Lana Hallmark: Thank you. I'm Lana Hallmark and the Fine Arts Program Adviser at the Arkansas Department of Education. I also hold an advisory position on the Board of Arkansans for the Arts. Okay, the good, the bad, and the innovative. I would like to say that Arkansas’ SP3 work was all good and innovative, but there was some bad, too. But, SP3 is all about lessons learned, I think, and we learn more from the bad. So, I’m going to talk about all of it, the good, and the bad, and the innovative. Also, I really found interesting in the blurb that we got today, their words, terms, agile and responsive, so, I also want to address agile and responsive in our work. First of all, I’m going to review quickly the SP3 plan. The original Arkansas SP3 Plan, which we stuck to all the way through the program, had two important initiatives, goal one was to establish a statewide Arts Advocacy Organization and goal two was to implement the then newly revised Arkansas Fine Arts academic standards. So, goal one, establish a statewide Arts Advocacy Organization. Arkansas had never had one. There were no alliances. Even the Department of Ed and the Arts Council who are both strong organizations weren’t really doing any work together. So, this was a very ambitious project from the beginning. It was a very ambitious project. So, here’s the good, at this point. Arkansans for the Arts was founded. It does exist. This happened as a result of the SP3 program. We call it ARFTA. ARFTA’s mission; it has a mission, is to advance the arts, arts education, and the creative economy in Arkansas. ARFTA has a mission. It has board members. It has a strategic plan. It has members. It has a website. So, a lot’s going on with Arkansans for the Arts. They’ve already done some good advocacy work, as a matter of fact. And, ARFTA leadership attended the stakeholder meetings that surrounded the planning of Arkansas’ ESSA plan and they got a statement about ESSA and Fine Arts into the public record when ESSA was being written in Arkansas. ARFTA leaders also met with the state legislators when a bill was introduced and our state legislature this past legislative session that would have negatively impacted middle school arts education in Arkansas, and that bill was eventually pulled. It didn’t even run, and I think it was entirely due to the efforts of our ARFTA leaders’ leadership. Here’s the bad. It takes a really long time for a new nonprofit to get off the ground, and it’s not just Arkansans for the Arts. Like they say in the movies, it’s a tale as old as time. And, two years or three is not enough. So, Arkansans for the Arts is still struggling. We have all of those new nonprofit pains, you know finding their voice, finding out how to communicate with their audience, figuring out what their capacity needs are, figuring out what their leadership needs are because frankly we’ve been through a couple of executive directors already. The point is, or at least the point should be made, that this is really the most important work that Arkansans for the Arts can be doing at this moment is this infrastructure, without this solid foundation beneath them, well, we all know what’s going to happen to an organization that doesn’t have a solid foundational infrastructure. It’s not going to be sustainable. So, there was really no way in its first year or two that Arkansans for the Arts could take on any kind of big initiative, advocacy initiative on their own. They were really too busy building the plane, and so, here’s how they were responsive, and agile. And, this brings us to goal two, which was implementing the state’s fine arts standards. Obviously, ARFTA was not there yet. They were not going to really be able to push that initiative through. Because the Director of the Arts Council, at the time, and myself from the Department of Education because we were both on the steering committee Arkansans for the Arts was able to rely on those two more established organizations to fulfill that second goal, to work towards that second goal. It was important, our second goal was because Arkansas, just through the coincidence of timing, was the first state to revise their state standards after the new National Core Art Standards were rolled out in 2014. The new national standards rolled out on June 4, 2014, and coincidentally my revision...
Advocacy Strategies for Arts Ed: The Good, Bad, and Innovative: Lana Hallmark (2 of 5)

committees were scheduled to convene on June 12th. And, we have a state law in Arkansas that mandates that Arkansas standards have to be written by Arkansas teachers, so, we couldn’t just adopt the national standards outright. But, we did rely on them very heavily as a resource and a reference. And, actually at this point, do you have. Oh, I’m going to let Lizzie show you some pictures. So, what happened was the Arkansas Arts Council, the Department of Education, and the brand-new Arkansans for the Arts supported with SP3 funding created a professional development series that supported the implementation of the new arts standards throughout the state. It was kind of innovative, it was innovative in Arkansas. It had never been done that way before, but because it was not just teachers, and they were not just meeting in the Educational Service Cooperatives, we included teaching artists and community artists and we reached out to community-based arts organizations to host these workshops in inspirational, authentic spaces, and pretty soon they were reaching out to us saying come to our space and present at your workshops. It was hugely successful, and because Arkansans for the Arts had supported the project, been a partner in the project. Their story was heard by hundreds of arts educators and community-based artists across the state. So, this program got a lot of attention, we were asked to do it again in 2017. We did a new series this summer. The next thing I know, the Chairman of the Department of Art at the University of Arkansas is calling me, and they want to be part of this initiative. Okay, here’s some more bad news. Unfortunately, Arkansans for the Arts was still kind of lumbering along and not really ready to respond. We didn’t have an ask yet. Oh, the University is reaching out to us, but we didn’t have anything to say, "Oh, well then, let’s do this." So, a few months later, however, actually almost a year later, fortunately we got back to the good, ARFTA decided it was time to step out, take on a big project of their own, and so, at that point, fortunately, the opportunity wasn’t lost. We called the Chairman of the Art Department at the University of Arkansas, and together, we partnered to hold regional arts roundtable discussions, convenings again supported by SP3 funding. We started with two in two opposite corners of the state where resources are totally different, and they were hosted by University of Arkansas campuses, one in Fayetteville and one in Monticello, and they were very well attended. Their purpose was really to connect, not only with arts educators, but with a much broader base of potential partners and stakeholders, our State Commissioner of Education attended and was a panelist at one of these meetings. We had a state legislator, a state representative on one of our panels, and a lot of movers and shakers came out and it was ARFTA’s, I think, really big success story over the three years. This just happened in June, May and June of this year. Okay, so the great thing is, and again see how agile and responsive this is. <laughs> Those two roundtable discussions were so successful that now two other campuses in the university system in other regions of the state have reached out and asked to host roundtable discussions after the first of the year on the other side of SP3, and we are planning to have those meetings after the first of the year. Also, you may have read about the wonderful $120 million-dollar endowment that the Walton Family Charitable Foundation has just given our new partner the University of Arkansas Art Department and the timing of that was just incredible because Jeannie Hulen, who is the Chairman of that department called to tell me that that gift was going to make-- had a huge impact on K12 arts education in Arkansas. So, here we are at the end of our three years in SP3. Is Arkansans for the Arts still kind of plunking along? Yeah, but from Lizzie’s list we still struggle especially with core leadership, sustaining core leadership and I think with creative and consistent and effective messaging. However, we’ve had some real success in forming relationships and in fostering alliances with decision makers, and I don’t really have a closing for this because I see it as more of a jumping off place than an ending for us in Arkansas because of SP3, and so we appreciate the opportunity very much.