

Success Story: California Title I Arts Initiative



2020 Action Agenda for Advancing the Arts in Education: Priority Area 4: Build Leadership Capacity and Knowledge

“Arts programs can help schools achieve the goals of Title I by facilitating student engagement and learning, strengthening parent involvement, and improving school climate and school wide behavior.” – Joe Landon, Executive Director, California Alliance for Arts Education



Photo courtesy of California Alliance for Arts Education.

Building Leadership Capacity to Support the Achievement of Low-Income Students: California Alliance for Arts Education’s Title I Initiative

Arts Education Partnership (AEP) partner organizations work to ensure that all arts and education policy leaders have the knowledge and resources needed to engage the arts as an essential component of a complete and competitive education for all students. Federal Title I policy allows schools and districts to include arts education in their strategies to achieve Title I goals, but many school and district leaders remain cautious when making choices that do not follow traditional strategies for meeting those goals.

In a dedicated effort to work with educational leaders to build the foundation for arts as a tool to meet Title I goals, the California Alliance for Arts Education (the Alliance) began its Title I Initiative in 2011. The intention was to support schools and districts in embracing the arts among their strategies for achieving Title I goals and realizing the benefits of arts education for students evidenced in arts education research.

The Alliance’s Title I Initiative developed and clarified a policy pathway aligned across school, district, state and federal levels of leadership regarding what is allowable when it comes to expending Title I funds on arts education. This pathway overcomes barriers to entry across the state for implementing proven, effective programming for some of the state’s most under-resourced students. The components of the pathway developed as follows:

- Clarifying state policy and its relationship to federal policy.
- Aligning school and district practice with state and federal guidance.
- Connecting programs to research.
- Building resources and communication.
- Creating a distribution and training network for the policy pathway.
- Expansion to other states.

Since the Initiative’s beginning, more than 40 schools and districts in California expanded the use of Title I funds for arts education.

Current Location: California and Arizona, with expansion to New Jersey and Minnesota in 2017.

Population Served: Early childhood, elementary school, middle school, high school, and in-service educators.

Conditions for Success:

The Alliance, a nonprofit arts education advocacy group, initially created the program as a statewide initiative in California. While Title I funds are federal dollars, the Alliance's initiative to clarify and support school flexibility has been entirely privately funded through foundation support. State-based private foundations provided the largest grants, with national advocacy groups providing additional funding.

Successful implementation of the arts as a strategy for addressing Title I priorities requires knowledge of both the federal requirements for using Title I funds, as well as state-specific contextual issues around education priorities and governance. While paths to build partnerships supporting implementation may differ from state to state, many of the tools created to support the pathway transfer across states. The Alliance executive director and program director manage and execute much of the work; however, they depend on close working relationships with the state department of education, county offices of education and district leaders, as well as arts education partners.

After the initial steps, the Alliance organized six regional meetings to introduce the pathway, which became the foundation of title1arts.org. This website launched in January 2015 as an online resource detailing the Title I planning cycle and includes links to research, materials, examples and further resources.

Questions to Consider:

- What are the biggest barriers for school building leaders to implement Title I arts programming?
- Who are the most important allies to cultivate when doing the work?
- How can your state utilize the materials developed as part of the Title I Initiative to create and implement a pathway for expanded use of Title I funds for arts education?
- How will you measure success?

Learn More:

[Title 1 Initiative Website](#)

[AEP 2020 Action Agenda for Advancing the Arts in Education](#)

[ArtsEdSearch](#) studies on the effectiveness of arts-based strategies for improving academic achievement.

About AEP Success Stories

The Arts Education Partnership (AEP), a center within Education Commission of the States, is guided by [The Arts Leading the Way to Student Success: A 2020 Action Agenda for Advancing the Arts in Education](#). To achieve its goal to expand access to high-quality arts learning opportunities for all students, AEP gathers detailed information on Success Stories with the potential to be replicated in communities across the country. AEP will use this information to promote and disseminate these stories through online resources, publications and media platforms.

The California Alliance for Arts Education

The California Alliance for Arts education advocates for high-quality arts education for all students by providing policy expertise and mobilizing a statewide network of advocates and allied partners. The Alliance is in its fifth decade of working to build a brighter future for California by making the arts a core part of every child's education.

Updated: June 1, 2017