



Department of Art

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Re: Community Letter of Support, Hear/Here Northside Project Funding

Dear Distinguished City Council Members,

The Hear/Here Northside Project possesses educational value. I am writing to express some strong and compelling arguments for why the City of La Crosse should support funding its development.

The late Elliot Eisner (Education Theorist/Professor) used critical methods borrowed from the arts to improve educational practices. In 2002, he identified [10 lessons the arts teach](#), which is still looked at today as powerful rationale for interdisciplinary models of education, such as pairing history with art and concepts such as experiential learning. In his third lesson, Eisner relays that the arts celebrate multiple perspectives citing perhaps the largest lesson is that there are many ways to see and interpret the world. In this context I'd like you to consider the Hear/Here Project as an interdisciplinary and experiential opportunity for youth in our community as well as those visiting to have opportunities to develop and grow in terms of their sense of self in connection with the broader world. If we look at the project through this lens it is an educational toolbox that functions as an outdoor, interactive historical museum sharing stories about the community, its history, and its strengths through its members.

In Eisner's tenth lesson, he writes about how curriculum symbolizes to the young what adults believe is important. Again, if we consider the Hear/Here Project through the educational lens (it's essentially an outdoor historical museum representing the community) we realize each potential story signifies a sense of pride for Northside identity and its history (as well as preserving that history and sharing it). It encapsulates pride for the Northside to its members as well as its visitors through the preservation and sharing of its history. That is significant and has enormous value for morale, especially for Northside youth populations because identity is important at those developing stages of life.

I'm a former La Crosse resident and K-12 educator who taught at several Northside schools between 2010-2018. I taught at Coulee Montessori Elementary and Middle School at the former Roosevelt Elementary location as well as its current Northside School location. I also taught at Logan Middle and Logan High School. I am currently an Associate Professor of Art at UWL, teaching, advising, and



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supervising the art education program. As an educator of pre-service teachers, there is rich value in our students developing curriculum derived from Hear/Here Project sites/stories that can be scaled for interdisciplinary art-integrated elementary, middle, and high school lessons. In working with numerous area teachers, I also believe there would be a strong interest for area teachers to utilize and adapt Hear/Here sites/stories and content in their classrooms to connect their students to the community in ways that adds depth and makes local history vivid, alive, and site-specific.

Lastly, I'd like to share how powerful learning becomes when there are opportunities for research and experience that can take place outside of the school and classroom walls that are free (no admission fee required per person) and no bus charge/fee required. There is a beauty in the ability for students to be able to engage in walking field trips from school or their home locations on the Northside to interact with the intended Hear/Here Project sites (or via the website). Many schools and teachers no longer have funding or budgets to support field trips to museum locations so having the walkable and website Hear/Here Project available free would offer teachers a one-of-a kind adaptable and memorable curricular experience for their students.

Teaching on the Northside was something I truly took pride in during my K-12 career. Thank you for your time and consideration in hearing my arguments and position.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lisa Lenarz', written in a cursive style.

Lisa Lenarz