



Arts Education & Access Fund Oversight Committee

Date: February 8th, 2023

Time: 6:30pm-7:30pm

Location: Zoom Meeting

Attendees: AOC Members: Jenn Falco, Eric Miller, Ellen Thomas, Hana Layson, Leah Faure, Margo Norton, Suzy Root

City of Portland Staff: Amelia Hicks, Barbra Rice, Jeff Hawthorne, Darion Jones, Stephan Herrera

PPS: Li Ezzell, Kristen Brayson

1. Greetings/Introductions (Jenn Falco)

- a. Introductions. Assigned Hana Layson as timekeeper.

2. Discussion/Approval of Final Draft AOC Report to Council

- a. Hear objections from Committee members:
 - Suzy Root: Chart on pg. 5 of draft- estimated student/teacher ratios look misleading. 253 students per teacher is counting all of the full and part time assignments and ratio appears incorrect.
 - Jenn Falco: If you add up all individual people it's 80.5 FTE for yr. 21/22. That was used to calculate the ratio. Data is correct; prior versions may have incorrect number that has since been corrected in this version. Calculations are district wide. Clarifying footnotes have been added to the report as well. Offered to meet after meeting to over numbers more in depth.
 - Final Draft Approved by Committee. Committee will move forward with submitting to Council after a few minor edits and further clarification of number with Suzy.
 - Margo Norton: Question about what happens next, timeline?
 - Jenn Falco: This report will be submitted to Council.

- Jeff Hawthorne: Hard to anticipate level of pushback since council has not seen report yet. Could require reconvening if changes are needed or correction of facts.
- Eric Miller: Supports adoption of report as is; but concerned about amount of recommendation bullets. Concerned about lift of asking council for that much. May want to emphasize on cover communications what our priority is.
- Jenn Falco: I think we can make our point clear in our presentation, with a PowerPoint and report will be an addendum.

3. Discussion and Direction on Preparing Bylaws Proposal (Margo Norton)

- a. Materials were sent in advance to committee.
- b. Recommendation from working group is that we start to move forward with preparing bylaws and engage with City to enact bylaws.
- c. Template has been created by City Attorney.
- d. We are substantially different from other city committees. Closest would be Children's levy which predates Arts Tax. Other would be Parks Levy, which is just getting going with first committee.
 - These other levies sunset, approved for specific amount of time. Arts Tax lasts forever, unless City returns to voters to make change. No end date in the measure itself.
 - We must rely on what voters approved in 2012.
 - Important to preserve that difference in bylaws.
 - Other committees have a clear bureau that they report to. That is unclear for AEA currently.
- e. Important that we remain independent. Our actions are not subject to bureaus or city staff and programs/offices because that is not what voters approved.
- f. Operational issues to be addressed:
 - Size of Committee: rolling membership currently.
 - Chair of group have not been appointed by mayor for some time. We recommend not having a designated co-chair.
 - We should re-engage an executive committee.
- g. Asking tonight: Should we proceed with making proposal when quorum is available? If so, we will proceed to meet with City staff to hammer out proposal and return to committee for approval of the bylaws and go through City process.
 - No objections
 - Margo and Jenn will take this forward for next steps.

4. City Arts Manager Update (Jeff Hawthorne)

- a. Over next two years, System of City govt. is about to go through many transitions with a new City Manager overseeing bureaus.
 - City Arts program currently reports to the COO, which will be similar to new system. So hopefully not a huge change for City Arts program.
 - Mayor reassigned all bureaus with an eye to the upcoming changes.

- Link to article explaining newest structure:
<https://www.portland.gov/wheeler/news/2023/1/3/mayor-wheeler-announces-bureau-assignments-kicking-off-new-overhauled-process>
 - Commissioner Dan Ryan has been named Commissioner of Culture and Livability. New cluster of Bureaus. Also named liaison to RACC and AEAF.
 - Introduction of Darion Jones, with Comm. Ryan's office.
- b. City is getting ready to recruit for new position: Arts Education Coordinator.
- Job description has been completed. Class/Comp analysis taking place.
 - In the meantime, Jeff Hawthorne is acting as point person for school districts who have questions.
- c. Declining enrollment situation at PPS:
- Due to declining enrollment at PPS schools, less funding from the Arts Tax will be sent to those schools.
 - Could lead to layoffs or converting full time Art teachers to part time.
 - Kristen Brayson and Li Ezzell from PPS are here to tell us more about the situation.
 - Kristen: Staffing window is 2 weeks. Union protected until Feb. 15th. Particulars are embargoed right now, we can't say what's happening for future staff at each particular school. Staffing ratio at 334 to 1 right now, But the cutoffs for full time and half time are steep cliffs. PE Education does not have steady funding either, but uses a different method and funds in sections. We need to consider an approach that is a little softer as enrollment declines, in order fill schools' needs. Enrollment will continue to decline over the next 5 years.
 - Jenn: to recap- Due to declining enrollment, is some type of alternative "section based" funding more stable, or more in the best interest of students moving forward? Will open up to broader questions from committee. But to do anything more formally with this we'd need to hear from all 6 districts that receive funding from the tax.
 - Margo Norton: For the AEAF committee, the measure approved by voters sets the funding formula. It is not left to the committee. Distribution of funds is based on school enrollment. Unless there is a proposal for consideration sent to voters, looking at enrollment in a different way, there is no way to figure out a different way to pass out the money. Enrollment will need to be the front and center driver of the proposal.
 - Hana Layson: Could the section model be explained a little more?
 - Kristen: Sections refers to how many classes rotates through a Special. We are talking about the total number of sections in a school. We have allocated the dollars so that every student gets 45 min. of art per week. A teacher can see 6 arts classes in a day. We have some schools with low enrollment so they may only have 10 sections. Because .5 and 1 FTE has a big bridge between them, some schools end up seeming overstaffed and others seem understaffed.
 - Suzy Root: Scheduling is much more complicated than dividing into sections. To base on just sections there's a missed opportunity. If you have a full time arts teacher each year you're going to have a more integrated community. The programs will be so much richer when teachers have the time to truly do all of the extra work

needed outside the classroom. How do we change something established 10 years ago without enough thought into the process or what education really looks like? I've seen a lot of different arts programming in the district and it seems like we should be doing better because the tax payers said we should have quality education in our community. I'm not sure how it can change within the framework of the Arts Tax, but if you cut programs in schools, that school moves backwards. The City Council could fund schools at the same level as last year even though funding has gone down, so that positions don't have to be cut for next year. The council could decide to stabilize funding for 1 year, and as a committee we could recommend that.

- Ellen Thomas: Thanks to Margo for reminder that this is an oversight committee, not a policy setting committee. I hear Suzy's concerns. Major question is, what can we do, what should we do, and what are we allowed to do? Liaison to Council and Jeff can help guide us through these questions. Wondering if we will need to reach out for further City Attorney review for questions like this. I'm mindful of our role of oversight and want to keep the focus there.

5. Next Steps

- a. Seeking info from all 6 districts that reflects the code language and enrollment funding before committee can pursue more with last topic.
- b. Minor issues to deal with offline
 - Letter from arts teacher at Rieke.
- c. Will meet in two months. Will meet every other month until not needed.

6. Meeting adjourned: 7:31 pm.