

## Expanding Arts Education in New Mexico's Public Schools

New Mexico Advisory Council on Arts Education Position Statement on Increasing Arts Education Funding for Public Schools

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The New Mexico Advisory Council on Arts Education (NMACAE) advises policymakers and promotes best practices and standards of excellence in the New Mexico arts education community at the state and local levels through advocacy, leadership, and research.

The NMACAE is a consortium of leaders (arts educators, museum educators, arts administrators, and professional artists) instructing at all educational levels who provide their expertise about standards of excellence in the field of arts education for the New Mexico Secretary of Education, the Public Education Department (PED), the New Mexico Arts agency, school districts, museums, associations, teacher preparation programs and other arts organizations by advocating for high-quality, comprehensive, balanced and sequential, standards-based arts education programs for all students in New Mexico taught by highly qualified arts teachers.

Since 2001, the NMACAE has been a partner with the New Mexico PED in arts education advocacy, leadership, and research, promoting best practices and standards of excellence. Since its formation, a steady increase of equitable access to quality, standards-based arts education in New Mexico public schools has been realized. This increase has been the direct result of passing the Fine Arts Education Act (FAEA) (22-15D-2. NMSA 1978) in 2003 and of fully implementing it as part of operational funding for schools through the State Equalization Guarantee (SEG).

**In the 2019-2020 school year, despite an overall increase in public school allocations, school districts saw a significant decrease in arts education funding due to an unintended consequence of HB 188 from the 2018 Legislative session.** In light of this, NMACAE advises policymakers to both increase arts funding in public schools and expand the reach of benefits of arts education beyond the elementary grades.

- **Increase the FAEA funding formula.** NMACAE advocates an increase in funding for arts education in public schools, augmenting the .05 cost differential multiplier in the FAEA funding formula. We recognize and extol the demonstrated impact of art, music, dance, theater, and media education programs on all students, especially at-risk students. We cite other mandates that value the outcomes of arts education, including Judge Singleton's 2018 ruling on the Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico lawsuit and the 2015 Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA).
- **Expand the range of grades that benefit from FAEA funding.** The benefits of quality arts education are not being realized to sufficiency among secondary students in grades unsupported by current FAEA. Arts education funded by the FAEA has the potential to substantially contribute to the success of secondary students.

## Support for Expanding Arts Education Access

**The Fine Arts Education Act Report–Year 10.** The year 10 report of the impact of the FAEA (NMPED, NMDCA & New Mexico Arts, 2013) assessed the level of impact on numbers of students served, student contact hours in the arts, the level of qualification of arts educators, and the level of funding allocated and expended by school districts. The report recommended redoubling efforts to expand the reach of the FAEA, with a focus on the role of the arts in educating at-risk and youth of diverse New Mexico cultures and students with disabilities.

**Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico.** The lawsuit of Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico challenged the state's constitutional requirement to fully fund public schools. Judge Sarah Singleton ruled in 2018 that the state had failed to meet this obligation, especially among those at greatest risk, including low-income, Native American, English language learners (ELL), and students with disabilities. Singleton's decision referred specifically to arts education access as part of a remedy. As a result of the lawsuit and Governor Michelle Lujan Grisham's "moonshot for education," (Yazzie, 2019) legislators substantially increased spending on public education in the 2019-2020 school year. Despite this increase, districts saw a reduction in FAEA funding for the following school year.

**Every Student Succeeds Act.** In agreement with the position of NMACAE, ESSA acknowledges the role of arts education programs to improve the academic outcomes of academically at-risk students, filling gaps for a well-rounded education. This is evident in the law's invitation to states to incorporate arts-related measures as part of school and district report cards. Like the FAEA, ESSA places high value on opportunities for professional development for arts educators.

### **Selected References:**

Center on Law and Poverty. (n.d.). *Yazzie/Martinez v. State of New Mexico Decision*. [Blog post] Retrieved from <http://nmpoertylaw.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/09/Graphic-Yazzie-Martinez-Decision.pdf>

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New Mexico Public Education Department, New Mexico Department of Cultural Affairs, & New Mexico Arts. (2013). *New Mexico Fine Arts Education Act Program Plan and Evaluation–Year 10*. [Report] Retrieved from <https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/Fine%20Arts%20Education%20Act.Final%20wletter.pdf>

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