

OCDSB Advisory Committee on the Arts 2007-2008

Year-End Report, 18 June 2008

Submitted by ACA Chair, Katherine Stauble

The OCDSB is, to our knowledge, the only school board in Ontario – and possibly in all of Canada – to have an Advisory Committee on the Arts. The ACA was founded by Trustee Marjorie Loughrey in 1987. Among the most important aspects of its mandate are to advise the Board on matters related to arts education and to provide a liaison among educators, members of the community and arts organizations. Over the years, the ACA has contributed many valuable ideas and activities to the Board.

1. ACA Meetings and Membership

At the first meeting of the ACA for the 2007-2008 school year, held September 24, 2008, the committee elected Chair Katherine Stauble and vice-chair Debbie Holzman. Meetings were held at Fisher Park School Staff Room, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month, from September to May.

Membership for the year conformed to the suggested representation in the ACA Terms of Reference, including the following individuals:

Voting Members

Arts Community

Amanda Lewis, Ottawa School of Speech and Drama
Kelly Abercrombie and alternative representatives, National Arts Centre
Gary Goodacre, National Gallery of Canada
Kate Wetherow, Great Canadian Theatre Company
Audrey Churgin, MASC
Jim McNabb, CACDA/NAC
Jeff Stellick, Ottawa School of Art
Chris McLeod, Salamander Theatre
Tina Fedeski, OrKidstra
Eleanor MacDonald, Ottawa International Children's Festival
Alan Weekes, Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy

City of Ottawa

Nancy Burgoyne, Community Arts Program

Parents/Community Members

Katherine Stauble

Debbie Holzman
Lillian Thomsen
Heather Flinn, retired music teacher
Dan Rambo, OCASC
Michael Wilson, retired OBE teacher and U of O professor

Non-Voting Members

OCDSB Staff & Trustees

Dale Taylor, Instructional Coach in the Arts, Curriculum Services
Suzanne Denney, teacher, John Young E.S.
Joanna Swim, teacher, Colonel By S.S./Visual Arts Subject Council
Jennifer McKenzie, Trustee, Zone 10
Bronwyn Funicello, Trustee, Zone 6
Peter Gamwell, Superintendent

The average attendance for monthly meetings was 12 people, which was the same as last year. Once again, trustee attendance was infrequent because of conflicts.

4.2. ACA Projects

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The ACA had a number of significant accomplishments this year.

1. ACA Arts Recognition Awards:

These awards are presented annually by the ACA to individuals, groups or organizations, and for special projects and events, in recognition of outstanding service in the area of arts education. Nominees include OCDSB teaching staff and community members.

The 2006-2007 Awards Ceremony took place in the presence of trustees and senior staff at the OCDSB headquarters on October 17, 2007. Award recipients were:

Staff Awards

- Elementary Integration of the Arts Award – Andrew Thomas (Fisher Park/Summit Alternative School)
- Elementary Media Arts Award – Trent Taniguchi (Farley Mowat P. S.)
- Elementary Music (Primary/Junior) Award – Suzanne Denney (John Young Elementary School)
- Elementary Music (Intermediate) Award – Blair Smith (Dunning-Foubert E.S.)
- Elementary Visual Arts Award – Christos Pantieras (Hopewell P. S.)
- Secondary Drama Award – Deborah Grinnell (John McCrae S. S.)

- Secondary Integration of Arts Award – Jeannie Hunter (Brookfield H. S.)
- Secondary Media Arts – Jamie Leduc (Hillcrest H. S.)
- Secondary Music Award – Charles Ramin (Merivale H. S.)
- Secondary Visual Arts Awards – Lisa Gale (Merivale H. S.)

School and Community Awards

- Elementary Event Award – “Here, There and Everywhere” (Fisher Park/Summit Alternative School)
- Secondary Event Award – “Zombie Prom” (Merivale H. S.)
- Leadership in the Arts – Dale Taylor, Instructional Coach in the Arts (OCDSB)
- Community Award – Bettina Choo, “The Heart of the City Piano Program”
- Marjorie Loughrey Lifetime Achievement Award – Jan Salmon (retired, Canterbury H. S.), Neil Yorke-Slader (Superintendent, OCDSB)

2. Encore Instrument Donation Program

The ACA organized its third annual city-wide collection of used musical instruments, collecting almost 40 instruments. About 30 instruments were donated to OCDSB schools, five to OrKidstra – a music program for children from low-income families – and five to ArtsCan Circle – a group that helps Canadian Native youth at risk.

The number of instruments collected this year was considerably lower than last year, to the disappointment of the committee. There are a number of possible reasons for this relatively poor result: we might have exhausted Ottawa’s used instrument market; and we received less media attention this year. The group has therefore decided not to run the complete program in 2008-2009. However, the Ottawa Folklore Centre, which was Encore’s most successful drop-off point, has agreed to continue collecting instruments indefinitely.

3. Communications: OCDSB website and phone line

With the help of OCDSB staff, the ACA was able to post information about Encore on the OCDSB website. In addition, the committee obtained a phone extension (596-8211 ext. 8185) to use as an information line for Encore and for general information about the committee.

4. Arts Education Directory

The ACA updated its directory of arts enrichment opportunities for Ottawa schools. This includes student programs at many of the city’s museums, theatres and concert halls, as well as artist-in-residence programs through organizations such as MASC and the Ontario Arts Council. This is a valuable resource for teachers seeking

enrichment activities in or outside of school. The directory is posted online on the OCDSB website, under “Students Corner”: http://www.ocdsb.ca/sc_art_ottawa.asp.

5. Time Allocation and Evaluation

The ACA discussed the need for clearer guidelines at the OCDSB regarding time allocation for arts instruction and evaluation of the arts. It was brought to our attention that some elementary principals had misinterpreted the Time Allocation Model, assigning excessive time to Daily Physical Activity, often to the detriment of arts classes. We were also concerned that many elementary teachers in the board were evaluating each art strand only once a trimester. In other words, they might teach and evaluate music only in the fall, drama and dance only in the winter, and visual arts only in the spring. We are pleased that the Board has revised and clarified its Time Allocation Model. In addition, it has issued a directive to teachers to evaluate at least two arts strands each trimester.

6. ArtsJunktion

The ACA began discussions last year about mounting a project to collect visual arts materials for OCDSB schools. This fall, a subcommittee was created, chaired by Christos Pantieras of Hopewell Public School, to organize a project similar to ArtsJunktion in Toronto, and a similar program in Winnipeg, where businesses donate materials that can be used to create art. We hope to run the program sometime in the 2008-2009 school year.

7. REEL Canada

The ACA was approached by the organizers of REEL Canada, a Toronto-based group that organizes Canadian film festivals in high schools, to bring the program to Ottawa schools for the first time. Glebe High School jumped at the opportunity to participate and hosted a successful festival.

8. Ontario Ministry of Education

Audrey Churgin of MASC met with a representative from the Ontario Ministry of Education to discuss issues concerning both MASC and the ACA. She presented a paper drafted by members of the ACA outlining some of our ongoing concerns, namely: the lack of expertise among many educators teaching the arts; the continued lack of adequate funding for arts materials, especially in Intermediate and Secondary Visual Arts and Music; the perception among both educators and the public that the arts are not an essential part of the curriculum, and that arts education is expendable.

The presentation to the Ministry official was followed up with another letter sent by mail, reasserting those concerns.

3. Instructional Coach in the Arts

The Board's Instructional Coach in the Arts, Dale Taylor, has continued to do a superb job to support the delivery of the arts curriculum at elementary and secondary schools. She has continued her efforts in providing information and workshops to teachers, and in helping to organize the Cappies Awards program – which has become the fastest-growing Cappies program in North America. She has maintained very strong links with arts organizations, as well as with her counterpart, Shelley Smith-Dale, in the Catholic board. This relationship, in particular, is of great value to our community and stands as an excellent model of interboard collaboration. Dale was invited to work together with Shelley this year to organize, together with MASC, the annual Arts Incentive Day for teachers. Other initiatives included the development of arts focus programs, to be offered in two OCDSB high schools during the 2008-2009 school year, and the mounting of a staff art exhibition. Finally, Dale has made a major contribution to the development of the revised arts curriculum.

One of the ACA's ongoing concerns is the continued need for qualified arts teachers at the OCDSB. Given the lack of arts specialists in the elementary panel, and the necessity for most generalist teachers to provide arts instruction, the ACA feels very strongly that the Instructional Coach in the Arts plays an indispensable role in the Board's delivery of arts education.

4. Arts Organizations

The ACA has enjoyed the continued participation of representatives from the city's arts organizations, as listed above. These individuals have been able to communicate important information to the ACA about educational programs and activities such as museum tours and workshops, and student matinees, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers. This year, GCTC increased attendance at its student matinees. MASC brought many artists to OCDSB schools and put on a series of successful professional development workshops for teachers. The NAC hosted the National Musicfest, in which a number of OCDSB schools participated, and members of its orchestra gave 5 free concerts in OCDSB schools (among a total of 51 performances in area schools).

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6.5. Subject Councils

Joanna Swim, Chair of the Secondary Visual Arts Subject Council, has secured funding from the OSSTF for a life drawing workshop for teachers, which will be held at Cube Gallery. This is an excellent opportunity for teachers to develop skills in this important, fundamental area. The ACA regrets that no other representatives of subject councils have participated in the committee this year and hopes to recruit those members next year.

6. Budget

The ACA has an annual budget of approximately \$1000. The following outlines this year's expenditures.

Budget: \$1000.00

Expenditures:

Photocopies, etc.	\$ 42.85
Refreshments	\$ 34.42
Encore supplies	\$ 87.53
Arts Awards	\$ 320.00 (approx.)
Year-end social	\$ 227.60

TOTAL Expenditures, approx.: \$ 712.40

7. Ongoing Priorities

The group is committed to a number of annual activities, including the Arts Appreciation Awards, the updating of the Arts Education in Ottawa directory, and continued improvement of ACA's presence on the OCDSB website. The following are new initiatives we would like to pursue in the coming year:

- Raise awareness among both educators and the public of the importance of arts education:
 - Create a Power Point presentation on arts education.
 - Make presentations to school councils and to elementary school principals.
 - Make a mid-year presentation to Education committee.
 - Publicize ACA's activities through the OCDSB website and phone line, *Ottawa Citizen*, CBC Radio, and during OCDSB Education Week.
 - At the provincial level: continue directing concerns to the Ontario Ministry of Education; submit an article to People for Education newsletter.
- Revisit recommendations from 2002 "Review of Education in the Arts," which were presented to OCDSB but never addressed by the Board.

- Recruit more subject council representatives to ACA, especially Drama, Dance and Intermediate councils.
- Launch ArtsJunktion.
- Promote International Dance Day: organize a board-wide activity.
- Promote OCDSB Arts Focus programs.
- Promote May Day show for Education Foundation: help showcase schools, especially elementary schools.
- Use City of Ottawa's *Young at Art* exhibition as a model for a student art showcase.
- Partner with *Awesome Indies* film festival.

7. Conclusion

The ACA is satisfied with another active and productive school year. We feel we play a valuable role in supporting and enhancing the Board's arts education programs. This is to the great benefit of our students, who are so deeply enriched by activities in music, drama, dance and visual art.

However, there is an ongoing need for active intervention, in our opinion, to preserve and strengthen arts instruction in our community. The ACA will continue to advocate for excellence in arts education, for the sake of our children.