SAMPLE CURRICULUM · FOR PRINCIPAL REVIEW

Beats & Bars

A Youth Music Production Residency

Hands-on beat-making, sampling, and recording in a professional DAW — aligned to the New York State Learning Standards for the Arts and the CASEL Social-Emotional Learning core competencies.

Grade band	Grades 5–8 (adaptable K–12)	**Format**	In-school residency, one cohort
Duration	6 weekly sessions, 60–90 min	**Cohort size**	~25–30 students
Setting	Standard classroom; we bring the full lab	**Culmination**	An original track per student + showcase

Scales to a 10-week or full-semester residency by deepening each module and adding studio time. This sample reflects a typical six-week arc.

Program overview

Beats & Bars introduces students to music production the way working artists actually make records: starting from a blank session in a professional digital audio workstation (DAW) and building an original track step by step. Over six weeks, students learn the DAW, program beats, work with samples, record melodies and vocals, and arrange and mix a finished piece they can keep.

Music production is an unusually strong vehicle for both arts learning and social-emotional growth. Every student makes creative decisions and expresses something personal, while the studio routine — taking turns, giving feedback, persisting through revisions, and crediting others' work — builds relationship skills and responsible decision-making in a natural, motivating context. The program requires no prior musical training and meets students wherever they are.

Learning objectives

By the end of the residency, students will be able to:

- Navigate a professional DAW (Logic Pro X or GarageBand) and explain its core functions.
- Build an original beat by programming and layering drum sounds.
- Source, chop, and use samples and loops responsibly, with attention to attribution and copyright.
- Record audio (vocals) and MIDI / instrument parts into the DAW.
- Perform simple editing, arrangement, and mixing to complete a track.
- Produce and present an original track, and give and receive constructive feedback.

Standards & SEL alignment

The curriculum is built around two frameworks at once.

New York State Learning Standards for the Arts. Adopted in 2017 and built on the National Core Arts Standards, the NYS arts standards organize learning around four artistic processes — Creating, Performing/Producing, Responding, and Connecting — and eleven common anchor standards. Music production naturally moves students through all four processes within a single project: they create and develop original work, produce and present it, respond to and evaluate music, and connect their work to its cultural roots.

CASEL Social-Emotional Learning core competencies. Each session is mapped to one or more of the five SEL competencies — self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, relationship skills, and responsible decision-making. Self-expression and relationship skills are emphasized throughout, as students share personal work and collaborate in a supportive studio environment.

Session-by-session curriculum

Session 1 — Inside the Studio: Understanding the DAW

Foundational orientation to the digital audio workstation (Logic Pro X / GarageBand).

Students will	Open and navigate a professional DAW, identify its core areas — transport, tracks, timeline, and sound library — and build and save a first four-bar loop.
Key activities	Guided studio tour of the interface; hands-on transport and track practice; each student creates and saves a first four-bar loop using built-in sounds.
Production / DAW skills	DAW interface and navigation; transport controls; creating a software-instrument track; reading the beat grid.
NYS Arts Standards	Creating — Anchor 1 (generate and conceptualize artistic ideas) and Anchor 2 (organize and develop artistic ideas).
SEL competencies	Self-awareness — noticing the sounds and styles they are drawn to; Self-management — focus and following a new workflow.

Session 2 — Building the Beat: Rhythm, Drums & Groove

Constructing an original beat from the ground up.

Students will	Program and layer drum sounds (kick, snare, hi-hat) into an original rhythmic pattern, and shape its tempo and feel.
Key activities	Guided listen-and-analyze of a short groove; build a drum pattern step by step; experiment with tempo and swing; refine a personal beat.
Production / DAW skills	Drum programming and step input; layering percussion; setting tempo; looping and duplicating regions; introduction to quantization.
NYS Arts Standards	Creating — Anchors 1–2; Responding — Anchor 7 (perceive and analyze artistic work) through guided listening.
SEL competencies	Self-management — iterating and persisting through revisions; Self-awareness — developing a personal rhythmic style.

Session 3 — Working with Samples: Sound, Choice & Credit

Understanding what samples are and using them responsibly.

Students will	Explain what a sample is, audition and chop samples and loops, layer them into a beat, and make ethical choices about sourcing and crediting.
Key activities	Mini-lesson on loops vs. one-shots and the roots of sampling in hip-hop; browse and audition the loop library; chop and fit a sample to tempo; class discussion on royalty-free vs. copyrighted material and why attribution matters.

Production / DAW skills	Importing and auditioning samples; slicing and chopping; fitting samples to tempo and key; layering sounds.
NYS Arts Standards	Creating — Anchor 2; Responding — Anchor 7; Connecting — Anchor 11 (relate artistic work to societal, cultural, and historical context).
SEL competencies	Responsible decision-making — ethical sampling and attribution; Social awareness — appreciating cultural roots and the work of others.

Session 4 — Layers & Melody: Recording into the DAW

Working on recording in Logic Pro X; adding melodic and harmonic layers.

Students will	Record a melody, bassline, or chord part into the DAW using the software keyboard or MIDI, then perform simple edits to shape it.
Key activities	Demonstration of recording a take; students record a melodic idea over their beat; basic note editing in the piano roll; arranging early song sections.
Production / DAW skills	Recording a software-instrument take; piano-roll editing; simple quantize and note fixes; building song sections.
NYS Arts Standards	Creating — Anchors 2–3 (organize/develop, refine and complete); Performing/Producing — Anchor 5 (develop and refine techniques).
SEL competencies	Self-management — managing a multi-step recording process; Self-awareness and self-expression — expressing a musical idea.

Session 5 — Find Your Voice: Recording Vocals

Recording vocals on Logic Pro X or GarageBand; centering student voice and self-expression.

Students will	Set a microphone and input level, record a vocal part — sung, spoken-word, or rap — over their beat across multiple takes, and choose a best take.
Key activities	Microphone and levels basics; a supportive recording routine; students record vocals; comping a best take from several recordings; light trimming and cleanup.
Production / DAW skills	Audio recording and input monitoring; setting levels; recording multiple takes and comping; trimming audio.
NYS Arts Standards	Performing/Producing — Anchor 4 (select, analyze, interpret for presentation), Anchor 5 (refine technique), Anchor 6 (convey meaning).
SEL competencies	Self-awareness and self-expression — sharing one's own voice; Relationship skills — a respectful, encouraging recording space; Self-management — managing nerves and persisting across takes.

Session 6 — Mix, Arrange & Premiere: Finishing the Track

Simple editing and arrangement; completing and presenting the track.

Students will	Arrange a full track (intro, verse, chorus, outro), balance levels in a simple mix, export the finished track, and present it to peers with constructive feedback.
Key activities	Arrange song sections into a complete structure; balance track levels; export and bounce the track; group listening premiere; structured peer feedback; a brief written or verbal reflection.
Production / DAW skills	Arrangement; basic mixing and level balancing; bouncing and exporting a finished file.
NYS Arts Standards	Creating — Anchor 3 (refine and complete); Performing/Producing — Anchor 6 (convey meaning through presentation); Responding — Anchors 8–9 (interpret meaning; apply criteria to evaluate).
SEL competencies	Relationship skills — giving and receiving constructive feedback; Social awareness — responding respectfully to peers' work; Responsible decision-making — final creative choices; Self-awareness — reflection.

Assessment & evidence of learning

The program is project-based and produces concrete evidence a school can report to families and to its district:

- Original track. Each student exports a finished track — a tangible artifact demonstrating creating, producing, and technical skill.
- Reflection. A short written or verbal reflection on their creative choices and what they learned (self-awareness).
- Peer feedback. Structured, criteria-based feedback during the showcase, in which students apply evaluation criteria to artistic work (Responding, Anchor 9) and practice relationship skills.
- Formative check-ins. Teaching artists track participation and skill growth session to session, with simple Creating / Producing / Responding indicators available on request.

Reportable outcomes for district arts and enrichment reporting include: original creative work, collaboration and communication, technology and digital literacy, persistence and iteration, and cultural awareness.

Differentiation & access

Music is the medium, so the program carries no heavy reading or language barrier, which makes it naturally inclusive. Teaching artists differentiate through multiple entry points (loop-based building or composing from scratch), peer pairing, paced step-by-step demonstration, and headphones that support focus. We support students with IEPs and multilingual learners, and offer extension challenges for students who move quickly. Tell us about your group in advance and we will plan around it.

Materials & setup

We provide: laptops loaded with Logic Pro X / GarageBand, audio interfaces, microphones, headphones, the full standards-aligned curriculum, and professional teaching artists who run the room — plus setup and teardown.

The school provides: a standard classroom, access to power, and about 10 minutes for setup. We handle the rest.

Standards alignment matrix

A one-page summary mapping each session to NYS arts anchor standards and CASEL SEL competencies — useful for grant applications and district reporting.

Session	Core production focus	NYS Arts anchor standards	CASEL SEL competencies
1	DAW navigation & first loop	Create (1, 2)	Self-awareness; Self-management
2	Drum programming & groove	Create (1, 2); Respond (7)	Self-management; Self-awareness
3	Samples — chopping & ethics	Create (2); Respond (7); Connect (11)	Responsible decision-making; Social awareness
4	Recording melody / MIDI & editing	Create (2, 3); Produce (5)	Self-management; Self-awareness
5	Recording vocals	Produce (4, 5, 6)	Self-awareness; Relationship skills; Self-management
6	Arrange, mix, export & showcase	Create (3); Produce (6); Respond (8, 9)	Relationship skills; Social awareness; Responsible decision-making; Self-awareness

NYS Arts anchor standards referenced

#	Anchor standard	Artistic process
1	Generate and conceptualize artistic ideas and work.	Creating
2	Organize and develop artistic ideas and work.	Creating
3	Refine and complete artistic work.	Creating
4	Select, analyze, and interpret artistic work for presentation.	Performing / Producing
5	Develop and refine artistic techniques and work for presentation.	Performing / Producing
6	Convey meaning through the presentation of artistic work.	Performing / Producing
7	Perceive and analyze artistic work.	Responding
8	Interpret intent and meaning in artistic work.	Responding
9	Apply criteria to evaluate artistic work.	Responding
11	Relate artistic ideas and works with societal, cultural, and historical context.	Connecting

This is a sample for review. Final session pacing, grade-level targets, and standard-by-standard performance indicators are tailored to your school's grade band and goals in the version delivered with your booking.