

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## Annual Houston Arts Partners Conference Sparks Creativity in Every Classroom

*Event highlights local arts-in-education partnerships and brings national leaders in the field to Downtown Houston*

Houston, TX—**The Houston Arts Partners Conference will be held on Sept. 13 and 14, 2019, at the University of Houston-Downtown.** With the goal of ensuring participation in visual and performing arts for all students in the Houston area, this annual event generates cross-curricular learning, partnerships, and innovation for K-12 teachers of all subjects, fine arts educators, and teaching artists. Registration fees are \$45 for one day or \$75 for both days. **For more information, to view the full schedule, or to register, visit [www.HAPconference.org](http://www.HAPconference.org).**

The theme, ***IGNITION: Sparking Creativity in Every Classroom***, highlights the galvanizing potential of partnerships among arts organizations, colleges, and schools – and prompts teachers to reconnect with their inner artist or performer. The 2019 event is the 9<sup>th</sup> professional development conference held by the Houston Arts Partners (HAP) coalition, a collaborative partnership among Houston’s professional, non-profit arts organizations, institutions of higher education, and public school districts. The event’s co-chairs are Susan Chiboroski of Goose Creek Consolidated Independent School District, and Jonathan Minchew-Gonzalez, the Director of Education and Youth Engagement at Main Street Theater. Young Audiences of Houston, a 501(c)3 organization, is the managing partner for the HAP coalition.

The event’s keynote speaker, Courtney J. Boddie, is the director of Education/School Engagement for the New Victory Theater, New York City’s premier nonprofit performing arts theater devoted year-round to kids and their families and classmates. Ms. Boddie will be reporting

on research on the intrinsic impact on children of attending professional performing arts events. Additionally, she will be leading a masterclass and conducting an “office hours” session during the event.

The 2019 HAP Conference features more than 25 breakout sessions in all arts disciplines. These sessions showcase the work of the coalition’s partner institutions, with classroom-tested, innovative, and unexpected strategies to integrate the arts and creativity into every classroom; demonstrations of how to connect students with Houston’s professional visual and performing artists; and artistic experiences that have teachers rolling up their sleeves and activating their inner artist, performer, or musician for a “HAPpening” on Friday afternoon. Some sessions will explore partner venues with excursions to the Ensemble Theatre or the Contemporary Arts Museum Houston.

To emphasize that every moment of the HAP conference is an opportunity to learn, participating faculty from the University of Houston-Downtown will lead a wraparound experience throughout the conference focused on peer learning and engagement. Attendees are encouraged to group themselves by focus areas including Culturally Responsive Education, Addressing Social/Emotional Issues, Advocating for the Arts on Your Campus, and Initiating Collaboration on Your Campus.

HAP Coalition Members:

**A.D. Players, Aldine ISD, Alief ISD, Alvin ISD, Art League Houston, Artist Boat, Asia Society Texas Center, Brazosport ISD, Contemporary Arts Museum Houston, The Ensemble Theatre, Express Children's Theatre, FotoFest - Literacy Through Photography, Galena Park ISD, Goose Creek CISD, HITS Theatre, The Hobby Center for the Performing Arts, Holocaust Museum Houston, Houston Center for Contemporary Craft, Houston Community College, Houston ISD, Klein ISD, Lamar Consolidated ISD, Lone Star College - Tomball, Main Street Theater, MECA - Multicultural Education and Counseling through the Arts, Mercury, MUSIQA, New Caney ISD, Pasadena ISD, San Jacinto College, Sheldon ISD, Spring ISD, Texan-French Alliance for the Arts, Theatre Under The Stars, Tomball ISD, The University of Houston, Young Audiences of Houston**

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### More about Courtney J. Boddie:



**Courtney J. Boddie, New Victory Director of Education/School Engagement**, oversees all programs related to school communities including the New Victory school partnership program, teacher professional development training in the performing arts and an innovative approach in the professional development of more than 50 New Victory Teaching Artists. In the last 7 years alone,

Ms. Boddie has expanded the theater's scope of work in such programs as Victory Dance, which provides free dance and dance education to NYC summer schools; Create, a theater-based teacher professional development track for the city's Pre-K expansion, the largest in the nation; and GIVE, a brand new initiative to address equitable student engagement in inclusion classrooms.

In 2019, TYA/USA awarded Ms. Boddie with the TYA Community Impact Award for her leadership in New Victory SPARK (Schools with the Performing Arts Reach Kids), a robust multi-year arts program that has transformed New York City school communities previously underserved in the arts. Through intensive relationships with schools' administrative and teaching staff, New Victory SPARK utilizes the theater's existing school programs—including live performances by international arts companies, a highly trained ensemble of Teaching Artists and smartly-designed classroom curricula—to supply performing arts engagement that is as sustainable, creative and impactful.

During her tenure at New Victory, the Theater received the Arts Education Award (2008) from Americans for the Arts and a special Drama Desk Award (2012) for "...nurturing a love of theater in young people." Ms. Boddie is the Creator and Host of Teaching Artistry with Courtney J. Boddie, a monthly podcast featuring engaging and investigative interviews, roundtable conversations and panels with artists and arts education leaders. She is an adjunct professor at New York University. Ms. Boddie was on the Board of Directors of the Association of Teaching Artists (ATA) for 5 years (President, 2015 to 2017; Treasurer, 2018-19). Additionally, she serves on the Teaching Artist Committee of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable, the editorial board for the Teaching Artist Journal and is a Women's Center Media SheSource. Prior to joining The New Victory in 2003, Ms. Boddie was Program Associate for Empire State Partnerships (NYSCA) and a teaching artist

for Roundabout Theatre Company. She received her Master's degree from the Educational Theatre Graduate Program at New York University.