Akira Recording Studio
PLAYBOOK

Madison Metropolitan School District
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Project Overview

Project Description

The Recording Studio, piloted at MMSD's Toki Middle School, empowers students as producers capable of teaching other students and staff how to utilize a recording studio. Artist residencies, peer-to-peer mentorship and an emerging partnership with community centers is part of the sustainability of the Studio. The goals of the recording studio are to 1) amplify student voice, 2) increase a sense of belonging among the students, and 3) provide students with high-quality audio arts experiences.

Key Contributors

- School Based Leads: Eliav Goldman and Gavin Garrett (Toki Middle)
- Research and Innovation: Katie Mae Imhoff-Bebeau and Daniel Torres-Rangel

Minimum Needs for Project Success

- Staff members to teach the recording studio class
- Space to build out the recording studio
- Designated class time in the school schedule
- Budget to get the recording studio and class up and running, ~$2,000 per station (Mac computer, keyboard, mic, mic cable, headphones, Logic program, Audio interface)
- Plan for technology and equipment*
- Student interest to fill minimum course sections
- Guest artists to engage with students in the recording studio

*As a 1:1 district, MMSD has committed to and invested in PC (not Mac) technology. All devices, equipment, and software for the recording studio needs to be PCs or PC compatible.

Desired Outcomes + Metrics

OUTCOME: Amplify student voice within the school

- Measured by: List of projects

OUTCOME: Increase student sense of belonging

- Measured by: Surveys and meeting attendance

OUTCOME: Provide students with high quality audio arts experiences

- Measured by: Curriculum plan, list of guest artists, skills assessments

Testing and Learning

Before investing in a full recording studio, a "satellite studio" was set up during the first year at Toki using closet/side-office spaces. A satellite studio was smaller in scale in terms of equipment (2-3 recording stations) and number of students (4-5 at a time). It was also integrated into an existing part of the schedule (lunch) rather than being a separate class.

In the early stages of the Akira Recording Studio (ARS), the team used Build-Measure-Learn (BML) cycles to develop the project and make adjustments and improvements along the way. Similar to feedback loops, the BML cycles are intended to test uncertainties, assumptions and risks about whether the prototype is desirable, feasible, and worthwhile. The tests are reflected upon in order to make adjustments, and move toward proof of concept that makes the prototype scalable. Below are the key questions and learnings for each.

	What we tested	What we learned
Desirable	• Will students experience an increased sense of belonging? • Will guest artists want to work with students?	• Students were excited to use the studio and contributed ideas for how to use the space and equipment • The 3 guest artists who worked with students wanted to come back • 6th grade class shows higher attendance rates for BIPOC students than students who are not identified as BIPOC • 6th and 7th grade classes show higher attendance rates for IEP students than students without an IEP

BIG IDEAS

|	**What we tested**	**What we learned**
Feasible	• Can guest artists come in to work with students?	• Having a designated space and knowing as many details as possible is helpful when working with guest artists • Setting up contracts and a schedule for guest artists can take time • 3 contracted artists came to the studio • Scope and sequence was developed
Worthwhile	• Will staff members be interested in supporting or running the studio? • Will there be enough tech support for studio maintenance?	• Staff members are more interested in participating if they are paid • Toki added 1.0 FTE Music teacher position to provide quarterly classes in the studio for 6th and 7th grade students • Humanities class was able to find a way to use trained students to support class use of the studio • Recording studios need to be PC based (not Mac) to receive approval and sufficient ongoing technical support
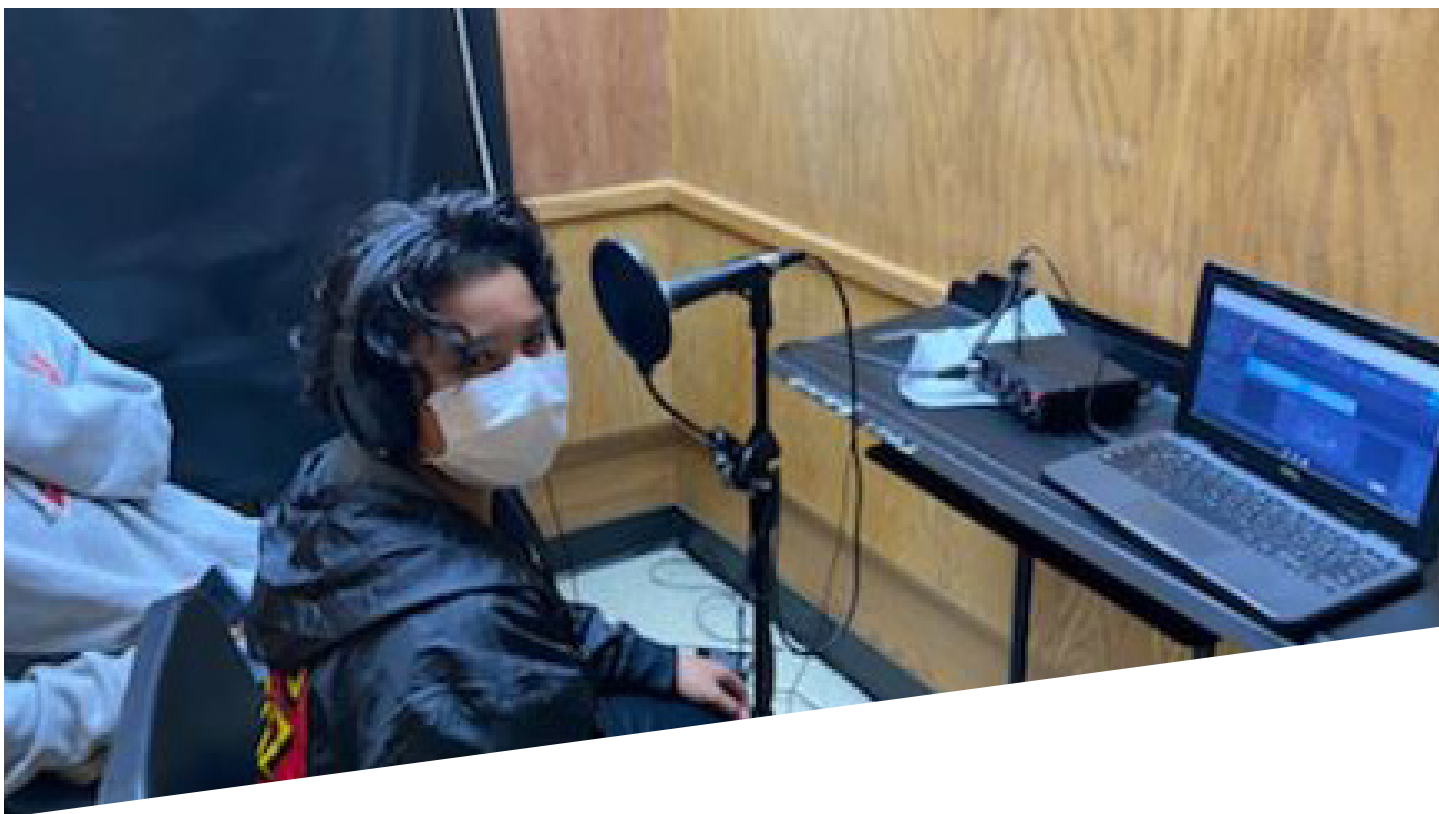
Getting Started

To set your project and team up for success, ask yourself the following questions.

❍ Do we have staff members to teach the recording studio class?

❍ Do we have a space to build out the recording studio?

❍ Do we have a designated class time in the school schedule?

❍ Do we have the budget to get the recording studio and class up and running, ~ $2,000 per station?

❍ Have we identified and ordered recording studio equipment?

❍ Do we have student interest to fill minimum course sections?

❍ Do we have a first guest artist to engage with students in the recording studio?

Project Details

The Recording Studio

If the satellite studios prove to be desirable, feasible, and viable, then you're ready to build a full recording studio for the second year. A full recording studio is a larger, more permanent investment, with one recording station per student, full classes of students, a designated staff member to teach the classes, and a designated class time built into the schedule.

SUMMER:
- Identify and order full recording studio equipment
- Designate a permanent space in the school for the recording studio
- Hire teacher and/or studio manager
- Begin curriculum planning

FALL & WINTER:
- Implement recording studio classes
- Bring in guest artists to engage with the students
- Collect data studio engagement and student skill development

SPRING:
- Implement recording studio classes
- Bring in guest artists to engage with the students
- Collect data studio engagement and student skill development
- Compile list of completed projects
- Showcase student projects

Ideas for Adaptations

Technology: Depending on the budget, expanding the technology in the recording studio can enhance the student experience and offer more authentic audio/musical opportunities. Examples of technology include: Personal tablets (class set), instruments (guitars, basses, keyboards, percussion), mixers, midi pads, DJ equipment, sound systems, and amps.

Space: Once the basics are set up for students to be able to record, how might you enhance the space? How might the wall space be used to honor student projects, reflect the culture of the students, or spark a sense of creativity? What are ways to soundproof the room? How can the tech be stored so it is organized and accessible for students?

Partnerships: Guest artists who are interested in returning can become part of a network of artists connected to the recording studio. What organizations might you partner with as well? What field trips are possible for students?

Audience: Part of creating an authentic experience for students is offering opportunities for them to engage with an audience. What are ways that the students' project can be shared within the school, with families, and in the broader community? How might the students gain recognition for their work?

Additional Resources/Appendix/Templates

Scope and Sequence sample