



El Sistema Case Study Questions

San Diego Arts Education Learning Exchange

Purpose & Description

We believe that El Sistema inspired programs have the potential to be change agents for their communities and schools, just as they are for children and families. The majority of El Sistema inspired programs across the U.S. meet on school campuses. Their connection to in-school music programs varies. Quite often, the vision for connecting the two is undefined or under developed.

The five questions below are intended to help programs begin exploring their potential to make systemic change within schools. A select group of completed Case Studies will be used during the San Diego County Arts Education Learning Exchange as workshop content facilitated by Eric Booth.

Please answer the three questions below by March 7, 2016 and send them to:
Annette Fritzsche at afritzsche@sdys.org

Program Name: Bravo Orgeon!
Program Contact: Bonnie and Seth
Email and Phone Number:

1. A metaphor to depict the current relationship between our program (BRAVO) and the Portland Public Schools:

The Portland Public Schools is a large city district that we are comparing to a Douglas Fir forest, which covers much of the Pacific NW.

Our program (BRAVO) can be compared to the rhododendrons which grow in areas of the forest. They are beautiful bushes with astoundingly stunning flowers and dark green leaves that are evergreen. Our program is small but growing, does not require an opening in the forest to flourish, and lends beauty and stature to the forest. The rhododendrons grow best in some shade, so need the forest canopy to grow, as the BRAVO program needs the school district to provide the space and nurturing to thrive. it is a lovely symbiotic relationship.

2. The Douglas fir forest of the Pacific NW, is a stately evergreen forest which provides space in its understory as well as protective partial shade for the beautiful rhododendron, a hardy evergreen with stunning flowers. The Portland Public Schools, like the fir forest, provides space and nurturing for BRAVO Youth Orchestras, which, like the rhododendrons, provide inspiration, beauty and a complementary kind of strength.

3. We have definitely sought to use our program to influence equitable availability of in-school music. We began our program with both in-school and after school components, the in-school one based on the model of JAMM (Juneau Alaska Music matters). We currently are based in two schools, and both schools have in school BRAVO now funded by the Portland Public Schools. We hope to expand to three schools next year, and to more in the future. We regard the in-school program as a critical part of the entire BRAVO program; the school district does as well, as that is the part that they currently fund.

4. We have been working closely with the Portland Public Schools (PPS) to expand our BRAVO program to all the schools in the Roosevelt Cluster, which is a cluster of 8 schools in the most underserved part of the city. These schools have had fewer musical opportunities for their students, partly because of poverty. PPS is asking BRAVO, which has had great success in two of the schools, to help them reach the other 6 schools. Every school that has BRAVO will also have an in-school music teacher as well.

5. The obstacles are money, sufficient outstanding staff that teach with El Sistema principles, and staff oversight.