Navigating to Policy Success: The Findings, Outcomes, and Response to SP3: Jeff M. Poulin (1 of 4)

Jeff Poulin: Good morning. My name is Jeff Poulin. I'm the Arts Education Program Manager at Americans for the Arts, one of the three-member team that work on the State Policy Pilot Program. I would like to invite my two panelists, Jeremy Anderson from the Education Commission of the States, and Pam Paulson representing The College Board, to please join me up at the table this morning. The next two sessions will be set up in such a fashion that both myself and my colleague, Elisabeth Dorman, will be presenting some of the large trends that Narric talked about, from the findings of the State Policy Pilot Program, one in a set of policy development trends and the other around advocacy infrastructure. This first panel will be called Navigating to Policy Success, the Findings, Outcomes, and Responses to the State Policy Pilot Program. I'll begin by sharing those big trends with you and some examples from the case studies, which were made available online this morning at Americans for the Arts dot org, slash SP3. And then, I'll invite my panelists to come give a short presentation about themselves, their work, and the larger context in which the State Policy Pilot Program operated in and continues to operate in moving forward, and then, we'll have a conversation about some of those trends and what we anticipate for the future. That said, I'll go ahead and get started, and again, thank you for the panelists for joining me this morning. The SP3 findings, after working with the states, we noted through their various case studies, from our external evaluators at RMC Research, as well as our internal team, that there were five policy development trends that helped to advance arts education in the pilot, the ten pilot states within the program. Specific to policy development, we were looking at sustaining appropriations for statewide initiatives, revising K-12 arts education standards, implementing the arts provisions in ESSA, enabling a pathway for Title I policy, and building infrastructure for stakeholder engagement. To begin, let's talk about sustaining appropriations for statewide initiatives. Largely, policies were offered in concert with appropriations for large-scale statewide initiatives that we've seen developed in many states, over the course of the last decade or so. Many states have earmarked funds for statewide initiatives that are often housed at their state departments of education or state arts agencies, and these initiatives do stand the test of time and have a longevity to them, through these statewide appropriations that are tied to specific advocacy efforts. One example that I'll give, and I'll highlight the state of North Carolina, which has its signature A-Plus Schools Program. We do have representatives in the audience today from that program, and that lives at the North Carolina Arts Council. This initiative not only provides a beacon of how arts education can happen throughout their state, particularly in rural and low income communities, but also, how it is able to foster relationships within higher education, provide teacher professional development, and be a resource for school leaders and educators, in particular. We've seen another number of initiatives in other states replicating the A-Plus model, as well as statewide initiatives from the Federal Turnaround Arts Program that now lives at the Kennedy Center. The second big trend is around revising K-12 arts education standards. We saw policies implemented that were supportive of the adoption of new K-12 arts education standards, following the launch of the 2014 National Core Arts standards model from the National Coalition for Core Arts standards. The last time that states overwhelmingly updated their standards in arts learning was following the release of the 1994 standards, which was 20 years prior to the update from the National Coalition for Core Arts standards, and what we saw was sweeping legislation from states, authorizing the out of cycle adoption of standards and the updating of standards. As of today, I'm really happy to announce that there are 25 states that have revised their standards, frameworks, or competencies, and there are 12 in process. We anticipate some
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45 states to have adopted new standards by 2019. The example that I will give for revising K-12 arts standards is the state of Arkansas. Team Arkansas identified this as one of their key initiatives, from the very beginning, and though they changed many of their projects over the course of the three years, this one remained consistent and was realized through professional development offered from the Arkansas Department of Education, in conjunction with numerous partners, and has revolutionized the way that teachers are teaching and students are learning in the state of Arkansas. Third, I want to discuss the implementation of the arts provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act. Policies were developed in states pursuant to the guidance that was released from the US Department of Education, following the adoption of the Every Student Succeeds Act in 2015. A number of these strategies took advantage of the arts-friendly opportunities. There were about a dozen of those that manifested themselves in Titles I, II, and IVa, in particular. We also saw sweeping updates to state accountability systems particular to the arts. One state that I would call out, in particular, from the State Policy Pilot Program is Michigan. Michigan hosted a statewide summit to gain feedback and learn more about these opportunities. I had the pleasure of joining them on that day, and they were able to submit feedback through several rounds of revision, including one from the US Department of Education, and they now see several arts-friendly provisions in their state plan. One of the most notable projects from the State Policy Pilot Program actually began before the State Policy Pilot Program, but expanded rapidly over the course of our three years. Enabling a pathway for Title I policy from federal to state to local implementation revolved around states articulating that pathway in ways that were relevant to their own success. Led largely by the California Alliance for Arts Education and through their champion, who bounces around the country, Laura Smyth [ph?], they were able to share this model with a number of other states, like New Jersey, Massachusetts, Minnesota, and others, following numerous different pathways. The state that I would call out as an example for this is New Jersey, and they will be very proud to tell you themselves, and I will tell you on behalf of Team New Jersey, that they were able to secure approximately $1 million last year and $1.5 million this year, to use the arts as a strategy for achieving the goals of the Title I federal program. And last, but not least, is the strategy of building infrastructure for stakeholder engagement. We saw many policies and guidance from state departments, state agencies and non-profit organizations to engage a multitude of stakeholders in implementing the provisions of their state education laws. We also saw them utilize digital and in-person meeting strategies to overcome previously lacking infrastructure to build engagement in policy implementation and advocacy for policy change. Their infrastructure led to regular engagement in coming policy development that they'll see realized in the coming years. As an example, I'll identify the state of Wyoming, who is unfortunately unable to be with us today, because over the course of their three years, they were putting together a statewide engagement strategy that culminated in a summit that is being held today and tomorrow. I congratulate them on their efforts. Because of the rural status of their state and the provisions for arts advocacy efforts, they largely were able to overcome those challenges and have this meeting today. So I'm very pleased that they are not with us, in fact. With all of that said, I would like to turn it over to Jeremy Anderson, from the Education Commission on the States, who will be talking to us a little bit about the reasons that we're able to see some of these policy trends emboldened in the states, and some of the changing environment that we should expect in the future.