



**Kennedy Center and
National School Boards Association Award**
Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education

NARRATIVE QUESTIONS

Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education

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QUESTION #2

Given the community setting and profile – including the statistics you included in the Quantities Form – please describe any pertinent challenges the school district has faced in developing and maintaining a comprehensive arts education program for all students.

Over the past five years, Michigan has reduced the amount of money it will reimburse public schools per pupil drastically. This has resulted in our district having to cut anywhere from \$6-18 million dollars annually to balance the budget. The Board of Education has tried successfully each year to keep these reductions away from the classroom and programming, and in particular the Fine Arts. In preparing for the 2014-15 school year, the Board of Education recognized it could no longer cut its' way to a balanced budget, and instead developed initiatives district wide to draw students back to our district that have left for various reasons.

Through various methods of collecting feedback from the community, the Board of Education determined the following initiatives would respond to the needs of the community; the creation of STEAM, Pathways, additional world language offerings at the elementary, middle and high school, International Baccalaureate, and Performing Arts emphasis schools.

Instead of closing Northside elementary school due to low enrollment, the Board of Education approved the building becoming Ann Arbor STEAM at Northside. This school underwent remodeling and new construction to become a K-8 building and in the fall of 2014 was opened as a K-6 building with 402 enrolled. This is an increase of over 200 students from the previous year. 7th grade will be added in 2015 and 8th grade in 2016. The BOE committed to training the staff and provided professional staff development over the summer. The STEAM academy, a week long professional staff development was held August 11-15, 2014.

For many years we have had two small alternative high schools, Clemente and Ann Arbor Stone. For the 2014-15 school year, the BOE approved combining these two programs in one building and calling the new program Pathways for Success. Part of this new program was also to increase fine arts offering from .5 art to 1.0 art and adding .7 music/theatre.

The International Baccalaureate program, K-12 is in the training phase, but will ultimately offer additional Fine Arts opportunities when implemented.

For the 2014-15 school year the BOE also approved two buildings becoming Performance Arts emphasis buildings, Logan elementary and Clague middle school. This enabled Clague middle school to add .2 theatre fte in addition to their 1.0 band, 1.0 orchestra, 1.0 choir/African drumming, and 1.0 visual arts staff. Logan elementary will be working on a year long arts integration project that will culminate in the spring with a performance for the community involving Donnie McClurkin, Grammy award winning gospel artist.

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education, administration and parent community are very supportive of the rich, varied arts programming we have been able to provide K-12. Evidence of

their support are the initiatives they chose to draw students to our district, all involving increasing arts experiences for students.

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QUESTION #3

Describe the distribution of arts expenditures, arts teachers, supplies, and other arts resources among the schools and students in the district, and how decisions are made about which students, grades, and schools have access to arts education. How does the school board address equality of access to the arts for students? Are there assistance programs for interested students who cannot afford fees associated with arts learning?

The Ann Arbor Public Schools consists of 19 elementary, 2 K-8 schools, Ann Arbor Open and STEAM, 5 middle, 3 comprehensive high schools and 2 alternative high schools, 1 pre-school and 1 adult education program. Every school in the district provides instruction taught by arts specialists and every student at every grade level, K-12, has equitable access to arts programming. Arts specialist fte per building is determined by how many students are in the building. The district Fine Arts budget of \$82,967 is managed by the full time Fine Arts Coordinator, Robin Bailey. This money is used for membership fees to State and National arts organizations such as Michigan Art Education Association, Michigan State Band and Orchestra Association, etc. This budget is also used for instrument repair/replacement for our \$2 million plus instrumental music inventory district wide, piano tunings, festival and solo and ensemble fees, supplies, etc.

We provide an instrument for every child in beginning instrumental in fifth grade. We also provide instruments at the middle and high school for the larger instruments such as cello, bass, tuba, etc. Also, any child who indicates they need a school instrument is loaned a school instrument. Due to a voter approved Bond in 2004 we were able to purchase \$2 million dollars worth of musical instruments, so all of our schools have a rich inventory of instruments for student use. Each elementary school has a per pupil allowance for arts, and each middle and high school provides an annual budget for arts expenditures such as sheet music, art supplies, etc., based on per pupil calculations.

Because we have such excellent K-12 music instruction, many students begin private lessons in middle school. We partner with Community Music School of Ann Arbor to provide free/reduced private music lessons for those students grades 6-8, who otherwise would not be able to afford them. Ann Arbor Public Schools and Community Music School of Ann Arbor share the costs of this program. Students in high school who cannot afford private lessons are provided them through the Parent Booster Associations in each high school.

In the 2013-14 school year, we began a partnership with the University of Michigan which provides El Sistema three days a week, after school at one of our Title 1 schools, Mitchell elementary. This is an extension of their 60 minute weekly instruction on their instrument during the day by teacher Dan Tolly, who also works with the UM sponsored El Sistema instructors after school.

QUESTION #4

Is the school board involved in the arts-based professional development opportunities that are offered to classroom teachers and arts specialists? If yes, what is their involvement?

The Ann Arbor Public Schools Board of Education is involved in the professional development opportunities that are offered to classroom teachers and arts specialists in various ways. AAPS is one of the few districts in the state of Michigan that still employs a full time Fine Arts Coordinator, who organizes and delivers professional staff development opportunities for arts specialists and works closely with district wide physical education, media and world language department chairs to provide professional development opportunities for all other special area teachers. AAPS also employs one full time Curriculum Specialist who works closely with core content area district wide departmental chairs to develop and deliver professional staff development opportunities for classroom teachers. The Board of Education supports all teachers, including arts teachers in attending and presenting at state and national conferences. The AAPS Board of Education also pays for any AAPS teacher to attend UMS sponsored professional development in the form of teacher workshops. AAPS teachers have had the opportunities to work with incredible Kennedy Center performing artists such as Deb Brzoska, Eric Booth, and most recently Ryan Hourigan, all supported by the AAPS Board of Education. Board of Education trustees have also attended UMS workshops alongside teachers annually. The Board of Education also provides the Fine Arts Coordinator funding to attend the Kennedy Center Annual Meeting each year.

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QUESTION #5

List any partnerships or collaborations the school board has developed with cultural institutions and community arts resources, including, but not limited to artist residencies, field trips, professional development opportunities for teachers, etc. For each partnership, include how the board works with the partnering organization and describe the board's financial commitment to the partnership.

The Ann Arbor Public Schools has developed deep, rich partnerships with several arts and community institutions enabling us to continue to support our excellent K-12 arts programming. UMS provides culturally rich student performances and teacher workshops throughout the year tied to AAPS goal/strategic plans. They also provide teacher resources and educational materials in preparation for the student performances. UMS routinely brings performing artists into the schools to perform for and interact with the students. UMS routinely provides artist residencies such as Eric Booth, Deb Brzoska, Kimberli Boyd and most recently Ryan Hourigan.

The University of Michigan Museum of Art (UMMA) provides free transportation and tours for AAPS students as well as teacher workshops. AAPS pays for any AAPS teacher to attend any UMMA or UMS teacher workshops.

Community Music School of Ann Arbor provides weekly one on one private music instruction for economically disadvantaged AAPS middle school instrumental music students. This program is funded through donations from local organizations and donors, such as Burns Park Players and the PTO Thrift Shop as well as the AAPS Fine Arts budget.

Main Street Business Association hosts March is Youth Art Month where AAPS K-12 artwork is displayed in local businesses on Main Street in Ann Arbor. The Ann Arbor Art Center participates in this event as well as hosts the Potential show in the spring, displaying high school art work and presenting monetary awards donated by local individuals.

The University of Michigan has partnered with AAPS on several initiatives, providing apprentice teachers to teach 3rd and 4th graders 60 minutes weekly Spanish instruction, as well as implementing El Sistema at one of our Title 1 schools, Mitchell elementary. U of M is providing the music instructors for this after school program for 5th graders.

Music scholarships to attend summer music programs are provided annually through Kiwanis, Womens Association, New England Music Camp, Interlochen and Blue Lakes Fine Arts Camp.

Performance Network, a local professional non-profit theatre, provides theatre performances that are tied to AAPS curriculum/standards. The performance comes to the school, funded by local donors. They also provide arts integration workshops for teachers and students as an extension of viewing the performance.

Toyota chose the AAPS as the only district in the country to pilot a collaboration around STEAM education. They funded a development team of 10 AAPS staff, including myself to spend two weeks in Singapore this past summer to observe and learn from their educational system. This past summer, 25 teachers travelled to Singapore again, and we are hosting 16 Singapore educators this November for two weeks. We have a three year commitment from them to continue sending teams of AAPS teachers/staff to Singapore each summer and to develop educational experiences in AAPS to encourage more students to participate in STEAM related fields.

QUESTION #6

List how the school board has actively contributed to the development of arts education within the school district, including policy development; long range plans for arts education; increasing funding for the arts as well as securing grants to support arts programs. Please provide specific examples.

Despite seven years of having to make difficult decisions due to decreased school funding at the State level, the Board of Education has continued to support arts programming for all students, K-12. An example of the Board of Education's commitment to maintaining our rich, excellent arts programming is their response to yet another discussion of how to eliminate \$10 million dollars from the budget for the 2014-15 school year. Instead, they decided they would put all their emphasis on new initiatives to draw additional students to our district, hence increasing funding. Instead of opening a K-8 STEM building, they created a K-8 STEAM building, recognizing the importance of having arts programming alongside science, technology, engineering and math in this new project based learning model. The Board also approved Logan elementary and Clague middle school having a Performing Arts emphasis. This resulted in Clague offering theatre for the first time, which brought them into alignment with all of our other middle schools that already offer theatre. They also approved a theatre class added to Pathways for Success, the new alternative high school, bringing them into alignment with all of our other high schools that already offer theatre.

QUESTION #7

Are the arts included in your district's strategic plan or mission statement? Please paste the text of your mission statement below.

Long Range/Strategic Plan – The AAPS Strategic Plan was developed in 2009 and is still our current plan. During its' development I served as a Team Leader/Facilitator for Strategy 6. While the arts are not directly referenced in the Strategic Plan, there is a reference in the subsequent AAPS Beliefs, "We believe that creative expression enhances the quality of life." Also, several of the Strategies are broad enough to include arts programming, such as Strategy 2 "We will develop and implement a personalized learning plan for each student," and Strategy 3 "We will actualize the potential for excellence in all students through inspiration and support." Also, the Mission of the Ann Arbor Public Schools states, "The mission of the Ann Arbor Public Schools is to ensure each student realizes his or her aspirations while advancing the common good, by creating a world-class system of innovative teaching and learning." This mission statement embraces and promotes excellent, rich K-12 arts programming in support of those students realizing their aspirations.
