Arts Education Navigator

Getting Started

AMERICANS for the ARTS

Sponsored by Vans Custom Culture

Table of Contents

The Five Ws 4

What is arts education? 6
Why is arts education important? 7
Where does arts education happen? 8
Who is involved in arts education? 9
When has arts education advanced? 10

The How 12

Know the Facts 14
Engage the Community 15
Build Consensus 16
- Find the Right Model 16
- Create a Shared Vision 17
- Questions to Ask 18

Create an Infrastructure 20
- Policy 20
- Plan 21
- Budget 22

Conclusion—Five Simple Ways 23

Sources 24

Acknowledgement

Through a **partnership with Vans Custom Culture**, Americans for the Arts has designed a series of e-books to help educators, advocates, students, and organizations alike navigate the field of arts education as we work together to ensure that the arts are valued in our country as an important part of all students' lives.

Vans Custom Culture has provided critical resources to support the development and launch of this e-book series, ***Arts Education Navigator***, which will provide advocates with the tools and data they need to effectively support arts education in their communities.

This e-book series will cover multiple topics, such as the benefits of arts education, what quality arts education looks like, tips for evaluating arts education, and how to effectively make the case that the arts should be an integral part of a well-rounded education.

To read more, visit our ***Arts Education Navigator*** website.

The Five Ws

Maybe you know first-hand the powerful education that the arts can provide or maybe you've seen it change a child's life. We'll give you the tools to empower you to spread, encourage, and share arts education. This *Getting Started* Navigator will provide some basic information about the field of arts education, particularly ideas for how to support the arts as part of our country's K–12 education system.

This first section of the e-book will provide just the basics, or the "five Ws" of arts education:

- What is arts education?
- Why is arts education important?
- Where does arts education happen?
- Who is involved in arts education?
- When has arts education advanced?

While the five Ws focus on our K–12 education system, don't forget to check out our entire **Navigator Series** for more tips and tools on how to effectively support arts education in both your school *and* your community.

Let's get started!

The Five Ws

What is arts education?

The definition of arts education—like all education—varies greatly depending who you ask. A teacher might have a very different idea than a principal or a parent or even a professional in the arts education field.

Some might define arts education narrowly as: the visual and performing arts delivered in a standards-based, sequential approach by a qualified instructor as part of the **core curriculum**, where instruction in the arts is dedicated and not a means to another end.

At Americans for the Arts, we define it as:

Instruction and programming in all arts disciplines—including but not limited to:

dance, music, visual art, theater, creative writing, media arts, and arts history, criticism, and aesthetics.

The term is used in its broadest sense, including arts-centered and arts-integrated curriculum in both academic and community settings.

Additionally, a consortium of 28 national arts organizations called the National Coalition for Education in the Arts defined arts education broadly in 1993 as "the process of teaching and learning how to create and produce the visual and performing arts and how to understand and evaluate art forms created by others." They also outlined an ideal curriculum with four basic aspects:

» Create and perform the arts;

» Understand the role and importance of the arts in culture and history;

» Perceive and respond to the qualities of the arts; and

» Make sound judgments about the arts and understand the bases upon which those judgments rest.

No matter how you define it—or if it happens in or outside a school or a dedicated, required class—we encourage leaders to develop programs for arts education both in schools and in the larger community.

Why is arts education important?

Why arts education? The following excerpts from *Champions of Change* offer five eloquent reasons.

1 The arts transform the learning environment.

When the arts become central to the learning environment, schools and other settings become places of discovery; school culture is changed and learning is improved.

2 The arts reach students who are not otherwise being reached.

Young people who are disengaged from schools and other community institutions are at the greatest risk of failure or harm. The arts provide a reason, and sometimes the only reason, for a student to engage with school or other organizations.

3 The arts reach students in ways they are not otherwise being reached.

Recent educational research has produced insights into different styles of learning. The theory of multiple intelligences illustrates that students learn in myriad ways: linguistically, logically, spatially, kinesthetically, etc. This means that conventional classroom practices do not engage students with different learning styles. An education rich in the arts is more likely to reach more students in more ways.

4 The arts connect students to themselves and each other.

Creating an artwork is a personal experience. The student draws upon his or her personal resources to generate the result. By engaging his or her whole person, the student feels invested in ways that are deeper than "knowing the answer." Experiences such as this enable young people to grow and connect with one another in new ways.

5 The arts provide new challenges for those students already considered successful.

Boredom and complacency are barriers to success. For those young people who outgrow their established learning environments, the arts can offer a chance for unlimited challenge.

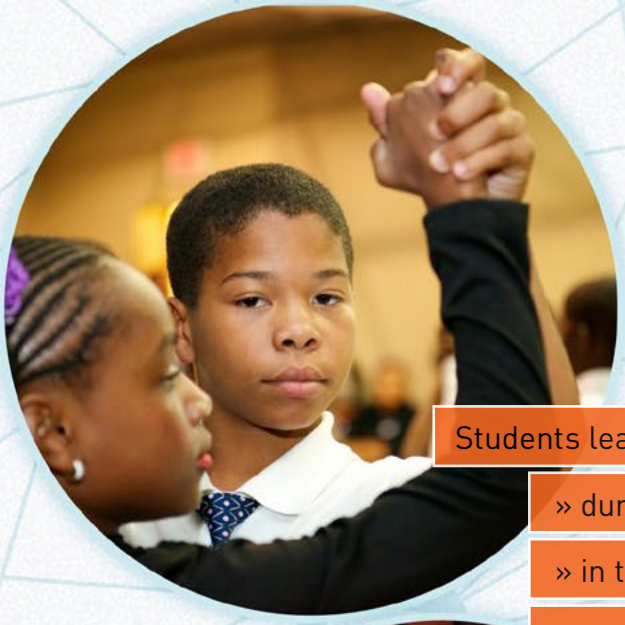
To read more from *Champions of Change*, download the full report.

For more statistics and research about the developmental and academic benefits of arts education, please see our ***Facts & Figures*** **Navigator.**

The Five Ws

Where does arts education happen?

Arts education happens everywhere and anywhere that people are learning how to express themselves through the rigorous discipline of an artistic medium—at any age and in any setting, whether at home, in school, or in the community. However, for this e-book, we'll mostly focus on arts education for K–12 students.



Students learning in and through the arts:

» during and after school

» in the community

» at home

Photos courtesy of Dancing Classrooms in Washington, DC (upper left); Creative Clay in St. Petersburg, FL (upper right); ACT – A Contemporary Theater in Seattle, WA (lower left); and Walt Disney World Resorts (lower right).

Who is involved in arts education?

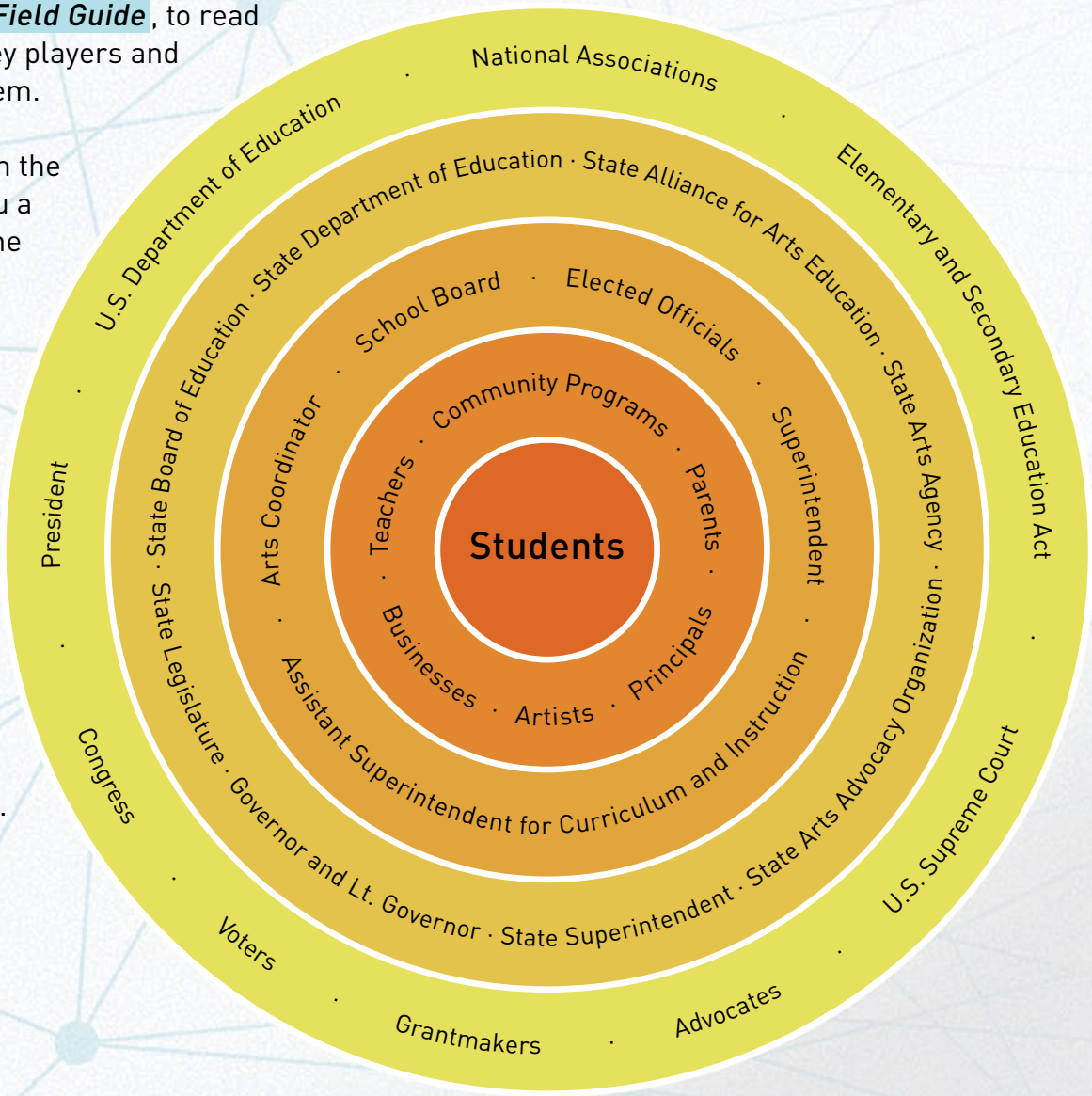
The field of arts education is a complex network of citizens, policymakers, government entities, and organizations that influence the system from the schoolhouse to the White House and from the living room to the boardroom.

By reading about the motivations and connections for each position in the arts education ecosystem, you can build more effective partnerships in your school, community, and state that will enable arts education to thrive.

Check out Americans for the Arts' publication, the ***Arts Education Field Guide***, to read more about these key players and how to work with them.

This illustration from the *Field Guide* gives you a quick look at all of the players that affect this ecosystem and can provide you with ideas for new partners and allies.

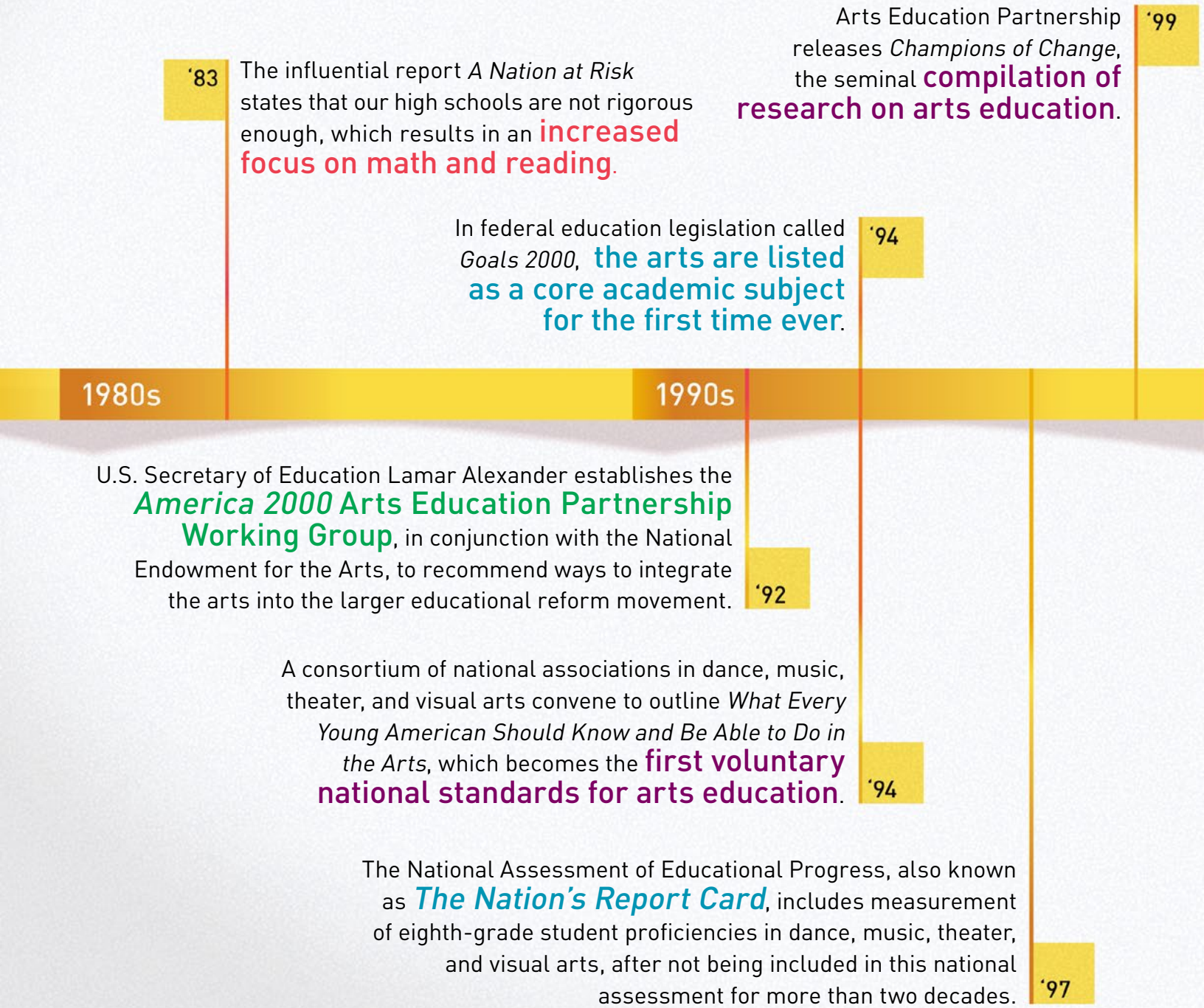
Additionally, the section Engage the Community on page 15 has several ideas about how everyone in this ecosystem interacts.



The Five Ws

When has arts education advanced?

While advocates and policymakers have marked many important milestones in arts education, this section will focus mostly on research and policy achievements in the field over the past 30 years.



2000s

'02 The reauthorization of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, also known as ***No Child Left Behind***, continues to list the arts as a core subject, but also calls for a heightened focus on accountability, standards, and testing.

'05 Education Commission of the States finds that **49 states** have established standards for arts education.

'02 The No Child Left Behind Act includes authorization of a federal **Arts in Education** program at the U.S. Department of Education, providing direct federal investment in arts education research and program support totaling more than $375 million for more than 200 local and state arts education programs.

2010s

'12 The U.S. Department of Education releases *Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools*. The report shows that the majority of schools offer regular music and visual arts instruction, but that instruction in dance and music has declined over the past decade. Schools most likely *not* to offer arts instruction have higher levels of at-risk students. U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan calls this a **civil rights issue**.

'12 Arts Education Partnership launches **ArtsEdSearch**, an online and continuously updated repository for arts education research.

'10 States begin to adopt the **Common Core State Standards** in English Language Arts & Math, which inspires the formation of the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards. They begin to revise the national arts standards for the first time since 1994.

The How

Now that we've covered the "five Ws" it's time for the how—how to make arts education happen in your school district. Making arts education a priority begins with building a unified front among parents, faculty, administrators, and fellow school board leaders. It also involves a commitment on the part of the school board to allocate and secure funding for the future sustainability of such programming.

This chapter will outline a five-step process to strengthen the arts in your public school district.

Know the Facts

Engage the Community

Build Consensus

Create an Infrastructure

Conclusion—Five Simple Ways

It takes a village to educate a child. Everyone has a role they can play. Thank you for taking the first step in mobilizing support for arts education in your village.

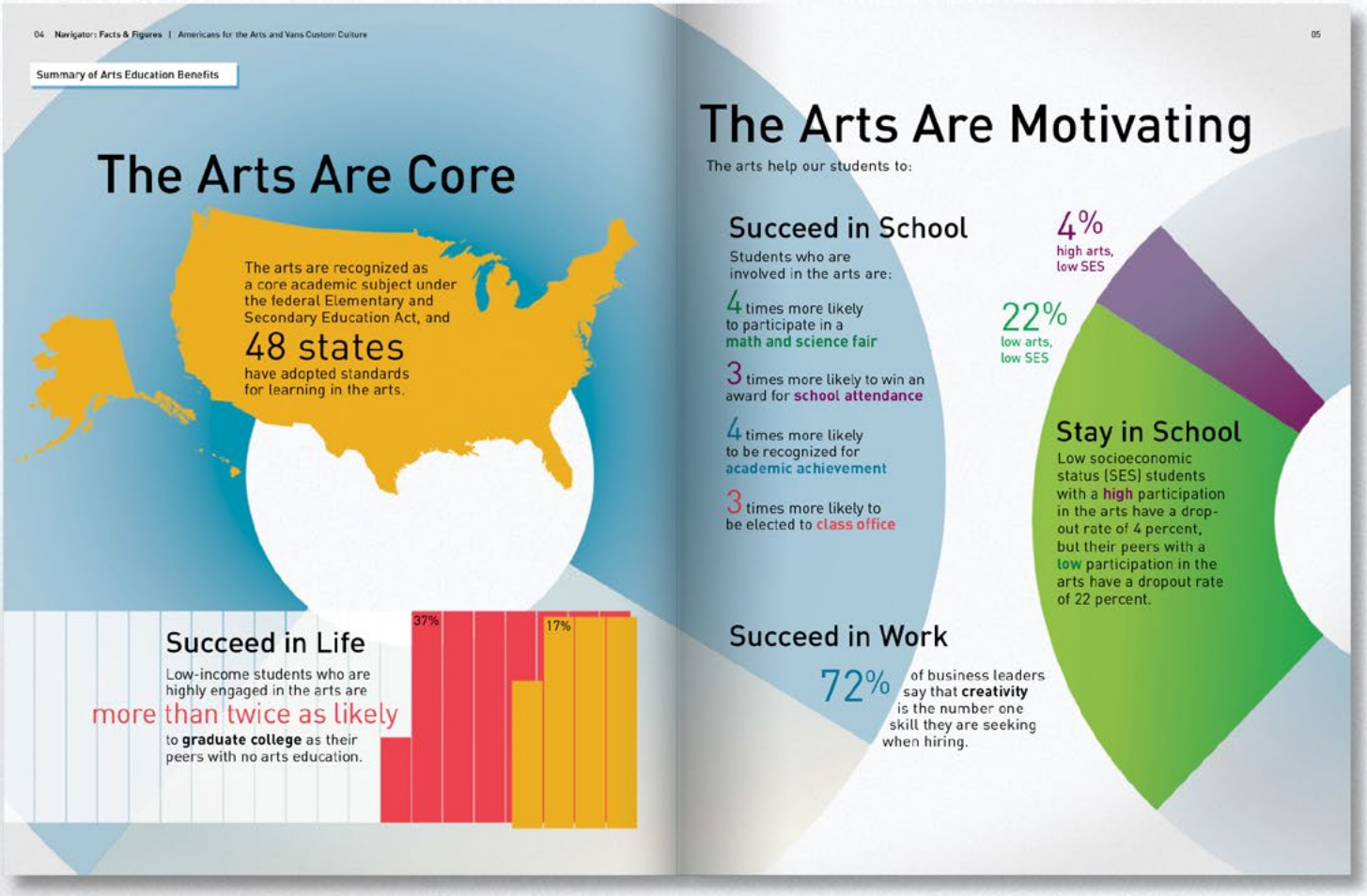
The How

Know the Facts

Building consensus on the value of arts education can pose a difficult challenge. You will need data about both the benefits of arts education and the need for access to arts education.

Check out our ***Facts & Figures*** Navigator, pictured below, which will enable you to build a strong argument in support of the arts in your district and community without having to pour over volumes of research. All of the classic research for arts education has been summarized in this handy e-book, and it also features links to each of the full reports that it cites.

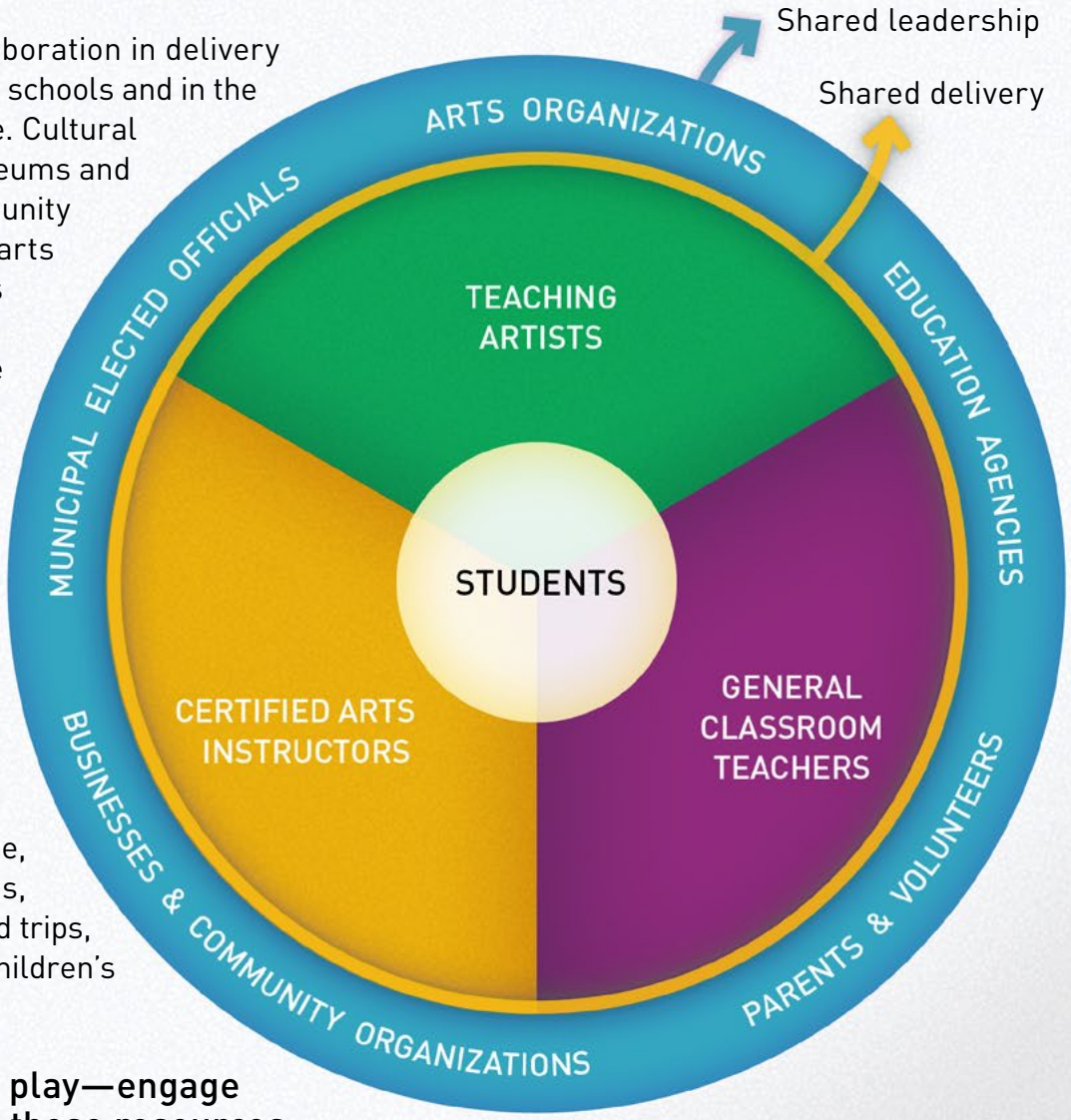
Also make sure to familiarize yourself with your state or district's **instructional standards** and the **national standards** for arts education.



Engage the Community

The sustainability and success of arts education programming is due in large part to a commitment across communities for both **shared delivery** of arts instruction by arts specialists, teaching artists, and general classroom teachers *and* **shared leadership** for arts education among arts agencies, education agencies, parents, and businesses.

The key to success is collaboration in delivery and leadership—working in schools and in the community together as one. Cultural institutions, including museums and libraries, often offer community outreach programs. Local arts agencies and organizations can assist school boards in establishing a district-wide arts education plan using community resources. Elected officials can attract public attention and resources to arts education. Business leaders can offer internships, mobilize resources, and raise visibility through op-eds and letters to the editor. Parents volunteer their time, raise funds, donate supplies, chaperone arts-related field trips, and encourage their own children's participation in the arts.



Everyone has a role to play—engage your community to tap these resources.

Build Consensus

As you begin to engage your community, here are some tools to get the conversation started.

The following three sections can help you assess where your school or district is in terms of quality arts programs. To get started, you'll need to:

Find the Right Model
Create a Shared Vision
Answer Questions

Find the Right Model

One way to engage the community is to create a community arts team comprised of business leaders, teachers, principals, school board members, superintendents, parents, students, arts organizations, and other stakeholders. (See the ***Arts Education Field Guide*** for examples.)

Across the country, different communities operate with several different models of community teams, coalitions, and networks that support arts education. Most are run by volunteers, but some are managed by a backbone organization, such as a local nonprofit arts organization or education agency. Some even morph into new organizations, such as education foundations.

Check out these different models:

- **Arts for All** in Los Angeles
- **Any Given Child** – the Kennedy Center's national program
- California Alliance for Arts Education's **local advocacy networks**
- **ArtsRising** in Philadelphia
- **The Right Brain Initiative** in Portland
- **Mind Pop** in Austin
- **Arts Expansion Initiative** in Boston
- **Thriving Minds** in Dallas
- **Ingenuity Incorporated** in Chicago

Create a Shared Vision

Once you've assembled members of the community, it's time to discuss what you want to strive for, and to create a shared vision for arts education.

First you can assess your **strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats**, or something similar to a **SWOT analysis**, which will help you know what to prioritize. This is as easy as 1, 2, 3:

1 First assess your needs.

Examples:

- No fourth graders receive music instruction
- No dance is offered at any of the schools
- High school theater has been cut in half

2 Then, take stock of your resources.

Examples:

- Parent volunteers
- After-school programs
- Teachers with talents or degrees in the arts
- Schools with unused stages in the cafeteria
- Nearby museums or cultural institutions

3 Now, utilize your assets to strategically address your needs.

Examples:

- After-school drama clubs could meet in the multi-purpose cafeteria areas with stages.
- A third-grade teacher with a background or degree in dance could offer to teach dance to all students in the grade as part of a wheel rotation through the various subjects, led by teachers with that expertise.
- The school district could contract with a nearby performing arts center to have their musicians teach in-school programs to the fourth grade.

The How

15

Questions to Ask

Here is a checklist of 15 questions for your community arts team to ask of the school district. For each question posed, we provide at least one suggested benchmark that addresses some of the indicators of a high-quality arts program and can help you understand what to aim for. If you find the answer is '*no*' to several of these questions, work with your community arts team to plan for improvement.

1 Does your district implement either your state's instructional standards or the national standards for arts education?

BENCHMARK Standards define what students should know and be able to do in any given academic discipline and are the basis for high quality arts instruction.

2 Does your school or district have a designated minimum amount of time for instruction in the arts?

BENCHMARK One class per week should be the minimum amount of time—one class per day is ideal.

3 Is there a high school arts requirement for graduation?

BENCHMARK Many colleges require at least a year of arts study for admission, so make sure that your kids are college-ready by having this requirement in place.

4 Does your school district have an instructional leader in the arts, such as an arts coordinator? Does s/he need community support to expand or improve the arts program?

BENCHMARK If there is no arts coordinator, often the director of curriculum and instruction can serve in this role.

5 Does your school district have a written arts education policy approved by the school board?

BENCHMARK A district policy can protect the arts program in times of budget reductions and administrative changes. If you don't have a policy, here are some examples.

6 Does your school or district have a written plan for the arts program?

BENCHMARK (IF YES) Ensure that all arts disciplines are included (music, visual arts, theater, dance, and media arts) and that all children in the district are covered by the plan—not just some grade levels at some of the schools.

BENCHMARK (IF NO) Work with a team of teachers, principals, and community members to put together a plan. Here are some examples.

7 Does your district pay for arts teachers' salaries and instructional supplies, materials, and equipment?

BENCHMARK A good goal to aim for is utilizing 5 percent of the district's general budget to cover these instructional costs. Think creatively to utilize other existing funding options, such as: PTA funds, grant funds, categorical funds, school site-based funds, community partnerships, and federal funds, such as Title I funds for arts integration, Title II funds for professional development, Title III funds for arts-based ESL strategies, Titles I & III for parent involvement programs, etc.

8 Are school district administrators supportive of the arts program?

BENCHMARK Support could include any or all of the following indicators: allocation of funding, creation of partnerships with community arts organizations, participation in curriculum development, providing equipment and materials, providing instructional time, providing professional development opportunities, and support for assessment of arts instruction.

9 Does your school or district have a sufficient number of arts teachers?

BENCHMARK A good goal for teachers per students is a ratio of 1:400.

Tip: Print & share with stakeholders

10 Are certified arts teachers the ones delivering the arts instruction?

BENCHMARK While certified teachers should be the primary source of instruction, additional sources of instruction can include arts integration taught by generalist teachers, or artistic residencies taught by professional artists and/or volunteers. A well-rounded program will include a combination of all instructional strategies.

11 Are professional artists involved?

BENCHMARK Professional artists can bring the arts alive during performances and demonstrations at the school. Meaningful partnerships can also evolve between schools and artists through the design of long-term teaching residencies for artists and co-planning between teachers and artists.

12 Does the arts instruction focus on more than just performing?

BENCHMARK A good program will have students not only learning to perform the work of others (such as learning to play Mozart or paint like Picasso), but will also teach students to respond to work (such as appreciation and history classes) and to use self expression to create their own original works of art.

13 Are there separate arts facilities?

BENCHMARK Schools should have dedicated space for arts instruction, such as music rooms, an auditorium, a visual art studio, and a dance studio.

14 Does your school or district have the appropriate resources for arts education?

BENCHMARK Necessary supplies and equipment could include: prints, artifacts, books, videos, slides of art work, computer programs, textbooks, sheet music, art supplies like paint or clay, musical instruments, curriculum units, lesson plans, and resources for field trips or school programs presented by outside organizations.

15 Is your community involved in arts education?

BENCHMARK The community can and should provide additional resources and support to schools in terms of facilities, volunteers, instructional support, funding, professional development opportunities, field trips, and/or any of the resources listed in the question above.

The How

Create an Infrastructure

Once you've built consensus on a shared vision for arts education, you need to turn that vision into reality. One of the best ways to ensure longevity of your vision is to create an infrastructure where arts education programs can thrive.

The following three sections will demonstrate how you can build a sound infrastructure with a:

Policy

Plan

Budget

Policy

Federal Policy

Federal law through the Elementary and Secondary Education Act identifies the arts as a core academic subject, just like math, science, and language arts. However, implementation of education policy is left up to each state. This means that arts education policies regarding standards, curriculum, teacher certification, and graduation requirements vary from state to state.

State Policy

The Arts Education Partnership's **state policy database** lists a variety of policies that states adopt, such as a high school graduation requirement in the arts. However, having a policy in place doesn't always mean it gets implemented. A state arts organization, such as members of **Americans for the Arts' State Arts Action Network** or the **Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network**, can provide details on how state policy gets implemented locally, and can offer tools to advocate for better implementation of state policy.

Local Policy

While there is no one prescription for local arts education policy, a written statement or policy by the district's school board often exemplifies a commitment to arts education at the school district level.

Written policies stating that the arts are just as important as other school subjects such as language arts, mathematics, the natural sciences, and the social sciences is an important first step in building a district-wide infrastructure that outlines educational values.

In addition, a written statement should protect funding for arts education by explicitly stating that when budget cuts occur, reductions are distributed equally across all subject areas, rather than eliminating specific programs. If you would have a hard time passing a policy with your school board, a resolution might work as well, which would serve as a strong values statement. School boards that adopt such policies and resolutions demonstrate their commitment to arts education as a critical component of a child's basic education.

Plan

Implementing a policy that includes the arts as a core academic subject requires a plan that consists of goals, objectives, strategies, budget implications, persons responsible, and a time frame for implementation. A plan should be designed following the consensus-building conversations from the previous section and should include specifics regarding:

- standards and curriculum
- instruction and methodology
- student assessment
- professional development
- program administration and personnel
- partnerships and collaborations
- resources and facilities
- program evaluation

For some information to guide you in developing a team and crafting a plan with that team, check out these two tools:

1. The California Alliance for Arts Education's **Insider's Guide to Arts Education Planning**
2. The Kennedy Center's **Community Audit**

Want **examples of local policies and plans**? Burbank Unified School District of California has developed comprehensive examples of a **school board policy**, as well as a **district-wide plan**, as part of its ongoing participation in L.A. County's **Arts for All Initiative**.

The Arts for All Initiative houses several models of district policies and plans on its website's **tools section**.

Budget

A lack of funding and resources is the most common concern facing school districts. Funding does exist at the national, state, and local levels for arts programs in public schools. On average, public schools are funded 10 percent by the federal government, 47 percent by state governments, and 43 percent by local government (mostly through property taxes).

Because the arts are a core academic subject under federal law, they are eligible for federal funding streams, such as Title I funds. This **excellent report** by the California Alliance for Arts Education outlines how schools can utilize Title I funds for arts instruction.

Because there is no federal line item (and usually no state line item), it is hard to track nationally how much is being spent on arts education.

At the local level, while external funding and seed money may be needed to launch and/or revitalize a comprehensive arts education program, sustainable programs require a funding commitment from the district's operational budget. A designated percentage of the instructional program for all students in elementary and secondary schools supports a district's commitment to the arts. This will help to secure ample teaching staff and materials, appropriate classroom equipment, and financial support for professional development training.

Here are some potential funding sources available to schools and school districts:

External:

- PTA/PTO/PTSA funds
- Student body (ASB) funds
- Voluntary integration funds
- 21st Century Community Learning Centers funds (after-school programs)
- Adopt-A-School programs
- After-school funds
- Booster Club funds
- Crowdsourced funds, such as Kickstarter, Donors Choose, or other online fundraisers
- Festivals/carnivals
- Selling artwork
- Community fundraising projects (gift wrap, candy or bake sales, etc.)

Internal:

- Discretionary school site funding
- Textbook funds
- Gifted/Talented (GATE) funds
- Local, State, and Federal Staff Development funds
- Magnet school funds
- Migrant education funds
- School improvement funds
- Federal Title I, II, V and VII funding

Conclusion—Five Simple Ways

While this e-book has outlined several ways to comprehensively support arts education at the school district level, there are other simple ways individuals can support arts education. Here are five ideas to get you started:

1 **Volunteer your time, resources, and skills:** Many schools would appreciate your time as a chaperone, your skill as a teaching artist, or your donations of money, costumes, rehearsal space, etc.

2 **Get involved politically:** Tell your elected officials why arts education is important. **Ask your congressperson** to keep the arts listed as a core subject during the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act.

3 **Increase visibility of the issue:** Host a community conversation or speaker series on the topic, coordinate community fundraisers, write an op-ed piece for your local paper, **screen a documentary about arts education**, and include the arts in school communications (newspapers, newsletters, displays, letters to parents, etc.).

4 **Talk to school leaders:** Testify at school board meetings. Request meetings with superintendents and/or principals. Use these brochures to start conversations: ***What School Leaders Can Do to Increase Arts Education*** by the Arts Education Partnership and ***My Child, the Arts and Learning*** by the Center for Arts Education.

5 **Be the solution:** As you approach school leaders with your message in support of arts education, don't just insist that principals offer arts education overnight. School leaders are facing tough situations. Offer solutions that help solve these problems. Is the principal having an attendance issue at her school? Show her **research** that says that the arts can be her solution to increase student engagement. Propose concrete ways that the arts can be a tool in improving overall education.

Whatever involvement level you choose, we hope that this e-book has helped you with ***Getting Started*** in supporting arts education!

Sources

Americans for the Arts (2013). Arts Education Navigator: Facts & Figures. Retrieved from www.americansforthearts.org/pdf/networks/arts_education/AFTA_Navigator_Facts-and-Figures_lo.pdf

Americans for the Arts (n.d.). Public Awareness Campaign. Retrieved from www.americansforthearts.org/public_awareness/get_involved/002.asp

Americans for the Arts (2012). *The Arts Education Field Guide*. Washington, DC. Retrieved from http://bit.ly/fieldguidelr

Aud, S., Hussar, W., Kena, G., Bianco, K., Frohlich, L., Kemp, J., Tahan, K. (2011). *The Condition of Education 2011* (NCES 2011-033). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

Fiske, E. (Ed.) (1999). *Champions of change: The impact of the arts on learning*. Washington, DC: The Arts Education Partnership and The President's Committee on the Arts and the Humanities.

Kasper, J. (2013). A Recent History of Arts Education. Retrieved from http://prezi.com/c8wopzagh3p7/a-recent-history-of-arts-education

LA County Arts for All (n.d.). Models and Materials Database. Retrieved from http://tools.laartsed.org/search.aspx

Larson, G.O. (1997). *American Canvas: An Arts Legacy for Our Communities.* Washington, DC: National Endowment for the Arts.

The National Coalition for Education in the Arts (1993). *Arts and School Reform*. Renyi, J. and Sanchez-Purrington, S. (Ed.). New York: American Council on the Arts.

The National Coalition for Education in the Arts (1992). *Definition of Arts Education.* Renyi, J. and Sanchez-Purrington, S. (Ed.). New York: American Council on the Arts.

Arts Education Partnership Working Group, *The Power of the Arts to Transform Education* (Washington, DC: John F. Kennedy Center for the Arts, 1993) 5.

TimeToast (n.d.). pecansandies. The History of Art Education In America. Retrieved from www.timetoast.com/timelines/the-history-of-art-education-in-america

Vasquez Heilig, J., Cole, H., & Aguilar, A. (2010). From Dewey to No Child Left Behind: The Evolution and Devolution of Public Arts Education. Arts Education Policy Review, 111, 136-145. Retrieved from http://bit.ly/18sbOxQ

About Vans Custom Culture

For more than 45 years, Vans has evolved beyond a surf and skate shop to draw influence from Southern California youth culture as diverse as it is progressive. Incorporating elements from art, music, and street culture, with deep roots in action sports heritage, Vans today offers a full range of footwear, timeless apparel, and accessories around the world.

In 2010, youth brand Vans developed the Vans Custom Culture Art Competition to encourage high school students across the United States to embrace their creativity and inspire a new generation of youth culture. Vans Custom Culture is committed to investing in the arts as an integral part of all students' education.

The Vans Custom Culture competition offers students a fresh perspective on art and an outlet for self expression through the synthesizing of design, fashion, and function during this unique contest and multimedia exhibit.
www.vans.com/customculture

About Americans for the Arts

Founded in 1960, Americans for the Arts is the nation's leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education. From offices in Washington, DC and New York City, we provide a rich array of programs and services that meet the needs of more than 150,000 organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America.

Americans for the Arts envisions a country where every child has access to—and takes part in—high quality and lifelong learning experiences in the arts, both in school and in the community. We believe that learning in the arts enables every individual to develop the critical thinking, collaborative, and creative skills necessary to succeed in today's ever-changing world.

Through advocacy, research, partnerships, and professional development, Americans for the Arts strives to provide and secure more resources and support for arts education.

Copyright ©2013, Americans for the Arts. All Rights Reserved.

Navigator Series Editor: Kristen Engebretsen
Managing Editor: Elizabeth Van Fleet
Design: Andee Mazzocco, Whole-Brained Design, LLC
Spanish Translation: Alex Sarian

Our Navigators are easy to share—just hit the appropriate button below:

Share on Facebook

Download / print as a PDF

E-mail this to a friend or colleague

Washington, DC
Americans for the Arts
1000 Vermont Ave NW 6th Floor
Washington, DC 20005
202.371.2830

New York City
Americans for the Arts
One East 53rd Street, 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10022
212.223.2787

artseducation@artsusa.org

www.AmericansForTheArts.org/ArtsEducation