



New York City Arts in Education Roundtable

Written Testimony - Joint Legislative Public Hearing - February 9, 2023

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony in conjunction with the Joint Legislative Public Hearing on 2023 Executive Budget Proposal on the topics of Economic Development and the Arts. I am writing to request robust support for the New York State Council on the Arts and for capital funding for culture!

My name is Kimberly Olsen, and I am the Executive Director of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable. We are a grassroots service organization working to improve and advance arts education in New York City and State. We work with more than 4,200 artists, cultural workers, and arts educators helping them do their best work reaching students in and through the arts.

Because of our direct services, we help support the sustainability and development of the cultural workforce that works in schools or community settings via arts education. We are a proud NYSCA grantee and have the esteemed privilege of running the New York State Teaching Artist Mentorship Program, made possible by the New York State Council on the Arts with the support of the Office of the Governor and the New York State Legislature. This program pairs 14 mid-career teaching artists from across the state with mentors to help them develop the networks, skills, and increased capacities necessary to support career advancement. In our first year, we helped two artists create arts nonprofits that now serve New York students in low income communities! In our second year (2023), we had more than 90 artists from around the state apply for just 14 spots.

Investing in our State starts with the arts. That is what I am here today to call on our State to invest in dance, music, theater, visual arts, and media arts in New York.

We know arts education is the foundation and launch pad to success in school and life. The arts provide evidence-based solutions for engaging students in learning, increasing our parent involvement, improving academic outcomes, supporting student mental health, and promoting well-being. Engagement in the arts provides students with an avenue for learning and career development that is not measured by standardized tests. Instead, the arts create a safe environment for students to learn important life skills to help them reach their full potential.

Arts and culture is also a major economic driver in New York, [accounting for 7% of the state's total annual economic output and employing over 435,000 workers in NYC](#). Culture taken as a whole is one of the leading drivers of tourism in New York State. If we want the tourism industry to survive, we need to invest in the cultural sector that brings visitors to our state. It is imperative that funding for the arts and arts education is prioritized to support pathways for career development and employment in creative industries, tourism, and the cultivation of generations of future arts lovers and patrons.

We want inviting, colorful, vibrant, and thriving schools and communities — that starts with the arts.

The NYC Arts in Education Roundtable recommends that the State invests in arts and culture by investing in the following key areas:

Renewed Funding for the New York State Council on the Arts

- Last year NY State distributed **\$100M for arts programming through NYSCA**. And an additional investment of **\$150M in capital funding for cultural groups**. We must have that funding renewed if we are to continue to do the work of rebuilding NY's economy and communities. A cut of the size proposed in the Executive Budget would be devastating to our recovery.

Build the Foundation for Arts in our Schools

- Restore NYSED arts staffing to pre-recession levels, and invest in professional development for the implementation of content standards and Arts Pathways to Graduation. Specifically, we call for approval of the Regents' request to restore at least one arts position (as proposed under NYS Standards Implementation/Graduation Measures Work - \$319,796 for 3 associates in "Health, Computer Science, and Arts").
- Update outdated levels of funding for Career Technical Education, providing funds for the Big Five Cities and rural school districts to expand access to Creative Industry career readiness CTE courses specially echoing the calls of Career Technical Education, NYSSBA, and NYSCOSS, in seeking to raise the aidable annual salary cap on CTE instructors from the current antiquated \$30,000 to \$60,000.
- Support for the Regents' Budget request for \$2 million to ensure that the New York State Summer School of the Arts can remain available to all eligible students regardless of financial need.

The arts are essential and make up the very fabric of NYC. Thank you for your time, consideration, and commitment to New York State.