

DREAMS BOARD MANUAL



DREAMS CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION 901 Fanning Street Wilmington, N.C. 28401
910-772-1501

Table of Contents

The Little Organization that Could	Page 3
Mission, Vision, & Values Statements... ..	Page 6
Board Member Job Description... ..	Page 7
Ten DREAMS Non-negotiable Values	Page 8
Sample DREAMS Elevator Pitch... ..	Page 9
Compelling Statistics... ..	Page 10
Awards & Accomplishments	Page 11
The Board-Management Relationship	Page 12
Board Contract	Page 14
Confidentiality Policy	Page 15



Founded in 1997 by a group of social workers, artists, lawyers and concerned citizens, DREAMS Center for Arts Education was created to provide high-quality, multidisciplinary, free-of-charge arts programming to young people who could not otherwise afford or access it. The program began in the back of the Wilmington Children's Museum, with four teaching artists, 40 students, and four rooms. In 2006, DREAMS was awarded the President's Committee for the Arts and Humanities Coming Up Taller Award (now known as the National Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award).

Today, DREAMS operates in a renovated 12,800-square-foot former bus maintenance garage in the heart of the City's impoverished North Side, serving 400 students annually via classes at their Center and at outreach sites throughout the community. (This is, in itself, a best practice— offering programming in areas of the community where participants live, thereby eliminating barriers of transportation.) In fall 2016 alone, the program held 42 weekly multidisciplinary arts classes for youth ages 8-18 at their inner-city Center, all facilitated by professional teaching artists and free of charge to students who qualify for the school system's free and reduced school lunch program.

The program's success is, in part, built on its responsiveness to the needs of the Wilmington community. When founder and Executive Director Tracy Wilkes launched DREAMS, the first thing she did was to conduct a needs assessment. She wanted to make sure that city recreation center facilitators, public housing sites, low-income youth and families, and others would actually be interested in such a program—and to discover what they would like such a program to include. Conducting the needs assessment as part of DREAMS' programmatic design was a best-practice approach that allowed the program to open its doors with a strong sense of what its constituents wanted and needed, and set the tone for a program that was truly interested in serving its community.

The second best-practice approach that DREAMS employed was starting the program on a small and manageable level. By beginning with four students and 40 teaching artists, and then expanding the program bit by bit, DREAMS was able to determine what worked well and what did not on a smaller stage, and make course corrections as the situation demanded.

Founder Tracy Wilkes' background is in clinical social work, and she brought a child-centered approach to the program that continues to this day, two years after her retirement from the Executive Director position. DREAMS conducts an extensive in-person intake interview with each new student, ensuring that programmatic staff is able to pair them with the classes and teaching artists that are the best fit for their wants and needs. The program's core philosophy is "creating a culture of confidence," and the question to which staff return to over and over is simple: "Is it best for the kids?" This query drives every decision that DREAMS makes, from hiring teaching artists to building a solid board of directors. Having a clear, easily-articulated, student-based focus enables DREAMS to avoid mission drift and stay true to the program's goals.

Parental involvement is an important component of DREAMS' programming, facilitated through family arts nights where parents and grandparents have the opportunities to create alongside their children, cultural field trips to art exhibits and theater/dance performances, and focus groups where DREAMS staff gathers feedback from parents and families to guide the program's direction. By involving parents in the program, DREAMS is able to build a sense of connection and investment, and empower families to truly make DREAMS their own. This builds on the "youth-led, adult-supported" approach that lies at the heart of the program, so that program participants' interests in large part drive the curriculum.

Community partnerships have also been instrumental to DREAMS' success—no pun intended. Since its inception, DREAMS has partnered with public housing sites and City of Wilmington community recreation centers to provide onsite programming for those children who are unable to come to the DREAMS center. During 2015-16, they provided programming at ten outreach sites, including the Open House Youth Shelter and GLOW Academy, a new 6th-12th grade girls' charter school predominantly serving economically disadvantaged youth.



The [partnership with the City of Wilmington](#) has expanded to include public art projects, funding through the Community Development Block Grant program, and—since 2012—the existence of the DREAMS Center itself. As the program expanded, it outgrew its available space. DREAMS found itself having to turn students away because it simply did not have enough room to meet the demand for its services. The City of Wilmington agreed to rent the aforementioned 12,800-square-foot former bus maintenance garage to DREAMS for \$1 per year, provided that DREAMS covered the cost of the renovation. With funding assistance from the City, DREAMS was able to raise the funds to renovate the entire space: In 2012, the new programmatic and office space opened, and in 2015, DREAMS completed the renovation of the Garage, a multipurpose community gathering and performance space that will [provide DREAMS with an alternate income stream](#)—as well as respond to the community's needs for the existence of such a space.

In 2017, DREAMS partnered with UNC Wilmington professor Janna Robertson to create the '[Forest of DREAMS](#)' mural on a retaining wall bordering the DREAMS property—a project that incorporated hundreds of volunteers, community groups, and area residents, and served to beautify the North Side, [promoting a strong sense of community involvement and ownership](#). DREAMS' partnerships also extend to [museums and performance venues that provide free tickets to events for children and families](#), as well as local youth-serving organizations. Through the United Way of the Cape Fear Area, DREAMS expanded and formalized their partnership with three other nonprofits: Communities in Schools, Brigade Boys and Girls Club, and Kids Making It, a microenterprise woodworking program. The four organizations share resources, including transportation, refer students to each other, facilitate shared programming, and collaborate on funding opportunities, [maximizing resources while avoiding duplication of services](#).

The program provides [youth entrepreneurship opportunities](#), in which students learn how to value, market and sell their artwork. (In 2015-16, DREAMers collectively earned more than \$2,000.) Students [perform and exhibit work at events throughout the year](#), giving them an opportunity to demonstrate what they've learned and feel a sense of accomplishment. DREAMS has recently [expanded their existing community garden](#) and offered two weekly gardening classes during 2015-16, educating students about the importance of good nutrition and the 'garden-to-table.' They provide healthy snacks to students and incorporate garden produce whenever possible.

DREAMS' programmatic longevity (ages 8-18) enables teaching artists and staff to [develop enduring relationships with the youth and families they serve](#)—another best practices approach. The program's Teen Council is a key element of retaining older youth, fostering a sense of investment in the program and creating a teens-only discussion space.

More than just an arts program, DREAMS works to [identify students' physical, emotional, behavioral and financial needs and address them in partnership with other organizations](#), fulfilling their goal of serving the 'whole child.' The program constantly strives to [balance artistic excellence with positive youth development](#), incorporating the [Search Institute's 40 Assets Model](#) as well as [NC Arts Education Essential Standards](#) into curriculum design as well as evaluation. In 2015, the program established a new fellowship program with the support of the United Parcel Service (UPS), giving students [the opportunity to earn \\$5,000 college scholarships by completing 250 hours of service to DREAMS](#). Through the fellowship, students gain career readiness skills while simultaneously mentoring younger students and engaging in service learning.

Colin, Emily. Arts Education for At-Risk Youth in North Carolina Overview, Survey Analysis, Case Studies, and Recommendations. 2018, Arts Education for At-Risk Youth in North Carolina Overview, Survey Analysis, Case Studies, and Recommendations.



The mission of DREAMS is to create a culture of confidence for youth and teens, through equitable access to arts education, supported by the values of respect, family, and community.



Mission Statement

The mission of DREAMS is to create a culture of confidence for youth and teens, through equitable access to arts education, supported by the values of respect, family, and community.

Vision Statement

To create a world where youth are empowered with joy, creativity and self-confidence.

Values Statement

DREAMS will be an oasis where children continue to see themselves as artists; adept at making beautiful things and capable of transforming the world.

What We Do:

- **Programs.** DREAMers choose from a wide array of classes including painting, percussion, photography, filmmaking, dance, drama and creative writing. Through the arts, DREAMers connect with positive, constructive peer groups and mentors, develop self-confidence and prepare for leadership in the community.
- **Real World Exposure.** Through our Youth Entrepreneurship Program DREAMers value, market, and sell their artwork, which they exhibit at galleries, local shops and community events. Our students also perform and dance in shows, and create public art displays to beautify parks, buses and buildings around town. These projects instill a sense of pride in our students, and build connections between DREAMers and their community.
- **Visiting Artists.** Our visiting artists allow our DREAMers to DREAM beyond geographical boundaries and get to know the artists in their own backyard. Grants from the Landfall Foundation, the NC Arts Council and the National Endowment for the Arts have enabled DREAMS to host incredible visual and performing artists from all over the world. DREAMS also partners with No Boundaries International Artist Colony, UNCW Presents, and The Dance Cooperative. Some of the guests have included: the Los Angeles Guitar Quartet, Chinese painter Wei Ru, Barbadian artist Neville Crawford, Playback Theatre, multimedia artist Steve Myott, violinist and composer Daniel Bernard Roumain (DBR), the Ensemble Galilei, ventriloquist Jay Johnson, and local comedy troupe, PineappleShaped Lamps.
- **Excellence in Programming.** DREAMS implements research-based curricula in arts education and youth development, assuring that DREAMers receive only the best. Due to this mindful approach, DREAMS has received overwhelming support at the local, state, regional, and national levels. In 2007, the DREAMS program was recognized by the President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities with the Coming Up Taller Award, the nation's highest honor for after-school and out-of-school programs. We have also received the UNC Wilmington's Razor-Walker Award for distinguished service to youth, and have been recognized by the NC Governor's Crime Commission for dedication and achievement in the area of juvenile justice.

BOARD MEMBER JOB DESCRIPTIONS

Membership on the Board of Directors of DREAMS Center for Arts Education is an honor that requires knowledge, commitment, time, and attendance at board meetings. We are committed to diversity and inclusion in our recruitment and engagement of diverse board members.

EXPECTATIONS OF THE BOARD AS A WHOLE

The mission of DREAMS Center for Arts Education is to build creative, committed citizens, one child at a time through providing youth in need with high-quality, free-of-charge programming in the literary, visual, visual, multimedia, and performing arts.

As the highest leadership body of the organization and to satisfy its fiduciary duties the board is responsible for:

- Determining the mission and purposes of the organization
- Selecting and evaluating the performance of the executive director
- Strategic and organizational planning
- Ensuring strong fiduciary oversight and financial management
- Fundraising and resource development
- Approving and monitoring DREAMS Center for Arts Education's programs and services
- Enhancing DREAMS' public image
- Assessing its own performance as the governing body of DREAMS Center for Arts Education

EXPECTATIONS OF INDIVIDUAL BOARD MEMBERS

Each individual board member is expected to:

- Know the organization's mission, policies, programs, and needs
- Faithfully read and understand the organization's financial statements
- Serve as active advocates and ambassadors for the organization and fully engage in identifying and securing the financial resources and partnerships necessary for DREAMS Center for Arts Education to advance its mission
- Leverage connections, networks, and resources to develop collective action to fully achieve DREAMS Center for Arts Education's mission
- Given a meaningful personal financial donation
- Help identify personal connections that can benefit the organization's fundraising and reputational standing, and can influence public policy
- Prepare for, attend, and conscientiously participate in board meetings
- Participate fully in one or more committees

BOARD MEMBERS ARE ALSO EXPECTED

- follow the organization's bylaws, policies, and board resolutions
- sign an annual conflict-of-interest disclosure and update it during the year if necessary, as well as disclose potential conflicts before meetings and actual conflicts during meetings
- maintain confidentiality about all internal matters of DREAMS Center for Arts Education

The Board of Directors ordinarily meets at 5:30 p.m. on the third Wednesday of each month. It is expected that board members serve on committees, participate in board functions, attend board meetings regularly and demonstrate commitment and involvement in Board/DREAMS functions. Members must attend a minimum of nine meetings per year to maintain board membership. Our board now utilizes consent agendas. Board members must commit to reading all board materials before approving consent agendas at meetings.

The term of service for a Board Member is three years. At the end of three years, a Member may choose, with Board approval, to serve for another term or to leave the Board of Directors.

No group of people should display greater commitment to DREAMS than its Board Members. Bi-annually we complete a board self-assessment. As individuals, who have agreed to serve the organization in a number of ways, board members must set the tone for others—people in the community, funders, and constituents. Board Members should support the organization in spirit, encouraging others to be enthusiastic about its programs and activities as they are.

10 DREAMS Non-Negotiable Values

DREAMS' "Golden Rule"

Always ask: "What's best for the DREAMers?"

Mercy Before Justice

To the extent that it does not undermine the "Golden Rule."

The Power of Potential

We believe that children and adults can succeed if they are granted patience, opportunity, and the right help.

Culture of Collaboration

We are partners as much as we are friends, peers, colleges and coworkers. The world is a better place when we all strive to build positive, collaborative relationships with those around us.

Mission-Driven Motivation

Everyone at DREAMS is naturally compelled by a vision that has brought us together, that attracts other like-minded, highly motivated individuals to share our mission and to build further social connectivity. We are all empowered and united by the very same, powerful goal.

Can-Do Culture

We respect entrepreneurship; we respect innovation, people and their ideas. We strive to always meet challenges and obstacles with a positive, proactive frame of mind.

Data-Drive Decision Making

We do not work blindly in the world of assumptions. Like artists, we consider all angles, perspectives, and information available. We ask questions, we ask for help, we research, we collect, and we evaluate. We strive to make sound decisions, not rash ones.

The Value of Legacy

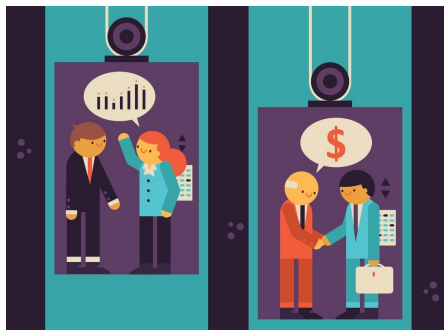
We cherish, study and appreciate the important work of all those who came before us, both personally, at DREAMS and beyond. We learn from past victories and as well as past mistakes; we do not build, improve, or innovate without sound understanding of prior circumstances and prior decision making. We reflect on our own work. We do not let former DREAMS family slip away, whether they be a student, volunteer, staff member, teacher, or board member. Once a DREAMer, always a DREAMer.

People-focused Relationships

People come first at DREAMS. People are more important than the situations they come from, the time they require, the issues they bring in the door, the dollars they donate. People always come first.

Work hard and always have fun!

Talking About DREAMS



Youth Entrepreneurship and Shaping Futures

DREAMS teaches kids art, but what DREAMS is really doing is creating the world's next generation of innovators and entrepreneurs.

DREAMers are surrounded each and every day with a universe of ideas, resources and direct mentorship opportunities that will help them succeed in whatever they choose to do—whether they one day wind up as engineers, politicians or astronauts. Our students are given problems to solve, and are surrounded by real-life examples of success everywhere they go.

Professional teaching artists teach all of our classes at DREAMS, and they are the highest paid individuals per hour in the organization. They take our kids on field trips to their studios, teach them how to think about market demand and branding, guide them on how to present their work and themselves. Teaching kids, “You can do this—look at me, your teacher, who *is* doing this. You can do anything. Let's figure out how, *together*.”

When DREAMers sell their work they make 100% of the profits. We treat them like budding young innovator in every way, and involve them in the process of production, market assessment, pricing, presentation, long-range planning and evaluation from the ground up. We build the habits of mind that breed success—it all starts with the arts but ends in whatever vision of the future our DREAMers dare to dream!

Compelling Statistics

- DREAMS serves over 500 youth, ages 8-17, with high-quality youth development programming, both on our campus and at outreach sites
- DREAMS is incredibly diverse—49% of our students are African American, 9% are Latino, 26% are Caucasian, 16% are Multiracial, 60% are female, 40% male.
- 90% of our students are economically disadvantaged and on free and reduced lunch programs at school. 10% of our students come from means and pay tuition, which then goes toward offsetting DREAMS programming costs.
- 25% diagnosed with ADHD, learning disability, autism spectrum disorder or a mental/behavioral disorder.
- DREAMS enrollment is offered on a first come first serve basis.

- Students are referred by a wide range of sources, including guidance counselors, the Gang Task Force, the juvenile court, social workers, mental health system, behavioral management programs and word-of-mouth.
- In January 2012, DREAMS relocated to a 1939-built, city-owned, former bus maintenance garage located at 10th and Fanning Street, in the heart of Wilmington's Northside "Youth Enrichment Zone"—which was the highest rates of youth violence, high school drop outs, and teen pregnancy in New Hanover County.
- DREAMS raised over a million and a half dollars to turn an old abandoned city property into a thriving arts center and community performing arts venue.

DREAMS Awards and Accomplishments

Awards

- President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities "Coming Up Taller Award" in 2007—the Nation's highest honor for after school programming.
- UNCW's Watson School of Education's "Razor Walker Award" for distinguished service to youth in 2012.
- Wilmington Real Estate "Rescue Award" in 2014, for the repurposing and renovation of DREAMS Center Phase 1 at 901 Fanning Street.
- Lower Cape Fear Stewardship Development Coalition's "Outstanding Stewardship Award" in 2017 for our Phase II permeable parking lot project in the Fall of 2016.
- 2017 "Best Arts Education Organization in Wilmington" Award by Arts in Wilmington.

Accomplishments

- 99% of DREAMS Center for Arts Education graduates go on to graduate from high school and attend college or the military.
- DREAMS has thrived for 20 years as a high-impacted independent, grassroots nonprofit organization with no outstanding debt or loans.
- DREAMS started with four teaching artists and 40 kids in back of the Children's Museum, and now has over 30 teaching artists, 50 different classes and over 500 kids served each semester.
- DREAMS has, since our founding in 1997, always served children in satellite outreach sites throughout New Hanover County public housing and community centers. It has always been our priority to reach out to children who most need our services.
- DREAMS has always been committed to the beautification of Wilmington, with numerous murals and public art pieces around Wilmington—mosaic stepping stones at the Airlie Gardens bottle house, to murals at the Carousel Center, Da Vita Dialysis center, City of Wilmington downtown offices, Castle Street mural. We built a 14 foot tall giraffe ("Gracie") at Greenfield Lake, and have the largest mural in New Hanover County—240 feet long—just outside our building on our retaining wall.
- DREAMS now sends 1-2 kids to college annually to college with a \$5000 Fellowship Award provided by UPS. Our vision is to one day send all of our kids that work hard and graduate from highschool on to college with some sort of scholarship.

The Board-Management Relationship

Board's Roles

Select, evaluate, and support the CEO.

Approve high-level organizational goals and policies.

Make major decisions.

Oversee management and organizational performance.

Act as external advocates and diplomats in public policy, fundraising, and stakeholder/community relations.

Management's Roles

- Run the organization in line with board direction.
- Keep the board educated and informed.
- Seek the board's counsel.
- Recommend goals and policies, supported by background information.
- Frame decisions in the context of the mission and strategic vision, and bring the board well-documented recommendations.
- Bring the board timely information in concise, contextual, or comparative formats.
- Communicate with candor and transparency.
- Be responsive to requests for additional information.
- Keep the board informed, bring recommendations, and mobilize directors to leverage their external connections to support the organization.

DREAMS Board Member Contract

I, _____, understand that as a member of the Board of Directors of DREAMS Center for Arts Education, I have a legal and ethical responsibility to ensure that the organization does the best work possible in pursuit of its goals. I believe in the purpose and the mission of the organization, and I will act responsibly and prudently as its steward. As part of my responsibilities as a board member:

1. I will interpret DREAMS Center for Arts Education work and values to the community, represent the organization, and act as a spokesperson.
2. In turn, I will interpret our constituencies' needs and values to the organization, speak out for their interests, and on their behalf, hold the organization accountable.
3. I will attend at least 75 percent of board meetings, committee meetings, and special events.
4. Each year, but no later than Thanksgiving of each year and without having to be asked, I will make a personal financial contribution at a level that is meaningful to me.
5. I will actively participate in one or more fundraising activities.
6. I will excuse myself from discussions and votes where I have a conflict of interest.
7. I will stay informed about what is currently relevant in the organization. I will ask questions and request information. I will participate in and take responsibility for making decisions on issues, policies, and other matters. I will not stay silent if I have questions or concerns.
8. I will utilize the Board Portal to access financial reports and an up-to-date information about organizational activities that allow me to meet the fiduciary responsibilities of a board member.
9. I will work in good faith with staff and other board members as partners toward achievement of our goals.

If I am unable to fulfill these commitments to the organization, I will expect the board chair to call me and discuss my responsibilities with me.

In turn, the organization will be responsible to me in the following ways:

1. Opportunities will be offered to me to discuss with the executive director and the board president the organization's programs, goals, activities, and status; additionally, I can request such opportunities.
2. The organization will help me perform my duties by keeping me informed about issues in the industry and field in which we are working.
3. Board members and staff will respond transparently to questions that I feel are necessary to carry out my fiscal, legal, and moral responsibilities to DREAMS Center for Arts Education. Board members and staff will work in good faith with me toward achievement of our goals.

4. If DREAMS does not fulfill its commitments to me, I can call on the board chair and executive director to discuss the organization's responsibilities to me.

Signed by: _____, Board Member

Date: _____

Signed by: _____, Board Chair

Date: _____

* To be completed one time, upon joining board to serve first 3-year term **Original signed copy will be kept on file with the Board Secretary.

DREAMS Center for Arts Education, Inc.
Board Member Confidentiality Policy

It is the policy of DREAMS Center for Arts Education, Inc. that board and emeritus council members and employees will not disclose confidential information belonging to, or obtained through their affiliation with DREAMS to any person, including their relatives, friends, and business and professional associates, unless DREAMS has authorized disclosure. This policy is not intended to prevent disclosure where disclosure is required by law.

Board members, emeritus council members, volunteers and employees are cautioned to demonstrate professionalism, good judgment, and care to avoid unauthorized or inadvertent disclosures of confidential information and should, for example, refrain from leaving confidential information contained in documents or on computer screens in plain view. Upon separation of employment and at the end of a board or emeritus council member's term, he or she shall return, all documents, papers, and other materials, that may contain confidential information. Failure to adhere to this policy will result in discipline, up to and including separation of service or employment with DREAMS Center for Arts Education, Inc.

Signature of Board / Emeritus Council Member or Employee

Printed Name

Date