

CALIFORNIA

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM – SP3

California 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).

California'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 California 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.



California is a national leader and resource to other states for using arts education to achieve Title 1 objectives. [credit: California Alliance for Arts Education]

The California SP3 Team has determined to focus its efforts on facilitating the use of Title 1 funds for arts education, as this has been indicated as an area in need of improvement through years of statewide consensus building through a much larger arts education initiative called CREATE CA. Since the enactment of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001, federal and state funding in California for elementary and secondary education emphasized test results and measurement of yearly progress related to English language arts, mathematics and science. Given this policy and budget environment, trying to incorporate arts learning into the curriculum could be extremely frustrating for a principal, school board member or parent – especially in an economically disadvantaged area with limited resources beyond Title 1 funding.

For instance, an elementary school principal in a high poverty, high crime area could have demonstrated great success using arts learning to motivate students, enhance their academic achievement, and keep them in school, but experience enormous difficulty finding flexible funds outside of the aligned federal and state categories to pay for arts instruction.

Led by the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE) and the strategies described in its publication, *A Policy Pathway*, the California SP3 Team specifically intends to:

1. Spread the message about the value of arts education strategies;
2. Support the efforts of principals and leaders interested in pursuing arts education strategies;
3. Hold regional meetings throughout the state in addition to meeting directly with schools; and,
4. Build an online resource that will provide school leaders with guidance and support in order to comply with the arts education Title I requirements.

In addition, the CA team used this pilot program to become a national resource and model of how arts education can achieve the goals of Title I. So far, they have been featured and promoted by the U.S. Department of Education at its national Title I convening, spoken at national arts education convenings, and shared their tools and strategies with other states.

In 2004, a study entitled *The Sound of Silence: The Unprecedented Decline of Music Education in California Public Schools* documented that during the previous 5 years, the percentage of all California public school students

involved in music education courses had declined by 50%, the largest decline in any academic subject area. Actual student participation in music – including band, chorus and instrumental lessons – fell by 512,366 students and the number of music teachers by 26.7%, representing the loss of 1,053 teachers. As causal factors, the report noted a shift in resources to subjects (Math, Science, Language Arts) targeted for high stakes testing under federal No Child Left Behind policy, the state budget crisis, and the simultaneous loss of school and district fine arts coordinators at the local level. Recommendations included:

- the creation of an official state taskforce to study and reverse the declines;
- the use of federal resources to restore music programs, specifically including Title 1, to improve the educational achievement of disadvantaged students through the arts, and Title II, to address the professional development needs of teachers of the arts; and
- advocacy by local citizens to local school boards.

From 2007-2009, the publication of *An Unfinished Canvas. Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices*, along with a series of supplementary policy studies, provided a comprehensive overview of the availability and quality of arts education in California – and revealed a huge gap between arts education policies and practices. Findings included:



California's Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) guarantees students a voice in planning and budgeting for their school district. The Student Voices Campaign invites young people to create videos that show their creativity and passion for the arts and share them with elected officials. [credit: California Alliance for Arts Education]

- 89% of California K-12 schools fail to offer a standards-based course of study in all four disciplines—music, visual arts, theatre, and dance—and thus fell short of state goals for arts education;
- 61% of schools do not have even one full-time equivalent arts specialist;
- at the elementary level, arts instruction is often left to regular classroom teachers, who rarely have adequate training;
- arts facilities and materials are lacking in most schools;
- elementary students who receive arts education in California typically have a limited, less
- substantial experience than their peers across the country; and
- students attending high-poverty schools have less access to arts instruction than their peers in more affluent communities.

An Unfinished Canvas recommended that school and district leaders should develop long-range strategic plans for arts education program that would dedicate resources and staff, provide for ongoing evaluation, provide professional development for teachers, and establish assessment and accountability systems for arts education. During the past three years the California Alliance for Arts Education has made significant strides in

- shifting the educational policy landscape so that schools may embrace arts programs among their strategies for achieving the goals of Title I;
- securing help for schools to include the arts among their Title I strategies; and
- detailing the steps that must be taken by schools if they wish to use Title 1 funds for arts programs into resources.

In 2011, the California Department of Education (CDE) and the California Arts Council (CAC) received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts for a leadership team to attend its Education Leaders Institute. Subsequently, the CDE, the CAC, the California Alliance for Arts Education, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), and organizational partners formed the CREATE

(Core Reforms Engaging Arts to Educate) CA reform movement, which views arts education as an essential part of the solution to the problems facing California schools.

To advance this effort, State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson appointed an Arts Education Task Force of more than 100 members, whose comprehensive recommendations were published as *The Joint Arts Education Task Force Report: How the Arts and Creative Education Can Transform California's Classrooms* (<http://www.createca.net/>) The policy agenda addresses the following goals:

- Supporting the Arts Curriculum (by aligning visual and performing arts state standards with Common Core State Standards, implementing media arts instruction and arts integration, and fostering “culturally and linguistically responsive” learning – including empathy, self, and mutual respect)
- Enhancing Educator Quality, Preparation, and Professional Learning in the Arts
- Producing High-Quality Arts Assessment, Research, and Evidence
- Ensuring Equity and Access
- Strengthening Collaborative Relationships
- Expanding the Role of Business and Industry in the Creative Workforce
- Providing Funding for the Arts



The CA SP3 agenda includes organizing arts education alliances throughout the state to reach local districts and schools. Below is the inaugural meeting of the 7-district coalition in San Diego's South Bay.

In 2013 California adopted a major change in how schools are funded and held accountable: the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Widely hailed by proponents as “the most comprehensive education finance reform in California in nearly 40 years,” LCFF provides K-12 school leaders, in partnership with their communities, more flexibility and planning opportunities to pursue innovative and holistic approaches to education, along with increased funding to reach low income students and English learners. Targeted areas of attention for the new funding include:

- Common Core State Standards
- Broad Course of Study
- Student Achievement (test scores, literacy, low income and English learners)
- Student Outcomes (graduation rates, work skills, critical thinking, creativity)
- Parent Involvement
- Student Engagement
- School Climate

Many of these outcomes can be impacted by direct and/or integrated arts instruction.

To advance its primary goal of including arts learning in Title I activities, initial California SP3 objectives include:

1. building website infrastructure;
2. engaging a consultant to develop content for online resources;
3. documenting the process of developing Title I arts integration at 5 school sites;
4. establishing communication with Title I schools throughout California; and,
5. opening communication with Title I schools throughout the country.

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

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The publication entitled *A Policy Pathway: Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title 1 Goals* is an excellent guide to action and is located at:

http://www.artsed411.org/files/Embracing_Arts_Ed_to_Achieve_Title1_Goals.pdf

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.