



EDUCATION

Revitalization of Arts Education Through Community-wide Coordination

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**National Assembly
of State Arts Agencies
December 2007**

***This study was commissioned by
The Wallace Foundation.
Complete information will be
available via The Wallace
Foundation's knowledge
center at
www.wallacefoundation.org***

Proponents of Arts Education Argue That It Is Critical to American Youth

They argue that arts education (music, dance theater, visual arts) can:

- Generate new artists**
- Develop creativity, confidence, work skills as demanded by businesses**
- Motivate and engage students affecting retention and graduation rates**
- Increase demand for arts ensuring future vitality of sector**

Across the Country, Access to Arts Learning Opportunities Is Idiosyncratic

- **Governments recognize arts education as a core subject and require it, but**
 - **Place accountability on other subjects**
 - **Do not enforce or fund requirements**
- **Test-based accountability in other subjects has reduced arts in the school day**
- **Districts and schools provide as they can, but significant variation exists**
 - **Arts are not consistently valued**
 - **Resources are not consistently provided**

How Did We Get to This Point?

1970s

1980s

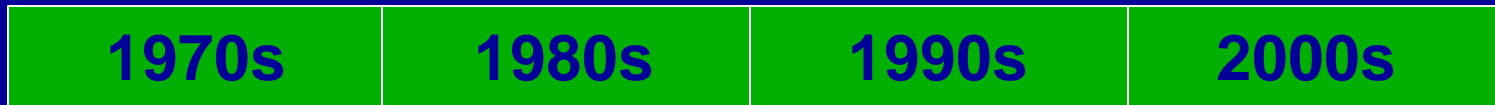
1990s

2000s

Two providers exist

- **Schools (major)**
- **Cultural and community organizations (minor)**

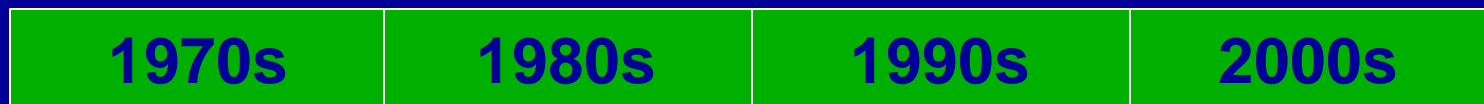
Fiscal Crises Led to Cuts and Growth



Fiscal crises

- **Districts cut arts**
- **New arts organizations emerge as a response**

We Have Seen Recent Positive Developments



Some steps forward

- **States adopt arts education standards**
- **After-school programming grows to include arts**
- **Arts education becomes school reform platform**

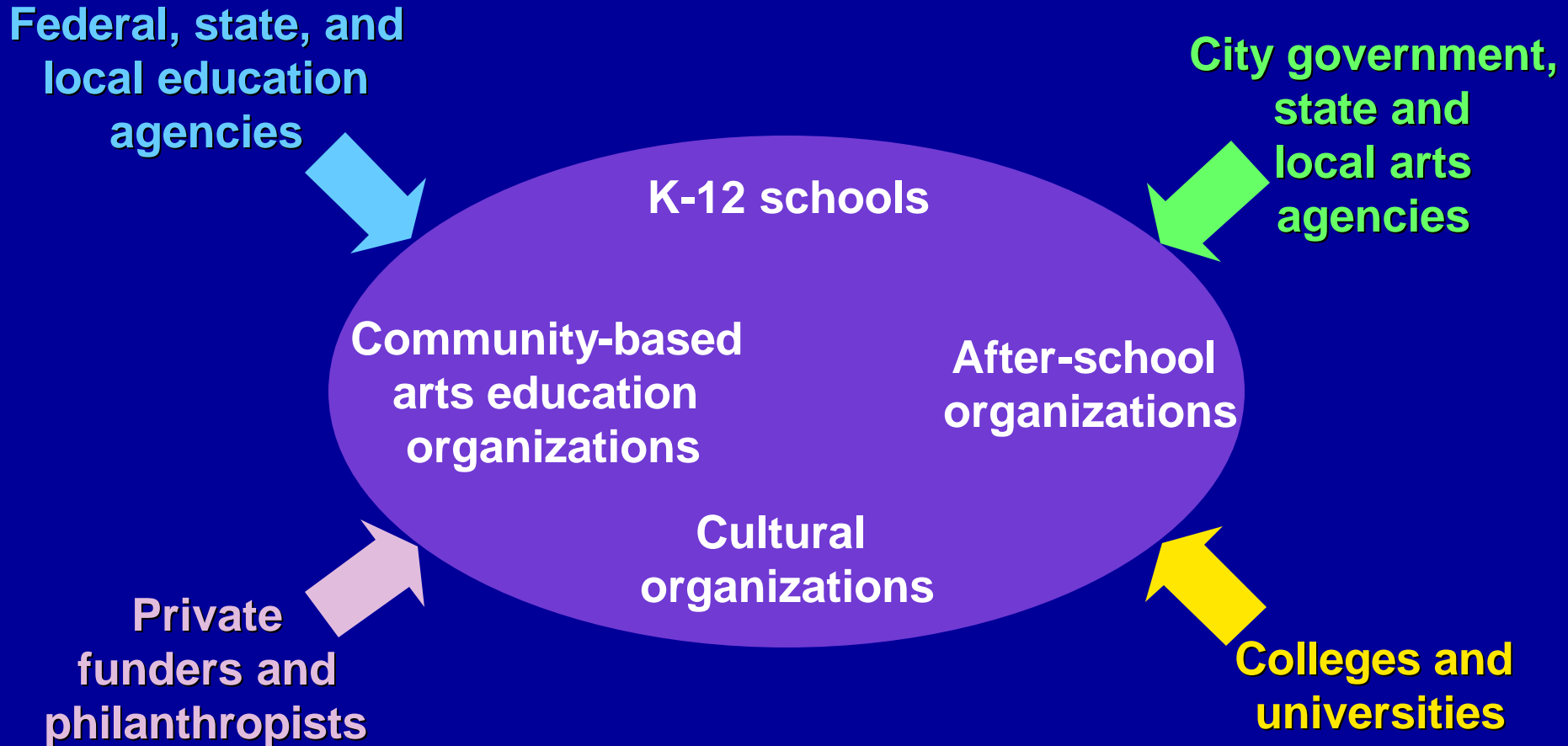
As Well As Serious Steps Backward



Some steps backward

- **High-stakes testing focuses on other subjects**
- **Educators disagree about purpose and methods**

The Current Ecology Is Complex



Some Communities Are Responding by Coordinating Efforts to Increase Access

- **Coordination involves shared goals, joint plans and actions, and routine communication to drive improvement**
- **Undertaken in resource constrained environments to**
 - **Leverage resources in pursuit of goals**
 - **Strategically address gaps and reduce inefficiencies**
- **Quality of programming may also improve, given shared constructs and strategies**

RAND Studied Communities Attempting to Improve Arts Learning

- **How do local communities coordinate to support arts learning opportunities?**
- **What are their strategies to improve access and quality?**
- **What factors support or impede their efforts?**
- **What can other communities learn from their efforts?**

We Used Several Data Sources

- **Conducted literature review and expert interviews**
- **Performed comparative case studies of six urban communities**
 - **Alameda County, Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles County, New York City**
- **Used non-longitudinal descriptive analysis**

We Interviewed Both Direct Providers and Those Who Influence Provision

Federal, state, and local education agencies



City government, state and local arts agencies



Community-based arts education organizations

After-school organizations

Cultural organizations

Private funders and philanthropists



Colleges and universities



We Selected a Collaborative Focus Within Each Community

- **Alameda County: Alliance for Arts Learning Leadership**
- **Boston: Boston out of school time efforts**
- **Chicago: Local funding collaborative spearheading hire of new Chief for Arts Education**
- **Dallas: Big Thought and the Dallas Arts Learning Initiative**
- **Los Angeles County: Arts for All**
- **New York: “Step Up” plan to provide arts for all in the city’s schools**

Sites Made Choices

	Where provided?	Who teaches?	What type of content?	Partners involved?	Who leads?
Boston	OST	Teaching artist	Non-specific	Limited	None
Chicago	Schools	Art teacher	Stand alone	Limited	District
New York	Schools	Art teacher	Stand alone	Limited	District
Alameda	Schools	Both	Integrated	Broader	County
Los Angeles	Schools	Both	Integrated	Broader	County
Dallas	OST and schools	Both	Both	Expansive	CBO

New York: City Efforts to Coordinate Stymied by Policy Changes

- **Coordination efforts were led by the NYC DoE's Office of Arts and Special Projects**
- **Goal was to improve access to in-school arts education, provided primarily in stand-alone courses**
- **Elimination of Project Arts funding and policy change to site-based management shifted course of coordination work**
- **New plans to hold schools accountable for arts education and evaluate its quality**

Dallas: Small Start Built to a City-wide Effort

- **10 years of coordination efforts now led by community-based non-profit organization: *Big Thought***
- **Three-part focus**
 - **Providing integration experiences in schools**
 - **Increasing number of stand-alone courses**
 - **Creating out-of-school opportunities in communities**
- **Coordination key in conducting audit, qualifying providers, providing training, leveraging funding**
- **Now providing stand alone courses, integration, and neighborhood based OST opportunities through out elementary levels**

Communities Use Multiple Strategies to Improve Access

- **Conduct audits and use information to develop plans with goals for access for all**
- **Appoint arts education leaders in prominent positions within district or county headquarters**
- **Build capacities in and out of schools through professional development, technical assistance, coaching**
- **Expand and leverage scarce resources**
- **Develop cases for and advocate for state and local policy and funding changes**

Communities Use Multiple Strategies to Improve Quality

- **Create standards and provide curriculum support**
- **Qualify or recommend providers**
- **Provide incentives and support for district- or city-wide planning and implementation**
- **Provide coaching, professional development, technical assistance**
- **Coordinate peer review, peer ranking of providers and curricular units**

Coordination May Strengthen Key Strategies

- **Incentivize districts and schools to hire key staff, develop plans, allocate resources**
- **Build capacity of artists and teachers**
- **Advocate for arts education**
- **Leverage scarce resources**
- **Facilitate peer review and modeling**

Key Conditions Enable Coordination

- **Capable, unifying leadership**
- **Early and ongoing funding for collaboration and positions**
- **Regular convening of stakeholders**
- **Dedicated time for reflection and mid-course adjustments**

Some Conditions Impede Coordination

- **Shifts in policies and the political landscape**
- **Arguments over teaching methods**
- **Staff turnover and organizational change**
- **Lack of dedicated funding for “overhead” work of collaboration**

Coordination Is Working in Several Sites

- **In communities with sustained and ongoing coordination, access to arts learning has improved**
- **There is no “right” way to coordinate improvement efforts**
 - **Dependent on community assets and needs**
 - **Important to recognize and involve assets across a community**
- **Wise to invest in people, structures, and strategies**
 - **Leaders may need to be sought out / invested in**
 - **Strategies may be more powerful in combination**

Practitioners would also benefit from more detailed information on implementation exemplars

Even With Coordination, Serious Obstacles Remain

- **Test-based accountability emphasizes other subjects, resulting in stiff competition for time and space**
 - **Integration may be more feasible than introducing new stand-alone courses**
 - **Field could be advanced by positively supporting state and federal policies**
- **Parents do not make arts education a priority**
 - **Sites note need for ongoing advocacy**
- **Schools struggle to build arts education capacity**
 - **Demand for ongoing hires, coaching, professional development has exceeded expectations**



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