

WYOMING

AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM – SP3

Wyoming has been selected, after applying on a competitive basis, to be one of ten (10) pilot states to participate in Americans for the Arts' comprehensive national campaign to advance arts education, the [State Policy Pilot Program](#) (SP3).



Photo credit: Wind River Dancers, Wyoming Arts Council Artist Roster

The Wyoming SP3 Team will facilitate an action plan for the development and implementation of an arts education policy strategy for a 3-year period. Americans for the Arts will provide in-depth customized technical assistance and \$10,000 each year to assist Wyoming in successfully creating its plan and achieving its planned goals. To ensure that best practices will be developed, both in the state and nationally, the team will attend an annual symposium to share learning with other state teams, participate annually in a meeting of the State Arts Advocacy Network, and produce a final report, outlining what worked and did not work during participation in the pilot program. These final report/case studies will be turned into policy development tools for the field.

The Wyoming SP3 Team, led by a partnership between the Wyoming Arts Council, the Wyoming Department of Education, and the Wyoming Arts Alliance, intends to use the three-year pilot program on the following three goals: First, to design and implement a state wide data collection system/method to establish a current understanding of arts education availability, quality and policies. Second, to follow that with the creation of a strategic action plan. And third, to organize an independent statewide arts education advisory council that would help drive arts education policy decisions. The Team believes there is great potential to use the three-stage process to engage other stakeholders and allies to work together for a stronger arts education in Wyoming.

Questions the SP3 team plans to address include:

- What policy needs do we have and how do we implement them?
- What types of relevant professional development do arts teachers need in Wyoming?
- Whom might we partner with to bridge the gap between community arts organizations and public education leaders, both in and out of the arts?
- How can we require, repeat and sustain data collection efforts in arts education for Wyoming school districts?

The Wyoming SP3 Team partners have a track record of positive collaboration and success. In early 2013, the Wyoming Arts Alliance, the Wyoming Department of Education, and the Wyoming Arts Council supported House Bill 177, which passed to include a fine and performing arts component in the Hathaway Success Curriculum (required courses for the state's Hathaway Scholarship eligibility), thus driving more high school students to fine

and performing arts coursework and in turn, improving overall college readiness. Staff turnover at both the Alliance and the Arts Council has slowed SP3 activity during 2015 and 2016, but progress is expected to resume in June 2016 with the filling of an arts education position at the state arts agency. Meanwhile, SP3 has already catalyzed a new level of collaboration between the state education and arts agencies, including joint work on the statewide Poetry Out Loud recitation competition and inclusion of presentations by the Arts Council at the Department of Education conference for administrators.



*Convergence Wyoming conference, Wyoming Arts Council
Photo by Ernie Over*

Additional stakeholders who will be sought as partners for the SP3 project include the Wyoming Music Education Association, Wyoming Secondary Art Education Association, and Wyoming Educators of Secondary Theater.

Wyoming SP3 activities include:

1. coordination with the Wyoming Department of Education to collect and aggregate arts education information already reported;
2. surveying the state to identify arts organizations and community arts providers that work in schools on standards-based learning;
3. integration of the Voter Voice legislative contact system to include arts education events and initiate at least one call to action; and,
4. identification of stakeholders and convening a statewide arts education summit to create coalition and develop a shared policy agenda

In 2008, Wyoming was part of the Arts Education Data Collection survey, a four-state report on the status of arts education in Montana, Utah, Idaho, and Wyoming. The study collected baseline data on the demographics, student learning (including minutes of instruction per week in each art form), teachers (including % of high quality educators offering instruction), professional development, and space and resources related to arts education in each state. Among the Wyoming findings that raised concerns were the following:

- Only 41% of the schools responding indicated that the arts were treated as part of the core curriculum
- Only 27% of schools indicated the arts were clearly included as part of the school improvement plan
- The ratio of arts specialists to students in Wyoming was extremely high: 1 to 169 for visual art and 1 to 161 for music
- Wyoming schools responding had lost 8% of their arts teacher FTEs in the previous 2 years
- Between the 2006-7 and 2009-10 school years, visual arts class enrollment fell 2.25%, dance fell 8.26%, music fell 5.3%; and only theatre gained: 2.37%

- By far the most common origin of assessment methods was the classroom teacher, rather than state or district practice

Responding schools in Wyoming ranked the top factors influencing their ability to improve arts education as follows:

1. Availability of certified specialist for teaching visual art
2. Flexibility in scheduling
3. Availability of more arts supplies or equipment
4. Availability of certified specialist for teaching music
5. Facilities and classroom space

For more information and to participate in Wyoming SP3 activities, please contact:

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Americans for the Arts' State Policy Pilot Program (SP3)

A three-year, 50-state initiative with a 10-state pilot component, the State Policy Pilot Program is meant to influence the implementation of federal mandates and programs around arts education at the state level, expand support for arts education policy and funding, and impact local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Through a set of data collection efforts, state-level capacity building, and the convening of a network for knowledge sharing and collective action, the State Policy Pilot Program will strengthen arts education nationally by improving state policy.

For more information, visit: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3.