

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES**

*Economic Development Division*

**m e m o r a n d u m**

**TO:** Public Arts Commission  
**FROM:** Pauline Tannos, Public Arts Intern  
**DATE:** December 4, 2014  
**SUBJECT: Prairie School Fine Arts Storytelling Project**

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**Update**

Prairie School contact Rusty Clevenger has submitted a proposal for a possible Arts in the Schools project, requesting a \$3,000 grant. The Arts in the Schools Subcommittee as well as the Public Arts Commission have discussed this matter at their meetings.

**Recommendation**

Staff recommends that the Public Arts Commission review the attached proposal and be prepared to discuss it after Mr. Clevenger's presentation at the December 9<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Prepared by:

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Pauline Tannos  
Public Arts Intern

Attachment A. Letter of Support from Urbana School District 116  
Attachment B. Prairie School Fine Arts Storytelling Proposal: Generations of Tradition and Stories



## Urbana School District 116

Jean F. Burkholder Administrative Service Center

Donald D. Owen, Ed.D.  
Superintendent of Schools

205 North Race Street  
Urbana, Illinois 61801

Ph) 217-384-3600

Fax) 217-337-4973

[www.usd116.org](http://www.usd116.org)

November 13, 2014

To Whom It May Concern,

Prairie Elementary School is appreciative of having various genres of Fine Arts presented to our student body population. We would appreciate the opportunity to receive an Urbana Arts Commission grant to provide Storytelling to our staff and students. Our Fine Arts Program at Prairie School includes: Visual Art, Music, Dance, & Drama. In Fine Arts, the students are able to use their creative voice, artistic ability, and dramatization to enhance the curriculum across disciplines. Prairie School students will be learning about South American & African storytelling throughout the 2014-2015 school year.

Fine Arts Integration of Storytelling through generations or traditions and stories will expand the curriculum being taught. Incorporating all of the arts contributes to making the learning rich and a meaningful one. Integrating storytelling provides a positive aspect of the arts; rediscovery of the values of arts through literature. Storytelling has an art that has mental, social and educational benefits on children. It has been proven that storytelling is an activity that can transfer emotions and feelings and also boost thinking capacity.

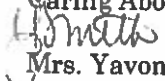
Below, you will find some statistics and facts in regards to Prairie Elementary School:

- Our student enrollment is 410.
- We have 6- Dual Language Classrooms (16- English only taught).
- Six languages are represented (French, English, Spanish, Cambodian, Kanjobal, & Japanese).
- Our school is 86% free/reduced income population.
- Our student population consists of: 26.8% White, 58.7% Black/African American, 3% Hispanic, .6% American Indian, & 10.5% Multiracial.
- Our school's mobility rate is about 25-28%.
- Our school has a 3-tiered model level of supports that provides interventions to all Prairie students who need academic, behavioral, and social supports.
- Our school's school wide programming is only able to accommodate some students, but not all students in need of individual instruction in literacy and mathematics are able to receive such service.

I am thankful for the opportunity to have additional presenters and presentations for Prairie Elementary School students that continues to provide academic support and enrichment, and social skills development and support. The families that attend events/assemblies at Prairie Elementary School have benefited immensely from a continuation of learning support.

We are so thankful for the continued support of the Urbana Arts Commission, and greatly look forward to building on our partnership. It is my hope that the continued support of additional funding to support the Fine Arts Program at Prairie School will better help us meet the needs of our students. Thank you for your consideration and time.

Caring About Kids,

  
Mrs. Yavonnda Smith, Principal

*Outstanding Schools in an Outstanding Community*

## **Prairie School Fine Arts Storytelling Proposal Generations of Tradition and Stories**

Students at Prairie school come from a wide variety of backgrounds, heritage, and traditions. This proposal shows how we would like to enrich the students' education experience through the arts by exposing them to the many celebratory and artistic aspects of storytelling from around the world. Fine Arts classes include Visual Art, Music, Dance, and Drama. We recognize that each Fine Arts area is important for the overall experience of creating a community atmosphere. Through each of these unique disciplines, Prairie students will be learning specifically about South American and African storytelling throughout the 2014-2015 Fine Arts Curriculum. Our student body includes a large number of students who come from low-income families in which experiences with the Fine Arts are limited. If our proposal is funded, we would be able to provide all students at Prairie Elementary with meaningful interactions with artists, storytellers, and instruments that would be otherwise unavailable. Our proposal is broken down by each discipline, even though instruction would be interwoven through cross-curricular instruction.

As part of our drama studies we will invite Storyteller and educator Kim Sheehan from the Spurlock Museum at the U of I to do interactive storytelling with all our students in Kindergarten through 5<sup>th</sup> grade. Kim will focus on stories from Africa. She will come to Prairie during the Jan 5<sup>th</sup>- Feb. 20<sup>th</sup> block and on April 30. During this time, she will do up to twelve 45-60 minute presentations. This will directly affect all 450 Prairie students. Students will use the information learned to reinvent a story in a modern setting that will be presented at our Annual Fine Arts Night.

In dance class Alicia Cross Engelhardt will direct a workshop on folk dancing from specific cultures. This will be for 5<sup>th</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> graders; approximately 120 students. Students will use the information learned during the dance workshop to perform for the school Fine Arts Assembly.

During our music classes, we will focus on the music and instruments of West Africa. We will read stories about the origin of the drum and learn the importance of percussion instruments from different African tribes. We will also learn the importance of community within our drumming circle. We will enhance our collection of African drums with the purchase of soprano, alto, and bass xylophones. These instruments will add the concept of pitch to our drumming circle. Students will use the knowledge gained from this experience to perform for the school during the Fine Arts Assembly. This purchase will directly affect all 450 Prairie students.

As part of our visual art studies Prairie School will host artist in residence, Langston Allston to share his own process of retelling folklore and myths with a modern setting to teach and help students create a mural that will be installed in the new Prairie Fine Arts Wing. Langston will directly work with approximately 120 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> grade students in order to design and create a mural composition that uses characters from mythology, folklore, and stories from Africa, Central and South America in a contemporary setting to represent the Fine Arts. Langston will talk to all 450 Prairie students about his artwork and answer questions during small class critiques. All students will work on their own projects inspired by Allston's work to retell stories from Africa, Central and South American in a contemporary setting. Students' work will be on display during the Annual Fine Arts Night.

At Prairie School, 60 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will go on a field trip to view Allston's work located in downtown Urbana. The 4<sup>th</sup> grade students will create lessons in connection with Allston's work that will be used to educate 75 Kindergarten students on the concept of storytelling in visual arts during a field trip to see Allston's work located in Downtown Urbana.

On May 14, Fine Arts teachers will host a Storytelling Through the Arts event at Prairie School. The students who have created dances and performances will present their work to the Prairie School community at this time. Students' work during their Fine Arts classes will be on display during performances, workshops and galleries shown throughout the school. Each student will have a piece of work on display that connects to the theme of storytelling in a modern setting. This event will potentially reach 450 students as well as their families.

Scope and Reach of the Project:

Approximately 450 students would be reached with Kim's program, and 120 with Alicia.

Approximately 450 students will be reached during the African drumming unit.

Approximately 150 students will be reached during the field trips to see Allston's work in downtown Urbana. Approximately 250 students will help create the mural.

Approximately 450 students will create artwork in connection to Allston's work.

Potentially 450 students plus their families will be reached during the Fine Arts Event on May 14.

This proposal will be a great way to teach students about the depth of artistry in their cultures and experience the joy of professional storytelling. It is also a great way to teach students to be curious about the many cultures surrounding them.

**Urbana Arts Commission Proposal Budget:**

Vendor	Item	Item #	item price	Number	Total
Kim Sheehan	Storytelling		\$50.00 for 3 sessions	4	\$200.00
Alica Cross Engelhardt	Workshop		\$50.00	2	\$100.00
Music 123	Soprano Xylophone		\$183.00	3	\$549.00
Music 123	Alto Xylophone		\$245.00	1	\$245.00
Music 123	Bass		\$479.00	1	\$479.00
Urbana School District Bus	Bus		\$100.00	2	\$200.00
Urbana Sub Line	Subs		\$80.00	2	\$160.00
Langston Allston	Mural Project		\$1067.00	1	\$1067.00