

To whom it may concern,

This letter is to serve as clarification on the goal and objectives of the Artists in Residence (Education) Program, known as AIR (Education).

The Artists in Residence (Education) program is a partnership program of the Ontario Arts Council. In this program, the Ontario Arts Council and school boards partner to develop a project which meets the needs of a school board's learning community. These projects involve professional artists partnering with teachers. The collaboration between artist and teacher is intended, first and foremost, to provide an effective and engaging creative learning experience for students. In addition to this goal, the defined objectives of the program are:

- Increase access to the arts by Ontarians
- Increase student engagement through a creative process;
- Increase opportunities for collaboration between teachers and artists;
- Increase opportunities for teachers to develop an understanding of the creative process and deliver the arts;
- Increase opportunities for school board partners to improve and develop projects through sharing of ideas, resources, successes and challenges.

At the core of this program is the artist and teacher partnership. This collaboration requires both artist and teacher to be involved in the planning and delivery of the program. Artists are experts in the arts and share their understanding, knowledge and skills with teachers and students. Teachers are likewise respected as experts, in this program model, as their understanding of their students' learning needs and pedagogical practice is vital to successful collaboration.

As cited above, one of the objectives, of this program is to build teacher's capacity to deliver the arts by increasing their artistic skills and understanding of the creative and critical analysis process.

The Ontario Arts Council believes that this capacity will be carried forward by teachers, with or without an artist, in their subsequent lesson and unit planning. The unique in-class professional development opportunity for teachers afforded by this program can only occur when teachers actively participate and collaborate in the planning and delivery of any learning experiences.

To date , the impacts of the AIR (Education) program on students include:

- **Increased engagement:** Students became more focused and excited by their school work and exhibited on-task behaviours. Class attendance increased.¹
- **Increased achievement:** Students displayed better understanding of concepts in the arts and beyond. Grades improved. ²
- **Sense of community:** Students developed teamwork skills through collaboration with other students and with artists and teachers.³

For teachers, the focus on creative processes has developed their understanding of the arts curriculum and has given them additional skills to incorporate into their teaching. The impacts of the AIR (Education) program on teachers include:

- **Increased opportunities:** Teachers learned new skills and new ways to deliver the arts curriculum.⁴
- **Sense of community:** Teachers developed an understanding of the cultural communities of the school with connections to local artists.⁵

If you require any further information regarding this program, please contact, Kirsten Gunter, OAC's Director of Communications.

Regards,

¹ Durham District School Board, OAC Artists in Residence Report, 2009-10

² Durham District School Board, OAC Artists in Residence Final Report, 2009-10

³ Durham District School Board, OAC Artists in Residence Final Report, 2009-10

⁴ Ministry of Education, Report on the Artist In Residence Program, 2009

⁵ York Region District School Board, AIR (Ed) Final Report, 2009-10