

Spring 5-31-2021

## **KID smART: Relief Effort Through the Arts**

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KID smART: Relief Effort Through the Arts

An Internship Academic Report

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
University of New Orleans

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Masters of Arts

In

Arts Administration

By

Adam LeBlanc

University of New Orleans

May 2021

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# **Abstract**

The purpose of this internship report is to analyze the nonprofit organization KID smART through the lens of my Arts Administration education and training. I will provide a breakdown of the organization's structure and the components of my internship that occurred during KID smART's programmatic response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Through my S.W.O.T. analysis, I connect KID smART's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to best practices of the Arts Administration industry. In conclusion, I offer recommendations of how KID smART can improve as it grows and continues to serve the New Orleans community.

# Introduction

In the summer of 2020, I accepted an offer to intern with KID smART. My involvement with the organization prior to the internship consisted of Graduate Assistantship that led up to the outbreak of COVID-19. The organization offered me a role in a new capacity to aid in the transition to virtual programming. This opportunity provided unexpected experiences in an unprecedented landscape from a professional and organizational standpoint. I was able to take part in KID smART's crisis management action plan while co-curating virtual platforms for the organization to pursue an entire programmatic shift.

# KID smART

## History/Mission

### **History**

KID smART was founded in 1999 by artists Allison Stewart and Campbell Hutchinson in an effort to introduce a handful of students in New Orleans to visual arts. Over two decades the nonprofit has grown into an organization of arts integration that served 2,464 students in 2019 and continues to administer high impact learning with a social and emotional component. KID smART offers professional development for educators, resources for families to learn together through art, and programming committed to community, equity, and empowerment for each child (KID smART, “FAQ”).

KID smART’s vision is an educational landscape where the arts empower all children to access their full academic, creative, and personal potential (KID smART, “Vision & Mission”). This is what most of the internal dialogue among KID smART staff is geared towards. The larger conversations are about aiding the betterment of the full child with a focus on social and emotional learning. This seems most relevant and crucial due to the numerous factors that affect the New Orleans youth population: poverty, drug/alcohol abuse in the home, decentralized school systems, systemic racism, in a post-Hurricane Katrina environment. Katrina’s 2005 impact resulted in the disenfranchisement of New Orleans schools, and with a lack of connectivity between the independent charter schools, there is a severe lack of arts resources for students. While there are obstacles for youth outside of school, mainly for under-resourced black and brown families, KID smART’s touchpoint is currently only in the educational setting. The

investment made to a child's social and emotional development is meant unlock real world benefits that go beyond the classroom.

## **Mission**

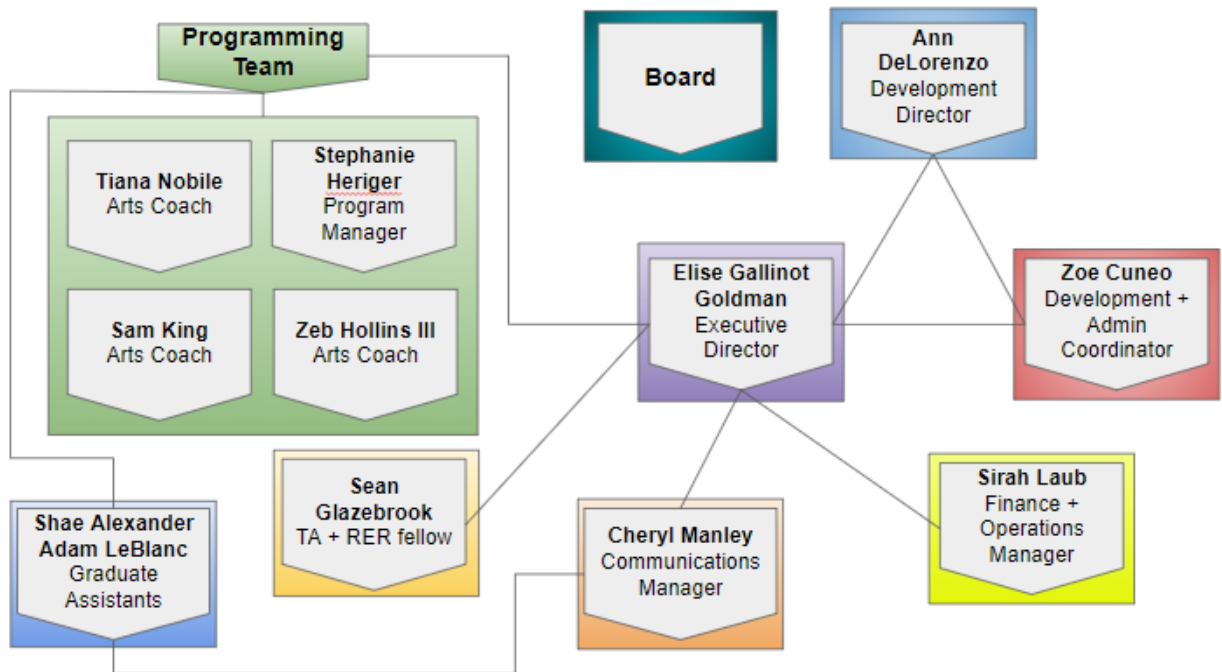
“To engage children and educators in dynamic, creative, and relevant learning through the arts.”

The organization fulfills this mission by placing their professionally-trained teaching artists into public school classrooms. These are schools that are under a one-year contract with KID smART and have access to the teaching artists that can demonstrate models of excellence through arts integration and create a positive learning environment. KID smART also increases the capacity and cooperation between schoolteachers and teaching artists to lead the classroom through an arts-integrated curriculum that leads to a better understanding by the students of the academic subject. This contributes to the students “critical thinking skills, creativity, social and emotional intelligence, and joyful engagement in learning” (KID smART).

KID smART provides arts learning through their programming to schools, develops sessions for families outside of the school setting, and conducts community-based programs through special project like the organization's community celebration: Art Jam. These special projects and professional developments offer the organization an opportunity to partner with other local and national presenters, bringing a richer learning experience to New Orleans youth.



# Organizational Structure



## **Executive Director and Board**

When looking at the organizational structure of KID smART, a division can be made into three different segments: Board of Directors, Staff, and Teaching Artists. The board at KID smART has a unique blend of working professionals, artists, and those with an educational background that helps shape the direction of the organization. Before the COVID-19 outbreak, the entire Board of Directors would meet quarterly while board leadership would meet once a month. This schedule has been strained by the pandemic, but it has mainly kept on track on a virtual platform.

Staffing at KID smART has remained small over the duration of their existence. Being a relatively small organization, high impact work has been implemented by only a few people at a time over the years.

Elise Gallinot Goldman is the Executive Director and has broken norms in the nonprofit sector by remaining with KID smART long enough to rise in the ranks. She was previously the Education Director at KID smART and also did her internship for her MA degree with the organization. Goldman's experience at the organization has made her a fount of knowledge, and she projects her understanding and values of the organization throughout the staff and administered programming.

Elise Gallinot Goldman worked her way toward Executive Director combined with her innovative ideas and an approachable personality makes her an effective leader. She never sits at the head of the metaphorical table and wants to hear all ideas and perspectives at any point in a project.

She also runs the organization keeping everyone's individual gifts in mind. In the last year, staff participated in a professional development workshop to identify and tap into our individual strengths. This workshop continues to be something we refer to moving forward facing new ventures. Being an arts education nonprofit that not only survives but thrives during a global pandemic is no minor accomplishment. KID smART's success and adaptability is awe-inspiring, and Goldman says it's a testament to the staff that she's lucky enough to be a part of.

## **Staff**

In November of 2019, the then-Education Director transitioned from the organization and the role was morphed into Program Manager. This was a step towards investing more of Goldman's time into the programming team, and it also placed the Program Manager at the same level as the Arts Coaches rather than them reporting to that role.

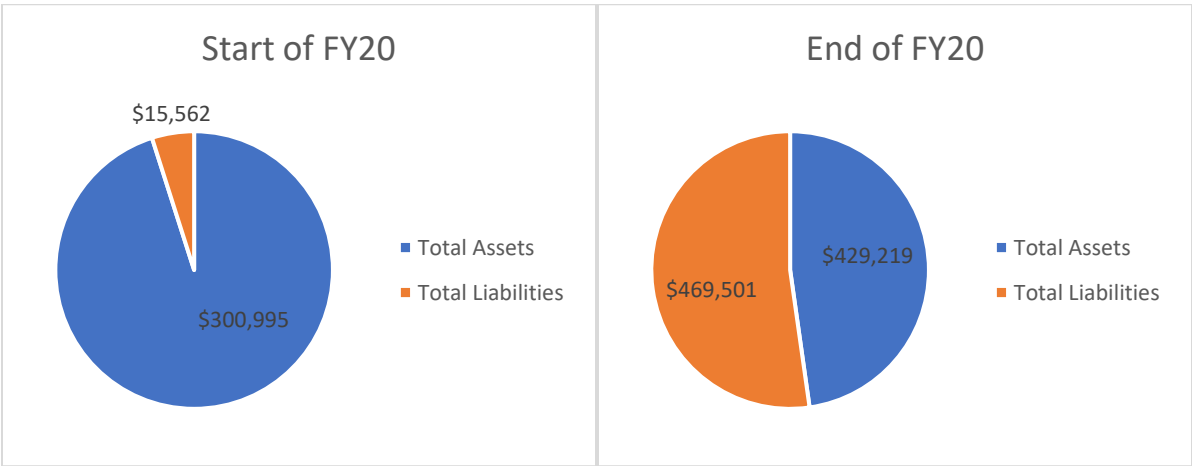
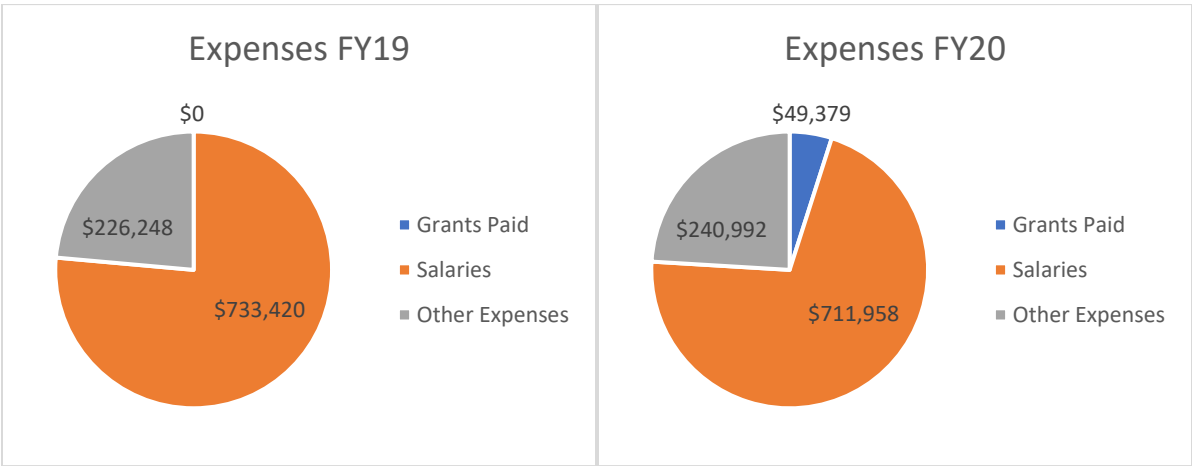
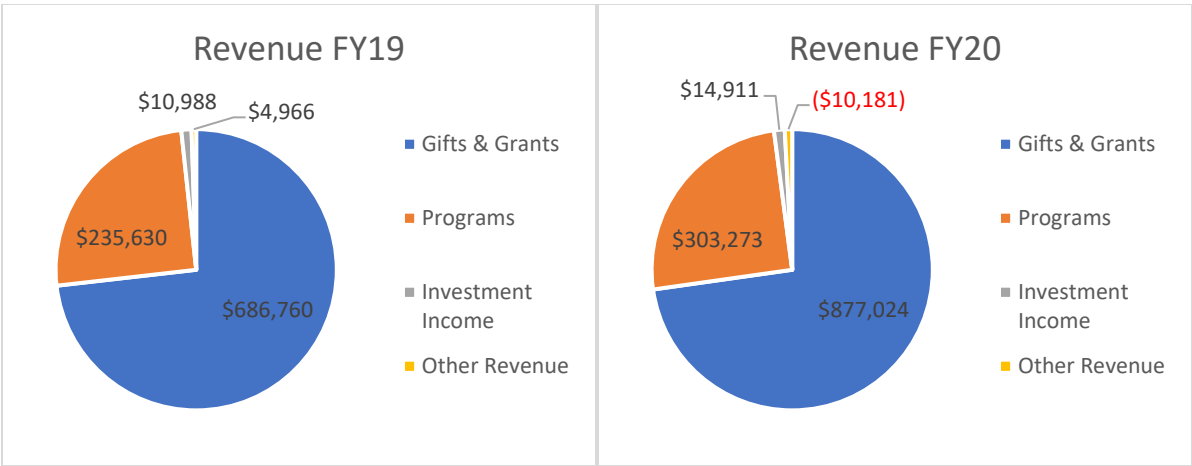
Arts Coaches have their own classrooms to teach just as Teaching Artists do, but a single Arts Coach will be assigned multiple Teaching Artists. This relationship is extremely important to the operations and implementation of KID smART's values, which also means that there is a lot of room for variation depending on the relationship between Arts Coach and Teaching Artist. Coaches also attend all staff meetings, are partners in the direction of the organization's programming, and lead all professional developments administered by KID smART.

Teaching Artists are the only part-time employees of KID smART and have the most in-person touchpoints with students. A Teaching Artist comes to KID smART specialized with an artform such as visual arts, drama, poetry, or dance, and they are then paired with a curriculum subject. Recent pairings are math & dance, history & drama, science & poetry.

Teaching Artists were also leading afterschool enrichment before the COVID-19 pandemic hit and in-person programming halted. Now all interaction with schools is restricted to during school hours and/or virtual, depending on the regulations of the individual charter school.

KID smART also invests in the professional development of their Teaching Artists, using a goal tracker to help the individual grow as a teacher, and artist, or in any other way that KID smART can help facilitate. Since the COVID-19 pandemic, Art Aparty was introduced through KID smART programming. Teaching Artists were asked to record video lessons depicting an art form and sometimes combining that with a classroom subject. This provided an inventory of content that KID smART could share with schools and community over social media. It also provided an opportunity for Teaching Artists to fulfill their work contract with the organization since in-person was initially completely cut due to restrictions. The Art Aparty series was the first step on KID smART's road to continuing operations during the 2020 lockdown.

# Operations and Finances



Breaking down KID smART's financial makeup is very straightforward and sheds a lot of light on why and how the organization continues to operate and fundraise in a similar manner annually. Revenue can be roughly sliced into two major areas: donations and school contracts. Donations and grants accumulate to build most of KID smART's budget.

Grants successfully secured by the fundraising department and administrators help support programming and even salaries that come from partnering with grant-offering entities. This is the case with KID smART's focus on social and emotional learning, of which the curriculum is supported and in-part provided by a partnership. Major fundraising events, besides GiveNOLA Day, take a lot of the teams' efforts to ensure financial goals are met to continue operations.

KID smART's contracts with schools are the second largest source of revenue for the organization. Placing a KID smART Teaching Artist in the classroom, Arts Coach consultation, dialogue and support between the school leader and KID smART Executive Director, on-site KID smART visibility for school, and measurable improvements of test scores and student comprehension are all components of a school's contract with KID smART. The more school contracts KID smART can secure a year, the more revenue brought in so that donated funds can go to areas of need.

KID smART compensates its staff fairly, and, as such, salaries are a major expense for the organization. The staff remains small, and grants are often sought after to help cover the costs, as is common with other nonprofits. The staff's ability to be a wealth of experience and talents earns them fair pay but also means that they juggle a lot of responsibilities in their capable hands. Opening up the staff to additional full-time positions is not something the

organization can presently afford, and this not likely to happen as giving trends may be uncertain for the years following COVID-19.

Financial Years 21 and 22 may look very different for KID smART as it pertains to earned revenue. In spring of 2020, not only were school contracts flipped to virtual via Zoom, but afterschool enrichment contracts and independent locations were no longer able to continue in any form. This extra access to income was very hands-on at site locations where arts could be demonstrated outside of a school required curriculum. Afterschool enrichment is not likely to return until fall of 2021, and that's only if all parties involved are safe, vaccinated for COVID-19, and can afford a contract with KID smART, which is not likely given the harsh financial nature in New Orleans for 2020-2021.

Support for KID smART has not faltered post-pandemic in spirit, but the organization may find itself scrambling to keep its budget on track in upcoming years. Individual donors and grants often go elsewhere in times of national and global crisis, and a small organization in South Louisiana can become a tough sell when its base city remains shut down and lacking in arts.

## **The Internship**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought immediate change to the way KID smART was able to provide resources and programming on all levels. This challenge has provided a multitude of opportunities to assist in the restructure of the organization's outreach. Duties previously performed by the organization shifted to an online platform and new forms of communication were required among staff.

I completed 480 hours of work with KID smART over the summer of 2020. The working days were predominately remote as the organization was committed to follow the health and safety guidelines presented by the Center for Disease Control and restrictions in place by the New Orleans Mayor's office. While my duties extended outside of just administrative work, most of my projects were overseen by the Administration and Development Coordinator, Zoe Cuneo.

### **Data Tracking**

Being an arts education nonprofit, KID smART's summers are typically slow because schools are not in session, but summer of 2020 was concentrated with staff catching up from the previous semester and preparing for the next on a virtual platform. My duties coming off of the spring semester focused heavily on entering student survey data in KID smART's tracker system: Survey Monkey. These surveys are conducted at the beginning and end of each semester in KID smART's Kindergarten-8<sup>th</sup> grade classrooms. From creating, administering, and reporting these surveys, I have found the value in the qualitative and quantitative responses from the students.

Being able to track a student's experience, comprehension of material, and social-emotional responses, one can make sure the organization is delivering impactful programming. The most valuable responses are those that highlight what KID smART is doing correctly and can be used as milestones to report to funders and parents.

### **Virtual Content**

I had the pleasure of working with Communications Manager Cheryl Manley on all promotional and marketing materials KID smART produced during the summer. This involved lots of graphic design work, editing media and sponsor lists, as well as editing all the Art Aparty videos that were being created for virtual outreach. Being able to work on KID smART's virtual outreach to students was very impactful for me. Responding to a lack of community resources and security due to COVID-19 was met with KID smART's delivery of streaming art content for students and their families. This stretched well into the summer months, and the organization was able to produce many more touchpoints than would have occurred in a typical year.

### **Art Care Packages**

Summer outreach had a physical component when we were able to create take-home art packages for students. I, with the help of Executive Director Goldman, was able to combine various art supplies into totes. These KID smART Care Packages provided all of our students with supplies they wouldn't normally receive, and it created a community-building experience for the organization.

### **School Engagement Plan**

One of my larger projects was developing the School Engagement Plan that was implemented in the fall semester of 2020. Many incarnations of this document were



workshopped in previous years, but engaging with so many charter schools calls for a singular place where KID smART staff can go to for all information and status updates on our contracts with schools. Highlighting the school leaders, school art liaisons, Teaching Artists, individualized touchpoints, and a communication plan for each school are some of the components that were put into this utilitarian document. This tool became especially useful when conversations around renewing contracts with KID smART approached. Staff was able to see a semester's worth of touchpoints to reference or add something special to the school's engagement.

### **Virtual PD Support**

Another major part of my internship was running and providing technical help for Zoom meetings. Every staff or community-focused meeting switched over to Zoom's virtual platform, and this required a lot of work on the back end. This gave me the opportunity to attend every staff, programming, board, and professional development meeting hosted by KID smART. This virtual support that kept the organization relevant through a difficult time had me working in close proximity of the Program Manager and the Arts Coaches to help implement all of their projects.

The Homegrown Teaching Artist Institute for Cultural Equity was born from the collaboration and presentation of KID smART, Ashe's Institute of Cultural Education, and Junebug Productions. I was able to take part in facilitating this institute that focused on the professional development of our current and potential Teaching Artists, as well as efforts to streamline artists of color who are native to the New Orleans area. Being a part of this coalition that provided professional resources to the local community while creating effective arts leaders that will help our students in the future was a proud moment of mine. This extension of KID

smART programming reaches individuals outside of the organization's typically serviced demographic, but it remains aligned to the mission and values.

### **Photo Documentation**

When I wasn't helping to facilitate professional development workshops or creating content for the organization to use across all channels of visibility, I performed administrative tasks that were limited to the summer months, two of which were creating timesheets and handling KID smART's photo log. Sorting and photo editing all the images of the previous school year helps the communication and fundraising arms of KID smART promote its success and highlight the positive impact the organization has on students inside the classroom. While there were less photos to detail because the in-person school year was cut short due to COVID-19, the need for photos that told the story of KID smART's effectiveness and necessity rose significantly. Capturing the nuance of an arts-integrated curriculum being exhibited by a student isn't easy, but sharing that vital story is important when budgets and partnering contracts are being cut because of the pandemic. A lot of my focus on the imagery of KID smART students had to shift to reaction and participation shots of students engaging with our Art Aparty series, via Zoom. This showed that even in a changed world, KID smART's presence provided healing to its community.

## S.W.O.T. Analysis

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Program Adaptability</li> <li>• Professional Development</li> </ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Orleans Arts Culture</li> <li>• Organization Partnerships</li> </ul>	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sustainability Reliance</li> <li>• “What is Arts Integration?”</li> </ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School Leader Turnover</li> <li>• Focus on Testing</li> </ul>
OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cultivating New Donors</li> <li>• Virtual/National Audience</li> </ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National Partners</li> <li>• KID smART Alumni Program</li> </ul>	<p><b>Internal</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Forced School Partnership</li> <li>• Fundraising Model</li> </ul> <p><b>External</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• COVID-19</li> </ul>

## Strengths

### **Program Adaptability**

While the organization is constantly finetuning and reflecting to be as efficient as possible, COVID-19 allowed true creativity to emerge as programming completely left the in-person setting. All business was thereafter conducted virtually without any missteps. New

forms of programming like Art Aparty and the Krewe of You virtual series were launched in 2020 and provided the organization with more visibility than ever. Innovating new channels with which to serve the students and community, KID smART was able to provide quality learning and arts experiences that were not being accomplished at the time or prior to the necessity of e-learning.

### **Professional Development**

Teaching Artists, while being part-time employees with KID smART, receives full-time investment by the organization. Every Teaching Artist is supported by an Arts Coach and helps pursue their professional development using KID smART's TA Tracker. This guide helps the organization know which direction the Teaching Artist would like to work towards in their career, and the growth is interdependent on the individual's wishes and chosen aspirations. This practice is echoed by KID smART's Homegrown Institute which familiarizes local teachers and artists with the same language and training received by Teaching Artists.

### **New Orleans Arts Culture**

New Orleans is the ideal home for KID smART's origin and home base. A city in love with theatre, visual arts, music, dance, and poetry celebrates all the love and community that KID smART strives to be a part of. While there are a lot of other neighboring organizations that draws in funding throughout the city, KID smART seeks to boost the interconnection of relationships as much as possible with community-forward events like Art Jam, a block party-like celebration that invites other nonprofits to showcase their services.

## **Organization Partnerships**

It's within KID smART's belief to celebrate the good work of other organizations in New Orleans. There is no other arts education organization the city whose main program focuses on arts integration like KID smART. This specific quality allows the organization to approach schools without much worry about similar competition. Many of KID smART's professional development workshops offered are often a product of a partnership. The Homegrown Teaching Artist Institute for Cultural Equity was born from the collaboration and presentation of KID smART, Ashe's Institute of Cultural Education, and Junebug Productions.

## **Weaknesses**

### **Sustainability Reliance**

The repetitive race to identify, cultivate, sign, and steward schools into being a happy KID smART partner is a constant struggle and may remain so as long as the organization operates with Creative Schools at its center. Rarely does a school elect to not renew a contract with KID smART because they are unsatisfied. The case is usually budgeting issues, cuts, and pressures on new school leaders to honor other allegiances before KID smART. KID smART has been able to retain an average of ten schools, give or take a couple, annually. This running average is a testament to level of personal relationship Executive Director Goldman is able to maintain with multiple school administrators and liaisons. Due to a reliance on this system, at any shortage of funding, a school can pull away from KID smART, and resources will dwindle for all remaining partners. KID smART is unfortunately too small and not self-sufficient enough to take too large of a hit. The next few years will continually test the resilience of the organization.

## **“What is Arts Integration?”**

After over twenty years of operation for KID smART, a 2020-2021 partnering analysis of the organization found that the biggest issue is confusion around arts integration. If the public can't understand what an organization does, they won't be inclined to support, enroll, promote, or engage with the organization. There is no simple way to display through quick imaging or a six second clip what arts integration is. KID smART's next problem to troubleshoot is how to make the messaging of its operations, programming, and existence clearer. If a school leader can't easily grasp the concept then there may be no contract, and if a new big fish donor doesn't quite catch on, it may not bite the hook.

## **School Leader Turnover**

The decentralized charter school system of New Orleans, post-Hurricane Katrina, leaves the city with unconnected resources, and many schools doing a lot of the same work without partnerships. Charter schools exist as their own entity which demands much from school leaders and staff. There is a quick turnaround among school leaders, directors, and principals in New Orleans, and when they leave, they often take their nonprofit support with them. Incoming administrations have their own agenda and their own preferences on how the budget is going to be spent in their vision for the student body. KID smART's approach to appointing arts liaisons and points of contact other than the school leader is a smart idea, but it bears little weight when it comes to deciding to cut KID smART out of the budget for an upcoming school year.

## **Focus on Testing**

Standardized testing has been a part of American school culture for over a century now, and it's become coupled with a lack of focus on creative skills, other than English Language Arts. This form of testing is one of the main culprits to the cutting of arts and athletics. Such forms of expression do not equate to a better score for an academic school, so they are the first things cut when budgets are tight. This environment has led to an unhealthy focus on a student's academic performance which devalues their own worth to subject comprehension and repetition. There is room for the misbelief that arts don't matter when its nowhere to be found on the only test that seems to matter. KID smART is far from the only outlet for students to get a more fulfilling education, but it continues to push for more arts inclusion in all classrooms and disciplines.

## **Opportunities**

### **Cultivating New Donors**

The best way for KID smART to build a number of public advocates is to cultivate New Orleans families who could one day become donors. This may seem like blanket and untargeted approach of social media blasting, but New Orleans is unique in citizens who care about the arts and music culture being passed onto the children. The heart of the city relies on the ability for arts sustainability which calls for advocates who can one day become donors, even if one-time small gifts are given. KID smART's marketing could target generational families of New Orleans, grandparents who take pride in their descendants receiving the same arts exposure that they've experienced, and expecting parents. Building public support behind KID smART would put pressure on competitive schools to fight for the funds to contract with KID smART. The organization is already a model of success and arts exposure through creative means, but not

enough of New Orleans is aware of how much they would support the organization given the chance.

### **Virtual/National Audience**

Means to remain relevant during COVID-19 provided unforeseen opportunities in KID smART's reach. What began as a considering opening up programming to schools outside of Orleans Parish, like Jefferson Parish schools, developed into being able to reach homes nationally through virtual platforms like Zoom. Partnering with the Kennedy Center and Harvard for supported programming, as well as KID smART professional development seminars in other cities, has already been successful. Now that a nation of students and educators have grown accustomed to virtual learning, KID smART virtual programming is an easy fit and readymade resource that could expand the organization's reach.

### **National Partners**

It is common for KID smART staff to interact with other organizations and arts leaders locally and from cities across the nation. Grant and programming support typically lead to better resources for KID smART's community, such is the nature of nonprofits. Seeking out potential programming partnerships with out-of-state partners could be an interesting trade-off for KID smART. A dual organization virtual series could offer arts integration on Jazz from New Orleans and perhaps the structure of musical theatre from an organization in Chicago. Much like the virtual series KID smART has successfully ran, anyone could register and this type of partnership would be an enriching experience for all parties involved, no matter the initial organization alliance.

### **KID smART Alumni Program**



Teaching Artists and Homegrown Institute fellows receive KID smART training and experience the same arts and education resources that classroom teachers get to enjoy through KID smART's AXIS Professional Development. These different groups all passing through KID smART from various levels all receive the same messaging, skill pointers, and training to become better professionals, students, and individuals. While KID smART-conducted surveys report that experiences are well loved and appreciated by participants, there is little communication with the organization after a school's contract ends or a Teaching Artist or Homegrown participant moves on. To better foster a lifelong sense of community between those who have engaged with KID smART, an alumni program of some form would be beneficial. This could range from an ongoing stream of resources and messaging to a wider connective web of jobs and arts advocacy that can help change the dialogue around arts integration.

## **Threats**

### **Forced School Partnership**

The communication and relationship complexity between a creative school and KID smART can quickly become strained when a single party is not a good fit but the contract is already initiated. If KID smART learns that one of their Teaching Artist is not fulfilling their duties and not responding appropriately to guidance, a replacement can be found to salvage the relationship with the school and honor the contract. In the financial game of needing a certain number of schools under contract for KID smART to generate enough revenue, the organization could find itself in a position of forcing a school partnership they may not otherwise feel is in their best interest. This could be due to the social climate at the school, a negligent teaching staff or school leader, or even the treatment of their own Teaching Artist in this school setting.

Having to rely on the money from a school can run the risk of sacrificing some of the standards of KID smART to secure a year's worth of funding. KID smART is not an organization to put money above the mental health of an employee, but it is the responsibility of the organization's leadership to honor contracts and make the relationship work by any means necessary, potentially tarnishing the integrity of KID smART if communication and honesty isn't at the forefront of the resolution.

### **Fundraising Model**

Another wave of social justice reckoning swept through the United States in 2020 with Black Lives Matter and the clear devastation of COVID-19 that disproportionately impacted people of color. This demographic makes up the majority of KID smART's serviced community and those whom the organization has pledged to advocate for. While an organization must attract donors through effective means which result in enough funding to exist, such events like high-end galas don't always relate to the students helped by the organization or reflect the value of arts integration. Cocktails for KID smART, the annual major fundraiser, would be an example of this at KID smART. The event is extremely popular and does auction the work of a visual artist, but there is difficulty in demonstrating the work and improvement of students in this environment outside of a PowerPoint or small visual display. This disconnect isn't an outright bad thing, as it does provide resources that allow students to prosper, but a more accountable eye is studying the actions of organizations today. Organizational partnership transparency may not be enough as activists continue to dissect means of fundraising and promote the messaging that an organization is unethical or hypocritical.

### **COVID-19**

Plainly and automatically understood, the COVID-19 pandemic has struck a massive hit to the arts world. KID smART, thanks to proper preparations for an unknown catastrophe, was able to cover salaries and continue contracts with part-time workers through the Payroll Protection Program (PPP). While many other organizations in New Orleans had a forced closures, KID smART remained sustainable, but the long-term effects are still unknown. The organization grew and was able to maintain connection with the community, but moving forward, this may prove to be a challenge. KID smART at its current size does fantastic work, and the intimacy of the staff generates the appropriate personalization. However, the organization is not likely to grow in the next few years, meaning that expansion of programming, fundraising, and innovative experiments may prove difficult or unfruitful without proper support.

# **Best Practices**

KID smART by many accounts is a successful nonprofit that continues to support the needs of the community through the arts and is always on the lookout for better models to help accomplish goals in the future. By looking at the following best practices, the organization can further its efficiency.

## **Educating the Community**

The Institute for Arts Integration and STEAM has a compilation of resources on how to educate the public on what is the methods and advantages behind arts integration. Some of the supplemental best practices for in schools include:

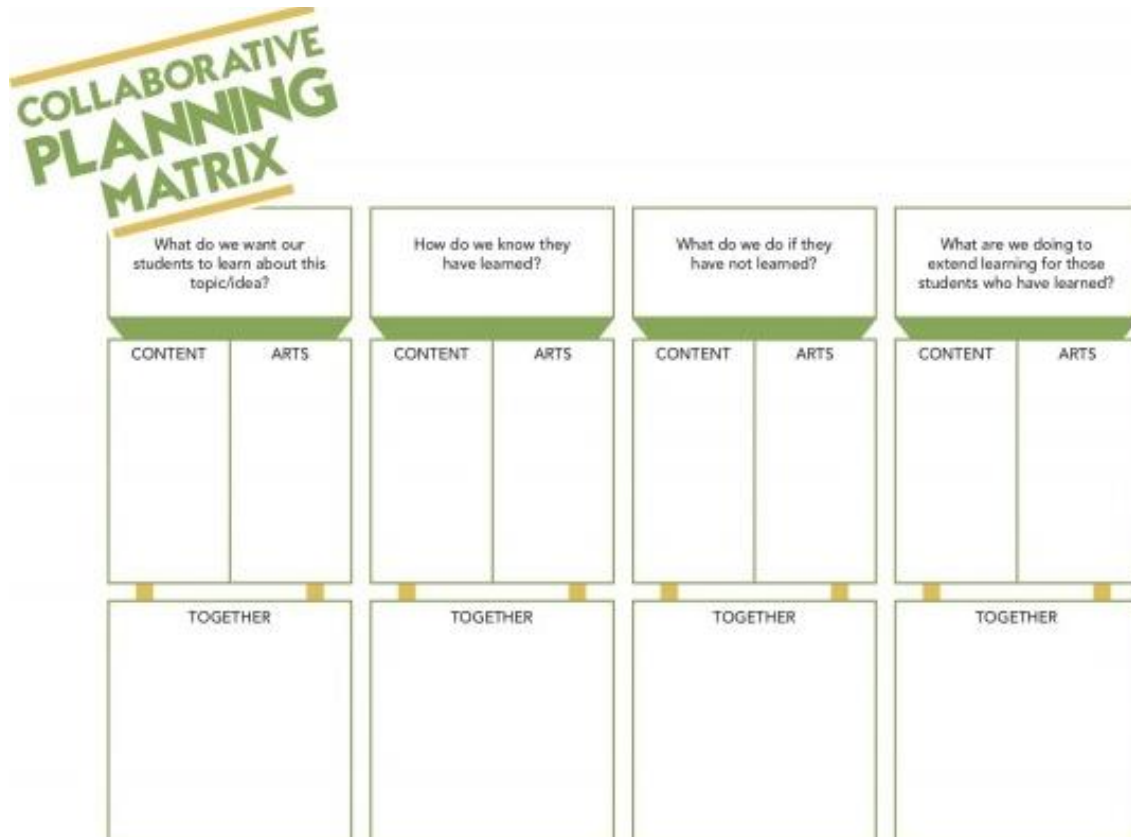
- Content and Arts Standards are naturally aligned, taught and assessed equitably.
- Students **MUST** have access to explicit arts instruction on a regular (at least weekly) basis, taught by arts educators.
- Collaborative planning between content and arts educators is valued and scheduled intentionally.
- Professional development for teachers and arts educators is provided in arts integration strategies and processes.
- The entire school community (parents, organizations, businesses, etc.) are partners with the school in support of the approach.

The Institute's research notes that while people are not quick to change to new formats of teaching, administrators and school leaders pay very close attention to the

analytics and educational research. Schools must remain marketable and successful. Key points to push for arts integration in school can help to educate decision-makers, parents, and the community on what arts integration can accomplish, such as:

- Arts integration improves test scores.
- Arts integration creates equity.
- Arts integration increases parental and community engagement.

The figure below is a tool provided by the institute to help schools visualize how the arts can be paired with mandated curriculum without having a specific portion of the school's budget segmented for arts (Riley).



**COLLABORATIVE PLANNING MATRIX**

What do we want our students to learn about this topic/idea?		How do we know they have learned?		What do we do if they have not learned?		What are we doing to extend learning for those students who have learned?	
CONTENT	ARTS	CONTENT	ARTS	CONTENT	ARTS	CONTENT	ARTS
TOGETHER		TOGETHER		TOGETHER		TOGETHER	

Visual aids to explain the connectivity of arts integration restates how arts integration would actually work within the classroom combining content and visual arts. Using such tools will further legitimize the tactical place for arts integration in schools while making a school's preplanning process as simple as possible.

## **Crisis Management**

*Essential Guidelines for Arts Responders Organizing After a Disaster* is presented by the Americans for the Arts as goes into length about how to support local artists, arts-related small businesses, and arts organizations when faced with an unpredictable catastrophe.

The article says the following about what can be done when tragedy strikes your community: The most important thing is to be realistic about your own organizational needs while being responsive to the needs of your community (Schwartzman).

While this article does not include scenario specifics about an airborne virus pandemic such as COVID-19, it does address that typical relief programs such as FEMA, the Red Cross, and other grant programs if such a climate does not meet the needs of local artists who are at a loss. The article provides a look at how an arts organization can assess its ability to serve its arts community in a time of crisis that may fall outside of the typical parameters of programming.

“We coined the term *arts responder* to connote those organizations that respond to the needs of the arts community post-disaster. They provide a variety of services to artists and arts organizations, including information gathering and dissemination, networking, financial assistance, and advocacy... for a relief effort to a local arts community; like any social hub, its performance is dependent on a

configuration of connective spokes and two-way communication.” (Schwartzman).

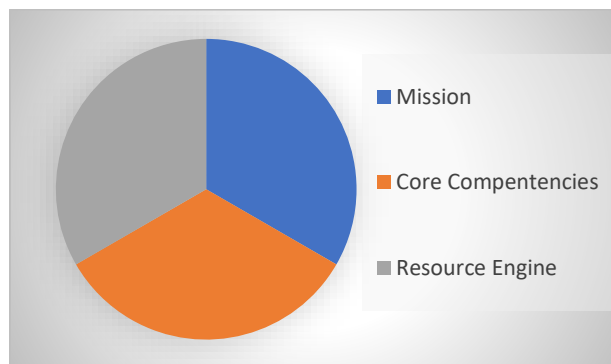
Being part of the relief effort in something as unique as COVID-19 certainly falls on the shoulders of community-based organizations who are likely just as affected as their base.

Resources such as this guide are essential tools to navigate an organization’s ability to translate programming into relief efforts based on the needs of the local community.

## Revenue Model

Nell Edgington, an expert with Social Velocity, works with nonprofits and philanthropic individuals to create social change, strengthen their strategic planning, and remain mission-aligned. In the article *The Critical Alignment of Mission, Money and Competence*, Edgington writes about the struggle’s nonprofits can often face with misalignments of their fundraising efforts (Edgington).

“For any organization three things must be aligned: 1) their mission, or reason for existing 2) their core competencies—what they do better than anyone else in the world, and 3) their resource engine—all the ways in which they sustain themselves financially. So that an organization, at equilibrium looks like this:”



Edgington speaks to the point that most nonprofits are familiar with issues in the resource engine segment. Organizations can produce and showcase great results, but they have a hard time obtaining financially sustainable revenue to support the worthy efforts. Edgington supports the following steps toward a solution when these segments are not in sync, often resulting in a financial support issue (Edgington):

- A nonprofit's mission needs to be one that they can generate financial support around, but it also needs to be something that they can deliver on better than anyone else.
- The financial support a nonprofit generates needs to complement, not detract from, their mission and core competencies.
- The nonprofit must integrate what they do really well with their mission and financial model.

### **Anti-Racist Lens**

COVID-19 has not been the only through line in 2020. The conversation around social and racial injustice in America had another resurgence with great ferocity after the murder of George Floyd by a police officer. Organizations, especially those with a community focus, are expected to be more transparent in their efforts and commitment to be anti-racist. Black Lives Matter remains at the forefront of how an organization is effecting change, and there are countless resources at their disposal. The use of such resources has the potential to be utilized in outreach, programming, and fundraising models.

Neon is a tech support company that offers a range of services to nonprofits and organizations that are geared toward betterment of all communities. The organization's



leader, Heidi Massey, published *Strategic Planning Through an Anti-Racist Lens* to the organization’s CRM component webpage as a resource to all organizations.

Massey talks about the importance of having anti-racism as part of the culture of an organization and that just claiming to be so is not nearly enough. To be actively anti-racist, an organization must implement a plan that touches every level of the board, staff, programming, and public facing outreach.

The following is a checklist of what an organization could do to take step towards being a better community partner and reflecting the values a nonprofit works to embody:

<b>Planning Process</b>	Engaging and centering those who are most marginalized
<b>Initial Discussion of Values, Vision, Mission</b>	Engage in the fundamentals of how racism works
<b>Internal and External Environmental Analysis</b>	S.W.O.T. Analysis
<b>Identifying Key Issues, Choices, Questions</b>	Reframing focus from organization to community
<b>Updating Values Where Needed</b>	Promote anti-racist practices
<b>Create Implementation Plan</b>	Lead charge and continue education
<b>Evaluation Plan</b>	Collaborative reflection and correction

Nonprofit organizations to have the power to enact change and speak to racial injustice, no matter the mission. Unless an organization uses tools to become anti-racist within the operations and structure, they risk becoming viewed as only in support of equality as a performative effort.

## **Recommendations**

Below I have outlined ways in which the previously provided best practices can be implemented to address areas of improvement for KID smART.

### **Educating the Community**

There is not much common knowledge of Arts Integration, and even the initial encounter of the term doesn't quite click unless it's presented as Arts Integrated Education. When all else is operating well for the organization, KID smART's one persisting challenge is the public's education or familiarization on the concept of Arts Integration. Parents, principals, and potential donors don't often offer support to something they cannot grasp immediately and decide to endorse.

I recommend KID smART focus a majority of their 2021-2025 messaging, branding, and social media communication to the simple defining and public education of arts education. The organization does have recorded videos that provide an inside look into the classroom to help understand what an arts integrated curriculum may look like, but something longer than six seconds isn't going to hold any interest. The world only has an appetite to consume snapshots of information that can be processed quickly. The trouble is that proclaiming Science + Poetry = Arts Integration is no closer to being clear messaging.

A committee formed of individuals from each department could be tasked with watering down the visual promotion of arts integration while retaining the content and comprehension. Bitesize bits of information that generates buzz is what will bring in new donors and more

importantly educate New Orleans, arts education advocates, and the rest of the public as to why KID smART is so essential to a student's life.

### **Programming Post-COVID-19**

KID smART has done a commendable job honoring all school contracts, paying all employees, providing work for artists, and continuing to interact with students during the months of the 2020 lockdown. Now that a year has passed since the initial outbreak and there's a sense of normalcy returning to New Orleans, I recommend KID smART to continue their efforts to be support system for local artists.

Brandishing the title of arts responder, KID smART was able to make new forms of connections by being flexible with what it was able to create and put out on a national level via virtual programming. As funds slowly trickle back into the local economy, artists and arts jobs will not bounce back to their previous levels right away, a field which was already under resourced. Programming much like the Homegrown Institute can be created over the summer to connect artists with resources and professional development to help boost their credentials and networking skills. This investment in local artists is in line with KID smART's previous work and would encourage more involvement with community artists in the future.

### **Strengthening Sustainability**

While KID smART is careful not to spread itself too thin by committing to too many school contracts, securing enough contracts is absolutely essential to operate. KID smART's current resource engine, reliance on schools and a few professional development workshops for revenue, won't likely be enough moving forward as budgets across New Orleans have shrunk substantially due to COVID-19.

I recommend that KID smART retool their school outreach by expanding to schools outside of Orleans Parish. There is nothing mission-based that keeps the organization within one parish, but an expansion to other regions is not something that's currently pursued. KID smART's mission alignment is sound, and its effectiveness sets it apart from other organizations that may be competition for a school's budget.

As schools in Orleans Parish struggle to remain competitive, they are also faced with cutting nonessential partners since the pandemic when their students were at a loss in 2020 and the beginning of 2021. While KID smART can prove it's a necessity to the betterment of a student's learning experience, the organization may find more access to schools in neighboring parishes.

With the pandemic pushing the organization to produce new materials for the virtual world, the next logical step is partnering with schools nationally. For the time being, this can remain in the realm of professional development for teachers of contracted schools or lessons in arts integration, but the capability for KID smART to be in schools across the country is manageable and not far off from its current operations.

The expansions to regions outside of the home base can be helped with the tools like the School Engagement Plan. Not only does this document help KID smART keep track and update relationships with schools that have a quick leadership turnaround, but it can help appeal to prospective schools when a comprehensive communications plan can be presented at the beginning.

## **Updating Fundraising Model**

KID smART clearly promotes equity, access, inclusion, and equality. That commitment means engaging in a continual reshaping of how the organization moves towards this goal. Incorporating anti-racist language at every level of KID smART is a recommended step as the organization moves forward.

The major donor gala, Cocktails for KID smART was presented in a different format in 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions, and open dialogue about Black Lives Matter has moved the idea about the fundraiser towards a direction that better reflects what KID smART stands for and the community it serves. Using the resource presented by Neon would be a great planning tool for the staff and board to use when orchestrating language to use when cultivating donors. Continuing on this path is highly recommended, and the introduction of anti-racist language and inclusion should be part of an event that potentially highlights socio-economic disparities in New Orleans.

## **Conclusion**

An ongoing theme that I've come to recognize with KID smART is that they are the model for a number of things. The organization and the efforts of members who make it up are intertwined with values that make every interaction with KID smART an impactful experience. Individualism, respect, and an investment in self-expression through arts stand out to me as the major lessons provided to the students that KID smART is lucky enough to work with.

With constant evaluation of the organization, KID smART's track to the future will only better align itself with the organization's mission and more closely reflect the community it serves. Pointing to areas where improvements can be made is an embedded function of the nonprofit, and it is more difficult to express all the ways in which KID smART is excelling without explaining every detail of the programming.

Schools and cities could learn a lot from the KID smART model, and a lot of that etiquette and nature comes from the people who have given parts of their best and own personalities to the organization. KID smART is truly a collective of arts-centric individuals who care deeply about a wholesome and rich life for every student it is able to interact with, however many that may be in the years to come.

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# Appendices

1 School Name		SCHOOL ENGAGEMENT FY21																																																												
2	ARTS COACH:	SCHOOL LEADER/ EMAIL:																																																												
3	TEACHING ARTIST:	ART FORM: Drama/Theatre																																																												
4	POI/ EMAIL: Additional art liaison	POI/ EMAIL: Additional community member linked to school																																																												
5																																																														
6	<b>STAFF</b>	<b>TOUCH POINT</b>	JULY					AUG					SEP					OCT					NOV					DEC					JAN					FEB					MAR					APR					MAY					JUN				
7			5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	4	11	18	25	1	8	15	22	29	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27								
8	<b>Elise</b>	Welcome Package																																																												
9		Quarterly Leader Email																																																												
10		School/Community Event																																																												
11		School Leader Luncheon																																																												
12		School renewal contracts																																																												
13																																																														
14	<b>Liaison</b>	Faculty Intro																																																												
15		Cohort Meeting																																																												
16		Site Viability check (poster, artist bio, classroom seats, yard sign, banner, media release)																																																												
17		Observation & Debrief																																																												
18		TA Tracker																																																												
19		Bi-Monthly Treat																																																												
20		Mid-Year Mtg w/ School Leader																																																												

## **Vita**

Adam LeBlanc was born in Raceland, Louisiana. He earned a BFA in Visual Arts from Nicholls State University in 2019. In the fall of 2019, he enrolled in the MA in Arts Administration program at the University of New Orleans. With the pursuit of this degree, he intends to build equitable bridges between the arts and community.