

MAYORAL CANDIDATE QUESTIONNAIRE 2009

Michael R. Bloomberg's Response

1. If elected Mayor, what policies would you pursue to ensure that all public school students receive a quality arts education?

Since the mid-1970s, our school system has had pockets of excellence in arts education, areas of great need, and schools all along the spectrum in between. And for too long, we only knew this information anecdotally. At the beginning of the 2007-2008 school year, our Administration introduced "ArtsCount," a series of metrics to measure and report on the arts education that is taking place in our schools, how it is being delivered, and which students are receiving it.

This data – released annually on www.nyc.gov/schools through the *Annual Arts in Schools Report*, as well as through individual reports for each school – allows us to hold principals accountable for ensuring that their students are receiving arts education as part of an overall quality education. School leaders are also held accountable for delivering arts education through the Principals Progress Report, and the school's Quality Review. This year, we will begin adding further metrics around the quality of the arts education being offered through the Quality Arts Education Tool, which has been designed in partnership with the cultural community and New York University to be used by school leaders, classroom teachers, art specialists, teaching artists, and cultural partners to build a common understanding of quality teaching and learning in the arts.

Although there remains a lot of work to do in ensuring that all of our public school students receive a quality arts education, we are making progress. Over the last two years, the data have shown that when we trust and empower school leaders to make the right decisions for their students, they do.

2. How can the cultural resources of New York City be leveraged to positively impact the lives of school children?

We currently have 305 cultural organizations working in our schools and bringing our school children to performances and exhibitions. This is a great start, and we will build on that this school year. We have placed 4 VISTA volunteers at the NYC Department of Cultural Affairs. These volunteers will look to expand the opportunities for students to attend professional arts events in the company of arts professionals (building on programs like "Open Doors" at the Theatre Development Fund and the Learning Leaders museum program), to increase high school internship opportunities at cultural organizations throughout the city, and to increase the quantity and quality of the materials and supplies available to public school art teachers and arts education organizations through the Materials for the Arts program.

3. What policies would you put in place to prevent drop outs and increase the City's graduation rates?

Thanks to the school reforms my Administration has put in place and the hard work of children, parents, teachers and principals, graduation rates have increased during my Administration to record highs and dropout rates have declined.

We have a number of comprehensive and targeted strategies in place to continue this historic progress. Student engagement is key to student success, and so our arts education program is a component of our effort to deliver a quality and complete education that will result in improved outcomes

4. What policies, if any, would you support to prevent the loss of arts spaces in schools due to overcrowding or other factors?

The *Annual Arts in Schools Report* and separate annual reports from the Division of School facilities provide an inventory of the spaces that are being used for art classes, as well as which of those spaces are properly outfitted and equipped to be used as arts spaces. Increasingly, we are looking to models where small schools in the same building are sharing spaces (and even teachers) among themselves and with community partners.

5. Do you support the reinstatement of per pupil dedicated funding for arts education in New York City public schools?

I believe that we need to empower principals to run their schools. A fixed per pupil arts allocation does not work because no two schools are the same. A micro example would be that a school that is adjacent to the Brooklyn Museum does not need the same resources to provide arts exposure for its students as a school in Far Rockaway would. A school that has full-time arts specialists on staff has a budget that looks different than one that leverages only cultural partnerships.

Using dedicated funding as an accountability tool makes no sense. This would be like judging the success of a nonprofit organization by the size of its administrative budget, rather than by looking at the ways and how well it fulfilled its mission.

Rather than tying the hands of school leaders by dictating their budgets for them, we need to give principals control over their resources and hold them accountable for learning outcomes.

6. Should the NYC Department of Education lead remediation efforts or other interventions for schools found to be out of compliance with state arts education requirements?

Yes, and it does. This year, the NYC DOE Office of the Arts and Special Projects has provided substantive leadership training in the arts through the Shubert Arts Education Leadership Institute and has made targeted outreach to those schools most in need of arts support. These efforts, combined with strategic use of privately funded arts programs in high need areas, are a first step in addressing these issues.

7. Should school “Progress Reports” include reporting on a wider array of factors, such as data from the *Annual Arts in Schools Report*, compliance with state education requirements or other?

The “Principals’ Progress Report” currently holds school leaders accountable for making progress toward the State instructional standards. This year, a lower elementary school principal that does not provide at least 101 instructional hours in the arts is found to be out of compliance. “Seat time” is certainly not the only measure that should be used in measuring the success of arts education, and that is why we are working on introducing the Arts Education Reflection Tool so that we can begin reporting not just on how much arts education is being offered, but on how good it actually is.

8. Do you support the creation of a City-wide taskforce to examine access to arts education offerings in City Schools?

For the past two years, the City has had an Arts Education Task Force working with the Department of Education, and this task force has included members from the cultural community like the Center for Arts Education and members of the higher education community. I am deeply grateful for the work that the Center for Arts Education and its other taskforce members have done in introducing the Arts Count metrics, the *Annual Arts in Schools Report*, and now the Arts Education Reflection Tool.

Our Administration has recently re-charged this arts education group with looking at arts education in our middle schools and possibly using the arts as part of an Expanded Learning Day model; at pre-service opportunities for elementary school teachers, who are called on to provide arts education; and at the pipeline issues around certified teachers in the arts – both looking at how we increase the number of certified teachers, as well as how we ensure jobs for these teachers in our schools. This group will now also work with State Senator Serrano and his colleagues in Albany on how the *Annual Arts in Schools Report* can be a State-wide model for conducting a census of arts education, on getting the State Regents to recognize dance and theater as credit-bearing art forms at the middle schools level, and on getting the State to create a recognized arts education pre-service credential for elementary school teachers.

9. Should the City expand career and technical education offerings Citywide to include more creative and innovative learning opportunities?

Yes. The Career and Technical Education Office already has significant arts-based programs, but we need more. If the past 12 months have taught us anything, it is the danger of investing in only a single sector. We are working on diversifying the City’s economy in myriad ways: the Bronx Council on the Arts is using Workforce Money to provide career training to be an art handler; Chashama is providing work and incubator space in the Brooklyn Army Terminal; and the Horticultural Society and the New York Botanical Garden are providing green jobs training, to name just a few of our efforts.

In our schools, the technical theatre exit exam is a great first step in providing a pathway to a creative career, and working with partners like the Lincoln Center Institute on its

Imagination program, the Ghetto Film School's new high school, or Casita Maria's artist corps program, we will continue to expand the offerings.

10. Do you support more comprehensive pre-service training for principals and teachers in the arts of arts education and arts integration?

Yes. The skills required for a principal to build a quality arts education program – recognizing and supporting quality teaching and learning, scheduling, budgeting, etc. – are the skills necessary to build a quality school overall. We are hoping to work with the State on creating a pre-service certificate for elementary school teachers in arts education, and we need to continue to work with the post-secondary education community around the pipeline issues of ensuring school leaders and teachers.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

We still have a lot of work to do ensuring that all of our students get a quality arts education. But we are building on top of strength, thanks to the hard work and dedication of philanthropists and leaders like Agnes Gund, Laurie Tisch, Tony Bennett, and Jeanette Sarkisian Wagner, who work with us through the Cultural Affairs Advisory Commission and the Fund for Public Schools. I would like to thank them and organizations like Arts Connection, Alvin Ailey, The Apollo Theater, Ballet Hispanico, Dream Yard, Manhattan Theatre Club, the Queens Museum of Art, Studio in a School, the Center for Arts Education and the more than 300 other cultural organizations that work in our schools, the principals, school leaders, classroom teachers, arts specialists, and teaching artists who work with our 1.1 million public school students every single day.