

NEW JERSEY

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM – SP3

New Jersey has been selected, after applying on a competitive basis, to be one of ten (10) pilot states to participate in Americans for the Arts' comprehensive national campaign to advance arts education, the [State Policy Pilot Program](#) (SP3).

New Jersey's SP3 Team will facilitate an action plan for the development and implementation of an arts education policy strategy for a 3-year period. Americans for the Arts will provide in-depth customized technical assistance and \$10,000 each year to assist New Jersey in successfully creating its plan and achieving its planned goals. To ensure that best practices will be developed, both in the state and nationally, the team will attend an annual symposium to share learning with other state teams, participate annually in a meeting of the State Arts Advocacy Network, and produce a final report, outlining what worked and did not work during participation in the pilot program. These final report/case studies will be turned into policy development tools for the field.

Led by the NJ Arts Education Partnership (NJ AEP), the New Jersey SP3 Team plans to use the three-year pilot program to advance three major activities that foster the active participation of all New Jersey students in quality arts education. These activities are:

I. The Arts Ed Now Campaign



New Jersey's Arts Ed Now Campaign includes the state's first Teen Arts Festival Video Contest [logos from NJ Arts Education Partnership web site]

The purpose of this activity is to develop effective materials and tools that can be used to advance arts education all across the state. The overall strategy is to get input from local stakeholders about the components of a campaign that would best work for them, drawing upon local, statewide and national resources. These components include developing a series of messages to be communicated; capturing stories in written, photo and video formats; branding the value of arts education; and drafting and testing campaign materials. It also includes reviewing and updating a previous advocacy toolkit for the new digital environment, training stakeholders in the

effective gathering and use of local data, and adopting the tools and strategies from the CA team to encourage schools to use the arts to achieve the goals of Title I.

II. Advancing School Board Engagement

This involves developing a system for encouraging, collecting and making visible the positions that local school board candidates take related to arts education. The process starts with consulting other states who have developed excellent tools, model policies and district plans featuring arts education; designing a platform to host information online, and establishing a process to access candidate information from the Board of Elections. It includes a first-year test of the survey, website implementation and publicizing results. Also important is partnering with the NJ School Boards Association and for them to include arts education in school board member training sessions, and arts education sessions in their convenings, and integrate arts learning in their STEM initiative.

III. Effective Use of Voter Voice Communication System

The goal is to activate networks to address local arts education policy issues. This involves testing the system in a few communities and then expanding statewide based on what is learned.

Background

For more than a decade, the focus of arts education leaders in New Jersey has been on increasing the availability of arts education. The New Jersey Arts Education Census Project was launched in the 2005/2006 school year to gather, evaluate and disseminate basic qualitative and quantitative data regarding arts education in the state. The Census Project findings were published in the 2007 report entitled *Within Our Power: The Progress, Plight and Promise of Arts Education for Every Child*. That year, The New Jersey Arts Education Partnership (NJ AEP) was founded to implement the report's recommendations, which emphasized helping schools, arts organizations, policy makers and citizens to use the information to improve arts education for all children.



New Jersey SP3 is committed to statewide availability of and participation in all fine arts disciplines.

Since its founding, NJ AEP has invested in research to integrate the Census Project data with economic, demographic, census, school report card and municipal data in order to understand thoroughly the causes and directions of educational change in the state. The Partnership also conducted research to identify the attributes of thriving arts programs in exemplary schools. These attributes provide target areas that can be addressed to improve arts education for all New Jersey students.

The New Jersey Arts Education Census Project became a collaboration of NJ AEP with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, ArtPride New Jersey Foundation, and Quadrant Arts Education Research. In 2011, it revealed that some great progress has been made in offering arts education throughout New Jersey, especially music and visual art. According to Quadrant Arts Education Research, 97% of New Jersey students have access to arts education in their schools, with music and visual art nearly universally available. Highlighting the inequities and drawing public attention to them had resulted in broadening statewide participation in arts education by 300,000 students. In addition,

- The percentage of New Jersey schools adopting core curricular standards in visual and performing arts has increased from 81% in 2006 to 97% in 2011.
- Well above 90% of all New Jersey schools use appropriately certified arts specialists as the primary provider for music and visual art instruction.
- More than 90% of New Jersey public schools interact with more than 972 community arts organizations to enhance visual and performing arts programs.

The survey also revealed that New Jersey high schools with more arts education tended to have a greater percentage of students who were highly proficient in language arts on the High School Proficiency Assessment test. High schools with more arts education saw higher rates of students planning to enroll in a four-year college.

However, concerns were raised that re-focused the work of arts education leaders on issues related to the availability of all arts disciplines and to equitable active participation in arts education:

1. The majority of New Jersey public schools failed to offer instruction in all four arts disciplines (Dance, Music, Theater, and Visual Art).
2. In theater instruction, less than half of schools used certified arts specialists. In dance, the percentage was under 40%.
3. Per-pupil arts spending in support of arts instruction had declined by 30% at the elementary level and by 44% at the high school level.
4. More than 25% of schools have had to use outside resources to offset budget cuts in arts education.
5. Student participation in arts courses – as a percentage of total enrollment – had declined significantly, especially at the elementary level.

6. The number of field trips, assemblies, and partnerships between schools and New Jersey cultural organizations had declined.

Strategy

The New Jersey SP3 Team intends to build on the results it has already achieved and the momentum it already has by increasing its capacity to address issues district by district and school by school, by targeting gaps in course offerings and inequities in participation, by institutionalizing gains, and by organizing, networking and informing arts education leaders.

Desired outcomes of the team's goals with the Arts Ed Now campaign, the school board initiative, and the Voter Voice initiative include:

- increase access to and participation in arts education.
- an increase in the % of students actually involved in the arts.
- a decrease in the number of remaining schools without the arts.
- adoption of additional, stronger policies supporting arts education and the inclusion of arts education in strategic plans – at the State Board of Education and local school boards.
- more robust research on effective arts education policies and practices.
- more people aware of the value and importance of the arts.
- more organizations, board members, teachers, and teaching artists active as effective ambassadors.
- more Theater and Dance course offerings.
- increased civic engagement, with tools and systems available for quick response to any given situation.
- more school board engagement with arts education issues.
- opportunities offered by the Every Student Succeeds Act taken advantage of.



NJ SP3 recognizes and promotes top quality arts education in localities throughout the state [image from NJ Arts Education Partnership web site]

The NJ SP3 Team recognizes it is linked to the work of other state teams addressing testing, time and resources; the need to broaden awareness; a necessary focus on local control; a diverse mix of rural, urban and suburban schools; and the opportunity to respond to new federal policies. The Team brings a distinct range of assets to their goals, including the established leadership, collegiality, creativity and inclusiveness of the NJ Arts Education Partnership; expertise and experience in collecting and using data; relationships with a broad range of stakeholders in addition to arts groups; good policies already in place; a close working relationship with the state's Department of Education; support from the Dodge Foundation and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts; and an exceptionally effective statewide advocacy group (ArtPrideNJ).

For additional information and to participate in New Jersey SP3 activities, please contact:

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Americans for the Arts' State Policy Pilot Program (SP3)

A three-year, 50-state initiative with a 10-state pilot component, the State Policy Pilot Program is meant to influence the implementation of federal mandates and programs around arts education at the state level, expand support for arts education policy and funding, and impact local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Through a set of data collection efforts, state-level capacity building, and the convening of a network for knowledge sharing and collective action, the State Policy Pilot Program will strengthen arts education nationally by improving state policy.

For more information, visit: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3.