

BLOG POST

INTEMPO and Norwalk Public Schools: Partnership Liaising through Norwalk ACTS

- Watch 50-second overview of Week 1 in Norwalk Public Schools, Summer 2021: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Zl7lY7Sq8Pg>
- Watch 2-minute program overview video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T8MkGg3KluA>

After joining the Norwalk ACTS Out of School Time (OST) and Implementation Team in the middle of the pandemic, INTEMPO's founder, Angelica Durrell, began talking about the importance of creative youth development through music and the benefits of engaging immigrant and non-English-speaking populations.

In spring 2021, Norwalk ACTS co-sponsored Voices and Actions, INTEMPO's statewide convening on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI), and helped confirm Norwalk Superintendent Dr. Alexandra Estrella's participation on the conference's educational equity panel. Shortly thereafter, in a monthly meeting to prepare for summer school 2021, we met Donald Chumney and Dr. Jennifer Katona, who invited INTEMPO to co-plan and co-teach with NPS general music teachers during summer school 2021. This would be the first time a community organization would partner with the NPS music department. It would also be the first time since the onset of the pandemic that students would be coming back for in-person instruction.

Five INTEMPO teaching artists were placed in Norwalk public schools that hosted a summer camp (Marvin, Brookside, Ponus, Jefferson, Tracey and Naramake). INTEMPO provided lesson plans that featured the use of native instruments such as the tortoise shell, which is used in Guatemala during Christmas festivities and that showcased intercultural repertoire such as "Yenyere Guma," a song that highlights Afro-Cuban rhythm and the Spanish language. We were delighted when an English Learner from Guatemala who was attending our class at Marvin Elementary School with NPS music teacher Micah Smith told us she recognized the tortoise shell instrument as well as the rhythmic patterns we were exploring. For this student, who speaks Achi, a Mayan dialect, as well as Spanish, being able to connect through music and feeling represented in class helped her feel at ease in a new learning environment.

As follow-ups to this summertime partnership, INTEMPO hosted a full-day professional-development workshop for all Norwalk Public School music teachers (K-12, band/choir/drama) in October and will be conducting a follow-up training on repertoire and specific units related to the repertoires of Guatemala, Nicaragua, Peru, and Ecuador on November 2nd. The units were selected and co-curated with Norwalk's Assistant Superintendent, Robert Pennington, and Dr. Jennifer Katona. The training design is based on feedback from NPS

music teachers, who report that they need more culturally responsive repertoire to effectively implement NPS's new curriculum map, and that having a community resource with the cultural background and knowledge that INTEMPO has would be an asset to Norwalk public school students.

Currently, Norwalk ACTS and INTEMPO are discussing a partnership for Voices and Actions 2.0, a follow-up statewide convening on DEI, scheduled for 2022. The focus will be on creative youth development and what that looks like across Connecticut towns and school districts.

For more information, visit www.intempo.org