



DEPARTMENT OF THEATRE & DANCE
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

1 University Station • D3900 • Austin, Texas • 78712-0362 • 512-471-5793 • FAX: 512-471-0824

August 4, 2020

To Whom It May Concern:

On behalf of The University of Texas at Austin I am writing in support of MS Savremeno-umjetnička škola Tuzla's application for a new Secondary Contemporary Art School in Tuzla. In this recommendation, I recognize that there is a great need for comprehensive arts education and arts integrated learning particularly at the secondary level of schooling. A wide breadth of research shows that effective arts programs in partnership with art integrated teaching methods, like drama-based pedagogy, can promote and improve learning in all subjects at the secondary level. Without foundational arts learning opportunities, many children are deprived of the improvements in academic achievement, personal learning skills, development of social capital, and the intrinsic benefits that arts experiences and arts-integration instruction provides.

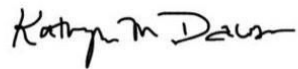
The University of Texas at Austin, in partnership with the U.S. State Department/U.S. Embassy in Sarajevo, Bosnia and Herzegovina have been in active partnership, supporting the training of educators in drama-based pedagogy in general education across Bosnia and Herzegovina since 2018. Drama-based pedagogy (DBP) translates theatre techniques—like improvisation and role play—into a drama-based teaching and learning approach that can be integrated into non-arts subjects. DBP increases opportunities for cognitive, aesthetic, and social-emotional learning. This is evidenced through research which shows that teaching is more effective when it engages with students' imagination, funds of knowledge, and bodies as central to knowledge production and understanding (see Vygotsky, 1978; González et. al, 2006; Yosso, 2005).

I am most excited to learn that the Secondary Contemporary Art School in Tuzla will be structured with an arts-rich approach to educational excellence. The Arts Rich Schools movement (see the U.S., President's Committee on Arts and Humanities 2011 report under President Obama for more information) argues for a wide range of arts engagement within education, including: (1) comprehensive study of the arts as a core curriculum; (2) multiple opportunities to engage with professional art and artists from the community; (3) arts integrated project-based learning led by teachers; and, (4) arts-integrated instruction (like drama-based pedagogy) led by teachers across all subjects. Arts-Rich teaching approaches have been shown to have powerful effects on engaging students and personalizing learning across the curriculum, supporting students' access to broader subject knowledge. The arts function as modes of communication with creative ideas expressed through visual images, sound and movement as different kinds of 'texts' within a variety of arts experiences (Livermore, 2003). The multi-modal aspects of arts learning provide students with a range of ways to represent their knowledge (The New London Group, 1996).

I am in full support of the Secondary Contemporary Art School in Tuzla. This innovative, 21st century approach to education will build on the 16 years of established success of MS Savremeno-umjetnička

škola Tuzla in working with children and youth in the arts. Our distinguished faculty and graduate students of The University of Texas at Austin are eager to partner with and support the Secondary Contemporary Art School in any way possible. We know through our experience that excellent arts-rich education for secondary students can have a tremendous impact on the personal and professional success of young people. Please don't hesitate to contact me if you have any further questions about my support for this new, innovative Art School.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kathryn M. Dawson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Kathryn M. Dawson
Associate Professor, Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities
Director, Drama for Schools
Program Head, MFA in Drama and Theatre for Youth and Communities
Theatre and Dance Department
University of Texas at Austin
kathryndawson@austin.utexas.edu