

Thursday, May 20, 2021

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## INVESTING IN ARTS EDUCATION

During this time of prolonged social isolation and general uncertainty, students need outlets for their imaginations, personal expression, and meaning making. Now is the time to rely on the arts as part of the solution and ensure that youth benefit from the holistic education they deserve while this public health crisis continues.

"For students living in a rapidly changing world, the arts teach vital modes of seeing, imagining, inventing, and thinking. If our primary demand of students is that they recall established facts, the children we educate today will find themselves ill-equipped to deal with problems like global warming, terrorism, and pandemics. Those who have learned the lessons of the arts, however - how to see new patterns, how to learn from mistakes, and how to envision solutions - are the ones likely to come up with the novel answers needed most for the future." *Excerpted from "Art for Our Sake" by Ellen Winner and Lois Hetland (2007)*

In 2021, Arts Ed Collaborative, community partners, and advocates introduced the [Arts Are Education campaign](#) to school districts in SWPA. They requested that school boards adopt the following resolution:

*"Whereas all students have the right to an arts education that includes dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts taught by certified arts educators, in partnership with community providers.*

*Whereas arts education has the power to change students' lives.*

*Whereas arts education is a key to re-igniting students' learning in a post-COVID-19 world.*

*Whereas arts education helps nurture healthy, inclusive communities where all points of view are respected.*

*Whereas arts education experiences help students understand their own cultural roots and appreciate others' cultural roots and traditions.*

*Whereas arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students and fosters a more positive, safer school environment.*

*Whereas arts education is part of the well-rounded education for every student as outlined in the Every Student Succeeds Act and in state law.*

*Therefore, we pledge to maintain and grow our arts education programs in the 2021-22 school year and beyond."*

**The [Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief \(ESSER\) fund](#) that received a third installment as part of the [American Rescue Plan Act](#) provides a unique opportunity for school districts to invest in arts education.**

## Proposed Arts Education Investments

1. Maintain and/or increase staffing to achieve a minimum 1:350 Arts FTE (dance, media arts, music, theatre, and/or visual arts) to student ratio
2. Increase budgets for materials and supplies to accommodate COVID safety protocols and address historical underfunding: \$20/student
3. Establish annual dedicated budget line item for arts partnerships including but not limited to teaching artist residencies, workshops, field trips, and professional learning: minimum \$10,000/school x 4 years
4. Increase substitute teacher pay for teaching artists who go through guest substitute teacher training program to simultaneously address the substitute teacher shortage and increase student access to professional artists and arts learning opportunities during the school day: increase teaching artist substitute teacher pay rate to \$250
5. Invest in designated arts learning spaces (e.g., dance floor, theater lighting, print studio, sound proofing, etc.): 1-time expenditures of \$20,000/school on average

## A Selection of Arts Education Facts and Figures

- Low socioeconomic status students with a high participation in the arts have a dropout rate of 4 percent, but their peers with a low participation in the arts have a dropout rate of 22 percent: Catterall, J.S., Dumais, S.A. & Hampden-Thomas, G. (2012)
- The report Critical Links contains 62 academic research studies that, taken together, demonstrate that arts education helps close the achievement gap, improve academic skills essential for reading and language development, and advance students' motivation to learn: Deasy, R. (ed.) (2002)
- Low-income students who are highly engaged in the arts are more likely than their peers with low arts involvement to have obtained gainful employment, completed college, and volunteered in their communities; Catterall, J.S. (2009)
- 72% of business leaders sat that creativity is the number one skill they are seeking when hiring: Lichtenberg, J., Woock, C., & Wright, M. (2008)
- In 2008, Black and Latinx students had less than half of the access to arts education than their white peers: Rabkin, N. & Hedberg, E.C. (2011)

## Supporting Organizations

- 1Hood Media
- Arts Ed Collaborative
- Assemble
- Attack Theatre
- Balmoral School of Piping and Drumming
- BOOM Concepts
- Bricolage Production Company
- Center of Life
- ChoreoNova
- Greater Pittsburgh Arts Council
- Hill Dance Academy Theatre
- Kelly Strayhorn Theater
- Neighborhood North Museum of Play
- New Hazlett Theater
- Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization
- Pennsylvania Music Educators Association
- Pittsburgh Cultural Trust

Contact Yael Silk, executive director, Arts Ed Collaborative for additional information or support at 310-633-3897 // [silky@artsedcollab.org](mailto:silky@artsedcollab.org).

- Pittsburgh Festival Opera
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Youth Chorus
- Remake Learning
- Repair The World Pittsburgh

- The Andy Warhol Museum
- The Legacy Arts Project
- Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestras
- The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition

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