



ARTS EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

Leadership Academy (2018–2019)

End-of-Program Summative Evaluation Report – Overview
August 2019

INTRODUCTION

This report summarizes findings from an evaluation of the **Leadership Academy** class that met during the 2018–2019 school year. Data was collected from participants before, during, and after Leadership Academy to assess their reactions to the experience and their learning over the program.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Leadership Academy is an intensive year-long professional learning program facilitated by AEC to help educators develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes that promote quality arts education leadership in schools, arts organizations, and the community.

Participants in the 2018 cohort attended a week of day-long sessions in the summer followed by four one-day seminar sessions and four online sessions throughout the school year. Through facilitated discussions and activities, participants explored issues of leadership, pedagogy, and current issues in education. In-person sessions included an arts experience led by teaching artists, which were followed by time for reflection on implications for practice. Additionally, each participant developed and carried out their own individualized action plan related to their professional goals in arts education.

Ten educators finished the 2018–2019 program: six arts teachers from public and charter school systems and four educators from arts organizations. They primarily teach music and visual arts.



ABOUT THE EVALUATION

The purpose of this evaluation is to improve the program's effectiveness in facilitating learning, inform future applications to qualify as a state-approved program for continuing education, inform the design of additional programs for arts educators, and document outcomes to advance the field and garner support.



Online surveys were administered at various points in the program. Participants were asked to self-assess their knowledge of leadership and arts education topics at the start of summer sessions, end of summer sessions, and conclusion of the program. Participants also shared reactions to their experiences after each session.



Participants created and added to a **personal mind map** centered on the concept of leadership at the start and end of summer sessions, halfway through the program, and at the end of the program.



Participants will be invited to reflect on their Leadership Academy experiences during one-on-one **interviews** in the spring of 2020 to explore long-term changes in their practice. Findings from the interviews will be added to this report in summer of 2020.

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

EVALUATION QUESTION

KEY FINDINGS

What are participants' reactions to Leadership Academy?

- Responses indicate that **participants reacted favorably to the design of the sessions overall**—especially the variety of experiences and opportunities to actively engage in their learning. Participants **almost always reported the sessions met their needs as adult learners**.
- Participants also almost always reported **summer sessions led by AEC staff were valuable and had useful applications** to their work. Responses to sessions held during the school year—both in-person and online—were more varied.
- While participants said the majority of experiences led by guest teaching artists and facilitators had useful applications to their work, reactions to some sessions were less positive in this regard. Reasons why these sessions were less relevant for some participants are unclear, but differences between the discipline taught by the teaching artists and participants may have played at least some role.
- The **opportunity to engage with fellow arts educators appears to have been a significant part of the cohort's experiences** with Leadership Academy, particularly during summer sessions. When asked to name a highlight of Leadership Academy following the kickoff week, about two-thirds of the class referred to opportunities to meet and collaborate with other arts educators. Participants frequently commented on the extent to which different facilitation and teaching strategies promoted engagement with their classmates.

In what way and to what extent does participants' understanding of leadership and arts education change?

- At the end of the program, all respondents said they were knowledgeable about **collaboration, instructional strategies and techniques, relationship building, and communication**—areas in which participants reported the highest levels of knowledge at the start of the program.
- Between the beginning and end of summer sessions, most of the largest increases in the number of participants who said they were knowledgeable about a topic occurred in areas in which respondents reported the lowest levels of knowledge at the start: **arts and community resources, action planning, leadership styles, and situational leadership**. There was some regression across the school year, however, in the number of participants who said they were knowledgeable about these topics—except action planning.
- Almost every participant said they felt more knowledgeable after the program than they had before about **action planning**—an area in which only one member of the class reported feeling knowledgeable prior to Leadership Academy.
- On average, participants' **final mind maps included references to leadership characteristics in almost twice as many categories** compared to the initial versions created at the beginning of the program. Respondents typically referred to more new categories of leadership characteristics in their additions to the mind maps following summer sessions than after school-year sessions.
- Only one mind map at the start of the program included a comment related to seeking assistance from **support resources**. The proportion of mind maps referring to support resources jumped to more than half after summer sessions and to about three-quarters by the end of the program—resulting in the largest increase among all categories.
- Participants consistently referred to **communication** as a function of leadership on their mind maps before, during, and after their engagement with the program. Overall, nearly one out of every ten responses on the final mind maps relate to communication.



As part of its evaluation of the Leadership Academy program, AEC will invite members of the 2018 cohort to participate in one-on-one interviews in the spring of 2020. The interviews will ask participants to reflect on the long-term significance of their learning and to share thoughts about how the program has contributed to changes in their practice over time. Findings will address several additional evaluation questions, such as the ways and extent to which participants engage in leadership activities in their work.

LOOKING FORWARD

AEC staff have implemented significant changes to the program for the next Leadership Academy class, most notably collaborating with a team of consultants to revise the curriculum around three core areas: culturally responsive arts education, leadership, and planning. Additional adjustments are expected in response to ongoing reflections from staff, consultants, and program participants.

KEY ACTION STEPS

In response to the findings in this report, AEC staff plan to:

- communicate with participants more frequently between sessions, including monthly emails
- schedule the first meeting during the school year as a face-to-face session to more effectively build continuity and momentum following the intensive week of summer sessions
- no longer require participants to attend Regional Arts Education Day as part of Leadership Academy, replacing it with a dedicated in-person session
- clearly and consistently encourage participants to think about how the variety of arts experiences they encounter during Leadership Academy can be applied to the specific discipline they teach
- engage participants in ongoing discussions about which leadership topics would be beneficial to revisit in greater depth during the school year and invite them to take on the responsibility of sharing what they know about those subjects with their peers
- continually monitor the balance of opportunities during school-year sessions for participants to explore issues of leadership, planning, and culturally responsive pedagogy as they relate to arts education
- provide past and present Leadership Academy participants with opportunities to connect with one another

