

ADVOCACY for the **arts** COVID-19 RESPONSE

THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC has had a profound impact on schools and society and will continue to transform our way of life in dramatic and unexpected ways. Teachers met the challenges of creating emergency distance learning in a matter of days. Now schools are engaged in re-imagining what learning might look like for students in the coming years, including rethinking modes of student-teacher interaction and prioritizing essential learning goals. Throughout this time, the Arts—which foster perseverance, analysis, communication, and personal conceptualization—have played an integral role in strengthening social-emotional wellness and empathy for students and families; yet the arts are often mistaken as extra when decisions are made about essential learning.

As State and local school district budgets are being developed, education leaders and community stakeholders are faced with difficult choices that could have long-term repercussions on students having a well-rounded education, which includes the Arts. There are State and federal requirements for Arts Education; the Arts are required subjects because through engagement in the Arts students develop a range of essential habits of mind not emphasized elsewhere in schools but critical to success as adults. Even in the face of challenging circumstances, school districts have a responsibility to make quality educational decisions on behalf of students and to uphold their commitment to provide equitable access to learning in the Arts for all students in New York State.

WHY THE ARTS ARE ESSENTIAL

The Arts prepare students for school, work, and life. Through Arts education, children learn to solve problems and make decisions, think creatively, build self-confidence and self-discipline, articulate a vision, develop the ability to imagine what might be, and accept responsibility to complete tasks from start to finish. A comprehensive Arts education fosters the creativity and innovation needed for success in a competitive workforce. <https://www.arteducators.org/advocacy/advocacy-toolkit>

High school students from under-resourced environments who are highly involved in the Arts have better grades, are less likely to drop out, and are more likely to go on to college. <https://www.arts.gov/sites/default/files/Arts-At-Risk-Youth.pdf>

Nationally, 673,656 Arts-related businesses employ 3.48 million people. In New York State, 50,337 Arts-related businesses employ 396,666 people.

- In Western NY, the Arts generate \$352.1 million, resulting in \$40.3 million in local and state government revenues and 10,160 jobs.
- In Kings County, 5,556 Arts-related Businesses employ 26,974 people.
- In New York County, 15,620 Arts-related businesses employ 218,794 people.
- In Suffolk County, 4,300 Arts-related businesses employ 33,804 people.

<https://www.artsactionfund.org/new-york>

NYS ARTS EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS

The Regulations of the Commissioner of Education Part 100 specify that public school students are to receive instruction in the arts including Visual Arts, Dance, Music and Theater in grades PreK-K (CR 100.3(a)), grades one through six (CR 100.3(b)), and one-half unit of credit in both Visual Arts and Music over grades seven and eight (CR 100.4). Additionally, students in grades nine through twelve must have the opportunity to complete a unit of credit in the Arts; which may include Visual Arts, Music, Dance, or Theater to satisfy Regents diploma requirements (CR 100.5(a)3(v)). Students should also have the opportunity to begin a sequence in the Arts in grade nine, and to access advanced coursework needed to complete a sequence in the Arts (100.2(h)). <http://www.p12.nysed.gov/part100/>

THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

The US Department of Education approved New York's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which demands that all students be provided with a well-rounded education, including the Arts, providing equitable access to an enriched curriculum and educational experience for every student. <https://www.ed.gov/essa?src=rn>

