Arts for All: An Analysis of Arts Access as it Relates to Socioeconomic Status and other Demographic Factors

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On my honor, I have neither given nor received any unacknowledged aid on this assignment.

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<u>Introduction</u>

As a current singer with 11 years of experience playing the cello, two years of dance education, and plans to work in professional theatre upon graduation, the arts are near and dear to my heart. I consider them a vitally important part of my education and a large influence on who I am as a person. I understand not everyone grows up with the same arts influences in their lives, but I genuinely believe that everyone *should* grow up with these opportunities to participate in the arts.

This paper provides empirical evidence on the benefits of arts education. Building on this, I draw from moral philosophy to advance the claim that all children should receive arts education. However, this paper includes a discussion of the history of arts education in the American school system that makes it abundantly clear that not all children do receive education in the arts. The paper concludes with a discussion of non-profit arts organizations and their efforts to bridge the gap between what children *do* have and what they *should* have. Common challenges faced by these organizations are considered and solutions are proposed. It is my hope that this paper will go on to influence the thoughts and actions of those existing at all levels of arts education—those writing policy, those giving grants, those educating, and those learning— to increase access to arts education until it is truly: for all.

<u>The History of Arts Education in American Public Schools</u>

The Common School Movement, which eventually developed into the public education system as we know it, took hold in America in the 1830s (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008). Prior to this, school was reserved for the wealthy. The founders of the Common School Movement and their supporters pushed the movement believing that a public system of schooling

would help close the gap between the rich and the poor (The Columbia Encyclopedia, 2008). In 1915, Margaret Naumberg founded the Walden School to address the lack of emphasis on self-expression and creativity present in the Common School curriculum (Davis et al., 2005). Only a few years later, Naumberg and those with similar beliefs started the Progressive Education Movement in an effort to integrate a child-centered approach to learning into the public-school system; their curriculum focused on everyday life skills and included instruction in the fine arts and the industrial arts (Davis et al., 2005). Children attending progressive schools were encouraged to think and act independently while educators attempted to foster these natural curiosities (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2016; "Progressive Education Network," 2019). Thus, children were the main drivers of their education, choosing which aspects of the fine and industrial arts they wanted to explore.

The education of students' minds, bodies, and spirits continued in this manner until the 1960s, when Francis Keppel—Commissioner of Education appointed by President John F. Kennedy—established the Arts and Humanities Program (Davis et al., 2005). The program funded 17 conferences within a 2-year period; participants outlined standards for education in the arts and engaged in teacher training initiatives (Davis et al., 2005). In this way, arts education moved from being driven by the student to being driven by the established curriculum.

In the wake of the race to beat Russia into space in the 1960s, the 1970s brought the beginnings of the accountability movement, as state governments developed more detailed instructional objectives and mandated assessments to evaluate whether or not students were learning them (Davis et al., 2005). The movement became even stronger in the 1980s after the *A Nation At Risk* report calling for educational reform was published under Ronald Reagan (Davis et al., 2005). No Child Left Behind capitalized on these earlier ideas of accountability and shaped

the education system well into the 2000s (Davis et al., 2005). Under No Child Left Behind, "the arts" were considered a singular core curricular subject; but the arts were not a subject with required yearly evaluations (Americans for the Arts, 2013). Thus, as emphasis on the tested subjects of reading and math increased, school budgets for arts programming as well as dedicated instructional time in the arts decreased (Americans for the Arts, 2013).

The Every Student Succeeds Act signed by President Obama in 2015 continued this emphasis on accountability but pared back federal requirements giving more opportunity to individual states to determine what their education systems would look like (Lee, 2019). Unfortunately, this hasn't helped bolster the state of arts education in the public schools. School arts programs—when they exist—still struggle with small budgets, are often under-staffed, and lack administrative support (Americans for the Arts, 2013; Thomas, Singh, & Klopfenstein, 2015). This is a serious concern for all students across the nation considering the beneficial outcomes the arts provide—discussed in the section below. This concern is especially great for minority students, English language learning students, students in special education, and low-SES students as they are the ones most affected when the arts are de-emphasized in—or removed entirely from— public schools (Thomas, Singh, & Klopfenstein, 2015).

The Empirical Reason for the Arts

Participation in the arts is empirically supported to benefit students of all ages in social, emotional, and academic domains. Imagine two hypothetical children: Child A is raised such that arts enrichment is a large part of their life while Child B is raised in an area where access to arts enrichment is limited. Child A attends pre-school at a facility which utilizes an arts-integrated curriculum. That is, instead of just offering some art, music, and dance activities, the school has

curricular time for the arts built into every single day and arts experiences are utilized in other core learning areas to meet instructional goals (Brown & Sax, 2013). Child B attends a pre-school which offers daily art activities but does not employ an arts integrated curriculum. By the end of their pre-school years, Child A is more likely able to regulate their positive and negative emotions compared to Child B (Brown & Sax, 2013). Child A is also more likely to have gained three times the number of vocabulary words that Child B has gained (Brown & Sax, 2013). If both children are from low-income families, Child B is likely achieving at a lower level when compared to their peers; this gap is much less likely to exist between Child A and their peers (Brown & Sax, 2013).

As these children move into their primary education years (K-8), perhaps Child A will take music classes in elementary school and start playing an instrument in middle school. Additionally, they will participate in dance at a studio in their hometown. Child B, on the other hand, may not be able to participate in their school's music classes, because they will be in need of some one-on-one enrichment to catch up to grade level. When the rest of Child B's class is in music, Child B may be pulled out to receive remediation. Child B may not participate in extracurricular arts enrichments outside of school because their parents cannot afford the tuition and equipment such enrichments require (Pellegrinelli, 2012; Pew Research Center, 2015). By the end of these primary years, Child A will most likely demonstrate a better working memory, better focus, better abstract reasoning skills, and will persevere longer when faced with a hard task compared to Child B (Arts Education Partnership, 2018). Academically, Child A will probably perform better than Child B on assessments of math ability, writing ability, and reading fluency (Arts Education Partnership, 2018). Child A will also probably score better than Child B

on state administered end-of-year assessments for science and writing (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012).

If Child A and Child B maintain similar levels of involvement in their arts activities throughout high school, their outcomes will probably continue to vary widely. Child A will be less likely to drop out of school when compared to Child B, particularly because Child A will probably feel more engaged in school and participate more in school culture (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012; Thomas, Singh, & Klopfenstein, 2015). Child A will be more likely to participate in student government and school service clubs than will Child B (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). Outside of school, Child A will be more likely to volunteer as well as to vote in both local and national elections when compared to Child B (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). Child A will likely finish high school with a higher GPA and better SAT scores than Child B (Americans for the Arts, 2013). Child B will have a 22% chance of dropping out of high school while Child A's chance will be reduced to 4% (Americans for the Arts, 2013; Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). If both children graduate, Child A will have a 71% chance of attending some sort of college compared to Child B's chance of 48% (Catterall, Dumais, & Hampden-Thompson, 2012). If both attend college, Child A will be more than twice as likely to graduate as Child B (Americans for the Arts, 2013).

This hypothetical tracking of these two children illustrates all the areas throughout development and schooling where participation in the arts seems to make a demonstrable difference. The body of research on which these conclusions were based is vast and many of the findings have been replicated in multiple studies. The specific studies cited in the above paragraphs were selected based on their participant populations which were either majority

children and adolescents of low-income backgrounds, if not entirely comprised of low-income individuals. However, most of the studies did not include random assignment in their methods; thus, their conclusions were correlational rather than causational, which limits the ability to conclude that the findings are a direct result of participation in the arts. It is possible that the positive outcomes associated with arts participation were driven by a third unknown factor. Having said that, many studies included measures of potential driving variables—age, gender, race, ethnicity, SES, etc.—and controlled for them in their final analyses. Every study's conclusion correlating the arts and positive outcomes remained after controlling for these variables. The potential presence of a lurking variable driving the relationship remains; hopefully longitudinal research that involves random-assignment will be funded in the future such that the relationship between the arts and relevant outcome variables can be further explored and better understood.

The Moral Reason for the Arts

In order to discuss the moral argument for ensuring art access, I must first define the term "moral." Merriam Webster defines moral as "of or relating to principles of right and wrong" as well as "conforming to a standard of right behavior." But standards and principles of right and wrong are not necessarily objective. What the collective citizens of the United States of America hold as morally right is based on the history of the nation as well as the collective culture. Collective citizens of other nations may not hold the same values and beliefs and thus, may not land on the same definition of moral right and wrong. For the sake of this paper—since I am discussing arts access and experiences of those in the U.S.—I will construct a moral argument based on the collective moral values of the United States.

That being said, I am not a philosopher. So, instead of leaning on my own musings of the morals of this nation and how those morals compound into support for arts accessibility, I use the writings of Martha Nussbaum. Nussbaum is a well-known American philosopher who currently teaches philosophy, ethics, and law at the University of Chicago. She is best known for her Capabilities Approach which is intended to help people achieve well-being while tasking governments with establishing systems to ensure people the opportunities to exercise their capabilities (Robeyns, 2016). Nussbaum adapted this idea from Amartya Sen. Unlike Sen, however, Nussbaum actually listed the ten capabilities she felt most comprehensively outlined the necessary faculties of a human life worth living. Half of these capabilities—senses, imagination, and thought (listed as one capability on Nussbaum's list), emotions, affiliation, play, and control over one's environment—relate directly to the arts.

The arts are more than just implicated as important in Nussbaum's work. In 2010, she published *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities*, which was re-released with a new introduction in 2016. In the book, Nussbaum discusses a number of the capabilities she believes are essential to well-being, explaining how they are achieved through education in humanities disciplines such as the arts. She goes on to discuss why this education is morally important considering the values and ideals of the American nation: democracy, equality, good citizenship, and a free economy.

Nussbaum argues that the current American school system. characterized by high-stakes testing and accountability, is focusing too much on economic growth. This focus has led to a decrease in arts experiences within schools which Nussbaum argues erodes the values of democracy, equality, and good citizenship. Economic growth in today's society is attached to innovations in science and technology which has consequently led these subjects to be the focus

of most major curricular reforms and testing initiatives of the last 20 years (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 7). This standardized testing culture encourages teachers to "teach to the test" while students learn to be passive rote learners and regurgitate facts in order to achieve success in school (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 65). Nussbaum argues that children should be actively engaging with material and analyzing to solve problems rather than absorbing information (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 65). In doing so, children actually become better at innovating which makes them more likely to successfully solve problems in their future careers (Nussbaum, 2016, p. xvii). For those children whose careers happen to be in a STEM field, such problem-solving abilities lead to new technology, capable of growing the economy.

As discussed in the empirical section of this paper, one of the best ways to cultivate problem-solving abilities and innovation skills is through experiences in the arts. When people participate in the arts—whether that's creative visual arts, music, theatre, or dance—they increase their emotional and imaginative resources (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 101). They develop a greater ability to understand themselves and others (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 101). In this greater understanding, they increase their capacities for empathy and narrative imagination—the ability to effectively adopt another person's perspective and think and act through that perspective (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 95). The capability to imagine quickly expands beyond something reserved for the "unreal spaces of art" (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 103). When children cultivate their imaginative abilities within arts education, the ability to imagine can then be applied and further refined in other disciplines (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 103).

Once children have the ability to imagine and empathize their way into other perspectives, they begin to see people as true individuals with intrinsic desires, thoughts and feelings, rather than mere means to useful ends (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 6). That is, they begin to see

people as equals to themselves, in their faculties and capabilities. Once they do this, children gain the ability to see themselves as one small part of a global whole; they begin to develop an understanding of their actions and the consequences these actions have for people around the world (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 80). When children view the world with this global perspective, they grow into better consumers and more civically active voters (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 90).

The above results of arts education are morally required to be supported by all structures of the United States—legislation, staffing, funding, etc.—if the country still holds its values of democracy, equality, good citizenship, and a free economy as important. Because it is not enough to simply hold values; they must be continually reinforced through the nation's institutions. Similarly, the arts education required to achieve the reinforcement of the above American ideals cannot be passive. It is not enough to provide children with time to play and imagine; arts instruction requires discipline and ambition if it is to effectively manifest into empathy, expression, and innovation (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 106). Instruction, then, may not be focused on mere "appreciation" of great works, either (Nussbaum, 2016, p. 103). For children—and consequently the nation—to reap the benefits, arts education must be engaging and active.

Active Exposure to vs. Passive Engagement with the Arts

The emphasis on active experience with the arts is not to say that arts exposure is not valuable. Children can learn a lot by watching artists perform, by listening to music--live or recorded--or by going to a museum to view art. A study which looked at the effects of school field trips to view live theatre found that students scored significantly higher on measures of tolerance after viewing a live theatre performance compared to students who went on a field trip to see a screened movie of the same story (Greene et al., 2018). Students who saw the live

performance also scored higher on measures assessing content knowledge—vocabulary and plot elements—related to the performance compared to their peers who saw the movie version (Greene et al., 2018). Thus, being exposed to live arts experiences seems to have an impact on students.

I spoke to a representative from the Washington and Lee Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film Studies who seemed to support this empirical evidence with his own anecdotal stories (see the next section of this paper for details on my interviews with arts professionals). Owen Collins directed a production of the children's theatre show *James and the Giant Peach* in the winter of 2018. Although productions at Washington and Lee typically run for four days, Collins added three extra performances and invited classes of local elementary students to come see the show for free. Collins remarked that he was inspired to put on a children's theatre production and invite local kids after watching his own children age through the school system. "There weren't a lot of drama options for them. So, in doing a children's show, I saw it as a great opportunity to increase exposure to theatre for the kids," he said. Later in the interview, he stated "I think there's an immediate need for theatre. Because it's imaginative but it's real life. It's not like TV or movies where it's virtual. So, they get more out of it. There was a good number of kids who our show was their first live theatre experience." When asked what effect he felt the performance had on the children, Collins said "theatre is a really important thing. It's fun and imaginative and a great opportunity for people to be creative and learn collaboration skills. It's about commitment and about being responsible for one another. It makes people work hard. There's a lot of employment opportunities in…theatre. Theatre and the arts are always viewed as extra but there are true opportunities there. One of our biggest exports is our culture. And there's millions and millions of jobs in those industries so I want to make kids aware of those."

Clearly for Collins, exposure is a key component of arts engagement. This is supported by the literature but should not be viewed as the only important aspect of arts engagement. Studies on exposure to the arts tend to report only short-term outcomes. For example, the study cited immediately above did find a significant increase in students' displays of tolerance as well as in their knowledge of vocabulary and related content (Greene et al., 2018). These effects were present 7 to 8 weeks after students were exposed to the live theatre productions, but there's no research or results on whether or not these effects persisted beyond this time frame. On the other hand, the empirically supported effects of active arts experiences—discussed in an earlier section of this paper—illustrate effects extending into post-secondary education and civic life beyond the time frame in which the experiences took place. Of course, children can only engage with what they know exists. That is to say, exposure ideally precedes active engagement. However, exposure should never take the place of children's opportunities for active engagement with the arts. If we want children to gain the advantages provided by the arts, we must not settle for passive exposure opportunities; rather, we should continue to advocate for actively enriching arts experiences for all.

The Role of Non-Profit Arts Organizations

Consider how important arts education is for children and for the future of our national culture, industry, and economy; then compare that to the current state of arts education as discussed in the first section of this paper. Clearly, something must be done to revive arts education in such a way that is equitably accessible for all children regardless of demographic factors such as age, race, SES, English-language-learning status, disability status, and location.

Martha Nussbaum believes this access should be provided within the schools, requiring politicians to pass new legislation and write new curriculum requirements which citizens would have to vote on; but legislative solutions are inefficient. They take time to work their way through all the necessary parties and systems. Not to mention, they are impermanent. Our nation's governing bodies undergo transition often. Thus, one congress or schoolboard may pass legislation in support of the arts one year and another iteration of the same group could completely decimate those policies a few years down the line. Until the majority of lawmakers and public figures place an emphasized importance on the arts, we cannot guarantee access through these channels.

That is not to say we should give up completely. Those invested in this issue of arts access can become politicians or school board members themselves; or perhaps they can go into lobbying, working to impress the importance of the arts upon those already in power. Invested individuals can also make art accessible to students directly by starting an organization which either brings arts programming into the schools or brings kids to arts programming elsewhere. These organizations face unique challenges but are also in a unique position to program art in direct, engaging, active ways which school systems may not always achieve with their arts curricula if said curricula exists in the first place.

I elected to interview choice individuals working for non-profit arts organizations in order to elucidate some of the common challenges these organizations face in their efforts to bring the arts to children. I found organizations via the internet and word of mouth. I reached out via email to all organizations to explain the project and interviewed all who responded. The interviewees represent 12 organizations/institutions including school boards, universities, and youth choirs, as well as dance studios and professional theatres. They are located in regions all

over the country and their experiences are representative of work in urban, suburban, and rural environments (See Appendix A for a list of the represented organizations, their locations, and their interviewees). I spent approximately an hour with each interviewee, asking them a standard set of questions which I allowed to lead into natural conversations regarding their organization, their work, and the arts in general (See Appendix B for the basic set of questions). We talked about facts, as well as opinions, and successes, as well as failures. I took extensive notes during each interview, which I then morphed into an excel spreadsheet--broken down by question category--so that the common themes threaded through all interviewee experiences could be recognized and reported here. In illuminating some of the challenges as well as some of the strengths of these individuals and organizations, I will conclude with some recommendations for those working in non-profit arts organizations so that children's access to arts can be improved even more moving forward.

All the organizations were funded through a combination of tuition and donations, with most also receiving grant funding. The proportion of funding received from these three areas varied greatly. Some organizations relied heavily on tuition dollars, while others relied mainly on donations. Still, others pulled from funding sources fairly evenly. All organizations offered financial assistance for families unable to afford tuition costs and all organization representatives reported that families utilized them. When direct percentages were given, utilization of scholarship funds ranged from 10% of participants to 17%. Almost all the organizations highlighted the simplicity of their scholarship application process, citing an "honor system" mentality in which they take families at their word when they say they can/cannot afford a certain amount.

When asked what their greatest challenge was in attempting to provide students with quality arts experiences, most organizations said funding. A few organization leaders talked about the challenge with grant funding, specifically. The majority of grants are designed to fund projects, rather than to provide core support. That is, granting groups give money to support a single event—like a concert or a class—rather than providing money to cover things like building rental costs or staff salaries. In speaking with interviewee Tom Tiernan, of Westside Youth Choir in Oregon, he stated that his organization "love[s] project grants" but noted "a problem with them is [organizations] need core operating support" in addition to support for their individual projects.

This challenge highlights an opportunity for grant organizations, corporate companies, and the federal, state, and local governments to create more opportunities for organizations to garner funds dedicated to core program support. Expanding the 21st Century Community Learning Center Grant program—with which the government supports programs which provide enrichment opportunities to students outside school hours—would be a good place to start. Currently, these grants are given directly to schools. Some organizations, like Halestone Dance Studio in Lexington, Virginia, benefit from these grants when schools pay small amounts of their grant award to bring organizations in for enrichment programming. One can easily imagine a grant which more directly targets relationships between non-profit organizations and schools. This sort of grant could fund core programming for non-profit organizations that agree to do routine enrichment programs with schools.

The majority of organization leaders reported that their organizations do work within the local schools already, usually in addition to their on-site programming. Schools do not typically pay organizations for programming, aside from when the work is brought on by a 21st Century

Grant as discussed above. Working in the schools is one source of recruitment for organizations. Other means of recruitment mentioned include the internet (mainly social media and organization websites), marketing via flyers and ads in newspapers or on the radio, and distribution of flyers through schools where organizations do not do outreach. The most cited method of recruitment, though, was word of mouth—whether from organization leaders, participating students and families, or arts teachers within the schools with knowledge of the organizations and their programming. All the organization leaders interviewed for this project detailed robust retention rates with many keeping students within their programs for 8 to 10 years.

Despite this, recruiting and retaining students was an oft-cited challenge for many organizations. Many mentioned the problem of over-commitment with the current generation of children. Kids participate in sports while also taking music lessons and dancing in addition to their academic obligations. This puts strain on the kids as well as on their families who must keep up with the child's busy schedule, managing work and arranging transportation, meals, and family time between activities. Kate Snyder, with Community Arts Center in Kentucky discussed an art survey sent to parents of children who participate in art programming at the center. "Most parents, when surveyed, say art is a fun thing that [they] work in when [they] can. It's not something they organize their life around. Unlike things like soccer," Snyder says. If families were made more aware of the benefits of arts programs, perhaps they would prioritize them more. This is work for the organizations themselves to undertake—making it clear the experiences they provide for kids as well as the benefits of those experiences—but it's also work for researchers to undertake. Those with interest in education and citizenship should study the arts and publish results in ways that are accessible to the average person.

Another challenge with recruitment and retention organizations highlighted was that of recruiting and retaining a diverse group of students. Mike Ross, the executive director, artistic director, and conductor for a youth choir organization in Madison, Wisconsin, talked about the importance of his organization being "a place for all kids" while also acknowledging his organization's struggle with recruiting students with diverse backgrounds. He stated that the word-of-mouth recruitment strategy "works really well for most things. But it doesn't work so well for the diversity issue." Word of mouth recommendations tend to occur along demographic lines. Ross' organization is attempting to address that issue by working to make better personal relationships with interested families who don't see themselves reflected in the current participant population. This is a good solution for any organization struggling with diverse representation.

Other solutions include adjustments in leadership and space. Role models are important; recruiting members of diverse communities to act as staff members illustrates organizations' devotion to diversity. Children and families are then more likely to see the activity as one feasible for them to participate in. The second pieces of this puzzle is space. Where is the space located? What does the community surrounding that space look like? How accessible and welcoming, then, is that space for members of diverse communities? Answers to these questions and any resulting changes would need to be very specific to each organization and its community, so I will not spend any more time here discussing it generally.

All in all, non-profit arts organizations appear to be doing great work within their communities by continuously analyzing the challenges they are facing in achieving the goals of their missions and working to overcome them.

Conclusion

This paper briefly covered the history of arts education in the United States and discussed the less-than-stellar state of the current curricular requirements and offerings, particularly for students who are low-SES or have unique educational needs. It also presented empirical evidence and moral philosophical arguments as to why the arts are important educational components for all students and for our nation as a whole. Finally, interviews with leaders of non-profit arts organizations from around the country were summarized into key points regarding funding, recruitment and retention, and diversity.

In an interview with the education director of a professional theatre in Philadelphia, I asked if there was anything more I should know about his organization. He responded with "we bring water to the desert. We do a lot, but every city needs so much more!" This paper ultimately speaks to "the desert" that is current arts education in the U.S., "the water" brought to this desert by hardworking individuals, and the need to ultimately do more. It is my hope that this paper equips organization leaders, teachers, parents, politicians, lobbyists, and other ordinary citizens with empowering knowledge, enabling them to increase children's access to arts education in this country.

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Appendix A

List of Interviewees

Organization	Location	Interviewee, Job Title
Brooklyn Arts Exchange	New York, NY	Lucy Scheckner, Education Director
Community Arts Center	Danville, KY	Kate Snyder, Development and Marketing Director
Halestone Dance Studio	Lexington, VA	Mauri Connors, Artistic Director
Lexington City Schools	Lexington, VA	Rebecca Walters, Superintendent
Madison Youth Choirs	Madison, WI	Mike Ross, Executive Director, Artistic Director, and Conductor
Magnified Gift Theatre Company	Chicago, IL	Rosette Jarriett, Board President & Artistic Director
MSU Community Music School	East Lansing, MI	Jaime DeMott, Director
Northfield Youth Choir	Northfield, MN	Ann Kay, Choir Director
Rockbridge Youth Chorale	Lexington, VA	Lacey Lynch, Director
WLU Department of Theatre, Dance, and Film Studies	Lexington, VA	Owen Collins, Play Director
Walnut Street Theatre	Philadelphia, PA	Tom Quinn, Education Director
Westside Youth Choir	Hillsboro, OR	Tom Tiernan, Board Member

Appendix B

Sample List of Interview Questions

1. When did you first begin working with (organization)?

2. Before joining (organization), what was your experience within the arts like? What was your experience with educational arts specifically?

3. How is (organization) funded?

4. Does (organization) do any work within the (area) schools?

5. How do you recruit students to participate in (organization) programs?

6. When students come to (organization), do they usually have experiences in the arts? If so, have these experiences come from their time in school or from elsewhere?

7. Do you see a lot of kids who start with (organization) stay with it?

8. Does (organization) offer financial assistance to families? Do families utilize these financial assistance offerings?

9. Does (organization) have a policy for handling families with transportation concerns/concerns over affording attire/etc.?

10. In your professional opinion, does arts engagement benefit students? If so, in what ways?

11. What are the challenges you've faced in trying to provide students with quality arts experiences? How do you work around these challenges?

12. What's one of your favorite stories of success/triumph from your time with (organization)?

13. Is there anything else you think would be helpful for me to know about (organization), your work, or the surrounding area?