

PLANNING MEETING GUIDE

Planning for Successful Workshop & Residency Experiences

*The following list of discussion topics are designed to help facilitate the planning meeting discussion, and will help ensure teachers and Teaching Artists are prepared for a well-organized, engaging VocalEssence WITNESS Workshop experience for students. Successful workshop and residency experiences are defined by a high level of **commitment** on the part of participating school teachers and staff, the VocalEssence Teaching Artist, and VocalEssence staff.*

DIRECTIONS: Use the following topics and bullet points to help guide your planning meeting discussion and to make sure all bases are covered. After discussing each of the following topics and bullet points within, the team will then complete the **PLANNING MEETING CHECKLIST** as a group. The Primary Contact teacher and Teaching Artist will sign and return the signed copy to Rob Graham at robert@vocalessence.org.

☐ GREETING AND INTRODUCTIONS:

- Take a few minutes to get acquainted with one another. Everyone share your name, Teaching Artists share a bit about yourself and career, and teachers share your positions [what grade you teach, role at school, etc.]
- **Teaching Artists**, share what name you would like to be called by students and **Teachers**, how you would like to be addressed (i.e. Ms./Mr., etc.)
- **It is very important** that all participating classroom teachers and specialists participate in the planning process. If someone was not able to be here today, please discuss a plan of action to bring that teacher up to speed and on the same page as the rest of the team.

☐ SHARED GOALS AND ASPIRATIONS:

- **Teachers**, share the overarching hopes and aspirations you have for your students through this workshop/residency experience. What do you hope your students will learn or gain from working with the Teaching Artist?
- **Teaching Artists**, share your goals with the teachers, what you hope students will learn and gain from their experience with you. Try to find some synergy and shared understanding with the teachers.

☐ DAILY WORKSHOP PLANS:

- **Teaching Artists**, share with teachers what activities you plan to do with each class, each day, and what you hope students will learn, gain or take away from their participation in those activities.
- **Teachers**, ask clarifying questions and make sure everyone is on the same page with the class schedule and plan for each workshop day.

☐ PREPARING WORKSHOP SPACE, RESOURCES & EQUIPMENT:

- **Teaching Artists**, share your ideal set-up of the space that your workshops will be taking place in. If you are moving from classroom to classroom, please share what your hopes are for each teacher's classroom set-up.

- **Dance and Movement teaching artists:** ask if it is possible to use a larger space, i.e. gymnasium or other large open area free of desks and chairs.
- **Teaching Artists,** share below what equipment or resources you would like to request using from the school (i.e. white board/markers, flip chart/easel, projector w/computer hook-up, audio-visual equipment or stereo, scratch paper and writing utensils, etc.) Also, please share with the teachers what resources you will be bringing into the classroom, if any, and if you will need assistance hauling anything to the workshop space.
- **Teachers,** please share what limitations there are, if any, in using various workshop spaces.
- **Teachers,** share whether any of the equipment or resources requested by the Teaching Artist are not possible to provide, so that we can make other arrangements. Please also let the Teaching Artist know if they need to bring their own cords for A/V equipment (i.e. an auxiliary cord to plug a phone into, an adapter to hook up a laptop or MacBook to the TV or projector, etc.)
- **Teaching Artists,** let teachers know if you prefer students wear more comfortable clothing on workshop days, especially if they will be doing dance and movement.

☐ **PRE-WORKSHOP PREPARATION:**

- **Teachers,** prepare your students for the Teaching Artist visit by sharing that they are participating in a special program called WITNESS, a program of an organization called VocalEssence that celebrates the contributions of African Americans to the arts and to our shared American cultural heritage, and that a special guest Teaching Artist will be coming at least two days to engage them in a workshop. They will learn about the idea of “Reawakening Love” in our society, the importance of embracing peace, and how we can all play a role in creating a more loving, understanding community together. Share the name of the Teaching Artist that will be coming and what they specialize in (dancer and choreographer, a composer, a well known actor and jazz singer, etc.) Help prepare and excite students for their visit!
- **Teaching Artists,** let the teachers know if you have any specific things you want them to share about you with their students prior to your visit.
- **Teaching Artists,** if you have any specific activities you would like to ask teachers to do with their students before your first workshop day, please give them any instructions and resources that they may need to prepare.

☐ **COMMUNICATING CHANGES TO WORKSHOP PLANS:**

- **IF** there need to be any changes made to agreed-upon workshop plans between the planning meeting and the first workshop day, teachers and the Teaching Artist must communicate any changes to one another well in advance of the first workshop day. **Please do not spring any last-minute changes on one another. Communication with advance notice is key!**
- Be sure you share contact information with each other. It is the job of the primary contact teacher to be sure their colleagues are all aware of any changes and a part of that communication stream.

☐ **DO WORKSHOPS HAVE TO CENTER AROUND THE WITNESS THEME?**

- Yes, WITNESS Workshops are to be centered around this year’s theme of “Reawakening Love” in our communities. They are not intended as a time for the Teaching Artist to prepare a song for your students for their upcoming concert, or to teach subject matter unrelated to the WITNESS theme. If a teacher would like to engage that Teaching Artist in a separate experience around other subject matter, that is certainly possible for an additional fee to the school.
- **Teachers,** if you are interested in engaging a VocalEssence Teaching Artist in other ways at your school, please contact Rob Graham of VocalEssence and he will be happy to chat with you about possibilities!

☐ **TEACHER INVOLVEMENT & CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT:**

- **Teachers**, it is imperative that you not only stay physically present in the classroom during the workshops while the Teaching Artist is working with your students, but also to **PARTICIPATE AND STAY ACTIVELY ENGAGED**. Show your students how cool this is and that everyone in the room can participate!
- **Teachers**, please assure the Teaching Artist that you will not check email, grade papers or otherwise not be engaged in the workshop activity while the Teaching Artist is in your classroom.
- **Teachers**, share with the Teaching Artist what your school's policies and protocols are on managing student behavior, especially when students demonstrate bad behavior. It is not the job of the Teaching Artist to discipline students. **Together, discuss a plan** on how you will work to manage this, should a situation arise where a student is being disrespectful, or is disrupting the workshop.

☐ **INVITE YOUR ADMINISTRATORS!**

- **Teachers**, please invite your principals and administrators to stop by your classes and say hello! The Teaching Artists love seeing actively involved administrators, and it is important they are acknowledged in front of students as being special guests to the school community. Please send them the workshop dates and encourage them to stop by, or to stay and participate!

☐ **PUBLIC PRESENTATION, RECORDINGS AND INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY:**

- **Teachers**, are you hoping that any of the content created during the workshops can be used in a concert, assembly or other program at your school? If so, it is important things to discuss this with the Teaching Artist, and may require the school to pay for additional days of preparation or rehearsal with the Teaching Artist.
- **Teaching Artists**, share that your work is meant to be exclusive to that workshop experience. If the teachers would like you to come back or to be more involved in a culminating performance or event, please ask them what their vision is, and determine what additional time, if any, would be needed of you at the school. Then, contact VocalEssence to discuss plans and fees for your additional time.

☐ **WALK THRU!** At the end of the meeting, Take a brief walk-through of the workshop space(s) that will be used so that the Teaching Artist can begin visualizing that set-up and how to best prepare for their workshop activities.

After doing a walk-through of the workshop spaces, please complete the accompanying PLANNING MEETING CHECKLIST document as a group and follow the instructions on signing and returning it to VocalEssence.

Thank you, and have a great WITNESS Workshop experience!