



CREATIVE ALLIANCE  
M I L W A U K E E

**THE ROLE of CREATIVE EDUCATION in  
PREPARING TOMORROW'S TALENT**

Grant Report Submitted to



Prepared by  
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**Report to Northwestern Mutual Foundation**  
**THE ROLE of CREATIVE EDUCATION in PREPARING TOMORROW'S TALENT**  
**March 5, 2012**

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

**Project Focus**

Creative Alliance Milwaukee believes that arts education is critical to developing creativity skills necessary for leadership in today's global environment. It is widely recognized that after decades of research on the positive impact of arts education on student development, support for arts education has dwindled not advanced. To that end, the Creative Alliance Milwaukee suggested that a new approach – a re-frame from 'arts education' to 'creative education' be considered and explored, along with an awareness campaign supporting creative education. Creative Education would include a multi-sensory disciplined study of all of the arts, design, and new media technologies.

**Key Findings and Conclusions**

**Key Findings**

- ❖ Creativity skills are increasingly identified as the top criterion for business leadership success in today's complex global environment.
  - The 2010 IBM global CEO study "Capitalizing on Complexity" found that *creativity* was selected as the most crucial factor for future success.
  - Conference Board research, *Ready to Innovate* in 2008 shows that there are some significant disconnects between the creative skills schools believe they are offering in student preparation with the needs of the employer.
  - The human resources executives surveyed revealed that creativity is a critical skill today, yet the majority of them have no systemic way of assessing it in new hires or developing it within their talent base.
- ❖ The definition of creative education from the Project Advisory Council is a good start to guiding curriculum development focused on creativity skills.
  - ***Creative education*** in K-12 represents curricular activities expressly designed to foster capacities for imagination, creativity and innovation. These activities would focus specifically on the attributes of sensing what is not already in existence; thinking through applying imagination; making and implementing unique solutions through the direct experience of multi-sensory learning opportunities including the arts, design, film and media, literary and digital technology.
- ❖ Leading national and local arts education researchers recognize that there is a serious lack of consistent assessment-based evidence for the impact of arts education on creativity development.
- ❖ Strong, effective strategic collaborations and partnerships will be critical in integrating creativity into the classroom in alignment with required workforce skillsets.

## Conclusion

There is a serious communication gap between what the business community says its' creativity needs are in the workforce and what arts programs (in school and community-based) are doing to prepare students' creativity skills for workforce readiness. This communication gap affects any delivery or development of arts/creative education programming as well as value messaging.

This project revealed an issue so much bigger than agreeing on the definition of 'creative education' or developing an awareness campaign for supporting arts/creative education. The most relevant conclusion is *there is a fundamental flaw in our community when a key attribute for workplace success is identified as our creative abilities and yet there is no agreement nor assessment on developing those skills within our children in our K-12 education system.*

## Recommendation and Next Step

The main recommendation of this report is to bridge the creativity skills gap between workplace needs and student development through creative education. And then determine how to foster these skills across the creative education resources available to students – in-school curriculum, community partnerships, civic leadership, etc.

- Develop a list of desired creativity skills that bridges the different sectors including: business community, school leadership, artist educators, and arts organization board leadership.
- Develop creativity skill development assessment protocols for community based learning arts/creative education programming.

Creative Alliance Milwaukee has established a commitment to championing creativity and fostering creative education. Therefore, it is recommended that Creative Alliance Milwaukee take the lead in developing a School to Workforce Creativity Skills Matrix, with the guidance of a community Task Force. This would include:

- ❖ Develop a list of creativity skills relevant to workforce readiness;
- ❖ Distribute the above list to corporate and other relevant community leaders;
  - Ask this leadership to indicate the level of importance of creativity skills in hiring, developing and retaining talent, and for high school graduate readiness;
- ❖ Construct a matrix outlining the priority order of creativity skills;
- ❖ Prepare a summarized report and submit back to research participants for feedback;
- ❖ Present these research findings to corporate, civic, school and cultural organization leadership to commence a discussion on a shared creativity skill outcomes protocol.

Working together to ensure we have the most creative graduates ready for today's complex global environment will not only give us a competitive economic edge locally but it will provide the range of skillsets necessary to establish our talent and our businesses as ready and capable of managing within a complex, constantly changing world marketplace.