



ARTS EDUCATION
COLLABORATIVE

2018 Regional Arts Education Day

Summative Evaluation Report – Overview
November 2018

INTRODUCTION

This overview report highlights key findings from an evaluation of the **2018 Regional Arts Education Day** held at Pittsburgh Greenway Professional Development Center on October 8. A full report with detailed analysis of findings is available in a separate document.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM

Regional Arts Education Day is an annual, one-day meeting of arts educators, school and district administrators, consultants, and policymakers to explore the principles and practice of quality arts education. Presentations, discussions, and opportunities to engage with others are designed to highlight key issues and current trends in effective practices for teaching and learning as well as ways to apply new knowledge to improve student learning.

Almost 150 educators and arts education advocates attended Regional Arts Education Day in 2018. Highlights included:

- a drum performance by students from the Pittsburgh Miller African-Centered Academy
- a keynote co-presentation by teaching artists Anqwenique Wingfield and Eric Booth
- twenty-one concurrent session presentations and workshops facilitated by a range of experts from school, arts and cultural, and community settings



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.



A brief **online survey** was administered onsite to participants at the conclusion of the event. Attendees also received an email invitation the following day. About 70% of participants responded to the survey overall.



Most questions asked respondents to indicate on a six-point Likert scale the extent to which they **agreed or disagreed** with statements about various aspects of Regional Arts Education Day. For purposes of analysis, only participants who answered that they "agreed" or "strongly agreed" with an item are considered to have given an unequivocally positive response. All other answers—ranging from "strongly disagree" to "agree slightly more than disagree"—are classified as neutral or negative.

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

EVALUATION QUESTION	KEY FINDINGS
Who participates in Regional Arts Education Day?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Almost 150 educators and arts education advocates attended—the most since AEC began tracking actual attendance in 2014. ▪ The number of participants from arts and cultural organizations in 2018 tripled the average from 2014 through 2017, while more professionals from other types of settings—such as community organizations, consulting firms, and universities—attended in 2018 than over the previous four years combined. ▪ Twenty-six school districts and charter school systems in southwestern Pennsylvania were represented, including one-third of the school districts in Allegheny County. ▪ Nineteen educators from Pittsburgh Public Schools attended—the most from a single district in 2018.
To what extent do participants engage in other professional learning opportunities offered by AEC?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A little more than half of participants at the 2018 Regional Arts Education Day were attending the event for the first time in at least four years. ▪ More than half of participants in Regional Arts Education Day engaged in at least one other AEC program during the past five years. Participants most commonly attended a previous RAED, which represents the highest level of prior engagement in AEC programs for about one-quarter of all participants.
<p>What are participants' reactions to Regional Arts Education Day?</p> <p>What suggestions do participants have to help improve RAED in the future?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ More than nine out of every ten respondents agreed or strongly agreed the event overall was valuable to them and has useful applications to their work. While the findings are strong across all participants, a lower proportion of music educators reported the program's content has useful applications to their work compared to educators who teach other disciplines. ▪ Participants were invited to share suggestions about how to make Regional Arts Education Day more useful to them in the future. About 40% of respondents' comments focused on programmatic elements—particularly concurrent sessions and the affinity group discussions. In contrast, few respondents mentioned the keynote co-presentation as an area in need of change. ▪ Slightly more than half of respondents agreed or strongly agreed the lunch-time affinity group discussions were valuable—well below levels found in response to other elements of the program. Responses varied widely across individual affinity discussion groups. ▪ Almost one out of every five respondents offered suggestions to improve the lunch-time affinity group discussions. Comments were split almost evenly between recommendations to more tightly structure or facilitate the discussions and recommendations to shorten the allotted time. ▪ Responses to the facilities at Pittsburgh Greenway Professional Development Center were somewhat mixed. While about four out of every five respondents indicated that the building offered productive spaces for learning, participants were less positive in their assessment of how comfortable they felt in the spaces. Several comments noted challenges with navigating around the building. ▪ When asked to recommend a change that would make the event more useful in the future, about one out of every seven respondents made suggestions related to the food service—including requests for coffee and tea.

OVERVIEW OF KEY FINDINGS

EVALUATION QUESTION

KEY FINDINGS

What new ideas about effective arts education practices do participants learn at Regional Arts Education Day?

- When participants were asked to identify one new idea that they are likely to use in their work, about two out of every five respondents named an idea explored during the keynote co-presentation. The need to foster learners' intrinsic motivation in arts education appears to have been an especially important takeaway for many.
- Almost half mentioned a new idea that they encountered in a concurrent session. The sessions mentioned most often in participants' answers about what they learned were also rated as valuable by an above-average percentage of respondents who attended.

To what extent do participants feel a sense of connection with other arts educators and arts education advocates?

- 85% of respondents agreed that Regional Arts Education Day helped them feel a stronger sense of connection with other arts educators. For several participants, the need to network and collaborate as part of their work was a key takeaway from the event.



LOOKING FORWARD

After implementing several changes to the structure of Regional Arts Education Day in 2018—such as introducing affinity group discussions into the program—AEC staff are exploring more changes to increase access to the event, improve engagement with its offerings, and enhance its overall impact.

KEY ACTION STEPS

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

- continue efforts to recruit a diverse group of facilitators and presenters whose perspectives are informed by a wide range of personal and professional experiences.
- switch RAED to a different date. Informal conversations with past participants who did not attend this year indicate scheduling conflicts are a factor in some cases. Additionally, a review of the composite calendar for the Allegheny Intermediate Unit showed that about half of the school districts in the county now hold classes on Columbus Day / Indigenous Peoples Day.
- explore alternative formats for the opening plenary session to more actively engage participants in collaborative, arts-focused learning experiences.
- establish a committee of local arts educators to solicit, review, and select concurrent sessions in an effort to increase the number of proposals submitted, enhance the diversity and relevance of the topics, and improve the quality of sessions overall.
- examine different approaches to facilitating affinity group discussions, including offering facilitated discussions as an additional concurrent session format.
- reduce the amount of time allocated for transitions between programmatic elements and for lunch, which may enable adding a third concurrent session block or other type of experience.
- review and revise the number of concurrent sessions offered per session block and alter the process by which participants are assigned to concurrent sessions.
- send multiple communications to registrants prior to the event with information about logistics, including a PDF version of the program.
- collect information through the online registration process about participants' artistic discipline and grade levels taught to help develop a more detailed profile of attendees.

