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WYOMING



STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM

A CASE STUDY FROM

Arkansas



AMERICANSFORTHEARTS.ORG/SP3



About Americans for the Arts

The mission of Americans for the Arts is to serve, advance, and lead the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America.

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 that meet the needs of more than 150,000 members and stakeholders. We are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and to creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

About the State Policy Pilot Program

The State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) was a three-year initiative of Americans for the Arts focused on a three-pronged approach of data collection, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange to work toward influencing implementation of federal mandates or programs at the state level; expanding state support of arts education in policy and appropriations; and impacting local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Through annual grants and technical assistance, Americans for the Arts empowered leaders and stakeholders from 10 state teams seeking to strengthen arts education by advancing state policy in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

Visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3 for more info!

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**CHARMAINE AND DAN
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About the State Policy Pilot Program

The State Policy Pilot Program—“**SP3**”—was a **3-YEAR** initiative of Americans for the Arts focused on a **3-PRONGED** approach of data collection, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange to work toward achieving the broad goals of:

- influencing implementation of federal mandates or programs at the state level;
- expanding state support of arts education in policy and appropriations; and
- impacting local access to arts programs and instruction for students.

Through annual grants and technical assistance, Americans for the Arts empowered leaders and stakeholders from 10 state teams seeking to strengthen arts education by advancing state policy in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

The results of this program include numerous reports, case studies, and a network of state leaders ready to enact policy change and advocacy initiatives to advance arts education across the nation.

NATIONAL THEMES

Throughout the 3-year State Policy Pilot Program, several themes were observed across all case studies, which support the trends in policy development and advocacy infrastructure.

- 1. Employing the Federal-State-Local Policy Pipeline:** establishing a pathway to link federal policy frameworks and federal guidance to state-level education policy development to impact local implementation of educational resources.
- 2. Utilizing Data to Support Policy Development and Advocacy Efforts:** research and analysis will both inform and influence the path toward devising an effective policy or advocacy strategy.
- 3. Embracing the Power of Convening:** coming together as diverse stakeholders, whether at the national, state, or local levels is an essential part of relationship building, plan crafting, and policy development.
- 4. Sharing Knowledge Among State Leaders:** documenting and disseminating the good, the bad, and the innovative concepts from your work is key to have ownership and a stake in the shared advancement of the field of arts education.

Policy Development Trends



Sustaining Appropriations for Statewide Initiatives



Revising K-12 Arts Education Standards



Implementing Arts Provisions in ESSA



Enabling Title I Policy Pathway

Look for these icons throughout the SP3 series!



Building Infrastructure for Stakeholder Engagement

Advocacy Infrastructure Trends



Sustaining Core Leadership



Forming Relationships with Coalitions



Fostering Allies Among Elected Officials



Building an Information Base



Crafting Consistent and Effective Messages



Creating Communication Infrastructure for Grassroots Advocacy

Read more about the State Policy Pilot Program and its findings at AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3

INTRODUCTION

Americans for the Arts selected a group of arts leaders in Arkansas—interested in establishing a 501(c)(3) dedicated to statewide advocacy for the arts, arts education, and the state’s creative economy—to participate in the State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) sponsored by Americans for the Arts. This group of arts leaders would become Arts Advocates Arkansas (AAA) and later Arkansans for the Arts (ARftA). To support and develop the creative economy in Arkansas, the group felt it would be necessary to ensure opportunity for all people in Arkansas to have access to and involvement in the arts. They felt that participation in the SP3 project was well suited toward that end. To be successful, this organization would need to establish a two-tiered oversight structure, including a state team to oversee all aspects of the three-year SP3 project and a task force of arts education stakeholders strategically selected from each region of the state to pursue the goals of AAA.



The initial Arkansas SP3 team consisted of Lana Hallmark, Fine Arts Program Advisor for the Arkansas Department of Education (ADE); Joy Pennington, then executive director of the Arkansas Arts Council (AAC); and Craig Welle, executive director of Arkansas Learning Through the Arts. At the first SP3 convening in November 2014, this team determined two ambitious goals.



GOAL ONE

To Build a Statewide Infrastructure To Support Arts Education



This goal would require establishing productive relationships with key regional arts, arts education, and community leaders throughout the state. These regional leaders would develop and implement regional arts advocacy action plans.

GOAL TWO

To Effectively Implement and Evaluate Newly Revised Fine-Arts Academic Standards For The State



This goal would require the development of a data collection plan to determine the success of the implementation of new standards throughout the state.





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To illustrate the realities of the work of the state team and their new regional partners to achieve these goals, including the challenges, successes, and lessons learned over the last three years, this case study is organized into three sections. Section 1 focuses on AAA’s journey to secure and strengthen its organizational **infrastructure**. Section 2 details the evolution of the **implementation** of the 2014 Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards. Section 3 chronicles the **advocacy** efforts of the SP3 team to integrate both efforts to achieve the ambitious goal originally designed.



ESTABLISHING INFRASTRUCTURE

At the outset of SP3, crucial foundational steps had already been taken. AAA had secured 501(c)(3) nonprofit status in September 2014. It had established both a board of directors and an advisory board. The eight board members were all current or former Arkansas Arts Council (AAC) commissioners, one of whom was a full-time educator. Consequently, the AAA board was well informed on Arkansas' arts funding landscape. According to the AAC-defined region map, **see right**, a board member or an advisory-board member represented seven of the eight regions.



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ARKANSAS ARTS COUNCIL DISTRICTS



Key Infrastructure Strategies

ORGANIZING LEADERSHIP

By mid-2015, the original SP3 team had expanded to include Kim Wilson, professional development consultant for Arkansas A+ Schools. Additional task force members included: Garbo Hearne, AAA Vice Chair; State Senator Joyce Elliot (D); State Representative Matthew Shepherd (R); and Cynthia Haas, AAC Arts Education Manager.



At an organizational meeting, members brought forward the following global recommendations:

- Be intentionally inclusive to honor all arts disciplines.
- Speak with one voice when talking to decision-makers.
- Audit and analyze resources by region.
- Identify SP3 committee member roles.
- Determine data needed and how to compile it.
- Understand national standards and how they should inform state arts standards.
- Expand arts standards training to include community as well as arts educators in all settings (charter, private, and home schools).
- Gather feedback from attendees at arts standards training sessions.
- Address the issue of sustainability of arts programs affected by demographics.
- Make the nurturing of creativity in young people an important message.
- Use a differentiated approach when promoting the arts in various regions.
- Address media arts standards in the state.
- Perform a gap analysis of arts availability across regions of Arkansas.
- Address arts for early childhood, including daycare and pre-K programs.



Given the available resources, the AAA board of directors decided to combine the duties of an SP3 director with those of the AAA executive director, in order to hire a half-time person who would oversee the entire organization and connect SP3 to the broader work of AAA.



SUCCESSSES



Maintained the participation of the writers of the original SP3 plan throughout the entirety of SP3 project; this participation provided consistency and long-range vision when changes and adaptations to the plan were necessary.

Benefitted from multiple arts education perspectives (i.e., professional artists, certified arts educator, professional development provider, state agency advisor).

CHALLENGES

Identified advocates through professional development workshops and regional meetings but did not officially designate those advocates as task force members or ask them to perform specific work.

Lost the first director hired for the organization after only a few months, so leadership was inconsistent during the first year.

Organizing AAA



The following timeline summarizes the key steps the AAA board of directors took towards organizational infrastructure during the SP3 project:

**SEPTEMBER
2014 –
SEPTEMBER
2015**

Established roles and responsibilities of AAA:

- Established schedule of regular board meetings.
- Developed AAA budget with and beyond SP3 funds.
- Wrote job description for and hired Jessica Sabin as executive director.



Created a Strategic Plan [\[Appendix, Attachment 2\]](#)

At a two-day strategic planning retreat, AAA board members determined its:

- New name: Arkansans for the Arts (ARftA)
- Mission: To unite all supporters of the arts in Arkansas in one voice to educate, inform, and advance the arts, arts education, and the creative economy in the state
- Vision: To achieve wide recognition of the significance and impact of the diverse spectrum of the arts in the economy, and to achieve stable funding for the arts as critically important in all major economic development strategies in the state
- Purpose: To provide leadership in (1) promoting and advancing the creative economy, (2) transforming policy in arts education, and (3) uniting the state with a call to action by policy makers to increase investment in the arts.

Goals through December 2017:

- 1** Promote the creative economy
- 2** Promote arts and education
- 3** Build the organizational infrastructure through communication and marketing
- 4** Build the organization infrastructure through financial stability and staffing





**SEPTEMBER
2015 –
SEPTEMBER
2016**



Worked to establish a public presence

- Attended and participated in statewide conferences
- Created ARftA website: www.arkansansforthearts.org
- Established Voter Voice account with SP3 technical assistance funds



**SEPTEMBER
2016 –
SEPTEMBER
2017**

Hired Joy Pennington as ARftA director

SUCSESSES

- Jessica DeLoach Sabin, the first ARftA director, was an asset to the organization because of her political influence.
- Joy Pennington, Sabin's replacement and current ARftA director, became a tremendous asset due to her decades of experience and connections to arts leaders, politicians, and policy.
- The strategic plan provided a tool for discussion for the board of directors, ARftA, and SP3 team members.



CHALLENGES

- Organizational growth and momentum were compromised by the loss of Sabin and turnover on the ARftA board of directors.
- A continuing challenge has been to engage arts educators. Even though the summer professional development has been very popular among arts teachers, they have not joined ARftA.
- An important issue that has not yet gained consensus among board members is the extent to which ARftA membership drives should target individual versus organizational memberships.



Overall results of a three-year effort

To date, ARftA has attracted 80 individual and organization members and has garnered support from the following arts organizations and foundations: Americans for the Arts, the AAC, Arkansas Learning Through the Arts, Center for Arts and Education, Clifford Family Fund, Community Creative Center, Don Munro Fund at Arkansas Community Foundation, Emergent Arts, The Foundation of Arts for Northeast Arkansas, (Hearne) Pyramid Art Books & Custom Framing, Mid-America Arts Alliance, Morris Foundation, Inc., South Arkansas Arts Center, Starr Foundation, Symphony of Northwest Arkansas, and Windgate Foundation. The new organization continues to grow in membership and public presence.

IMPLEMENTATION OF ACADEMIC STANDARDS

Arkansas revises its academic standards on a rotating basis, typically every six years. The Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards in music, visual art, theatre, and dance were scheduled to undergo revision in the Summer 2014. Lana Hallmark, ADE Fine Arts Program advisor, was aware that the National Coalition for Core Arts Standards expected to release new national fine arts standards, the [National Core Arts Standards](#) (NCAS), in June 2014. Realizing that Arkansas would be the first state to rely on the new NCAS as an important resource in revising its own state standards, Hallmark worked closely with the developers of the NCAS to inform the 2014 Arkansas Fine Arts Standards revision committee about changes in the national standards. As the SP3 process began, the goal of effectively implementing the new Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards was of primary concern to the Arkansas state team, and SP3 leaders saw it as a worthy goal.





Obviously, effective implementation and delivery of standards-aligned resources requires relevant and inspirational professional development. A common sentiment among arts teachers in Arkansas is that there has always been a lack of relevant professional development options for them. In Arkansas, regional educational service cooperatives offer professional development to classroom teachers. [\(Appendix, Attachment 1\)](#) Informal arts educators and teaching artists have had limited exposure to arts training related to the state’s required academic standards. Thus, the variety, quality, and accessibility of professional development have historically varied widely across the state.

KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES

Defining Realistic Goals

The original SP3 plan goal was to develop regional arts education centers to deliver resources such as professional development to arts educators, much like [Arkansas' STEM Centers](#). From the onset, the state team understood that achieving this goal required a massive, concentrated effort to secure state and private supplemental funds, as well as university and educational cooperative partnerships. After its first conversation with a potential pilot center, the team immediately realized that it would require more than three years to establish regional arts education centers. The SP3 team did not have a clear vision and a definitive “ask,” and each stakeholder came to the initial conversation focused on how the proposed center might provide potential funding for his or her organization’s and department’s initiatives. It became apparent that, to build towards the SP3 team’s goals, momentum would need to start by building relationships with people across multiple organizations, not by establishing a singular place of reference.

Delivering Focused Professional Development on New Standards

As the SP3 work began in early 2015, ADE, through the educational service cooperatives, delivered to Arkansas fine-arts teachers the usual summer professional development, introducing the new state standards. For the first time, ADE provided workshops for theater and dance teachers as well as visual art and music teachers. Approximately 200 teachers attended ADE workshops hosted by the fifteen cooperatives. To inform the SP3 work, open discussions were embedded into these workshops, and surveys were administered at the conclusion. The responses indicated that the school arts programs often had little interaction and communication with local community arts programs. The survey also revealed that the teachers were uninformed about AAC programs that placed teaching artists in the classroom.



In 2016, in response to these conversations about collaboration between school and community programs, the ADE, the AAC, and the newly organized ARftA developed a partnership. The three organizations worked together to provide a new model of professional development for classroom teachers and teaching artists. In 2016, the partners rolled out [Taking It to the Schools: Community Experiences in Fine Arts](#),



an exciting new model of professional development for fine arts educators. Over the summer, 26 workshops welcomed approximately 320 participants. Classroom teachers and teaching artists, hosted by community arts organizations, gathered in authentic, inspirational spaces for workshops in all arts disciplines. Teams (of one classroom teacher and one teaching artist) worked together to prepare standards aligned instructional materials that could form the basis of a content unit or a residency. In working together as presenters, the teacher and teaching artist modeled the relationship of the pair in a classroom. Representatives of the host organization shared educational programming schedules with local teachers, and presenters integrated their host's current exhibit or other offering into their workshop content.

It became clear to the SP3 team that educating only the certified arts educators keeps arts education isolated and limits the inclusion and appreciation of arts education. Many museums and other cultural institutions invest significant funds into arts education within their public programming. Many of those institutions expect their education departments to design K–12 programs, either as field trips, residency programs, or instructional units and lessons for teachers. For those programs to be relevant to their intended audience, their educators must stay abreast of and knowledgeable about current standards. In other words, it was essential that the ADE's professional development on the new state academic standards be open to teaching artists and community arts participants as well as classroom teachers.



It has also become clear in workshop discussions that ADE and ARftA should work to educate administrators on the importance of arts education and its place in their overall school culture. Both ADE and ARftA have taken this to heart and are planning to connect with administrators in the coming school year.



In the Summer of 2017, the partnership between ADE, AAC, and ARftA continues. Based on the success of the first [Taking It to the Schools: Community Experiences in Fine Arts](#), a second series of workshops, titled [Taking It to the Schools II: Community Experiences in Fine Arts](#), is currently presenting 26 workshops with new resources, presenters, and hosts. The program has expanded to include a third series called [Introducing...the Theatre!](#) Over 460 teachers have registered for the 2017 workshops. The most valuable component of the workshops is the rich conversation between classroom teachers and community artists regarding opportunities for collaboration.

The following timeline outlines the ongoing evolution of new professional development design decisions that address SP3 goals:

**SEPTEMBER
2015 –
SEPTEMBER
2016**

Introduction to 2014 Fine Arts Standards:

- Revised Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards in June 2014.
- Established standards implementation as a goal of SP3 in November 2014.
- New state standards adopted by the State Board of Education in January 2015.
- Recruited and trained teams of teachers who had served on the state standards revision committee to deliver a consistent message on the new state standards in all educational service cooperatives in the Summer of 2015.
- Designed survey and collected data from all professional development attendees to measure confidence to implement new standards following the workshops in the Summer of 2015.



**SEPTEMBER
2016 –
SEPTEMBER
2017**

Taking It to the Schools: Community Experiences in Fine Arts
[\[Appendix, Attachment 3\]](#)

- Recruited and trained teams of classroom teachers and AAC teaching artists from across the state to deliver professional development and model standards-aligned instruction to formal and informal arts educators in March 2016.
- Provided training that reinforced effective instruction of academic standards and provided regional networking opportunities between school arts programs and local community arts programs in authentic spaces, open to all arts education stakeholders, in the Summer of 2016.
- Designed and administered an end-of-workshop survey in 2016 to gather data **[\[Appendix, Attachment 4\]](#)** from attendees to measure participants' confidence in implementing state standards and to measure the extent of regional collaborations.
- Designed and administered a follow-up survey to collect data on the use of workshop materials and on new collaborations between schools and community organizations in May 2017 that is currently ongoing.





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SEPTEMBER 2016 – SEPTEMBER 2017



Taking It to the Schools II: Community Experiences in Fine Arts

- In response to demand from the field, the team developed a second series on the Community Experiences in Fine Arts model.
- Further discussion of regional collaboration in the workshop setting led to expand collaborations and new advocacy partnerships.
- The team introduced a second professional development workshop series, featuring arts integration between theatre and English language arts.
- SP3 advocacy partners (community organizations, SP3 team members, arts education professional associations, etc.) worked together to promote the professional development series.
- The team created a [Google site](#) to disseminate instructional materials developed through the project to the arts education field
- An end-of-workshop survey will again provide data from attendees to measure confidence to implement state standards and the extent of collaborations.
- The team plans to issue a follow-up survey to collect data on use of the workshop materials and on new collaborations between schools and community organizations.



SUCCESSSES

- Growing enrollment numbers, surveys, and written responses indicate overall appreciation of the quality and relevance of the professional development workshops. Data shows that teachers and teaching artists are confident that they can or have implemented the fine-arts academic standards with success.
- Data will serve as evidence for regional educational cooperatives to increase the number and relevance of future offerings.
- Bringing together arts educators from all sectors (i.e., classroom teachers, teaching artists, pre-service teachers, community arts advocates, museum and gallery instructors) will ensure that the initiative effectively addresses the 2014 Arkansas Fine Arts Academic Standards—not just in the classroom setting, but in the informal arts education setting as well.



CHALLENGES

- The team never identified quality indicators in student work to reflect the success of the new arts standards. Although educators were more comfortable with the standards, the team did not measure their effect on student work.
- Fine-Arts Standards Writing Committees did not address media arts standards. The SP3 team held conversations with computer science and CTE departments at the state level, but there was no interest in using National Media Arts standards in courses in those departments. When ADE leads the revision of library media standards in 2018, there may be some interest.
- The SP3 team deemed it necessary to redefine its original goal.





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Overall Results of Three-Year Effort

Since September 2014, the initiative has offered 71 professional development workshops, with over 980 registered participants. There was training for theater and dance educators for the first time, as well as for non-certified educators, assisting community and museum education departments, and contracted teaching artists who wish to design programs for public school students. [Taking It to the Schools: Community Experiences in Fine Arts](#) provided a creative model for community organizations and regional education cooperatives. The program has developed new community partnerships, which increases communication among the various advocacy constituent groups and produced a wide variety of new advocacy partners. The successful workshop series has brought attention to the ADE's Fine Arts Academic Standards in unexpected ways. Governor Asa Hutchinson's office recently called for reports on successful projects to highlight from the ADE, including [Taking It to the Schools: Community Experiences in Fine Arts](#).

ARTS ADVOCACY

Funded by the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation a decade ago, the [Arkansas Creative Economy Project](#) was a multi-year initiative to identify and enhance the state's creative assets. Efforts to implement recommendations from the report began well, but stalled over time. The report was, however, not forgotten and was used to develop the ARftA strategic plan. Its contents indicate that the foundation for arts advocacy existed in the state, even before SP3. [See [Creativity in the Natural State Project Report](#) (2007), [Ducks, Documentaries, and Design Project Report](#) (2008), [Deep Roots, High Hopes Project Report](#) (2008), [Unveiling the Creative Economy Project Report](#) (2009)]



Included in the report is the following directive:

“Arkansas must spread the word to parents, school boards, and communities about the importance of arts and design in the schools and their impact on learning. The state is already a step ahead of most of the country in emphasizing arts in the schools. By widely disseminating its accomplishments, Arkansas can become a benchmark state.”

KEY ADVOCACY STRATEGIES

Partnering in ArtLinks Conference

To introduce the newly formed advocacy effort to stakeholders across the state, the AAC invited ARftA to sponsor its biennial conference, held October 25–27, 2015. Narric Rome represented Americans for the Arts, and there was significant support for the effort from community arts organizations. Approximately 35 representatives of arts organizations and teaching artists attended a brown-bag lunch to gather input for the SP3 effort. Arts educators were not represented, and it the team noted that they needed to be at the table as well. [\[Appendix, Attachment 5\]](#)

Participating in Arts Advocacy Day

For the past three years, ARftA’s executive director and at least one board member has represented the organization at [Arts Advocacy Day](#). The group scheduled appointments with all Arkansas congressional offices. In 2015 and 2016, ARftA representatives visited most offices, and in 2017, there were visits to all six offices, including face-to-face meetings with both senators and ranking staff members of the House of Representatives.

Participating in Arts Policy Discussions

By Years 2 and 3 of SP3, raising public awareness of ARftA’s mission became possible, as the organization’s leadership began to participate in policy discussions. The SP3 Team saw the advent of the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) as an opportunity to engage in conversations about the meaning of a well-rounded education and took advantage of state-sponsored information gathering meetings to advance this agenda. Education Commissioner Johnny Key reported that, in ESSA meetings across the state, fine arts had emerged as an important concern. Currently, the draft of Arkansas’s ESSA plan offers Arkansas A+ Schools as an example of a program that local school districts could write into district funding plans. This was largely due to ARftA’s efforts.





Additionally, ARftA expanded its list of allies in the political arena and successfully advocated in the Arkansas legislature against [HB 1527](#), a bill that would have put a cap on the amount of time elementary students could spend in art and music classes, and [HB 1458](#), a bill that would have eliminated the requirement for students in both seventh and eighth grades to receive music or art instruction. ARftA was successful in mobilizing arts education professional associations in this effort.

Convening Regional Leaders

After the first successful professional development workshops in 2016, the ADE began receiving calls of support and offers of assistance from potential partners. Here the arts standards implementation effort began to pay off in the areas of infrastructure and advocacy. Jeanie Hulenn, chair of the University of Arkansas (U of A) Art Department, offered to host a convening of regional leaders in Northwest Arkansas. The SP3 team and ARftA capitalized on this offer to plan the same type of convening at a U of A campus in Southeast Arkansas. The purpose was to promote arts, arts education, and the creative-economy advocacy issues and potentially to identify and recruit for ongoing relationships.

**SEPTEMBER
2014 –
SEPTEMBER
2015**

Establishing key relationships

- Recruited Senator Joyce Elliott (D) and Representative Matthew Sheperd (R) to the task force.



**SEPTEMBER
2015 –
SEPTEMBER
2016**

Capitalizing on Opportunities

- Cosponsored biannual conference, ArtLinks, with the AAC [\[Appendix, Attachment 5\]](#).
- Established a presence with key leaders in the field as a result of **Community Experiences in Fine Arts** professional development series.

**SEPTEMBER
2016 –
SEPTEMBER
2017**

Accomplishing the Original Goals of Advocacy

- Attended four ADE-sponsored listening sessions to promote arts education and its significance to ESSA and ADE strategic planning.
- Intervened on two separate proposed bills that would have significantly impacted Arkansas arts education policy with swift advocacy communication and calls for action.
- Hosted two successful regional meetings to promote arts and arts education advocacy issues and potentially identify and recruit for ongoing relationships [\[Appendix, Attachment 6\]](#).



Overall results of 3-year effort

ARftA successfully hosted two inaugural regional meetings in May and early June 2017. The Arkansas Arts Roundtable “Why the Arts Are Essential to Southeast Arkansas,” hosted by the U of A at Monticello, featured Education Commissioner Johnny Key as a panelist. Commissioner Key stated that he had heard from ARftA and arts education supporters at each of the departments listening tours for ESSA and encouraged all to “stay at the table.” The Arkansas Arts Roundtable “Why the Arts Are Essential to Northwest Arkansas,” hosted by the University of Arkansas, featured panelists from Quadrant Research, the Tulsa Artist Fellowship, and the Walton Family Foundation, as well as State Representative Greg Leding (D), among others.





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Both roundtables included a morning panel on the significance of arts education and afternoon panels on the economic and cultural impact of the arts. Word of these meetings has spread, and ARftA the SP3 team is leveraging the two inaugural meetings to garner invitations to other areas of the state after the SP3 project ends. Southern Arkansas University and the U of A Little Rock are discussing possible roundtables for Fall 2017.

After successful efforts with HB 1527 and HB 1458, the SP3 state team is optimistic that ARftA's leadership has the experience and contacts to protect and nurture the arts and arts education in the state from a legislative perspective. As ARftA's presence grows, legislators and other leaders will look to the entity for guidance in matters related to the arts.

LESSONS FOR OTHER STATES

1 **Uniting the Arts Community Under One Roof is Possible**

Arkansas lacked what the SP3 leadership called the “three-legged stool”—a strong relationship between a state arts agency, a state arts-advocacy group, and a state education agency arts representative. The founding of ARftA through SP3 made that relationship possible. The new organization put arts education at the center of an organization expected to promote a broader mission of arts advocacy. The fact that the two lead members of SP3 are on the ARftA board, with one on the executive committee, is a strong indication that ARftA will continue to emphasize arts education under the broader umbrella of arts advocacy. Through collaboration, the AAC, ADE, and ARftA have accomplished—and will continue to accomplish—advocacy goals. Arkansas is proof that the “three-legged stool” is a formidable model.

In the end, however, keeping this model in place will depend upon the continued willingness of the AAC executive director and the ADE arts administrator to work in partnership through ARftA. Bringing new leadership of these agencies into the fold as they take on their responsibilities is key to continued successful collaboration.



SP3 has provided ARftA with the support it needed as a task force of individuals who can advance SP3 goals as part of their independent job descriptions. Moving forward, the group will delegate these duties almost entirely to the half-time executive director, and the ARftA Board or other interested individuals will devote additional time and effort. This may or may not prove to be a sustainable model, and ARftA has much work on sustainable infrastructure yet to do.

2 Making a Regional Approach Work

The demographic diversity of Arkansas inspired the team’s decision to work regionally at the outset—an obvious approach that has proven to be easier said than done. It has taken three years to even begin the process of bringing together regional leaders of arts stakeholders and community leaders to support and sustain a broader statewide advocacy effort. The team has, however, successfully sponsored two regional meetings in the final months of Year 3 ([Appendix, Attachment 6](#)) that have demonstrated the strategic value of this approach, and has made the case for continuation of this effort beyond SP3.



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3 Bringing Decision Makers into the Effort

We have learned that having an impactful conversation with school administrators about strengthening arts education, both through standards implementation and other means, requires related discussions of career pathways and providing a creative workforce for respective regions. While school administrators are generally supportive of arts education, it is difficult for them to move that agenda forward without support from key community leaders that understand and advocate for the arts as a contribution to a vital, creative economy.

In terms of advocacy, ARftA's leadership discovered through its meetings with legislators that support can sometimes come from surprising sources. In talks related to HB 1458, Senator Jason Rapert (R) emerged as a strong supporter of the arts because of his children's participation in school-music programs.





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4 Data Collection is Critical



Collecting more data throughout the process, both statistical and anecdotal, would have been valuable. A lack of communication and collaboration across all fronts in some ways hampers progress in the effective implementation of standards. The ADE and AAC have not had as strong a presence in the arts education field as they should have. This was evident in the great success of the fine-arts professional development workshops that emphasized standards implementation. Classroom teachers and teaching artists were hungry for this type of training, as is clear from the fact that more than 400 participants have registered so far for the Summer 2017 trainings. The trainings also provided networking time for school arts programs and community arts programs.

FINAL THOUGHTS

As the state team came together in 2014 to develop its SP3 vision, two important goals were establishing a statewide advocacy organization and implementing new state arts academic standards. The group struggled to find a way to make these two efforts mutually supportive. The standards implementation already had an ADE process in place and moved along quickly, while the new 501(c)(3) developed slowly. The group found these challenges frustrating at times, as if it were trying to manage two separate programs.

An unexpected but important consequence of the statewide professional development workshops being open to both school and community arts programs was that it provided outreach for advocacy efforts. The new organization was not ready to maximize the support that came its way as a result of this outreach, and the recent



regional roundtables have helped capitalize on the earlier work. The success of the workshops led directly to organizations, particularly universities, reaching out to offer assistance and resources for the project. **When the chair of the U of A Art Department called and said, “I have an army of graduate students at your disposal,” it was clear that regional alliances were available and regional task forces were a reality.**



Finally, in Year 3, new ARftA leadership stepped up to connect the support from new partners, such as the U of A, which had found the organization through advocacy initiatives undertaken by the **Taking It to the School I and II: Community Experiences in Fine Arts** professional development series. The group scheduled regional roundtables. The pieces finally fell into place, and the team is optimistic that ARftA will make a difference in the future of Arkansas’ children and its communities.

NOTES

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

www.AmericansForTheArts.org

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