

LESSONS LEARNED AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the experience of the implementation of the SSAE Grant Program, we offer the following recommendations to advance the goal of providing arts education for every student:

Significant ongoing statewide funding is essential to ensuring that every student has access to high quality arts education instruction.

Advocates for arts education throughout the state responded with creativity, passion, and strategic thinking to the opportunity presented by the SSAE grants. However, the number of LEAs supported by this grant represents only a small fraction of the more than 1,000 LEAs across the state. The programs instituted and the student lives impacted by the investment offer a glimpse of how much more needs to be done to address the aspirational goal of 'arts for every student.'

We cannot ignore the impact of over 40 years of narrowing of the curriculum, in which arts education has been increasingly marginalized or eliminated altogether. As our schools have risen to the challenges posed by defining their priorities through the Local Control Funding Formula process, the legacy of the past continues to hamper access to arts education for our neediest students. At the same time, research shows ever more clearly the positive links between arts education and student engagement, academic success, improved school cultures, and strengthening social-emotional learning.

Our Education Code states that every K-12 student shall receive instruction in and access to arts education. Yet the California Arts Education Data Project concludes that only 39% of students in California public schools participate in the arts, and that participation is significantly lower in low-income and rural schools.

The time has come for our state to address this inequity. In order to do so we must invest in an ongoing funding source to ensure adequate resources for arts education for all students. One-time grants help identify learning opportunities, but fail to provide districts with the necessary reliability and support required to hire teachers and build sustainable programs.

Statewide leadership is required in order to create change.

There is no denying the powerful impact of one senator — Ben Allen — on the arts education landscape in California, first by championing Dance and Theatre credentials, and followed by his authorship of legislation leading to the SSAE grant program. Effective advocacy for the arts requires leaders with the capacity to comprehend and the ability to navigate the legislative process, as well as a commitment to arts education as an essential component of a complete education. We must continue to identify and cultivate the advancement of leaders who will stand up for arts education and equity.

Recognizing the importance of decision making at the local level is critical to the successful implementation of arts education strategies.

The execution of this grant program illustrates a wide variety of local initiatives that are tailored to fit the priorities of a given school district or county. There is no one-size-fits-all formula to addressing the needs of students. Each community reflects unique cultural and social demands which must guide their decision making. In order for strategies to take root in the local education system, they must grow out of the necessities and priorities expressed in that community.

Creating district- and county-wide arts plans empowers the advancement of arts education. For the SSAE program, those LEAs with arts plans in place were ready and able to respond to the funding opportunity presented by this grant. These districts had already convened community-based discussions which included parents, arts education experts, administrators and teachers. Through the process, they created strategic plans designed to express the intent of the district or county office of education. Their applications reflected a clear vision of where they wanted to go next. There is no better investment in a district's desire to implement arts education than the thoughtful articulation of a district-wide or county-wide plan for arts education (<https://www.artsed411.org/artsnow/ArtsPlan>).

The California Alliance for Arts Education believes the visual and performing arts have a unique ability to communicate the ideas and emotions of the human spirit and connect us to our history, heritage and culture. They foster creativity, critical thinking, and collaborative skills. Beyond the classroom, the arts engender humanity and citizenship, which contribute to the vitality of communities and enrichment of the larger world. Every student has a right to a well-rounded education that includes the arts and the benefits it brings.

To learn more about the work of the Alliance go to www.artsed411.org.

THE ARTS FOR EVERY STUDENT

A Case Study in Statewide Arts Education Funding

THIS POLICY PAPER TELLS THE STORY OF:

- a **Governor and Legislature** that included funding for arts education for underserved districts in the state budget;
- a **legislator** with a commitment to provide high quality arts education for all of California's students;
- a **policy and advocacy organization** that sponsored legislation leading to the investment and remains committed to accountability for those funds;
- the **administrators and teachers** in school districts, county offices of education and charter schools who submitted proposals for the funding and implemented the local work;
- the **students** throughout California who benefited from an investment of \$26.5 million in arts education.

SB 933 (Allen) – known as the “Arts for Every Student Incentive Grant Program” – was introduced by the Chair of the Joint Committee on the Arts, Senator Ben Allen (D-Santa Monica), in January of 2018. Sponsored by the California Alliance for Arts Education, the legislation was aimed at “closing gaps in arts access by creating a statewide grants program to address the needs of underserved districts.”

SB933 was designed to conform to the statewide policy of the Local Control Funding Formula, requiring decisions related to education funding to be made at the local level, where district leaders best understand the needs of their specific communities. The bill gained bipartisan support in the legislature and resources were designated from a federal allocation in Title IV, Part A of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. Known as the Federal Student Support and Academic Enrichment Grant Program (SSAE), these funds are intended to provide students with access to well-rounded educational opportunities, to support safe and healthy students, and to encourage the effective use of technology – all areas which could include the arts in their implementation. The legislature set aside \$44 million of these funds to be awarded in a competitive grants program open to all LEAs (Local Education Agencies) across the state.

For an advocacy organization, this allocation created a good news/bad news scenario. The good news was that the grant could provide urgently needed statewide funding support for arts education in underserved districts. The not-so-good news was that due to the federal funding requirements, the entire process needed to occur within a dizzying twelve-month period. That process included LEAs submitting grant applications to the California Department of Education, the Department's reviewing and selecting awardees, and the selected local programs being enacted and concluded between September 2018 and September 2019.

As sponsors of the legislation the California Alliance for Arts Education provided support to LEAs in the application process in regions across the state. In addition, we created an online web page (https://www.artsed411.org/ssae_grants) where LEAs could share strategies and post local media stories and public information related to the grants. The grants reflected the diversity of communities and specific needs being faced by a broad spectrum of districts and county offices of education, from the fire-ravaged districts of Butte County to the Special Education programs in Orange County, where students were not receiving equitable access to the benefits of arts education. Ultimately, the grant funds were awarded to 54 LEAs throughout the state. Of these awardees, 35 LEAs had the arts as their entire focus or as a partial combined focus. Approximately \$26.5 million dollars of these funds were directed towards Visual and Performing Arts initiatives.

At the conclusion of the grant period the cohort of arts grantees met in Sacramento for an advocacy day, where they shared the results of local programs with their elected officials.

And here's the story they told...



United Sound



Val Verde Unified School District



United Sound



Val Verde Unified School District

Anaheim Union High School District Anaheim allocated their grant funds to hire VAPA teachers, hold a summer arts academy, conduct teacher training on arts integration, and send staff to arts conferences. They purchased instruments, sound equipment, lighting, kilns and technology.

Beaumont Unified School District Beaumont, located in the Inland Empire Region of Riverside County and with over 10,000 students, used grant funds to offer VAPA arts integration training and to develop a Maker Space. They also purchased World Drumming equipment, costumes, computers and camera equipment, sound boards, a rear projection screen, and lighting equipment.

Butte County Office of Education The County Office represents a large geographical area, still recovering from the impact of last year's fires. The office used grant funds to support teacher professional development, highlighting the needs of rural students. In addition, the office purchased equipment to support visual and performing arts, from lighting to ceramics.

Chula Vista Elementary School District This California border school district utilized their grant funds for professional development for all teachers. Artists partnered with teachers in dance, theatre, visual arts, music (ORFF program), as well as virtual reality and engineering design for lesson creation and arts integration.

Cutler-Orsini Joint Unified School District All teachers in the district attended a week-long summer STEAM institute focusing on the infusion of the arts into English language arts, history-social studies, math and science lessons. The district instituted a Mariachi ensemble as well as a guitar orchestra, and provided courses in photography, digital video, media production, dance and movement.

Delano Union School District Delano USD is located in Kern County in the Central Valley. Their grant funds were used for instruments, composition and world music software, and arts instructional materials, texts and curriculum. The district also instituted a piano lab.

Fresno Unified School District This Central Valley school district utilized their allocation for professional development. They increased arts education for special education students and added teaching artists. They partnered with Music Speaks for music therapy and the Kennedy Center for Mind Work. They also purchased Audio Jacks, a program using media sound effects to inspire creativity.

Fullerton School District The district expanded their stage program to produce five musical productions in 8 weeks, in which the band played for a dual language show, the arts class created posters and the media video department documented the productions. They used funds to purchase VAPA and Maker Space vans.

Lancaster School District This district northeast of Los Angeles used their funds to purchase Wonder Media Programs (animation) and StoryMaker (story telling), and also instituted a Saturday School highlighting the arts.

Los Angeles County Office of Education The Office used their grant to expand a pilot Magnet School program. PE teachers were trained in arts integration by Lineage Dance Company, who also instituted a dance residency. They developed dance spaces and created SCALE UP: Student Support through Technology and Arts. They integrated arts into the Multi-Tiered System of Support for struggling students. Four counties were brought together to share their programs.

Los Angeles Leadership Primary Academy This K-5 charter school in Lincoln Heights hired a VAPA teacher and a music teacher, initiated a Reader's Theatre program, and purchased a portable stage, guitars, keyboards, and other art equipment.

Lost Hills Union School District A rural K-8, Kern County district, Lost Hills used their funds for a graphic arts course, a Mariachi program and arts instructional materials.

Marin County Office of Education The Office planned a program to bridge the huge achievement gap in Marin County in underserved communities and Special Education. They partnered with environmental scientists to provide a STEAM summer institute in which they created integrated lessons and focused efforts on Special Education.

Moreno Valley Unified School District The district implemented arts programs in TK-3 and in Special Education in grades 1-3. The district purchased iPads. An Artist in Residence program partnering with Phearless Art Studio included arts integration and digital arts.

Monterey Peninsula Unified School District Building on their existing arts integration work, the district partnered with 20 arts non-profits to offer VAPA programs at all levels and a summer teacher institute. They also initiated an Art Therapy program, hired a VAPA coordinator and dance contractor, and purchased equipment.

Morgan Hill Unified School District Morgan Hill conducted arts staff development for arts integration and VAPA standards. They created on-line lessons and hired a VAPA Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA).

Napa Valley Unified School District The district offered arts integration and technology-infused arts integration training to mainstream and specialist teachers, including special education, physical education and teachers working with advanced learners. In addition, they held a two-week Arts and Science Summer Camp for English Learners.

New Haven Unified School District This Bay Area K-12 school district used funds to purchase musical instruments and stands, sheet music, performance risers, smartboards, audio speakers, other arts equipment, and for instrument repair.

North Monterey County Unified School District This coastal district worked on arts integration and lesson design. They instituted a grade 9 summer school and a culturally relevant theatre program. They also initiated cinema and dance curriculums.

Oceanside Unified School District The district used funds to increase access to visual arts instruction by 90%. They conducted summer professional development for 120 teachers, highlighting needs of students with special needs, migrant students, and other underserved students. They also initiated a program in Mariachi and Ballet Folklorico.

Ontario-Montclair Elementary School District This district focused much of their grant funds on dramatic arts. They developed programs in improvisation, pantomime, storytelling and video simulations. They also purchased musical instruments, developed a Maker Space and held an arts-based summer school.

Orange County Office of Education Orange County's focus was on Alternative/Special Education. They allocated their funds towards professional development in VAPA standards, arts integration, Universal Design, Theatre and Music. Another focus was leadership development for the arts.

Pasadena Unified School District The district expanded a piloted magnet program in which physical education teachers received arts integration training. Funds were also used for summer staff training by professional artists, and the creation of dance spaces.

Patterson Joint Unified School District Patterson JUSD, located in the Central Valley, used a portion of their grant allocation for after school and summer arts programs. They worked on the VAPA standards and added dance classes. They funded arts field trips, puppetry workshops and scholarships for private music lessons.

Red Bluff Joint Union High School District This rural district in Tehama County in northern California used their funds for after school music and arts programs, which included hiring a choreographer and an art teacher, initiating drumming therapy programs, renting a theatre and providing transportation for arts activities.

Sacramento County Office of Education The Office involved all 13 school districts in Sacramento County partnering with 13 local community-based arts organizations in an implementation that included strategic arts plans for all districts, as well as staff training in the new arts standards and in arts integration.

Santa Cruz County Office of Education The Office targeted alternative education populations (homeless, addicted, social/emotionally challenged) by providing professional development for faculty and staff using teaching artists.

Santa Rosa Elementary School District This coastal district's music programs were dwindling. They used the grant funds to institute the Music Blitz program for all 4-6 grade students. The district is focusing efforts on Title 1 schools and has partnered with the Santa Rosa Symphony and the Kennedy Center.

South San Francisco School District This district created culturally relevant performances. They also held a Summer STEAM Camp, conducted VAPA professional development for staff, and purchased art supplies.

Stanislaus County Office of Education Over 500 teachers and many central office administrators participated in training for the EquAALS (Equitable Access to Arts Learning for Students) modules, which integrate the arts with ELA for students with disabilities. Partnerships with Art from the Heart and Central Valley Autism supported this work.

Sulphur Springs Union School District This K-6 school district in Santa Clarita used a portion of its funds to institute a "Vision Expo." They also began a Visual Thinking program and hired arts coordinators for all the schools in the district.

Tuolumne County Office of Education In Tuolumne County, a rural, widely separated county, funding focused on infusing the arts into the STEM program to create STEAM curriculum. Teachers participated in on-line professional development and a 2-week intensive summer institute.

Tulare Unified School District This Central Valley district directed funds towards critical thinking, band instruments, sound systems and performances. Their staff training focused on arts lesson development.

Val Verde Unified School District Val Verde is near Riverside, CA and serves 21,000 students. They used their grant funds to focus on dance, theatre and visual arts. They held teacher workshops, purchased World Drumming equipment, and invested in graphic design, photography, and keyboard integration equipment.

Windsor Unified School District 72% of Windsor teachers did not include arts in their teaching prior to the grant. Partnering with Pulse Arts and Big Idea Arts, Windsor used grant funds to train teachers and administration in implementing arts integration and writing arts curriculum. They also purchased iPads and arts materials.

Note: As a component of the SSAE grant process, all LEAs submitted reports to the California Department of Education detailing the impact of the grants they received.