

# Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking

Evaluation of Intent, Impact and Lessons (2007-2017)

*Prepared for the William and Flora Hewlett  
Foundation's Performing Arts Program*

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*In summer 2017, the Hewlett Foundation commissioned Education First, a national education strategy and policy consulting firm, to conduct an evaluation of its arts education grantmaking over the past 10 years. This report summarizes the major themes, conclusions and findings from our evaluation. Authors include Bill Porter, Joe Anderson, Phil Gorrington, Lisa Towne and Kathleen Callahan. In addition, we want to acknowledge the significant contributions of foundation grantees who shared their insights and experiences (see list on page 29) in shaping the evaluation and the involvement of Jessica Mele, John McGuirk and Larry Kramer of the foundation staff in providing feedback and ideas.*

## Introduction and Overview

From its founding in 1966, the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation has made grantmaking to strengthen opportunities for cultural and artistic expression a core priority of its Performing Arts Program. Since 2006, the program has expanded this commitment beyond its historic focus on the San Francisco Bay Area to support “equal access for California students to engage in the arts at every level, from introductory programs to professional training.”<sup>1</sup> One important strand of this grantmaking is supporting arts organizations, artists, school leaders and parents in the Bay Area and across the state to advocate for policies and funding that can lead to high-quality arts education in public schools for more students.<sup>2</sup>

The foundation’s approach to arts education policy and advocacy recognizes an interdependence of education decisions at the local, state and national levels. National policies and priorities influence state policies and priorities, which in turn create obstacles or opportunities for local communities to put in place robust arts education programs. As such, over the past decade, the foundation quilted together and empowered a variety of voices to work for change in tandem and in collaboration with each other. These voices have included arts advocates, education policy advisors, researchers and providers of arts education. Further, the foundation and its grantees persevered in this work during a decade of incredible change, including a debilitating economic recession that handicapped school budgets, major changes in education laws governing school accountability and school funding, and evolutions in program and organization leadership within the foundation itself.

Because policy and political changes are

unpredictable, the success of grantmaking-focused advocacy can sometimes be hard to judge. With this reality in mind—as well as the opportunistic-by-design approach the foundation took to funding arts education advocacy—the Performing Arts Program asked *Education First*, a national education strategy and policy consulting firm, to help it take stock of its past 10 years of grantmaking in this area. **Key questions** it wanted to evaluate and document included<sup>3</sup>:

- + What was the original goal of the arts education policy and advocacy grantmaking work?
- + How did the strategies the foundation and its grantees pursued play out, and how did they change or evolve over time?
- + What were major successes and challenges?
- + What impact did the grantmaking have?

To inform this assessment, we examined grantee proposals and reports to the foundation, internal strategy documents and reports to the foundation’s president and board members, and key research the foundation commissioned. To complement these data, we conducted interviews with leaders of the foundation’s active grantee organizations working in this area as well as current and past program staff, peer funders, and state policy and education leaders.

Although it is impossible to establish a causal link between grantee actions and specific policy developments or changes, we have tried to look carefully at the actions grantees took in response to major opportunities and crises, the issues they prioritized for advocacy, and what changes close

1 Hewlett Foundation Arts Education grantmaking overview, [www.hewlett.org/strategy/arts-education](http://www.hewlett.org/strategy/arts-education).

2 The arts education policy advocacy grantmaking exists as one part of the Performing Arts Program’s overall work. In 2017, the program advanced grantmaking in four areas: Continuity and Engagement, Arts Education (which includes the focus on policy and advocacy), Arts Infrastructure, and the 50th Anniversary Arts Commissions.

3 For a full list of research questions, see [Appendix B](#).

observers of the field have seen as a result of those efforts.

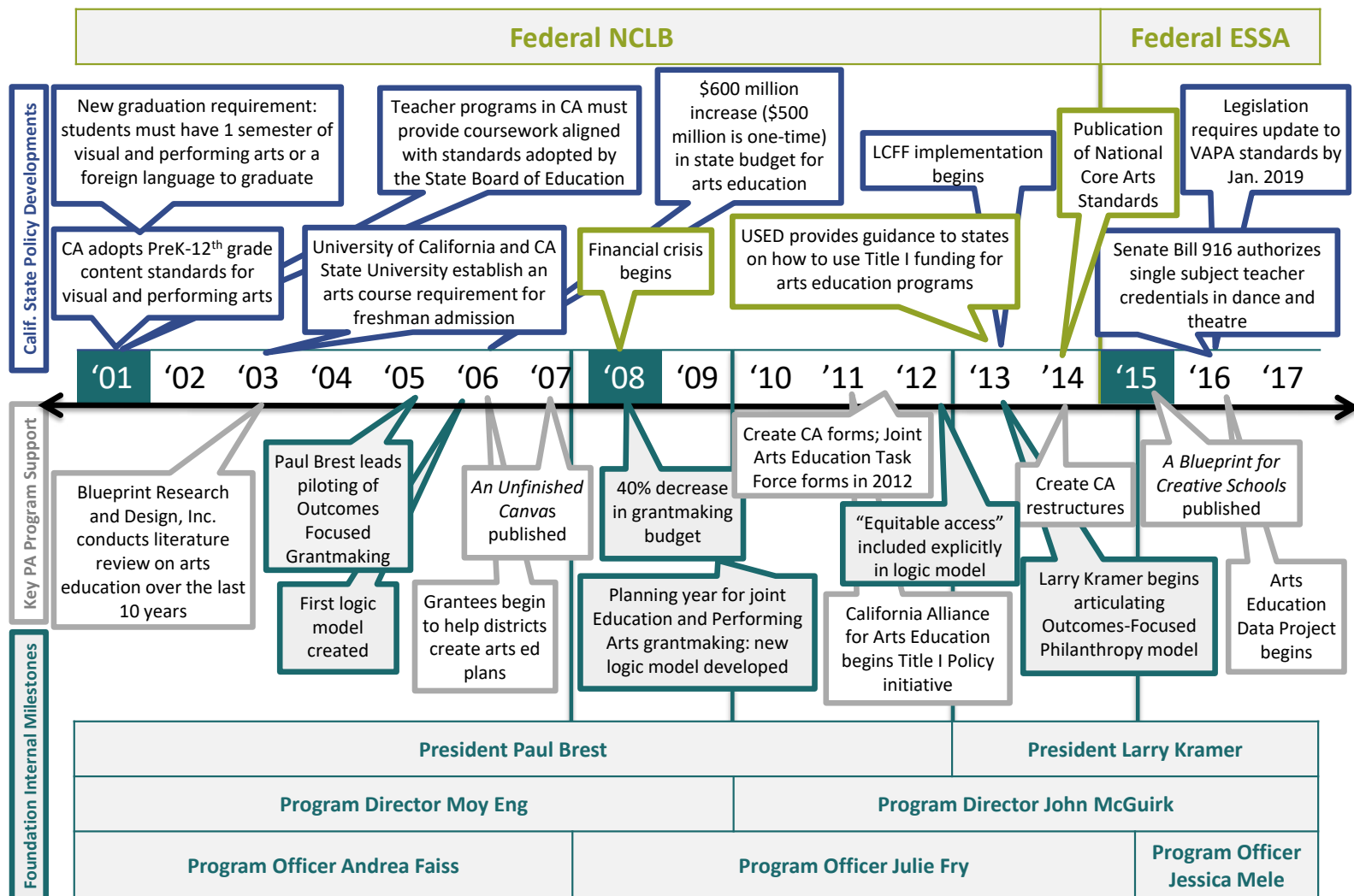
At the same time, any evaluation is less helpful if only limited to looking backward and documenting what happened. An evaluation's real value comes from identifying what activities were pursued for what reasons, and what lessons can be drawn—to better inform tough choices and strategic decisions by the foundation and its grantees moving forward. The Performing Arts Program intends to use this evaluation to inform a critical look and “refresh” of its arts education policy and advocacy grantmaking strategy in 2018. In its concluding section, our evaluation includes important questions we've surfaced as part of looking backward that ought to be considered as the foundation and its grantees think about next steps looking forward.

The report is organized into these sections:

- + History of the Hewlett Foundation's Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking
- + Advocating for More Arts Education for More Students: What Did the Hewlett Foundation Set Out to Do, and How?
- + Milestones and Impact: Major Changes to California's Arts Education Policy Landscape
- + Grantmaking Approaches: Success and Challenges for the Foundation and Its Grantees
- + Conclusions and Implications for Strategy

**Figure A. Timeline of Federal, State and Hewlett Performing Arts Program Milestones, 2001–2017**

Education First created this timeline based on its research and in consultation with foundation staff and grantees. Though not meant to be an exhaustive illustration of every event, the timeline includes major state and federal policy developments (blue and green, respectively), Performing Arts Program-supported milestones (gray), and leadership decisions and changes within the foundation (teal).



## History of the Hewlett Foundation’s Arts Education Policy and Advocacy Grantmaking

Through all of its grantmaking, the Performing Arts Program seeks to *“ensure continuity and innovation in the performing arts through the creation, performance and appreciation of exceptional works that enrich the lives of individuals and benefit communities throughout the Bay Area.”*<sup>1</sup> Within arts education policy and advocacy specifically, the aim is to *“Encourage public investment at the state and local levels to promote arts education [by making] grants to organizations that raise awareness among parents and educators, develop research to inform policymakers, and help set priorities and standards for arts education in schools.”*<sup>2</sup>

Strengthening arts education in public schools—and, specifically, helping organizations advocate for policies that support high-quality programs for more students—became a part of the program’s overall strategy in the early and mid-2000s. During this period, the program’s team observed that the demographics of artists and audiences within the Bay Area were out of step with those of individuals and communities in the broader region. As part of addressing this gap, team members proposed that giving children early and rich exposure to the arts could increase their participation as adults in arts communities, as both audience members and artists themselves.<sup>3</sup> Internal factors at the foundation also contributed to this shift in strategy to include arts education policy and advocacy. According to Moy Eng, the foundation’s Performing Arts Program Director from 2001–2009, dramatic growth in the foundation’s endowment and annual grantmaking budget in the mid-2000s created

opportunities for the program to “do better” in the Bay Area and to *“support a larger breadth of aesthetic and cultural diversity.”* One pressing opportunity she saw was to “make a bigger impact in arts education, to help millions of students.” Her passion for the transformative power of arts education was shared by Marshall Smith, her colleague director of the foundation’s separate Education Program and a widely respected education policy expert.

In 2005, the Performing Arts Program and the Education Program took the unique step of each committing \$1.5 million of their budgets that year to advance arts education in California. Together, the two programs initiated a fact-finding process to answer a simple question: Could they *“help to ensure arts education for every child in California”*?<sup>4</sup> According to the foundation’s *History of the Performing Arts Program: 1966 to 2016*:

**This was an enormous departure for the Performing Arts Program on two fronts. First, geographically. Because of state politics, this was not a regional question, it had to encompass the entire state of California—a deeply embedded structure of interlocking interests underlies the subject of public education. And second, an effort to restore the arts to K–12 school children required going beyond the limitations of performing arts to include visual arts, new territory for the Program.**<sup>5</sup>

Momentum was on the side of the foundation and its grantees. The 2006-07 California state budget allocated \$605 million to support arts

1 Hewlett Foundation, “A Q&A with John E. McGuirk, Program Director, Performing Arts,” accessed November 1, 2017, <https://www.hewlett.org/newsroom/a-qa-with-john-e-mcguirk-program-director-peforming-arts/>.

2 Hewlett Foundation Arts Education Grantmaking Overview, <http://www.hewlett.org/strategy/arts-education>.

3 Interview with Moy Eng, September 1, 2017.

4 History of the Performing Arts Program: 1966 to 2016, page 45, Hewlett Foundation, 2017.

5 Ibid, page 45.

education in K–12 public schools: a \$105 million increase over the prior year and a one-time investment of \$500 million to help schools acquire new arts, music and physical education materials.<sup>6</sup> ***“This situation has provided an enviable challenge for our exploratory initiative in arts education: Should we pursue a full-fledged arts education initiative now?”*** the Performing Arts Program team reported to the foundation’s board of directors in late 2006. ***“The recent victory can be attributed to the Governor’s leadership and strong advocacy efforts on the part of the California Alliance for Arts Education, one of our pilot arts education grantees.”***<sup>7</sup>

With blessing from the foundation’s leadership, the program at this time set as one of its goals ***“a standards-based arts education for every California public school student.”***<sup>8</sup> And it moved forward by strategically choosing to engage and support mainstream education leaders and organizations, and to help them identify and commit to an agenda for arts education in California. The program also invested in research on the condition of arts education in the state and a suite of studies about the obstacles preventing high-quality arts education from reaching more students.

One of these early major efforts was the commissioning of SRI to undertake a first-ever analysis of the field. Released in 2007, ***An Unfinished Canvas: Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices***

documented how California had failed not only to address its goals<sup>9</sup> for arts education but also how poorly California was doing compared to other states. For example, only 11 percent of K–12 public schools in California offered a course of study in all four arts disciplines (dance, music, theater and visual arts) and 29 percent offered no course of study in any arts discipline at all.<sup>10</sup> *An Unfinished Canvas* also highlighted the need for and set the expectation for regularly-collected, actionable data about arts education in the state’s schools. Perhaps most important, the study gave urgency to the issues the foundation and its emerging network of grantees wanted to address.<sup>11</sup>

By summer 2008, the Performing Arts and Education Programs had jointly invested \$4.2 million to work toward the goal of making arts education part of the regular school-day for all students.<sup>12</sup> Adjusting its grantmaking to reflect progress made, the program refined its grantmaking strategy to prioritize: (1) increasing state-level policy efforts, (2) strengthening the capacity of local educators to deliver quality arts education and (3) build constituent support to increase the delivery of arts education.<sup>13</sup> Also, as part of making progress toward the goal of a standards-based arts education for every California public school student, the program articulated important milestones: It wanted to increase access to high-quality arts education in the state’s 10 largest districts as a stepping stone to dramatically increasing weekly arts instruction for all students over 20 years.<sup>14</sup>

6 Hewlett Foundation, *2007 Budget Memorandum* (2006), Performing Arts Program, 1.

7 Ibid, page 1.

8 Hewlett Foundation, *AE Initiative Exploratory Phase Outline* (2006), Performing Arts Program.

9 Section 51210 (5) and Section 51220 of the California Education Code specify that students in grades 1–6 and 7–12, respectively, shall receive instruction in visual and performing arts, including instruction in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts, as part of the course of study.

10 Woodworth, K. R., et al., *An unfinished canvas. Arts education in California: Taking stock of policies and practices.*

*Summary Report* (2007), SRI International, 5, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://nasaa-arts.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/06/UnfinishedCanvasSummaryReport.pdf>.

11 Hewlett Foundation, *History of the Performing Arts Program: 1966 to 2016* (2017), Performing Arts Program, 46.

12 Hewlett Foundation, *Arts Education* (2008), Memorandum to Paul Brest from Moy Eng, 1.

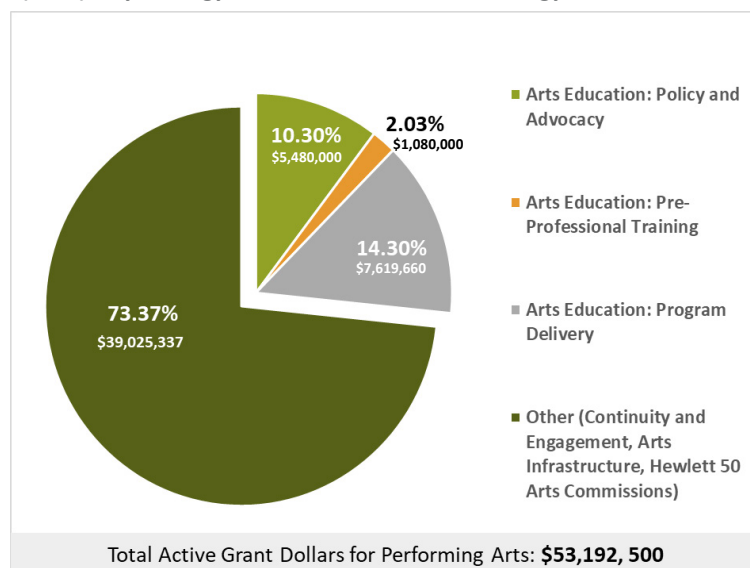
13 Ibid, page 2.

14 Ibid, pages 1-2.

However, dark clouds were beginning to form on the horizon and soon began to affect much of the foundation’s grantmaking across all program areas. In late 2008, the country fell into a deep economic crisis that consumed the attention of and required emergency steps from national leaders—and dramatically affected funding available for government-funded programs (including public schools). The situation was especially acute in California given its unique tax and revenue structure. In 2010, the foundation’s Education Program—now led by Program Director Barbara Chow—deprioritized education policy change in California, including the joint work with the Performing Arts Program on arts education policy and advocacy. Judging multiple conditions in the state as working against the possibility of new, enlightened education policies, the Education Program shifted to emphasize a new national education focus.<sup>15</sup>

By 2012, the Performing Arts Program was pursuing its arts education policy advocacy goals on its own, prioritizing this area of work solely out of its budget. As illustrated in Figure B below, the program most recently invested about 10 percent of its active grant dollars (\$5.5 million) to support arts education policy and advocacy grantmaking. This amount represents about 39 percent of its total grant funds devoted to arts education.<sup>16</sup>

**Figure B. Performing Arts Program Active Grantmaking Budget (2017)—By Strategy and Arts Education Sub-Strategy**



<sup>15</sup> This new education strategy aimed to change policies and teaching practices that advance “deeper learning” that better prepared students for success in college, careers and civic life. However, to continue supporting California-based education advocacy and research organizations generally, the Foundation created in 2011 the California Education Policy Fund. The program allocated about \$4 million annually to the Fund to continue supporting the efficacy and capacity of in-state education organizations. This work contributed to the eventual adoption of the Local Control Funding Formula in California.

<sup>16</sup> The program’s Arts Education strategy is comprised of three sub-strategies: (1) Program Delivery, which includes grants to support innovative arts education programs in and out of school that help California students learn more about the arts (in 2017, comprised 14% of overall Performing Arts Program active grant dollars or 54% of Arts Education strategy active grant dollars), (2) Pre-Professional Training, which includes grants to pre-professional training organizations that prepare future artists in a variety of disciplines (in 2017, comprised 2% of overall Performing Arts Program active grant dollars or 8% of the Arts Education strategy active grant dollars) and (3) Arts Education Policy and Advocacy.



# Advocating for More Arts Education for More Students: What did the Hewlett Foundation Set Out to Do, and How?

Five years ago (2012), the Performing Arts Program shifted from its original focus for arts education grantmaking on achieving “a standards-based arts education for every California public school student” to a new goal explicitly prioritizing equity and access to high-quality arts education. Now, the Performing Arts Program aims to ensure its policy and advocacy grantmaking leads to California students having “*equitable access to multidisciplinary arts education opportunities.*”<sup>1</sup>

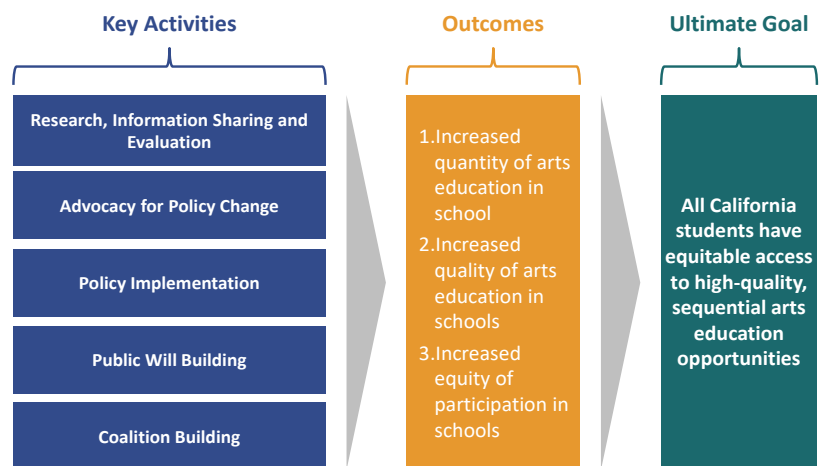
To make progress toward this goal of equitable access and participation, the program’s arts education policy and advocacy grantmaking has engaged organizations working at the national, California state and local levels. These efforts can be organized into five major categories—which bear a resemblance to the three core activities the program initially began funding in 2008 (described in the prior section above and illustrated in Figure C):

1. **Research, Information Sharing and Evaluation**, which includes data collection and dissemination and hosting regular convenings of grantee organizations
2. **Advocacy for Policy Change**, which includes advocate training and organizing, permissible lobbying activities<sup>2</sup>, and educator professional development
3. **Policy Implementation**, which includes local planning—district arts education plans and influencing Local Control and Accountability

Plans (LCAPs)—and developing tools and resources for advocate, district and school use

4. **Public Will Building**, which includes media campaigns and gathering input from and sharing feedback with stakeholders

Figure C: Grantmaking Strategy for the Hewlett Foundation’s Arts Education Policy and Advocacy (2017)



5. **Coalition Building**, which includes creating coalitions and partnerships to pursue common goals

The grantmaking strategy illustrated in Figure C, especially the key activities, reflects Education First’s analysis of grantees’ own strategies and activities rather than an explicit plan by the foundation to support activities in these five areas at the outset. The Hewlett Foundation’s approach to identifying, funding and supporting grantees to be effective advocates has stayed remarkably constant over the 10-year period since beginning this work. We see that the approach has incorporated two primary elements:

<sup>1</sup> Hewlett Foundation, *Board Docket Memo on Arts Education* (2012), Performing Arts Program.

<sup>2</sup> Although some of the work of the grantees described in this report may reflect the passage of legislation, the Hewlett Foundation does not lobby or earmark its funds for prohibited lobbying activities, as defined in the federal tax laws. The foundation’s funding for policy work is limited to permissible forms of support only, such as general operating support grants that grantees can allocate at their discretion and project support grants for non-lobbying activities (e.g., public education and nonpartisan research).

- + **Opportunism**, which has meant employing strategies developed organically, nuanced for the time and situation, and responsive to changing contexts and needs, and
- + **A focus on multiple governance levels**, which has meant funding some grantees who work nationally to share best practices across states and inform national policies, some grantees who focus on supporting California leaders and state policy changes, and some grantees who work locally to influence decisions and policies for arts education in local school districts.

Figure D identifies the foundation arts education policy and advocacy grantees by their primary

activities and sphere of influence. Although none of the organizations worked solely in one area, each acknowledged—through interviews and focus groups—the principal role it has played in working toward the foundation’s grantmaking outcomes and goal.

The shaded boxes in Figure D above highlight that grantees at all three levels bring their own assets, spheres of influence and knowledge to help influence changes in policy. Specifically, among the five main activities the foundation funds, the majority of grant funds and grantee efforts at the national level support research, information sharing and evaluation activities. At the state level, grant funds primarily support grantees whose activities focus on training advocates and building commitment for new policies among educators and policymakers. And

**Figure D. Current Grantee by Primary Activities and Spheres of Influence (2016-2017)**

	National	State	Local
Research, Information Sharing and Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Americans for the Arts</li> <li>+ Arts Education Partnership (ECS)</li> <li>+ Grantmakers in the Arts</li> <li>+ National Guild of Community Arts Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Create CA</li> <li>+ SRI International</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> </ul>
Advocacy for Policy Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Americans for the Arts</li> <li>+ Grantmakers in the Arts</li> <li>+ National Association of State Boards of Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Arts for LA</li> <li>+ California Alliance for Arts Education</li> <li>+ California State PTA</li> <li>+ Grantmakers in the Arts</li> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> <li>+ National Association of State Boards of Education</li> <li>+ State Education Agency of Directors</li> <li>+ Teaching Artists Guild</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Alameda County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Arts for LA</li> <li>+ Fresno County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> <li>+ Performing Arts Workshop</li> </ul>
Policy Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ National Guild of Community Arts Education</li> <li>+ Americans for the Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Arts for All (LA Arts Commission)</li> <li>+ CCSESA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Envision Education</li> <li>+ Alameda County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Santa Clara County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Performing Arts Workshop</li> <li>+ Community Initiatives</li> <li>+ Arts for All (LA Arts Commission)</li> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> <li>+ In Addition: County offices of education in Marin, Napa, San Francisco, Solano and Tulare counties (one-time grants to create county-wide arts education plans)</li> </ul>
Public Will Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Americans for the Arts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ California Alliance for Arts Education</li> <li>+ California State PTA</li> <li>+ Create CA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Arts for LA</li> <li>+ Alameda County Office of Education</li> <li>+ California State Summer School Arts Foundation</li> <li>+ Fresno County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> <li>+ Santa Clara County Office of Education</li> </ul>
Coalition Building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Americans for the Arts</li> <li>+ Arts Education Partnership (ECS)</li> <li>+ Grantmakers in the Arts</li> <li>+ National Guild of Community Arts Education</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ California Alliance for Arts Education</li> <li>+ California PTA</li> <li>+ Create CA</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>+ Alameda County Office of Education</li> <li>+ Arts for All (LA Arts Commission)</li> <li>+ Arts for LA</li> <li>+ Luna Dance Institute</li> </ul>

*\*Based on interviews of leaders at each grantee organization and grantee reports to Hewlett Foundation.*

locally, grantees spend most of their time and resources on activities that are about implementing policy changes, such as facilitating planning with counties and districts to prioritize resources for arts education in more school buildings.

Grantees at every level engage in the other two activities the foundation funds: coalition building and public-will building.

Figure E illustrates the opportunistic and synergistic way the foundation’s national, state and local grantees have worked together to accomplish common goals—and reflects the weighting of grantmaking and activities in each sphere of influence as described in Figure C.

**Figure E. Primary Grantee Activities at the National, State and Local Levels (2007-2017)**



## Milestones and Impact: Major Changes to California’s Policy Landscape

While the major grantee activities did not change significantly over the past 10 years, what did change was the national and state policy landscape in which the Hewlett Foundation and its grantees were working. The foundation’s interest in arts education emerged in a particularly difficult policy and financial environment at the federal and state levels.

At the federal level, the 2001 congressional reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (called “No Child Left Behind” or NCLB) mandated annual state testing for all students in reading and mathematics—which made prioritizing the arts (or any other subject areas) difficult. According to the Center on Education Policy, among other research, many school districts reacted by narrowing the curriculum and limiting instructional time in other disciplines, including the arts.<sup>1</sup>

In the Golden state, the narrowing of the curriculum and funding priorities was further reinforced by California’s own Academic Performance Index (API), which the state legislature created in the Public Schools Accountability Act of 1999. The API reported a score for every school that was based primarily on students’ performance in English language arts and mathematics. State leaders used the API to track and report school improvement under the federal requirements of NCLB; as part of the law, states were required to pursue increasingly directive measures in schools that failed to make progress improving student achievement and closing achievement gaps over time.

Even with evidence showing the role arts education could play in boosting student

achievement and confidence in other subject areas, state and local education leaders lacked resources to implement arts programs. Those leaders who somehow managed to secure the resources and the will to implement arts programs faced another significant barrier. Since 1970, certified physical education and English teachers—not trained and certified dance and theater instructors—were the only teachers authorized to teach dance and theater in public schools.

But the worst setback came in 2008: With havoc in energy markets and the national recession that began late that year, the California state budget collapsed. District and school leaders (and leaders of other community agencies supporting struggling families) were forced to make deep cuts in staffing and programs across the board. Arts education was one casualty among many.

It was in this context that the foundation’s grantees first began to take up the challenge of bringing high quality arts education to all California students. Ten years later, the 2017 policy landscape for arts education—as for K–12 education entirely in California—has changed substantially.

Now, several obstacles have been removed. Gone is No Child Left Behind, replaced by a less restrictive authorization of federal education law: the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA). Gone are federal and state funding restrictions, replaced by guidance making clear that federal education funds for struggling students can be used for arts education. Gone is California’s old school funding formula with its emphasis on state-driven categorical grants; in its place is the innovative, needs-based Local Control Funding

<sup>1</sup> Jennifer McMurrer, *NCLB Year 5: Instructional Time in Elementary Schools: A Closer Look at Changes for Specific Subjects* (2008), Center on Education Policy, accessed December 1, 2017.

Formula, which pushed decision-making for expenditures to the local level and replaced the state’s API-driven accountability system with one that includes local priorities and multiple measures to gauge school success. And, with newly enacted authorizations for theater and dance teacher certifications in California, gone are limited conceptions of what skills and knowledge are needed to teach robust classes in the arts. Figure F below illustrates these key policy differences in 2007 versus the present. It also notes that leadership for advocacy, especially at the state level, broadened to include new coalitions (e.g., Create CA) and organizations not solely focused on arts education (e.g., CCSESA and the California Department of Education).

California education policy observers and grantees themselves believe that grantee organizations played important roles influencing key policies and taking advantage of political changes affecting the education sector as a whole—all aimed at finding ways of creating greater access to and improved quality of arts education.

As part of our research, we identified four major policy milestones—each described below—that clearly benefited from and in some cases were the culmination of grantees working in and coordinating efforts across national, state and local levels. The first two, passage of the federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and California’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF), are policy developments that foundation grantees influenced to a small degree but capitalized on to a large degree in their efforts to advance arts education. The second two milestones, clarifying Title I funding guidance and enacting new dance and theater teacher credentials, were changes grantees themselves promoted and negotiated.

Grantee actions in all four areas were informed by—and maybe further motivated by—SRI’s original *An Unfinished Canvas*

analysis from 2007. As one grantee put it, “*The public will-building via An Unfinished Canvas and the data it showed was the most important factor in enabling policy wins.*” The formation in 2011 of Create CA, a coalition of the California Department of Education, the California Arts Council, the California Alliance for Arts Education, the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA) and other partners, also helped inform priorities for policy change and provide direction for advocates. 2015’s *A Blueprint for Creative Schools* describes these priorities.

Figure F. 2007-2017: Comparison of Evolving Federal and State Education Policy Landscapes

	Then	Now
Federal Policy Framework	No Child Left Behind (NCLB) Act	Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA)
California Analysis	<i>An Unfinished Canvas</i> report by SRI (one-time snapshot of access to arts education)	Arts Ed Data Project (ongoing data collection but lacks K-5 data)
Teaching Requirements	Single-subject credentials for <b>music and visual arts only</b>	Additional single-subject credentials in <b>dance and theater</b>
Funding	State categorical funds to support local K-12 visual and performing arts programs	Local control funding formula allows communities to set local improvement priorities, including funding arts education
Leadership	California Alliance for Arts Education (Alliance)	Create CA, Alliance, CCSESA, Calif PTA, Calif. Department of Ed and others

### Policy Milestone #1

**The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA): New federal law explicitly encourages states and districts to prioritize arts and other subjects that lead to a well-rounded education**

In 2015, as the U.S. Congress began serious deliberations on reauthorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, two Hewlett Foundation grantees working at the national level advocated for including language that would better elevate the importance of arts education. Tapping a pooled fund of contributions from Hewlett and other national

and regional funders dedicated to national advocacy activities, Grantmakers in the Arts (GIA) worked hard to inform and in some cases lobby members of Congress and Administration leaders about ways to recognize arts education in evolving bill drafts.<sup>2</sup> Americans for the Arts also contributed to the cause—and coordinated closely with GIA—with a similar advocacy and lobbying push.

The resulting law, the Every Student Succeeds Act, asks states to do more to prioritize arts education while also loosening earlier federal requirements for school accountability and improvement activities (thus creating new flexibility for states to innovate with new approaches). According to an American Institutes for Research *analysis* of the law’s provisions, these changes create significant opportunities for arts education:

**ESSA includes at least 12 different funding opportunities that state educational agencies, local educational agencies [school districts], and schools can use to implement arts integration interventions for students in all grades, from prekindergarten to Grade 12. These funding opportunities can be used to support activities such as teacher professional development, school improvement efforts, supports for English learners, arts integration courses, instructional materials, extended learning time programs. They can also be used to support arts-focused charter or magnet schools.**

**ESSA addresses the issue of arts education—and, more specifically, arts integration—in**

**several ways. It maintains an emphasis throughout its varied funding streams on ensuring that students have access to a “well-rounded education,” which, according to the law, can include “the arts” and “music” along with other subjects. Title IV of ESSA explicitly identifies programs in the arts and arts integration as allowable activities, and it provides for dedicated assistance for arts education. ESSA also offers funding for arts integration interventions that address the needs of specific student subgroups, such as economically disadvantaged students and English learners.<sup>3</sup>**

Grantees—even those involved in specific debates over the law’s passage—report that, with these new federal provisions and flexibilities, ESSA has become a new tool for advocating with state policymakers and local education leaders to include the arts as part of a more holistic education approach in schools. As one grantee reported, “there are renewed opportunities for funding in the arts in the law...we just need to ensure that the opportunities for the arts in ESSA are translated to the local level.”

Building on the passage of ESSA, both GIA and Americans for the Arts say they stayed involved in the regulatory rule-making process and worked to influence how the Administration communicated to stakeholders about the law. In addition, Americans for the Arts has acted as “translator” by presenting to local arts education program-delivery grantees in California about ESSA and the opportunities it offers for arts education policy at the local level.

<sup>2</sup> Although some of the work of the grantees described in this report may reflect the passage of legislation, the Hewlett Foundation does not lobby or earmark its funds for prohibited lobbying activities, as defined in the federal tax laws. The foundation’s funding for policy work is limited to permissible forms of support only, such as general operating support grants that grantees can allocate at their discretion and project support grants for non-lobbying activities (e.g., public education and nonpartisan research).

<sup>3</sup> Meredith Ludwig, et al., *Review of Evidence: Arts Integration Research Through the Lens of the Every Student Succeeds Act* (2017), American Institutes for Research, accessed December 1, 2017, <https://www.air.org/resource/review-evidence-arts-integration-research-through-lens-every-student-succeeds-act>.

**ESSA provides clearer guidance and support for districts and schools to take the arts into account when developing a well-rounded curriculum for all students.**

### ***Policy Milestone #2***

#### **Local Control Funding Formula: Governor’s commitment to “subsidiarity” creates opportunities for local school communities to choose themselves to invest in arts education**

California’s Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF) legislation—strongly promoted by Governor Jerry Brown and adopted by legislators in 2013—swept away a complex funding system based on student attendance and hundreds of funding directives and limitations. The legislation shifted decision-making—coupled with more funding and local discretion on how to spend the money—to school districts and communities, giving them flexibility to put additional resources into arts education if desired.

The replacement funding formula, while still based on attendance, supplements school districts with moneys specifically targeted to English-language learners, low-income students and foster youth (i.e., a district with more low-income students will receive more money than a same-size district with fewer). The LCFF legislation also eliminated most restricted, categorical funding streams. In Governor Brown’s vision, these changes would give local communities flexibility to identify and set their own priorities for improving student learning—and then allow them to

direct the dollars how they choose (as long as they address the needs of these subpopulations of students). Indeed, California’s new approach to distributing funding to schools based on student need is seen as the largest voluntary (as opposed to court-ordered) effort ever undertaken by a state. LCFF also contributed to the demise of the Academic Performance Index (API), the single measure the state used to report on and judge school quality for more than a decade. Like federal law before ESSA, the API prioritized student achievement in reading and mathematics and didn’t consider progress in other areas.

LCFF did not come into existence solely because of the influence of the foundation’s arts education advocacy grantees—although grantees whose organizational scopes are more broadly focused on K–12 education, such as the California State PTA and the California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), did play an important role.<sup>4</sup> By pushing for more flexible funding at the district level and changes to the state accountability system that expanded the types of measures used to assess school quality, these advocates helped create a system that gave locals greater self-determination.

For arts education advocates, LCFF shifted the dynamics and decision-making context in California—and increased opportunities to implement new arts education programs in more schools—in three important, related ways:

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<sup>4</sup> Importantly, changing the state’s school funding system—to make it more needs-based, more flexible and more adequate to the challenges facing schools today—was a priority for the Hewlett Foundation’s Education program in the mid-2000s. Although the Education Program shifted the emphasis of its direct grantmaking in 2010 toward national school improvement efforts and not just California, many advocacy and research organizations it had supported to work on school funding reform stayed engaged and continued receiving Hewlett support through the California Education Policy Fund (CEPF). These efforts culminated finally in the adoption of LCFF in 2013. Education grantees such as Children Now, the California Collaborative for School Reform and Public Advocates played key roles informing the design of LCFF—including how to balance state and local accountability expectations as funding decisions were decentralized—and investing significant energy in advocating for the adoption of this new funding approach. However, because of the way the Education Program had started making grants in California starting in 2011—via the separately managed California Education Policy Fund—there was no coordination between Performing Arts and Education grantees on LCFF advocacy efforts.

- + First, by eliminating most categorical funding (including state categorical funding for the arts), it shifted the focus away from Sacramento and annual debates over the state budget to influencing instead how school district communities chose to direct their new-found, more flexible funds.
- + Second, with its new requirement that school districts engage communities and stakeholders to craft an annual Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP) that set priorities to drive local funding decision, it created a venue where advocates could argue their case for arts education as an important tool for boosting student learning.
- + And third, it called for a new state-level approach to tracking school district quality (and holding districts accountable for progress under their LCAPs) composed of eight education indicators, including not just student achievement in English language arts and math but also student engagement, parent involvement, school climate and student outcomes in other areas such as the arts.

By creating “permission” for school districts to make decisions to prioritize arts education, LCFF and the required LCAPs have become important tools that grantees are now using to create more arts opportunities in more schools. As one grantee explained, *“The local funding system is a milestone... It changes the way we do arts advocacy. We need strategies in every school community instead of at the state.”* One way the foundation

adapted to local grantees’ need to support local capacity building and planning was by providing one-time county-wide arts education planning grants to the education offices for Marin, Solano, San Francisco, Napa and Tulare counties. CCSESA is also working with its member county offices to facilitate needs assessments and planning within and across districts; Arts for All and the Alliance have also provided guidance to districts for arts education planning.

Reflecting on this evolution, Program Officer Jessica Mele speculates that the shift away from a state-level advocacy emphasis to a more local-level emphasis under LCFF has encouraged K–12 education organizations, such as the California State PTA and CCSESA, to take leadership roles in arts education advocacy and collaborate with arts education-focused organizations. *“LCFF may have made conditions more favorable for a coalition like Create CA—with members including the California Department of Education, the PTA, CCSESA and the California School Boards Association—to have a seat at the state table,”* she observed. *“Advocacy for arts education no longer meant fighting for a pot of money limited to arts education; it was now about the allocation of local funding, program implementation and local planning.”*<sup>5</sup>

LCFF opened the door for grantees to work locally, with individual counties, districts and even schools, to direct funding and programming to the arts.

### ***Policy Milestone #3:***

**Title I Funding Guidance: Clarifying the ability to use federal funds for arts education for low-income students gives schools more resources to tap**

<sup>5</sup> Interview with Education First, December 11, 2017.



With its focus on providing extra resources for schools to support struggling students from low-income families, federal Title I funds represent one of the more flexible sources of funding for district and school leaders to use to advance school improvement strategies and strengthen teacher skills and knowledge.<sup>6</sup> According to grantees, however, district and school leaders have long felt pressure to use Title I dollars narrowly for improving student learning (and test scores) in mathematics and reading, even without an official edict from the U.S. Department of Education or the California Department of Education. Indeed, many grantees told us, education policymakers and district leaders at all levels of the system have held a decided bias against or sometimes maintained an outright prohibition against using Title I dollars to support arts education for low-income students.

Over the last six years, many grantees made it a key priority to push for guidance and clarity from federal and state officials that Title I funds could in fact be used for arts education, if local leaders determined that approach could help their low-income students improve learning. As a result of this focus, these grantees ultimately achieved a big success.

In 2011, the California Alliance for Arts Education—in collaboration with Arts for LA, Arts for All and other foundation grantees—elevated the need for and directed their resources to promoting the use of Title I funds for arts education. Convinced by the Arts Education Partnership’s *ArtsEdSearch* bank of research on the positive impact of arts education on student achievement, the Alliance believed it had a strong case for

clarifying assumptions that Title I funds could be used for broader purposes than only math and reading interventions. This tacit assumption about the appropriate use of Title I funds was creating needless barriers to arts education, especially in lower-income schools unlikely to have any arts education in the first place. If federal and state officials could go on the record and declare unequivocally that arts education was not a prohibited use, the grantees reasoned, many more schools would prioritize arts education using Title I funding.

Grantees first sought a clear understanding of the position of the California Department of Education regarding if and how arts education programming could play a role in achieving the goals of Title I in the state. To this end, in July 2011, Arts for LA and the Alliance co-authored a letter to California’s newly elected superintendent of public instruction, Tom Torlakson, requesting clarity. Four additional partners—the California State PTA, the California Arts Council, the Los Angeles Music Center and Arts for All—added their names to the letter. This joint letter was coupled with additional advocacy efforts that included publishing op-eds making the case for a broader conception of Title I and mobilizing grantees’ networks to write letters of support.

All these efforts, grantees and state leaders observed, directly led to the California Department of Education issuing two letters of guidance in 2012, both clarifying that districts could in fact use Title I funds to **“support arts education as a strategy to improve student achievement in ELA [English language arts]**

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<sup>6</sup> Title I of the federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act, as amended by the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), provides financial assistance to districts and schools with high numbers or high percentages of children from low-income families to help ensure that all children meet challenging state academic standards. Title I schools with percentages of low-income students of at least 40 percent may use Title I funds, along with other federal, state, and local funds, to operate a “schoolwide program” to upgrade the instructional program for the whole school. Title I schools with less than 40 percent low-income students or that choose not to operate a schoolwide program may offer a “targeted assistance program” in which the school identifies students who are failing, or most at risk of failing, to meet the state’s challenging academic achievement standards.

**and mathematics.”<sup>7</sup>**

Grantees then turned their attention to the federal level, recognizing the U.S. Department of Education would be the ultimate arbiter on this issue. The Alliance pressed department leaders to clarify that the California Department of Education guidance was consistent with their own interpretation. The federal department ultimately issued a statement on how Title I funding can be used for arts education in a 2013 **Letter to State Title I Directors** and in remarks by the Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy and Programs for the U.S. Department of Education at the 2014 National Title I Conference. Americans for the Arts helped broadly disseminate this federal guidance to California grantees and shared information on Title I with partners in other states throughout the country.

Securing state and federal guidance for the use of Title I funds for arts education was only the first, albeit critical, step for advocates. Next, other grantees, including but not limited to CCSESA and its member county offices of education, now lead local outreach, education and advocacy efforts to support districts’ strategic use of Title I funds. They use the **materials and messages** developed by the Alliance in their work with district superintendents statewide. Local grantees such as the Santa Clara County Office of Education reported that they are “reaching out to schools that are Title I funded and reaching out to districts with large pockets of Title I schools.” Grantees acknowledge there are still substantial reservations in many districts about spending Title I dollars on arts education, but they continue to share the facts and work hand-in-hand with districts and schools to identify a policy pathway using arts

education to meet Title I goals.

**The tide has begun to turn, and the foundation’s grantees have played a significant role in promoting the use of Title I funds to support arts education and advance student achievement.**

#### **Policy Milestone #4**

**Dance and Theater Credential for Teachers: California restores special requirements for arts educators, which can contribute to higher quality arts education offerings**

For over four decades, arts advocates have seen the lack of credentials in dance and theater in California as an obstacle to well-prepared teachers and to higher-quality arts instruction. The state legislature eliminated these individual teaching credentials back in 1970. According to the California Alliance for Arts Education, the state took this step when the Teacher Preparation and Licensing Law of 1970, known as the Ryan Act, inadvertently left the “s” off of the word “arts”—and the law has since been interpreted to authorize credentials only in visual art and music. As a result, rather than receiving robust, arts education-specific preparation, teachers have had to earn a physical education credential to teach dance and an English credential to teach theater. Likewise, English and physical education teachers were often assigned to teach theater or dance courses. For students, this meant a lack of qualified teachers in those two subject areas; for school leaders committed to the arts, it meant a thin talent pool for teacher hiring.

Since 1970, efforts to bring back dance and theater credentials have failed multiple times, including being vetoed by Governor Wilson in

<sup>7</sup> Excerpted from California Alliance for Arts Education, *A Policy Pathway: Embracing Arts Education to Achieve Title I Goals* (nd), 1-2, accessed December 1, 2017, [https://www.artsed411.org/files/Embracing\\_Arts\\_Ed\\_to\\_Achieve\\_Title1\\_Goals.pdf](https://www.artsed411.org/files/Embracing_Arts_Ed_to_Achieve_Title1_Goals.pdf).

1989 and Governor Davis in 2000. One grantee speculated the California Teacher Association (CTA), the largest and very influential teachers union in the state, was the primary barrier to changing the state law. Historically opposed to any policy changes that create more credentials, requirements or tests for teachers, the CTA had resisted single-subject credentials in dance and theater (or any other subject areas).

However, grantees in 2016 worked together to create a “*perfect storm*” of events that led finally to the re-establishment of separate dance and theater teaching credentials. That perfect storm consisted of three factors: (1) Create CA prioritized the adoption of new teaching credentials, bringing the attention and resources of many organizations along to work in unison for the change; (2) the 2016 push featured strong leadership and collaboration between the California Alliance for Arts Education and the California Dance Education Association; and (3) arts education advocates formed a new partnership with CTA and, more importantly, with local teachers.

Guided by five leadership organizations—including a mix of K–12 education organizations and arts education advocacy organizations—and 10 individual elected members from the field, Create CA plays a critical role in the state by unifying disparate voices and priorities for education change behind common arts education priorities. In this coalition role, Create CA organizes and supports multiple organizations to lend their resources and voices to advancing specific changes in policy and practice. As such, its decision to jointly prioritize winning new teaching credentials in dance and theater once and for all—as part of its guiding Blueprint for Creative Schools agenda—was significant.

Although many had pointed out the need for

this change over the years, what was different this time—in having the idea appear in 2015’s Blueprint—was the commitment of many organizations to pursue this change. Together, Create CA and its members targeted this policy as a priority during the 2016 session.

With the commitment to change the credential enshrined in Create CA’s policy agenda, the California Alliance for Arts Education began close work with the California Dance Education Association (CDEA) to influence the proposed legislation. Integral to their success, organization leaders say, was working in partnership with the other three professional arts educator associations (music, theater and visual art) to create clear, compelling talking points and consistent messaging for advocates (and classroom teachers) to use. Senate Bill 916 passed unanimously in both houses of the state legislature and awaited the Governor’s signature.<sup>8</sup> Governor Brown’s approval was by no means guaranteed; he had vetoed two similar bills in previous sessions. Arts educator association outreach resulted in 750 letters to Governor Brown as S.B. 916 awaited his signature urging his support.

Lastly, a game-changing piece of the puzzle contributing to the passage of S.B. 916 was the Alliance’s and CDEA’s engagement of CTA, which had consistently opposed past efforts to add the credentials. While CDEA and the Alliance worked with CTA leadership to change its position, other grantees, such as the Luna Dance Institute, targeted CTA councils at the local school level to build strong teacher grassroots support for the change. Indeed, endorsements for S.B. 916 from local CTA councils across the state removed the last major barrier to the bill and brought the teachers union (and largest stumbling block to adoption in the past) on board, according to grantees. Governor Brown signed S.B. 916 into

<sup>8</sup> ‘Perfect storm’ was the metaphor a grantee used to describe how S.B. 916 was finally passed in 2016.

law on September 26, 2016, ending a longstanding barrier to high-quality performing arts education for California's public school students.

**After 46 years, advocates, led by Hewlett grantees, were able to restore the single subject dance and theater credentials in California.**

## Grantmaking Approaches: Successes and Challenges for the Foundation and Its Grantees

### ***Factors Underlying the Success Grantees Have Had***

Hewlett Foundation grantees envision many gains that are still needed and much work to be done before all California students have equitable access to multidisciplinary arts education opportunities. At the same time, they say that the future for arts education in the state is bright, given the momentum the four milestones described above have created. Looking across the accomplishments from the past 10 years and listening to the reflections of grantees, state leaders and foundation staff, we see these factors below as contributing to past successes—and likely contributing to continued success moving forward:

### **Grantees say the foundation’s commitment to convening and fostering collaboration have informed and strengthened their advocacy efforts.**

Grantees appreciate the foundation’s efforts to do more than only provide grant dollars. Since 2009, the foundation has regularly convened the Arts Education Policy and Advocacy grantees. The foundation’s original intention was for these grantees to share information with each other. As time went on, the convenings fostered meaningful collaboration among grantees. As one grantee said, ***“In my mind, Hewlett stands alone in their willingness to partner as a funder in the spirit of collective impact. This has been a total gift to our organization, more so than a funder who is behind the curtain.”*** Grantees report they have developed a strong sense of collaboration and partnership over time and that Create CA (a key foundation grantee) has been an important ***“hub”*** to guide and coordinate efforts throughout the state.

Moreover, the grantees routinely point to the foundation’s convenings as important opportunities to compare, get clearer about the

work, strengthen relationships and align their efforts with those of other grantees. One grantee noted that ***“when we partner with other key organizations, together we’ve been able to build momentum and visibility”*** and that the foundation’s ***“building of relationships has been key to this initiative.”*** Of the foundation’s role as convener, another grantee suggested, ***“Hewlett does this quite well and should do more of it...It is very important to bring people together to articulate lessons learned and bring them to scale.”***

Bringing people together has resulted in important collaborations to help advance the foundation’s goal. Indeed, grantees say, all four policy milestones achieved in California to advance arts education have benefited from the strong collaboration and coordination of research, communications and advocacy strategies the foundation has encouraged.

### **Data and research strengthen grantees’ ability to develop targeted strategies, advocate to multiple audiences and track outcomes of their work.**

The foundation’s investment in *An Unfinished Canvas* 10 years ago set an expectation for having high-quality, action-oriented data about opportunity gaps. That report shed a one-time spotlight on inequities that many advocates and educators had suspected for some time. It also informed and spurred many of the efforts in the field for advocates to come together more formally and help California consistently prioritize arts education among other school improvement activities.

Calling out the importance of having ready access to data for planning and for case-making, Create CA’s Program Director Pat Wayne said, ***“The An Unfinished Canvas report was spot on, brilliantly spot on. It aligns perfectly with what was later reflected in the Blueprint [for Creative Schools].”***

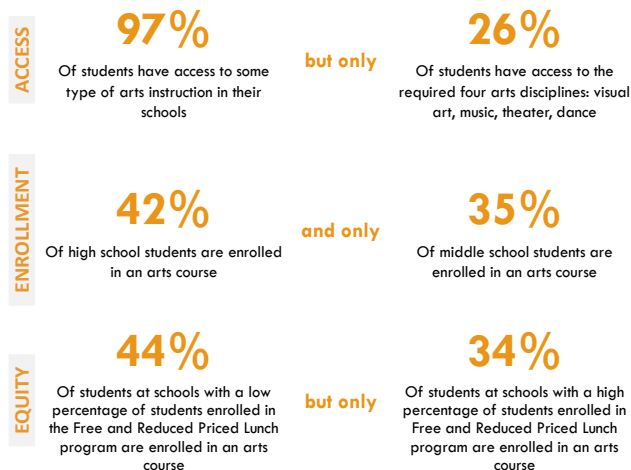
*Much of what they called out and where [Hewlett] focused their partnerships after has been incredibly strategic.”* Create CA has subsequently embedded the findings from *An Unfinished Canvas* into its own strategic thinking about how to address deficits and gaps between student populations.

Indeed, Create CA used the example of *An Unfinished Canvas* many years later to inform the interactive database and data analysis tools of the Arts Education Data Project (AEDP)—though users should note that comparisons between *An Unfinished Canvas* and AEDP data are difficult since the former focused mostly on access to arts education and looked across K–12 while the AEDP includes significant enrollment data and is constrained to grades 6–12. AEDP allows advocates to regularly monitor the status (and progress in schools across the state) of funding, access and quality of arts education. One grantee noted that *“looking at school-by-school data with school leaders is definitely eye-popping and leads to some tough conversations.”* A weakness of the dashboard, however, as grantees consistently noted, is that it reports data only for secondary schools—because those are the only data the state requires schools to report.

Because of the Arts Ed Data Project, advocates, educators, policymakers and others can see the successes and the gaps that exist in districts and counties and statewide, some of which are illustrated in Figure G.

Similarly, the Arts Education Partnership’s assembling of research and resources into *ArtsEdSearch* has given other grantees a go-to source of evidence to inform their case-making strategies and communications. This research hub, created in 2012, now contains 256 research studies that have been reviewed by experts and used by advocates to make the case for the use of Title I funds and in LCAP planning, among other wins. One grantee suggested that the research on the hub *“made the case for Title I—the data/*

Figure G. California State-Level Arts Education Data Examples



*research completely shifted the conversation. We wouldn’t have gotten anywhere without it.”*

**With the move to local accountability in California and the greater flexibilities allowed by ESSA, the grantmaking initiative and its grantees have focused on stronger and more differentiated local and district-based advocacy strategies while maintaining a commitment to state, and some national-level, advocacy and research.**

LCFF and ESSA have contributed to shifting the focal point of the work for grantees over the past five years, both forcing them to broaden their advocacy beyond state funding and policy debates and giving them new opportunities to work with local communities to prioritize arts education. This shift has meant grantees—both veterans of the foundation’s investments and newer grantees with particular expertise—have worked to develop new tools, communications and relationships that influence local policy priorities and how local communities take advantage of their new funding and accountability flexibility from the state and federal levels. Legislators and state policymakers remain an important audience (for example, in winning passage of S.B. 916) but many grantees are now working directly to influence school

## Local Successes:

LCFF, LCAP, ESSA and new interpretations about Title I have changed the arts education advocacy landscape, impacting grantee activities and strategies. With the move to local accountability in California, the foundation and its grantees have been opportunistic, focusing on stronger local and district-based advocacy strategies that Education First has distilled into three priorities:

**Priority One:** Building the skills of leaders at the school, district and regional level. Grantees noted that success hinges on having the support of leaders who can actually “get things done,” hence the need to empower them with information and the skills they need to take advantage of the new policy environment. One grantee noted, “We empower local leaders—giving them confidence and basic skills to be well informed and well tooled to make the changes they are seeking.” Another noted, “Especially with new local control, we need to equip local decision makers.”

**Priority Two:** Supporting districts in arts education strategic planning processes. Grantee efforts here have focused most explicitly on helping districts develop arts plans that can be integrated arts into district LCAPs, using tools developed by Create CA. “We are thinking writing an arts plan and integrating it into LCAP is how we’re going to get policy change in districts. LCAP is our best point of leverage,” one grantee noted. Another grantee observed that fellow grantees have been making incremental change in helping districts create arts education plans. “This has been one of the most beneficial activities [that grantees have engaged in].”

**Priority Three:** Training students and parents to be local advocates for arts education. Grantees note how important parents are to local school board decision-making processes. One said, “We’ve tried to get more information to parents because they have the strongest voices with the boards.” Further, the state PTA School Smarts Engage Program is noted for its ability to train parents to be knowledgeable about content they need to be effective advocates in their schools and with boards of education and to have the skills and knowledge to sit on committees or serve in their PTAs. The state PTA is one grantee that has decided to go all in on LCFF and LCAP, noting, “We made advancements in integrating advocacy for the arts into our School Smarts LCFF work—we want arts to be front and center in the LCFF and LCAP process.” Another noted that “we try to get students to be able to advocate in their own communities.” Although parent and student advocacy has proven successful, some grantees note that arts advocacy organizations aren’t doing as much community outreach/involvement in lower-income communities. As one grantee put it, “Disadvantaged communities are not part of the [local arts education] planning process. Arts programs need to do more listening about what the community wants rather than imposing a specific type of arts education that is not always culturally relevant to students.”

board members and superintendents and to empower and train local parent, student, teacher and arts activists. This newer, locally-focused advocacy is designed to influence the adoption of LCAPs and district budgets that set aside money for the arts. It has resulted in growing numbers of district arts plans and prioritized funding, including in a greater number of Title I schools, according to grantees.

## *The Challenges Grantees Face*

While grantees are confident the strategies and approaches they and the foundation have pursued in recent years will continue to lead to success, they also see emerging challenges and real problems on the horizon—obstacles that will need to be attended to if they are to meet the shared goal of more equitable arts education in California and Bay Area schools. We see these factors below as particular issues that have slowed down progress or need to be addressed moving forward:

### **A large equity gap persists in California regarding access to and quality of arts education, and closing the equity gap has not been a main focus of grantee advocacy.**

In 2012, the foundation explicitly added the concept of “equity” to its goal for arts education advocacy grantmaking, although its commitment to this idea has always been an implicit part of its grantmaking. Ten years ago, *An Unfinished Canvas* highlighted gaps in arts education access particularly for students in high-poverty schools. Today, those gaps remain.

Some of the grantees’ work has clearly supported equity, in that they have improved access to high-quality arts instruction. As *An Unfinished Canvas* disclosed, low-income schools—those eligible for Title I funding—are those schools least likely to offer arts programs to students. Title I funding therefore represents a valuable resource to address that gap. Grantee advocacy to broaden allowable uses of Title I funding and then make the case to school districts to use it for the arts

have been important efforts to advance equity.

The Arts Education Data Project's Interactive Dashboard is also a major step forward for advancing equitable access and quality. The AEDP enables grantees to quickly see where arts courses are and are not being offered. One grantee reported, "Because of these data we now look at the rural parts of the state (especially north and east) and... whether what we are already doing can work in those places" where arts are less frequently offered.

However, a central challenge to continued progress in closing gaps within and across school districts is the lack of an agreed-upon definition of equity among grantees, both in practice and in policy. Create CA's *Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning*, published in March 2017, defines equity in arts education as:

*...the right of every student to engage and succeed in powerful, high quality, standards-based arts learning PreK–12. All students from every race, culture, language background, geographic region, and socio-economic level must have the opportunity to fully develop their own artistic, cultural, and linguistic heritage while expanding opportunities to study and explore artistic expressions across different cultures and time periods."*<sup>1</sup>

Leaders of other Hewlett grantee organizations recently expressed interest in signing on to the definition of equity in the Declaration of Student Rights, though there is still not a common definition that all grantees and state and local policymakers use.

The need for advocates to agree on a common definition of equity is in part to move beyond the

tendency to repeatedly rehash the conversation about what equity in arts education really means and to move forward with actions that will address inequities. By deciding on a clear definition, and even possibly working to set that definition in state and local policy, advocates and educators can better 1) measure equity and equity gaps and 2) use those data to make the case for policy and financial decisions (e.g., using federal title funds to expand arts courses in specific schools that lag behind others in access to high-quality arts courses).

Once advocates agree on a definition they will also be able to identify the metrics that can measure how equity gaps change. As one grantee summed up, "*We really need to think about what we are looking at in terms of equity in arts education. Racial demographics, schools, art form itself? The Arts Education Data Project is the tool we have now but so much is unaccounted for.*" Questions we heard from grantees about specific ways to measure included: Is increasing equity about access, quality or both? Is it about culturally relevant pedagogy and art forms? Should equity include how low-income parents and students and people of color are involved in creating arts plans?

**State policy and education leaders more strongly support arts education today, but their choices when resources are scarce do not always demonstrate a belief that arts education is a priority for students (especially compared to investments in math and English language arts).**

Grantees report that they are seeing greater support for the arts, particularly in district and school leadership. "*We've made progress and*

<sup>1</sup>Create CA, "Declaration of the Rights of All Students to Equity in Arts Learning," accessed November 30, 2017, <http://www.createca.dreamhosters.com/initiatives/declaration-of-student-rights/>.



***should recognize that—the needle has moved here.*** Grantees also report that support for arts education has been bolstered by LCFF and now ***“schools and districts are supporting arts more so than they would have in 2007.”***

At the state level, greater support for the arts is manifest in the legislature’s passage of the 2016 bill requiring single-subject credentials for theater and the arts and by a governor’s signature affixed to it—where before similar bills were greeted with a veto. It is manifest in CDE’s support for and leadership in Create CA, in having a state-supported document—the *Blueprint for Creative Schools*—designed to advance education in the arts, and in the state superintendent of public instruction’s support for the use of Title I dollars on the arts. At the federal level, increased support is certainly evident in ESSA, in which, as already detailed, there are 12 funding opportunities that state and local education agencies and schools can use to implement arts integration interventions for all students.

Grantees believe their efforts have facilitated this enhanced support, as they have worked to promote the understanding of policymakers about allowable uses of funds, educate them about how LCFF flexibilities allow arts expenditures and advocate to them that they should spend money on arts education. As already noted, grantee-driven and grantee-supported arts education and LCAP planning have led to growing numbers of district arts plans and prioritized funding, and County Offices of Education and other regional and local grantees have helped districts and schools integrate arts across the curriculum. For example, grantees’ work to clarify allowable uses of Title I funds have enhanced policy and education leaders’ understanding about how federal dollars can support arts education.

Nonetheless, despite all the work arts education advocates have invested, they worry that a broad commitment to arts education remains fragile

and that most leaders still see it as a “nice-to have.” When resources become tight and in the face of multiple opportunities and demands, state and local leaders don’t regularly prioritize it, as they do mathematics and English language arts. As the grantee who noted that the needle is now moving in favor of the arts said, ***“There’s still a gap [between what disciplines—arts or tested grades and subjects—win when they are competing].”*** Another put an even finer point on the concern, ***“No one says they are opposed to the arts; it’s a matter of competing priorities.”***

**Individual leaders “who get it” are key for policy change and are difficult to replace.**

As discussed above, individual leadership is important and perhaps most so at the local level, where leaders make decisions about arts plans, develop and sign off on LCAPs and serve as advocates for the arts. Leaders who “get it” will eventually move on. Grantees themselves note that local leadership has become even more important with the emergence of LCAP. They note that ***“many districts do not have a stable and strong pipeline of arts educators and arts education champions,”*** that ***“new champions must be identified and trained constantly”*** and that leadership development will be an essential part of the ***“long game.”*** As one grantee observed, ***“The fact is that many leadership changes—from state leaders to local advocacy champions—force grantees to repeatedly build understanding of and will for the arts in communities.”***

Grantees—who have appreciated and benefited from the commitment of many high-level state leaders over the past eight years—see a risk that policy gains could be undone when these leaders (especially Governor Brown and Superintendent Torlakson) move on and are replaced by newly elected officials. One grantee worried, ***“As we change to a new governor and state superintendent, I’m worried we could see that if people get elected and don’t care about arts***

***education, we will have some major issues. We possibly can't overcome institutional barriers and this could set back many gains."***

Grantees also know that the restructuring and strategic planning of Create CA took advantage of strong education policy leadership from the Governor's Office, Department of Education, CCSESA, California Alliance for Arts Education and California State PTA. And there have been key arts education advocacy leaders, including Joe Landon at the Alliance and Pat Wayne at Create CA, who have taken on formal and informal leadership roles to build coalitions and share information and ensure common messaging.

Grantees are contemplating a key question: ***"What happens when leaders move on?"*** One had an answer: ***"Building leadership capacity needs to be an on-going thing: making research available, providing resources, best practices, strategies because of the [ongoing] changes we see in leadership across organizations."***

### **There is an absence of data but not necessarily a desire to focus on its acquisition.**

Access to arts education has changed in districts and schools in concrete ways. But, while anecdotes exist, consistent, reliable, cross-district data do not yet exist. Due to the foundation's grantmaking and work of grantees, more and better quality data are finally being collected and can be tracked moving forward—via the Arts Ed Data Project and a number of county and local initiatives. However, there is still a great need for comprehensive, statewide K–12 data and data collection and dissemination systems that advocates can use to refine their strategies and tell their stories.

In particular, the absence of data for elementary students, even though data are available for grades 6–12, is a case in point, making it difficult to monitor progress in closing equity gaps. But it

is also important to call out a special challenge for the arts education advocacy grantmaking community: prioritizing more data collection and research at the expense of other activities, when time and resources are finite. Two grantees noted how important it would be to publish another report, such as *An Unfinished Canvas: Where are we now, 10 years later?* But others expressed concerns about getting too caught up in the data. ***"Should we spend time and resources on collecting data if it continues to tell us what we already know?"*** one grantee asked, reflecting the concerns of others.

## Conclusions and Implications for Strategy

The quilt of national, state and local grantees that the Hewlett Foundation have played a substantial role in winning changes in California for prioritizing policymakers' commitment to arts education and beginning to close gaps in access and opportunity. Just as important, grantees believe that the foundation has played an important role in their accomplishments, serving as more than just *“a funder behind a curtain.”* ***By convening grantees so they could learn from each other, helping them get clear about their work, and aligning their objectives and fostering collaborations, the foundation has helped grantees build momentum and win several successes over the last decade. Indeed, according to one grantee, the foundation's relationships with its grantees “has been key to this initiative.”***

Still, the foundation and grantees remain far from the goal of all California students—especially those in struggling schools and low-income communities—benefiting from robust and high-quality arts education on a regular basis. Moreover, changes in state leadership over the coming year, coupled with ongoing leadership changes at the local level, conspire to make the work going forward harder and threaten to slow down momentum.

As the Performing Arts Program takes stock of both successes won and imminent—and considers how and whether to adjust its strategy moving forward—we think these questions, raised by this evaluation, deserve attention and consideration:

- + Given uneven data in the state, how can the foundation (and its grantees) more firmly define whether it is increasing access to and the quality of arts programming? How can outcomes become more specific and measurable, such as the number of districts with high-quality arts plans? What specific outcomes should

there be for the Bay Area?

- + How can future grantmaking more directly work to close very real and persistent equity gaps in access to arts education? What can the foundation do to help grantees develop coherent definitions and metrics for equity? What can it do to help grantees more regularly prioritize the challenges of equity and to pursue strategies that can help close specific gaps, both those between advantaged and disadvantaged communities and between rural and urban/suburban communities?
- + Now that California has some of the policy infrastructure it needs to advance the foundation's goal of high-quality, sequential arts education for all, how can the Performing Arts Program stay focused on grants that will have a demonstrable impact on the Bay Area, even if they are outside the region?
- + Should the Education and Performing Arts programs work together and adopt shared goals for change in California moving forward? If so, what goals would be appropriate, and what would a shared commitment look like?

We have appreciated the opportunity to work closely with the Performing Arts Program and its grantees over the past six months to learn more about their accomplishments, their worries and their reflections for the future. And we look forward to working with the foundation and its grantees in the months ahead to determine how to incorporate these developments into future grantmaking priorities.

## Appendix

### *Appendix A: Methodology*

We created a research plan using multiple methods to conduct this evaluation of the Performing Arts Program’s policy and advocacy grantmaking. The full list of research questions is in Appendix B. Our methodology to address those questions included:

1. **Document Review.** We reviewed and analyzed internal Foundation strategy documents, grantee reports and key publications (e.g., *An Unfinished Canvas*, *A Blueprint for Creative Schools*). This research informed the questions we asked interviewees.
2. **Grantee and Stakeholder Interviews.** We conducted in-depth phone interviews with 28 leaders in the arts education advocacy and policy field, including current and former program staff, current and former Hewlett grantees, peer funders, policymakers and other thought leaders. We developed customized interview protocols based on the role of the individual we interviewed. A list of interviewees is in Appendix C.

Because the Hewlett Foundation is a prominent leader in—and primary funder of— arts education in California, there are relatively few experts in the field who are not current or former Hewlett grantees or staff. To mitigate self-report bias of the current and former grantees and staff, we interviewed eight stakeholders who are not current or former grantees or staff (eight of 28 total interviewees).

3. **Focus Groups.** We conducted four focus groups of current Hewlett Foundation advocacy and policy grantees to test and elaborate emerging findings from our document review and grantee and stakeholder interviews. A list of focus group participants is in Appendix D.

## Appendix B: Research Questions

Theme	Research Questions
<b>Defining Success for Equity of Access</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is an ambitious but achievable goal for improving arts education for all students in California—for the foundation and its grantees to focus on?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. How long will it take to achieve this goal, and what will need to change specifically?</li> <li>b. What would be expected “markers of progress” along the way?</li> <li>c. What could be a short term (3–5 year) goal?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What top challenges need to be overcome toward accomplishing this goal?</li> <li>3. What activities or efforts—such as advocacy, research, coalition-building, policy implementation, etc.—is most needed to address these challenges?</li> <li>4. What ways specifically can the foundation champion and accelerate a focus on equity and equitable access with its grantee organizations?</li> </ol>
<b>Prioritizing Advocacy Efforts</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How does the current California arts education policy landscape and what is achievable compare to where grantees and the foundation have focused their efforts in the recent past (past 10 years)?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Has the landscape—including the nature of the problem or opportunity—changed significantly during this time? How?</li> <li>b. Is there new research or knowledge that could be better used now to address the problem of inequitable arts education?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Are there specific changes (e.g., policy, practice) the foundation (and its grantees) should be aiming to accomplish?</li> <li>3. What key investments (continued, doubled-down or new) from the foundation will be necessary to help grantees make progress toward the short- and long-term goals you’ve suggested?</li> <li>4. What can the Performing Arts Program learn from other foundation programs about successfully funding grantees who advocate for policy change?</li> </ol>
<b>Identifying Leaders &amp; Influencers</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Which organizations and leaders seem best poised to advance different levers for change in California?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Are there new leaders or organizations who are not current foundation grantees but poised to make a difference with extra support?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. Who are the major players or influencers who comprise the “ecosystem” of K–12 education and arts education today, including advocates and communicators, capacity-builders and technical assistance providers, and researchers?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Which role does each play? How may that role change, if at all?</li> </ol> </li> <li>3. What roles do other funders play in California to support equitable arts education?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are the opportunities for collaboration?</li> <li>b. What are the gaps in funding the Hewlett Foundation should consider filling?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>
<b>Mitigating Risks &amp; Monitoring Progress</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What are the major risks to the new strategy, both for the foundation and for its grantees?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What are ways these risks can be mitigated?</li> </ol> </li> <li>2. What strategy monitoring will be needed to examine progress and make course corrections?               <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. What assumptions about challenges or opportunities seem most risky or most tentative?</li> </ol> </li> </ol>

Theme	Research Questions
Defining the Foundation's Support to Grantees	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. How tightly should the foundation manage grantees' expected outcomes and strategies?</li> <li>2. Should the foundation ensure grantees are working on common priorities? If yes, how?</li> <li>3. Should grantees be expected to all work toward a common, specific goal for change? Or should grantees be funded with more general support to build capacity and move quickly as new opportunities for change emerge?</li> <li>4. Based on the past five to 10 years of leadership, which roles for the foundation to support the field should be prioritized?</li> <li>5. Are there other ways the foundation should support grantees to achieve their common goals in addition to grant funding?</li> </ol>

### Appendix C: Interviewees (August–October 2017)

Type	Name, Title, Org
Hewlett Foundation Staff	<p><b>Jessica Mele</b>, Program Officer, Hewlett Foundation</p> <p><b>John McGuirk</b>, Program Director, Hewlett Foundation</p>
Former Hewlett Foundation Staff	<p><b>Moy Eng</b>, former Program Director, current Executive Director, Community Arts Stabilization Trust</p> <p><b>Julie Fry</b>, former Program Officer, current CEO, CA Alliance for the Humanities</p>
Advocacy & Policy Grantees	<p><b>Joe Landon</b>, Executive Director, CA Alliance for Arts Education</p> <p><b>Sibyl O'Malley</b>, Senior Director of Advocacy and Communications, CA Alliance for Arts Education</p> <p><b>Laura Smyth</b>, Program Director of CA Alliance Title I Initiative</p> <p><b>Sarah Anderberg</b>, Director, CCSESA Arts Initiative</p> <p><b>Louise Music</b>, Director of Integrated Learning and <b>Derek Fenner</b>, Program Manager, Alameda County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Pat Wayne</b>, Program Director, Create Ca</p> <p><b>Jane Best</b>, Director, Arts Education Partnership</p> <p><b>Janet Brown</b>, Executive Director, Grantmakers in the Arts</p> <p><b>Sofia Klatzker</b>, Executive Director, <b>Karen Louis</b>, Deputy Director, and <b>Abril Iñiguez-Rivas</b>, Program Manager, Arts for LA</p>

Type	Name, Title, Org
<b>Advocacy &amp; Policy Grantees</b>	<p><b>Denise Grande</b>, Director of Arts Education, LA County Arts Commission</p> <p><b>Narric Rome</b>, Vice President of Gov't Affairs and Arts Education, Americans for the Arts</p> <p><b>Sherry Griffith</b>, Executive Director, and <b>Lisa Borrego</b>, School Smarts Director, CA PTA</p> <p><b>Nancy Ng</b>, Director of Community Engagement, Luna Dance Institute</p> <p><b>Jeannine Flores</b>, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Santa Clara County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Aaron Bryan</b>, Program Manager for Visual and Performing Arts, Fresno County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Heidi Kershaw</b>, Executive Director, California State Summer School for the Arts (CSSSA) Foundation, and <b>Michael Fields</b>, Director, CCSSA</p>
<b>Former Grantees</b>	<p><b>Paul Richman</b>, Consultant, CA Alliance for Continuous Improvement (former Executive Director of CA PTA and former Chief of staff for CA School Boards Association).</p> <p><b>Danielle Brazell</b>, General Manager, Department of Cultural Affairs, City of Los Angeles</p> <p><b>Bob Lenz</b>, Executive Director, Buck Institute (formerly at Envision Education)</p> <p><b>Bob Bullwinkel</b>, former VAPA coordinator for Fresno County Office of Education</p>
<b>Peer Funders</b>	<p><b>Tom DeCaigny</b>, Director of Cultural Affairs, San Francisco Arts Commission</p> <p><b>John Abodeely</b>, Acting Executive Director, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities</p>
<b>Other</b>	<p><b>Craig Cheslog</b>, former Chief of Staff to Tom Torlakson</p>

### ***Appendix D: October 13, 2017 Focus Group Participants***

Type	Name, Title, Org
<b>Focus Group A</b>	<p><b>Nancy Ng</b>, Director of Community Engagement, Luna Dance Institute</p> <p><b>Jessa Brie Moreno</b>, Program Officer, Alameda County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Emily Garvie</b>, Executive Director, Performing Arts Workshop</p> <p><b>Jeanne Johnstone</b>, Executive Director, Teaching Artist Guild</p> <p><b>Heidi Kershaw</b>, Executive Director, California State Summer School for the Arts Foundation</p>
<b>Focus Group B</b>	<p><b>Michelle Eklund</b>, Interim Assistant Executive Director, California State PTA</p> <p><b>Derek Fenner</b>, Program Manager, Alameda County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Jeannine Flores</b>, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Santa Clara County Office of Education</p> <p><b>Karen Louis</b>, Deputy Director, Arts for LA</p> <p><b>Tom McKenzie</b>, Development Manager, Los Angeles County Arts Commission</p>

Type	Name, Title, Org
Focus Group C	<p><b>Sarah Anderberg</b>, Director, CCSESA</p> <p><b>Jane Best</b>, Director, Arts Education Partnership</p> <p><b>Sherry Skelly Griffith</b>, Executive Director, California State PTA</p> <p><b>Jonathan Herman</b>, Executive Director, National Guild for Community Arts Education</p> <p><b>Joe Landon</b>, Executive Director, California Alliance for Arts Education</p> <p><b>Narric Rome</b>, Vice President for Government Affairs and Arts Education, Americans for the Arts</p> <p><b>Pat Wayne</b>, Program Director, Create CA</p>