



EDUCATION

# ***Revitalization of Arts Education Through Community-wide Coordination***

**Catherine Augustine  
Susan Bodilly**

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of State Arts Agencies  
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center at  
[www.wallacefoundation.org](http://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

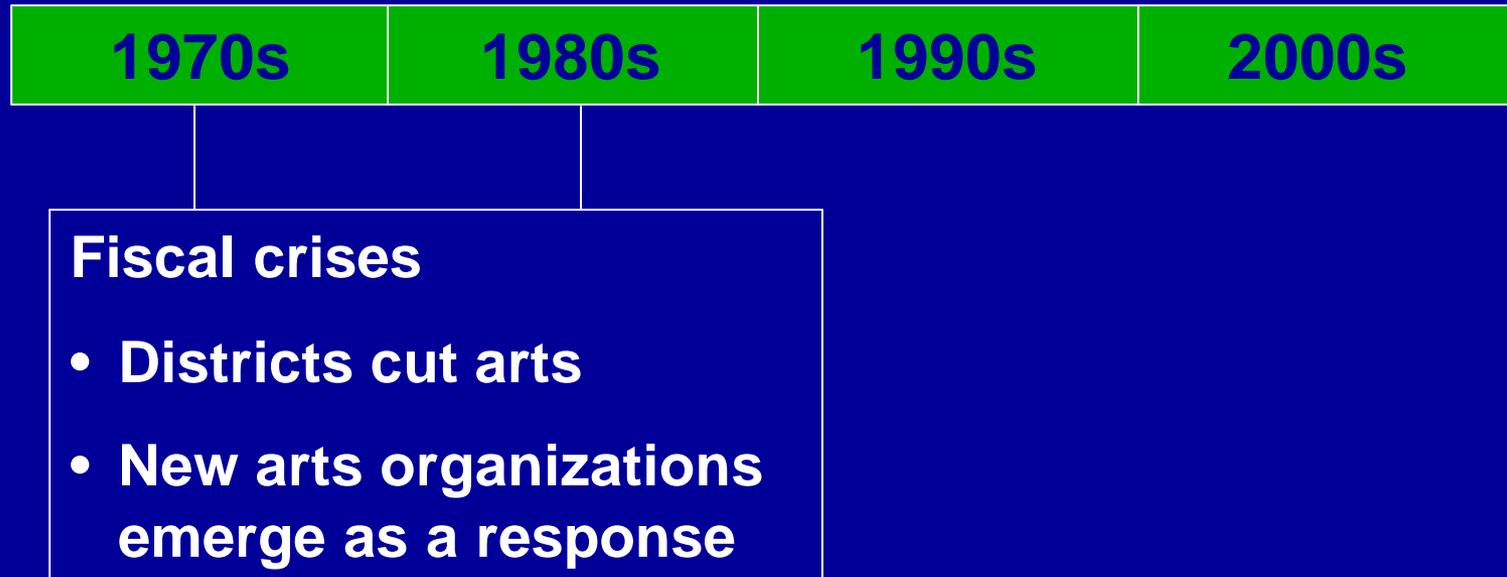
1990s

2000s

**Two providers exist**

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

# *Fiscal Crises Led to Cuts and Growth*



# *We Have Seen Recent Positive Developments*

1970s

1980s

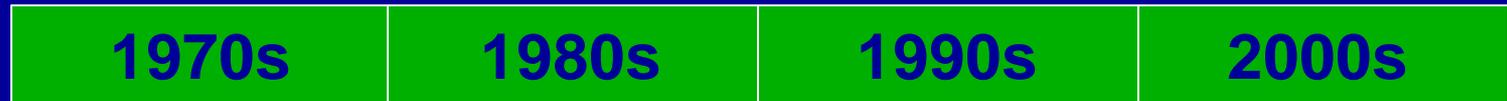
1990s

2000s

## **Some steps forward**

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

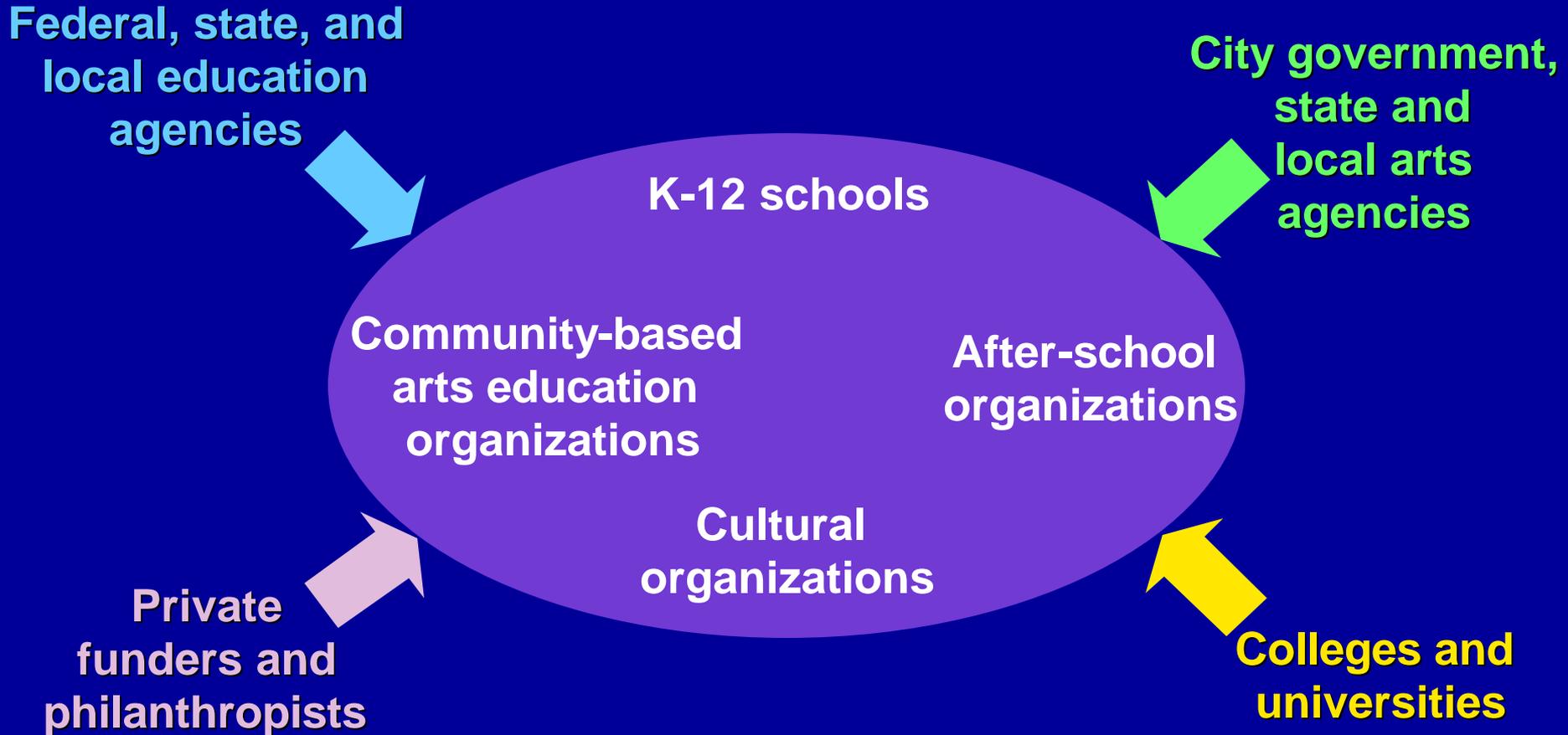
# *As Well As Serious Steps Backward*



## **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



K-12 schools

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?
<b>Boston</b>	OST	Teaching artist	Non-specific	Limited	None
<b>Chicago</b>	Schools	Art teacher	Stand alone	Limited	District
<b>New York</b>	Schools	Art teacher	Stand alone	Limited	District
<b>Alameda</b>	Schools	Both	Integrated	Broader	County
<b>Los Angeles</b>	Schools	Both	Integrated	Broader	County
<b>Dallas</b>	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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