as an educator?

- This study looks specifically at the manner in which accountability is affecting high school curricula and decision-making. Similarly, it would be helpful to do the same with higher education by looking at how they are responding to changes at the K-12 level to ensure that a comprehensive curriculum will continue to be embraced by leaders receiving certification in their programs.
- Throughout this study it was found that many of the participants spoke about who influences them, including authors and consultants. Determining who these consultants are and in what ways their voice is shaping the direction of administrative decision-making and school leadership, would help educators to better understand the value of the arts.
- Many participants in the study spoke to a perception that the arts seem to be absent (or secondary) from so many of the discussions about education. Determining the validity of this perception would assist in determining how the arts get into mainstream discussions about education.
- This study looked specifically at perception and voices of arts advocates. It is not enough to listen to perception alone. Instead one must now ask what the actionable impact of the decision to reduce arts education becomes in the future. Questions considering the culture of these schools and whether or not students are being successful there would be a tremendous contribution to educational research.
- This study looked at arts education for the value of developing a preferred citizen. It did not consider specific initiatives that have helped schools reach a

tipping point in student achievement. Therefore, studying the extent to which the arts have contributed to these initiatives would be of great interest.

- Similar to the above suggestion, is there a specific administrative structure that helps a school find academic success? Do content experts work or do we create isolated leadership positions that operate in closed systems with little understanding of the whole?
- After studying the value of arts education, especially during the eras researched for this study, one must now extend this curiosity to the value of testing and whether or not parents and community members value testing.

### **Conclusion**

The primary purpose of this study was to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education; therefore, it is incumbent upon us to understand the lessons learned from those who have come before us, coupled with today's educational leaders. Given all of this, this researcher has come to understand the influence our local educational leaders have, especially given that nothing that happens in education does so in a vacuum. Instead, it is a response to a prevailing condition, be it social, political, or economical. Therefore, it is incumbent upon leaders to learn from those that have come before us and have wrestled with similar challenges.

It is often said that history repeats itself, from which we should learn. The difficult economic and political reality of our time bare striking similarities to our past, and is certain to be seen yet again in the future. The goal of reforming education is as alive today as it was 100 years ago. The Progressive Movement was a grass roots call to have education be based on real-life experience, while today we see a call to focus on

character, citizenship, community, life, a journey of inquiry, discussion, and reflection. Regardless of the source, qualities we desire to shape our citizenry are common. Among the most commonly stated are: diversity of talents, curiosity, imagination, creativity, entrepreneurship, and passion. Giving voice to the past is a tremendously powerful means of understanding what is important.

The numerous influences thrust upon school leaders are simply too abundant to mention. However, in an era of high-stakes accountability, recognizing and acknowledging the complexity of leadership as it manifests itself in the curriculum is something that school leaders must not only be aware of, but need to embrace so that they are adequately able to respond. Leaders should be compelled to know what they value and reflect upon those values as they persuade those around them to make decisions that affect the learning of students. Awareness of the importance and value of arts education should be a critical factor in making curricular decisions.

### **Discussion**

It is crucial that the findings and conclusions be understood within the changing social, political, and educational environment. Drew Faust, President of Harvard University and Wynton Marsalis, Trumpeter described this context very well in their *USA Today* piece published on January 2, 2014.

Anxiety abounds concerning the demands of our rapidly changing and ever more complicated world and about the ability of our educational system to respond. Yet the education we are fashioning for our children and their children seems ill-suited for the lives they will lead.

We hear widespread calls for "outcomes" we can measure and for



education geared to specific employment needs, but many of today's students will hold jobs that have not yet been invented, deploying skills not yet defined. We not only need to equip them with the ability to answer the questions relevant to the world we now inhabit; we must also enable them to ask the right questions to shape the world to come.

We need education that nurtures judgment as well as mastery, ethics and values as well as analysis. We need learning that will enable students to interpret complexity, to adapt, and to make sense of lives they never anticipated. We need a way of teaching that encourages them to develop understanding of those different from themselves, enabling constructive collaborations across national and cultural origins and identities.

In other words, we need learning that incorporates what the arts teach us. (p. A7)

Since beginning this research in 2010, a great deal has changed in education, both outside and inside of the classroom that has had either a direct or indirect impact on arts education. Driven by various reform efforts, Illinois has seen significant discussion and debate about the funding of the pension system. This politically driven discussion is unsettling to most in education and induces fear in many as to what lies ahead. There has also been significant tension surrounding union rights, which is being watched carefully by all interested parties. Closer to the classroom, we have seen the federal government's inability to find common ground and reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, better known as No Child Left Behind. As a result, states (including

Illinois) have applied for additional funding through a program now commonly known as the Race to the Top, which awards states federal funding for meeting certain criteria. Since 2010, criteria associated with this application have become the recent reform movement in Illinois education and include at least two noteworthy components.

Thanks to the Performance Evaluation Reform Act (PERA), principal and teacher evaluation is almost unrecognizable from two years ago. In fact, the process now must include student growth as a significant factor. It requires a new rating system and training for anyone conducting an evaluation. In addition, Senate Bill 7 was soon to follow and addresses topics such as the acquisition of tenure, reductions in force/layoffs and recall rights, and the system for the dismissal of tenured teachers. As anyone might infer, these topics are quite personal and have ushered in a time in education that has been accompanied by intense concern for future generations, while at the same time, leaving many in the profession stunned by fear of what may lie ahead.

The second component associated with the Race to the Top application is a commitment to the Common Core. Illinois joined more than 40 states in a collaborative effort to raise learning standards and improve college and career readiness for all students. The standards establish expectations for what students should learn in English language arts and mathematics. A number of states, including Illinois, have joined together to work with the Partnership for the Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC) to develop a new assessment system aligned to The Common Core.

While almost every aspect of teacher evaluation has changed to include student growth and performance, we see politicians also changing the curriculum and the manner that student growth will be measured. As a result, it comes as no surprise to most that this

is both an exciting, yet challenging time for those serving our children. With this in mind, consider how often school leaders jump on an initiative bandwagon where the only thing that seems to matter is the one initiative being proposed, much like The Common Core. When this occurs, where is the balance? Instead, leaders must be charged with delivering the balance that will continue to provide students with extended opportunity beyond the core curriculum regardless of whether or not one can measure a return on investment.

Found in documents from the University of Chicago Laboratory School, as well as the participant voices from the Kennedy Schools of Distinction, it appears clear that the arts ground people and help those who experience it firsthand to understand how important process is. This valued understanding extends beyond that of the arts and grows into a greater appreciation of the contribution of society.

If part of our calling in education today is to address The Common Core, then arts educators and school leaders must come together to reframe the work at hand. The Common Core then becomes an opportunity for the arts to have resurgence. Much of what is being fostered in common core, such as an inquiry project-based learning, and productive struggle, is exactly what students experience in the arts, especially in the performing arts. The Common Core then becomes the opportunity to launch this conversation. Such a discussion can't be left to chance. It is the responsibility of school leaders to be able to inspire and articulate the value and importance of the relationship between The Common Core and the arts. The Common Core focuses on building the capacity to answer why and is a major philosophical underpinning that promotes rigor through detailed exploration, dialogue, debate and reflection. These rich processes, which creatively engage students and challenge them to be critical thinkers, are applicable to all

areas of study and create meaningful cross-curricular ties between the core subjects and technical content areas such as the arts.

Furthermore, the need for immediate gratification has never been stronger. In fact, the increased use of technology today raises the question of whether or not we are raising a generation of kids in front of screens whose brains are going to be wired differently. If so, what will this mean? Are students feeling disenfranchised by the requirement of certain activities that necessitate a separation of the virtual and real worlds? To the contrary, the arts are a place where students are not able to be distracted. The arts require that students be engaged and present at all times. The study of the arts is helping the 21<sup>st</sup> century student develop an understanding that real world successes follow hard work, dedication, and commitment.

School leaders need to be able to make generational decisions, especially when it comes to the curriculum made available to students. Leadership must be about defining the long-term. Leaders must find a way to embrace a long enough period of time (five-years) to see the impact of our decisions without waiting too long or to the point where people see the goals being so far out as to risk the accuracy or the opportunity to reach the finish line. Leaders today must be bold about their work and in the belief about how important their work is in changing the lives of the students. In consideration of the rapidly changing educational landscape, leaders must trust one another, embrace all content areas, not be afraid to have a loud political voice, and recognize that if they want to get different results, then the programs in the schools must be responsive to today's context.

A great concern is that education is not going to get to a place where there is curricular balance, which includes access to the arts for all students. This is coupled by the notion that American education has at times been held hostage by political forces that may make the future all but impossible to be re-centered. Leaders must begin to present solutions for what needs to be and ensure that they provide a comprehensive curriculum, including arts education to all students.

It is now an exciting time in education and opportunities abound to change the path of the future. Most wouldn't argue that there seems to be a great deal of potential for positive change. Educators must get excited by this notion, but also recognize that the challenge is that they need to figure out how to interpret and communicate the benefits and advantages of a well-rounded education to those without this background or understanding. Therefore, there is a certain amount of creativity that must be employed when talking to those that have a distinctively different background. Translating the message and telling the story of the value and importance of the arts is everyone's responsibility, but most importantly, those serving in a leadership capacity. The idea of building capacity in others is the job of those in education so privileged to do that life changing work.

The attention to detail, problem solving, and risk taking allow for limitless amounts of personal growth and satisfaction, which contribute to the development of strong community ties in a very open-minded and fearless approach to learning. Hence, I leave with the words of Faust and Marsalis (2014):

As we lament the discordant tone of our national conversation, perhaps we should focus less on that which we can easily count. Let's instead look to

the longer run as we teach our children how to practice until it hurts, to bravely take the stage, to imagine, create and innovate and — after hitting that wrong note — follow it up with the right one.

We must teach our children to be ready for a world we cannot yet know, one that will require the attitudes and understanding sparked and nurtured by the experience of the arts.

These are the qualities by which the future will measure us. (p. A7)

APPENDIX A

LETTER OF SUPPORT FROM COOPERATING INSTITUTION

## LETTER OF COOPERATION TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** Perceptions of Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education During an Age of Accountability: Conditions and Qualities that Shape a Citizenry

**Researcher:** Steve Plank

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Janis Fine, Professor and Program Co-Director, Educational Leadership

### **Introduction:**

You are being asked to provide this researcher with access to your school site as part of a research study being conducted by Steve Plank in partial fulfillment of an Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Janis Fine in the Department of Educational Leadership at Loyola University of Chicago.

Your site has been selected for participation because you are affiliated with the University of Chicago Laboratory School or a Chicago area school that has been recognized as a School of Distinction in Arts Education by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to provide this researcher with access to your school site.

### **Purpose:**

Using historical documents and oral history interviews, the purpose of this study is to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. It will examine how these arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. Another major aspect of this study is to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions of the researcher you wish before agreeing to participate in this study. You may contact the researcher at 262-945-7413.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be asked to:



- Sign and return this Letter of Support.” Please download this “Letter of Support” onto your school or personal stationary. Please sign the form and return it to the researcher. Signing and returning this letter of support will indicate your agreement to allow this researcher access to your school site for this research study.
- Collaborate with this researcher to identify participants.

**Participant Recruitment:**

Once access to the school site has been gained, the recruitment of participants will include the following procedure:

- Collaborating with the signatory official to select four leaders that served as a voice of advocacy and support for arts education.
  - Selection will be sought from key administrative groups including curriculum specialists, fine arts department chairs, principals, superintendents, and board members.
  - Selected leaders will have held a position of decision-making at the school for a minimum of three years prior to receipt of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Award.
  - Selected leaders will participate in an hour-long oral history interview where you will be asked questions regarding your educational background, work history, and work experiences. You will be asked to discuss your experiences with arts advocacy and decision-making, and how your values and views may impact your perception of a preferred citizen. Prior to the interview, you will be asked to sign a “Consent to Participate in Research” letter. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcriber hired for this purpose has also signed a confidentiality agreement. In order to increase credibility, member checks will be used in which you will be given a copy of your transcribed interview, to ensure accuracy. After the research project is completed, all audiotapes and transcriptions will be destroyed. Signed consent forms will be kept by this researcher for three years following this study.

**Risks/Benefits:**

During the course of the interview, participants will be asked to recall and discuss their own personal experiences with advocating for arts education. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

While there are no direct benefits to participating in this study, there may be a benefit to having their voice heard and the opportunity to reflect on your own participation within the profession. Furthermore, your contribution will provide practicing and emerging school leaders a more clear understanding of perceptions of value and perceived strengths

of arts education especially during an age of accountability as they pertain to the conditions and qualities that shape our citizenry.

**Confidentiality:**

- This study is research in preparation of a doctoral dissertation. As such, the data collected will only be used for this dissertation and for no other purposes.
- Research notes and any documents collected will be stored and made available only to the researcher. When not in use notes and documents will be secured, and upon completion of the research will be destroyed.
- Although only the researcher will have access to notes and collected documents, other people within your school environment may be aware that you are being interviewed.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact:

Researcher:

- Steve Plank @ splankster@gmail.com / 262.945.7413

Faculty Sponsor:

- Dr. Janis Fine @ jfine@luc.edu / 312.915.7022

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

**Statement of Cooperation:**

As the appropriate signatory official, I agree to provide access to our school site for the research to be conducted by Steve Plank, a Loyola Doctoral student. His project, entitled, *“Perceptions of Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education During an Age of Accountability: Conditions and Qualities that Shape a Citizenry”* along with the outlined research protocols are understood.

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**Education Official Signature**

---

**Date**

---

**Researcher’s Signature**

---

**Date**

APPENDIX B

ORAL HISTORY / INTERVIEW SCRIPT

Perceptions of Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education During an Age of  
Accountability: Conditions and Qualities that Shape a Citizenry

*Interview Script*

**Introduction to the Oral History Interview:**

- Introduce myself.
- Thank the participant for their time and willingness to consider being a part of my research. The purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education during an age of accountability, in an effort to compel current school leaders to base decisions upon the conditions and qualities that are desired to shape our citizenry.
- Discuss consent form and obtain signature.

**Questions:**

I will be using a semi-structured interview protocol. The interview questions have been designed to be asked in a specific order and yet, I want to have the flexibility to use the participant responses to guide the interview.

*School leader experience and background in the school.*

1. How many years and in what capacity have you been at the school?
2. Describe your educational background.
3. Describe your work history.
4. What is unique and different about working at “X” school?

*The School as place that values Arts Education*

5. Describe the learning culture in the school.
  - Follow up – Provide a concrete example of the importance of arts education in this culture.
6. Explain how you interpret the value of arts education in your school.
  - Follow up – What beliefs and practices demonstrate this?
7. In what ways do the arts contribute to the school culture?
8. What has the arts done for you?
9. What is the value of the arts?

*Decision-Making*

10. Has your decision-making process changed as accountability has risen? If so, in what ways?
11. What lenses do you use when making decisions?

The above questions are designed to be open-ended, which may lead to questions unique to each of the study participants.

APPENDIX C  
CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION

Stephen T. Plank  
23020 88<sup>th</sup> Place  
Salem, WI 53168

Date

District's Name  
Participant's Name  
District Address  
District City

Dear (Insert Participant's Name),

Thank you for agreeing to participate in my research study. I would like to take this opportunity to confirm our meeting date of \_\_\_(Date)\_\_\_, at \_\_\_(Time and Location)\_\_\_ . Also, I will be bringing a copy of the informed consent form to this interview for you to review and sign.

I look forward to meeting with you.

Sincerely,

Stephen T. Plank  
Doctoral Student with Loyola University

APPENDIX D

CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

## CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

**Project Title:** Perceptions of Value and Perceived Strengths of Arts Education During an Age of Accountability: Conditions and Qualities that Shape a Citizenry

**Researcher:** Stephen T. Plank

**Faculty Sponsor:** Dr. Janis Fine, Professor and Program Co-Director, Educational Leadership

### **Introduction:**

You are being asked to take part in a research study being conducted by Stephen T. Plank in partial fulfillment of an Educational Doctorate in Educational Leadership under the supervision of Dr. Janis Fine in the Department of Educational Leadership at Loyola University of Chicago.

You are being asked to participate because you are affiliated with the University of Chicago Laboratory School or a Chicago area school that has been recognized as a School of Distinction in Arts Education by the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

Please read this form carefully and ask any questions you may have before deciding whether to participate in the study.

### **Purpose:**

Using historical documents and oral history interviews, the purpose of this study is to access the arguments made, both past and present, by advocates for the value of arts education. It will examine how these arguments and perceived strengths, relative to the benefits of arts education, have been used to support curricular decisions. Another major aspect of this study is to learn from these advocates the beliefs that drive their behaviors and actions, as well as their perceptions regarding the strengths of an arts education that assist in developing a citizen who exhibits behaviors such as imagination, creativity, curiosity and evaluation.

### **Procedures:**

If you agree to be in the study, you will be interviewed and asked questions regarding your educational background, work history, and work experiences. You will be asked to discuss your experiences with arts advocacy and decision-making, and how your values and views may impact your perception of a preferred citizen. If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to provide the researcher with both an email and U.S. Postal address for the purpose of communication. You will be interviewed for approximately 60 minutes, at your office, or a different location mutually agreed upon. The interview will be audio taped and transcribed. The transcriber hired for this purpose has also signed a confidentiality agreement. In order to increase credibility, member checks will be used in which you will be given a copy of your transcribed interview, to ensure accuracy. After



the research project is completed, all audiotapes and transcriptions will be destroyed. Signed consent forms will be kept by this researcher for three years following this study.

**Risks/Benefits:**

During the course of the interview, participants will be asked to recall and discuss their own personal experiences with advocating for arts education. There are no foreseeable risks involved in participating in this research beyond those experienced in everyday life.

While there are no direct benefits to participating in this study, there may be a benefit to having your voice heard and the opportunity to reflect on your own participation within the profession. Furthermore, your contribution will provide practicing and emerging school leaders a more clear understanding of perceptions of value and perceived strengths of arts education especially during an age of accountability as they pertain to the conditions and qualities that shape our citizenry.

**Privacy and Confidentiality:**

- This research in preparation of a doctoral dissertation. As such, the data collected will only be used for this dissertation and for no other purposes.
- To the extent possible, privacy will be maintained by using pseudonyms for each school site in the findings.
- Participants' identities will be protected with the use of pseudonyms.
- Research notes and any documents collected will be stored and made available only to the researcher. When not in use notes and documents will be secured, and upon completion of the research will be destroyed.
- Although only the researcher will have access to notes and collected documents, other people within your school environment may be aware that you are being interviewed.

**Voluntary Participation:**

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you do not want to be in this study, you do not have to participate. Even if you decide to participate, you are free not to answer any question or to withdraw from participation at any time without penalty.

**Contacts and Questions:**

If you have questions about this research study, please feel free to contact:

Researcher:

- Stephen T. Plank @ splankster@gmail.com / 262.945.7413

Faculty Sponsor:

- Dr. Janis Fine @ jfine@luc.edu / 312.915.7022

If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, you may contact the Loyola University Office of Research Services at (773) 508-2689.

**Statement of Consent:**

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information provided above, have had an opportunity to ask questions, and agree to participate in this research study. You will be given a copy of this form to keep for your records.

---

**Participant's Signature**

---

**Date**

---

**Researcher's Signature**

---

**Date**

APPENDIX E  
LETTER OF ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Stephen T. Plank  
23020 88<sup>th</sup> Place  
Salem, WI 53168

Date

District's Name  
Participant's Name  
District Address  
District City

Dear (Insert Participant's Name),

Thank you for your willingness to participate in my doctoral research study. Enclosed you will find a transcript of the audio recording made during our interview. Please review the transcript carefully to ensure its content accurately reflects your thoughts and intent in regard to the questions asked.

An electronic copy of the transcript has also been sent to you. Please email any corrections or additions that need to be made to the transcript. A corrected copy, reflecting these corrections and additions will be sent to you via email.

When you are satisfied with the content of the transcript, please initial and date this letter in the place indicated. Please return it to me in the self-addressed envelope provided. As agreed upon, please return this confirmation letter within two weeks. Any unreturned acknowledgement letters will be seen as confirmation of an error free transcription.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail or telephone. My telephone number is included for your convenience.

Sincerely,

Stephen T. Plank  
262.945.7413 (Cell)

\_\_\_\_\_ Participant's Initials

\_\_\_\_\_ Date

APPENDIX F  
CONFIDENTIALITY AGREEMENT

### Confidentiality Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have agreed to perform the duties of audiotape transcriber for a research study being conducted by Stephen T. Plank, Doctoral Candidate in the School of Education at Loyola University.

I understand the nature of this work will involve sensitive and confidential information about the interview subjects. By signing this agreement, I agree to keep all transcript information confidential and in a secure place when in my possession. Furthermore, the information in my possession will not be shared verbally or visually with anyone except the researcher.

Stephen Plank will provide the necessary equipment for me to transcribe the audiotape interviews from her home office. All transcribing will be done in the privacy of a home office so that I may listen to the tapes confidentially. Transcriptions and audiotapes will be kept in a locked portfolio provided by the researcher, while in my possession.

**Signature of Audiotape Transcriber**

---

**Signature of Researcher**

---

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Why Arts Education Is Crucial, and Who's Doing It Best. Website:  
[www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development](http://www.edutopia.org/arts-music-curriculum-child-development)

## VITA

Stephen Plank was born on the south side of Milwaukee in Cudahy, Wisconsin where he attended high school and met his wife, Rebecca. He now resides in Pleasant Prairie, Wisconsin with Rebecca who is a Nationally Board Certified early childhood teacher.

Stephen earned a Bachelor of Science degree in 1996 from The University of Wisconsin at Whitewater, majoring in Music Education with endorsements in K-12 Instrumental Music and 6-12 General Music.

In 1999 while working as a Band Director at Watertown High School in Watertown, Wisconsin, Stephen earned a Master of Arts in Educational Leadership from The University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. In the spring of 2008, he began the doctoral program in Educational Administration and Supervision at Loyola University in Chicago, Illinois.

Stephen began his administrative career as an Assistant Principal at Fort Atkinson High School in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin prior to accepting a High School Principal position with the School District of Durand in Durand, Wisconsin. Stephen and his wife later moved back to southeast Wisconsin where he became the Principal at Mary D. Bradford High School in Kenosha.

Stephen then returned to his artistic roots upon being appointed to serve as the Director of the Fine Arts Division at Adlai E. Stevenson High School District 125 in

Lincolnshire, Illinois. He returned to the Principal role in 2010 at Lakes Community High School in District 117 in Lake Villa, Illinois where he remains today.

## DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

The Dissertation submitted by Stephen T. Plank has been read and approved by the following committee:

Janis Fine, Ph.D., Director  
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Loyola University Chicago

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