



New York State
EDUCATION DEPARTMENT

Knowledge > Skill > Opportunity

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

for

Building Arts-Focused School Communities: A Request for Innovative Partnerships and Programs

February 27, 2025

New York State Education Department
Office of Standards and Instruction
89 Washington Avenue, 860 EBA
Albany, NY 12234

ARTSRFI2025@nysed.gov

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) hereby issues this Request for Information (RFI) to collect information from qualified organizations, institutions, educators and experts in arts education and community engagement to support the development of comprehensive guidance for establishing and sustaining arts-focused school and district communities.

1. Introduction

The New York State Education Department (NYSED) is committed to developing comprehensive guidance to support school districts and schools in building and sustaining strong arts-focused communities. This effort aligns with the Department's Strategic Plan for the Arts and seeks to integrate arts learning across curricula while emphasizing partnerships between school districts and community arts providers and stakeholders. The initiative aims to uplift sustainable, culturally responsive models for arts education that reflect the diverse cultural experiences of students.

To support this goal, NYSED is developing a set of resources, including a comprehensive guidance document, that will assist district leadership and school staff in fostering a thriving arts culture within their schools and communities. Key components of the initiative include:

- Researching successful models of community arts programs in New York State, focusing on best practices for integrating arts education with community and cultural resources.
- Engaging arts stakeholders to discuss criteria for building arts-focused school communities and to gather insights into current needs and challenges.
- Exploring funding opportunities at local, state, and federal levels to sustain and expand arts programming and partnerships.
- Developing a guidance document that includes examples from site visits, professional development resources, and tools for evaluating the effectiveness of arts programs.
- Creating resources for local schools and districts, such as templates for sustainability plans and an evaluation matrix.
- Hosting a statewide webinar series to communicate the guidance to district administrators and other key stakeholders, with a focus on actionable steps and best practices for building arts-focused communities.

2. Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this RFI is to gather information and insights from organizations, schools, districts, and other stakeholders with experience in building and sustaining arts-focused school communities. The information gathered will be used to inform the development of resources that will assist school districts in creating arts-rich learning environments that integrate community arts partnerships. The responses will help identify effective strategies, models, and resources that support arts integration, cultural sustainability, and the development of a thriving arts ecosystem within school communities.

This RFI seeks information in the following areas:

- Best practices in integrating arts education within the school curriculum and broader community initiatives.
- Models of successful collaborations between schools and arts organizations, community groups, and other stakeholders.
- Professional development resources and strategies for building the capacity of educators and community partners in arts education.
- Funding sources and strategies for sustaining and expanding arts-focused programs and partnerships.
- Data or evaluation tools used to measure the impact and success of arts programs.
- Successful school and district-level programs or initiatives that can serve as models for replication.

The objectives of this Request for Information include the following:

Objective 1

To gather insights and best practices from the field on sustaining and building arts-focused districts, informing the development of comprehensive guidance and support resources for school districts across the state.

Objective 2

To gain awareness of districts with high-quality, community-based arts programs.

Objective 3

To collect data and insights on successful arts education models that can be adapted and scaled across diverse school settings in New York State.

Objective 4

To assess the current challenges and barriers schools face in establishing arts-focused communities and identify potential solutions and supports.

Objective 5

To gather information on the role of arts education in promoting student engagement, academic achievement, and social emotion development.

3. RFI Contact Information and Timeline

Interested entities are encouraged to submit a response according to the guidelines in section 4. NYSED may, at its discretion, invite respondents to visit its offices at 89 Washington Avenue, Albany, New York or participate in a video conference for further discussions following the receipt of the RFI responses. In addition, after reviewing RFI responses, NYSED may follow up with respondents to request clarifying information.

NYSED contact person:

David W. Seligman
ARTSRFI2025@nysed.gov

Questions:

All questions regarding the RFI must be submitted in writing to the above email address by March 15, 2025. Answers will be posted by April 1, 2025, on the Department's [Arts Related Links and Collaborations webpage](#)

Timeline:

RFI Released: February 27, 2025
Deadline for Questions: March 15, 2025
Response to Questions: Issued April 1, 2025
Deadline for Receipt of Responses: May 15, 2025

4. Information Requested

NYSED is seeking the following information from organizations, schools, districts, and other stakeholders with experience in building and sustaining arts-focused school communities. Respondents are encouraged to respond as fully as possible to the prompts below.

Respondents are asked to provide responses to the following questions related to arts education and program development:

4.1 Cover letter

Each respondent should provide a cover letter (limited to no more than two pages in length) that includes the following information:

- Company/Organization Name
- Contact Name
- Title
- Phone #
- E-mail address
- Mailing address
- Summary of the organizations experiences with arts education
- Number of certified arts teachers, if applicable
- Current arts course offerings or link to course catalog, if applicable

NOTE: Provide additional contact persons as needed.

Each respondent should answer the questions below in detail.

4.2. Arts Integration and Curriculum Development

4.2.1 What models or strategies does your organization use to integrate the arts into the curriculum?

4.2.2 How does your organization engage students through the arts including arts integration, and what approaches are used to connect the arts with other academic subjects?

4.3. Community and Stakeholder Partnerships

4.3.1 Can you provide examples of successful partnerships your organization has established with arts organizations or local community groups?

4.3.2 What strategies do you employ to engage parents and community members in supporting arts education initiatives?

4.4. Professional Development

4.4.1 What professional development programs and resources does your organization offer to support arts education?

4.4.2 What capacity-building strategies does your organization utilize to support teachers and administrators in delivering high-quality arts instruction?

4.5. Funding and Sustainability

4.5.1 What funding opportunities has your organization successfully utilized to support arts programs?

4.5.2 What sustainability strategies does your organization implement, particularly in economically disadvantaged areas, to ensure the longevity of arts programs?

4.6. Evaluation and Impact

4.6.1 What evaluation tools or metrics does your organization use to measure the success of arts programs?

4.6.2 Can you provide data or examples that demonstrate the impact of arts education on student outcomes?

4.7. Additional Information

4.7.1 What additional information can you provide that would be valuable for building and sustaining arts-focused school communities?

4.8. Case Studies and other relevant information

4.8.1 Please provide case studies, reports, ephemera from community events or any additional materials that would help the Department in learning about your organization's experience with arts focused schools and/or community organizations.

5. Submission of Response

Responses are due by 5pm E.S.T on May 15, 2025, via email to the following address:
ARTSRFI2025@nysed.gov Subject Line: RFI Submission – Arts [Organization Name]

Respondents should submit their responses to the prompts above as a single .pdf or.docx file with the following formatting:

- Include the organization's name in the header and page numbers in the footer.
- Ensure the document is structured according to the provided questions.
- File name format: **RFI_Arts_[OrganizationName].pdf**