

OCDSB Advisory Committee on the Arts 2008-2009

Year-End Report, 16 June 2009

Submitted by ACA Chair, Katherine Stauble

“The arts should be part of the essential curriculum for all students.” – Robin Pascoe, Murdoch University, Western Australia

The principal mandate of the Advisory Committee on the Arts is to support and encourage arts education for all OCDSB students, and to provide a liaison among educators, members of the community and arts organizations.

1. ACA Meetings and Membership

ACA meetings were held at Fisher Park School Staff Room, from 7:00 to 9:00 pm on the fourth Monday of each month. At the first meeting of the ACA for the 2008-2009 school year, held September 22, 2009, the committee elected Chair Katherine Stauble, Vice-Chair Debbie Holzman, and Secretary Kelly Abercrombie.

The average attendance for monthly meetings was 15 people, up from previous years. Membership for the year conformed to the ACA Terms of Reference, including the following individuals:

Voting Members

Arts Community

Kelly Abercrombie and alternative representatives, National Arts Centre
Audrey Churgin, MASC
Ashley Judd, Ottawa International Children’s Festival
Amanda Lewis, Ottawa School of Speech and Drama
Jeff Stellick/Julie Trewartha, Ottawa School of Art
Kate Wetherow, Great Canadian Theatre Company

City of Ottawa

Nancy Burgoyne, Community Arts Program

Parents/Community Members

Heather Flinn
Jim Hardy
Debbie Holzman
Jim McNabb
Katherine Stauble
Lillian Thomsen, OCASC
Trina Whitehurst, OCASC alternate

Post-secondary institution

Michelle Olsen, student, Carleton University
Amanda Silliker, student, Carleton University
Michael Wilson, professor, University of Ottawa Faculty of Education

Non-Voting Members

OCDSB Staff & Trustees

Susan Daugherty, teacher, Adult HS/Visual Arts Subject Council
Suzanne Denney, VP, Charles H. Hulse E.S.
Peter Gamwell, Superintendent
Dale Hayward, teacher, Fisher Park PS/ Drama & Dance Subject Council
Jennifer McKenzie, Trustee, Zone 10
Karen McNeil-Barclay, teacher, Sir Robert Borden/ Visual Arts Subject Council
John Shea, Trustee, Zone 8 (alternative)
Dale Taylor, Instructional Coach in the Arts, Curriculum Services

Lifetime Community Members

Judy Kirsh
Joan Doern

4.2. ACA Activities

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“Arts and learning need to go hand in hand every day, in every child.” – Kelly Lamrock, New Brunswick Minister of Education

A. The Amazing ACA Art Show

In an effort to raise awareness among parents of the importance of arts education, and to encourage parental involvement, the ACA gave presentations at school council meetings around the district. The Advocacy sub-committee prepared a Power Point presentation and handout, and distributed brochures from a number of the region’s arts organizations, as well as copies of the Arts in the Community Directory. The response at the 15 schools visited was very positive, with parents engaging in fruitful discussions about the arts and how they can help teachers. Observations included the following:

- In some schools, parents lamented the loss of instrumental music programs in Grade 5 or 6.
- Parents expressed concern over the loss of specialist arts teachers and wished to ensure that specialists would be retained in future.
- A number of schools have enjoyed performances and workshops given by visiting artists.
- Several schools had very good hallway displays of their students’ visual arts work.
- One teacher spends her own money to purchase quality art materials, such as watercolour paper and paints.
- Parents and staff at one school expressed interest in receiving regular emails from ACA about local arts events; the principal proposed including an arts corner in each school newsletter.

- In one school, the vice-principal and a teacher have started a ukulele club, which has attracted an eclectic mix of students, some of whom are usually hard to engage. The group performed at the Tulip Festival in this, its first year.

Parents were particularly appreciative of the handouts we distributed, which included ideas for how parents can help support arts programs, from electing an arts representative on school council, to fundraising for materials and visiting artists, to writing newsletter articles that celebrate student art work. The handout also included a number of valuable resources and websites.

B. The Review Review

The ACA took a renewed look at the Board's 2003 report on its Arts Review and presented a request to Education Committee to conduct a new program review, based on that report. A sub-committee prepared and distributed a summary of the 2003 report, and copied the entire report onto CDs for Education Committee members. The delegation was presented at the April 21, 2009 Education Committee meeting. By May 26, EC had announced plans for an Arts Program monitoring to commence in September 2010.

C. Intermediate Program Monitoring

The ACA has engaged in numerous conversations with Board staff and trustees about the recent changes to Intermediate programs, and the possible negative effects on arts programs of decreased rotation. A number of specialist arts teachers have reported that their arts sections have been severely reduced for September. ACA is very concerned about the continued loss of such specialized classes, ever since there were cuts to overlay teachers two years ago. The committee maintains that adolescent students need specialist arts teachers: they need their expertise in order to meet the curriculum demands; they need their passion in order to be motivated.

ACA is also concerned about the apparent hierarchization of the arts disciplines at many OCDSB schools, with music instruction taking priority over visual arts and drama, and dance getting the least attention. The committee feels that it is important for Intermediate students to be taught by specialists in all four disciplines, whenever possible, and to receive an equal number of instructional minutes in the four disciplines.

Report No. 09-0555 to Education Committee on Program Monitoring of Intermediate programs states that the new Intermediate timetables are to include "some specialization," and that the Board intends to support working groups in the arts beginning this fall. The ACA hopes that staff will ensure equity across the system by recommending that all Intermediate students receive instruction from specialist arts teachers in the four disciplines, with equal time devoted to each one.

D. Other Board and Ministry issues addressed

In February 2009, the ACA wrote a letter to OCDSB CFO Michael Clark to inquire about the Board's use of the Ministry's Program Enhancements Grant and Pupil Foundation Grant. Mr. Clark reassured us that the Program Enhancements Grant had been used to preserve existing arts and IB programs, but that the OCDSB was ineligible for the Pupil Foundation grant. The

ACA hopes that the Board will continue to use Program Enhancements Grants for arts programs.

The ACA was very pleased that the Board recently contributed \$100,000 to arts materials from the Ministry's Student Success grant. Such materials are well needed.

E. International Dance Day

One of ACA's strategic priorities for this school year was to promote International Dance Day in schools. To that end, Renata Soutter, Outreach Coordinator of NAC Dance Department, organized special events for this year's Dance Day, April 29. The ACA worked with Renata in the early stages of planning and helped her to make connections with a number of schools who participated in the event. Dance teacher Allison Carrier of Woodroffe HS put on the OCDSB's first annual Dance Showcase, with funding from the Board, and organizational support from Instructional Coach Dale Taylor.

F. Guests

The ACA hosted the following guest speakers at its monthly meetings:

- Deborah Davis and Matt Marjanski, Odyssey Showcase
- Mike Taylor, City of Ottawa, Young at Art exhibition
- Hannah Beatch, Dandelion Dance Company and Tournesol Dance
- Carolle Séguin and Bram Lewinowski, City of Ottawa, Cumberland Museum and Billings Estate
- Scott Hebert-Daly, Cornelia Wagner and Lindsay Heubner, Glebe Collegiate, for REEL Canada

Each of these speakers provided extremely valuable information about some of the most inspiring arts programs offered to schools. As a result of this presentation, Dale Taylor made arrangements with Hannah Beatch to conduct PD workshops and provide resource materials to OCDSB teachers. The ACA will include details about these programs in its next update of the Arts in the Community Directory, and distribute their materials to school councils.

In addition, six student teachers from the University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education arts cohort attended an ACA meeting to learn about the committee's activities.

G. Encore

Although ACA did not run a formal Encore program this year, a donor contacted us with an offer of a full drum kit. We found a home for it at Castlefrank ES.

H. OCDSB Arts Recognition Awards

The OCDSB Arts Recognition Awards are presented annually 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 2007-2008 Awards Ceremony took place in the presence of trustees and senior staff at the OCDSB headquarters on October 22, 2008. Award recipients were:

Staff Awards

Elementary Dance, Melanie Baker-Lesage (Emily Carr MS)
Elementary Integration of Arts, Astrid Johnson (Jack Donohue PS)
Elementary Drama, Dale Hayward (Fisher Park / Summit)
Elementary Music – P/J, Leslie Bricker (Terry Fox ES)
Elementary Music – Int., Ginger Jacobson (Broadview Ave. PS)
Secondary Dance, Allison Carrier & Kathy Tsarouhas (Woodroffe HS)
Secondary Drama, Matt Minter (Sir Wilfrid Laurier SS)
Secondary Literary Arts, Thomas O'Connor (Merivale HS)
Secondary Music, Jean-François Fauteux (Nepean HS)
Secondary Visual Arts, Bonnie Mahoney (Rideau HS)
Leadership in the Arts Award, Sheila Williams (OTLC)

School and Community Awards

Community Arts Award, Andrew Hawryshkewich (Merivale HS Volunteer)
Elementary School Event, Latin Music Project, Dianne Van Den Brekel (Stittsville PS)
Secondary School Event, "Chicago," Jeff Kanter & Rocco Romeo (Nepean HS)
Marjorie Loughrey Lifetime Achievement Award, Cheryl Woods (Broadview PS)

I. Arts in the Community Directory

The ACA updated its Arts in the Community directory of 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 in-school or off-site enrichment activities, such as performances, exhibition tours, literary readings and hands-on workshops. The directory is posted online on the OCDSB website, under "Students Corner": http://www.ocdsb.ca/sc_art_ottawa.asp.

2. Instructional Coach in the Arts

"If you want a creative culture, cultivate and celebrate diversity, including diversity of thinking." – Sir Ken Robinson

The Instructional Coach in the Arts, Dale Taylor, has continued most of her activities from previous years, including providing resources and workshops to teachers (12 workshops this year), helping to organize the Cappies program, and collaborating with the Catholic board and MASC to organize the annual Arts Incentive Day for teachers. She has also been involved in the revision of the Ministry's arts curriculum, and various OCDSB Curriculum Services projects, including the development of the arts Focus programs and Specialist High Skills Major programs. She helped organize the LiterARTcy event for teachers, and attended numerous conferences and meetings. The Instructional Coach in the Arts continues to play a vital role in the delivery of arts programs at the OCDSB.

3. Arts Organizations

“It is vital that young people are given the chance to experience culture within and outside school, and that this experience is excellent.” – Sir Brian McMaster, “Supporting Excellence in the Arts: From Measurement to Judgement,” 2008

The ACA has enjoyed the continued participation of representatives from the city’s arts organizations. These individuals have been able to communicate important information to the ACA about educational programs and activities such as museum tours, workshops and student matinées, as well as professional development opportunities for teachers. The following are some highlights:

- This year, GCTC set a record for attendance at its student matinees. It held two Theatre for Teachers evenings in the spring.
- MASC partnered with the US Embassy to bring in American artist Jacqui Russell to work with autistic students at Clifford Bowey School.
- The NAC organized a Music Monday performance on Parliament Hill. Members of its orchestra gave 54 performances in area schools, including 11 free concerts in OCDSB schools.
- The NAC’s English Theatre department gave two PD workshops to teachers.
- The Ottawa Youth Orchestra Academy received a grant from the Telus Community Foundation to perform two concerts for 1,800 Ottawa area students at Centrepointe Theatre. All student bussing and other costs were completely covered by Telus.
- The Ottawa School of Speech and Drama mounted a “Theatre for Young Audiences” program, with a production of Mischief City. Four local schools attended, and received a book of poems and a soundtrack. OSSD also conducted the “Our Stories” program in two OCDSB schools.
- The Ottawa International Children’s Festival booked over 40 local schools for its matinées.
- The National Gallery of Canada held an information night for teachers in the fall.
- The City of Ottawa mounted a number of student-friendly exhibitions in its galleries, and organized the Young at Art exhibition for students.

6.4. Subject Councils

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“Know your opera, theatre and literature because they embody the very essence of what it means to be human, to laugh, cry, scream and sit quietly in thought.” – Ruth Sigal, Holocaust survivor and therapist

One of the ACA’s strategic priorities for this school year was to recruit more Subject Council representatives to the committee. We achieved this, and had regular attendance at meetings by teachers Dale Hayward (Intermediate Drama and Dance Subject Council), and Sue Daugherty and Karen McNeil-Barclay (Visual Arts Subject Council). They were able to report on the activities of their councils, including a number of excellent PD workshops for teachers, and to report back to their members on ACA meetings.

5. Budget

“If we let the arts slip, we’ll let our civilization slip.” – Marion Dewar, former Mayor of Ottawa

The ACA has an annual budget of approximately \$1000. However, we have spent very conservatively in past years, and have been able to carry over funds from one year to the next. We plan to use surplus funds towards improving communications in 2009-2010.

2008-2009 Budget:	\$1733.00
Expenditures:	
Meetings	\$577.30 (projected)
Arts Recognition Awards	\$412.20 (projected)
Conferences	\$418.75
TOTAL Expenditures	\$1408.25 (projected)

6. Strategic Priorities for 2009-2010

“I probably never would have become president if I had not studied music.” – Bill Clinton, interviewed by Elvis Costello on “Spectacle”

In an effort to support excellent arts education for all OCDSB students, the ACA is committed to a number of annual activities, including the following:

- Arts Appreciation Awards
- Arts in the Community directory: update listings
- ACA presentations to school councils (“Dog and Pony shows”)
- Monitoring of Board and Ministry developments: new Ontario arts curriculum; Intermediate arts specialists; 2010-2011 Arts program monitoring; use of Ministry grants.
- ACA web page: continue improvement
- International Dance Day: continue promotion
- Recruitment of new members, including representatives of subject councils

The following are new priorities and initiatives we would like to pursue in the coming year:

- Make an ACA presentation to other groups, e.g. OCASC, trustees.
- Publish hand-out for ACA presentations in booklet form.
- Showcase OCDSB elementary students’ arts in a one-day board-wide event.
- Publicize success stories and best practices in schools.
- Include a short video of student arts in ACA presentations to school councils.
- Improve connection with Education Committee (attendance at meetings, reading reports).
- Partner with Algonquin College: recruit volunteer students to help organize Arts Recognition ceremony; help develop communications materials.
- Explore possibility of OCDSB summer arts programs and e-learning.
- Partner with CJOH to create an Artist-of-the-Week program.
- Encore: plan for Spring 2010.
- Initiate a program to support visual arts education (e.g. ArtsJunktion collection of visual materials).
- Invite new guests from arts community to speak at ACA meetings, e.g. The Director’s Cut in-class media literacy workshops, Ottawa Art Gallery.
- Find new secondary schools to host REEL Canada.

7. Acknowledgements

Many ACA members worked very hard this year and made substantial contributions to our activities. I would especially like to thank our incredibly dependable secretary, Kelly Abercrombie, who prepared minutes in record time, as well as Audrey Churgin, Heather Flinn, Jim Hardy, Debbie Holzman, Judy Kirsh, Jim McNabb, Dale Taylor and Michael Wilson, who contributed great creativity, humour and wisdom to our major projects for the year, the “Amazing ACA Art Show” and the “Review Review.” Some of them had to tackle Highway 174 in snow storms or traffic jams (or both); others enjoyed the cookies. I also thank Trustees Jennifer McKenzie and John Shea for their constant support and their good brains. Finally, I am grateful to Carleton students Michelle Olsen and Amanda Silliker, who lent us a hand and showed us how good high school arts programs help form our finest university students.

8. Conclusion

“Creativity is as important in education as literacy, and we should treat it this way.” – Meesha Bruggergosman, Canadian opera diva.

The ACA is very happy with a productive year in which we reached out to dozens of new people: parents, school administrators, teachers, artists, arts educators, and university students. We engaged in fascinating and fruitful discussions, gathered and re-told terrific stories, and got excited all over again about the power of arts education.

Many OCDSB students are benefiting from truly wonderful arts programs, taught by the most committed and talented teachers. The ACA hopes that the Board will continue to nurture this environment and help it to grow and spread so that all students will have equal opportunity. We look forward to another year of supporting education in dance, drama, music and visual arts.

All quotations appeared in 2008-2009, at conferences, in the media or in official reports.