

# Shakespeare **STEAM**: 2019-20 Summary, Solutions and Summer (+*Future*)

## What is Shakespeare STEAM?

Shakespeare STEAM is Shakespeare in Detroit's educational program which supplements and complements the curriculum of schools located within the city proper through artistic and vocational training.

## What are the pillars of Shakespeare STEAM?

- **Science** of lighting a production
- **Technology** of sound design
- **Engineering** of a form (*i.e. an Elizabethan costume*)
- **Art** of classical performance (*i.e. heightened language, verse vs. prose, metaphor, antithesis, iambic pentameter*)
- **Mathematics** of building a set

## What is the purpose of the program/what need is Shakespeare STEAM meeting?

The purpose of the program is to supplement the lack of arts programming in Detroit schools, both charter and public, with professional, qualified artists who are actively working in the industry and serve as teaching artists and cultural insiders. In addition, the program will introduce the technical aspects of theater with the aim of inspiring more young people of color to explore careers as technicians and designers in lighting, sound, costume design, carpentry and other behind-the-scenes aspects of theater. Students will earn a skill set that is applicable to the American Theater and several industries that incorporate engineering, technology and science into their workforce.

The program also aligns with Shakespeare in Detroit's mission for an equitable world by offering an artistic/theatrical curriculum that is competitive with educational systems around the country.

## Why did we begin the pilot at 3rd grade?

According to several experts, [such as Unicef](#): "Early childhood, which spans the

period up to 8 years of age, is critical for cognitive, social, emotional and physical development. During these years, a child's newly developing brain is highly plastic and responsive to change as billions of integrated neural circuits are established through the interaction of genetics, environment and experience. Optimal brain development requires a stimulating environment, adequate nutrients and social interaction with attentive caregivers."

However, it is our goal to expand to K-2nd in the future with hopes of growing partnership at The School at Marygrove which will be an institution for K-12.

### **What were the short-term goals of the program?**

The goal for this 2019-20 academic year was to measure the feasibility of the program via four major categories: (1) the collaboration and active partnership between SiD and potential school partners (2) feedback from students, educators and the community (3) capacity to bridge access for young people interested in classical theater and (4) impact, at least, 500 students by providing a Shakespeare performance (required reading in schools) at no cost to them.

### **What are the long-term goals of the program?**

The long-term plans for the program include the following outcomes:

- Establish Shakespeare STEAM as the premiere performing arts youth program in the city
- Evolve Shakespeare in Detroit's traditional Shakespeare in the park performances as an opportunity to showcase extraordinary Detroit students as the actors/talent for this service to the community
- Impact five-to-ten thousand students in the City of Detroit via accessible programming including content at no cost to them, free live performances, vocational training and artistic opportunities by 2023
- Develop summer employment opportunities in the arts where students gain industry experience and an income
- Build a conservatory with qualified artists and technicians leading the work for high school students to learn directly from experts currently working in the American Theater
- Establish two full scholarships for two extraordinary students to receive "full rides" to the university of their choice (with an accredited theater program)
- Hire a full-time + contracted staff to facilitate and grow Shakespeare STEAM
- Earn a permanent home for the conservatory and SiD staff \*\*\*

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- Monitor and improve literacy and life skills for students in Detroit
- Establish curriculum that is competitive with youth drama programs around the country to meet Detroit's incredible students at their potential
- Sustain hope and humanity by connecting Detroit to live theater for, by and of its most valuable and vulnerable population to build a brighter educational and economic future

**Boggs School Learnings (3rd through 8th grades):**

This is a highly-engaged, collaborative school that we want to continue to work with in the future. We served 75 students from September - November 2019.

The school's principal is a professional organizer and created an environment that allowed the students to thrive from a social justice aspect as well as artistically and academically. They had a showcase on November 14, 2019 which featured some of the art and renderings they created for Romeo and Juliet as well as a dance performance for the masquerade scene. They then hosted a panel where students talked about the process and their experience with their school community. It was incredible watching elementary and middle school students break down the structure of iambic pentameter (10-syllables or five "dee dums") as well as compare and contrast it to contemporary poetry.

**Clippert Academy Learnings (5th to 8th grades):**

The program received an incredible response from students and staff members. We served around 20-to-30 students from September 2019 - March 2020.

The students were most recently working on Macbeth. However, they presented vignettes of Romeo and Juliet on November 14, 2020 where they created their own sets/backdrops, they staged themselves and curated their own costumes from one of our teaching artist's stock.

These are extremely high-potential students and we are looking forward to continuing to steward this relationship and expand our after-school program in collaboration with the staff. We have identified this school as our top choice for ongoing partnership as the impact possibilities are extraordinary here.

### **DSA Learnings (9th to 12th grades):**

There are highly-talented youth actors in the school with incredible potential that needs to be harnessed. We served 23 students with in-person instruction from September - November 2019.

The University of Michigan, who are also embedded at the school, helped facilitate our program through their team member who was consistently engaged with the process of producing Shakespeare in Detroit's youth production of Romeo and Juliet.

The school has great ambitions but, as DPSCD superintendent, Dr. Vitti mentioned during a February 11, 2020 meeting at the school, attended by SiD Managing Director, Christine Pellecchia, there is much work to do.

We may go back to the school as the district announced a new initiative called DSA Pathways, which may help streamline communications and collaboration for long-term partnership.

### **The School at Marygrove Learnings (9th grade):**

The majority of students we worked with did not have theater experience. Only 3 of the 15 who received in-person instruction had performing experience. However, most of them displayed great potential in this regard. In fact, on our last day, one of our groups (Group B) showed incredible progress with Act 3, Scene 1 of Romeo and Juliet and great comprehension of the text along with impressive syntax and modulation based on iambic pentameter as well as confidence and projection capacity.

The students also thrived in the area of design and engineering showing great sketch and rendering capabilities.

The school also doesn't have a physical-Ed hour or instruction so we made our warm-ups for the class cognitive and cardio-based.

We were unable to complete the program due to COVID-19 but are exploring digital possibilities for the future with hopes to return to our in-school training in the fall of 2020 (the new academic year).

We are planning on using our partner, Folger Shakespeare Library, as a resource to continue our 7th hour class this school year. However, we are in need of 15 tablets to be distributed to our students for weekly digital interaction with Shakespeare in Detroit.

**What were the successes of the program during the 2019-20 academic year?**

SiD produced a full, onstage production of Romeo and Juliet at DSA, which more than 700 students in 3rd through 12 grades experienced/saw from Clippert Academy, Boggs School, Academy of the Americas, Brenda Scott Academy, Spain Elementary-Middle and, of course, the student body at DSA along with members of the public November, 14-16, 2019.

The program was an incredible display of the quality of SiD's work and impact as DSA's Principal, Dr. Reynolds, stated after the opening performance of Romeo and Juliet: "This is the sort of work I've always wanted at this school."

Romeo and Juliet was a proofpoint of what is artistically possible in Detroit schools with the properly trained individuals in place to execute theater and provide training to students.

The nonprofit was also able to begin working with the inaugural 9th grade class at The School at Marygrove, beginning Tuesday, January 28, 2020. Although, the work was impeded due to COVID-19, we were able to see progress in the following areas with 90 percent of our 15 students during the 7th hour class on Mondays, Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: greater understanding of verse vs. prose, verb usage, completed renderings for costume designs, great confidence displayed by several students and a curiosity to learn more.

**What were some of the opportunities discovered for the next school year during this current pilot?**

SiD has the opportunity to find ways to inspire high school faculty to visit our classrooms more frequently. Perhaps, by setting specific dates for teachers, counselors and/or the school principal to participate in activities. We believe this would further encourage students to see the class as a connected piece of their curriculum and a supplement to what they are learning in their other subjects.

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It appears (and we can't make a final judgment as there is more to discover and learn with more time to continue to grow the program) that middle schools have more bandwidth for learning due to an active faculty presence in our classrooms.

Boggs School and Clippert Academy's accessible staff and community culture aligned with SiD's mission to work collaboratively. While we are unclear on why this may have been the case, perhaps, it is the learning trajectory of middle vs. high school as perhaps the latter is expected to be more independent of faculty?

The School at Marygrove had three different principals throughout the school year which made building a relationship with the person helming the curriculum challenging. However, the school counselor was a great resource for us beginning the program and we hope there will be some leadership stability upon our return.

SiD's largest hurdle this year is, of course, COVID-19 which means that our program, Shakespeare STEAM, has been cancelled for the remainder of the 2019-20 school year. We do not have middle and high school educational content available digitally, yet. Although this has been on our radar as the organization recently began creating HOW TO videos for the general public (see [HERE](#)) on YouTube. In addition, our founder is part of a learning module called Ringbeller along with other influencers such as Seth Godin and Ira Glass (see [HERE](#)). There is an opportunity here for us to create virtual content that allows us to remain connected with our students when unforeseen occurrences happen in the future.

**What solutions can be put in place to create radical change that can improve processes and positively impact the program and its most important beneficiaries, youth?**

1. Digital content featuring STEAM pillar modules
2. Digital performances with our professional actors created for students that aligns with their required Shakespeare reading
3. Lunch or orientations with school faculty to discuss common goals, objectives, collaboration opportunities and specific partnership dates
4. Continued partnership with pilot schools to shape and grow relationships
5. Explore relationships with more schools to create more impact and identify more robust and meaningful partnership opportunities

### **Timeline for the 2019-20 season:**

- Shakespeare in Detroit began its pilot educational program, Shakespeare STEAM, the week of September 16, 2019 at Boggs School, Clippert Academy and the Detroit School of Arts.
- Boggs School -- teaching artists were embedded in three (3) classrooms during school hours with 3rd through 8th graders (Mon-Fri) beginning in September - November 2019
- Clippert Academy -- teaching artists taught after school theater workshop (Tues & Thurs) beginning in September 2019 - March 2020
- DSA -- Shakespeare in Detroit produced a full production of "Romeo and Juliet" with theater students at the school (M, W and Friday with extended hours during technical/dress rehearsal weeks), September - November 2019
- In-person learning concluded on Thursday, March 12, 2020 due to COVID-19 (coronavirus) precautionary measures by the Detroit Public Schools Community District | Governor Whitmer determined that schools will be closed for the remainder of the school year on Thursday, April 2, 2020
- Digital learning opportunities for students at The School at Marygrove begin Monday, April 13, 2020

### **How was the program funded?**

The program was funded at no cost to the school district, students or faculty.

Sponsorships paid for the cost of the program for the 2019-20 academic year, along with some grant funding as follows:

- DTE Foundation (\$10,000)
- Community Foundation of SE Michigan (\$10,000)
- Strategic Staffing Solutions (\$7,500.00)
- Deloitte (\$5,000)
- Greektown Casino (\$5,000.00)
- Michigan Council for the Arts and Cultural Affairs (% Culture Source, \$4,000.00)
- Skillman Foundation (MCACA match \$4,000.00)
- Chemical Bank (\$2,000.00)
- Indiegogo crowdfunding campaign (\$1,884.68)
- Inebriated reading fundraising series (\$8,408.60)
  1. Antony and Cleopatra at Ant Hall, 2019
  2. The Two Noble Kinsmen, 2019
  3. The Scarlet Letter, 2019
  4. Macbeth, 2019

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5. Julius Caesar, 2019
  6. Love's Labour's Lost, 2020
  7. Taming of the Shrew, 2020 **\*\*\* (Raised \$550.00)**
- Knight Foundation (% University of Michigan \$8,400.00)
  - Schoolcraft College (lunch for Boggs School and Clippert Academy, in-kind)

\*\*\*impacted by the COVID-19 and tickets did not sell as well as they traditionally do. All funds were distributed to the artists who participated in the podcast reading of the play (and/or teaching artists for Shakespeare STEAM) as an alternative since SiD's in-person event was postponed/canceled until further notice. The podcast reading took place on Sunday, April 5, 2020 via Blog Talk Radio. BREAKDOWN: \$100 Jowi Estava, \$40 Cal Schwartz, \$40 Nate Mark, \$40 Vicki Morgan, \$100 Laura Heikkinen, \$40 Steve Xander Carson, \$90 Christine Pellecchia, \$100 Indigo Colbert. These funds are NOT included in this summary total.

**TOTAL RAISED: \$66,193.28**

**Additional information:**

SiD hired nine (9) teaching artists for the program: Steve Xander Carson (DSA and Marygrove) Indigo Colbert (Boggs, DSA and Marygrove), Jonathan Curry (DSA), Jowi Estava, Reg Flowers (Boggs and Clippert), Laura Heikkinen (Clippert and DSA), Asia Mark (DSA), Christine Pellecchia (Clippert Academy), Cal Schwartz (DSA), Sam White (DSA and Marygrove/Administration)

**SUMMER 2020 PROSPECTS FOR EXTENDED LEARNING (PLAN A):**

- Hire 10-to-15 high students to work on summer production of The Merry Wives of Windsor at Campus Martius, July 23-26, 2020, as production assistants (summer employment/paid opportunity).
- Some students will also have the opportunity to perform in the play (this depends on their pillar/area of interest/focus).
- Students will also participate in a summer conservatory where they will earn scholarships and technology to use for the following school year.
- Extend learning for students who excelled during SiD's in-school Shakespeare STEAM programming in 2019-20 using Barry Edelstein's "Thinking Shakespeare" through rigorous and exciting classical training with the organization's cultural insiders.



**SUMMER 2020 (PLAN B):**

*A plan B is required due to the current and unpredictable trajectory of COVID-19 in Michigan (and throughout the world).*

- Extensive six-to-eight week conservatory, beginning in July 2020 with hopes that the state and world are in a much healthier condition by that time.
- Extend learning for students who excelled during SiD's in-school Shakespeare STEAM programming in 2019-20 using Barry Edelstein's "Thinking Shakespeare" through rigorous and exciting classical training with the organization's cultural insiders.
- Conservatory focuses on all five pillars, facilitated by qualified SiD teaching artists and cultural insiders
- Students to be paid for conservatory
- SiD to record learning modules based on STEAM pillars

**SUMMER 2020 (PLAN C):**

*A plan C is required due to the current and unpredictable trajectory of COVID-19 in Michigan (and throughout the world). \*\*\*in the case in-person activities are still not possible by summer 2020.*

- SiD to record learning modules based on STEAM pillars
- SiD to record abbreviated, filmed version of a required play i.e. Julius Caesar (required reading for sophomore's in DPSCD).

\*\*\*Some funds raised for summer 2020 programming will be applied to the fall 2020 school year at The School at Marygrove, Boggs School and Clippert Academy based on status of COVID-19 and appropriate allocation.

