AIA Minnesota Youth Outreach and Pipeline Development Program Review

AIA Minnesota staff intend to undertake an objective and thorough evaluation and analysis of the work we have done related to youth outreach and pipeline development. Through such a review we hope to better understand what work has been done in the past and is being done now, both within the organization and outside of it in the broader community.

With that understanding, we hope to identify where we can support, enrich, or complement work already being done. In instances where we can enrich or complement existing work, we will take from and build upon the learnings and successes of the AIA Minnesota Architecture in the Schools Committee's past work.

We also aim to better understand the outcomes of our engagements with youth to-date. We will investigate the depth and breadth of impact achieved by our previous engagements and efforts. Additionally, we need to understand *where* our engagements have had impact within the community. More specifically, are we reaching students who would normally not be exposed to architecture? Doing so is important to our goal of diversifying the future workforce of our profession.

Heeding the call to take bold, meaningful action to address climate change, we hope to learn more about whether architecture-related programming for youth currently includes information about how the built environment can positively mitigate the effects of climate change by understanding what exists now and what may be needed in this realm.

In addition to engaging with youth to spark interest in the built environment and a future career in architecture, our work must also include a closer look at the existing paths into the profession and whether there are barriers that can be cleared away or alternative paths that should be opened up. To this end, it is important to examine our existing relationships to academic institutions and identify areas where we have power and resources to make change, when change is called for.

Draft Goals

Following are goals we believe should drive AIA Minnesota's future work of youth outreach and pipeline development. We acknowledge that these goals may be refined as we continue our research and analysis.

1. Increase the number of youth from under-represented populations who consider architecture as a career
2. Foster a sense of agency for youth related to their influence over shaping the built environment

3. Increase awareness of the idea that decisions of the past (e.g., redlining, racial covenants, discriminatory lending) are connected to the built environment of today and tomorrow
4. Grow recognition of the ways that the built environment can positively impact climate change
5. Foster the understanding of architecture as inherently collaborative (within the profession, within the building industry, and within community)

Potential Action Items

Items are listed according to their importance in grounding us in a holistic perspective.

1. Report to the Board of Directors regularly and invite board members' perspectives on the research and analysis we are conducting

2. Looking more broadly beyond the existing ecosystem, perform primary and secondary research— including with community organizations—to learn more about these questions:
   a. What do we think are the barriers to entry into this profession? Are these assumptions true for young people in our marketplace?
   b. What barriers might we be missing or unaware of?
   c. What changes might we have the power/resources to impact?

3. Poll AIA Minnesota members to find out what they are doing in schools that we may not know about.

4. Talk to others doing this work in our community to gain insight about:
   a. What can we do to support your work?
   b. Are there ways we can partner with you?
   c. What is challenging about your work? What is successful?

5. Engage the Equity Council and COTE to understand better what opportunities may exist for youth that we are unaware of.

6. Reach out to educators with whom we have a relationship to find out:
   a. Can we help? If so, what help can we provide?
   b. How can we serve as a resource?

7. Convene volunteer members who were most recently involved with the Architecture in the Schools Committee and programming to learn more about:
   a. What motivates you to be involved with this work?
   b. What made it difficult for you to be involved in this work?
   c. What was most enjoyable about your involvement in this work?

d. How do you see yourself engaging with this work in the future?

Existing Programming and Efforts

Over the past twenty years, most engagements undertaken by the Architecture in the Schools Committee can be characterized as classroom visits where volunteers interact in a classroom environment with students at the request of educators. These engagements were either one-time engagements, where architects spoke about their careers or led students in an activity to teach a foundational concept of architecture, or multiple sessions, where architects led students through a more complex design exercise.

Within the past 3-4 years educators have not requested activity-based engagements but instead have favored career presentations, often asking for a specific identity (women architects, architects of color) to speak with a student group of similar identity.

Outside of work done by the Architecture in the Schools Committee, many AIA Minnesota members have done classroom visits independently. Frequently these engagements come about through an architect's child being enrolled at the school. However, when the child is no longer a student at the school, the relationship with that educator or institution ceases.

In the Twin Cities urban core, AIA Minnesota staff and committee members have made headway in developing a relationship at the district level in the Minneapolis Public Schools system. However, similar relationships with the St. Paul Public School District and in the Duluth Public Schools has been challenging. While preliminary conversations have occurred, eventually they have xcgbstalled, and progress has halted.

in addition to evaluating the success and relevance of our own programming and efforts, we believe it is important to understand the nature of current programming and efforts that exist outside of AIA Minnesota to determine how we can best support, complement, or enhance that programming.

AIA Minnesota staff and Architecture in the Schools Committee efforts include:
- **Classroom engagements** (one-time engagement or multi-session)
  Examples: *Marcy Open School, Providence Academy, Perpich Center for the Arts, Hale School, Fair School Crystal*
- **Career presentations** (one time, sixty minutes or less, single perspective presented)
  Examples: *AchieveMpls career fairs, Wayzata High School, White Bear Lake High School, MPS STEM Expo, Girls & Engineering Day at Glacier Hills Elementary in Eagan*
- **Afterschool or summer programming** (multiple sessions)
  Examples: *Minneapolis Public Schools GEMS & GISE program, Arts on the River Summer Camp, Girl Scouts workshops*

- **Community Engagements** (single day, booth-style engagement)
  Examples: *STEM Day at the State Fair, Mill City Museum STEM Day, Open Streets events, Highland Fest*

Programming and efforts led by AIA Minnesota members and others within the community include:
- Classroom engagements – lots of members with a connection to a classroom
- RSP collaboration with Summit Academy – The Design Studio
- Cuningham collaboration with Fair School Downtown
- STEP UP internships
- Camp See (hosted by Urban Design Perspectives)
- JXTA's Environmental Design Lab (apprenticeship program)
- University of MN's Design Summer Camp (led by Abimbola Asojo)
- Weisman Art Museum's Teen Architecture Workshop
- AoA MSP NOMA DesignSHOP
- ACE Mentorship program
- Cheryl Fosdick Middle School architecture unit in Duluth
- Outside the Box program (led by Tiersa Wodash)
- Hack the Gap
- Minneapolis Parks Board Design Camp (led by Paul Bauknight)

Collaborations and Partnerships

We believe that a critical factor in diversifying the profession's future workforce is working to remove barriers to the profession and identifying alternative paths. We also need to work with organizations who already have established relationships with under-represented youth populations so we can potentially partner with them to engage their participants in architecture-related programming.

List of organizations to potentially deepen relationships with:
- Minneapolis College – Architectural Technologies program
- Dakota County Technical College
- STEP UP
- Dunwoody College
- Hennepin Technical College
- University of Minnesota
- North Dakota State University

List of organizations to potentially explore relationships with:
- MIGIZI
- Big Brothers Big Sisters
- St. Paul's Right Track Youth Employment Center

- University of Colorado-Denver
- ARTS-Us
- Mia
- Northside STEM

Shaping the Identity of the Architect

Public perception of an architect's skills has long been focused on aptitudes in art (drawing, sketching, creativity) and mathematics. As educators and guidance counselors guide their students toward careers that match their skills and strengths, this perception may prove to narrow the pool of students they guide toward a career in architecture.

We know that there are, in fact, many more aptitudes than just math and art skills that contribute to being successful in the architecture profession. Qualities such as critical thinking, collaborativeness, problem-solving, curiosity, and empathy are a few. It is important that we help educators and others with influence over youth to gain an understanding of architecture professionals that is more nuanced, multi-dimensional, and realistic. Those who may be positioned to influence students in their future careers include:

- PreK-12 teachers and guidance counselors who identify a student with aptitude for becoming an architect
- Parents and caregivers
- Mentors or community mentors
- Afterschool and summer program leaders

We believe it will be necessary to re-educate these individuals about what skills and qualities make for success in the architecture profession through conversation, dialogue, and targeted messaging.