

**Assembly 2007  
Baltimore, Maryland**

**Executive Director Peer Session**

**Breakout Session Notes**

**THURSDAY, DECEMBER 6<sup>th</sup>  
ARTS EDUCATION (submitted by Philip Horn)**

**We heard about a number of interesting efforts among our group. Actionable suggestions included:**

1. Having the AEP meeting either before or after a NASAA conference.
2. Have NASAA research federal funding for teacher training.
3. Spend more time on this issue.

**The following ideas/thoughts/suggestions were offered:**

- Institutes for school district planning. Short term consultants to develop a school/district plan.
- Working with Universities in developing pre-service programs and advocacy capacity, particularly with music and art pre-service student teachers. A number of us expressed interest in that.
- Teacher institutes. Arts integration institutes.
- LEA's granting continuing education credits.
- Partnership with the state Alliance.
- Discovering what other money is available.
- Providing expertise, not necessarily money, to the DOE and others.
- Arts organization's education delivery. Before and after studies.
- Gap strategies. Intervening when there are gaps.
- Grants to education non-profits.
- Arts ed consortium. \$200,000 from DOE for summer institutes.
- How to cut the cord/Dependency
- The Ying/Yang of partnerships.

**Who are your partners?**

- School board
- Alliance
- Principals
- Superintendents
- PTA/PTO (PA has an on-going partnership to support their annual conference)
- Foundations

- Art/Music Teachers
- Universities
- Arts Orgs/Education Divisions
- Chambers of Commerce
- Roster artists
- Economic Development offices
- Workforce development
- Realtors –which schools have good arts programs
- Guidance counselors
- Social service agencies
- Home schoolers (PA gets a lot of these for POL)
- Juvenile justice
- Girls/Boys Club (the YWCA has a big initiative in the arts)
- Private sector – Galleries, studios
- County AG/State Attorney General
- Sentencing at-risk kids to arts programs (PA)

**SATURDAY, DECEMBER 8th  
ADDRESSING CAPACITY CHALLENGES**

**Strategies for Addressing Advocacy Challenges**

- Capitalize on “arts days” to make them more effective.
- Form internal/informal culture clubs or cabinets to get together with like-minded agency heads. CHAT (culture, history arts and tourism) to identify similar goals and identify collaboration opportunities.
- Look for most productive alignment with statewide advocacy groups:
  - Consider best way to establish groups where none exist
  - Synchronize agendas and efforts. Lack of consensus can be counterproductive
  - WESTAF is funding arts advocacy groups – providing funds to hire a lobbyist – but is requiring SAA approval of their plan to encourage alignment with SAA goals.
- Consider how to utilize boards – not only SAA boards, but also the boards of cultural organizations - more effectively. These networks are sources of considerable influence and access to policy decision makers.
- Recruiting partners for special collaborations – such as American Masterpieces projects – can expand advocacy networks.
- Provide visual evidence of the SAA’s work. Map SAA achievements by county and supply that information to decision makers in concise form to bring “home” the return on the arts investment.

**Partnerships and Outsourcing**

- Look for outsourcing solutions for both mission driven and required initiatives (e.g., Poetry Out Loud).
- Some long-term partnerships become so comprehensive/integrated that the relationship can come to resemble operating support or salary support. This is appropriate for some partnerships, but may be less effective if the SAA expects specific contractual deliverables.
- Keys to success include:
  - Assess the potential of partners by working with them on short term or pilot projects before conducting major initiatives.
  - Select partners with common interests.
  - Consider fee-for-service contracts rather than partnerships if you want specific outcomes.
  - Create a contract, MOU or specific document for all relationships. Get roles, responsibilities and expectations on paper.
  - Have an exit plan.

### **Staff Development**

- Look internally to see what special talents your staff have, and develop a plan to cultivate those talents.
- Gather staff input about streamlining, efficiency and lightening the load. Invite staff input into key decisions.
- Confront staff entrenchment, “my favorite program,” and silo challenges.
- Consider how best to manage younger workers. (They like to have something “new” to do every 6 months!)
- Provide adequate training – especially on grants management and core systems – to all staff.
- Get out of the “mundane.” Offer training and opportunities to discuss real issues (e.g., how to care for ailing parents).
- Take junior staffers out and about. Go on site visits and side trips to introduce them to the field and build their understanding of your constituent base and its diversity.
- Involve staff in making art.
- Spend the most time with your “winners” – those staff who are most consistently productive. Most of us do the opposite, focusing on raising the results from low performers. But this concentrating and enhancing exemplary performance will yield better net results over the long term.
- Fill a bookcase with storyboards of the agency’s major projects to let everyone know how things are going.
- Invite staff to imagine that they are the director.
- Invite staff to imagine that they are *not* the director.
- Share budget details and other key documents with the staff to increase their awareness of your operating constraints.
- Give staff credit when it’s earned.

## **Managing Expectations**

- Good question: Is the budget a result of the programs (e.g., what we're used to spending in the past)? Or our plan (what we might need to do or spend differently)?
- Stay in front of staff r/e big issues – use of grant funds, major policy issues, etc. Make sure they learn information from you first and recognize the rationale employed when change is made.
- Be transparent, firm, clear and direct in stating agency positions.

## **Resource Allocation**

- “Mission Creep” is a central issue. SAAs must strike a balance between exploring new ideas/opportunities and reacting in a way that threatens our central focus. Be sure to understand who you are as an agency and what you do (i.e., what drives choices about operations, goals and programs).
- Identify what the incentives are that drive/motivate staff, council and legislators. Those motivations will affect their reactions to your resource allocation decisions, so take them into account when assessing your options and crafting communications.
- Allow time and space to do the work incrementally.
- Retasking / retooling may be necessary. Cultivate a culture of ongoing learning and change. This requires candor.
- Achieve transparency about operations and realities:
  - Where there is success
  - Where there is lack of success
  - Unusual needs / circumstances
  - Directives from the state