

Part One: COVID-19 Community Conversation for Arts Administrators Transcript
Zoom Webinar
Tuesday, March 10, 2020

JEN: Good morning everyone, we're just going to wait until we get assembled a bit to get started.

DANIELLE (viewer): Hi there, good morning. Who's hosting this meeting actually? This was forwarded from a whole group of like sister leaders...

JEN: This is the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable.

DANIELLE (viewer): Okay, fantastic.

SOBHA: Hi.

JEN: We're just going to wait for a few more folks to join, there are quite a few more to join us. If you are on the line, please mute yourself, and we'll tell you when to unmute. Thank you.

SOBHA: I have a timer going, Jen.

JEN : Great, thanks Sobha.

GARY (viewer): Hello this is Gary.

SOBHA: Hi, Gary.

JEN: Hey Gary, we are just waiting for folks to assemble, and we will start as close to 9:00 as we can.

GARY (viewer): Alright sounds good. I'll put you on mute, I'm walking outside.

PAULA (viewer): And this is Paula Heitman from Marquis Studios, I'm here too.

JEN: Hi there. For those of you who just joined us on the phone or via the Zoom video, we are waiting for folks to assemble. We are waiting on quite a few folks to join us this morning, so we're not going to do formal round-robin introductions just to save time, and we'll start as close to 9 o'clock as possible. Thanks to everyone for being here.

GABRIELLE (viewer): Sounds good.

ANONYMOUS VIEWER: Are we supposed to mutee ourselves?

JEN: Yes, if you're on the phone please mute yourself. We're going to start in just a minute, folks are just signing on and we are expecting many folks.

ANONYMOUS VIEWER: Okay, thank you.

(background chatter)

JEN; Folks, if you're just joining us, please put yourself on mute. We're going to get started in just a moment. We'll have a chance for folks to answer or add resources once we get the meeting started.

(background chatter)

JEN: Okay Sobha, should we get started?

SOBHA: Do you want to wait one more minute?

JEN: Okay. Again, if you're on the phone please mute yourself. You can let us know you're here by just typing into the chat functionality on the right side.

ANONYMOUS VIEWER: I feel a little silly but I can't figure out how to mute myself.

JEN: Are you on the video or the phone?

ANONYMOUS VIEWER: I'm just on the phone, but my regular screen for my phone mute I can't-- do I mute it during Zoom or on my actual phone?

JEN: I think either would work. Whatever is comfortable for you to toggle between.

AYESHA (viewer): Hi, this is Ayesha.

JEN: Hi, good morning, we're just getting started.

EVE (viewer): Hi this is Eve- it says Nancy Cleaver but that's just because I'm on my work Zoom.

JEN: Hey Sobha, I think we should get started.

SOBHA: Let's get started, yeah. So-

TIFFANY (viewer): Just a quick question-- sorry. This is Tiffany, I'm from Literacy Trust, is it possible to record this call so we can share it?

SOBHA: Yeah, this whole hour is being recorded. So, thank you for reminding me to tell everybody. If there's something that you don't want out there, don't say it. It is being recorded as a resource that will be linked to our website. Thank you to everyone joining us.

GABRIELLE (viewer): Wait, sorry, just one minute. This is Gabrielle from Lineage Project. Is it possible to think about having a part at the end where it is not recorded? Because I think there's some information about systems we may want to talk about that we may not want on a website, but we may need to share information internally. Is that a possibility, like to have the last 15 minutes not be recorded?

JEN: We can try to do that. We have a pretty packed agenda, but let's-- we'll try to, if we have time at the end, we'll try to spend at least 10 minutes or so unrecorded, we can do that.

SOBHA: And one thing I just want to put out there, if we think it's a good idea to do something like this again, we can. Anyway, my name is Sobha. Jennifer DiBella is also on the line, as well as Gary Padmore, representing our Executive Committee of the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable. I know that there are several board members on as well, and thank you to everyone. I know this was last minute, but we felt that we wanted to create a space where we could, you know, talk about what is happening and share resources and ideas. Again, please mute yourself unless you're talking. If you want to ask a question, share a resource, or introduce yourself, please use the chat feature in Zoom, you can just... on the bottom of your screen, it'll show up on the right hand of your screen, and we'll do our best to indicate when people should come off of Mute you know, if we see something. I know there are people on the phone, Jennifer and I will do our best to kind of, sort of reiterate resources that are being shared out loud. But again, this will be linked to our website as a resource. So we're going to get started. Again, we wanted to create the hour- which is going to go by probably pretty fast- to share any plans or procedures, even if you're waiting on approval for them. And we're going to try to structure it... we thought really late last night about a way to structure the conversation so we could make the best use of our time. So we thought about doing it in this manner: dedicating some time to organization on-site programming, so if you're a theater educator, for example, that might mean like public performances; dedicating some time to off-site school programming; how to support teaching artists and staff; and just resources to share, and then questions. Again, if we run out of time, we can think about doing this again in the next week or so. Um, I'm going to pass it over to Jen. She's going to start the conversation.

JEN: Morning everybody. Actually, I think I'm going to mute everybody just to get us started, because it's hard to hear. That means that if you want to speak, you'll have to unmute yourself. Hopefully this works, it should help us reduce the noise. Okay, that seems better. Okay, so as Sobha said, we're going to talk about it through those lenses. Hopefully everybody saw that I also posted in the chat the different lenses that we're thinking about. I just want to say- I know we said in the email, but- we're also specifically working with a few different organizations to create a similar forum specifically for teaching artists and individuals. This is meant to be for

folks who manage programs and manage staff in the education world. So, we decided to think about this issue in terms of “Threat Level.” As we were talking through, we realized that there were sort of different levels of things to be thinking about as the threat grew. So we're looking at level 1, which we're saying is “heightened awareness and some change behavior.” Level 2: multiple cases of coronavirus in New York City and more stringent actions recommended; and Level 3: government-mandated closure of public assembly spaces and/or organizations making individual decisions to close. I will just say, there's some debate amongst our Roundtable team about where we're at currently in levels. We think we're somewhere between Level 1 and 2, and really what we want to do today is to offer suggestions for actions, and we really want to crowdsource as much as possible. My plan is to share a few ideas that we have sourced from our colleagues around the country of how folks are responding at these different levels, and then give opportunities for the attendees to share resources or action steps in the chat box. So, starting with Level 1, which we are calling “heightened awareness and some change behavior”-- some basic things that we feel like everyone should be doing at this point, it might seem obvious, but please make sure you're sending messages to your teaching artists and education staff, trying to be as transparent as specific as possible. Obviously, sharing preventative practices, but also providing any information you have at the moment about your plans. Another thing that we think is really helpful and quick to do is providing any alternative food options at public facing events. This may be potentially using individual or no-touch packaging. Of course, also send information via email to schools and program participants, letting them know about any changes or plans that you have. Distribute tissues, wipes, hand sanitizer to staff and teaching artists, and encourage phone and video meetings instead of in-person meetings. We just learned that Google Hangouts is changing their policy to allow up to a thousand participants in a Google Hangout for free, which is kind of a cool thing that they're offering, and might be useful if you're trying to do something with a larger group virtually. I'm wondering if folks can, in the chat box, add other things that they're doing to just heighten awareness and change behavior at the beginning stage, and we will ask you to put those responses in the chat, and Sobha will kind of aggregate and call them out as she sees folks coming, but we really want this to be a forum so that the community can share. There is a question here saying, “should we hold questions until later?” Yes, we're going to try to answer questions, both ourselves and through the community at the end of each section. If you have any specific ideas around how to share best practices around heightened awareness and changed behavior, please add them here. Sobha, just unmute yourself--

SOBHA: We have: loosen attendance policies; (loosen is a word ha ha), so that's something to think about. Thank you, Becky. We have: checking with schools of student interns to see if they want the students to keep participating in our in-school programs; encouraging teaching artists to check in with their school contacts to see what their schools are doing; checking in with daily teachers about how their schools are doing; putting off doing training for education staff, and thinking about how to do online classes. Many organizations are closed, including especially private colleges; encouraging teaching artist to cancel or postpone their classes if they personally do not feel well; offering and planning alternate dates, if feasible, in the programming calendar; let each part-time employee know exactly how many sick hours they have accrued.

Those are great.

JEN: And again, if you're on the phone, will be sharing this whole chat transcript and the video online, but Sobha's trying to reiterate here...

SOBHA: We have another suggestions: using videoconferencing in lieu of face-to-face meetings. Question about what the federal response will be for lost pay, a great question. If there's money in the budget, we are also offering Lyft/ Uber to necessary workshops; sharing resources with teachers about how to interrupt bias and xenophobia; if you're a non-profit- see if a donor would consider making an extra donation and/or loan to cover unpaid TA's on contract-base payment. Can government contracts continue to pay teachers, that's a good question... considering streaming classes, I missed that one... consider staggered work hours for office staff. I think I'm just going to throw in building-- making sure you have a communication tree, like knowing how to get in touch with all your employees. Looking into streaming performances for schools and public audiences.

JEN: One other thing I might add thinking about is teaching artist supervisors being prepared to submit a two-week work projection to leadership at any time, so that might come now or might come in a week or so.

SOBHA: Another one that just came in: ensuring that your staff has the capacity to work remotely so that they have the tools that they need; if everyone is mandated to stay home, how to stay sane with online programs, offering support for that; offering schools to postpone the start of their residencies; should we (lost sound) in the event of closure...

JEN: Just to clarify- there was a question there- if you are a teaching artist supervisor, we think it would be helpful to have a projection of what each teaching artist was planning to work for the two week period moving forward, that way if you needed to share with your leadership, "here is where all of our part-time staff members are intending to work" in order to prepare for how you might think about expanded sick leave, or just to understand the loss of work to the teaching artists. I hope that helps clarify.

SOBHA: Connecting to DOE- if things escalate and there are issues fulfilling contract requirements, what do we do? I think that's a question. Policies for paying TA's for missed work. Another question: "is there a reason the field/country is only thinking about this through March, and our programing policies are only changing through March for now? Is it just the best we can do? Will it go away in April? What's the logic behind it?" Great question... We're researching using New York City sick leave hours to pay TA's for missed work; should we hire new people for coverage?; Can organizations who are canceling classes (where we don't get paid if the classes are not held) consider having teaching artists engage in professional development hours and other remote things so we don't lose income?... These are all really good questions, and really great suggested ideas or things to think about. Jen, I'm wondering if we should move to like Level 2.

JEN: Absolutely. Level 2, again, is “multiple cases of coronavirus in New York City and more stringent actions needing to be taken.” A few things that we've sourced that seem obvious but I think are important to reiterate-- if an employee has been in contact with somebody who has the virus, they should be in quarantine and starting to use accrued sick time. Check with your organization about expanded sick time policies, some organizations are offering additional sick time beyond the banked time. If you have to cancel student programs, if you can share a video of the program production or live events, then maybe you can create a policy that says you would have not issue refunds or cancel, but we can offer to re-book. So that again, if you're able to share video productions of a video or live feeds of your live, in-person events. If you have to cancel classes or programs, issue vouchers or offer exchanges. Other ideas for when we get to this level where people are starting to quarantine more?

SOBHA: Someone from the museum perspective, Poster House New York City: we are considering having our TA's make up for lost hours by doing outreach or research for upcoming exhibitions, various remote options to not lose hours... we pay different rates for training and teaching, but we're prepared to pay at the teaching rate for any lost hours made up for research and this kind of work; Question- “can you share an example of the extended sick time that other organizations are offering?;

JEN: Do you want me to answer that now, Sobha?

SOBHA: Yeah.

JEN: What we've heard from a few other colleagues is that they're offering one week of extended sick time. So, you would first use your accrued sick time, and then once you've used your accrued sick time, then you would get the equivalent of a week. So, if you are a part-time teaching artist and you work about 10 hours a week, you'll get 10 hours of that sick time to offset your lost wages. That's one example that colleagues are using, but we're also curious about other examples, if folks want to share.

SOBHA: Here's another question: “any ideas for teaching artists who work as contractors?”

JEN: I'm curious if folks have action steps for those individuals.

SOBHA: Or employees without paid sick time, mm hmm, so I'll just reiterate: any ideas for teaching artists who work as contractors, and then a follow-up “or employees without paid sick time”.... “The FED said they would give some funds.”... “For the extended one week sick time, do you then subtract the hours from future sick time hours accrued?” Good question. Jen, do you know the answer to that?

JEN: I think it's a great question. It's obviously organization by organization. I think some folks are, I've also heard some people are just sort of starting fresh on sick time again, when they go

back to work... I think everybody's kind of thinking about it in a different way. So, I think you could just sort of put a hold on the time already accrued, and then create a new extended policy or have it run out and start fresh.

SOBHA: Um, a suggestion: "if you are a non-profit, it might be a good idea to get your board to approve using a percentage of a reserve fund if you have one." Another one: "we're looking at extending our cancellation policy and paying our actors/ TA's a percentage of their rate." "What are local government responses to those who work part-time and are contract workers?"

JEN: We're going to write that one down. I will say that there are some city responses already announced, and I know that there's a push to try to make sure that arts organizations are included with some grants from the city-small grants from the city- and no interest loans for small organizations.

SOBHA: "Just something to think about: business models vary enormously, its tricky to devise one-size-fits-all." A clarifying question: "If a program is canceled, you pay performers/ TA's a percentage rate of the lost work?"

JEN: I think that fits into this.

SOBHA: MM hmm... "Westchester is definitely in a Level 2. As a Westchester organization, we're rescheduling all school visits to our site in March to May/ June... waiting on April visits until we hear from surrounding districts and policies around visits. Working now on a two-week work plan for my staff to be prepared should the office close... actually looking at the repercussions of this bleeding into our summer camp offerings, should the school year get extended. As of right now, there's no waiver for the 180 school day rule for the state."

JEN: That's a really good point. There are discussions happening at the school level about extended school year, so it's good to be thinking about.

SOBHA: Another one: "We just had a partner cancel classes, but I'm still paying my faculty for those classes." "Can you clarify what the 180-day rule is?" question.

JEN: Hopefully Clare O'Hare can respond to that, from Westchester.

SOBHA: That's a state law of required instructional days..."At what level do we think the DOE would close and/or cancel after-school programs?" Great question... So, "if there's no waiver that means they would need to extend the school day if classes are canceled."... yeah, extend the school year, maybe? Yeah. "How long are you prepared budgetary to pay TA's for canceled programs?"

JEN: I'd love to hear from folks about that.

SOBHA: There's someone saying we're not prepared for it. Somebody else agreeing. "For us it depends upon whether there is a waiver and 180 day rule, I think." Someone else: "I just ran a report for our ED to bring to our board for programs through May 2nd." Someone else: "We've been adhering to our regular cancellation policy-- full payment for classes within 10 business day window-- but if this extends, wondering what to do... also, how to engage funders and explaining why their money is being used to pay TA's for cancelled programs." Good question.

JEN: And this is another thing that people have been thinking about, is talking to existing funders of local foundations, and really trying to see if they can step up with some emergency grants. I'm sure the funding community have been thinking about this, too, but we'll see if we can reach out to some of our colleagues there and respond.

SOBHA: Another one: "In superstorm Sandy, New York City schools closed for a week. Did we extend school? I can't remember." I can't remember either... I think they, we went in during a winter break to make up, if I'm not mistaken. "We're in a tricky position because most of our income is tied to our gala, which we don't know if it's going to be canceled or not. We're reaching out to our stakeholders to encourage them to fulfill their pledges. Most of our income during this time is that." "After Sandy they canceled February break." Thanks. So the school year wasn't extended, but they canceled February break. "We've budgeted for a designated number of residencies, so we have flexibility regarding kill fees."

JEN: I think that Erika brings up a good point, especially for organizations that are thinking about fundraising, too. So, I think that's an area to think about for folks who have to do both programming and fundraising.

SOBHA: "We have a 72-hour cancellation policy, and so far of all canceled programs, only three so far have canceled before that window expired... but trying to think ahead for later cancellations and more widespread ones." Another one: from an organizational manager standpoint: employers may communicate confirmed cases of the virus, but may not reveal identities of employees infected." That's good to know. "Employers may not ask an employee if they have been diagnosed with the coronavirus. It is okay to ask if the employee may have been exposed to the virus. Employers can require the employee to provide medical documentation stating they are not infectious before returning to work." Another idea: "Move around a professional development schedule and use those funds to train and pay TA's if classes are canceled.

JEN: Sobha, there was an important one that's was up a little earlier from Dancing Classrooms about the MTAC cancellation policy.

SOBHA: Yeah, I missed that one, sorry. "In our MTAC there is a cancellation policy that says that the DOE can cancel with a full refund with over 48 hours notice. If they cancel with less than 48 hours, you can recoup 20% of what was allotted on the p.o. This puts us in a terrible position for schools that are thinking about canceling their spring residencies."

JEN: That's an important detail. Thank you.

SOBHA: "Along with discussion on the DOE, how might we determine if the New York City DOE would even honor billing for potential online learning or other dissemination means for teaching or performances?"

JEN: We can turn that into a question and ask our colleagues in the DOE, too, as they're developing their policy.

SOBHA: Just keeping us on time, Jen, do you want to move to Level 3 after I read the last one or last few... "We are rolling over work to summer delivery or fall delivery, but that has been budgeted in this school year's budget." Question: "Have you gotten anything regarding policies from your colleagues at the DOE?" Question for later: "If organizations are going to offer April spring break programming, what are folks doing, hosting programming or canceling?"

JEN: There was a question about Level 1 vs. Level 2. I'll just talk again about that quickly. Level 1 is really more about heightened awareness, sharing information, and some changed behavior to prevent spread. Level 2 is when we start to really see multiple cases throughout the city, and when we are thinking about more stringent actions. And Sobha, if we're ready to move into Level 3, I think we can do that. And Level 3 we are defining as "government-mandated closure of public assemblies in public places, i.e. schools and meeting places, and/or your organization makes the decision to close on its own. Just to get us started, here are some of those kind of basic things that we would assume during this area: use your communication tree to disseminate notice of closing programs or cancellations; all of your staff who can work from home would work from home; if a participant or school can't come to an onsite program or it's canceled, offer to send them the recording if possible, or issue a voucher for future experience or visit. Again, expanded sick-time policies would be enacted. We encourage you to be thinking about that now so that you can just enact them in this case, again, based on management's discretion. So now we're talking about sort of mandated closure of public assembly and work spaces in schools for a period of time. What are folks thinking about in terms of when we get to that point?

SOBHA: "We made a decision to cancel this week's team dance competitions, hoping to reschedule them for June." Another comment: "I've already been asked to teach my college class online for the next two weeks, and possibly beyond." Another one: "A conference we were supposed to attend in mid-March was canceled yesterday and rescheduled for June. Conferences across the country are being cancelled in advance as far as April already. Amazon employees now have a travel ban, and all meetings a remote until further notice. We're developing a business continuity plan via the World Health Organization," and there's a link for framework. "For on-site programming, we will cancel in alignment with the DOE, with the plan to make up at the end of the semester. If the DOE closes school by school, it'll be a little trickier to make that call." Another one: "Hopeful for rescheduling, but know at a certain point there won't

be enough time left in the year to reschedule all lost programming..." "Our host, a school who provides donated spaces on weekends, canceled all weekend activity for the foreseeable future because of the hygiene protocols they say they must follow. We're trying to figure out whether and how to replace that space." A question: "What made you decide to cancel? And for other organizations, what would make you decide to cancel programming before officially mandated?" "For DOE partners, we will ideally make up classes and we're thinking how to financially sustain TA's in the interim." "At what point will the board make a decision about Face-to-Face?" I'll just say that we are in touch with the venue and in discussion about that, but right now we're moving ahead, but more to come. Also "developing a co-op" suggestion/comment. Another comment: "We have our benefit tonight. Still having it, as we will need to have unrestricted funds needed in the future, should the DOE close and not honor contracts and/or p.o.'s." Another comment: "This isn't a solution, but I'm thinking a lot about privilege in this situation. Those students and our TA's and our staff that don't have their own Tech to participate in telecommuting. In an ideal world, there would be an amazing rental program through Materials for the Arts or something like that."

JEN: That would be amazing.

Sobha: COOP: Continuity of Operation Plan, just to define that.

JEN: And in response to the technology access piece-- I don't know what New York City is doing, but some school districts are trying to offer hotspots and laptops for kids who may not have access, but I can't imagine New York City could do that, but that would be amazing if it could be offered in some way. Agreed about the equity point. Sobha, I wonder if we want to let folks who are on the phone, if you haven't been able to answer via chat, to offer any suggestions? If you have muted yourself, I have muted everybody, but if you had muted via Zoom, you can unmute yourself, if you are logged on to the website and on the phone.

BROOKE: Hi my name is Brooke Wallace, I'm calling from Generation Citizen. We work with middle and high schools, and we also have college volunteers that go into the class to support our programming. One of the questions we have is that we have a really exciting 10 year celebration and gala in April, and we just wanted to know if any other organizations are nervous or have any contingency plans for if this continues to be a heightened issue... how to ensure that funding will come in, if an event needs to be cancelled, or just if anyone has any ideas to share on that?

JEN: Anyone on the phone want to share? Or video?

EVE: This is Eve from Dancing Classrooms. I just wanted to jump in because I've also worked in the development world for a long time, specifically producing galas. At Dancing Classrooms, our gala is scheduled for April 1st, and we are also looking at what to do. It's a lot, I would advise, it's about balancing the numbers in terms of there's a hard-and-fast value with a gala, which is

how much money you're raising, both in advance of the event and in the room at the event. But there is also an undefined amount, which is your donor engagement, and oftentimes the gala might be the only place that donors can see your programs, or get to interact with your staff, et cetera. I would advise, you know, I think that this situation... I saw this with galas cancelled after Sandy and Irene, that those donors who already purchased tickets or tables, I think you're likely to get a high return. Very few people will ask for their money back if they can't attend an event that's rescheduled for a future date. However, I would also recommend talking with your leadership or your team about some other donor engagement activity over the summer or in the fall, where they can have an opportunity to see your programs first hand, so that you can continue to recoup that portion of what might be lost by people who can't attend a reschedule gala.

SOBHA: Thank you, Eve. We have a comment: "We have an event coming up in April as well, and we have a contingency plan to reschedule but keep our ticket holders engaged with weekly online raffles. A question for those with programming on-site, a dance studio in their case, "What is the refund policy for families, even in the likelihood that we can makeup classes at the end of the semester?"

JEN: That's a good question. Are folks enacting existing refund policies or amending them for the situation? If you don't have any other folks from the phone, Sobha, do you want to go back to some of these questions...

GABRIELLE: Well I am-- sorry, can you hear me?

JEN: Yeah.

GABRIELLE: Sorry, this is Gabrielle from Lineage Project. I was on my phone and couldn't chat, and I tried to get in but it was at max capacity, but now I was able to switch to video, so that's why I didn't participate earlier. Thank you so much for this, I want to share a couple of policies that we put in place at Lineage Project, and we bring mindfulness inside of schools, homeless shelters, jails, and we work with basically a teaching artist model. We have, as of today, all staff and teachers can be reimbursed for car service or personal driving to or from our work, should they wish to. That was implemented in response to, we had calls with every single teacher and checked in on how they were feeling, their comfort level... So both our own reflection, and a response from one teacher was that they would feel safer if they didn't have to take the subway, so we're doing unlimited car service to and from our sights via reimbursement. All our full-time staff have been working remotely since February 27th, and we already work two days a week remote, we're now at five, and we have some best practices around doing that, which were implemented some time ago, and I'm happy to share them out. I just want to be mindful of time, so I'm going to move on for now. Also, we have reached out to every single program site and shared our policies, which you know are the usual around not coming to work if you-- you know, all the things-- but we've also asked them to give us their primary contact person for this situation, to share their policies and anything we should know about the safety for our teachers

on the safety of our students. We also are using... we have unlimited paid sick time for the month of March if needed, regardless of our accruals, because our teachers don't have enough accrued time, because they accrue... they don't work a lot of hours. So I looked at their accruals, and basically if people were sick, they couldn't be out. I'm really concerned about cash flow for our teachers, and that they may go to work because of their own needs even if they're sick, and the risks that that presents to our students who are more vulnerable because of structural oppression, and racism, and economic inequality. So we have unlimited sick time for the month of March. We'll reassess at the end of the month. I don't think this is going to be over by the end of March, but I wasn't willing... I just wanted to buy myself some time to make a policy, and then be able to re-evaluate. We also are modeling paying our teachers for every class that's currently scheduled between now and the end of June, and we modeled it in Excel using three different models. One is teachers are paid in full for what they would have been paid if classes were run. A second is they're paid 50% of what they would have been paid if classes ran. A third is they're paid a \$50 flat stipend for each class they would have taught. And then, we're modeling that along two dimensions: one if they pay nothing back, so this is just- they're paid whether or not programs run; and the second is that the payment is "an advance against future work", meaning the classes are rescheduled or they're doing other classes, and their pay is reduced. I have a query in to our pro bono counsel about whether that is allowed under labor law, and I would say the same thing about-- there was a question earlier like "can sick time used be counted against future sick time accrual?" I think that's a labor law question and something-- I wouldn't start docking sick time without ensuring that that's consistent with New York sick time law and labor law. I'm an attorney, so just kind, I think those pieces are just important to be mindful of, because some of the labor laws are more restrictive than you might think. The last thing I'll say is that I am concerned about following the lead of the DOE and other large systems, because they have concerns we don't. Which are valid-- like, if schools closed, there's graduation requirements, there's kids who eat in school, there's kids who do laundry in school, there's parents who don't have childcare... We're a more agile, nimble organization, because kids don't need to take our program in order to graduate, or to make sure that their parents can go to work. So, I just am really mindful of like a default being that a large system is going to make this call for us, because they have considerations we don't have. And that's been clear if you read their messaging, like they're talking about all the ripple effects of school closures. Those are not ripple effects of canceling our program.

JEN: Thank you, thank you so much. That's really, really helpful information. We really appreciate it. I want to just try to get to a few of these questions. Sobha, I think you probably saw that there's interest in either a Facebook or Google group. That's something that the Roundtable can absolutely do, so we'll work on that ASAP and get it out so that we can continue to share as things happen in real time. We will do that. There's a couple things that just came, Sobha, and then we'll go back to some of the questions for the last few minutes, and then there was a request earlier in the webinar to turn off the recording at some point, and let folks ask questions off record. So, we'll try to just get to a few of the questions, and then get to that if we have time.

JEN: So, just lastly, more calls for sharing, yea, and talks about paying people in advance, and whether or not that is legal. We'll see if we can get some information on that. Okay, there was a question about federal response for lost pay, so we can't answer that, but we'll see if we can find some more resources to point you to, unless somebody has one on here, they can do that. There was a question around government contracts continuing to pay teachers, also we can find out information about that.

SOBHA: There were some DOE ... we'll see if we can follow up with that.

JEN: We did share an example of extended sick leave, but if other folks have any ideas, please throw them in the chat and we can record those and aggregate them. This is an important one, Sobha, and I wonder if we could just spend a minute on this: "What are folks doing for teaching artists who work as contractors?" I know we talked a little bit about the part-time, and accrued sick leave, and some of the pay ideas, but is there anything else in particular around contractors?

SOBHA: Somebody asked a question and they're wondering if and when they can file for unemployment, if they lose some work but not all work.

JEN: That's a really good question. And there was also a question earlier about April spring break programming. Anybody who has programming during that spring break, are they thinking about canceling or rescheduling? Any ideas to share?

SOBHA: Someone answered: "We have spring break programming but we're definitely unre right now."

JEN: There's an earlier question around, and I can't remember- I'm sorry- if we talked about this, but "how long are you prepared budgetarily to pay TA's for canceled programs?" There was one answer where someone said until the month of May, but then looking for contingencies beyond that. I think that's where we were talking about city or state or foundation response, potentially we can apply for some relief.

SOBHA: A question: "How would a small organization begin to make the decision to cancel their program, even if the DOE keeps the school open?" If anyone has any thoughts, please type it in... "I wonder if anyone has changed the way their front desk or registration staff interacts with families. Any precautions in place there?" Another one: "Slight shift in questioning-- New York City council member discretionary funding-- will there maybe be a shift in their priorities from arts and after school to health programs?" Another comment: "We're supposed to open registration for our classes tomorrow, with a big email notification to our members. Are other organizations planning to change the registration dates or any other important admin dates in the midst of all the overwhelming covid19 emails?" Another one: "I work for an after-school program that takes place in DOE public schools. Can you reach out now ahead of time and beg

these organizations not to cancel? Because we lost a hundred percent of pay, and it disrupts the programming for the children. For example, if schools are closed, can alternate sites be offered where we can meet?"

JEN: We are recording all these questions and will try to... if we're going to do a shared Facebook-sort of thing, we can post them there, too, to get some more crowdsourcing. There's a question about council member discretionary funding, Sobha, did you see that one?

SOBHA: Yeah, I read it. I don't know where it is right now.

JEN: I can read it: "A slight shift and questioning-- New York City council member discretionary funding will-- there be a shift in their priorities from arts and after school to health programs?" Oh, you may have read that one already, but that's an important one to think about. Would there be a world in which they would take away an arts discretionary allotment? I think if it's already in the budget, they can't take it away, but...

SOBHA: Here's another comment: "Regarding the front desk, we have put a massive bottle of Purell at the desk, and encourage our staff to use it after any transaction, coat check- in, but nothing beyond that. We did send an email, and all staff emails with CDC suggestions to try to calm some of the fears, and so far it's been okay."

JEN: I work for a Theatre Company, and all public-facing employees are wearing cloth gloves when interacting with the public: taking money, scanning tickets... They're wearing sort of, not plastic medical grade gloves, but just cloth gloves that look slightly more uniform.

SOBHA: "Does anyone know where we can find Purell and hand sanitizer?" It's a good question! Another question: "How does a small organization consider canceling advance of the DOE No silver bullet answer... we are small, and here are the variables we are considering: number 1- the interconnected nature of our well-being and immunity, meaning we are trying to think about the public health dimensions of our organization's decision making; number 2- talking to all teachers and assessing their comfort levels, which vary; number 3- following the international news and what other governments and organizations are doing; number 4- thinking about equity within the organization... for now, admin. staff are working remotely, but teachers cannot because of the nature of their work." Question: "For myself, am I asking teachers to take risks I would not or do not want to take?" Someone from Dancing Classrooms just wrote the comment "make your own" and I'm not quite sure of the... oh, the hand sanitizer! "Is this group interested in speaking to an infectious disease specialist?" "You cannot make your own without diluting alcohol percentage."

JEN: So I think we should stop the comments and questions at this point, and I'm going to turn off the recording, Sobha, if that makes sense.

SOBHA: Yeah, we have five more minutes.

JEN: So if there's anything you all want to ask off the record, we now have five minutes to do that. I'm going to do that now, so-- stopping recording.