

INVESTING IN ARTS EDUCATION

During this time of loss, disruptions, and general uncertainty, students and educators 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 powerful, personally relevant education they deserve while this public health crisis continues.

How do Elementary and Secondary School Emergency Relief (ESSER) funds support arts education? (adapted from [NAfMe's ESSER Funding Toolkit](#))

[ESSER guidance from the U.S. Department of Education](#) makes a point of highlighting that, "an LEA might also address the needs of students arising from the COVID-19 pandemic by using ESSER and GEER funds to implement or expand arts programs, such as music programs, including purchasing instruments." The law identifies 15 types of spending as allowable uses of ESSER funds, the first of which is "any activity authorized by the ESEA of 1965" and other federal education laws. This means that if funding an activity is authorized under any well-rounded education program, such as the [Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant](#) authorized under Title IV-A of ESSA, then that purchase would be allowable with ESSER funds as well. Other federal laws for which ESSER funds can be used include the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act, the Perkins Career and Technical Education (CTE) Act, and the McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act.

Need more support for spending ESSER money on the arts? See the additional information following the proposed arts education investments. You are also encouraged to connect with Arts Ed Collaborative's executive director, Yael Silk (silky@artsedcollab.org // 310-633-3897).

Proposed arts education investments

1. Maintain and/or increase staffing to achieve	a minimum 1:250 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	a minimum of \$20/student, annually
3. Establish annual dedicated budget line item for arts partnerships including but not limited to teaching artist residencies, workshops, field trips, and professional learning:	a minimum of \$10,000/school, annually
4. Invest in designated arts learning spaces (e.g., dance floor, theater lighting, print studio, sound proofing, etc.):	one-time expenditures of \$20,000/school on average

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

In addition to the previously mentioned guidance, [the U.S. Department of Education](#) explicitly states that ESSER funds can be used for “other activities that are necessary to maintain operation of and continuity of and services, including continuing to employ existing or hiring new LEA and school staff.” This does, of course, include arts educators. For secondary schools, where staffing is contingent on enrollment numbers in specific courses, ESSER funding may allow arts educators to remain employed using the federal funds while the programs are rebuilt post-pandemic.

For ESSER III funds, Local education agencies must use at least 20% of funds to address learning loss through evidence-based interventions that respond to students’ academic, social, and emotional needs. Arts education supports the social and emotional well-being of students, whether through distance learning or in person. Arts related activities may be eligible for support under this set aside. ESSER funds can also be used to support arts instruction while mitigating the spread of COVID-19.

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
- PearlArts
- Pennsylvania Dance Education Organization
- Pennsylvania Music Educators Association
- Pittsburgh Cultural Trust
- Pittsburgh Festival Opera
- Pittsburgh Girls Choir
- Pittsburgh Musical Theater
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra
- Pittsburgh Youth Chorus
- Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra
- Remake Learning
- Repair The World Pittsburgh
- The Andy Warhol Museum
- The Jazz Workshop, Inc.
- The Legacy Arts Project
- Three Rivers Young Peoples Orchestras
- The Squirrel Hill Urban Coalition
- UrbanKind

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