



ABC PROJECT

## Arts in Basic Curriculum

SC Arts  
Commission

SC Dept of  
Education

Winthrop  
University

# The Development Process to Become an ABC School

Thank you for your interest in becoming an ABC Certified School. ABC Certified Schools are unique in that arts education is not only appreciated but valued as integral to the school's vision of student development. Being an ABC School is a certification process, determined by a school's demonstrated, strategic commitments of practice. The South Carolina Arts Commission (SCAC) ABC Advancement Grant is to support ABC Certified Schools in their commitments.

The development process to become an ABC school consists of two initial steps with accompanying components. Each school's journey to ABC Certification is different. Therefore, the initial steps are important to determining the best plan for each school along with the order of the characteristic components of ABC School development.

## *Step 1*

### **Contact ABC Project**

Contact ABC Project to set up an initial meeting to discuss your school's current commitment to arts education.

There are several [SCAC funding opportunities](#) to support equitable access to quality arts education, ABC Certification (and subsequent ABC Advancement Grant) is only one. ABC Project's mission is to provide leadership to those who seek to increase student access to quality arts education. Leadership may take a variety of forms from supporting an individual teacher to coaching a team's coordinated efforts to provide an arts-rich learning environment. The initial conversation helps to determine where you, your school, and your community are in the process.

In preparation, ABC Project suggests all interested stakeholders read the [ABC School Certification Guidelines and Application document](#) before the scheduled meeting.

## *Step 2*

### **Determine Next Steps**

After the initial meeting with ABC Project and learning more about what ABC School Certification requires, school teams determine if they are "In Development" to become an ABC School, according to the

ABC Certification Continuum. Typically, schools that intend to apply for ABC School certification require 6 to 18 months to secure all commitments and application contents.

Regardless of whether or not a school is ready to apply for certification, ABC Project remains a resource partner. Schools in the process of developing an arts-rich learning environment and securing the community vision for an ABC School model will work with ABC Project to determine a unique set of next steps based on the development components listed below.

Each school's development process is unique, yet ABC Schools that have successfully sustained their commitments shared characteristic components which have been proven to be crucial to the process of developing an ABC School.

What follows are the shared components of ABC Schools Development Process. They are presented in the order most commonly recorded, however, should not be viewed as a linear, sequential checklist.

## Characteristic Components of ABC School Development

### *Component 1*

#### **Cultivate Support**

Build an awareness and commitment for arts education within the school community including:

- District and school administrators
- District and school arts educators
- School board members
- School or district grant writing committee
- Parents/guardians, members of family units
- PTA/PTO representative
- Classroom teachers

The strategies and actions used to build an awareness and commitment for arts education within your school community depends on the culture and processes in your school and district. Below are a few ideas to consider:

- Provide strategic Professional Development for staff in arts education
- Invite district and community to an arts event or performance
  - Provide opportunity for dialogue along with the event and/or performance
- Host an interactive arts experience at your school or in your community for parents/guardians, members of family units
- Highlight the arts happening at your school through social media
- Share the impact of arts education on your student population at a school board meeting
- Display student work and learning throughout your school
- Visit an ABC model school

- Foster student leadership through student ambassador groups and/or structured conversations with student representatives within your school

## *Component 2*

### **Identify and Engage Partners**

Cultivating support and engaging partners can happen simultaneously. As support is being cultivated, seize opportunities to engage with partners. However, we encourage schools to start small. Some examples from ABC Schools include, but are not limited to:

- A volunteer parent (or grandparent) facilitates a session during PTO/PTA meetings. Possibilities include:
  - Teaching a specific art technique/ providing a creative experience
  - Sharing cultural-specific art forms (style of music, fashion/costume; art style, etc.)
- Feature a student showcase
- Collaborate with a local/regional organization
  - Virtual or in person field trips
  - Guest speakers
  - Service learning projects
- Apply for [teacher-level support grants](#)
- Facilitate a creative learning experience for colleagues
  - Arts education as inclusive, differentiated learning—dispel fears and doubts
  - Reveal shared learning objectives and cognitive skills – breakdown silos
- Invite stakeholders to assist in the cultivation and development.
  - Recruit to serve on the strategic arts education planning committee

## *Component 3*

### **Form a Strategic Arts Education Planning Committee**

A diverse group of stakeholders ensures that multiple perspectives are heard when designing a shared vision. While there is no maximum or minimum, the following stakeholders should be represented:

- Arts and non-arts educators
- School administration
- Parent/guardian
- Student
- Community Stakeholder

The role of this diverse group of stakeholders is to serve as the advisory board at an ABC school. The group is also the guiding committee who meet on a regular basis to review and revise the school's arts education strategic plan. Some ABC schools choose to combine this group with an already existing committee, such as the School Improvement Council or the Parent/Teacher Organization, in order to better align efforts towards overall strategic goals of the school.

## *Component 4*

### **Conduct Asset and Needs Analysis**

Analyzing the quality and effectiveness of your overall school arts program is an important step in determining strengths and weaknesses. Below are a few examples of evaluative methods:

- Analysis of Assets
  - In preparation for designing a vision for a school's future, it is important to determine what resources and assets are currently available and what needs exist.
    - What arts instruction are currently available? What would you like to offer in the future?
    - What capital equipment do you currently have? What aspects of arts instruction are not possible due to lack of equipment? What capital investments are needed for a comprehensive curriculum?
    - What is the condition of your current facilities? What facility upgrades are necessary to ensure quality instruction of your current art programs? What facilities additions, modifications or renovations would be necessary to add new programs?
    - What cultural and arts organizations are within your community? What businesses or other community resources may be connected to supporting your school's art programs?
    - Make a list of creatives in your community! Be sure to include both professional artists, commercial arts and industries, traditional/folk artists as well as community members who still participate in the arts (community theatre, church choir, etc.)
- Stakeholder Survey
  - You may decide to survey your community (parents/guardians, students, staff) to assess the design and implementation of your overall arts programming.
- SWOT Analysis. Determine the strengths, weakness, opportunities, and threats through a series of reflective questions
- Here are some useful resources for consideration:
  - <https://www.abcprojectsc.com/overview/documents-links/>
    - Check out the Opportunity to Learn Surveys for each art area and Essential Elements for Arts Infusion Programming.
  - <https://youtharts.artsusa.org/evaluation/approach.html>
  - [https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC\\_05.htm](https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMC_05.htm)

## *Component 5*

### **Develop an Arts Education Strategic Plan**

Schools may choose to attend a sponsored strategic planning event, such as South Carolina Department of Education's (SCDE) Strategic Arts Planning Institute offered in the summer, ABC Project's Arts Education Leadership Institute (AELI) in July, or contract a strategic planning facilitator for their school.

An arts education strategic plan:

- Outlines a comprehensive standards based arts education program tailored to the school population and needs.
  - Identifies school budgetary decisions necessary to support a commitment to arts education
  - States the desired timeline to build arts programming and personnel/provider, adding disciplines and or topics not currently taught This can be achieved in a variety of ways from residencies, afterschool programs, part-time/shared faculty, with a goal to work up to a full-time employee.
  - Identifies professional learning needs to ensure discipline-specific best practices and innovation.
  - States the on-going supplies and materials required as well as long-term capital investments.
- Serves as a guide toward the development and implementation of a quality arts education program.
- Should meet the needs of all students at all levels of the instructional process.
  - The plan should be grounded in the school's overall educational philosophy and should be consistent with the primary mission of the district and school.
  - may outline specific investments in special needs of specific student subpopulations
- For more information, check out the [Arts Education Strategic Planning Manual](#), located under Resources on our webpage.

## *Component 6*

### **Submit Strategic Plan for feedback and approval**

Submit the five year Arts Education Strategic Plan to the school community for feedback and approval.

Consider the various stakeholders and opportunities:

- faculty and staff meetings
- PTO/PTA meetings
- Open House
- Local Business and Community arts organizations
- District Administration

Depending on the amount and type of feedback, the approval process may require revision(s). This is a crucial component for community investment and longevity of commitments.

## *Component 7*

### **Implement Strategic Plan and Convene the Committee**

A plan requires the contribution of many stakeholders. Once the strategic plan has been created, it is the role and responsibility of the governing stakeholder group to implement the plan with fidelity. Convene the Strategic Arts Education Planning Committee at least quarterly to review what actions have or have not been taken, advocate for actions not yet taken, and uphold the support needed to implement the plan.

In general, the basic responsibilities of the Committee includes:

- Meet 3 times a year (at least)
- Determine/Review action steps to achieve strategic goals based on funding and other factors (such as personnel, district policy, or special project, opportunity or circumstance)
- Delegate tasks to members such as advocacy, press releases, parent involvement, school/district initiatives
- Maintain an attendance roster
- Record minutes from each of the meetings
- Here are some tools used by ABC Schools:
  - [Sample Meeting Template](#)
  - [Sample Sign in Sheet](#)

## *Component 8*

### **Embrace documentation and data analysis**

Take on accountability with creativity! SC accountability measures are required, so avoiding or ignoring the influence of accountability equates to a tenuous commitment and vulnerability to the next “hot topic initiative.”

Your strategic plan includes indicators of success, what data should you collect and analyze to determine if success indicator was achieved? Keep an open mind about what constitutes data and how to collect it. Consider the factors that influence student attendance, academic achievement, and the climate of a campus. Document actions taken, collect the data and discover how those actions influenced measures of accountability.

Consider accessibility to the strategic plan amongst your stakeholders. Some ABC schools utilize document sharing through programs such as Google Drive, OneDrive, or Dropbox for data collection.

## *Component 9*

### **Celebrate and Advocate**

Make a concerted effort to celebrate accomplishments, even the small ones. Celebrations help inform your community of how learning in and through the arts supports student skill development and provides additional pathways for student achievement. An informed community is a supportive one – consider celebrations a form of advocacy. Celebrations can take many forms, but here are a few examples from ABC Schools

- Press releases/ news articles
- Social media posts
- Video testimonials from student, parent, or teacher.
- Events (both on and off campus)

## *Component 10*

### **Expand your community and learn from others**

The ABC Network is a community of individuals and organizations that share ABC Project’s vision that all SC students deserve access to quality arts education. There are several ways to interact and learn from the community.

- The ABC mobile app
- Visit ABC Schools
- Partner with other ABC Schools
- Follow ABC social media accounts
- Attend ABC-sponsored programs and professional learning opportunities

## *Component 11*

### **Persevere**

Remind yourself and your team of the long-term vision. Struggles and challenges should be expected. It is the vision that is unwavering. What is most important to any school’s process is to reflect and learn from challenges and unanticipated struggles. A strategic plan is just that – a plan. Be sure to convene your strategic arts education planning committee at the end of the year or before the next academic year to review the plan and make necessary adjustments (edits). Additionally, discuss potential future challenges and determine a strategy to maintain momentum towards implementation and growth.