

Setting the Stage: Arts Education Policy and Advocacy at the State Level

Narric Rome: Again, hello, my name is Narric Rome with Americans for the Arts and I'm back to set the stage. So I have a couple of slides to set the stage for this summit and for the beginning of this discussion. I'll lay out a little bit more about the State Policy Pilot Program and then also set up some of the speakers and what we have ahead of us on the program today. So starting a little bit at the beginning so to speak with a little education look back. So as many of you or all of you know that in 2002, just let's start there for a point of reference, No Child Left Behind was signed into law and over the course of its five year authorization, it finished in 2007 and then from then for a number of years Congress was not able to reauthorize it and due to a whole number of factors, the law would designate schools as failing when they failed to perform to meet various measures of accountability and up at 2011, it was measured that about 50 percent of America's schools were failing and this resulted in enormous amounts or if not, all governors issuing statements of concern and urging Congress to reauthorize the law and as such, governors, chief state school officers and all those involved in education policy became alarmed as to the continuation of No Child Left Behind. In 2014 we launched the State Policy Pilot Program at the National Conference of State Legislatures, the purpose of the program as I've mentioned was about trying to build a pipeline between federal policy, state policy and local action. As those years progressed, in 2015, by then almost every state had received a waiver from the federal government, from the U.S. Department of Education relieving them from various elements of No Child Left Behind and later, at the very end of that year, just in time for the holidays, No Child Left Behind was reauthorized and was renamed in legislation that was named the Every Student Succeeds Act. That led to then the final year of the Obama Administration in an implementation phase, it was Secretary John King's year in office at the U.S. Department of Education and put into place many features or launched many features of the new federal education policy law. And then this year, in 2017, it has been roughly, to summarize, a year of state accountability plans in states preparing for what their new responsibilities were, are under ESSA. Over those course of all those years and through the 2000s, there have been national advocacy efforts to try and strengthen arts education in federal policy, these are just a sampling of some of the 90 plus national organizations that take part in trying to convince decision makers around the country and on Capitol Hill how the arts can be strengthened in federal policy and over the course of those years, tried to maintain a steady and consistent policy pressure on members as they were seeking to reauthorize No Child Left Behind and eventually the resulting Every Student Succeeds where there were about a dozen what we identified as pro arts education elements in the new law. At the same time and throughout these years, the Arts Education Partnership has issued ArtScan, a body of research based on state education policy what is in statue around the country in state and it was based on some of this early-- or the continuing research that identifies specific education policies in the arts and then it itemizes by state what is currently in statute. And this is a continual changing and research project that is incredibly valuable to understanding the context at hand. And so with those pieces in place when we started designing the State Policy Pilot Program, we felt that there were a couple of pieces that were essential to its design. First, the need for knowledge sharing of arts education policy, research like the Arts Education Partnership's ArtScan info, understanding of other efforts taking place in states around the country and also the new federal provisions that were being designed. At the same time, the National Coalition for Core Art Standards had moved through an effort of writing new standards in each arts discipline, in visual arts, dance, theater, music and media arts and those standards have since then and continued to make their way through states approving, adopting and revising their standards in the arts. And then also, at

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the end and starting in 2015 and 2016 as I mentioned, trying to understand the new arts friendly provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act and understanding what the shift to the states meant. All of those pieces were what were wrapped into the design of the State Policy Pilot Program. Now this is a graphic that helps to succinctly, if you don't have a Venn in your program, you're not doing something right and so this Venn diagram itemizes the three strategies that we tried to put into place. And as you can see, the first strategy refers to much of the I've already-- some of the research I've cited and the need for further products and so utilizing data, trying to understand the gap between policy and practice at the state level, understanding some of the status and condition of arts education in the states and then also a further look into what has been supported at the U.S. Department of Education in arts education grant programs. The second strategy, most of the folks here in the room was working with states directly and so ten states were a part of this pilot program and then we also supported two national what we called and this may sound like an oxymoron, two national state by state campaigns which were on supporting the adoption and revision of the national state standards and also understanding the new ESSA law. And then the third one, part very well symbolized by why we're here today, network and knowledge sharing, this was meeting with state advocacy groups and also helping to support an annual state policy symposia. I'll come back to that in a little bit. The ten states that participated in the State Policy Pilot Program are here on the screen, going from west to east, California, Arizona, Wyoming, Oklahoma, Minnesota, Arkansas, Michigan, North Carolina, New Jersey and Massachusetts, they were the coalition of the willing, they had projects that they were working on, projects that they wanted to bring to a collective impact setting to try and leverage the group's efforts together and so for three years, teams from these ten states have convened multiple times a year in various conferences and also formally with the program itself. This is us meeting at one of the very early stages, introducing ourselves to each other and understanding what each of our state projects were based on, we then finally realized we needed to stand and formally take pictures.

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Narric Rome: This is a meeting in Washington D.C. at the Kennedy Center and then this was earlier this year at the final working group session of the State Policy Pilot Program. I think many of the people in this picture are in this room today. Now the materials that you saw when you walked in and the materials that are online at americansforthearts.org/sp3 which include the case studies from each of the states, the summary report from Americans for the Arts and some other supporting resources, they highlight and capture these four themes that I'd like to present to you briefly. Applying the Federal-State-Local Policy Pipeline, again, for years working under No Child Left Behind there was a continual barrier that arts advocates would find in either some of the budget frustrations, appropriations frustrations with competition from many other priorities that No Child Left Behind identified, it was recognized in the pressure on testing, teaching to the test and the need for meeting adequate yearly progress and then finally I think one of the critical ones was the frustrations we would hear from state policy makers or that they would identify that they believed the reason why they couldn't support arts education more strongly was because of No Child Left Behind, it was the federal government's fault in that case. In many ways they were right, in many ways that was the place to blame. And so understanding the tiers of policy jurisdiction, the federal, the state and local in education policy became a catalyzing desire of the State Policy Pilot Program, it's not exactly the most fun endeavor to try and figure all that out in education

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policy, those of you that are all involved in that in these multiple tiers know but it is certainly for advocates that are parents, that are stakeholders that don't follow policy developments on a daily, monthly, yearly basis, it's very hard to activate them to support their student's, their child's education if it's a very convoluted pipeline and so we identified through this project how to try and clarify some of those tiers. Doing so, we also of course perhaps not surprisingly renewed our faith in utilizing data to support policy development and advocacy efforts. Things such as general population polling data to state department of education data on the status and condition of who is receiving what kind of education in the arts at the state level or at the state agency and how they collected that data and how they reported that data out. Those kinds of inputs are critical to understanding how a state team can then best tackle their state advocacy and support arts education throughout the state. And then as I mentioned, embracing the power of convening, arts education like many other policy areas at the state level, the leaders in those areas, it is sometimes a challenge to meet face to face, it is a challenge even in the same state to see each other on a regular basis where you are free either your daily work or you have a set specific time to make plans to provide critical thought and to put the brain power into how your state team and how you could work to further the project's goals. So Americans for the Arts through the State Policy Pilot Program would fund the travel of all ten state team members, well two from each state and then as many that would attend to the two meetings each year over the course of three years that took place because having everybody face to face in a room was identified before, during and now after SP3 has been a critical element to the success of the project. And then finally and related to that, sharing knowledge among state leaders. It is certainly as you might assume, a value for arts education leaders to be able to be on the same page, it is even more powerful when you're able to coordinate with broader education sector efforts in your state and have the arts be one of the stakeholders at the table among those state leaders. This has identified or we identified that for the reason why we wanted to introduce this at the National Conference of State Legislatures back in 2014, it's why we are very pleased to work with Education Commission on the States now and many of the other public partners such as the U.S. Conference of Mayors, National Lieutenant Governors Association, county officials and other elected officials, decision makers in the education sphere and outside of the education sphere. Some of the project outcomes, I won't go into these in detail, they will be key elements for the presentations yet to come in the breakouts this afternoon, but in terms of the overall products that we have at the end of three years. In the report section, as I mentioned in those strategies that I identified previously, we have a new state status report, it's a review of some of the preexisting data on arts education provision around the country. We have what we called a gap analysis which harkens back to the gap that I mentioned between policy being on the books, being in the statute but not seeing it recognized in practice and there's a huge discretion area for state policy leaders and implementers there. And then also, the U.S. Department of Education has been running a specific arts and education grant program in a number of ways and since 2002 about 450 million dollars over the course of 15 years has been put into arts education in roughly about 25 to 40 million blocks each year helping to power arts education research in three and four year projects, these are the gold standard in arts education studies and to be able to rely on that is still a continuing bright spot at the federal government level and this is a report that looked at some of the trends and analysis from the findings of those significant studies. Then also we today will be releasing the case studies from each of the ten states that participated in the State Policy Pilot Program, we have their final case studies online and in print out front and then also there's some appendix information that provides not just pictures of what they did but also some of the agendas from their

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meetings, some of the resolutions or findings of their research in the state, some of the legislation that they developed and worked with, with state leaders and other supplementary documents like that from each of their states. And then also we had earlier in the program some project narratives that helped lay out what it is they're doing, why it works in their state and what they hope to-- what their vision is. And then finally, on the goal of SP3 for-- we are culminating today in this summit and we also met yesterday with the State Arts Action Network which is a dynamic of state education leaders and state arts and arts education leaders coming together repeatedly throughout the year and as I mentioned we've launched an Americans for the Arts, the new State Educational Policy Network that will be a part of our series of networks to try and broaden the advocacy and policy understanding behind arts education around the country at the state level. And then finally, looking forward and back, in the last five years, we've both hosted and co-hosted an annual State Policy Symposium mostly with the Arts Education Partnership and that will continue into next year as well. So I'm going to stop there, the next two presentations will cover two specific sections of our findings and the report that's coming out today. One will be on the policy development elements of what was accomplished and what is underway in the ten states and so that will be the first panel that will be up here following my presentation and then second one will be on advocacy infrastructure, the science of organizing, building stakeholders, joining coalitions and the like and how the partners work to accomplish that. I'd like to close if I may with just a couple, a few other mentions of some of the guests that we have here. I want to provide a special welcome to both Jeremy Anderson from the Education Commission of the States and Jane Best from the Arts Education Partnership which is housed at the Education Commission of the States, and I mentioned, for the last couple of years Americans for the Arts has been very pleased to partner with the Arts Education Partnership and ECS both on the State Policy Symposiums and some other projects we have that we'll discuss shortly. The next one, the next Policy Symposium by the way, State Policy Symposium will be March 12th in-- 10th in Washington, D.C. And then also I want to recognize on the second panel, we'll be joined by Andrew Baumann of the Global Strategies Group, a communications and polling firm in New York City where in addition to the many advocacy initiatives that Global Strategy Group undertakes, it also managed the most recent visit to Capitol Hill by Lin-Manuel Miranda, which you may have seen on social media because for about a day he was overtaking Capitol Hill with some of his posts and it was wonderful to work with them on Mr. Miranda's visit to Capitol Hill where he, my boss and I were able to speak to a number of senators about arts and arts education policy and funding, so I'm happy to have him joining as well. And so that's the introduction, that is the setting of the stage for the next two panels coming up, I once again welcome you to Denver and for those of you who live here in Denver, thank you for having us, it's a wonderful city and have a wonderful day. Thank you very much for your attention and thinking on what the State Policy Pilot Program has been and what the learnings from it can be into the future as we all try to work on this new environment in Every Student Succeeds and education policy at the state level. Thank you.

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