STATE POLICY PILOT PROGRAM

A CASE STUDY FROM

Wyoming
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
- 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
Prior to Wyoming’s involvement in the State Policy Pilot Program (SP3), a recent and successful advocacy effort occurred when a lobbyist from the state’s arts advocacy organization Wyoming Arts Alliance (WyAA) worked with Wyoming legislators to introduce an amendment to the Hathaway Scholarship, which set up a structure for advocacy in the state as foundation for the work of SP3.

In 2005, state lawmakers established the Hathaway Scholarship with a $400 million permanent endowment to fund scholarships for qualified Wyoming high school graduates to attend the University of Wyoming or any of the state’s seven community colleges.

The proposed legislation would allow fine and performing arts and/or career technical education credits as options to fulfill requirements for the top two levels of the Hathaway Scholarship. The WyAA and their associates at the Wyoming Music Educators Association, the Wyoming Secondary Visuals Arts Educators, The Wyoming Theater Educators, and the Wyoming Business Alliance activated their memberships to contact legislators throughout the entire legislative session to ask for their support of the
amendment. The WyAA's ability to create a strong coalition and, under its lobbyist's leadership, to monitor and provide a consistent and unified message to the legislators lead to the successful passage of the fine and performing arts criteria in the Hathaway.

**Origin for Initiating Project**

Wyoming was part of the Statewide Arts Education Assessment (SAEA), a four-state report on the status of arts education for the 2009–10 school year, which also included the state arts agencies in Idaho, Montana, and Utah. Unfortunately for Wyoming, there was little follow-up after the release of SAEA, and traction for all arts education efforts was largely lost. This lead to the looming question of the present: Where does Wyoming stand with arts education now? Wyoming’s SP3 team began as a partnership between the WyAA, the Wyoming Department of Education (WDE), and the Wyoming Arts Council (WAC), with the potential to expand to eventually include other organizations. The Wyoming team had a twofold plan: to design and implement a statewide data collection project and to follow that with a strategic action plan in strengthening arts education in Wyoming.
TIMELINE OF KEY EVENTS

2014  
**AUGUST**
- Acceptance to project
- Vacancy in WDE Fine & Performing Arts Standards Consultant position

**NOVEMBER**
- SP3 Google group created
- Change in WDE leadership with new Superintendent
- Cohort gathering

**DECEMBER**
- The WyAA receives VoterVoice scholarship

2015  
**MARCH**
- Arts Education Partnership symposium/SP3 cohort meeting

**APRIL**
- Vacancy in WDE Fine & Performing Arts Standards Consultant position

**MAY**
- Change in WAC Arts Education Specialist position

**JUNE**
- WDE position hired

**JULY**
- Americans for the Arts initiates [Gap Analysis](#) study
- SP3 survey created
- Americans for the Arts contracts Jonathan Katz for SP3 story project

**OCTOBER**
- SP3 cohort meeting
- Vacancy in WyAA staff

**DECEMBER**
- ESSA signed into law

2015  
**JUNE**
- WAC staff hired

**SEPTEMBER**
- SP3 cohort meeting

**OCTOBER**
- WyAA staff hired

2017  
**JANUARY**
- Vacancy in WDE Fine & Performing Arts Consultant position

**FEBRUARY**
- First convening of Arts Education working group

**APRIL**
- WDE staff hired
Statement of Primary Goals

The Wyoming team’s plan focused on data collection, identifying stakeholders, and policy recommendations. Through a cross-agency collaboration, the WAC and the WDE would collect quantitative and qualitative data, by surveying state arts educators and arts education service providers. The team would then create a task force and advisory board, and guide its work by the data it collected. The final step would be to form policy around the findings to strengthen arts education statewide, as well as to produce a strong and sustainable arts education network. The WyAA’s partnership role included building on the history of the Hathaway success and mobilizing resources and structures already in place. Below are the strategies and primary goals the team identified as it entered the first year of SP3.

STRATEGY 1

Partner With the WDE on Data Collection Efforts

- Data collection: understand who teaches which arts disciplines, how often during the school day, and to whom.
- Report out data to constituents via toolkit and provide talking points on websites, social media, and in-person meetings.
- Use information to inform Arts Education Task Force.
- Provide strong, arts-specific professional development for administrators, teachers, and professional arts organizations.
- Work to create a full-time fine and performing arts position at WDE (current position dedicates less than half time to fine and performing arts)
STRATEGY 2

Informal Survey of Arts Organizations With WyAA’s VoterVoice

- Use the “Arts Education for America’s Students: A Shared Endeavor” plan to understand which communities are successfully collaborating in providing high quality arts education.
- Use Survey Monkey tools to poll constituents.
- Focus on communities that do not fit in the model, and provide resources.
- Implement use of VoterVoice to develop and grow arts champions in all 23 counties.
- Develop policy for moving arts education forward in Wyoming, based on the data from the survey.
STRATEGY 3

Convening of Stakeholders, Task Force Creation

- Contingent upon legislative funding, hold a statewide summit on the arts education (denied during 2015 session).

- Identify stakeholders, change leaders, educators, arts organizations, and key businesses.

- Create an advisory panel.

- Create an arts education task force or coalition with sustainability in mind.

- Create shared goals and vision for equal access to arts education for all Wyoming students through an activated task force.
During Wyoming’s three years of involvement in SP3, several changes took place in the political and education environment for state arts education policy and advocacy. First, in 2014, Jillian Balow was elected as state superintendent of public instruction; she shifted focus to career and technical education, military support, and rural education. Also, although the English/Language Arts and Math Common Core State Standards were adopted in 2012, many school districts were working on breaking down the standards with teams of teachers well into 2014–15. In addition, over the past three years, the WDE offered professional development focused around Professional Learning Communities (PLC). Since 2015, fourteen districts have hosted trainings, reaching over 2,600 educators. The PLC model, encouraging collaboration and data-driven discussions, holds great opportunity for practice-based professional development as well as district-wide and statewide collaborations.
One of the most significant changes over the 3-year period of SP3 was the reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), also known as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), which President Barack Obama signed into law on December 10, 2015. Wyoming’s ESSA implementation plan has led to many changes, including updates to the state graduation requirements, a shift in teacher evaluation systems from a requirement that educators be “highly qualified” to “highly effective,” and the adoption of a new statewide assessment: **WY-TOPP**—an acronym (for Wyoming Test of Proficiency and Progress) a Cheyenne 6th-grade student developed. This new assessment, introduced during the 2017–18 school year, replaces the previous assessment in grades 3–8 and ACT-Aspire in grades 9–10. Students in grade 11 will continue to take the ACT. In the Wyoming ESSA implementation plan, the new availability of Title IV funding for afterschool and alternative educational programming holds opportunities for support for fine and performing arts and STEAM programming—listed as focus areas for support. There were not any significant changes made to the arts standards, which were last revised in 2013, and are not be up for review again until 2019–20.
Building a Core Leadership Team for Advocacy

Going into the first year of the pilot program, the Wyoming team laid the foundations for strong relationships and collaboration. Establishing the groundwork for contact and engagement with Wyoming’s State Superintendent of Public Instruction through other arts-focused events and other opportunities helped tremendously when making the initial “ask” to support this project.

During the first year, the Wyoming team met regularly and had scheduled meetings at the WDE to discuss data collection. In May of 2015, both the WAC and WDE positions went vacant. While the WDE filled its position soon after, the WAC position remained unfilled for over a year. The WyAA’s position also became vacant in October of 2015 and remained unfilled until October 2016. These position changes from all three core leadership organizations resulted in a stall in the second year of Wyoming’s SP3 work.

When the WAC position was filled, SP3 work continued, but due to time constraints, there was a need to revise the original strategies the Wyoming leadership team set in 2014. After lengthy discussion, it was decided that the formation of a working group,
rather than a task force, was an important solution to move Wyoming’s work forward during Year 3.

During the first convening of the working group, 21 representatives from diverse arts disciplines and programming levels attended, including the WyAA’s previous executive director and the prior WAC Arts Education Specialist—both part of Wyoming’s original SP3 leadership team. Unfortunately, the WDE’s position again fell vacant a month prior to the meeting. Although the original core leadership team structure has not remained intact over the course of three years, the formation of this working group has proven to set a different type of leadership structure, encouraging the continuity of work and momentum during difficult staffing times.

Attracting Allies and Champions, Especially from Political and Educational Leaders

The Wyoming team’s initial strategy for attracting allies and champions focused on developing a task force or coalition: identifying stakeholders, change leaders, educators, arts organizations, and key businesses to be involved in the group. As cited above, elections in 2014 brought a new state superintendent to office. Soon after, the core leadership team began to lay the groundwork for contact and engagement, inviting her to attend and speak during arts-related events. Establishing this contact early was tremendously helpful, and Superintendent Balow has proven to be an ally for the arts in education on numerous occasions—the most recent being her support for the arts in STEM for The Roadmap to STEM Conference, August 2-4, 2017 [Appendix, Attachment 1].

At the beginning of Year 3, due to staffing vacancies and a stall in momentum during year two, the strategy for attracting allies and champions shifted slightly, as efforts focused on the development of a working group. This group consisted of educational leaders from various arts discipline areas (i.e. visual arts, music, theatre, dance, foreign language), independent artists, community arts programming, after-school arts programming, museums, university and college representatives, and a governor-appointed university board trustee—as well as several representatives from the WyAA.

As the working group continues to evolve, its work will begin to shift towards that of a coalition or task force, prompting the need to invite political leaders and additional educational leaders (such as superintendents, administrators, and representatives from parent organizations and teacher associations) to the table.
Crafting Messages and Implementing a Communication Strategy

Around the time Wyoming’s involvement in SP3 began, the WyAA was denied additional grant funding to expand its website to include functionality issues such as database management, e-newsletters, social media integration, and surveys. As a result, the WyAA did not have the capacity to enhance member and constituent services and would have to continue to use multiple systems to communicate across a vast geographic landscape. As a nonprofit with limited funding, the WyAA had a need to create outreach campaigns that leveraged all digital channels to engage constituents. Once awarded a VoterVoice scholarship through SP3, the WyAA planned to send relevant and engaging emails that made an impact, gathered insights, and published highly targeted content. VoterVoice solved many of the problems the WyAA was hoping to address with its website redesign.

The WyAA was hopeful that VoterVoice would have long-term outcomes for the organization, which included enhancing communication and growing membership. Growing WyAA membership was a key piece to the organization’s sustainability plan. A growing member base would help strengthen the organizational capacity of the WyAA and the ability to continue the use of VoterVoice. From an election education e-newsletter, the WyAA determined that Wyomingites want to be engaged: find their legislators, read arts information about their legislators, and participate in the advocacy process. Though it had small numbers, the WyAA felt this was a positive first step for active engagement and a growing constituency base.

During the first year of the pilot project, the WyAA used VoterVoice’s CRM platform to connect and create relationships with donors, members, and legislators. WyAA desired to understand these groups better by capturing their preferences and interactions, and to identify new opportunities by analyzing their histories. VoterVoice replaced the multiple platforms the WyAA was using, such as: MailChimp, SurveyMonkey, and Constant Contact.

The WyAA also used VoterVoice to track visitors to the Action Center, as well as interactions such as shares and opens. They used the VoterVoice reporting tools to gauge effectiveness of campaigns. The WyAA looked at “heat maps” to determine counties in need of more arts-advocacy champions.

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1. The Action Center is a tab on the WyAA’s website. It lists recent advocacy campaigns (national, state, and local). The campaigns were generated in Voter Voice to populate the website (via a plug in) and WyAA was able to collect data on the opens/shares using Voter Voice software.)

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The WyAA used VoterVoice to track elected officials opinions on the arts and arts education. The notes section tracked any meetings individuals attended, notes of the conversations, action items, etc. The WyAA also used VoterVoice to send targeted messaging to elected officials, such as statements to protect the arts, invitations to attend art events, and letters of appreciation for attending Arts Advocacy Day.

Unfortunately, when the WyAA director left in October 2015, there was no dedicated staff available to use and maintain VoterVoice, so active use of this tool stopped soon after. When the WyAA was actively using VoterVoice, however, it proved to be a useful tool, making information more easily accessible regarding elected officials, and federal and state arts issues.

Another important communication strategy of the WyAA, WAC, and the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance with the informal survey was the use of the WAC directory and listservs. This ever-growing resource will continue to prove useful as the working group sends out a new survey and information prior to the November 2016 summit.

*Developing the Knowledge Base for Advocacy: Context Information, Arts Education Status, Policy Framing*

In order to gain a deeper understanding of arts education on a statewide level, the SP3 leadership team planned to work with the WDE for formal data collection and with the Wyoming Afterschool Alliance, the WyAA, and WAC in the creation and administration of an informal survey. The survey would also help identify the communities that were not providing adequate arts programming. The team would then use the data collected from the WDE, as well as the informal survey, to inform the advocacy work of the task force moving forward.

Due to staffing changes during the first year and into the second, the team did not follow up on the execution of the informal survey after initially sending it out, so it did not draw as many participants as it could have. Once the WAC hired a new staff member who could finally collect and review the data, it became clear that some of it was no longer as relevant, given that new issues had arisen such as state budget cuts, ESSA, etc. The WDE data indicated the number of students with access
to arts programming and the number of schools offering specific arts-discipline areas. However, due to a lack of testing in the fine and performing arts—and a lack of consistent course coding in the state—there was no data on the specific types of arts courses available and the number of students enrolled in arts courses. During its first convening in Year 3, the working group reviewed this data and decided to develop a new survey, with members agreeing to assist with distribution to arts education constituents around the state. The data collected from this survey, as well the knowledge base the group built through its own development, will help inform its advocacy work moving forward.

**Establishing an Advocacy Infrastructure (e.g., Regional Teams and VoterVoice)**

According to the Wyoming SP3 team’s initial plan—after putting together a data picture of arts education statewide—it would hold an arts education summit and form a task force and advisory panel. The task force would meet to create a shared vision and goals for equal access to arts education for all Wyoming students, based on the data from both the WDE and an informal survey. The task force would then use VoterVoice to build capacity and identify arts education champions in the school districts, forming regional teams.

As mentioned in the previous section, during the first year the SP3 leadership team met with the WDE’s data team and developed a survey to send to various arts education constituents around the state. Unfortunately, the WAC staff member spearheading Wyoming’s SP3 involvement left her position prior to receiving the data results from the WDE, and soon after the survey was initially sent out. Her position remained vacant for a little over a year, resulting in little to no follow-up on the survey and WDE data [Appendix, Attachment 2]. In addition, the 2015 legislative session denied the funding request for a statewide summit on arts education.

When the WAC filled its position in June 2016, Wyoming’s involvement in SP3 became active once more. With less than one year remaining in the pilot program, the leadership team revised its plan to focus on creating a working group, rather than a task force, with the goal of eventually transitioning the group into a task force or coalition. During the initial convening [Appendix, Attachment 3], the working group reviewed data from the survey and decided that a subset of working group members would revise the
original survey questions. In an effort to ensure that the survey would reach all arts discipline areas, working group members would then help distribute the survey to arts constituents within their regions and networks.

In lieu of bringing the summit request again to the 2018 legislative session, during a time of economic downturn, the working group decided to hold its second meeting in conjunction with the WAC’s 50th Anniversary Summit on November 2-4, 2017, in Lander. During this summit, the working group plans to hold a special meeting and lead a discussion on creating a shared vision for the future of arts education in Wyoming. Working group members will also discuss the continued growth and need for additional group members, to transition the working group to a coalition or task force.

**Decision-Making About Policy Strategies, Tracking Accomplishments, and Course Corrections**

The staff turnover throughout the three years of Wyoming’s involvement in SP3 posed unique challenges to tracking accomplishments and project changes over time. With the exception of the first nine months of the project, most of the decision-making regarding the direction of the project involved only one or two leadership team members. During the third year—in an effort to keep the work moving forward after a yearlong stall—the staff of the WAC made many of the organizational decisions. Thankfully, team members had saved many of the initial SP3 documents and notes to a shared drive, and two (of the original three) leadership team members, though in new positions, were still available to provide background information to new staff members.

For the new WAC staff member coming into year 3 of the program, the SP3 cohort meetings and connecting with teams from the other states proved to be invaluable in setting the course moving forward. These meetings also drew the new staff member into the SP3 cohort’s ESSA conversations. Through her discussions with other states, she was able to become actively involved in Wyoming’s ESSA Implementation Plan by presenting to the WDE’s ESSA task force, attending public comment forums, and serving on the revision committee. Her involvement with the state’s ESSA plan, and the pressing need for action during this time, prompted the addition of ESSA-related discussions to the working group agenda and the WAC’s plans for a summit workshop.
Despite the hurdles regarding staff turnover over the past three years, one significant outcome from Wyoming’s involvement in SP3 is recognizing the importance of shared leadership. When the new WAC staff member came on board in June 2016—having no prior knowledge of SP3 or Wyoming’s progress towards meeting its goals—the notes saved to a shared drive as well as conversations with the WAC director and the new WDE staff member were of tremendous value in providing clarity and direction. Although the original WyAA and WAC leadership team members were no longer actively involved, they were willing to meet with the new WAC staff member to answer questions and provide support. They then became active working group members, remaining involved in a different capacity. To this end, when seeking resilience in the face of staff turnover and other changes, it became evident that the continuity of relationships was more vital than a focus on job titles.
In convening the working group—of 21 representatives from diverse arts discipline areas and programming levels—the team created another form of shared leadership. During the first convening and in meetings that followed, group members have identified action items and begun taking on more leadership roles, for the sake of long-term sustainability [Appendix, Attachment 4]. During the upcoming WAC 50th Anniversary Summit, working group members will lead arts education workshops and facilitate a statewide meeting to develop a shared vision for arts education in the state of Wyoming over the next ten years.
2 Bringing in an Outside Consultant and Facilitator

Another significant resource that greatly assisted the team in picking up project momentum again in year 3 was bringing in an outside consultant and facilitator, Dawn M. Ellis & Associates (DME). DME began working with the new WAC arts education specialist in late January 2017. Since, at the time, the WDE fine and performing arts standards position had once again fallen vacant, having someone knowledgeable in planning meetings who could move forward the group’s proved to be invaluable as the team made preparations for the first convening of the working group. DME also provided post-convening support in synthesizing information, planning the continued work, and facilitating conference calls in preparation for the November Summit. Because DME had initial discussions with the original Wyoming leadership team during the first year of SP3, her active involvement in the final year provided additional consistency in the work and ideas from the first year to the third.

3 Communication and Face-to-Face Meetings

Although email and phone communications proved to be effective when planning the first convening of the working group members, the power of face-to-face meetings became evident the moment the meeting was called to order. In a rural state with lower populations, individuals are often willing to travel longer distances to meet in person, share ideas, and influence change. Much of the post-convening feedback the team received indicated these sentiments and the desire to meet again in person.

A few examples include:

- “[My biggest takeaway was the need for] continuing the conversation and bringing stakeholders to the table.”
- “I do believe that meeting in person is the ideal situation as it allows for multiple modes of communication.”
- “Having everyone at the table is important. I prefer live meetings, because I believe the dialogue is more honest.”

Given how feelings of isolation and disconnect can influence individuals, the ability to come together in person for discussions was incredibly valuable in moving work forward and creating change.
Another takeaway from the first convening of the working group was the power of bringing together voices from all arts-discipline areas for discussions about the importance of the arts in education. This was the first such conversation to include representatives from all arts-discipline areas in the state of Wyoming.

During the meeting, representatives of dance and theatre education shared ways in which they were currently underrepresented in the state. In addition, dance educators expressed a need for a state dance education organization to facilitate a greater connection among them. During one of the smaller group working sessions, members developed a “We Believe” statement [Appendix, Attachment 5] on importance of coming together with one voice as the “Wyoming Fine and Performing Arts: Dance, Music, Theatre, and Visual Art.”

After the convening, the team charged representatives from each of the arts education organizations with bringing the “We Believe” statement back to their organization to gain support. In the post-convening feedback, many group members shared their reflections and desire to continue meeting as “one voice.”

Comments regarding their most valuable takeaways include:

• “That we are stronger together than apart, and we need to work harder to unite to fight for arts.”
• “The commonalities of all Fine art subjects.”
• “Being in conversation across content areas, both in terms of educators and artists.”
• “Learning more about the needs of all arts discipline areas in the state[,] such as dance and theatre being so underserved.”
• “That all of the arts education organizations need to communicate with each other on a regular basis. Coupled with other organizations, we can accomplish great things for our students and communities.”

The initial opportunity for unified conversation between discipline areas will provide a strong foundation for future conversations and advocacy work, including the “Shared Vision” discussion planned for the November Summit.
5 Identifying Other Areas of Collaboration With Partners

Toward the end of the February 2017 convening of the working group, smaller teams identified specific items and projects they would be taking action on. These included: encouraging arts education organizations to support the “We Believe” statement; creating an arts education toolkit; making presentations about national and state standards, and annotating where state benchmarks fall within national standards; revising and sending out a new arts education survey based on identified needs for data; and developing a marketing plan centered around growing arts education in Wyoming.

After the conclusion of the first convening, the WAC staff member met with the DME to synthesize the discussions and information that came from the meeting. The team decided that, while the action items and projects it had identified were important, several high-priority areas had risen during the meeting that the team needed to act on more quickly.

Also, with Wyoming’s ESSA Implementation Plan in the works, one of the pressing needs, aligning with an arts education toolkit, was an ESSA Implementation resource for teachers, parents, and community members. WAC staff sent email correspondence to the group, asking for volunteers to put together the ESSA Implementation Toolkit [Appendix, Attachment 6]. The request included volunteers to act as: resource/information gatherers, parent outreach coordinators, school board outreach coordinators, teacher outreach coordinators, community outreach coordinators, and testers. Five volunteers emerged from the working group, gathering data and identifying contacts to move this work forward. The WAC staff member synthesized the information, putting together the rough draft for the testers and then graphic design. The ESSA Implementation Toolkit, both printed and electronic, was sent out to school districts and communities in early August 2017. This timing aligned with the arrival of the state implementation plan to school districts.
As indicated above, the practice of convening a group of stakeholders such as our working group members has proven to be an invaluable resource in identifying and maintaining collaborative partnerships.

For states wishing to create a similar group, some contributing factors to the working group’s successful collaborative efforts included:

- An identified coordinator to organize meetings and maintain clear and consistent communication before and after meetings
- Sharing leadership roles throughout the group’s membership
- Providing background information to inform group members prior to meetings
- Prioritizing efforts and establishing specific action items to motivate group work
- Establishing a variety of opportunities for group communication and collaboration (i.e. In-person meetings, conference calls, facebook group, email communications)

### 6 Data Collection

As the “Key Advocacy Strategies” section explains (above), staff turnover also impacted the data collection strategies, particularly the execution and analysis of the informal survey. The February 2016 working-group convening addressed the results of the informal survey [Appendix, Attachment 7], and included a discussion regarding the effectiveness of the survey and the data needed to move the work forward. Acknowledging that the state’s arts education needs have shifted—as the state faces budget issues and the implementation of ESSA (among other changes)—members expressed a desire to revise and resend the survey, using connections within their organizations to widen its reach. The first survey attempt made clear that follow-up and the ability to analyze the results in a timely manner will result in a higher number of participants and more relevant data.
7 The Importance of Being Adaptive

Despite the numerous changes over the past three years, in many ways the initial goals that the team set regarding Wyoming’s SP3 plan have been or will be achieved. The significant difference is the order in which the plans have come to fruition—a change that was necessary due to lack of time. While the team altered its plans to form a task force and advisory board and formed a working group instead, recent conversations regarding sustainability and shared leadership have centered around the need for a different group to take on advocacy work, such as a coalition or task force.

A component of the Wyoming SP3 team’s original third strategy, convening a statewide arts education summit (its funding denied in the 2015 legislative session), will also be different than what the team originally anticipated. The WAC 50th Anniversary Summit offers the perfect opportunity to host a statewide gathering of arts educators. Leading up to the summit, working-group members have identified a need to collect data that will help develop a shared vision for arts education in Wyoming over the next ten years. Working-group members will meet during the summit to analyze the data and develop that shared vision. In line with one of the goals from the February convening, working-group members will then develop a marketing plan for this shared vision. [Appendix, Attachment 8]

The Wyoming SP3 team learned a great deal about the importance of adaptability throughout this process. Based on experiences outlined above, we would encourage any state team engaging in similar long-term projects to practice flexibility throughout the process. While it is important to keep the large, overarching goals in mind, it is equally important to leave room for inevitable changes (legislative, staffing, etc.) that will occur when working over a longer period of time. Practicing adaptability does not mean taking steps backwards whenever there is an unexpected change, but rather embracing the change as a catalyst for keeping the momentum moving forward.
Learning from Other States

Involvement in SP3 provided many great opportunities to network and learn from other states. While in the developmental stages of Wyoming’s SP3 plan, the leadership team looked to the work of Alabama, Maryland, and Georgia in creating and organizing a task force, as well as to data-survey examples from Colorado, Arizona, California [createCA], Michigan, Georgia, New Jersey, and Montana.

The ability to connect with other states became particularly useful during Year 3, as the new WAC staff member was working to resume Wyoming’s SP3 involvement. During the fall 2016 SP3 cohort meeting, the WAC staff member was able to connect with the other states involved in the project; she gained suggestions for improved data collection from the New Jersey team, as well as encouraging ideas and new opportunities from many of the other states.

Regarding the arts and Wyoming’s ESSA Implementation Plan, connecting with the New Jersey and California teams during the spring 2017 SP3 cohort meeting provided many new ideas for approaching the ESSA planning committee—particularly as the arts relate to Title I and Title IV funding. New Jersey was able to provide a wealth of examples regarding work to include the arts in their state plan. California had also recently developed a short, animated film clip about Title I and the arts that was helpful to share with working-group members and other constituents around the state.

When planning and organizing the first working-group convening, phone conversations with SP3 team representatives from Oklahoma and Michigan proved to be helpful. Both states had worked through the process of building a coalition and convening statewide stakeholders, and they were supportive in providing suggestions for meeting agendas, formatting a working group, and creating a structure for the working group’s sustainability.