Arts Programming & Partnerships in New York City Public Schools: Geographic Mapping Revealing Disparities

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Arts Programming & Partnerships in New York City Public Schools: Geographic Mapping Revealing Disparities

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Background
The New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) is a New York State agency dedicated to supporting arts, culture, and heritage activities that serve the state’s citizens and visitors. Each year, through a competitive grant program, NYSCA awards grants to non-profit organizations.

Benefits of Arts In Education
The integration of arts education into the school system has a large impact on learning, discipline, creativity, cultural awareness, self-esteem, and educational opportunity for school-aged children. Studies have shown that education in the arts has a significant overall impact on the success of children across all fields of studying, including math and reading. However, there is a significant deficit of arts education programming in low-income and minority communities where students are found to have lower scores on standardized tests and lower rates of graduation. The lack of arts programming in disadvantaged areas creates a social construct impeding potential scholastic advancement by oppressing the opportunity for minority populations to build essential skill sets.

Research

Initial New York City Research
1. Arts education research conducted by the Scott Stringer, the comptroller of New York City
2. Research uncovered that more than one in three New York City schools are without designated arts programming
   - The majority of these schools are located in the South Bronx and Central Brooklyn

Current NYSCA Research
I was interested in uncovering the geographic location of the partnerships that were receiving arts education funding from the New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA). The research on funded arts education partnerships with K-12 schools in New York City will give a comparative examination of locations lacking arts programming with locations where arts programs are present and financially supported by NYSCA.

The overall goal of this research is to influence future funding decisions on arts education by drawing attention to the disproportionate lack in arts partnerships in underserved high poverty areas.

Goals
1. Geographically display NYSCA’s currently funded arts education partnerships in New York City
2. Pinpoint areas that are underserved in arts education
3. Influence arts funding decisions
   - Analyze data and translate into a recommendation list of strategic funding priorities for NYSCA
4. Bring awareness to the need for an increase in arts employment, programming, and partnerships in New York City public schools located in low-income areas which vastly effect minority populations
5. Create a sustainable geographic mapping program for NYSCA to utilize as an aid during funding deliberations

Products
1. Digitally Layered Map
   - Map #1: Map of New York City Census Tract of Percentage Below Poverty w. School Districts
   - Map #2: Map of New York City Public Schools
   - Map #3: Map of NYSCA School Arts Partnerships
   - Map #4: Map depicting New York City Schools WITHOUT Full-Time or Part-Time arts instructors
2. List of funding recommendations

Utilization
This digital map of the K-12 schools and partnerships within New York City will be the first step in creating a sustainable geographic information system for NYSCA to utilize when determining organizations and programs deserving funding for aid-years to come. The digital map is intended to be used as a reference within the arts education grant deliberation process to give HIGH priority to partnerships existing in areas with the greatest need for arts education programming. The digital map will be accessible to arts education program staff at NYSCA to be easily updated with any changes made to the list of funded arts education school partnerships.

Citations

Analysis of Data

Recommendations
1. Give HIGH priority funding to schools located in areas 50.1-100% below the poverty line
   - Schools located in Central Brooklyn and South Bronx
2. Initiate partnerships and make recommendations to arts organizations to consider partnering with schools in these underserved areas
3. Prioritize arts education funding to programs in the field of Film and Visual Arts
4. Prioritize funding programs located in Staten Island

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