



The Center for Arts Education is committed to stimulating and sustaining quality arts education as an essential part of every child's education in the New York City public schools.

CAE provides tools and resources to deliver quality arts learning for all children. Our innovative teaching and learning programs—fostering collaboration with teachers and school leaders, cultural and community organizations—help build arts-infused school communities.

Our advocacy initiatives educate policymakers and the public about the need for and value of arts education as an essential ingredient in a well-rounded education and a fundamental part of children's health and well-being.

*Author: Douglas Israel,
Director of Research and Policy*

*Richard Kessler,
Executive Director*

The Center for Arts Education
14 Penn Plaza
225 W. 34th Street,
Suite 1112
New York, NY 10122
P: 877.434.ARTS
F: 212.268.5266
www.caenyc.org

THE CENTER FOR ARTS EDUCATION

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Accelerating Arts Education Funding Cuts and Loss of Arts Teachers Paint Grim Picture for City Schools

Independent analysis of New York City Department of Education arts education spending and personnel data cause of concern as Mayor proposes teacher layoffs and further cuts.

KEY FINDINGS

As part of ongoing analysis of arts and education data collected by the New York City Department of Education (DOE), The Center for Arts Education (CAE) has looked in-depth at system-wide budgeting for arts education and at data related to the number of certified arts teachers on staff in New York City public schools. Our findings reveal significant declines last year in the three primary areas of arts education budgeting tracked by the DOE: budgeting for arts supplies, musical instruments and equipment; budgeting for school arts teachers; and budgeting to hire the services of arts and cultural partners to deliver educational programming to schools.

CAE also aggregated the arts education data over the four years that the DOE has released these numbers. Since 2007–08, when the Mayor eliminated the dedicated funding line for arts instruction (*Project ARTS*) and substituted the *ArtsCount* initiative,¹ funding for arts supplies and equipment as well as for partnerships with cultural institutions has declined steadily and severely. The decline in funding for arts teachers is a new development and reflects the decreased number of certified arts teachers last year in city public schools after several years of increases.

Today arts programming in city schools is threatened further by the likelihood of additional budget cuts as well as teacher layoffs next year. The enormity of these cuts is on a par with the cuts made during the New York City fiscal crisis of the 1970s, when the promise of a well-rounded education was destroyed for a generation of public school students. Specifically, last year:

- Funds to hire arts and cultural organizations to provide arts education services directly to students declined by \$1.1 million, or 8 percent, since the previous year, and by \$7.8 million, or 36 percent, since SY 2006–07.
- Funds for arts supplies, musical instruments, and equipment declined by \$1.2 million, or 34 percent from the previous year, and by \$8.4 million, almost 80 percent, since SY 2006–07.
- Funds for school-based arts teachers fell by \$11.6 million, or 4 percent, from the previous year; this budget line has increased by 7 percent over the 2006–07 school year (SY).
- New York City public schools lost 135 arts teachers — a decline of 5 percent.
- Approximately 23 percent of all New York City public schools had no *full-time or part-time* licensed arts teacher on staff.

1. According to the NYDOE website, *ArtsCount* is "a new set of strategies to enhance arts education in New York City public schools. *ArtsCount* builds upon the *Blueprint for Teaching and Learning in the Arts*, which provide[s] common benchmarks and curriculum goals for dance, music, theater, and visual arts. *ArtsCount* incorporates arts metrics into the Administration's measurement of school performance, establishing first-ever accountability for arts programming and signaling the importance of the arts to a student's overall education."
<http://schools.nyc.gov/offices/teachlearn/arts/artscount.html>

INTRODUCTION

Since the New York City Department of Education's release of the first *Annual Arts in School Report* in 2006–07, the public has been given access to a wide array of information about the arts education provided to our city's public school students. Tracking these data was a central element of the DOE's *ArtsCount* initiative, intended to establish the "first-ever accountability" for arts programming in city public schools.

What the data show is that declines in funding for key components of arts education — for arts supplies, instruments, and materials, and for cultural partnerships — have been occurring since the launch of *ArtsCount*. This past year, we even witnessed a decline in budgeting for school arts personnel, attributable to the loss of 135 arts teachers citywide. With this loss the total number of certified arts teachers in city schools is at roughly the same level as before the *ArtsCount* initiative, even though hundreds of new schools have opened since that time.

In light of the Mayor's preliminary FY 2012 budget (released in early May), which proposes to eliminate over 6,000 school teaching positions citywide next year, these findings are especially concerning. If the city implements this budget, the DOE projects that 350 or more arts teachers will be laid off, a higher percentage than in any other subject category.² This reduction in school arts staff — on top of last year's loss of 135 arts teachers — would reduce the corps of certified arts teachers by 20 percent in just three years, and its impact could be even worse if additional arts positions are eliminated due to attrition. Coupled with the other sharp declines in arts education manifested in schools citywide, these losses will be devastating to school arts programs and to the students in our city's schools.

This briefing paper is not a comprehensive review of the status of arts education in city schools, nor should it be viewed in that light. The DOE — particularly the Office of Arts and Special Projects — and numerous partners deserve credit for important programmatic efforts under way. Rather, this paper examines the most reliable core measures of school arts education that the DOE has provided to date and takes stock of the educational policies that have contributed to the long-term and significant declines in these areas. The policies put in place by the New York City Department of Education, and at the federal level through the No Child Left Behind Act, share equal blame for shifting the K–12 education focus away from providing a rich, balanced curriculum that includes the arts. In New York City, this decline was initiated by the administration's decision to eliminate the dedicated funding line for arts education. The paper concludes with a set of policy recommendations that can help the city school system put arts instruction back on track at schools across the city.

SCHOOL BUDGETING FOR ARTS EDUCATION

In the 2009–10 school year, budgeting for arts education decreased by \$13,963,382, or 4.3 percent, from the previous year. Budgeting to hire arts and cultural educators to provide arts education services to schools fell by \$1.1 million, or 8 percent, from the previous year. Budgeting for arts supplies and equipment fell by \$1.2 million, or 34 percent, year-to-year as well.

As illustrated in Table 1, this budget marks the fourth consecutive year of significant declines in these two areas — arts vendors and arts supplies — a period that coincides with the phasing out of the dedicated stream of arts education funding that specifically incentivized spending in these areas and the administration's launch of the *ArtsCount* initiative intended to track and then bolster school arts education offerings. As demonstrated in the table, during these four years city schools have seen a decline of \$7.8 million, or 36 percent for arts partnerships, and a decline of \$8.4 million, or almost 80 percent, for the purchase of the supplies, instruments, and other equipment that are essential to providing quality — or perhaps any — instruction in the arts. The 2009–10 school budget allocates \$2.2 million for arts supplies and equipment for roughly 1.1 million students in city schools, or an average of two dollars per student for the year.

Last year's decline in budgeting for arts personnel — \$11.6 million, or 3.8 percent — while less pronounced, was equally significant because 135 certified arts teachers left the system, lowering the personnel payroll. After years of growth in this area, this was the first year since the city began releasing these data that funding for arts personnel has declined.

2. According to information released on potential teacher layoffs by the New York City Department of Education on February 27, 2011, 15 percent of active arts teachers would be laid off, compared with 3 percent in science, 3 percent in math, 6 percent in Spanish, 6 percent in English, and 9 percent in social studies.

TABLE 1. SYSTEM-WIDE BUDGETING FOR ARTS EDUCATION UNDER ARTSCOUNT

School Year	Arts Education Services	Supplies/Equipment	Personnel
2006–07	\$21,471,201	\$10,664,118	\$276,580,862
2007–08	\$15,050,535	\$3,925,082	\$289,591,558
2008–09	\$14,896,116	\$3,445,345	\$307,871,253
2009–10	\$13,746,900	\$2,260,260	\$296,242,172
Difference from 06–07 to 09–10	-\$7,724,301	-\$8,403,858	\$19,661,310
% Change Over Four Years	36% DECLINE	79% DECLINE	7% INCREASE

Source: Author’s calculations from New York City Department of Education data.

LOSS OF CERTIFIED ARTS TEACHERS

After modest growth in the number of certified arts teachers in city schools over the past several years, last year the overall number declined by 135 citywide from the previous school year, as shown in Table 2 below. This loss nearly erased the gains of the past decade and has returned the system to the same level of arts teachers as in 2006–07, when over one hundred fewer schools existed.

As displayed in Table 3 on the next page, 23 percent of city schools — over 350 schools — had no certified arts instructor last year. The deficit is most pronounced in the elementary schools, where 30 percent of schools had no full- or part-time certified arts instructor.

While this dearth of arts teachers at the elementary level is concerning, their absence at the middle and high school levels is most troubling. State education policy requires students to complete two art courses at the middle school level and two arts courses for high school graduation. State education policy also stipulates that coursework counting towards advancement or graduation requirements must be taught by an instructor certified in the subject matter of the course.

With 17 and 16 percent of middle and high schools, respectively, lacking even one certified arts teacher, a question arises as to how those schools are providing the necessary instruction for their students to receive the required instruction in the arts. According to most recent *Annual Arts in Schools Report* we know that 40 percent of middle schools are not ensuring that all their graduating 8th-graders are receiving what is required by state education law.³ This leads to further questions as to what the city is doing ensure that schools are providing the required instruction taught by a qualified instructor, and even, in light of the lack of compliance noted above, what the State Education Department is doing to ensure that schools provide the mandated instructional requirements for the arts to all students?

3. New York City Department of Education, *Annual Arts in Schools Report 2009–2010* (New York: Author, 2011): 25.

TABLE 2. CERTIFIED ARTS INSTRUCTORS IN NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS, 2006–2007 TO 2009–2010

School Year	Certified Arts Instructors
2006–07	2,458
2007–08	2,518
2008–09	2,597
2009–10	2,462

Source: Author's calculations from New York City Department of Education data.

TABLE 3. NEW YORK CITY PUBLIC SCHOOLS WITHOUT CERTIFIED ARTS INSTRUCTORS (2009–2010)

School Level	% of Schools with No Full- or Part-Time Certified Arts Instructors
Elementary	30%
Middle	17%
High	16%
Systemwide	23%

Source: Author's calculations from New York City Department of Education data.

CONCLUSION

The combination of declines in both budgeting for arts education and the number of certified arts instructors on staff at city public schools paints a very grim picture for arts education in New York City. While there are many important programmatic initiatives under way at the Department of Education to enhance arts education opportunities for city school students, the data in this report raise serious concerns about the efficacy of the city's *ArtsCount* initiative, concerns that are particularly troublesome in light of the proposed cuts to education and the city's corps of arts teachers.

The budget cuts of the past several years have forced principals to make very difficult decisions regarding the allocation of education dollars. However, the arts education funding declines outlined in this briefing paper, which began before the onset of the fiscal crisis of 2008, can be traced to a set of educational policies that appear to be at odds with the provision of a balanced, well-rounded curriculum for all students.

The policies put in place by the current mayoral administration, reflecting the mandates of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, have served to focus the attention of principals and schools leaders on improving achievement (as measured by state testing) in just two subject areas — English Language Arts and math. The New York City Department of Education has developed a set of powerful rewards (i.e., salary bonuses) and consequences (i.e., school closings) intended to raise test scores in these two areas. Principals have, unsurprisingly, responded with an energetic focus on testing results, which not only encumbers quality teaching and learning but also pares away the provision of a rich curriculum for all students.

ArtsCount was launched at the beginning of the 2006–07 school year, as a more flexible, more accountable replacement for *Project ARTS*, the dedicated funding line that, by general consensus, catalyzed the restoration of arts education to hundreds of city schools that had little to no arts instruction after the city's 1970s financial crisis. The dedicated funding line led to investments in the hiring of new arts teachers, to the forging of partnerships with cultural organizations, and to the purchase of much-needed arts supplies and instruments for city classrooms. While this funding line technically still exists in a school's budget, principals are no longer required to spend it on the arts. As a revealing example, since the loss of dedicated arts funding schools now spend, on average, *two dollars* on arts supplies and equipment per student per year.

To be sure, hundreds of schools across the city have developed and nurtured outstanding school arts programs, and have integrated the arts into the school curriculum in ways that are having a real and inspiring impact on their students. And despite newly limited resources and difficult financial times, the DOE's Office of Arts and Special Projects continues its admirable work for the schools they serve.

The work of the Arts Advisory Committee to the Panel for Educational Policy, formed at the behest of The Center for Arts Education and allies in the state legislature in February 2010, is also noteworthy. The committee's primary role is to advise and comment on any educational or instructional policies involving arts education. If implemented, its initial set of thoughtful recommendations would help provide a greater level of equity and access to arts instruction for city school students.

The city's creation and expansion of *The Blueprints for Teaching and Learning in the Arts* has also been very promising, and the state has developed a set of instructional requirements and learning standards for the arts — all of which are invaluable when used as intended. However, such documents and guidelines are beneficial only to schools that avail themselves of them. We have seen here in New York City the vast disparity in the application and delivery of best instructional practices that have been developed by dedicated educators across all disciplines.

Schools with principals who understand the value of the arts profit from these tools. For schools where key personnel are not convinced of, or familiar with, the benefits of arts education, minimum standards and funding levels are critical, as are support and leadership, to bringing the arts to their students. The new Schools Chancellor Dennis Walcott has signaled his intent to ensure that schools provide a balanced, rich curriculum that includes the arts. His leadership is a welcome development for the city's education policy.

4. Supporters include the Council of Supervisors and Administrators and the United Federation of Teachers, among others.



New York City is the cultural capital of the world, surrounded by a priceless array of arts and cultural institutions, talented artists and inventive thinkers, and a creative energy that has defined the city for generations. Unfortunately, too many of our schools are culturally isolated and devoid of the vibrancy and course diversity that one would expect, and should demand, of our city schools.

To better provide all students with access to the quality arts education that is outlined in state education law, and that the administration asserts is important, we call on the city and the Schools Chancellor to address the shortcomings of current educational policies and create the proper mechanisms and incentives to allow arts instruction to flourish in city schools.

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Mayor and the Department of Education should ensure that New York City's public school students do not bear the brunt of budget cuts. Central to this is ensuring that arts teachers, having already experienced declines in number, are protected, and that at a minimum every public school across the city has at least one certified arts teacher on staff.
- The DOE should once again hold principals accountable for spending dollars targeted for arts education on arts education. Restoring the per-pupil dedicated funding line for arts education has the support of a wide cross-section of education and child advocates⁴ and would help ensure that students receive the arts education to which they are entitled.
- The Department of Education and the State Education Department should put in place a mechanism to ensure that all schools are held accountable for providing the arts instruction that is required by state education law. ■