



DRAFT: Report No. 50 Advisory Committee on the Arts (ACA)

Date: February 23, 2015

A meeting of the ADVISORY COMMITTEE on the ARTS was held at Summit/Fisher Park Public School, Ottawa, Ontario, commencing at 7:15 p.m. with the following in attendance:

Members: Cheryl Carman*, Eric Ding*, Superintendent Peter Gamwell, Debbie Holzman*, David Jones*, Judy Kirsh*, Evelyn Michaud*, Jacquie Pinard (AIC), Trustee Lynn Scott,

Regrets: Trustee Erica Braunovan, Susanna Donato (AIC), Sheila White*, Michael Wilson*

Guests: David Chen (Music for Kids)

1. Welcoming Remarks:

ACA Chair David Jones welcomed the group and invited everyone to introduce themselves. He noted that Sheila White (Co-Chair) had sent her regrets. Her knee prevents her moving too much.

2. Approval of Agenda:

Moved by Debbie Holzman: CARRIED

3. Co-Chair's Report:

David noted that there is a push to find new members for ACA and that we will start by looking at the schools which received arts awards. It is hoped that there might be parents and staff willing to attend the ACA meetings. ACA will work through Principals and School Councils. ACA is also looking at expanding that search to all elementary schools, and has tentatively divided up the alphabet. Cheryl Carman graciously offered to help.

The second issue concerned the Arts Awards ceremony, and the future of it. David and Evelyn, who offered to be in charge of the process, will contact Chair Shirley Seward to confirm that ACA can present at the board next year. They will report back next meeting. There will be further discussion under Item # 10.

4. Approval of the October Minutes:

Moved by Judy Kirsh: CARRIED

5. Business arising from the January minutes:

There was none.

6. Arts Coaches Report:

Jacquie said the arts coaches are very busy, and that things are going extremely well. They have been focusing on Drama this year, but are continuing with the VALL and DALL projects as well.

In addition to the regular workshops that she and Susanna are giving, they have enlisted some secondary Drama teachers to offer their expertise to the elementary teachers...and that is a very good way of using the resources we already have in the system.

Jacquie is trying to initiate some workshops on creativity, using the arts, and they have also been working with the Special Support Unit to help with special needs students and the arts.

They have been working with the project mentioned at last month's meeting, and are helping the students and Chinatown BIA work on the showcase of the arts project.

One other issue that is concerning the coaches is the lack of good information in the French version of the Arts Curriculum. There are many fewer pages of reference notes and definitions in the French document, and that is presenting serious issues for the French Immersion teachers teaching the Arts.

Apparently the French document was written for the French school boards, many of whom have their own documents and more specialists as well.

In the general discussion, it was suggested that perhaps ACA could write a letter to the Ministry about this concern, and it was also suggested that ACA could ask the trustees to write such a letter. A letter from trustees would have a little more credibility than one from ACA. Such a motion could be drafted and presented for ratification at the next ACA meeting. Then Trustee Scott could take that request to the full board.

7. Superintendent's Report:

Supt. Peter Gamwell spoke eloquently about the blossoming interest and passion for the arts. He has recently spoken to 3 different audiences and was delighted by the responses. He believes that this kind of response would not have happened a few years ago. He will be speaking next at the World Creativity Forum in March 2015.

8. Trustees' Report:

Trustee Scott brought regrets and regards from Trustee Braunovan, who was not able to attend tonight. She spoke about the process of creating a new strategic plan for the board and further opportunities for ACA to have input. At this point, the trustees and senior staff have looked at all the input gathered so far, they have looked at the broad themes that have emerged, and senior staff has gone away to digest all the discussions. Once the draft strategic plan has been released, there will be further opportunity to consult. We can then see how the arts can be worked into more specific areas.

The other item Scott spoke about was the recent provincial gathering of public school trustees. Many of the trustees were there, and the keynote speaker was Jeff Melanson, of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. Melanson was head of the National Ballet, then at Banff and is often credited with being an arts turn around man.

The following are the notes trustee Scott took during the keynote address by Melanson

- described himself as "an impossibility" - likes taking on insurmountable challenges
- ref: TED talk by Karl Dunker
- reinvigorating "how people see music"

- important to measure kids on the right skills sets - not restricting to the bookish academic side of things, but value all kinds of giftedness
- all move through space every day = all of us are dancers
- all speak on pitch = all of us are singers
- all of us are artists

- ref: book "Rise of the Creative Class"
- if no arts education, then people don't participate in the arts later in life
- kids need access to arts education

- huge investment in cultural infrastructure in Toronto in past 15 years, but at same time have seen reduction in investment in arts education

- kids participate in arts activities through public school education - some think we should regress to what was done 25 years ago but that may not be what will engage kids - or through recreation/private involvement

- hoping to create "Big Thought" in Toronto in near future - Dallas Texas connects arts meaningful opportunities through Big Thought
- also, look at El Sistema in Venezuela
- how to use e-learning for the arts

- consider the emergence of reality TV in conjunction with the disappearance of arts education - so how do we use the momentum of the former to reinvigorate the latter?

- consider merging arts, technology and design into one area of endeavour

- disruptive innovation - Clay Christensen (also consider Michael Porter) who wrote Innovator's Dilemma - look at failure of RIM and Nortel - in Canada we improve incrementally but don't innovate radically - government funding tends to bolster the old ideas rather than encouraging and facilitating the new

- define innovation as the practical application of creativity

- tend to overweight some aspects of creativity and underweight others

- re: arts education, boards have many creative and artistic kids in schools many of whom may be identified as ADHD

- remember the community organizations (like orchestras, etc.) that are trying to run arts outreach programs - need to work together more, need to have more conversations about arts and education

9. BREAK:

Thank you to Debbie and Evelyn for the many treats.

10. ACA Awards:

The first question to be addressed about the awards was: Are they worth it? Should they be continued? They are a huge investment in time and energy for the group? After a general discussion, the answer seemed to be they are clearly worth it and appreciated by everyone.

Evelyn distributed a summary of things that have to be done and asked us all to see how we could help. The first thing to be done is to update the forms with the new deadline dates. Then they can be distributed by the AICs and put on the website. The applications should come in before the end of the year, but the award decisions do not have to be announced until September.

ACTION: It was decided that Evelyn and David should contact Chair Shirley Seward to confirm that ACA will present in front of the board. The board's calendar is finalized at the end of June, so that if a date is agreed on, it could be posted on the website in advance. They will report back at the next meeting.

If there is no satisfactory conclusion to that meeting, ACA could ask Trustee Scott to ask the trustees to allow us to present: but that would only be as a last resort. It is considered that the request will be granted.

11. New Business:

Eric Ding spoke a little more about the Music showcase on May 31 his group is working on with the Chinatown BIA. There will be a first showcase featuring Music, and they hope to have a few more small ones featuring the other arts. They will lead up to a showcase next year featuring all the arts.

The group congratulated Eric and his group on the progress it has made so quickly.

There was also a brief discussion of the Time Allocation Model.

12. Adjournment:

David adjourned the meeting at 9:05 pm

Moved by Judy: CARRIED

Next meeting: Monday, March 30, 2015, in the staffroom at Fisher Park / Summit, 7:00 -9:00 PM

Upcoming ACA meetings: April 27, May 25

For information: ACA Co-Chairs David Jones & Sheila White: chair@ACAottawa.ca