

EXPECTATIONS FOR THE ARTIST IN SCHOOL RESIDENCIES

1. PLAN FOR CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT

As the legally responsible party, classroom management is primarily the responsibility of the teacher. That being said, the artist will need a degree of autonomy and leadership and the teacher needs to lend support for that shift in the classroom. The artist's ability to manage the room flows directly from the relationship the children have with their own teacher, until the artist is able to build his/her own relationship.

There may be stylistic differences between the teacher's management system and your desire to let the creative process unfold. **Compromise.** Trust will be built through regular and open talk about decisions regarding limits for students.

The subject of management should be discussed in depth before the project begins, and the results of the discussion should be shared with the students explicitly, for example, "Our visiting author will be in charge and I will be assisting her, because she has something special to teach us all. Our regular classroom rules will be in effect, and there will be the same consequences if problems occur." With this as a base, adjustments should be negotiated between the teacher and the artist--without the students present--as relationships evolve. **Don't wait and stew. Just talk about it.**

2. SCHEDULE TIME CAREFULLY

Whether or not an artist starts and finishes on time is a key criterion for the school as to whether or not you will be invited back. The staff manages hundreds of children through complicated schedules each day; for example, in many districts, each classroom is scheduled into a specialist-taught class such as art, music, etc, once a day; many students are also scheduled for individual and small group instruction with resource personnel.

The teachers are great time managers for the most part, but they have very little room for flexibility, as they operate as part of a large and very complicated system. This is why being clear and consistent on time-related matters is so important.

Ask the coordinator for a written copy of the schedule you and the school have worked up; check it against your own notes. If you are not able to meet at a scheduled time, talk with the coordinator and make adjustments in a timely fashion.

Be sure to plan enough time just to talk with your collaborating teacher. The best collaborations happen when the planning time approaches the contact time with students. Work toward a minimum of one hour of planning time for every four contact occasions.

3. ROLE OF ARTIST IN THE COLLABORATION

There are several collaborative models. Discuss which of these you will be using with your partnering teacher. Will you be presenting, or co-teaching and co-designing the learning activities?

The partnering teacher's active participation is critical. The teacher may participate as a learner, doing the activities alongside his/her students, or the teacher may act as a coach and second instructor. What is never acceptable is a teacher in the back of the room grading papers and thereby signaling to the students that what is going on is not of interest or value to him/her.

Under no circumstances should the artist be left alone in the classroom. The teacher is the licensed adult, and is legally responsible.

4. THINK OF WHAT IT WILL LOOK LIKE WHEN THE STUDENTS ACHIEVE YOUR GOALS

Your job is not to identify the students who already come to the classroom well-versed in your art form, and only to focus on them, unless that is the specific request of the school. Your job is to achieve success with each and every child, regardless of where they enter the process.

It's a tough assignment, but you can engineer success by designing learning activities with baby steps built-in for the ones who need the work broken into smaller bits, and by having open-ended tasks available for kids who are ready to sail.

5. **DO YOU WANT PARENT VOLUNTEERS?**

With enough lead time, this can often be arranged. It can't happen at a moment's notice, however.

6. **IT'S A MATERIAL WORLD**

Together, you and the coordinator need to arrive at a materials budget. Be sure you specify materials you will need, being mindful of the bottom line. Decide who will select, pick-up, buy, order, store, etc. If you are paying for things out of pocket, ask what you will need to do to be reimbursed. The schools are audited frequently. Be sure to keep good records and receipts.

7. **HOUSEKEEPING**

Be on time, and have materials set up and ready for use when students arrive.

8. **SO HOW WILL YOU BE PAID?**

Communicate about your fee early on, and ask about the payment schedule. You will need to be able to address the following questions:

- What is your rate of pay for student contact time?
- What is your rate for planning time?
- What paperwork does the school or grant-making agency need you to fill out?
- What documentation is needed for reimbursed expenses?
- What is the payment schedule?
- Will the combined income paid by the district to the artist as independent contractor exceed the district's limit?
- Is a formal contract needed? (If you are already considered an employee of the district, you will probably fill out an extended time card and be paid as part of your existing contract.) To be paid for hours or for reimbursements you will need an IRS business identification number or a social security number.

9. **COMMUNICATION WITHIN THE BUILDING**

The most powerful people in the school building are the custodial engineers, the office staff, and the lunchroom workers--oh, and the administrators. Be sure that you meet each of these players before your work in the school begins; try to share your visit with them in some way intermittently. Then, when you need their help--and you will--your request will be more welcome. (Always ask permission rather than forgiveness.)

10. **MID COURSE CORRECTIONS**

Maintain an ongoing dialogue with your collaborating teacher to see if your plans need modification. Involve the coordinator if there are problems.

11. **DOCUMENTATION**

In ALL projects, keep samples or copies of student work.

In addition, choose from this menu of possibilities for other documentation:

- student and/or teacher and artist journals
- digital or analog video and/or photos
- audio interviews with students
- student portfolios.

12. **CULMINATING ACTIVITY**

This is a required element of the program, but it is not necessarily a finished product that needs to be shared. Lecture demonstrations, open final rehearsal, works in progress, informal sharing sessions are also possibilities. The idea is to show what the students are learning and to celebrate their authentic work for a real audience in the way that makes most sense. Time together with the students, their age levels, the time of year, will all factor into the decision you and the teacher(s) make as to the end products and their dissemination.

13. **ASSESSMENT & EVALUATION**

Participate in student assessment and evaluation of the project, using the methods you identified in your original planning.