

**FUNDING THE ASSISTANCE FOR ARTS EDUCATION GRANT PROGRAM  
AT THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION  
IMPROVING ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION FOR ALL STUDENTS**

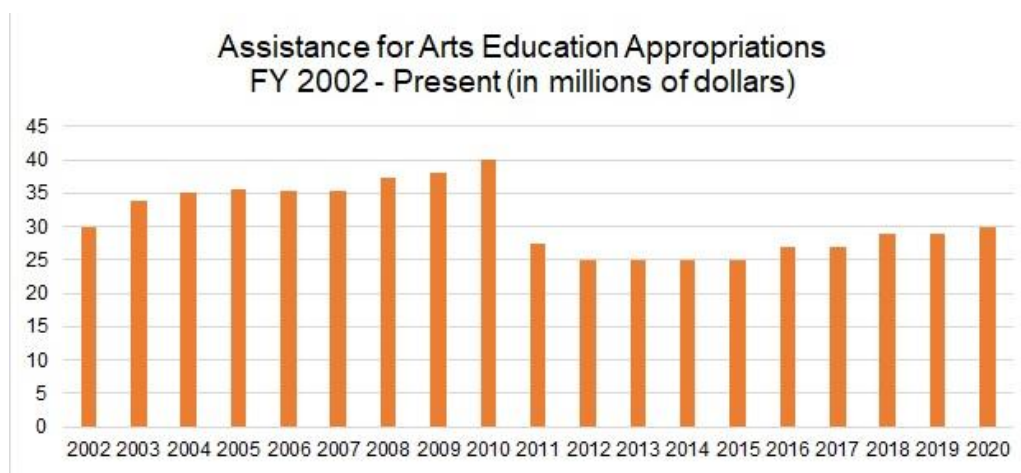
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**ACTION NEEDED**

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**We urge Congress to:**

- **Appropriate \$40 million for the Assistance for Arts Education (AAE) programs in the FY 2021 Labor-HHS-Education appropriations bill. The AAE program is authorized under Title IV of the *Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)*.**



**TALKING POINTS**

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- Student learning is strengthened through standards-based arts education and integration of arts instruction into other subject areas supported by ***Arts Education Model Development and Dissemination (AEMDD) grants***. Since the program's inception, a total of 185 projects have been funded, including rigorous evaluation of arts education strategies that can impact schools and communities nationwide.
- Innovative models to improve instruction for arts specialists and classroom teachers are supported by ***Professional Development for Arts Educators (PDAE) grants***. The PDAE grants program has supported over 100 projects that serve as national models for effective arts education professional development.
- The impact of these federal investments is multiplied by the program's ***Evaluation and National Dissemination*** component. For example, in FY 2009, the program exceeded its performance measure in both mathematics and language arts. In math, 12% more students reached the achievement target goal in the grant program group than in the comparison group. In Language Arts/Reading, 54% more students in the grant program achieved the target goal than in the comparison group. State and local education agencies can adapt these models to provide rigorous arts instruction for all students.
- National level, high-quality arts education projects and programs for children and youth, with special emphasis on serving students from low-income families and students with disabilities, are supported by a ***National Program Competition***.

**A reduction below the current level of arts education funding would result in under-funding multi-year projects that are midstream.** Grant awards support projects over the course of up to four years. Cuts to funding would place these projects in extreme jeopardy.

## **TALKING POINTS (CONTINUED)**

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**U.S. Department of Education directs grants through the AAE program to strengthen the arts as part of a well-rounded education. Arts education grants have served more than 230 congressional districts in 33 states, including these examples.**

- In Long Beach, California, Dramatic Results was awarded a four-year FY18 Model Development and Dissemination Grant of \$2.5 million to the organization's Art of Building a City Ecosystem (ABC) program to support low-income, gifted middle school students in the Long Beach Unified School District. Using theatre techniques, Dramatic Results works to improve students' math, art, and social-emotional skills. The ABC program is also providing 36 classroom teachers and 36 pre-service teachers with professional development that includes strategies for working with gifted students.
- Chicago's SPARK, an arts education teacher professional development program, was awarded a four-year FY18 Professional Development grant of \$2.5 million to create a system and culture of collaboration among school leaders, teachers, art/education partners, teaching artists, and the larger school community. Led by the Opportunities for All organization and numerous community partners, the goal of SPARK is to increase teachers' knowledge and instruction of professional arts education content and arts integration strategies.
- In Philadelphia, Drexel University's MakeSPACE program was awarded a four-year FY18 Model Development and Dissemination Grant of \$2.5 million designed to support four rural school districts in integrating the arts across classroom learning in order to improve the motivation, engagement, creative learning skills, and arts and academic achievement of their students. The MakeSPACE project is working to reach that goal by increasing rural educators' capacity to integrate standards-based, high-quality arts learning into core academic areas, along with local cultural and artistic resources.
- In Portland, Maine, Side x Side and its primary partner, the University of Southern Maine, was awarded a \$2.5 million FY18 Model Development and Dissemination Grant to fund (Re)Imagining Education, a program designed to address achievement gaps among elementary school students in Portland and Lewiston. The program is focusing on helping teachers integrate the arts into the curriculum and assigning trained teaching artists as mentors as part of a "Master Teachers" program, with the goal of strengthening students social-emotional skills in order to improve learning.
- The most recent National Program Competition awarded a three-year grant to The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts to provide arts education programs and resources focusing on pre-K–12. The programs and resources are in three areas: Teaching, Learning, and Partnerships; Performances for Young Audiences; and Career Development for Artistically Talented Young People.

## **BACKGROUND**

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The Assistance for Arts Education (AAE) program at the U.S. Department of Education is authorized under Title IV of the *Every Student Succeeds Act* (ESSA) and is a continuation of the programs previously authorized under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act as the "Arts in Education" program fund.

ESSA recognizes the arts as essential to a "well-rounded" education. The arts education programs have received consistent bipartisan support from Congress year after year. On June 19, 2019, the House approved an FY20 Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies funding bill that recommended a \$6 million increase for the program. In December of 2019, the House and Senate agreed to full support for the program fund and the final FY 2020 bill signed into law included a \$1 million increase to \$30 million for the Assistance in Arts Education program.

The Administration's budget proposal for FY 2021 calls for the AAE program to be ended by combining it into a broad block grant.