

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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### WHY QUALITY? WHY NOW?

In recent years, Chicago has made great strides in expanding arts access within the Chicago Public Schools (CPS), thanks to collaborative efforts among CPS, the arts and arts education sectors, Ingenuity, philanthropic and cultural leaders, and the public at large. The individuals and organizations involved in this effort share a commitment to providing an equitable arts education to all youth in Chicago. Equity requires both access and quality. Now that access efforts are well under way, it is time to turn to quality—to understand what quality is, what it requires, and what it will take to make sure all students have access not just to arts education but to *quality* arts education, thus achieving our common goal of equity.

Ingenuity launched the Quality Initiative in November 2015 to define, assess, and enhance quality in arts education. This report explains the work of Phase One of the Quality Initiative, presenting insights from the 22 quality conversations conducted from January-July 2016. The second phase of the Quality Initiative is planned for October 2016-July 2017 and is discussed further on pages 54-58 of this report.

We begin with an introduction to the Quality Initiative as a whole. We then interpret the data with respect to the Lenses of Quality developed in *The Qualities of Quality*, a landmark report that catalyzed significant national interest in researching and supporting quality in arts education! The Five Lenses analysis helps us to understand where Chicago stands with respect to national expert perspectives on quality. We next interpret the data with respect to existing measures of professional educator practice, which helps us to understand the ways in which arts partners' perspectives on quality teaching and learning align with research-based components of instruction. Finally, we offer a fuller interpretation of the uniquely Chicago understandings of quality that surfaced in the conversations, which lays the groundwork for our Values of Quality, Ecosystem, and next steps.

Such conversations made clear that this community shares core values such as student-centered and student-driven teaching and learning; reciprocal relationships with students, families, schools, and neighborhood community members; the embrace of diversity; and many more described in this report. This philosophical unity is a major asset as we move forward in working toward quality.

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The quality conversations also clarified the work we have yet to do and the substantial gap that exists between our ideals and reality.

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Photo by Sara Pooley, courtesy of UChicago Arts + Public Life and ASM.

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Participants in every conversation mentioned the need for more resources—material, human, financial—to ensure equity across the system. Teaching artists and partner organizations are hungry for increased collaboration and communication with schools and classroom teachers, students and their parents, funders and cultural leaders, and with each other. All stakeholders need tools to help clarify their expectations of each other and build long-lasting, mutually beneficial relationships. Further, though members of the arts education community hold many values and priorities in common, some of these values—such as embracing diversity or teaching effectively to all types of learners—need more conversation and research to be put into practice across the system.

Chicago’s arts education community is united in its conviction that quality is both a component and result of an equitable arts education. This community’s shared set of values is crucial to creating equity of quality in practice, moving from conversation to action.

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The quality conversations articulated a vision for quality; we have work yet to do to understand how this vision is or is not currently enacted in practice.

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Thank you for your insights thus far. We look forward to continuing this work together.



Photo courtesy of Changing Worlds.