

## Planning for Successful Workshop & Residency Experiences

*Included in this document is important information that will help ensure teachers and students have a well-organized, engaging, educational VocalEssence WITNESS Workshop experience with a VocalEssence Teaching Artist.*

*Successful workshop and residency experiences are defined by a high level of commitment on the part of each constituent involved in the process from the participating school teachers and staff, the VocalEssence Teaching Artist, and VocalEssence. Here is additional information on how this commitment works in relationship to*

### **Planning and Communication:**

#### **What is the purpose of the pre-workshop planning meeting? What exactly are we planning?**

- Workshop subject matter
- What lessons or activities will be the focus of the workshop activity; what teachers will prepare in advance of the Teaching Artist's arrival; determine any prescribed pre-workshop activities by the Teaching Artist
- Outline and articulate learning goals for each workshop or residency day
- Classroom management: what is the school's policy on managing student behavior? In general, it is the duty of the classroom teacher or specialist to monitor student behavior and intervene if any issues arise; **it is not the job of the guest Teaching Artist to manage student behavior.**

#### **Should all participating teachers from a school be involved in the planning process? Why?**

- Absolutely, yes. This helps to avoid confusion around expectations and goals of the workshops. It also helps each teacher to build a rapport with the Teaching Artist, so they can work together in the moment to turn any obstacles into opportunities for success.
- Planning meetings will be scheduled during a common prep time during the school day, or before/after school; it is imperative that **all** participating classroom teachers and specialists be involved and present during the planning meeting.
- This is also a great opportunity to invite your principal to stop by and greet the Teaching Artist; this will help your principal see what the VocalEssence WITNESS School Program is all about, and to know how involved their faculty are in the process.

#### **How important is it for Teachers to follow through on the pre-workshop activities?**

- It is critical to the spirit of the program that students are engaged in thoughtful activities prior to the Teaching Artist's arrival. It has not been as successful when the Teaching Artist arrives to a classroom, and the students have not been adequately prepared to know who the Teaching Artist is, why they are there as a guest artist, or why students are learning about the subject matter being presented in the workshops.

#### **How important is it for Teaching Artists to follow through on agreed upon goals and workshop outline?**

- Very important. At VocalEssence, staff and Teaching Artists strive to be accountable for delivering on the expectations that were established during the planning process.

**Do VocalEssence WITNESS Workshops and Residencies *have to focus only on the VocalEssence WITNESS theme?***

- Yes. The VocalEssence WITNESS School Program components (Curriculum, Young People's Concert attendance and Teaching Artist Workshops/Residencies) all function in tandem with one another for the purpose of enriching student learning on a defined subject matter through a variety of experiences and modes of learning. The focus of the workshops is to be solely that of the annual VocalEssence WITNESS program theme (*Blooming with Creativity for 2019-2020*).
- If your school is interested in engaging the Teaching Artist in additional workshops related to other subject matter, those workshops can be scheduled directly with the Teaching Artist, at a rate negotiated between the artist and school. Schools are responsible for paying for workshops or residencies that center around non-WITNESS themed subject matter, or fall outside of the two days that are included in your ticket purchase.

**What is the procedure for changing focus of workshops?**

- The Teaching Artist will communicate the proposed change **in advance** of the first workshop day. If a change is requested by the school teachers, that needs to be communicated to the Teaching Artist well in advance of the first workshop day to allow them adequate preparation time.

**Besides the activity and content of the workshops, what other topics should be covered in the planning process?**

- Checking in to the school (special entry instructions, visitor name badge, etc.)
- Work space/classroom set-up and tour of facilities that will be used during workshops
- Identifying any materials needed from school for specific workshop activities (i.e. use of audio/video equipment, use of a white board or flip chart)
- Identifying any materials the Teaching Artist will bring (i.e. audio/visual materials, flip charts, handouts for students, instruments, or other supplies)
- Upon confirming the planning meeting date, liaisons Rob Graham and Amanda Timmer will send via e-mail a checklist that can be used by teachers and teaching artists during the planning meeting, to ensure all bases are covered, and no important items get forgotten.

**What is the Teacher's role during the workshop and residency experiences?**

- To be active participants in the process alongside the students (i.e. no grading papers or checking e-mail during the workshop);
- To model engaged and enthusiastic participation and attention to the Teaching Artist
- To observe and mitigate any student interruptions to the flow of the workshop or to the Teaching Artists' leadership; **is not the job of the guest Teaching Artist to manage student behavior.**

**So, Teachers should be in the room for the entire workshop experience?**

- Absolutely! It is the classroom teacher's responsibility to take the lead on issues related to management, disruption, and non-participation of students.
- Teachers know school policies related to management and can follow that protocol when seeking to turn obstacles into successes. These policies can, and should, be discussed during the planning meeting.

## What is ideal method and level of communication between school teachers and VocalEssence Teaching Artists?

- In the interest of streamlining the communication and scheduling process, we are implementing a new system of communication that places more accountability on both the Teaching Artist and the primary contact person to successfully schedule the planning meeting and workshop/residency dates.
- VocalEssence Education Staff members Rob Graham and Amanda Timmer will establish initial communication by sending an e-mail to the Teaching Artist and the primary school contact; This initial e-mail will contain the workshop request information provided by the teacher on the VocalEssence WITNESS Workshop or Residency Request Form.
- After this initial connection has been established between the Teaching Artist and primary contact, it is then the responsibility of the Teaching Artist and primary contact to continue communication directly to schedule the planning meeting date and time, all workshop or residency dates, and the exact class schedule for each workshop or residency day. New this year: We are asking that for every communication, that Rob Graham (robert@vocalessence.org) be CC'd on the e-mail exchanges, so he can be aware of all program-related activity happening at each school, and intervene if there are any challenges needing to be addressed. It is important that Rob be aware of the exact class schedule and workshop/planning meeting dates for record-keeping purposes, and to ensure Teaching Artists are compensated for their time, in a timely fashion.

## Elements of a successful VocalEssence WITNESS Workshop or Residency

- **Commitment:** One of first elements to a successful experience is commitment by all participating teachers, administrators, and the VocalEssence Teaching Artists. VocalEssence will empower schools with as many resources necessary to ensure an engaging, well-organized, successful VocalEssence WITNESS experience for all participating students.
- **Enthusiasm:** By demonstrating enthusiasm about the VocalEssence WITNESS program, the annual theme and all program activities, teachers will inspire students to dive into learning and maintain a high level of engagement in all aspects of the program. This will be matched by the high level of enthusiasm and excitement by the visiting Teaching Artists.
- **Organization and Preparation:** During the scheduling process, it will be important that the planning meeting is scheduled at a time when all participating teachers can be present. Following the planning session, teachers will complete lesson plans and activities from the VocalEssence WITNESS Teacher Resource Guide to jumpstart student learning and to adequately prepare them for more experiential learning during their time with the visiting Teaching Artist. In preparation for attending the VocalEssence WITNESS Young People's Concert, teachers will supply each student with a copy of the "What to Expect at the Young People's Concert" handout on page 14-15 of the Teacher Resource Guide. It will be important to reinforce student behavioral expectations and concert etiquette guidelines, as well as a reminder of what potential consequences may be enforced by the school for poor behavior at the concert.