

# Strengthening arts education: Could the most powerful policy approach be local?

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Grantmakers in the Arts  
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## Outline

- Arts education: The national challenge
  - Access
  - Equity
  - Quality
- Lessons from coordination
- Looking ahead

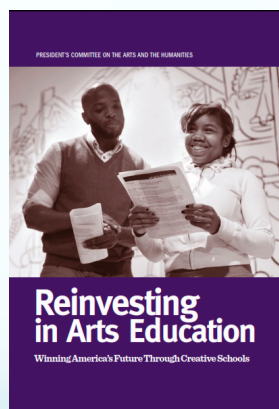
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## Hard to get a clear picture

- It is difficult to get an accurate current picture of arts offerings because there is no consistent required data collection about what schools offer or how students are achieving in the arts.
  - President's Council on the Arts and Humanities, 2011
- Three issues emerge across data: Access, equity and quality

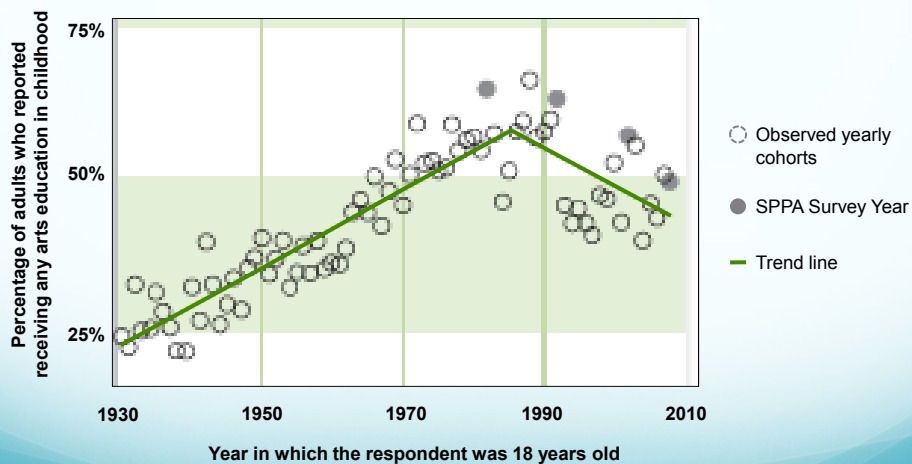


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## Challenge I: Access

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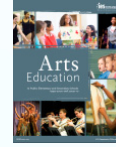
## NEA: A portrait of declining access



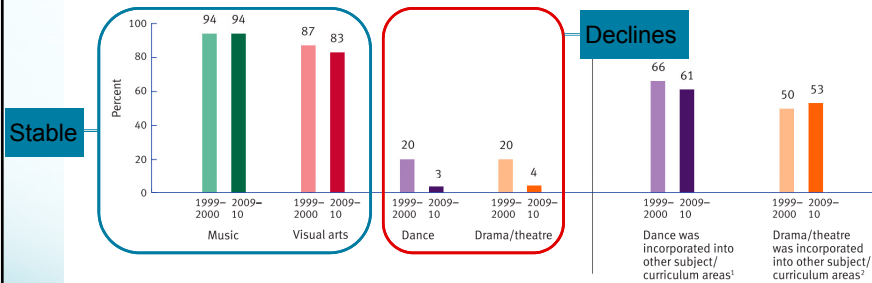
Source: Nick Rabkin, et al, *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*, National Endowment for the Arts, 2011

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# NCES: A mixed picture: Elementary schools: Music and art stable; dance, drama declines



**Figure 1**  
Percent of public elementary schools reporting instruction designated specifically for various arts subjects and percent incorporating dance and drama/theatre into other subject or curriculum areas: School years 1999–2000 and 2009–10



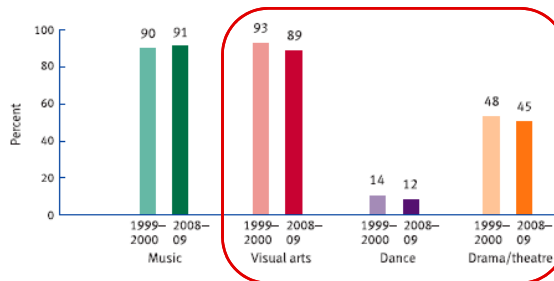
Stable

Declines

<sup>1</sup>Includes dance that is taught as part of physical education programs, dance taught as part of music curricula, and dance activities and instruction that are integrated into other curriculum areas. Respondents could report more than one method of incorporating dance in their program of study.  
<sup>2</sup>Includes drama/theatre that is taught as part of English/language arts curricula and drama/theatre activities and instruction that are integrated into other curriculum areas. Respondents could report more than one method of incorporating drama/theatre in their program of study.  
 NOTE: More detailed data are provided in supplemental tables 1, 12, 128, and 139 at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubinfo.asp?pubid=2012014>. The 1999–2000 data presented in this figure may differ from previously published information because missing data from the 1999–2000 surveys were imputed for analysis in this report.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, “Elementary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 2009,” FRSS 100, 2009–10; and “Elementary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 1999,” FRSS 67E, 1999–2000.

# Secondary schools: Little change

**Figure 4**  
Percent of public secondary schools reporting whether various arts subjects were taught at the school: School years 1999–2000 and 2008–09



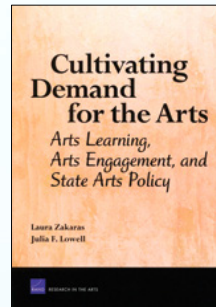
Declines

NOTE: The 2009–10 survey asked whether various arts subjects were taught in the previous school year, while the 1999–2000 survey asked whether various arts subjects were taught in the current school year. More detailed data are provided in supplemental tables 70 and 134 at <http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubinfo.asp?pubid=2012014>. The 1999–2000 data presented in this figure may differ from previously published information because missing data from the 1999–2000 surveys were imputed for analysis in this report.  
 SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, “Secondary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 2009,” FRSS 101, 2009–10; and “Secondary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 1999,” FRSS 67S, 1999–2000.

Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999–2000 and 2009–10, DOE, 2012

## Age makes a big difference -- RAND

- Elementary schools
  - “Education in music and art tends to be spotty, casual, and brief; and instruction in drama and dance is even more limited” – at best about an hour a week for music and visual arts
- Middle and high school
  - Elective system means qualified arts specialists “reach only the small proportion of students who choose to take arts classes”
  - Few courses in offer arts appreciation



Source: Laura Zakaras, Julia Lowell, *Cultivating Demand for the Arts*, RAND, 2008

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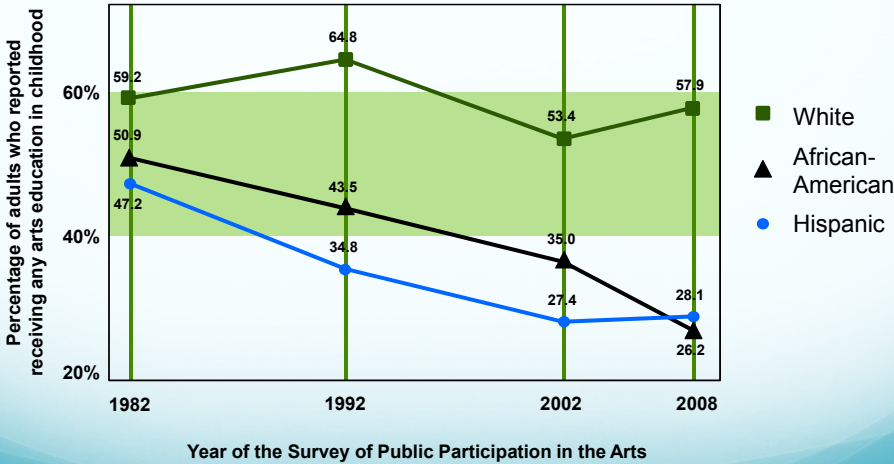
## Access: Summing up

- It varies by discipline and age.
- Elementary schools
  - Little change in visual arts, music
  - Theater, drama declines
- Secondary schools
  - Little change across the board
  - Much less participation
- From students' perspective, fewer say they are exposed

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# Challenge II: Equity

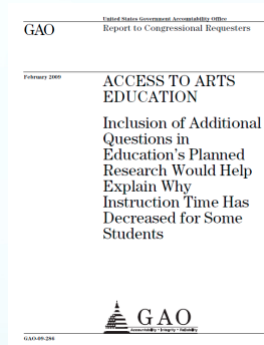
## NEA: Growing inequity



Source: Nick Rabkin, et al, *Arts education in America: What the declines mean for arts participation*, National Endowment for the Arts, 2011

## GAO confirms inequity

- “Teachers at schools identified as needing improvement and those with higher percentages of minority students were more likely to report a reduction in time spent on the arts.”
  - At low SES schools, average decrease of 49 minutes per week
  - At high SES schools, average decrease of 31 minutes per week

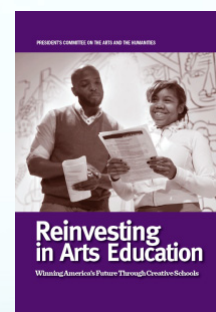


*Access to Arts Education, Government Accountability Office, 2009*

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## As does the President's Council on the Arts and Humanities

- “Due to budget constraints and emphasis on the subjects of high stakes testing, arts instruction in schools is on a downward trend. ... Sadly, this is especially true for students from lower-income schools, where analyses show that access to the arts in schools is disproportionately absent.”



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## Equity: Summing up

- Evidence is clear that access is lower in schools with high poverty

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## Challenge III: Quality

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# Arts can generate many benefits

	PRIVATE BENEFITS	PRIVATE with CITIZEN BENEFITS	PUBLIC BENEFITS
<b>INTRINSIC BENEFITS</b>	Aesthetic experience Captivation Pleasure	Expanded capacity for empathy	Expression of communal meanings
<b>INSTRUMENTAL BENEFITS</b>	Creative thinking	Increased powers of observation	Sustaining cultural heritage
	Learning how to learn	Understanding of other cultures	
	More interest in school	Higher rates of school attendance, lower dropout rates	Creative workforce

Alan Brown, adapted from *Gifts of the Muse*, 2004, RAND

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# But only with sustained engagement

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## High-quality early arts can lead to a life of arts engagement

- “Arts learning in particular and early exposure to the arts in childhood are strong predictors of adult involvement.”

-- *Cultivating Demand*, RAND, 2008



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## When we define quality....

- A focus on quality and a shared vision of what it means
- Treating students as artists
- Teachers with expertise who model artistic processes, inquiry and habits
- High engagement in a purposeful experience
- Attractive, functional space
- Culminating in a public presentation

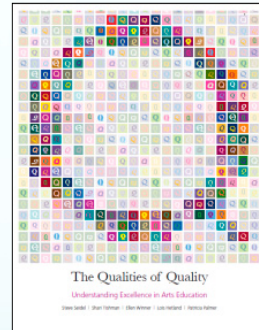
Source: *The Qualities of Quality*, 2009; forthcoming white paper on quality in out-of-school time arts learning, The Wallace Foundation, 2012.

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## Many conclude it's uneven

“What actually takes place in arts programs – in or out of school – despite the presence of countless excellent teachers and programs, is all too often uninspired.”

-- Steve Seidel, et al, *The Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*, 2009



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## DOE: Mixed indicators of quality

Figure 2

Among public elementary schools that offered instruction in various arts subjects, percent reporting the availability of arts specialists, the frequency of arts instruction, and the availability of district curriculum guides for arts subject areas: School year 2009–10



NOTE: Percents for each subject are based on the percentage of public elementary schools that reported instruction designated specifically for music (94 percent), visual arts (83 percent), dance (3 percent), and drama/theatre (4 percent) during regular school hours in the 2009–10 school year. More detailed data are provided in supplemental table 2 at [http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds\\_datacenter/ipeds\\_datacenter.asp?table=2012014](http://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds_datacenter/ipeds_datacenter.asp?table=2012014). Arts specialists are education professionals with a teaching certificate in an arts discipline—such as music, visual arts, dance, or drama/theatre—who provide separate instruction in that discipline.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, “Elementary School Arts Education Survey: Fall 2009,” FRSS 100, 2009–10.

*Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools, 1999-2000 and 2009-10*, DOE, 2012

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# In secondary schools – mixed use of curriculum guides

**Figure 5**  
Among public secondary schools that offered instruction in various arts subjects, percent offering five or more different courses in 2008–09 and percent reporting district curriculum guides and dedicated rooms for instruction in 2009–10, by arts subject



<sup>1</sup>Percentages for each subject area are based on the percentage of public secondary schools that offered music (91 percent), visual arts (89 percent), dance (12 percent), and drama/theatre (45 percent) during regular school hours in the 2008–09 school year. The 2009–10 survey asked about course offerings in the previous school year and schools were instructed to count different sections of the same course as one course.

<sup>2</sup>Percentages for each subject area are based on the percentage of public secondary schools that offered music (90 percent), visual arts (91 percent), dance (16 percent), and drama/theatre (46 percent) during regular school hours in the 2009–10 school year. The 2009–10 survey asked about curriculum guides and the primary space used for arts instruction in the current school year.

<sup>3</sup>NOTE: More detailed data are provided in supplemental tables 71 and 74 at [https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds\\_tables/2012/2012\\_71\\_74.html](https://nces.ed.gov/ipeds/data/ipeds_tables/2012/2012_71_74.html). The percentage of schools offering the arts subject in 2009–10 school year was inferred from the “not applicable” response to questions about curriculum guides and space used for instruction in the current school year.

SOURCE: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, Fast Response Survey System, “Secondary School Arts Education Survey, Fall 2009,” FRSS 101, 2009–10.

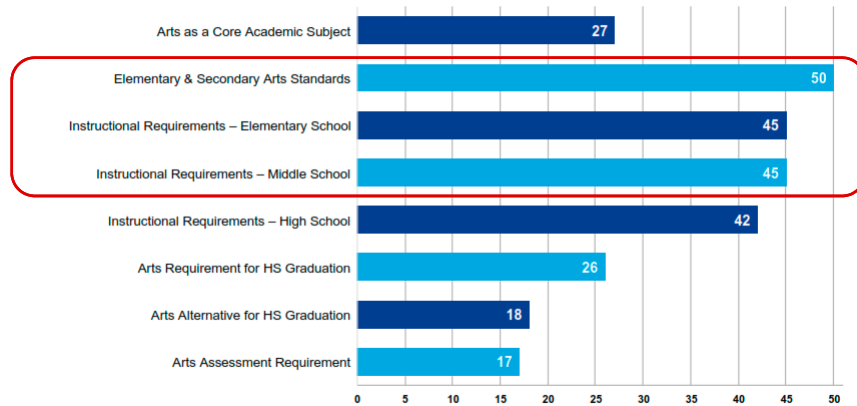
## Quality: Summing up

- Experts are critical
- As in other areas, music and visual arts are better-positioned than dance and theater

## Every state has arts standards

### SELECTED ARTS EDUCATION STATE POLICY AREAS

Number of States with Policies in Statute or Code



*A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education, Arts Education Partnership, March 2014*

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## The 'policy paradox' – standards are not enough

- The promise of an equitable and high quality education that includes the arts for every student depends upon the combination of strong policies at the state level, adequate resources and support to implement them at the local level, and mechanisms in place to hold all parties accountable for compliance.

*A Snapshot of State Policies for Arts Education, Arts Education Partnership, March 2014*

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The problems have been building for a while...

A long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away...

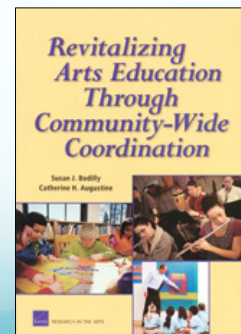
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## Arts Education: The 1970s

1970s    1980s    1990s    2000s

Two major providers exist

- Schools
- Cultural organizations



Source: Susan J. Bodilly, Catherine H. Augustine, *Revitalizing Arts Education Through Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND, 2008

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## Arts Education: Budget crises

1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
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### Fiscal crises

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

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## Arts Education: Some steps forward

1970s	1980s	1990s	2000s
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### Some steps forward

- Feds and states adopt arts standards
- Afterschool programming grows, includes arts
- Arts education becomes school reform platform

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## Arts Education: Steps backward

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

### Some steps backward

- High-stakes testing focuses on other subjects and strains school resources, especially in high-poverty schools.

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## Arts Education: Steps backward

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

### Some steps backward

- High-stakes testing focuses on other subjects and strains school resources, especially in high-poverty schools.
- State standards not enforced.

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## Arts Education: Steps backward

1970s

1980s

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### Some steps backward

- High-stakes testing focuses on other subjects and strains school resources, especially in high-poverty schools.
- State standards not enforced.
- Many principals ignore arts – a lost generation?

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## Arts Education: Steps backward

1970s

1980s

1990s

2000s

### Some steps backward

- High-stakes testing focuses on other subjects and strains school resources, especially in high-poverty schools.
- State standards not enforced.
- Many principals ignore arts – a lost generation?
- Educators disagree about purpose and methods.

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## Outline

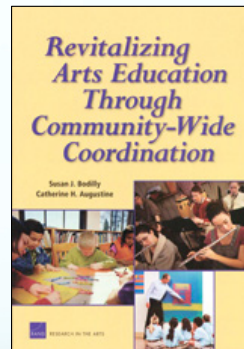
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## Coordinated efforts can help

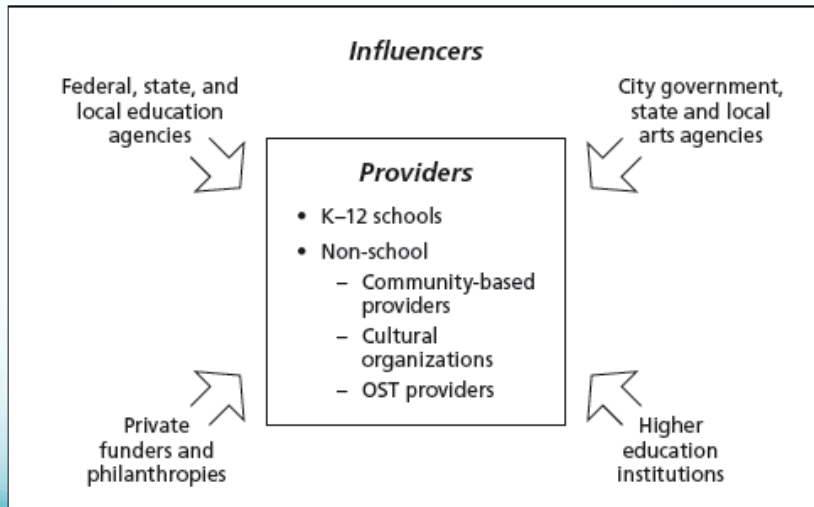
“Those working to improve access to arts education must navigate churning waters. But in at least several cases, coordination efforts have produced a powerful vehicle for change, a vehicle missing in other communities.”

-- Susan J. Bodilly, Catherine Augustine,  
*Revitalizing Arts Education Through  
Community-Wide Coordination*, RAND, 2008



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## Elements that can be coordinated



*Revitalizing Arts Education, RAND, 2008*

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## Benefits of coordination

- Personal support for efforts
- Some CBOs and cultural organizations reported grant funding increased when they developed partnerships with districts and schools
- Funders reported satisfaction

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## Strategies for strengthening access and equity

- Audits to identify and highlight inequities
- Setting a goal of access for all
- Creating a strategic plan
- Building the case, advocating for policies and funding
- Leveraging scarce resources
- Creating prominent arts education positions

*Revitalizing Arts Education*

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## Strategies for boosting quality

- Strategic planning
- Requiring alignment with state standards
- Developing curriculum supports
- Building individual and organizational capacity
- Qualifying providers
- Coordinating peer review, ranking, and modeling
- Assessing student learning.

*Revitalizing Arts Education, RAND, 2008*

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# Enablers and disablers

## Enablers

- Sparking conditions
  - Effective leadership that is capable, collaborative, inclusive, stable and persistent, often external to district
  - Seed funding for coordination
- Convening and joint planning
- Sustained funding
- Evaluation, feedback and improvement

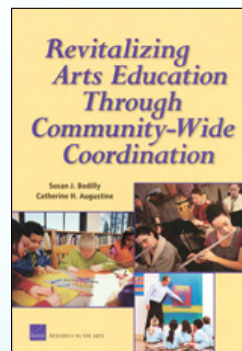
## Disablers

- Changing policy contexts
- Conflict among providers and ideas
- Turnover in leadership

Revitalizing Arts Education, RAND, 2008 41

# Gains – but they are fragile

- “Cities and counties in which there are efforts to coordinate providers and influencers in order to improve access to arts education appear to be **making headway against the long-standing devaluing of arts education in the public schools. In all cases, however, we found these efforts to be fragile, vulnerable not only to policy and political changes, but also to blows such as test-based assessments of non-arts subjects.**”
- How can the gains be sustained?



Revitalizing Arts Education, RAND, 2008

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## Looking ahead

### Positive signs

- Arts education has not disappeared from our schools
- Boston, Chicago, Dallas, Los Angeles, Seattle and NYC investing in arts education
- Coordinated efforts continue to make a difference
- Growing interest in socioemotional learning
- Some progress for arts education in ESEA reauthorization

### And continuing challenges

- Coordination is difficult – and takes highly effective leadership
- Equity is an emerging issue
- Socioemotional learning is a an unfamiliar area of focus for public education
- In a Jeffersonian moment, state and district autonomy is likely to remain paramount

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