STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM
A CASE STUDY FROM North Carolina
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 10 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!

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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 10 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

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
In December 2010, a diverse and thoughtful legislative task force submitted recommendations as North Carolina’s Comprehensive Arts Education (CAE) Plan to the Joint Education Oversight Committee of the North Carolina General Assembly. Earlier that year, Senate Bill 66 had directed the State Board of Education (SBE) to appoint a task force to create a CAE Plan. The SBE appointed task force members, with the General Assembly designating legislative members. The task force represented a broad cross-section of those with a stake in education, including legislators, superintendents, parents, arts teachers, classroom teachers, central office staff, community colleges, universities, the PTA, the business community, and other arts leaders.

As part of their work, the task force created a statewide vision and defined CAE as comprising three components: Arts Education (arts as core, academic subjects), Arts Integration (arts as a catalyst for learning across the curriculum), and Arts Exposure (exposure to arts experiences).

The task force established a number of goals and recommendations for each of these components; some were policy goals for the SBE to enact, some were funding goals that required legislation, and others were programmatic, training, and/or communication goals.
Examples of goals/recommendations include:

- Implement K–12 arts education as the Basic Education Program (BEP), G.S.115C-81, defines it.
- Establish the BEP with: designated additional, categorical funding allotments for arts education positions at elementary, middle, and high school grade spans and equitable staffing allocations to address small and low-wealth school systems.
- Ensure that appropriately licensed arts educators deliver arts education classes.
- Use arts teachers as resources and consultants within schools and across Local Education Agencies (LEAs).
- Establish a high school graduation requirement in the arts.
- Expand the nationally recognized, research-based A+ Schools of North Carolina as a model for whole-school reform, with arts instruction central to student learning and integrated throughout the curriculum.
- Use A+ teachers as resources and consultants within schools and across LEAs.
- Prioritize Arts Integration as a primary component of education reform.
• Require Arts Integration as a component of teacher and administrator preparation and licensure.

• Use state and local arts organizations, education programs, highly qualified teaching artists, and other resources to increase exposure to the arts for teachers and students, both within and outside the classroom.

• Strengthen ties among schools, parent and school organizations, and community arts programs.

Many stakeholders shared the responsibility to tackle these various goals, including those from the aforementioned SBE and General Assembly to the North Carolina PTA, institutes of higher education, the 115 school districts, professional associations, and arts and cultural organizations across the state. Different entities have taken on different pieces of the work; however, shouldering most of the responsibility has been the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction (NCDPI), the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources (DNCR, which houses the North Carolina Arts Council and A+ Schools), and Arts North Carolina (our statewide advocacy organization), to wrangle the entire process and keep the goals and related action items moving forward.
When Americans for the Arts invited North Carolina to participate in SP3, the team saw an opportunity to continue building CAE across the state. The team’s application letter stated that the primary goal of SP3 was to realize full implementation of North Carolina’s CAE Plan.

**North Carolina’s Political / Education Landscape**

The NCDPI oversees the public school system in the state. Its leaders are the State Superintendent, an elected office, and the SBE, whose members are appointed by the governor. There are 115 school districts in the state, each with a local school board. Over 2,500 public and charter schools serve over 1.53 million students, a population that is growing both in number and in diversity.

In 2010, as part of an education reform effort to have fewer, clearer, and higher standards—driven by ACRE (the Accountability and Curriculum Reform Effort) and North Carolina’s Race to the Top plan—the state adopted new standards for all content areas. In that effort, North Carolina was one of the first states to adopt the Common
Core. The state moved quickly to put the standards in place, fully implementing in 2012–13. Three years later, the General Assembly voted to repeal and replace the Common Core. Currently, North Carolina has adopted new, revised standards for English language arts and mathematics, and North Carolina Essential Standards from the 2010 adoption remain in place for all other content areas.

The NCDPI and SBE have recognized arts education as part of a well-rounded education for North Carolina school children. Recently, as part of the development of and public feedback on Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) state plan, North Carolina has begun the process to incorporate arts education as part of the State Report Card, beginning in fall 2018.

From 2005 to 2017, the state superintendent of public instruction was Democrat June St. Clair Atkinson. In the most recent election, Republican Mark Johnson, a lawyer and political newcomer, defeated her.

One of the state’s greatest arts education assets is A+ Schools, a whole-school, arts-based educational initiative housed at the North Carolina Arts Council. In addition to serving a network of more than 50 schools statewide, A+ also collaborates with NCDPI, higher education, and other state partners to train teachers to integrate the arts into their classroom practice. The professional development that A+ Schools Fellows provide is an extraordinary resource for educators and administrators.

The elections of 2010 led to Republican control of both houses of the North Carolina General Assembly for the first time since 1896. In 2012, Republican Pat McCrory was elected governor.

And then there was the overwhelming distraction of House Bill 2 (HB2), annotated as “an act to provide for single-sex multiple occupancy bathroom and changing facilities in schools and public agencies and to create statewide consistency in regulation of employment and public accommodations.” Even though the law was commonly called “the Bathroom Bill” for its best-known provision requiring that visitors to schools and other government facilities use the bathroom of the gender on their birth certificates, it included several other controversial provisions as well. The law also prohibited local governments from enacting their own regulations that ban discrimination. Instead, it banned discrimination on the basis of “race, religion, color, national origin, or biological sex” at businesses and other “places of public accommodation,” but it did not include sexual orientation and gender identity as categories protected from discrimination.
Additionally, the law restricted local governments from regulating employment practices. Cities and counties were not able to require contractors to pay specific wages or offer certain worker benefits as a condition of bidding for government work. Local governments were not able to set their own minimum wage.

HB2 happened very quickly. On March 22, 2016, a request from three-fifths of the members of the State Senate and the House called the General Assembly into a special session for the following day. On March 23, the House passed HB2, with 82 in favor and 26 against and 11 excused absences. About three hours later, the Senate also passed the bill, with 32 in favor, 6 excused absences, and all 11 Democrats walking out in protest and not voting. That evening, Governor Pat McCrory signed the bill, taking a total of 11 hours and 10 minutes to become a law.

For the next year, politics in the state were caught up in the fallout from HB2. Protests, boycotts, public demonstrations and rallies, national media coverage, talk of repeal, and lines in the sand became the new normal. It was difficult to get members of state leadership to focus on much else. On March 30, 2017, newly elected Governor Roy Cooper signed into law a partial repeal.
Over three years, the team identified timely key strategies to advance CAE, taking into account the changing political environment.

**YEAR ONE**

**Messaging to Key Stakeholders**

- Identify stakeholder needs, motivations, and influences.
- Develop strategies for engaging and guiding stakeholders and increase communication with consistent messaging and multifaceted networking.
- Cultivate and nurture existing statewide partnerships (not take these relationships for granted).

During Year 1, the team focused on understanding the motivations and influences of its most significant stakeholders to be strategic in its advocacy work. The team aimed high, targeting the legislature, the SBE, and the state superintendent.
In January 2015, at the request of then–State Superintendent June Atkinson, the team arranged to make a presentation to the SBE about the ongoing work to advance CAE in the state. The presentation began with DNCR Secretary Susan Kluttz and Representative Becky Carney making comments about the benefits of a solid arts education for every student. Carney described the development of bipartisan support in the General Assembly for CAE and expressed the belief—which teachers in Mecklenburg County had conveyed to her when she was a county commissioner—that arts education relates directly to the creativity students would need to address the challenges of the 21st century. Secretary Kluttz explained that, in her 14 years as mayor of Salisbury, she learned that involvement in arts activities could help at-risk children and solve most problems in a city such as race relations, gangs, etc. Following these strong endorsements and testimonies, staff from the Arts Council and NCDPI presented a list of legislation, policy work, and programs that had advanced CAE in the state.

Later in January, the SP3 team held a meeting with the Arts Education Leadership Coalition (representatives from the discipline-specific arts education associations and professional and partner associations) to engage in this effort. The team also hired
a facilitator that spring to help draft key messages that might align with the current legislative agenda. Immediately following the facilitated session, SP3 invited three Democratic legislators who had been supportive of arts education policy to serve as a focus group and vet the messages. This valuable feedback helped inform the language for H138, the bill to create a high school graduation requirement, and produced the talking points for Arts Day in spring 2015.

Armed with the freshly considered H138, Representative Becky Carney was instrumental in its passing in the House by a very large margin. Unfortunately, the General Assembly left this bill sitting in Senate committee when it adjourned the session, which was the first of the two-year cycle. This meant the team would have one more chance to get the bill passed the following year. The focus shifted to a strategy to compel the Senate leadership to let the bill move to the floor for a vote.

The legislative session provided an arts education victory when A+ Schools received a state appropriation of $232,711 for FY2015–16 and $482,711 for FY2016–17—the first time in over a decade that funds had been dedicated to A+ in the state budget. A+ Schools used these additional resources to shore up the current network of schools and accelerate efforts to bring new schools into the network.

The team believes there were two primary reasons for the legislative success:

1. Arts North Carolina included A+ Schools in its legislative agenda for the first time and folded that message into the overall advocacy work of their volunteers and lobbyists; and

2. hundreds of teachers in A+ schools wrote personal letters to their representatives, with stories about the impact of the program on individual students.

A+ Schools remained in the spotlight as it hosted a conference in honor of its 20th anniversary August 3–5, 2015, in Durham. The opening night event, five keynote speakers, 30 concurrent sessions, and ample time for networking made for an engaging, interactive, and inspiring conference. The conference goals of celebrating, sharing innovative practice, thinking forward, and inspiring action connected all participants—over 350 attendees on opening night event, and 300 educators, artists, advocates, and funders from across the nation on next two days—to the vision of CAE.

Another important arts education gathering took place the following month. The inaugural ArtsR4Life conference, on September 9, 2015. [Click here for materials.] Sponsored by the NCDPI, in collaboration with statewide partners including...
A+ Schools, this was the first ARTSR4Life professional development conference for North Carolina K–12 arts educators in dance, music, theatre arts, and visual arts. Organizers also encouraged pre-service arts educators and faculty from institutes of higher education interested in K–12 arts education to attend.

This conference was and continues to be an opportunity for arts educators to develop personalized, multidisciplinary learning experiences and have cross-sector learning and collaboration around the four Rs:

**Rekindle** your artistic spirit by participating in hands-on arts experiences.

**Reflect** on the profession through deepening your understanding of the standards to support student learning and growth.

**Reconnect** with colleagues and professional organizations.

**Renew** your body and mind through expressive, contemplative, and rejuvenating experiences designed to promote your well-being.

ArtsR4Life supports North Carolina’s vision for CAE as part of a well-rounded education for all schoolchildren, with sessions and opportunities that address Arts Education, Arts Integration, and Arts Exposure.

Lastly, June Atkinson, longtime superintendent of public instruction, continued her support of CAE and the collaboration between her department and the Arts Council by funding a fourth year for a CAE staff position. Housed at the NCDPI, this position provides support with information, data collection, and analysis to A+ Schools and other statewide partners.

**YEAR TWO**

**Messaging to the Broader Constituency**

- Design awareness tools for CAE.

- Implement a strategic effort to compel the Senate to pass H138, establishing a graduation requirement for the arts.

In the second year of SP3, the team took the idea of messaging beyond its key stakeholders to a broader constituency. Since 2011, the staff at the NCDPI had done a good job of building awareness among arts teachers about the three interdependent components of CAE. However, the staff at the Arts Council and Arts North Carolina
had not been nearly as diligent in their messaging to their constituents. So the team decided to develop some basic awareness-building tools that all could use: a well-designed, one-page handout and an accompanying website.

Working with a Raleigh marketing firm, the team distilled the 14-page comprehensive arts education planning document (originally written by a task force as a legislative report) into a concise introduction to the CAE, why it matters, and what action steps are next.

With those tools in hand, the SP3 team scheduled presentations to several gatherings of its constituents including: an Arts Council board meeting, the biennial conference for local arts council executive directors, an AEC statewide gathering, trainings for pre-service teachers at universities, A+ Schools leadership meetings, and two regional meetings of the major arts groups that receive general operating support from the Arts Council.

During this awareness campaign, the Arts Council received an interesting phone call from the director of a newly constructed McGregor Performing Arts Center in rural Vance County. Arts Council staff had been aware of the arts center and the hopes for downtown revitalization it brought to small-town Henderson, NC; the team learned that the superintendent of Vance County Schools also had his eye on the arts center as a catalyst for new arts education opportunities for his students. The Vance County superintendent, a former chorus teacher named Anthony Jackson, had a vision for CAE in his district that included an increase in the number of art teachers, arts-integration training for classroom teachers, the development of an A+ school, and lots of arts experiences for students through community partners such as the new performing arts center. Vance County began to look like the perfect place to pilot a strategic-planning effort to bring a microcosm of CAE to a school district.

The team invited Jackson to be the keynote speaker at the second annual ArtsR4Life conference. The emphasis of the conference was CAE, and he spoke from the heart about how the arts, in school and out, had saved his life. Then he led a panel of several partners from Vance County in a discussion of the plans underway to develop CAE in the county school system.

In the Spring 2016, Arts North Carolina turned its focus to one last effort to move the high school graduation requirement bill (H138) out of Senate committee for a vote. Republican leadership from the Arts Council board of directors, along with leaders
from Arts North Carolina’s board, met with Phil Berger, Senate majority leader and arguably the most powerful man in the state legislature. Senator Berger expressed his belief that the bill represented a mandate that would undermine local decision-making and was not a priority. H138 expired in committee.

YEAR THREE

Responding to Change and Issues; Continuing the Work

- Continue the awareness campaign for CAE, including investment in the Vance County CAE pilot.
- Secure an expansion budget for the Arts Council that supports A+ Schools.
- Support efforts to amend the recent budget provision by the General Assembly that impacts funding for arts education.
- Ensure that the state’s ESSA plan includes CAE.

The third year with SP3 began with some significant changes in the state’s political leadership. In November, North Carolina elected a new governor, Democrat Roy Cooper, and subsequently a new secretary of the DNCR, which impacts the direction of the Arts Council. Perhaps the most surprising election result was Republican Mark Johnson as the new superintendent of public schools, replacing Democrat June Atkinson after 12 years.

One of the first events Johnson attended was a breakfast at the NCDPI with a bipartisan group of legislators, who received materials and information about North Carolina’s CAE model.

The team also faced a new, unexpected challenge in year three: a state budget provision to reduce class size with the potential (unintended) consequence of eliminating thousands of arts teacher positions across the state. The state provides teacher allotments in all grades and sets class-size limits in grades K–3 that allow enough flexibility for local school districts to fund teachers in the arts, health, physical education, world languages, and other special-area subjects that someone other than the classroom teacher usually teaches. There is no separate allotment for teachers of these special subjects, and local school districts fund them given the number of teachers allotted and the class-size limits in place. A special provision in
the 2016 state budget bill would have impeded the flexibility set out in the grade K–3 allotments for class-size requirements and teacher-student ratios. Without flexibility, districts lose the opportunity to hire teachers in special area subjects.

At the local level, some district leaders reported that they would not have available positions to employ the key teachers that instruct students in the arts, health, physical education, world languages, and other special-area subjects. Cumberland County (Fayetteville) estimated that they would need to hire over 100 or more special-area subject teachers with local funds because of this change. Buncombe County (Asheville) estimated that this change would cut around 50 special teacher positions.

In response, the Arts Education Leadership Coalition (a cadre of leaders comprising the North Carolina’s arts education professional associations and partner organizations, including Arts North Carolina) began to coordinate lobbying efforts to make legislators aware of the possible damage if the budget provision moved forward. North Carolina PTA leadership, the North Carolina School Boards Association and advocates for physical education also joined the communication effort. Legislators passed H13, to push back the extensive class-size reductions for one year and provide time to study how to fund teachers in subject areas like arts education, healthful living, and world languages, and to accomplish the goal of smaller class size.

Through a transparent and inclusive process, development of North Carolina’s ESSA plan has proceeded with high levels of interaction between state department of education leadership and the arts education community. Arts educators, supporters, and leadership from state arts education associations have spoken at numerous public information sessions. Supporters who were unable to attend meetings have also contributed to the development of the plan via an input link on the NCDPI website. In addition, the team invited arts organizations and other arts education leadership—such as the Arts Council and the North Carolina Museum of Art—to actively participate in stakeholders’ meetings that the NCDPI organized.

The first draft of the North Carolina Plan was posted in September 2016, and the second draft in December 2016. The third draft is now available for public review and feedback. As a result of stakeholder feedback during the ESSA state plan development process, North Carolina is working toward including arts education data on the state report card for each school, beginning in fall 2018. Which exact data sets the report card will include is still being determined, but the inclusion of arts education will help to ensure that every school district has information about arts education access and participation. The inclusion of this information will provide
transparency to parents, students, and communities on status of arts education as part of a well-rounded education to the state’s schoolchildren.

A+ Schools continues to expand its scope of services and leadership to provide arts-integration training to teachers and administrators outside of the network of A+ schools. Once again, A+ Schools held a week-long arts-integration seminar at the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching (NCCAT) [Appendix, Attachment 1] as well as professional development in conjunction with the NCDPI in regional trainings. Another example of the reach of A+ Schools is a STEAM-based integration training for teachers in the eastern part of the state. This training uses the Vollis Simpson Whirligig Park as a focal point for learning about the arts, science, engineering, and local history. Again, A+ Schools is able to model and demonstrate comprehensive arts education in practice as well as talk about its importance.

Governor Cooper’s first budget in Spring 2017 earmarked A+ Schools to receive $450,000 in recurring funds. This endorsement was due to the strong case that the Arts Council made to the new Secretary of the DNCR about the value of A+ Schools and the agency’s collaborative work with the NCDPI. Unfortunately, the General Assembly did not put recurring funding in the state budget for the 2017–18 cycle.

**Major Achievements During SP3**

- Growing awareness of CAE model and adoption of that language across different constituency groups (example: Vance County School District is now using the team’s CAE language within its own materials).
- Growth of A+ Schools in both fiscal resources and reach.
- Use of CAE as a framework to illustrate statewide initiatives and efforts of state government agencies and others.
- Increasing collaboration and shared ownership between arts educators, non-arts educators, statewide arts organizations, and state agencies (arts and non-arts stakeholders, to break down silos and build understanding that a united effort is more effective.
- Influencing the legislature to take corrective action when arts teacher positions are threatened.
- Understanding that long-term advocacy is a series of short-term plans and an investment in the institutional relationships.
LESSONS FOR OTHER STATES

1 It’s All About Relationships
And You Can’t Take Those For Granted

For many years, the Arts Council and the NCDPI have collaborated on various projects, and a working relationship between two people made those collaborations possible: the Arts in Education director at the Arts Council and the NCDPI arts consultant. While a personal connection can be a significant asset, it can also be a source of vulnerability given that the dynamic can change if one person leaves. The team sought to strengthen these relationships in two ways: first, by creating a “deeper bench” in its collaborative efforts by involving several key staff members from each of partner agency in the work. This has helped the relationships to be institutional as well as personal.

Second, the team developed a practice within the SP3 group to nurture those relationships and not take them for granted. It is a cultural norm within the group to pat ourselves on the collective back for the gains that members accomplish together. Team members express gratitude when their fellow members make an effort. The team divides up the difficult tasks, as well as the rewarding ones, so all members get to experience both. The team also makes time to celebrate it victories.
2 The Dream Team Includes Partners Who Can Carry the Baton When They Need To

This may sound obvious, but state government employees can play a limited role in advocacy. That said, they are often some of the most knowledgeable and well-connected leaders in arts education. The most effective arts education advocacy team needs the expertise of government employees and other statewide leaders to create a balanced, thoughtful agenda and to have the capacity and ability to carry that work forward. There are many times when SP3 team members who work for the NCDPI and the Arts Council had to step back and let Arts North Carolina take action.

3 In Advocacy, Agility is Key

The software industry adopted a method of work called “Agility Management” that has great application to the world of advocacy today. The industry sought to answer a fundamental question: When you work in an environment that is constantly changing, how do you plan? Arts education advocates in North Carolina had the same question...
when approaching the CAE planning. A traditional logical model does not work if the sands keep shifting and it is hard to find firm ground.

Agility Management theory suggests that plans need to be short-term, six months at the most, and teams need to revisit them often so they can make adjustments in real time. Working this way shifts the emphasis from long-term plans, designed to produce outcomes, to short-term plans that move the effort in the right direction. Agility also requires strong communication and trust between the team members. While one does not always know what crisis or opportunity might present itself, the North Carolina team could strategically develop its communication pathways and build trust in one another, so it is as nimble and effective as possible in any circumstance.

An example of this came in 2012, when Representative Becky Carney discovered that the House had introduced a bill to increase the requirements for elementary pre-service teachers within the University of North Carolina system. The bill (later S724), included several new areas of knowledge that pre-service teachers would need to graduate and become certified. Because Representative Carney had been involved in arts education advocacy for several years, she recognized the opportunity to amend the bill, adding arts integration to the new list of requirements. The bill passed into law (G.S.115-C-296), and now university departments of education are reworking the course load for elementary pre-service educators to include meaningful instruction on arts integration classroom practice.

4 Language Matters, And Getting it Right For So Many Audiences is Difficult

Arts education advocacy is a large tent. Many different stakeholders come together to work towards common goals: teachers and administrators, arts organizations and artists, state arts council staff, elected officials, parents, business people, etc. One of the most challenging aspects of this work is making sure that the language describing goals and building awareness is clear, inspiring, and without baggage.
As stated above, the North Carolina team needed to create a printed piece and a companion website to provide a concise introduction to the idea of CAE, why it matters, and what action steps to take. Even with the help of a professional marketing firm, this proved to be a huge challenge—much harder than any of the team members thought it would be—to craft language that would effectively speak to all the various stakeholders. Educators and administrators are accustomed to a certain kind of writing that the general public does not find meaningful or may not understand. Arts teachers may understandably be suspicious about how any change will affect their position and resources, so they need reassurances in a description of CAE that might not be meaningful to other reader. Legislators and parents think the word “art” means visual art, so the language also had to address these kinds of misperceptions. What is more, the many SP3 partners needed to approve any documents given that they would be using them with their individual constituencies.

**Overall Benefits of North Carolina’s Involvement in SP3**

As with all new initiatives, it was important for the North Carolina team to find the balance between the costs of participating in SP3 (time, primarily) and the benefits. Overall, the greatest value was that SP3 gave the team a mandate to come together and focus on the work many had started years before with the Arts Education Task Force. The team was able to achieve results more quickly and purposefully than it would have without the SP3 opportunity.

Additionally, SP3 provided many opportunities to talk and write about the state’s arts advocacy work in a concise manner. That activity always has merit. The shared goals and travel opportunities strengthened relationships within the team, and its members developed new national contacts by spending time with teams from other states.
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