STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM

A CASE STUDY FROM

Minnesota
About Americans for the Arts

The mission of Americans for the Arts is to serve, advance, and lead the network of organizations and individuals who cultivate, promote, sustain, and support the arts in America.

Founded in 1960, Americans for the Arts is the nation’s leading nonprofit organization for advancing the arts and arts education. From offices in Washington, DC and New York City, we provide a rich array of programs that meet the needs of more than 150,000 members and stakeholders. We are dedicated to representing and serving local communities and to creating opportunities for every American to participate in and appreciate all forms of the arts.

About the State Policy Pilot Program

The State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) was a three-year initiative of Americans for the Arts focused on a three-pronged approach of data collection, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange to work toward influencing implementation of federal mandates or programs at the state level; expanding state support of arts education in policy and appropriations; and impacting local access to arts programs and instruction for students. Through annual grants and technical assistance, Americans for the Arts empowered leaders and stakeholders from ten state teams seeking to strengthen arts education by advancing state policy in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

Visit www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3 for more info!

Americans for the Arts would like to thank the following funding partners for their significant support of the State Policy Pilot Program:

CHARMAINE AND DAN WARMENHOVEN
ART WORKS.

The Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation
Acknowledgements

The Minnesota case study is part of a set of materials generated by the Americans for the Arts’ State Policy Pilot Program.

Americans for the Arts would like to thank the many individuals who also contributed to this publication, especially:

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Senior Director Policy at
Perpich Center for Arts Education

**Tyler Livingston**
Acting Director, School Support Division at
Minnesota Department of Education

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Segue Consulting Partners

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Minnesota Department of Education

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Minnesota Music Educators

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**Mary Jo Thompson**
Arts Consultant

**Representative Kathy Brynaert** [District 19B]
Minnesota House of Representatives

Many additional insights were provided by Americans for the Arts staff over the duration of the project including Elisabeth Dorman, Jeff M. Poulin, Kristen Engebretsen, Jay Dick, and Narric W. Rome; RMC Research staff Chris Dwyer and Susan Frankel; as well as researchers and facilitators Jonathan Katz, Dawn M. Ellis, Robert Morrison, Mary Margaret Schoenfeld, Yael Silk, and Barb Whitney; and organizations like the Arts Education Partnership, Education Commission of the States, and the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.
About the State Policy Pilot Program

The State Policy Pilot Program—“SP3”—was a 3- YEAR initiative of Americans for the Arts focused on a 3-PRONGED approach of data collection, technical assistance, and knowledge exchange to work toward achieving the broad goals of:

- influencing implementation of federal mandates or programs at the state level;
- expanding state support of arts education in policy and appropriations; and
- impacting local access to arts programs and instruction for students.

Through annual grants and technical assistance, Americans for the Arts empowered leaders and stakeholders from ten state teams seeking to strengthen arts education by advancing state policy in Arizona, Arkansas, California, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, New Jersey, North Carolina, Oklahoma, and Wyoming.

The results of this program include numerous reports, case studies, and a network of state leaders ready to enact policy change and advocacy initiatives to advance arts education across the nation.

NATIONAL THEMES

Throughout the 3-year State Policy Pilot Program, several themes were observed across all case studies, which support the trends in policy development and advocacy infrastructure.

1. Employing the Federal-State-Local Policy Pipeline: Establishing a pathway to link federal policy frameworks and federal guidance to state-level education policy development to impact local implementation of educational resources.

2. Utilizing Data to Support Policy Development and Advocacy Efforts: research and analysis will both inform and influence the path toward devising an effective policy or advocacy strategy.

3. Embracing the Power of Convening: coming together as diverse stakeholders, whether at the national, state, or local levels is an essential part of relationship building, plan crafting, and policy development.

4. Sharing Knowledge Among State Leaders: documenting and disseminating the good, the bad, and the innovative concepts from your work is key to have ownership and a stake in the shared advancement of the field of arts education.
Look for these icons throughout the SP3 series!

Policy Development Trends

- Sustaining Appropriations for Statewide Initiatives
- Revising K-12 Arts Education Standards
- Implementing Arts Provisions in ESSA
- Enabling Title I Policy Pathway
- Building Infrastructure for Stakeholder Engagement

Advocacy Infrastructure Trends

- Sustaining Core Leadership
- Forming Relationships with Coalitions
- Fostering Allies Among Elected Officials
- Building an Information Base
- Crafting Consistent and Effective Messages
- Creating Communication Infrastructure for Grassroots Advocacy

Read more about the State Policy Pilot Program and its findings at AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3
The Minnesota State Policy Pilot Program (SP3) project focused on customizing a statewide education policy mandate that would make sense for arts educators. The intent was to ensure that the resources the project created added value for arts teachers and their evaluators in their daily work.

In 2011 the Minnesota legislature passed the Teacher Development and Evaluation Statute 122A.40. Subd. 8, which required school districts and teacher unions to jointly create systems for teacher development and evaluation (TDE). Arts teachers were unsure how the system would include them.

With the law in place, schools needed a process for assessing student growth in non-tested grades and subjects, including the arts.

The state model plan, developed by the Minnesota Department of Education (MDE), does not give detailed guidance for teachers of specific subject areas, such as arts educators. The work the SP3 team undertook was to assist teachers and administrators across the state with tools for increasing the effectiveness of TDE specifically in the five arts areas: dance, media arts, music, theater, and visual arts.
At the first national SP3 meeting in 2014, the Minnesota team determined that an important project goal was to increase and improve communication between arts teachers and their evaluators (most often principals). So after gathering input from teachers and principals as well as peer coaches, teams of educators in each arts area were convened to create a tool for communication.

The tool, *Arts Teacher Development and Evaluation: What to Look For in Dance, Media Arts, Music, Theater, and Visual Arts* (known as *Look Fors*), provides examples of what an observer would see in arts classrooms. The examples connect arts-specific practices with the vocabulary of general education and help arts teachers communicate with their evaluators about what to look for in their classrooms.

On the following page is one example of a dance teacher checklist for one indicator in the Classroom Instruction Domain. It assists teachers in describing learning targets and content with students. The checklist identifies the types of evidence teachers can collect to demonstrate expertise in this domain as part of their teacher evaluation.
How do you communicate content to students?

**INDICATOR 3A: COMMUNICATES LEARNING TARGETS AND CONTENT CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY**

I. COMMUNICATES LEARNING TARGETS AND CONTENT

Explanations are creative and connected to prior knowledge; Students explain content to peers; Directions are clear; Students may develop procedures when appropriate

Teacher evidence could include various elements, and today the checked statement(s) apply:

- Posts, restates, and reviews dance-specific learning targets during class
- Uses dance-specific and age-appropriate vocabulary in learning targets
- Clearly articulates instructions for work as a full class, in small groups, and/or individually
- Demonstrates and models standard dance terminology
- Dances with students

Student evidence that may be observed today:

- Students are able to articulate and/or demonstrate learning targets
- Students are able to follow instructions with minimal confusion
- Students articulate their personal contributions to dance class
- Students participate in feedback protocols
- Students write artist statements that reflect the learning targets

Subsequent sections of this case study discuss additional information on the **Look Fors**.

The SP3 team included high-level members from MDE who were key to both bringing credibility to the project and helping align the work for arts educators with the TDE work they were leading for statewide implementation of the statute. MDE convened a stakeholder group of parents, teachers, principals, superintendents and school board members and led a year-long process to develop a state model for TDE. School districts, through joint agreement with their teachers, may elect to use the entire state model, use sections of the state model in combination with their own practices, or develop their own customized district-wide, teacher evaluation system.
As it turned out, few districts adopted the entire state model intact, often preferring to create their own customized systems that are based largely on the state model.

During development of the state model plan an approach for measuring student academic growth in non-tested grades and subjects was needed. This aspect of the model plan is referred to as Student Learning Goals (SLG). Today the majority of schools are engaged in some type of SLG process.

In early discussions of teacher evaluation most national attention was on those subjects that standardized exams could test (reading, math, and to a more limited extent science). However, this includes only approximately one-third of U.S. teachers – those who teach subjects that use standardized tests to measure student achievement.

In Minnesota the issue of non-tested subject areas came up early, however, school district plans identified almost no arts-specific strategies. Therefore, the SP3 team was interested in piloting subject-specific resources for TDE and MDE joined as a full participant on the SP3 leadership team to begin this work with the arts.

The overall goal of Minnesota’s SP3 project is to assist teachers and principals across the state with developing quality educational practices and tools to support arts teachers’ growth and effectiveness as schools implement the new TDE statute.

Objectives:

• create a Leadership Team to guide the project

• understand the TDE statute requirements as well as its intentions, as per a white paper by Representative Kathy Brynaert, who was key to drafting the legislation.

• learn from the MDE pilot TDE report, which included the Perpich Center for Arts Education’s Arts High School

• gather input and insights from teachers’ and principals’ surveys on TDE to understand perspectives, needs and challenges

• study what other states had done to implement TDE

• determine what resources and support arts teachers and principals needed to improve teacher effectiveness based on data

• develop the Look For tools to accelerate and improve communication between arts teachers and their evaluators as well as to increase effectiveness and integrity of teacher evaluation

• disseminate tools widely in the state and nationally, if there is interest
BACKGROUND AND MINNESOTA CONTEXT

Minnesota has worked over the past decade to put in place a wide range of policies that support arts education, including:

- required K–12 academic standards in the arts
- early learning arts education standards
- a requirement for assessing student achievement of the arts standards
- teacher licensure in each arts area (except media arts)
- required competencies in the arts for classroom teacher licensure
- requirements in the arts for higher-education admission.

In addition, a study on the statewide status of arts education was done to collect data about the scope of arts education in Minnesota, and MDE collected data from school districts on staff-development needs in the arts. Given all of this information and a foundation of arts education policies, the Minnesota SP3 project focused on policy implementation rather than policy development.
One reason the SP3 project wanted to focus on TDE in the arts, was that all signs at the federal and state levels pointed to the connection between student performance and teacher performance as a policy mandate. This was an excellent opportunity to work on how to include student performance in the evaluation of arts teachers. However, shortly after the SP3 project was underway, discussions about reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) revealed that the federal government would no longer include measures of student performance as part of teacher evaluation requirements. This was despite the fact that many states—including Minnesota—had already passed legislation requiring student performance as a measure of teacher effectiveness.

After internal consideration, the Leadership Team agreed that the Minnesota statute was not going away, even if the federal government changed course. The team reaffirmed that educators would benefit from more understanding of effective student assessment and quality arts instruction, so that development of resources for arts educator evaluation should continue. The SP3 team chose to focus on TDE because of the high impact of systematic teacher evaluation on all aspects of learning.
This renewed commitment to the importance of teacher development has remained at the center of the project. Leadership team members would say, “The focus on teacher professional growth is the right work—it is the work of developing excellent educators to provide students with an excellent education.”

During the year-long process MDE’s Working Group used to design the state’s model plan for TDE, a representative of the Perpich Center attended the meetings bringing an arts lens. Because there was a certain level of fear among arts educators that the new teacher evaluation system would not be relevant or appropriate for them and their subject areas, one of the directors at MDE convened a group of educators representing non-tested subjects to investigate effective methods for measuring student academic growth. This group presented to the full Working Group and the result was the approach of using Student Learning Goals, along with the development of a handbook on SLGs that is currently being used by school districts throughout the state. While these groups were meeting at the state level, arts teachers were still in a wait-and-see mode in terms of how teacher evaluation would be implemented for arts educators in their schools.

During 2013–14 MDE staff offered workshops, coaching sessions, and support for the new TDE process—all over the state, in schools and districts of many sizes. At that time the team learned that with the exception of the music education association, no other arts groups or schools had requested an arts-specific workshop or training from MDE. The time seemed right to find out more about what was on the minds of arts educators in relationship to TDE, to offer them support and resources that could be helpful as they strived to implement the new policy.

An early question was whether arts educators and their evaluators needed arts-specific tools and resources, or whether the same tools and processes the model state plan developed for evaluating any teachers were sufficient and appropriate. While many aspects of the Minnesota model work for arts educators, survey data confirmed that arts educators wanted arts-specific resources to assist them in communicating to their evaluators what is unique and important in teaching and learning in the arts.

Professional arts education organizations, who were highly interested in supporting arts teachers in addressing the new expectations for TDE, had begun some work on their own, but without coordination for a statewide approach across all the arts disciplines. There was a need for a leadership team with broad representation to collectively address TDE for arts educators.
Other states, including Tennessee, Colorado, Delaware, Connecticut and Michigan, had begun working on teacher evaluation systems as much as five years earlier. Their work contained valuable examples and lessons-learned that Minnesota could research and build upon to move its SP3 project forward. It was also clear from those states that a central part of the work is teacher development, an aspect of the state plan to which Minnesota gave substantial weight.

Minnesota allocates considerable authority to local school districts for decisions about TDE. Experience and expertise in evaluation, and specifically arts teacher evaluation, can vary greatly among schools. As a result, professional learning opportunities are critical to stimulate needed dialogue between teachers and administrators for implementing the new system with integrity. Providing teachers and administrators a consistent tool statewide would be important to increase the likelihood of equity in teacher development and evaluation.
1 Attractions allies and champions

The first step was to form an SP3 leadership team that included members of the professional arts organizations, as an essential source of knowledge and key partners for statewide reach. The leadership team comprised educators from the visual and media arts, dance, music, and theater; representatives from MDE and the state legislature; as well as a manager of a TDE pilot school project. This team met regularly, provided guidance for structuring the project, and brought expertise to all aspects of the project, including data collection, workshop development, and design of the key Look Fors tool that the SP3 team ultimately created for TDE. Current work on statewide dissemination continues.

SP3 support: When convening the SP3 national network, the national team repeatedly reinforced the critical need to engage partners in policy work. The MN SP3 team listened and learned from this important advice in building its leadership team.
2 Establishing a proof of concept to guide the project design

There was a question of where to start working on TDE, given it is such a broad and encompassing scope of work. With the inclusion of teacher development as a key aspect of the policy, the TDE process touches on nearly everything that is important in the teaching profession. Though key messaging about TDE has always emphasized the role of development in improving teacher craft and student outcomes, educators on the ground struggled to comply with certain aspects. Among these were attending meetings, following specific statute requirements, complying with the details of the district plan, and even filling out a range of forms. A real challenge to implementation continues to be how to focus efforts on meaningful professional learning— informed by evaluation data—rather than on compliance for compliance’s sake with the law or a local plan. Additionally, there remains an underlying question as to whether teacher evaluation can serve two ends: both teacher development and high stakes accountability of teacher performance.
To be open to continued professional learning, educators must feel it is safe to divulge their weaknesses or challenges, or they will not want to work on improving those areas. Charlotte Danielson says, “Learning can only occur in an atmosphere of trust. Fear shuts people down. Learning, after all, entails vulnerability. The culture of the school and of the district must be one that encourages risk-taking.”

Evaluation, on the other hand, is about high-stakes decision-making, such as whether a teacher will get tenure, get a performance pay bonus, or even keep their job. This is a stressful situation—even a fearful one—in which the impulse is to reveal only what is working well. This represents the antithesis of the conditions needed for teachers to continue learning and seek help in areas that challenge them.

The Perpich Center for Arts Education, which serves as the state agency managing the MN SP3 project, has an Arts High School for 11th and 12th grade students. MDE selected the Arts High School as a pilot site for implementation of TDE in 2013. The pilot process made it palpably clear that TDE is influenced by and has influence on nearly every aspect of teaching and learning in a school. Through the pilot, administrators of the Arts High School realized they had much work to do to prepare teachers for setting goals, assessing student work and growth, and managing the data as part of teacher evaluations. Teachers needed confidence in the entire process, to believe that there can be authentic connections between measurement of student growth (the basis for 35 percent of their evaluations) and their performance evaluation.

Teacher development was such a large undertaking in the Arts High School that it lasted two years beyond the MDE pilot, to more fully prepare teachers to participate in the TDE process with fidelity. This reinforced the necessity to make teacher development equal to teacher evaluation.

**SP3 Support:** Evaluators encouraged a protocol that included proof of concept as a way to organize the team’s thinking as well as its study.
To understand more clearly what the pressing issues were for arts educators and their evaluators, the team decided to collect data on perceptions, needs, and challenges.

During the first year of the project, the team hired evaluators from the University of Minnesota’s Center for Applied Research and Educational Improvement (CAREI) to do a statewide survey of teachers.

The SP3 leadership team worked closely with CAREI to craft the survey questions and gather contact information from MDE on licensed arts educators, to ensure that the surveys were widely distributed across the state.

Highlights from the survey include areas where teachers wanted additional help:

- Tools for their summative evaluators to understand what quality instruction looks like in each arts area
- Rubrics for summative evaluators that are sufficiently sensitive to support judgments about the instructional behaviors of arts educators
- Education for summative evaluators on how to effectively observe teachers and offer constructive feedback
- Help with determining how to measure student growth over time, especially how to conduct assessments without taking time away from instruction or teacher preparation time
- Professional-development opportunities on assessments that address subjectivity in arts assessment
- Professional development with teachers and principals together, so that each group can share their ideas and concerns

The second year of the project focused on principals. Again the leadership team worked with CAREI to develop and distribute a survey to principals about their perceptions, needs, and challenges related to arts teacher evaluation. Working with the elementary and secondary principal associations, the Perpich Center sent the survey out statewide, but produced a less, robust return rate than the teacher survey, although the responses reflected good demographic balance.
Among the common themes that emerged from the principal’s responses are:

- Principals were evenly divided on whether it was necessary for evaluators to have a background in the arts. They also raised the question as to whether rubrics specific to the arts were necessary.

- Professional development themes included a need for knowledge of the arts standards, communication with arts teachers, and training for observing arts specialists.

- Some principals described challenges they had previously experienced in evaluating arts educators. A couple thought it was unfair that arts educators would receive special attention at the perceived expense of math, science, physical education, special education, etc. Another said that arts teachers bristled at the prospect of creating quantifiable goals for a subjective discipline.

**SP3 support:** The national SP3 project design modeled the upfront collection of data and use of that data to inform the project. Research and data collection were part of the original design of the project, as Americans for the Arts selected 10 states to participate.

4 **Identifying audiences and accessing information**

The SP3 team used two different strategies to identify audiences and collect additional information. First, in response to the survey results, the leadership team decided to focus on both arts teachers and their administrators as the audiences for the project. The initial strategy, based on needs the survey identified, was a series of pilot workshops delivered in various locations in the state, to provide an opportunity for teachers and principals to come together for professional learning in two primary topic areas:

1. Defining and describing instructional effectiveness in the arts and
2. Observing and evaluating effective arts instruction

The team regarded the workshops, which it designed to bring teachers and principals together, as an opportunity to build context and demand for an eventual statewide rollout. A leader of the TDE process at MDE, as well as arts education specialists, presented these workshops as arts-focused sessions, including an overview of the TDE law, general expectations, and specific arts resources. Participants learned about
using the academic standards in the arts in the assessment process, reflecting more systematically on effective instructional practices, and strengthening communication with summative evaluators about instruction and assessment.

The workshops focused on developing authentic assessments that are meaningful for students and provide evidence of deep learning—rather than those that are easy to administer and minimally comply with requirements.

The workshops, while successful, were not sufficient. Few principals participated. While teachers rated the workshops highly, it was clear that the workshop approach served too few participants, did not attract administrators, and would be hard to scale up for a statewide rollout. Summative evaluators need other forms of assistance.

The team considered a third audience, peer reviewers, not only because the statute names them but also because they play a critical role in schools. These peer coaches provide an important link in the TDE process by providing feedback to teachers in a supportive environment that is not high stakes like the summative evaluator review. The project engaged peer reviewers later, through small group and
individual interviews, to determine if the Look Fors would work for them. During the interviews, peer reviewers gave advice on how to include additional resources in the Look Fors documents, specifically to address communication needs between peer reviewers and their colleagues. The team expanded the Look Fors to include links to several resources.

Key points that emerged during the peer reviewers’ interviews include:

- Post the Look Fors online and hotlink some of the tools/resources
- Assessment examples are not necessary or feasible because assessment is integrally tied to specific instruction
- Do not link assessments because they will be inauthentic
- Use Look Fors to inform instruction
- Post the Look Fors on the MDE website with all of their TDE resources
- Look Fors should not require any additional video or courses for explanation
- Electronic documents with hot links are good. No printing is necessary, but it is available
- Make the document “fillable” before printing (teachers or administrators can check the boxes on the form as a way to document accomplishments right in the document), and make it possible to download to an iPad for walk-throughs

The final document took these suggestions into account.

The second strategy was to gather information from other states already underway with teacher evaluation systems, to take advantage of developed tools as a way to jump-start the work in Minnesota. The team made contact with the Colorado Department of Education (CDE). Colorado, which received a Race to the Top grant, had nearly a five-year head start on designing a teacher evaluation system. The leadership team, along with members of the broader arts and education community, met with the CDE’s Karol Gates for a day and a half to learn about the Colorado system of teacher evaluation.

Responses from the meeting indicated strong interest in the Colorado Practical Ideas Guide. The Practical Ideas Guide is a tool for arts educators, to communicate: (1) what teaching and learning looks like in arts classrooms in each of the arts disciplines, and (2) with evaluators what is important to observe and understand. Connecting with
and learning from a state that had gone through a similar process proved pivotal to the Minnesota process. It provided a chance both to learn about specific tools and resources and to regain a sense of inspiration.

At this point the team changed the project focus—squarely onto creating a tool for communicating what is most important for evaluators to look for in arts classrooms during observations and evaluations. Initially the team intended to design the Look Fors as a tool for principals to use when observing teachers in their classrooms, to provide information on what quality instruction looks like, help them communicate with arts teachers, and assist in the observation process. Principals might use the Look Fors as a study guide before a pre-conference with the teacher, or as a resource for appropriate vocabulary for feedback in a post-conference.

Ultimately the team changed the audience from principals to the arts educators themselves. The Look Fors became a tool of empowerment for teachers to discuss with their administrators arts-specific indicators of quality teaching and learning. The team aligned the Look Fors to the domains in the Minnesota state model, to make them familiar and user-friendly. The Look Fors also became a bridge to the sample rubrics the state provides, so that arts-specific rubrics would not be necessary. Arts educators could use this communications tool in a variety of settings, with both administrators and peer reviewers.

The team recommended that a facilitator be hired to lead development of the Look Fors. Arts educators from dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts — from K-12 and higher education — convened to discuss and write examples of what teachers and principals needed to communicate about quality teaching and learning in the arts. The writing process became its own kind of professional development for the arts educators working on a common template across all art forms.

SP3 Support: SP3 evaluators recommended considering an additional strategy for the project. They suggested that connections with other states would be a valuable jump start for the Minnesota process.

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**KEY IMPLEMENTATION STRATEGIES**

Look Fors are aligned to the Minnesota Performance Standards for Teacher Practice, which includes four domains:

1. Planning and preparation
2. Classroom environment
3. Classroom instruction
4. Professionalism

It is based on the work of Charlotte Danielson and covers the five arts areas of dance, media arts, music, theater and visual arts.
5 Developing a rollout strategy and infrastructure

The leadership team was instrumental in developing a rollout strategy. An effective rollout requires people, tools, infrastructure, a dissemination plan, responsible leadership, and a variety of partners to help.

The rollout plan includes participation of leadership team members to:

• include SP3 materials on websites for access by educators in the field. The Perpich Center website features the Look Fors documents for each arts area, they are linked to the MDE website and the professional arts organization websites, where feasible.

• share a calendar of events and conferences for sharing the overall project findings and resources, and specifically the Look Fors, with educators throughout the state. Newsletters and publications will announce Look Fors as the new school year begins in the fall.

• use a PowerPoint deck for consistency of message in presentations about the SP3 project as well as how to use the Look Fors to improve communication with evaluators.

• incorporate arts education specialists at the Perpich Center into the strategies for sharing the TDE materials during their school visits around the state. Additionally three Regional Centers, run by the Perpich Center in rural Minnesota, are poised to disseminate the TDE resources with teachers and principals in their regions of the state.

• make connections with higher education faculty as an entry to teacher-preparation programs. One of the leadership team members, who teaches at the University of Minnesota, is introducing students in the teacher-preparation program to the TDE tools and resources.

• re-engage elementary and secondary principals’ associations. They were great partners in the first phase of the project by helping get the surveys out to their members across the state.

SP3 support: Evaluators suggested creating a list of components of the rollout process to gain the attention of others who might be able to increase dissemination through collaboration.
6 Benchmarking progress

The team is using Google analytics as a benchmark to track usage of the materials on the Perpich Center SP3 webpage. Additionally, it set up a system for tracking dissemination at conferences, workshops, through newsletters, and other mechanisms on Google Drive for continual updating by all leadership team members. If possible, working with MDE, the Perpich Center may try to collect data from teachers and principals on implementation of TDE at schools across the state, although this is not in place as of the 2017-18 school year.
1 Built strong relationships and partnerships

The SP3 project promoted renewed collaboration between the professional arts organizations, the Perpich Center, and MDE. The SP3 project was an important opportunity to build relationships and work collaboratively with key partners for success. Leadership team membership continued to evolve throughout the project. As needs arose for members with particular areas of expertise, the team brought on new members. Other members left as jobs required them to re-focus their time.
2 Created useful tool and resources

A simple, but compelling tool brought focus to the project. The Look Fors have become the primary communication tool for arts educators to share arts-specific language and content with their evaluators. In preparation for observations, during classroom visits, and in post observation conferences, the Look Fors help evaluators understand what is unique about teaching and learning in the arts, how the artistic processes help students meet the arts academic standards, and the vocabulary for discussing quality arts education instruction. Additionally, networking opportunities resulted from bringing together arts educators in all five arts disciplines to write the Look Fors. The writers brought expertise on instructional and assessment practices and learned from each other in creating a document that was built on a shared framework for consistency across arts areas. The tool, with links to other valuable resources, fills a need for teachers, peer reviewers and evaluators.
3 **Connected with policy makers**

The legislator who sponsored the initial teacher evaluation legislation that became law was an instrumental member of the leadership team. She increased the team’s understanding of the history and intent of all parts of the statute. Subsequently, after joining the leadership team, she decided not to run for re-election and has encouraged building relationships with other legislators currently in office to keep active the connection with policy makers. The team was reluctant to let such an informed legislator rotate off the leadership team during the project, but intends to include other legislators as part of future communications and plans.

4 **Learned about audiences through pilots and data collection**

There are multiple audiences for the tools the MN SP3 project created, including: teachers, peer reviewers, administrators/evaluators, departments of education in other states, arts and education organizations, and legislators/policy makers. Through both trial and error and learning from others who preceded this work, the team arrived at a clearer understanding of the variety of audiences that this project can influence.

5 **Disseminated the work**

In scaling up dissemination, it is more feasible to reach teachers, peer reviewers, and principals across the state—to assist them with tools and resources—with the cooperation of members of the leadership team. MDE is a critical partner and has included links to the resources for arts educators on its website. The professional arts education associations—such as Art Educators of Minnesota, Communication and Theater Association of Minnesota, Dance Educators Coalition, and Minnesota Music Educators Association—are already sharing this work with their members through presentations at conferences, newsletters, and when working with teachers around the state. Schools in other states have begun to contact MN team members for more information. Team members are discussing the development of webinars and will give national presentations where educators from other states can connect around TDE.
Creating additional opportunities through the National SP3 network

Based on connections with SP3 colleagues from other states, additional work emerged during the course of the project. Development of a Title I website—to help schools meet the goals of student achievement and a well-rounded education using the arts as tools—became a priority. Through a contract with the California Alliance for Arts Education the Title I website will be completed in November 2017. A stronger connection with the State Arts Action Network member, may result in undertaking a longitudinal data project on arts education in all Minnesota schools through the longitudinal data collection procedure at MDE.
1 Partnerships are necessary

Policy implementation with focused attention on multiple fronts requires partnerships with allied groups for successful implementation. Building relationships with the state’s Department of Education and the professional arts education associations brought expertise to the table to shape the evolving project plan and allowed the team to share the workload.

2 Start with data

Data helped define the project landscape and address identified needs for teachers and evaluators. While the data contained many more areas that needed attention than this project could address, the data helped put some parameters around what aspects of the work the project would undertake. Hiring an outside evaluator to collect data added credibility to the project.
3 Learn from other states.

Learning about the processes and products from other states working on teacher evaluation was eye-opening as Minnesota began its project. Seeing something concrete took the conversation to a new level and provided the leadership team with steps to realize project goals. Although Minnesota created its own Look Fors aligned to the MN state model, the Colorado Practical Ideas provided an example and initial structure from which the SP3 team developed the tool.

4 Stay focused on what is important

Laws change at the federal and state levels, which impacts the work in the field of education. However, in that changing climate it is also essential to focus on the most-important work related to student learning and teacher effectiveness. High-quality professional development for arts educators and evaluators builds teacher capacity in the areas that matter most, such as using evidence to assess both student learning and teacher effectiveness.
It is challenging to find opportunities to highlight and share the most important learning going on in arts education. Currently there are few opportunities to report on student academic achievement in the arts. A positive move would be to include measurements of student growth and achievement in the arts on school-district and state report cards or in other accountability measures. This would add other avenues and audiences for communicating about what students are learning in the arts. There continues to be a need to demonstrate the importance of creativity and expression in a system based more on numerical accounting of student achievement.

5 Funding provided important opportunities

SP3 funds provided resources to:

- cover costs of convening the leadership team (travel reimbursement, substitute teachers, etc.) to assure broad representation
- hire outside evaluators to collect data from teachers and principals
- bring in an expert from Colorado to share their TDE process
- hire workshop facilitators
- pay a facilitator to lead the Look Fors development process
- pay writers small stipends and
- develop materials for presentations that will assist the Perpich Center and professional arts organizations in dissemination

Additional funds are being allocated for activities beyond the scope of the original project, such as a Title I website. The overall impact of the project has been substantial, even though the sum was relatively small ($15,000 per year over three years). The result has been the realization of the original goal to develop tools that support arts teachers’ growth and effectiveness.