

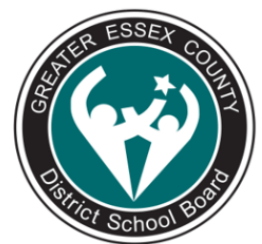
# Canadian Network for Arts & Learning

Arts Can Teach Program

FINAL REPORT  
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## Background

In September of 2019, The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning in partnership with the Arts Can Teach program received a \$61,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation “to develop, implement and research the impact of hands-on multicultural arts activities in high-needs elementary classrooms. Enriching people’s lives through arts, culture and heritage, this initiative will help increase access to arts-based learning opportunities and compelling artistic, cultural and heritage experiences, and impact the lives of 4,000 people in the community.” The project was initially expected to take 12 months but ran into a number of issues that delayed the implementation of the classroom sessions, due to a global pandemic.

Prior to this project, the Arts Can Teach program worked exclusively with the Greater Essex County District School Board (GECDSB) which provided funding for a set number of classroom sessions every year. With this project funding from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Arts Can Teach would increase the number of classes that it facilitates and develop new lessons that would focus on addressing the unique needs of newcomer students, of which there is a very high percentage in the Windsor region. Through the Ontario Trillium Funding, Arts Can Teach planned to hire artists representing multicultural backgrounds, train them on lesson planning and classroom management, provide mentorship with experienced artist-educators, create new multicultural lesson plans and facilitate these lessons in GECDSB classrooms.

The purpose of the Arts Can Teach program is to develop and implement hands-on arts activities in elementary schools in the Windsor Essex Region. Arts Can Teach aims to incorporate art forms into non-arts subjects such as Language, Social Studies, and Math. Hands-on experiences through the arts have been proven to remove barriers to learning, engaging all students, and creating an inclusive and supporting learning environment.

Throughout this project, Arts Can Teach and The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning aimed to learn how to: best mentor and support emerging artist educators from diverse multicultural backgrounds to help bring cultural arts activities to learning in a school environment; how a variety of traditional arts from around the world might integrate with and enliven non-arts school subjects, particularly language acquisition; how students respond to seeing a diversity of cultures and traditions represented in their artist educators and their learning.

The project also addresses key questions such as:

- In what ways can multicultural art forms be integrated with classroom learning in meaningful and culturally sensitive ways?
- In what ways can arts-integrated lesson plans be adapted to support English language learners?
- What type of support or training would best assist new artists to develop their skills as artist educators in a school environment?

The scope of this project had to slightly change due to the course of the pandemic. As a result, lesson plans focused on creative learning opportunities for teachers and students while being mindful of the stress, anxiety, and uncertainty in schools across the region. Multicultural art forms have been able to contribute to the educational and mental well-being of everyone

involved in the program. Additionally, artists were tasked with altering lesson plans to fit an online learning environment.

The Arts Can Teach program has always consisted of local artists facilitating lessons in-person, while partnering with teachers in schools in the Windsor Essex region. However, due to the pandemic, the program needed to make changes, moving online to ensure that artist visits were still possible. Arts Can Teach was able to take advantage of online learning, as artists from various regions across Ontario were now able to teach online. This expansion helped in adding new faces, perspectives, and inspirations to the program.

During the pandemic, there has been an increasing amount of hostility because of divides in society. Accordingly, the program wanted to focus on trying to restore the sense of community and partnerships in Ontario. One way this was done was by carrying on the positive momentum toward cultural diversity. Cultural diversity in the program was achieved through ensuring diversity and minority representation was reflected in the artists and their lessons. Through a diverse range of artists, students were able to see themselves represented.

### Purpose and Description

The Canadian Network for Arts & Learning (CNAL) was born out of the shared belief that arts and learning, formally and informally “enrich, empower, and sustain the lives of individuals and communities.” (Larry O’Farrell and Tina Kukkonen, 2017, Transformative Action and Arts Education). The Network continues to raise awareness of the value of arts education while building an extensive network of artists, artist-educators, teachers, arts organizations, researchers, universities and advocates across the nation. The Network regularly presents international conferences as well as local events, launches relevant research studies, gathers valuable resources and makes them easily accessible to the public including a digital Map with almost 10,000 arts and learning profiles from across Canada. The Network successfully provides a nexus where Canada’s arts and learning community connects with the ultimate goal of cultivating a more creative, innovative and prosperous Canada.

The Arts Can Teach program was founded by Karen McClellan, who also acts as the Executive Director. This program builds on the legacy of the Learning Through the Arts (LTTA) program, created in 1994 by Angela Elster and The Royal Conservatory of Music. This groundbreaking program brought artists and teachers together in classrooms across Canada, training and transforming through arts integration. Today, with many of Windsor’s original artists and an increasing demand, Arts Can Teach continues to expand, innovate, and develop to support the region’s schools and community.

This report will analyze the Arts Can Teach program in relation to its work supporting multiculturalism and diversity and assisting English language learners through the Adventures in Culture and Character program. The purpose of this report is to gain a better understanding of the participants’ experience with the Arts Can Teach program to measure its effectiveness and success in achieving its goals. This report aims to find ways to further develop the program, learn

how to mentor and support emerging artist educators from diverse multicultural backgrounds, and assess if the program is meeting organizational goals. The findings of this report will help to improve, develop, and expand the program.

Questioning ways to further develop the program while respecting multiculturalism is vital as Windsor's population is composed of peoples from all over the globe with different ethnic origins and is a hub for new Canadian families. Ensuring the program is incorporating multicultural arts and enhancing the learning of different cultures in a culturally sensitive manner is very important. In addition to respecting multiculturalism, this report will also analyze if arts-integrated lesson plans are being adapted to support English language learners. Furthermore, analyzing the specific type of support or training that is required to assist new artists to develop their skills in an educational school environment is vital for the success of this program and the learning of students.

This report also aims to learn how to best mentor and support artists from different ethnic origins to bring cultural arts and activities to classrooms across the Windsor Region. A variety of traditional arts from around the world are being used to integrate and enliven non-arts school subjects and are assisting in language acquisition for English language learners. It is very important that all students are exposed to diverse cultures and that multiculturalism is being reflected, as it is a major part of Windsor's population.

Meeting ongoing organizational goals is also imperative for the success of the program. CNAL and Arts Can Teach are aiming to increase awareness of the value of arts and how truly beneficial they can be in all aspects of a student's educational journey. Furthermore, the arts also provide an outlet for the vulnerable and elderly population.

CNAL wants to ensure that the Arts Can Teach Program is providing creative learning opportunities for teachers, artists, and students. Assuring that students are engaged and learning through arts-based learning is critical for the success of the program. Additionally, supporting teachers to integrate the arts in their teaching, independent of the program, will result in the long-term benefits of the program as teachers have the most access to students. Moreover, producing a creative learning atmosphere for artists is also important to expand their skill sets, qualifications, and the quality of their lesson offerings.

The program also aims to focus on the professional development of teachers. Through working alongside an artist in their classroom, teachers have the opportunity to learn arts-based strategies themselves. With four classroom visits, artists do not have the same exposure to the students that the teachers do, so it is vital that the teachers carry on the lesson plans and formulate new ones to help in the long-term development of the students. A vital goal of the Arts Can Teach program is to give the teachers enough tools and hands-on experiences to continue these effective and engaging arts processes with confidence.

### Methodology

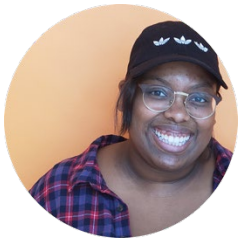
Upon the completion of the program for the school year ending in June 2022, a link to a survey with 12 questions was sent out via email to teachers, artists, and administrators involved with the program. The survey asked participants to rate the effectiveness, delivery, and structure of the Arts Can Teach program on a 5-point scale. The responses were classified as strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Of the 12 survey questions, 8 were multiple choice and 4 were open-ended questions asking participants for their feedback and experience with the program. The survey responses were then submitted to CNAL for further analysis. Quantitative and qualitative analysis were used to analyze the responses to gauge if the program met its goals. Qualitative analysis assisted in identifying the cause of the survey results and analyzing the reasoning behind the respondents approval or disapproval of the program. Quantitative analysis was used to analyze the aspects that influenced the success of the program, as indicated by survey respondents.

### Participants

The survey was conducted online by sending a link to teachers, artists, and administrators involved in the program. Three different survey sets were sent out to artists, teachers in the Culture and Character program, and teachers in the general Arts Can Teach program. In addition to the goals of Arts Can Teach, the Culture and Character program had a focus on English language learners. There were a total of 21 respondents to the survey: 15 teachers in the general Arts Can Teach program, 3 teachers in the Culture and Character program, and 3 artists. All respondents are anonymous as names were not collected for the purpose of this research.

## Artists Background

This section of the report will provide the backgrounds of Adventures in Culture and Character artists along with their expertise and qualifications. Each artist has been vital in the success of Arts Can Teach through their unique skill sets. All 6 artists used distinct teaching styles in their delivery and provided critical skill sets for the development, success, and expansion of this program. These are 6 of the 15 artists in the Arts Can Teach program and they have been focusing on multiculturalism and English language learners.



**Ariel Clarke**  
30 classrooms

Ariel Clarke specializes in drama and theatre and has completed her studies in Drama and Education at the University of Windsor. Furthermore, Ariel went on to complete her master's degree in teaching at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. Throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies, Ariel has taught across multiple elementary and secondary schools across Ontario. Ariel recognizes the importance of drama and theatre as a part of arts integration into non-arts subjects to help benefit children beyond their traditional academic studies. Ariel has also done specific work in social justice education targeting systemic racism and working on formulating anti-racist and anti-colonial perspectives into lesson plans. In her arts lessons, Ariel uses drama sources such as drawing, writing, and acting in role to facilitate student learning across multiple subject areas in addition to her theatre background which guides introductory work in script writing, directing, and acting.



**Maryam Safarzadeh**  
19 classrooms

Maryam Safarzadeh is an Iranian painter and poet. Maryam's poetry is renowned as many Iranian composers have created songs with her poetry. Maryam started painting at the young age of 10 and learned a variety of techniques from various masters of painting in Iran. Upon graduating from university with a degree in graphics design, she started studying with the renowned Iranian artist, Taha Behbehani. This experience opened doors for Maryam to incorporate new dimensions in her art. Maryam has been teaching art and creation for more than 16 years in various arts schools. Currently, she is creating art and running art classes at Shō Art Studios, which focus on the interplay of art, spirit, and

performance. Maryam also serves on the board of directors for the Art Gallery of Windsor (AGW).



**Samantha Badaoa**

8 Classrooms

Samantha Badaoa specializes in poetry/performance and poetry/storytelling. Samantha is a graduate of the University of Windsor with an Honours English Language and Literature degree. She is a recognized spoken word artist with an established body of work. Samantha has been part of the Windsor Poetry Slam since 2015 and has also served as the Director. Samantha's first full-length collection of poetry, *So Am I*, was published in 2020 with Black Moss Press. In 2022, she received a Windsor Endowment for the Arts Emerging Artist grant to create her second collection of poetry which will focus on the agricultural industry in the Windsor-Essex County. Samantha's poetry focuses on lyrical storytelling and the connection between the divine and the mundane. She hopes to create spaces for people to develop their poetry and spoken word while also being able to experiment with expression.



**Erik Johnson**

8 classrooms

Erik "E-Tomic" Johnson is a hip-hop lyricist, vocalist, and slam poet from the Windsor-Essex region. Erik has been writing and performing poetry for over a decade. He draws his poetic inspiration from his Afro-Indigenous culture and experiences as an artist of colour and a physically disabled creator. Erik's goal is to highlight the experiences of BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour) through storytelling, a theme that is deeply ingrained in all of his poetic endeavours.



**Naomi P. Peters**

10 classrooms

Naomi P. Peters is a Potawatomi/Chippewa (Ojibwe) person from Caldwell First Nation, as well as a second-generation Swiss Canadian whose passion is visual art and has been practicing for the past 14 years. She is a graduate of Tyndale University, with a bachelor's in English and a minor in Psychology. In Naomi's freelance career, she has been drawing since 2018 and has sold multiple custom pieces. She has had her art on display at the AGW, Point Pelee National Park, the Leamington Hospice Centre, and many other locations. Naomi was one of the



artists chosen to create a mural on the Gordie Howe International Bridge tower construction site. Naomi hopes to bring together her cultural background with other influences to create beautiful and meaningful pieces while expanding the way she uses her art.



**Alexis Jamil**  
1 classroom

Alexis Jamil graduated from university with an Honours in Drama in Education and Community. Alexis has a wide range of experiences in teaching in countries such as Costa Rica, Italy, Haiti, and Canada. Alexis is certified in teaching English as a foreign language through theatre and play to help English language learners and is determined to use the arts as a medium of education. Alexis teaches English to a wide range of people such as seniors with dementia, grade-level students, post-secondary students, and everyone else in between. Alexis started her career in Windsor with the Changing the Odds leadership camp from 2016-2017 and has only continued to develop her passion for education since then. Alexis believes that learning never stops, play never stops, change never stops, and inspiring the youth can change the world.



**Hussein Samhat**  
11 classrooms

Hussein Samhat is an emerging drama educator and practitioner. He obtained his Bachelor of Arts with Honours in the Drama in Education and Community program at the University of Windsor. He will complete a Bachelor of Education at the junior-intermediate level in Spring 2023. Hussein has experience working with youth from early childhood to post-secondary through practicums, employment, and community work with the Changing the Odds Summer Youth Program. As an educator, Hussein believes in leading with empathy and he hopes to create safe spaces for students to be able to share their thoughts and experiences and be themselves. The synergistic relationship between educators and students is very important in creating a deeper and more meaningful level of interaction and exploration. In his teaching, Hussein believes in bringing the world into the classroom through various drama practices such as perspective taking, story drama, and character work to explore diverse contexts.

## Lesson Descriptions

This section of the report outlines and describes the Adventures in Culture and Character lesson plans made possible through Ontario Trillium Foundation project funding.

### **Ariel Clarke**

#### Respect and Kindness Through Story Drama

Grades: 4-8

Using the picture book ‘The Woman Who Outshone the Sun’ by Alejandro Cruz Martinez as a pretext, students stepped into the world of Lucie and her village to explore themes of respect, kindness, and individuality. Students used this workshop to learn how to step in and out of role to story tell while also reflecting on their own personal experiences and acceptance.

#### Perspective and Acceptance Through Process Drama

Grades: 4-8

Using the pretext of ‘The True Story of the 3 Little Pigs!’ by Jon Scieszka, students explored multiple perspectives and voices through a multicultural lens. Through process drama, students were able to explore and discuss the consequences of vilifying one perspective without hearing another. This workshop taught students to practice patience and hear both sides of the story before offering judgment.

#### Power and Voice Through Poetry and Drama

Grades: 7-8

With a specific focus on Maya Angelou, a memoirist, poet, and civil rights activist and Amanda Gorman, a poet and activist, students were able to examine black poets, their work, and its significance. Students were able to learn different forms of poetry and worked on expressing their own voices. In addition to poetry, students also worked on spoken word and highlighted and emphasized the meaning and message in their poems. Workshops such as this are very helpful for children living in a multicultural city such as Windsor in understanding different cultures and their political struggles.

#### Morality and Identity Through Greek Theatre

Grades: 6-8

Students learned the origins of script and plays in Greek theatre. They were introduced to the elements of a Greek tragedy and comedy and looked at the mask and chorus work involved in a play. Students explored traditional Greek mythology stories and analyzed their significance and deeper meaning. Students were also given the opportunity to create their own Greek theatre-inspired pieces. Exposing students to types of theatre they are not accustomed to helps in broadening their understanding of the arts and the multicultural fabric of the Windsor Region.

#### Self-love and Identity Through Verbatim Theatre

Grades: 6-8

Using the pretext, ‘Where Are You From?’ by Yamile Saied Méndez, students explored self-love and identity through verbatim theatre work. ‘Where Are You From?’ is the story of a little girl who constantly gets asked where she is from. In this story, she shoes on a mission to get

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the answer from her abuelo (grandfather), who taught her the value of her heritage and home. Through verbatim theatre (a theatre piece made from real people's words, a form of documentary/applied theatre), students explored their own heritage and identity through voice. As increasing multicultural art forms and assisting English language learners are two major goals of this program, this workshop helps English speaking students to be sympathetic towards new Canadians and learn their stories and how, although they may be different, respecting each other's cultures is important.

### Diversity and Unity Through Role Play

Grades: 7-8

Students explored the concept of diversity and unity through the pretext 'All Kinds of Children' by Norma Simon. Students were able to respond, relate, and explore the necessities of life for different countries around the world. Students also brought their own uniqueness, research, culture, and identity to the lesson while exploring it through role and debate in a Model UN Conference.

### **Maryam Safarzadeh**

#### Exploring Shapes and Patterns through Visual Art

Grades: 2-3

Students were introduced to modern paintings from Iran and observed the shapes and patterns within these paintings. Using materials found at home, students were able to draw and design their own artwork. This 4-visit lesson served as an effective introduction to visual arts for young students.

### **Samantha Badaoa and Erik Johnson**

#### What's Your Origin Story?

Grades: 4-8

Everyone has an origin story and it's important that students recognize this from a young age to respect each other's cultural differences. In this lesson, students were introduced to the concept of storytelling through a historical lens. Using comic strips and poetry, students wrote about their personal history in relation to their collective family history.

### **Naomi P. Peters**

#### Culture Through the Arts

Grades: 5-8

In this lesson, students learned to express their culture and customs through art and practiced drawing techniques that developed their artistic abilities. Using household materials and various drawing implements, they created art pieces that are significant to them and their cultural roots.

### **Alexis Jamil**

#### Social Activism

Grades: 5-8

In this 4-visit lesson, Alexis introduced new ideas of social activism to this age range of students. Students were able to connect social justice issues to their own experiences and discuss their ideas, feelings, and experiences with their classmates.

### **Hussein Samhat**

#### We're all different! What Makes You, You?

Grades: 4-5

Students were invited to do some reflection on their backgrounds to explore their own traits and experiences. During this, students learned to accept that we are all not the same and we have our own unique lived experiences as a by-product of our ethnic origins. In doing this, Hussein used drama practices such as reflection, poetry, and teacher in role.

#### Empathy Through Forum Theatre

Grades: 4-5

Students explored the concept of bullying through Boal's Forum Theatre, a form of interactive drama that empowers students to rehearse solutions. In this lesson, students used drama practices such as forum theatre, storytelling, improv, and perspective-taking.

#### On, Between, and Beyond

Grades: 4-6

In this unit, students took part in various explorations of stories and experiences. This lesson encouraged student's curiosity and pushed them to think, reflect, and ask on-the-line, between-the-line, and beyond-the-line questions using the text, the world around them, and their creativity. Drama practices used include storytelling, tableau, and thought tracking.

#### Greenville and Blueville

Grades: 6-8

In this lesson, students were invited to take part in a process drama exploring societal norms, differences, and how we treat those we are not familiar with. Drama practices used include process drama, improv, and perspective-taking.

#### Who You Are and Who You Want to Be

Grades: 6-8

In this lesson, students were invited to do some self-reflection on how they see themselves and how others see them. Students also thought about what makes them unique while learning to accept all of their qualities. Drama practices used include self-reflection and role on the wall.

#### Case Study: Transition from Elementary to High School

Grades: 8

Students were invited to take part in a case study that analyzes a teenager's transition from elementary to high school. This study utilized drama practices such as mantle of the expert, self-reflection, perspective-taking, and teacher in role.

## Quantitative Data

The following data is from the surveys submitted by respondents using a 5-point rating scale. The survey was distributed to 3 groups: artists, teachers in the general Arts Can Teach program, and teachers in the Adventure in Culture and Character program.

- Questions 1-3, 5, and 8 were sent to all respondents.
- Question 4 was sent to the artists.
- Question 6 was sent to artists and teachers in the Adventure in Culture and Character program.
- Question 7 was sent to teachers in the general Arts Can Teach program.

**1. The program promotes student well-being.**

- Strongly Agree: 12/21 (57.1%); Agree: 7/21 (33.3%); Neutral: 1/21 (4.8%); Disagree 0/21 (0%); Strongly Disagree: 0/21 (0%); No Response: 1/21 (4.8%)

**2. The program promotes well-being for the artist/teacher.**

- Strongly Agree: 6/21 (28.6%); Agree: 8/21 (38%); Neutral: 4/21 (19%); Disagree: 1/21 (4.8%); Strongly Disagree: 1/20 (4.8%); No Response: 1/20 (4.8%)

**3. The program helps build character traits such as empathy and kindness.**

- Strongly Agree: 9/21 (42.9%); Agree: 7/21 (33.3%); Neutral: 4/21 (19%); Disagree: 0/21 (0%); Strongly Disagree 0/21 (0%); No Response: 1/21 (4.8%)

**4. Participating students respond positively to seeing diversity represented in their artist educators and learning.**

- Strongly Agree: 3/3 (100%); Agree: 0/3 (0%); Neutral: 0/3 (0%); Disagree: 0/3 (0%); Strongly Disagree; 0/3 (0%)

**5. The program engages English language learners, newcomers, and Indigenous students.**

- Strongly Agree: 10/21 (47.6%); Agree: 5/21 (23.8%); Neutral: 3/21 (14.3%); Disagree: 2/21(9.5%); Strongly Disagree: 0/21 (0%); No Response: 1/21 (4.8%)

**6. Arts Can Teach training and mentoring for artist education have had a positive impact on the program.**

- Strongly Agree: 2/6 (33.3%); Agree: 3/6 (50%); Neutral: 0/6 (0%); Disagree: 1/6 (16.7%); Strongly Disagree: 0/6 (0%)

**7. The program has effectively supported other aspects of the art curriculum.**

- Strongly Agree: 12/15 (80%); Agree: 2/15(13.3%); Neutral: 0/15 (0%); Disagree: 0/15 (0%); Strongly Disagree: 0/15 (0%); No Response: 1/15 (6.7%)

**8. I would recommend participation in the Arts Can Teach program to other artists/teachers/administrators.**

- Strongly Agree: 15/21 (71.4%); Agree: 4/21 (19%); Neutral: 0/21 (0%); Disagree: 1/21 (4.8%); Strongly Disagree: 0/21 (0%); No Response: 1/21 (4.8%)

## Qualitative Data

**Please use the following space to comment on the impact of the program on participating students and on you as a teacher.**

- “The students were 100% engaged throughout and looked forward to the next visit each time. As a teacher, it was nice to be able to sit back and focus on the student’s participating levels and on what they were doing creatively. I felt confident that they were being instructed by a professional who was providing them with more specific and helpful feedback than I could provide myself.”
- “The program was very engaging and closely tied with the curriculum and shows how another person’s perspective can benefit all. Students were engaged and I as a teacher am very motivated to explore further activities and develop extensions to the activities.”
- “It showed me in a very practical way how to incorporate the arts into other curriculum subjects. It is also so very engaging for students. They create art in such an enthusiastic way- the artist brings out abilities in students that a regular teacher may not be able to on their own.”
- “I really loved how the artist planned and revised lessons to meet the needs of my students at every level. My ESL students and RISE students loved the lessons and connections to the world around them - specifically nature - and how it relates to our mental health. The level of engagement from all students was so awesome to see and the incorporation of the whole body - inside and outside - was beautiful to witness from my students.”
- Student Comments:
  - "I learned how to look for the different shapes and patterns and rhythms in different pictures. I liked doing the art with the circle where we had to repeat the shapes, letters, and lines. I would use these techniques again in painting or in drawing."
- “My students who normally don’t enjoy writing loved creating their comics and wrote poetry. Some students who rarely share with the class felt comfortable sharing.”
- “When I joined ACT, it was in a strictly online setting. Being able to bring the arts and what we aim to teach through the arts to a classroom where morale and motivation are already low makes the experience so much more rewarding. You witness the impact your presence has on these students firsthand.”
- “As dance is a specialty art form, participating in Arts Can Teach gave my students an opportunity to learn from an expert in the field. The artist used her knowledge and understanding of dance to guide my students through a variety of lessons.”
- “Just quickly wanted to say that it was wonderful to have Arts Can Teach in our classroom. The lessons were engaging and inclusive and we all thoroughly enjoyed the time with our Arts Can Teach teacher.”
- “This program was amazing!! The students loved all of the activities, they worked together towards a common goal and thoroughly enjoyed themselves. The students were always engaged, smiling, and having fun while learning! As a teacher, the program has given me valuable lesson ideas for the future, and I look forward to signing up for this

program every year... hopefully! Thank you so much for offering this incredible experience to our students.”

- “The whole process of making puppets and performing was incredibly rewarding and they still talk about it as a favoured activity we did this year.”
- “The program was difficult as it was virtual. Students lost attention during certain aspects of the lesson.”

### Artist Comments:

- “As an artist educator, I love to see students learning while having fun. The ultimate goal is that they are having so much fun learning, that they don’t even realize they are learning until the final reflection at the end. It’s an engaging way to make sure that students are associating positive feelings with education and the arts, while also internalizing the lessons and morals that they’ve learned. Once there is a giant smile plastered to their faces, I feel like I have done my job.”
- “I have found that participating students were really given the time to examine their life. At first, they all had the attitude that their story was boring or that they had experienced nothing of value, but by the end of the lessons, there were some amazing stories shared! The students really got to reflect on themselves and their experiences and I’m not sure we ask children to do that often enough. This program has had a lasting impression on me as an artist. It was amazing to work with youth and to be challenged in a setting where I ask, what are essentially strangers, to open themselves up to each other, themselves, and the process. I was continually amazed by what people want to share with you if you just ask and I will continue to have that approach as an artist, asking people for their stories.”
- “I got a lot of positive feedback from students who had been very happy with their new drawing skills. It seems to build confidence in their abilities to create art and most were eager to have more lessons, I had many student participants when I asked questions related to art and had students using their creativity in answering the inquiries. The model of teaching them through having them draw and asking questions that had no perfect answers, seems to let them express their ideas. As a teacher I learned, often not much material is needed, as long as the class builds vital skills and promotes a growth mindset in the students.”

### **Can you share a personal transformative or memorable moment from the program? Please use the following space to share your anecdote.**

- “One of the artist’s lessons was about addressing what animals, feelings, lines, and colours come to mind during our body scans. A lot of my students have a lot going on at home and the artwork they created incorporated an animal that was visibly showing hostility and lines that came from it and how they were able to share with me that they feel so much anger and stress - it was beautiful and also helped open lines of communication.”
- “It was nice to see that my students who do not speak English felt confident to share and participated fully in the lessons. The program was inclusive to all learners.”
- “Students enjoyed the music, laughter, and hands-on activities during their pirate adventure.”



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- “I really got to know my student’s histories. One of my students who struggle with writing really loved writing poetry and he created a really beautiful piece.”
- “My experience in the program as a whole was transformative for me in the sense that I had joined at the end of my undergrad. My degree in drama education & community has allowed me to bring in the tools I have learned over the years and apply them in a professional context.”
- “Even though we were online, the artist was able to engage our primary students in physical components of the activities, and they responded with excitement and volunteered more than usual.”
- “After my lesson, I write down all of the ideas that were presented and I tried my best to emulate what was done with my other classes as it is a fantastic program with fantastic artists.”
- “There are so many great moments, but I think the thing that stuck with me was the quality of instruction. Our instructor was always smiling, telling jokes, and keeping the kids interested in her lessons. Her lovely cats added to the entertainment as well :)”
- “Our original focus was using the arts to support STEAM learning. During the activities, it became apparent that some students were not feeling valued or supported in their effort. The artist recognized this challenge and swiftly changed her focus to group problem-solving, dynamics, and how to work out disagreements while still valuing the thoughts and actions of others. She still used the themes of STEAM through the arts, but the focus was now on the immediate needs of my students. With the pandemic it is even more imperative to support student’s social and mental well-being. Our artist illuminated this need and then filled the void. A most memorable experience and a positive one for both my students, the artist, and myself.”
- “My students who do not speak English had confidence in participating and sharing their work because the artist used some methods that were action-based and reviewed the terms each lesson so that they became more familiar with the elements.”

### Artist comments:

- “I do a poetry writing class with some of the older elementary students (grades 7&8). Due to the personal nature of the content that students are writing poems about, there are moments on presentation days when me or the class cries at some of the absolutely personal and vulnerable things that students have chosen to share with us. It has transformed the way I look at safe and inclusive environments and it has allowed me and the students to share our voices and experiences in a way that makes us feel heard and supported.”
- “There have truly been so many for me! One that I find particularly poignant: We were teaching our second-week lesson with a class. In the second-week lesson, the students start by sharing the comic strip they’ve made over the last week. The teacher said to us that a student wanted to share their comic strip but was too shy and so she was going to read it instead. It was a deeply personal comic strip. Usually, we have a question-and-answer period after each person has shared so that students can ask questions or just say positive things about the comic. So many students were saying positive things that the student who had written the comic felt brave enough to come up to the front and talk about their comic and their experiences. It was amazing to watch how a supportive community could work so quickly to make a student feel safe to open up. It was amazing!”



And that student was one of the more vocal members of the class throughout the duration of the lessons. So amazing!”

- “It was heartwarming to see the students having so much fun with the lessons and so excited about creating a meaningful piece of art. I could see the improvement even in four short classes, as they took the lessons to heart. Then for them to be sad to see me leave was more than I felt I could ask for, even to have been gifted with a heartfelt thank you and even a class made card. This was a lovely experience to undergo. The teachers were great to work with and I would recommend this program to anyone interested.”

**Can you suggest any other ways that the arts can support learning in the school?**

**Please use the following space to make your suggestions.**

- “I believe there are always more opportunities to implement the arts into STEM. Math and Sciences are two areas I believe could benefit from arts pedagogy.”
- “The artist was amazing and engaged the students, gave examples, and went above and beyond. The second one which was a grant was not as well done. The artist was all over the place and very difficult to follow at times. The students were not as engaged and very confused about the expectations. It may have been better in-person but online was very difficult.
- “I encourage all my colleagues to participate because the experience A.C.T. teachers bring into the classroom is incomparable. Thank you so much for offering your program to Queen Victoria, it is such a blessing to our students!”
- “It would be lovely if they had an after-school program.”
- “Try my best to emulate what was done with my other classes. It is a fantastic program with fantastic artists.”
- “I wish there was an after-school program for underprivileged students who love the arts.”
- “The program was not very engaging. The students simply drew pictures each week. The lessons felt rushed and not thought out. There was no clear learning objective and I felt that many lessons were similar. The teacher's feedback to students was always the same and the artist didn't seem well versed in working with students. Also, it was online and I feel that the artist needed to be more mindful of their appearance.”

**In what ways could the program be developed or expanded? Please use the following space to make your suggestions.**

- “Bringing the program to high schools!!! Specifically, arts and drama therapies I believe have such potential to have an impact on students.”
- “It would be amazing if we could have several artists visit each class every year to show various arts.”
- “An in-person component would be great to see again. The virtual lessons were well done, but the materials used were not varied like in past programs my class has participated in (for the visual arts).”

- “I would suggest using a lens of promoting positive mental health. Using the arts as a vehicle to explore their emotions and well-being. Allow them to use the arts to explore conflict resolution, problem-solving, and those tough challenges that our kids face every day in a safe and inclusive space.”
- “A few areas that would be awesome are Indigenous history and Black history - we are in the process of introducing more and more resources in the classroom in these areas but to have actual teachers who are Indigenous or who are descendants of formerly enslaved peoples would be amazing.”
- “Maybe a program that includes all four strands of the Art curriculum rolled into one.”
- “Virtually put a lot of pressure on the teacher to manage everything, when it was not my expertise.”
- “Since the program was presented online at times, the presenter’s connection was spotty. Hopefully the program for 2022-2023 will all be delivered in-person.”
- “I think this program needs clear learning goals and lessons for each visit. Students should be provided with art materials and work with different art mediums. Connecting art and culture is so important and I think that if the lessons were more organized and had a clear purpose the students would be more interested.”

## Review of the Program

### Effectiveness and Success

Through the funding awarded by the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Arts Can Teach program has been very successful in reaching its goals. The program has been able to focus on multiculturalism by engaging artists from a variety of ethnic backgrounds to share their arts practices with students. 100% of the artists in the survey strongly agreed that students responded positively to seeing diversity represented in their artists. This vital step has helped the program of achieving its goal of providing 4-visit lesson plans with multicultural art forms. These artists were able to offer a wide variety of arts activities while teaching valuable lessons through the arts.

Students embraced their own culture while also learning about the culture of others. This is very important for students from diverse backgrounds to feel accepted and to dismiss any preconceived notions that some may have towards them and their culture. Four-visit lesson topics such as *Self-love and Identity Through Verbatim theatre*, *Diversity and Unity through Role Play*, *Perspective and Acceptance through Process Drama*, *Respect and Kindness through Story Drama*, *What’s Your Origin Story?*, *Culture Through the Arts*, *We’re all different!*, *What Makes You, You?*, and many other of the artists’ lessons have done an amazing job of meeting the goals of the program.

The program was also successful in fostering a respectful learning environment for English language learners. In the survey, 71.4% of all respondents are in favour of the program and believe it has engaged English language learners, newcomers, and Indigenous students; whereas, only 9.5% of respondents disagreed. Artists formulated lesson plans that were respectful of English language learners and ensured they could participate and not feel left out. Additionally, the artist also worked on expanding their language skills through the teaching

opportunity. Feedback from the surveys shows that English language learners were able to participate in all lesson plans, felt welcome, and were also able to learn from all of the sessions. The artists did a successful job of ensuring this inclusion, while also focusing on the arts aspects of the lessons. Creating a welcoming and safe environment for learning is vital for the learning of all students. The artists were shown to do this very successfully as 76.2% of respondents felt the program helped to build character traits such as empathy and kindness.

In addition to their teaching experiences, artists were also able to learn from feedback from their teacher partners. Through teacher feedback, artists modified their lesson plans and constantly improved them wherever they deemed fit. Furthermore, artists were able to effectively assist teachers with arts-based lesson activities. Artists were also able to expand their own skill sets as artists as 83.3% of respondents agree that the Arts Can Teach program is effective in mentoring for artist education.

Since Arts Can Teach cannot be in all the desired classrooms throughout the school year, it is imperative for the artists to train the teachers in arts-based processes and activities during their visits. Seeing that 90.4% of respondents believe the program promotes student well-being, it is crucial for teachers to continue arts-based learning with their students. This ensures the effects of the program are felt long after the artists leave the classroom. Through this, the program can create ever-lasting effects resulting in long-term impact and success. Teachers have had an overwhelmingly positive response to the Arts Can Teach program and are excited to carry on these lessons throughout their teaching careers. In addition to the students, 66.6% of respondents agree that the program also promoted the well-being of the artists and teachers. In contrast, only 9.4% of respondents disagree with this statement.

The Arts Can Teach program has also been successful in meeting its own organizational goals of increasing awareness on the value of the arts, providing an outlet for vulnerable students, and creating learning opportunities for teachers and students. 93.3% of respondents agreed that the program has supported other aspects of the art curriculum. This shows that while focusing on the goal of the program, the overall arts curriculum was also integrated into the lesson plans, paving the way for arts to prosper. Through artist visits, teachers were able to connect with their students on issues they were not open to speaking about otherwise. Some new Canadian students came from countries with conflict and were able to open up about their experiences and discuss them in a healthy way.

Ensuring students have a safe space to discuss issues is vital for the success of our educational system and the Arts Can Teach program has done an amazing job of achieving this. Teachers, students, and their parents have recognized how important the arts are in the development of young students in their academic endeavours and also in teaching quality life lessons. Artist-led lesson activities taught students the value of being kind to others, accepting differences, not discriminating against others because they look different, providing a healthy avenue to cope with life's hardships, and ensuring students are able to discuss their emotions and feelings in a healthy manner.

Another major success of the program has been persevering through the challenges of the pandemic. Regardless of uncertainty and unprecedented times, artists ran their lesson plans

effectively, whether that was in-person or online. Working online presented its unique challenges, but artists were able to work with the teachers and altered their lessons to meet the changing dynamics of the classroom. The program along with artists, teachers, administrators, and students have progressed through the challenging times of the pandemic and have grown.

Arts Can Teach ensured that the artist reflected the multiculturalism present in the population of the Windsor Region as Windsor is a growing hub for new Canadians. Having artists from diverse cultural roots was important so that students could see themselves be represented. Furthermore, benefits of the program also include focusing on subjects such as social activism, identity, perspective, and character education that are not explicitly in the school curriculum. As the program is independent of school boards, artists can incorporate subjects that students are not familiar with and have not been exposed to.

Beyond student learning, Arts Can Teach has assisted in establishing far-reaching community ties within the artist community. Through this, artists were able to collaborate with other artists and expand their portfolios. Being a positive force in the artist community and expanding it is another major success of the program. This creates a positive reinforcement loop as artists can network and grow their talents. As a result, their lessons also become more diverse and cover a wider range of topics, ultimately helping their careers and their teaching.

Arts Can Teach was also able to massively outperform its projections for the duration of the Trillium-funded project. Originally, the program was projected to engage 10-12 artist educators, more than 25 schools, teach in 133 classrooms, and reach more than 3,600 students. The program managed to engage 15 artist educators, 37 schools, taught in 225 classrooms, and reached more than 6,300 students. Of the 15 artist educators, 6 were hired specifically for the culture and character and multicultural project which this report has focused on. Arts Can Teach has nearly doubled its initial projection of students and reached a significantly higher number of schools and classrooms, while hiring more artist educators in the process. The program has been efficient with its resources while also maximizing its effectiveness.

The program is a massive success with overwhelming support as seen through these statistics and the survey data. The program continues to expand into more schools and this is vital for the Windsor Region as 90.4% of respondents would recommend the program to other artists, teachers, and administrators. This survey data shows the program is on the right track and will continue to prosper in achieving its goals.

### **Improvements**

Given the unprecedented circumstances of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Arts Can Teach program was tasked with overcoming many obstacles. Throughout the survey feedback, the only portion for improvement for the program was the online facilitation aspect of the program. At times, teachers felt that students were not as engaged and instructions were confusing. One respondent also felt they were tasked with helping deliver lesson activities when they did not have the expertise to do so. Originally, the Arts Can Teach program was designed to be delivered in-person, the best method of delivering arts-based learning. Given the circumstances of the pandemic and artists needing to adjust their entire lesson plans, the program didn't want to place

an increased workload on the teachers needing to assist the artist. Consequently, there was a growth process for the online portion of the program, improving as the pandemic progressed.

Ultimately, artists were noted as doing an amazing job of adjusting and doing the best they could with what they had. Although this is something that respondents noted as needing improvement, this isn't a shortcoming of the program, rather, it's an added obstacle of the pandemic. Accordingly, artists were adjusting with little to no notice as school attendance was constantly changing through the Provincial COVID-19 mandates.

As the artists had more time to adjust to pandemic teaching, the program was able to take advantage of the online aspect. Artists across Ontario were able to lead classes online in the Windsor Essex region, which would not have been otherwise possible. Teachers and students were exposed to unique perspectives and arts activities that helped meet the goals of this program. The artists, administrators, and program were able to take a difficult situation and use it to their benefit. This is an amazing accomplishment for everyone involved in the delivery of the program and its lessons.

### **Recommendations Going Forward**

As a result of the success of the Arts Can Teach program, there is a growing waitlist of schools that wish to be a part of the program. The program needs to continue to expand and meet the growing demand. This means hiring more artists, creating more lessons, reaching out to more schools, and maximizing the number of classrooms that the program can reach. Arts Can Teach has done an amazing job and is doing important work while providing results. For this reason, the program can also look to expand to other regions across Ontario.

Expansion of the program will be reliant upon securing more funding from the organizations such as the Ontario Trillium Foundation to meet the growing demand of the Arts Can Teach program. Given the success and overwhelmingly positive feedback from respondents, this is crucial to continue the amazing work being done. This program has shown its worth and still has amazing potential.

Going forward, Arts Can Teach will prioritize in-person classroom visits rather than online, for maximum effectiveness. The program will also be prepared to offer online visits in the event it is required due to the pandemic. Online facilitation presents the unique benefit of hiring artists across Ontario, making the best of a difficult situation, but the program will prioritize in-person visits with local artists. Overall, the Arts Can Teach program has done an excellent job with this funding opportunity, and will continue striving to meet its goals and build upon the progress made in 2020-2022.

## Participating GECDsB Schools

Amherstburg Public School  
Belle River Public School  
Bellewood Public School  
Centennial Central Public School  
Central Public School  
Coronation Public School  
Dougall Public School  
D.M. Eagle Public School  
Essex Public School  
Greater Essex County Elementary Virtual Learning School  
Ford City Public School  
Forest Glade Public School  
Frank W Begley Public School  
Giles Campus French Immersion Public School  
Gore Hill Public School  
Gosfield North Central School  
Hugh Beaton Public School  
Jack Miner Public School  
John Campbell Public School  
King Edward Public School  
Kingsville Public School  
LaSalle Public School  
Legacy Oak Trail Public School  
M.S. Hetherington Public School  
Malden Central Public School  
Marlborough Public School  
Parkview Elementary Public School  
Prince Edward Public School  
Queen Victoria Public School  
Roseland Public School  
Sandwich West Public School  
Southwood Public School  
Talbot Trail Public School  
Tecumseh Vista Academy  
W. F. Herman Academy  
West Gate Public School  
William G. Davis Public School

Total Participating Schools, 2021-22: 37