Foreword

Civic engagement is arguably one of the most important elements of fine arts-related education, not only because it serves to educate the public on what participating disciplines do, but because it serves as experiential education, adding significant reward to the academic experience of the students involved. But this engagement extends beyond education in that it offers opportunities for meaningful interaction among all of the participants. These participants include students, teachers, civic organization members, neighborhood leaders and residents, local government officials, and others, all working together to enhance the quality of life within the engaged communities.

Perhaps one of the most important aspects of this book is that it includes a wide-ranging and diverse collection of experiences in fine arts-related civic engagement. As such, it offers meaningful insight into the history and theory of engagement, the role of various participants, specific projects and activities, and the outcomes of and lessons learned in civic engagement.

Through the individual chapters, Dr. Bryna Bobick and Dr. Leigh Nanney Hersey have assembled a series of varied experiences that provide insight into the many choices available relative to fine arts-related civic engagement. These experiences are valuable to individuals entering into their first civic engagement project or veterans of civic engagement who may wish to explore other means by which to accomplish their goals. More importantly, it adds to the growing conversation about the importance of civic engagement as a learning tool and the power it has to change the way we think about education and its role in society, including the practical application of education to empower our local communities.

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