

AIA Minnesota Youth Outreach and Pipeline Development Program Review: Update to the Board of Directors

December 9, 2022

Since our last update to the board of directors in June 2022, the staff and member team doing the work of evaluating our youth outreach efforts has turned to querying educators and those at institutions and organizations where AIA Minnesota has a relationship to find out what kinds of partnerships and engagements are most effective.

In late August we contacted 45 educators, program directors, and other contacts who have opted in to receive information about our youth outreach opportunities. Many on this list were introduced to AIA Minnesota through our past six years of STEM Day at the Minnesota State Fair engagements.

The questions posed to this group via email included:

1. What is the age group/grade level you teach?
2. What motivates you to reach out for an architecture engagement (STEM/STEAM Day, architect classroom visit, design activity)? What makes you hesitate or keeps you from reaching out?
3. How can architecture engagements work better alongside your curriculum?
4. What are some of the positive aspects of partnering with AIA MN for architecture engagements? What are challenges? How can we better assist in incorporating the work they do into your lesson plans?
5. What has been the most impactful outcome from an architecture engagement?

Of those contacted, four responses were received. Respondents included a boy scout program leader, a college prep program director, a community recreation program director, and a program coordinator servicing elementary and high school students.

Feedback indicated that engagements that expose youth to the possibilities of a future career in the architecture industry is most needed, and that a format offering a combination of hands-on activity and informational presentation is most effective for elementary and high school aged audiences.

During the past four months staff have also had conversations with leaders at Dunwoody College of Technology, the Kitty Anderson Youth Science Center at the Science Museum of Minnesota, and CommunityConnect Academy at Patrick Henry High School (Minneapolis).

Each of these organization engages with historically marginalized youth populations within the Twin Cities and provides them with supports necessary to overcome barriers to professions that have previously been largely closed to non-white individuals. Each is interested in forging partnerships with AIA Minnesota to strengthen the exposure their students receive to the

profession of architecture and design.

Year-End Summary

Since February 2022, our team of AIA Minnesota staff (PaviElle French, Angie McKinley, Mary-Margaret Zindren) and one member volunteer (Nicole Bauknight, Assoc. AIA, NOMA) has undertaken a great deal of work to evaluate the work performed to this point and determine what work is ours to do in the future. We have accomplished a great deal, including:

- Taking inventory of the work and sweat equity of the youth outreach efforts that AIA Minnesota staff and volunteers have performed in the past.
- Identifying five goals that should drive future youth outreach work at AIA Minnesota and categorizing the type of youth outreach work there is to be done
- Developing action items that led us through a methodical process of reviewing, evaluating, researching, and asking for input about our past youth outreach efforts
- Identifying current partners in this work as well as partners with whom we might engage in the future
- Soliciting feedback from volunteers who have been involved in youth outreach efforts to date to learn about what has been challenging, what has been successful, and how we can most effectively engage them to maximize impact to audiences with whom we engage
- Soliciting feedback from educator and program leaders who work with youth to learn more about their needs, the challenges they face, and how we can best partner with them in the future

As we enter 2023, our team plans to synthesize the feedback, research, and evaluation from the past year and further refine the goals we identified at the start of this work, informed by the learnings we have gained. We will develop a series of recommendations that can serve as a blueprint for how youth outreach can be done in the future, considering the current environment, needs, and resources at our disposal. We hope the Architecture in the Schools committee can begin to convene regularly again at some point in 2023.