



# The 2024 State of the Arts in Education Symposium

ASIA SOCIETY TEXAS CENTER  
APRIL 25TH, 2024

Presented By  
**ARTS CONNECT**  
H O U S T O N

# Welcome to the 2024 State of the Arts in Education Symposium

On behalf of Arts Connect Houston, we are delighted to welcome you to the third annual State of the Arts in Education Symposium.

The State of the Arts convenes a multifaceted network of stakeholders – educators, artists and arts leaders, district administrators, policy makers, and community members – to learn, to grow our connections, and to deepen our impact. As a collective impact organization, Arts Connect would not exist without each and every one of you contributing your perspective, expertise, and passion toward our championing for equitable arts education for all students.

We are here to celebrate accomplishments in arts education and, at the same time, turn our attention toward the challenges and barriers we still need to address. This morning, you will hear from arts education leaders about our data-driven efforts to drive advocacy, build capacity, and deploy responsive action. Collecting actionable data is a crucial pillar of our work, as it helps inform where the most need is and where to deploy key resources to support Houston students. This year, Arts Connect made significant investments into expanding our data collection and analysis efforts through our first-ever State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report, which examines the arts education landscape in Houston ISD and offers insight into key growth areas within the district. Through this report, we aim to develop a shared vocabulary and common ground from which to have creative, critical, and collaborative discussions about our work as individuals and within this collective for years to come.

Each year, we also take the State of the Arts as an opportunity to celebrate members of our community who have made an immeasurable difference for Houston students and their access to the arts. The Champion in Education award recognizes Houston educators who embody excellence and dedication in arts education, and this year goes to Erwin Brown. "Erwin Brown is a diamond," Eepi Chaad shared. "Erwin lives and breathes his commitment to ensuring that each student has access to the arts as a part of their whole education." The Champion in the Arts award expresses gratitude to an arts leader who has made a significant impact on the Houston arts education community. Jennifer Sommers said about this year's recipient, Wenden Sanders, "No matter how high the mountain or difficult the obstacle, Wenden's optimistic approach and commitment to arts education for all students never waivers." We are grateful to Erwin Brown and Wenden Sanders for their unwavering support of and advocacy for arts education.

We thank you for being here today and for sharing our collective vision that Houston will be a city where every student experiences the joy and power of a complete education rich in the arts.

# Agenda

## **Welcome to Asia Society Texas**

Jennifer Kapral  
Director of Education & Outreach  
*Asia Society Texas*

## **Welcome to the State of the Arts in Education**

Harrison Guy, Arts Connect Leadership Committee Chair

Director of Arts & Culture  
*Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation*  
Founding Artistic Director  
*Urban Souls Dance Company*

## **Student Emcee Introduction**

Faith Olabanji  
*Westside High School*

## **Opening Remarks**

Jack McBride  
Executive Director  
*Arts Connect Houston*

## **State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report**

Monique Mogilka  
Data Manager  
*Arts Connect Houston*

## **Student Artistry: Screen Dance**

Frame Dance Productions  
*Arts & Culture Partner*

## **Introduction to Mid-America Arts Alliance**

Sarah Mote  
Director of Marketing & Communications  
*Mid-America Arts Alliance*

## **Arts Education in Practice**

Raie Crawford, Arts Connect Leadership Committee Member  
Director of Education & Community Engagement  
*Performing Arts Houston*

Christene Archie  
Executive Artistic Director  
*Diversity in the ARTS & Entertainment*

Anthony Barilla  
Executive Director  
*Musiq*

Marlon Lizama  
Director of Community Partners & Outreach  
*Iconoclast Artists*

## **Student Artistry: Poetry Performance**

Zoe Rojas  
*Northbrook High School*

# Agenda

## **Greater Houston Nonprofit Survey**

Rhonda Horn  
President & Managing Partner  
*Sterling*

## **Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD**

Armando Silva  
Executive Director  
*MECA*

Janette Garza Lindner  
*HISD Board of Managers*

Jack McBride  
Executive Director  
*Arts Connect Houston*

Eleisha Nelson-Reed  
Executive Director  
*Powell Foundation*

Dr. Shannon Parish  
Director, Enrichment Core  
*Houston ISD*

## **Champion in Education Introduction**

Eepi Chaad  
Artist Services Program Officer  
*Mid-America Arts Alliance*

## **Champion in Education Acceptance**

Erwin Brown  
Music Educator  
*Atherton Elementary School*

## **Champion in the Arts Introduction**

Lauren Anderson  
Associate Director, Education and Community  
Engagement  
*Houston Ballet*

Jennifer Sommers  
Director of the Academy  
*Houston Ballet*

## **Champion in the Arts Acceptance**

Wenden Sanders  
Former Fine Arts Director  
*Houston ISD*

## **Ways to Engage**

Michael Pipkin, Arts Connect Board President  
CEO & Founder  
*Rushmore Resource Partners*

Rachel Dickson, Arts Connect Leadership  
Committee Member  
Director of Operations  
*The Ensemble Theatre*

# Our History

In the early 2010s, a group of local leaders identified a decline in arts education in Houston. As the Houston community came together, we realized that we could never address inequitable access to arts education through isolated efforts; we knew we could accomplish more as a collective force. Three years later, that idea turned into action with the establishment of a pilot program that evolved into Arts Connect Houston.

Arts Connect Houston is a collective impact group, meaning we bring together a variety of stakeholders who share the common goal of ensuring access to high-quality arts education for every student, and we work together collaboratively to achieve that goal. We unite over 100 partners in our work, including local arts and culture organizations, Houston ISD, and other state and national partners.

Arts Connect Houston operates across four areas of work: Collecting actionable data, driving advocacy, building capacity, and implementing responsive action.

We utilize data to better understand the strengths and weaknesses of arts education in Houston. Our primary data collection project uses artlook®, a platform that gathers and analyzes information on arts education happening on Houston ISD campuses, as well as program offerings from our Arts & Culture Partners.

By operating as a collective, we help build capacity within both arts and culture organizations and schools. We offer professional development, shared learning opportunities, community events, and more, all with the goal of strengthening our skills and building resources that aid us in achieving our mission.

Since 2018, we have invested over \$1 million in Houston ISD through our Arts Action Fund, directly supporting in-school arts learning, arts integration, arts experiences, and professional development. Last year alone the Arts Action Fund served over 22,000 students across 67 schools. We also support a variety of initiatives, such as the Transformation Arts Initiative and the Creative Schools Institute, to fill gaps in arts education in schools, support professional development, and build arts-rich campus communities.

We have spent more than a decade building relationships, coordinating efforts, and sharing resources. We have seen year over year that, by working together, we have amplified our voices and strengthened our power. We look forward to continuing to champion arts education in Houston with our dedicated collective who knows that when students prosper, our community thrives.

# Our Leadership

## Arts Connect Houston Team

### **Jack McBride**

Executive Director

### **Taylor Bush**

Associate Director

### **Meggie Monahan**

Director of Partnerships & Learning

### **Kendahl Bermudez**

Development Manager

### **Monique Mogilka**

Data Manager

### **Mandy Whited**

Operations Manager

## Board

### **Michael Pipkin, President**

Rushmore Resource Partners

### **Lauren Anderson**

Houston Ballet

### **Suratha Elango, MD**

Texas Children's Hospital &  
Baylor College of Medicine

### **Brett Falkenhagen, Board Treasurer**

American Bank

### **Caroline Goeser, PhD**

Museum of Fine Arts, Houston

### **Harrison Guy**

Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment  
Corporation; Urban Souls Dance Company

### **Judy Nyquist, Board Secretary**

Community Volunteer

### **Mike Rome**

Houston Christian University

### **Todd Stein**

Mid-America Arts Alliance

## Leadership Committee

### **Harrison Guy, Chair**

Fifth Ward Community Redevelopment  
Corporation; Urban Souls Dance Company

### **W. KaNeesha Allen**

Community Representative

### **Stacey Allen**

Nia's Daughters Movement Collective

### **Alberto Careaga**

Art League Houston

### **Eepi Chaad**

Mid-America Arts Alliance

### **Raie Crawford**

Performing Arts Houston

### **Rachel H. Dickson**

The Ensemble Theatre

### **Marlana Doyle**

Houston Contemporary Dance Company

### **Marjorie Joseph**

Gibbous Phase

### **Alisa Magallón**

Houston Grand Opera

### **Nicole Moore-Kriel**

The Powell Foundation

### **Eileen Morris**

The Ensemble Theatre

### **Jacob Shideler**

Theatre Under the Stars

# Our Partners

## Arts & Culture Partners

Our Arts & Culture Partners are a diverse group of local arts organizations representing a variety of artistic disciplines committed to fostering equitable access to arts education in Houston.

### CREATIVE WRITING

Arte Publico Press  
Iconoclast Artists

Rainbow Joy Books  
Writers in the Schools

### DANCE

Ad Deum Dance Company  
Culture Arts Initiative Inc.  
Destiny Dance  
Frame Dance Productions  
Hearts in Motion  
Hope Stone, Inc.  
Houston Ballet

Houston Contemporary  
Dance Company  
Houston Healthy Hip Hop  
MECKKA Dance Project  
MET Dance  
Nia's Daughter Movement  
Collective

Open Dance Project  
Rising Stars Academy of Dance  
& Performing Arts  
Silambam Houston  
Social Movement Contemporary  
Dance  
Urban Souls Dance Company

### MULTIDISCIPLINARY

A.I.R. Project  
ARTreach  
Bay Area Houston Ballet &  
Theatre  
Diversity in The ARTS and  
Entertainment

Edison Arts Foundation  
Friends of Africa  
Harris County Cultural Arts  
Council Heritage Society  
The Hobby Center for the  
Performing Arts

MECA  
Partnerschools  
Performing Arts Houston  
Be Peace - Be Hope  
UNICEF USA  
Workshop Houston

### MUSIC

AFA  
Aperio, Music of the Americas  
Apollo Chamber Orchestra  
Ars Lyrica  
Campbell Learning Center  
Carya String Quartet  
Community Music  
Center of Houston  
DA CAMERA Chamber  
Music & Jazz

Dinkins Music and Arts  
Foundation  
Foundation for Modern Music  
Houston Boychoir  
Houston Chamber Choir  
Houston Children's Chorus  
Houston Grand Opera  
Houston Masterworks Chorus  
Houston Symphony  
Houston Viola Society

Houston Youth Symphony  
Kinetic Ensemble  
Loop38  
Mercury Chamber Orchestra  
Musiq  
Nameless Sound  
Opera in the Heights  
Prelude Music Foundation  
Segundo Barrio Children's Chorus  
WindSync

### VISUAL ARTS

Alta Arts  
Art Education Program at the  
University of Houston  
Art League Houston  
Asia Society Texas Center  
Aurora Picture Show  
Blaffer Art Museum  
Community Artists' Collective

Contemporary Arts Museum  
Houston  
Fashion Museum of Texas  
FotoFest Inc.  
Garza Studios  
Holocaust Museum Houston  
Houston Center for  
Contemporary Craft

Houston Center for Photography  
Houston School of Art & Design  
MFAH  
Orange Show Center for Visionary  
Art  
University of Houston Public Art  
Rothko Chapel  
The Printing Museum

### THEATER

A.D. Players  
Alley Theatre  
Bravissimo's OTMB.A.B.E.S  
EnActe Arts Inc.

Ensemble Theatre  
Exalted Arts  
Express Children's Theatre  
HITS Theatre

Main Street Theater  
Take the Stage  
Theatre Under the Stars

# Our Partners

## **DISTRICT PARTNERS**

---

Houston Independent School District

## **CITY OF HOUSTON**

---

Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs

Mayor's Office of Education

## **STATE & NATIONAL PARTNERS**

---

Arts Education Partnership

Arts, Humanities, & Civic Engagement Lab

Ingenuity, Inc.

The Any Given Child Program

of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts

MINDPOP

Parliament

Texas Cultural Trust

Texans for the Arts

## **SUPPORTED ORGANIZATION**

---

Mid-America Arts Alliance



# 2024 State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report Executive Summary

Arts Connect and our collective, in partnership with the HISD Fine Arts Department, have made great strides towards increasing fine arts education access in HISD. At the time the Fine Arts Department was created at HISD in 2017, there were 46 total campuses without any fine arts instructors. HISD has annually decreased the number of fine arts deserts across the district to 15 campuses in the 2022-23 school year. However, there are countless more steps to be taken before securing a complete and sustained fine arts education access for every student on every campus. The following are key findings from the first State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report, including discussion on different benchmarks for fine arts education access and goals that ACH has identified to grow the district.

## **Creative School Certification**

The Creative School Certification (CSC) is a quantitative summary score calculated for each campus, and these scores are intended to provide an overall summary of arts education access across HISD. We found that 56.9% of HISD campuses were Strong or Excelling, while 43.1% of HISD campuses were Emerging or Developing. For HISD to have all campuses in at least the Strong category, as ACH has defined as a goal, we need to increase fine arts education access and quality for 93 elementary schools, 3 middle schools, 9 high schools, 5 combination schools, and 8 alternative schools/programs.

## **Access**

The Access section of the Report includes information about fine arts instructors, as well as percent access in elementary schools and depth in secondary schools. These are the most basic access indicators for student access to fine arts instruction and constitute the foundation of fine arts education access. Using the Texas Cultural Trust Pilot Arts Education Access Benchmarks, we found that 35% of HISD's elementary campuses did not meet Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio access benchmarks, and 7 elementary schools (4%) did not have any fine arts instructors on campus and are arts deserts.

In order to make sure all elementary campuses meet the Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio benchmark, ACH advocates for, at minimum, adding fine arts instructors to 99 campuses offering elementary instruction. Additional exploration is required to identify fine arts disciplines that are needed most on each campus. In order to eliminate elementary arts deserts, HISD would need to add fine arts instructors to the seven elementary campuses that reported no fine arts instructors.

About half (21) of Houston ISD high schools did not meet Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio access benchmarks. Additionally, 2 high schools and 6

alternative campuses, or 7.7% of secondary and alternative campuses, reported having no fine arts instructors. In order to make sure all secondary campuses meet the Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio benchmark, ACH advocates for, at minimum, adding fine arts instructors to 38 campuses offering secondary instruction. Additional exploration is required to identify fine arts disciplines that are needed most on each campus. In order to eliminate secondary arts deserts, ACH recommends adding fine arts instructors to 2 high schools and 6 alternative schools that reported no fine arts teachers.

Roughly a third of reporting elementary and combination campuses reported having less than 100% of their students enrolled in at least one fine arts course. If this sample is indicative of all elementary and combination campuses, then HISD will need to improve fine arts course enrollment in about 60 campuses offering elementary instruction to meet ACH's minimum goal of 100% of students on every campus being enrolled in at least one fine arts course.

More HISD high schools, middle schools, and combination campuses offered visual arts and music courses than dance and theatre courses. To meet the minimum standard set by TEA, 13, or 13.5% of secondary campuses need to add additional fine arts disciplines to their course offerings. For campuses that offer two or three TEKS fine arts areas (about half of secondary campuses do), it is likely that theatre and dance are areas that need to be added to a campus' course offerings to reach the goal of having all four TEKS fine arts areas.

### **Quality**

Beyond basic access, the Quality section of the report covers additional opportunities to enhance fine arts education for students. These include which arts learning standards campuses utilize, arts inclusion in a school's governance structures, impact on student experience, partnerships with arts organizations, professional development for fine arts instructors, and family and community engagement offerings. These indicators are not required by the district or state, so ACH has defined goals and ideals for these indicators.

Most elementary and secondary campuses, at minimum, reported that they follow state arts learning standards. Supposing this sample is indicative of HISD as a whole, in order to meet the goal of every campus using district arts learning standards, about 65% of HISD elementary campuses and about 75% of HISD secondary campuses will need to adopt district arts learning standards. Regarding professional development for the arts, given that there is a fairly large disparity between elementary and secondary campuses reporting professional development for their instructors, there is more work to be done to ensure every elementary campus offers professional development. Additionally, this could be an opportunity for arts organizations to offer professional development through partnerships, which may also work to increase the number of partnerships across campuses.

Around half of elementary campuses reported offering family or community engagements, compared to about 73% of secondary campuses. While ideally every campus offers some type of family or community engagement, more research is needed to understand potential barriers to offering these engagements and whether this explains the difference between elementary and secondary campuses. Performances were the most common type of engagement offered by HISD campuses, as well as the most common program type in partnerships between HISD campuses and arts organizations as seen in the Program Types section later in this report. Further exploration is needed to understand how best to support campuses in offering volunteer opportunities, community events, and school-based exhibits. Additionally, further exploration is needed to understand why performances are more popular in both engagements and partnership programs.

### **Partnerships**

The Partnerships section of the report discusses partnerships between a campus and organization that have enriched conventional classroom learning, strengthened ties between schools and neighborhoods, and elevated the standard of arts education across HISD schools.

Given the breadth of fine arts disciplines offered by Houston's arts organizations, there is a possible opportunity for partnerships to provide programs in disciplines beyond the four TEKS fine arts areas, like literary or media arts. 27% of HISD campuses reported having 0 partnerships with arts organizations. Given that this data reflects the 22-23 school year, it is possible that partnership needs have changed throughout the district in the current year. In order to ensure that every campus has at least one partnership, we should also track the campuses without partnerships over time to determine if there are areas that frequently lack partnerships. Furthermore, around a third of campuses reported only one partnership. In order to increase the number of partnerships on a campus, artlook® can be used to match schools' needs with arts organization offerings.

### **Next Steps**

Some of the greatest challenges moving forward in our work involve gathering more data and continuing investigation of inequitable patterns of fine arts education access. In this report, a few questions from the artlook® survey, such as minutes of instruction, budget, and instructional approach, were omitted due to insufficient data, and we have yet to collect data on every campus due to incomplete surveys. The use of various benchmarks and the Creative School Certification point to the need for a Houston specific rubric for fine arts education access and quality.

Additionally, gathering data on teacher certifications and identifying areas of campuses with no partnerships will further enhance our understanding of fine arts education quality. Lastly, seeing how HISD compares nationally as well as identifying patterns of inequitable fine arts education access over time and

evaluating if they are correlated with socioeconomic factors will be important areas of further exploration.

Some of the greatest opportunities moving forward include addressing some of the fine arts education gaps identified in the data. For example, eliminating arts deserts remains a priority, and we can further decrease student-fine arts teacher ratio by continuing to advocate for more fine arts instructors on campuses with the highest student-fine arts teacher ratios. Mapping these arts deserts and areas that are under-resourced could potentially assist with directing policy.

To build a foundation of guaranteed arts education, we can ensure that all elementary students have access to at least one fine arts course on their campus as well as advocate that secondary campuses have courses in at least two fine arts disciplines (ideally all disciplines, with an emphasis on increasing dance and theatre access). To continue ensuring quality, we can support HISD campuses towards using district arts standards, including the arts across all governance structures, and providing a variety of family and community engagements. Finally, we can advocate that every campus has at least one partnership, and use the capability of artlook® to make partnership matches based on a school's profile and arts organization offerings to guarantee that campuses have multiple partnerships in different arts disciplines, including ones that are not the four major areas of TEKS.

## **KEY FINDINGS**

### **Access**

- According to the Creative School Certification, 56.9% of HISD campuses were Strong or Excelling, while 43.1% of HISD campuses were Emerging or Developing.
- All HISD alternative programs were either Emerging or Developing.
- About 93% of middle schools were Strong or Excelling.
- 77.5% of high schools were Strong or Excelling.
- About 42% of elementary schools were Emerging.
- Using Texas Cultural Trust access benchmarks for student-fine arts teacher ratio, 61% of HISD's campuses offering elementary instruction met or exceeded Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio access benchmarks.
- 4% of elementary schools did not have any fine arts instructors on campus and were arts deserts.
- About half of HISD high schools did not meet Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio access benchmarks, and about 73% of HISD middle schools met or exceeded Proficient student-fine arts teacher ratio access benchmarks.
- 7.7% of secondary and alternative campuses reported having no fine arts instructors.
- On average, 47 in 50 students, or 94%, were enrolled in at least one fine arts course in elementary and combination campuses.
- More HISD high schools, middle schools, and combination campuses offered visual arts and music courses than dance and theatre courses.
- 11 (11.5%) secondary campuses reported offering only one fine arts discipline.

## Quality

- Only 4 elementary campuses reported using no arts standards. Zero secondary campuses reported using no arts standards.
- Arts inclusion in campus strategic plans was the most common type of arts inclusion in governance for both elementary and secondary campuses.
- When asked how the arts improve student learning, engagement, and experience on their campus, educators overwhelmingly highlighted the positive impacts of arts education on student experience, including communication skills, engagement within the classroom, attendance, sense of community, and social-emotional learning.
- A higher proportion of secondary campuses (72.9%) offered at least one type of community engagement than did elementary campuses (55.8%).
- Performances were the most common type of engagement offered by HISD campuses.

## Partnership

- There were 434 total reported partnerships with an arts organization with an average of 2 partnerships per campus.
- Most HISD campuses (about 70%) reported having 1-5 partnerships.
- 73 (27%) HISD campuses reported having zero partnerships with arts organizations.
- Performances and workshops were by far the most frequent type of program that occurred through partnerships, accounting for 33.6% of all programs.

To read the full 2024 State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report, please visit our website at <https://www.artsconnecthouston.org/>.

# Welcome to Asia Society Texas



## **Jennifer Kapral**

Director of Education & Outreach,  
Asia Society Texas

Jennifer Kapral has served Asia Society Texas for five years as the Director of Education, co-leading an 11-million-dollar capital campaign to create Explore Asia, an interactive educational exhibit, and Asia in the Classroom, a digital hub for teaching and learning about Asia and the Asian American experience. Prior to her role at Asia Society, she served for 15 years as a professional educator, school leader, and project manager. She has held leadership roles with Teach for America, Raise Your Hand Texas, and the Houston Independent School District. More recently, she served as Dean of Instruction at the Houston Academy for International Studies, where she built and managed a nationally recognized study abroad program. Highlights from her travels include leading a student service-learning trip to Pune, India and receiving a Fulbright-Hays award to study curriculum development in Egypt. Jennifer holds a B.A. in Politics and Philosophy from the University of Pittsburgh and a Master's in Education from The University of St. Thomas.

# Welcome to the State of the Arts in Education



## ***Arts Connect Leadership Committee Chair***

### **Harrison Guy**

Director of Arts & Culture,  
Fifth Ward Community  
Redevelopment Corporation  
Founding Artistic Director,  
Urban Souls Dance Company

Harrison Guy has captivated audiences across the nation through his inspirational and unique works of passion, beauty, and activism that are rooted in African American history and culture. Throughout his career, he has gained a reputation for creating soul-stirring works that shift the consciousness of the audience and inspire a response.

Harrison studied dance at Prairie View A&M University and The Ailey School in New York, and has taught dance himself for 18 years. He was the inaugural Artist in residence at Rice University through the CERCL Department and has won numerous awards, including Best Choreography for his work as Movement Director for Rec Room's presentation of The Royale. He was a founding member of both Exclamation Dance Company and Dorrel Martin's Dance Fusion in Houston, founded Black Arts Movement Houston, and in 2016 launched Houston's first African American Dance Festival.

In 2004, Harrison debuted his dance company Urban Souls Dance Company at the city-wide dance festival, Dance Houston. Harrison is also the Director of Arts and Culture for the 5th Ward Community Redevelopment Corporation and the Historic DeLUXE Theater.

# 2024 State of the Arts in Education Student Emcee



**Faith Olabanji**

Westside High School

Faith Olabanji is a senior Westside High School student from Houston, Texas! She has a passion for web design and adores marketing and graphic design. In her spare time, she enjoys performing in theatre, debating, community service, reading books, listening to BTS, and learning new languages.



# Opening Remarks



## **Jack McBride**

Executive Director,  
Arts Connect Houston

Jack McBride is a nonprofit professional and arts education advocate from Houston, Texas. With over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit community, including at the AmeriCorps, the University of Texas, and Writers in the Schools, Jack's work has focused on equity of arts access for children, strategic planning, LGBTQ+ equality, and advocacy for artists, writers, and teachers. Jack grew up in San Angelo in an arts-rich and book-rich home and knows fully the impact an arts-rich education can have on children. Currently, he serves on the board of directors for Equality Texas. Jack has a B.A. in Art History and Spanish from Trinity University and a Masters in Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame. In their spare time, Jack and his husband Thain really enjoy drinking margaritas.

In his capacity at Arts Connect Houston's Executive Director, Jack sits on both the Board of Directors and Leadership Committee.

# State of the Arts in HISD Baseline Report



## **Monique Mogilka**

Data Manager,  
Arts Connect Houston

Monique Mogilka is the Data Manager for Arts Connect Houston. She has a varied background in sociology and art history, and her career has focused on using and analyzing data to inform policy. Previously, Monique worked as a Statistical Research Specialist at the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation analyzing crime data, and after moving to Houston, worked for the Mayor's Office of Cultural Affairs where she produced the first equity report on the city's art collection. Monique is currently pursuing a degree in Environmental Science from Oregon State University.

# Student Artistry: Screen Dance

## Frame Dance Productions

Outstanding Editing 2024

"Lilly of the Valley"

Charlie Redmond, Yahaira Prudencio, and Maya Trevino-Martinez

Young Women's College Preparatory Academy

Outstanding Cinematography 2024

"Friends"

Alma Bernabe, Yoriana Conway, Savannah Corvera, Alicia Lara,

Jacqueline Mendez, Camila Reyes Leal, Yelitza Solis Rios, Rose Villatoro

Furr High School

# Introduction to Mid-America Arts Alliance



## **Sarah Mote**

Director of Marketing &  
Communications,  
Mid-America Arts Alliance

Sarah joined Mid-America Arts Alliance as its Director of Marketing and Communications in 2023. An award-winning storyteller and content strategist, Sarah has amplified and optimized community-facing outreach within such varied industries as higher education, telecommunications, health care, philanthropy, entrepreneurship, and economic development. In her roles as a storyteller, speaker, and marketing consultant, she has helped guide and launch content strategies and brand development for numerous nonprofits, companies, and organizations, including the UMKC Innovation Center, UMB Bank, Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, International Economic Development Council, National Content & Technology Cooperative, and the Presidential Youth Fitness Program, among others. She earned her MA from Indiana University-Bloomington and her BA from the University of Texas at Austin.

# Arts Education in Practice



***Arts Connect Leadership  
Committee Member***

***Moderator***

**Raie Crawford**

Director of Education &  
Community Engagement,  
Performing Arts Houston

Raie Crawford (she/her/they/them) is a Wiley College Alumna from Houston, Texas. The 2017-2018 Houston Performance Poet of the Year, Raie is ranked among the top 20 among the Women of the World Poetry Slam and top 25 within the rankings of the Individual World Poetry Slam. In 2018 she released her first book "In Between |Space|" which captures the journey and movement of black bodies in today's society, and is currently working on her second publication slated to be released in 2024.

With 10 years of non-profit experience, Raie has worked with several organizations supporting strategic change and organizational innovation. A 2021 graduate of Rice University's Center for Philanthropy & Nonprofit Leadership and a member of Women of Color in the Arts (WOCA), Raie continues to deepen her roots in youth and leadership development centering an equity lens in the work she does in our communities. Holding several certifications in Diversity and Inclusion from University of Wisconsin at Green Bay, as well as in art equity practices from The National Guild for Community Arts Education, Raie values making sure those who have been pushed into the margins are heard so that they can truly be served. Currently the Director of Education and Community Engagement with Performing Arts Houston, Raie is an active member of the Arts Connect Leadership Committee.

# Arts Education in Practice



## **Christene Archie**

Executive Artistic Director,  
Diversity in the ARTS &  
Entertainment

Christene Archie's career in the creative arts arena spans over 30 years. Christene studied Information Systems Management in college, receiving a Bachelor's Degree from Lamar University. After graduating, she worked for several Fortune 500 companies in various industries, she worked professionally as the IT Trainer, Analyst, and Assistant Director while working as Music and Arts Director, Vocal Director, and Technical Arts Director for various community organizations and theater groups. She is also a songwriter, playwright, educator, and certified counselor who has found her heart's true passion within the blend of arts and service driving the desire to start Diversity in The ARTS & Entertainment (DiTAE.)

Diversity in The ARTS & Entertainment was initially birthed out of a desire to give back to a Houston community that provided so many artistic and cultural opportunities in Christene's formidable years, pivotal in not only her success, but the generational success of her family. Christene soon discovered those opportunities were now limited or no longer available to students. This ignited the mission of Diversity in The ARTS & Entertainment which is to give all young people the opportunity to a cultivating environment that will give the space to discover their artistic identity while building both their confidence and character through creativity.

# Arts Education in Practice



## **Anthony Barilla**

Executive Director,  
Musiq

Anthony Barilla is a musician, writer, and performance artist based in Houston, Texas. He has written music for theaters around the U.S., radio program like This American Life, and many bands. He has co-written and produced numerous albums, EPs and singles as half of Dutch/American songwriting duo Merel & Tony. His original monologues include Songs from the Post Office (2022), and in 2017 he was named "Best Sound Designer" by the Houston Press. He is the executive director of Musiq, a contemporary chamber music collective, a founder and performer in Houston's A.S.S. (Houston's most famous accordion cover band), and half of Bosnian/American rock duo Disko Komitet. In 2022 he was the plaintiff in a case against the city of Houston that resulted in the striking down of the city's restrictive busking ordinance on First Amendment grounds.

# Arts Education in Practice



## **Marlon Lizama**

Director of Community  
Partnerships & Outreach,  
Iconoclast Artists

Marlon “Marley” is a poet, writer, artist, author, and dancer who focuses on the cultural aspect of writing and the arts. He is the Co-founder of the Iconoclast Artists program that focuses on empowering youth in underserved schools and incarcerated youth through the arts. With the help of fellow educators, Marlon developed the “How to Teach High-Level Creative Writing to At-Risk Youth” curriculum, which aims to create creatives, writers, and young authors. Through Iconoclast, they are able to publish an anthology of poetry created by the students who have participated in this program. Marlon published his first book, *Cue the Writer: Cheers to the Notion of Love, Hate, God, and Revolution*, which is a collection of short stories and poetry from a young immigrant’s perspective, and launched his website [MarlonLizamaPoetry.org](http://MarlonLizamaPoetry.org). Marlon is the recipient of the 2015 John P. McGovern Award for distinguished activities in science, literature, arts and humanities. Through competitions, performances, poetry shows, and the U.S. Department of State, Marlon has traveled to more than 40 countries. His work and ultimate mission is to use the arts as a tool to reach out and change perspective, environment, and lives.



# Student Artistry: Poetry Performance



**Zoe Rojas**

Northbrook High School

Zoe Rojas is a Senior at Northbrook High School. She participates in the National Honors Society, Student Council, and is the starting varsity pitcher for the softball team, earning second team all district twice as well as first team all district in her years with the program. In addition to being a great technical student, Zoe is also a creative and artistic individual. She has been involved in her high school's varsity orchestra and poetry club, and her work has been published in four different anthologies. Zoe is part of the Iconoclast Artist Program that helps her to create, perform, and publish her work. Zoe was born and raised into a lower income neighborhood in Houston, TX where she learned the importance of community and giving back. She is a current member at the Spring Spirit organization where she gives back to her community through volunteer work in sports programs, faith groups, and educational programs. Joining Texas A&M in the fall as a Business major, Zoe will be the first in her family to graduate from college.

# Greater Houston Nonprofit Survey



## **Rhonda Horn**

President & Managing Partner,  
Sterling

Rhonda Horn is the President and Managing Partner at Sterling. She joined the firm in 2007 and brings more than 30 years of nonprofit management and fundraising experience to the team. In addition to consulting, Rhonda manages Sterling's human resources and strategic business development functions.

Rhonda began her nonprofit career with the American Heart Association in Houston, where she ultimately served as the Executive Director. Along with successfully expanding the AHA's individual, foundation, and corporate support, she was responsible for operations and human resources management, market strategy, board and volunteer development, and capital campaign strategy and management.

Rhonda leads complex client assignments across nonprofit sub-sectors, including strategic plans, campaigns, and organizational assessments. She is particularly known for her fundraising acumen and ability to accurately assess funding capacity and potential for both annual campaigns and capital and endowment campaign initiatives. She is well versed in creating cases for support and for developing prospect identification, cultivation, and solicitation strategies that drive major gifts programs and campaigns.

Additionally, Rhonda's management experience has equipped her with knowledge and insights to create effective staffing structures, processes, and systems that are essential to the success of nonprofit organizations.

Rhonda attended Texas A&M University where she earned a Bachelor of Arts in Speech Communication.

# Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD



***Moderator***

**Armando Silva**

Executive Director,  
MECA

Armando joined MECA in 1991 as an aspiring ballet and modern dance student while attending the High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. He later attended Southern Methodist University in Dallas and the Ailey School in New York before moving back to Texas where he spent a decade at the Dallas Black Dance Theater.

Throughout the years, Armando has held a number of positions at MECA, quickly moving into key leadership roles including the assistant to the Executive Director, co-curator of the MECA Presents Performances Series, Festival Chair of MECA's Annual Día de Muertos Festival, and Director of MECA's Sunburst Summer Arts Camp, an 8-week camp that blends arts education and academic techniques to address the learning loss that often occurs when students are out of school for the summer.

In November 2023, Armando was appointed Executive Director of MECA, where he continues the organization's long tradition of fostering the healthy development of families through arts and cultural programming, academic excellence and community building. Armando's vision for the future of MECA is based on his unique personal and professional understanding of the value MECA brings to all those whose lives are transformed by its rich cultural programming.

# Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD



**Janette Garza Lindner**

Houston ISD Board of Managers

Janette Garza Lindner is a devoted wife and working mom of two children who attend HISD schools. She serves on the Houston ISD school board to ensure a high-quality education is accessible to all students, regardless of their backgrounds, financial circumstances, or ZIP codes. Janette was a member of the Arts Connect Houston leadership committee from 2019 - 2023. She currently serves on the MD Anderson YMCA and HISD Foundation boards and sings with the Houston Cecilia Chamber Choir. Janette is a management consultant within the energy industry and earned her Bachelor's degree in Management Information Systems from the University of Texas at Austin.

# Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD



## **Jack McBride**

Executive Director,  
Arts Connect Houston

Jack McBride is a nonprofit professional and arts education advocate from Houston, Texas. With over 20 years of experience in the nonprofit community, including at the AmeriCorps, the University of Texas, and Writers in the Schools, Jack's work has focused on equity of arts access for children, strategic planning, LGBTQ+ equality, and advocacy for artists, writers, and teachers. Jack grew up in San Angelo in an arts-rich and book-rich home and knows fully the impact an arts-rich education can have on children. Currently, he serves on the board of directors for Equality Texas. Jack has a B.A. in Art History and Spanish from Trinity University and a Masters in Nonprofit Administration from the University of Notre Dame. In their spare time, Jack and his husband Thain really enjoy drinking margaritas.

In his capacity at Arts Connect Houston's Executive Director, Jack sits on both the Board of Directors and Leadership Committee.

# Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD



## **Eleisha Nelson-Reed**

Executive Director,  
Powell Foundation

Eleisha Nelson-Reed is the Executive Director of the Powell Foundation (Houston, TX). Prior to joining the Powell Foundation, Eleisha was an associate partner with Bellwether Education Partners and senior director for The Broad Residency. At the Broad Center, she oversaw all aspects of leadership development programming for a national network of central office leaders and partnered with school systems to assess talent needs. She played an instrumental role in helping to guide the program's growth and securing the organization's accreditation status as a graduate degree program through the Western Association of Schools and Colleges.

Eleisha held a wide range of central office leadership roles in Cypress-Fairbanks Independent School District (Texas), a racially and economically diverse school district serving 115,000 students. Her work primarily focused on supporting school leaders on academic strategy implementation. During her district leadership tenure, she worked on a change-management initiative focused on the adoption of an aligned and comprehensive literacy framework for the district's 51 elementary schools. She was a key architect of the district's elementary literacy curricula and supported district-wide implementation. The successful adoption of these tools, assessments, and training resources resulted in 91% of the student population meeting standards on the state's reading and writing assessments. Additionally, Eleisha managed a team in the development of a tailored socioemotional learning curriculum for the district's youth enrichment programs and provided oversight to five early childhood centers.

Eleisha is a proud third-generation educator, native Houstonian, and alumna of the High School of the Performing and Visual Arts. She received her bachelor's degree from Rice University and holds a master's degree in curriculum and instruction from the University of Houston.

# Looking Forward: Arts Education in Houston ISD



## **Dr. Shannon Parish**

Director, Enrichment Core,  
Houston ISD

Dr. Parish is a devoted Director of Leadership with a history of working in the educational system and various organizations for over 23 years and currently serves as Director of Enrichment Core in one of the largest urban districts in our nation, Houston ISD. She is the curriculum director for Art of Thinking (critical thinking, problem solving and information literacy), Visual Arts, Music, Theatre Arts, and Dance programs and operations.

Dr. Parish holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology with a Minor in Criminal Justice and a Master of Arts in Educational Administration from Prairie View A&M University. She has a diverse background and is certified in Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, Engaging Families & Communities as Educational Partners, Strategic Marketing and AI Strategy and Implementation. Dr. Parish completed her Doctor of Strategic Leadership with a focus on Foresight and Global Consulting from Regent University in 2017.

Dr. Parish has a heart for advocating for the voiceless in education and bridging the gap between our present dilemmas to future aspirations.

# Champion in Education

## Introduction



***Arts Connect Leadership  
Committee Member***

**Eepi Chaad**

Artist Services Program Officer,  
Mid-America Arts Alliance

Eepi Chaad (she/her) is a practicing multidisciplinary artist, educator, and naturalist who tells stories using textiles, fibers, metals, places, and people. Chaad currently serves as the Professional Development Program Officer on the Artists Services team at Mid-America Arts Alliance. Chaad also collaborates with various arts & culture organizations including serving on the PrintMatters board, the Houston Museum Educators Roundtable steering committee, and advisory boards for Baker Ripley Gulfton and Buffalo Bayou Partnership. Chaad has previously served in community building roles with organizations such as Arts Connect Houston, Art League Houston, and Artist Boat. Chaad believes art is for every community and creativity is in every human.



# Champion in Education Acceptance



## **Erwin Brown**

Music Educator,  
Atherton Elementary School

Mr. Erwin Brown is a native of Corpus Christi, Texas where he appeared on several occasions on local television stations with his high school jazz band and church choir. He also participated in four live album recording sessions with his high school band and church choir. While in high school he performed in London, England; Paris, France; Oxford, Austria; Lucerne, Switzerland; Vaduz, Liechtenstein; Munich, Germany; and New York Carnegie Hall as pianist with West Oso Jazz Band. After graduating from high school, Mr. Brown was awarded a full music scholarship to attend Texas Southern University as a Music Education student. While there, he was employed at TSU where he served as the Administrative Assistant Band Director for "Ocean of Soul" Band. Mr. Brown retired from TSU after 25 years of service and soon gained employment with Houston Independent School District at Atherton Elementary School where he is currently a music teacher. He is also the organist and choir director at Fourth Missionary Baptist Church.

# Champion in the Arts

## Introduction



***Arts Connect Board  
Member***

**Lauren Anderson**

Associate Director of Education &  
Community Engagement,  
Houston Ballet

Native Houstonian, Lauren Anderson danced with Houston Ballet from 1983 to 2006, performing leading roles in all the great classical ballets, appearing across the world to critical acclaim, and in the process, becoming one of Houston Ballet's most beloved stars.

She trained exclusively at Houston Ballet's Ben Stevenson Academy from the age of seven. She joined Houston Ballet in 1983 as a Corps de Ballet and in 1990 became the first Black principal dancer at Houston Ballet. She is also one of the few Black ballerinas at the head of a major ballet company anywhere in the world.

In January 2007, Ms. Anderson transitioned into Houston Ballet's Education and Community Engagement department, where she conducts and oversees free dance programming for Houston area schools. In the spring of 2016, the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture awarded her with a permanent exhibit. In fall of 2021 was inducted into the Texas Women's Hall of Fame. Most recently, a production chronicling her life, Plumshuga: The Rise of Lauren Anderson, premiered at Stages Theater.

# Champion in the Arts

## Introduction



### **Jennifer Sommers**

Director of the Academy,  
Houston Ballet

Jennifer Sommers is the Director of the Houston Ballet Academy where she oversees all educational programming. She holds an MFA in Dance, Performance and Choreography from Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. She presents on pedagogy and curriculum at local, national and international conferences, including the National Dance Education Organization and the International Association of Dance Medicine and Science. She has performed with Laura Dean Musicians and Dancers and the Albany Berkshire Ballet, where she also served as Ballet Mistress. Her dance honors include a scholarship to Jacob's Pillow Choreography Workshop, a Durham Arts Council Emerging Artist Grant, and a Lake Region Arts Council grant in support of new work. Prior to joining Houston Ballet, she was the Associate Director of Raleigh Dance Theatre and Founding Dance Educator at KIPP Sharpstown College Prep. She has also served on the faculty of and choreographed for the University of Houston, Meredith College and the University of Minnesota, Morris.

# Champion in the Arts Acceptance



## **Wenden Sanders**

Former Fine Arts Director,  
Houston ISD

Mr. Wenden Sanders served the students, families, community and HISD for over twelve years. He served as principal of Meyerland Performing and Visual Arts Middle School for 6 years and led the campus to achieve six TEA distinctions in the areas of mathematics, ELA/Reading, Science, closing the achievement gap, post-secondary readiness and student progress. Mr. Sanders was a public-school educator for 30 years with thirteen as a choral music teacher/fine arts department chair and seventeen as a campus/district administrator. As a music educator, he led his choirs to earn UIL sweepstakes, best of class and consistent superior awards. Over 350 students in his choral music programs were provided cultural arts travel experiences to New York, Italy, Germany, and France where they developed a deeper understanding and appreciation of music and art. He served as a Texas Music Adjudication Association judge, Texas Music Education Association region officer, fine arts department chair and member of the Texas Choral Directors Association, ASCD, NASSP, TASSP, HAMA and HASA. Mr. Sanders earned a bachelor's degree of Music in Music Education from Lamar University in Beaumont, Texas and a master's degree of education in educational administration from Prairie View A&M University. Wenden is a former member of Arts Connect Houston's Leadership Committee.

# Ways to Engage



***Arts Connect Board  
President***

**Michael Pipkin**

Rushmore Resource Partners

Michael Pipkin has over 17 years of experience as an investor and corporate executive. He graduated from Dartmouth College with High Honors in History and began his career in investment banking at RBC Capital Markets and Jefferies Randall & Dewey. Subsequently, Michael spent over 10 years in principal investing at The D.E. Shaw Group and Stellus Capital. Prior to his current position, Michael was with Reservoir Capital Group where he was responsible for opening their Houston office and leading energy investment origination and execution efforts. He currently serves as CEO and Founder of Rushmore Resource Partners, a private upstream oil and gas company.

An active member of the Houston community, Michael holds a number of board positions, including serving as Treasurer of Writers in the Schools where he is also a former Board President, President of the St. John's School Alumni Board, and Advisory Board Member for the University of Houston Honors College.

# Ways to Engage



***Arts Connect Leadership  
Committee Member***

**Rachel Dickson**

Director of Operations,  
The Ensemble Theatre

Rachel Dickson has functioned as a professional artist for over 25 years. She has worked as an educator, actor, director, playwright, dramaturg, producer, technical staff, and artistic consultant. While her home theatre where she currently serves as the Director of Operation is The Ensemble Theatre, she has worked with various theatres throughout the Houston community. She holds her Bachelor of Science in Engineering, where she developed a strong skill set in project and people management. After receiving her Master of Fine Arts from University of Illinois-Urbana, Rachel found she had a passion for connecting people and the arts, which led to becoming a licensed Master of Social Work. She is excited to serve on the Arts Connect Leadership Committee.

# Thank You to Our Event & Data Funders

**Sterling**



**Anonymous**

## Arts Connect Houston Supporters

**The Brown Foundation, Inc.**



*Charity Guild*  
**OF CATHOLIC WOMEN**  
*Benefitting Houston's children in need*



**NATIONAL ENDOWMENT**  
for the **ARTS**  
arts.gov

**NBA Foundation**

**The Powell Foundation**



**William E. and Natoma Pyle Harvey Charitable Trust**

## And Our Supported Organization



MID-AMERICA ARTS ALLIANCE

Thank you so much for joining us! Interested in supporting our mission of ensuring high-quality arts education for every student? Learn more & give today!



**ARTS CONNECT**  
**H O U S T O N**

<https://www.artsconnecthouston.org/sota2024>