



THE ALLIANCE
New York State
Alliance for Arts Education

S6318A & A6490B Information – Equitable Access To Arts & Music Education

The Ask:

1. *Are you willing to support this bill and see it through committee to the legislative floor?*
2. *If so, are you willing to sign on as a co-sponsor?*

What are these S6318A & A6490B?

- *S6318A & A6490B are bi-partisan support companion bills that address the change to the education law, in relation to adding arts and music education into the curriculum for public school students. Currently arts and music are regulatory, meaning schools have options to offer them. This change will ensure that arts and music education are incorporated into the public-school curriculum for all students in rural, suburban and urban areas, making arts and music statutory and providing equitable access.*

Sponsorship: Sponsor: Senator Rachel May – ***Passed Senate Floor Vote June 6, 2025***

Co-Sponsored by Senators Addabbo, Ashby, Borello, Samra, Canzoneri-Fitzpatrick, Cleare, Comrie, Cooney, Gallivan, Harckham, Helming, Hinchey, Hoylman-Sigal, Jackson, Lanza, Mattera, Myrie, Oberacker, Palumbo, Persaud, Rhoads, Rolison, Salazar, Scarcella-Spanton, Serrano, Skoufis, Stavisky, Stec, Weber, Weik

Sponsor: Assembly Member Landon Dais

Co-Sponsored by Assembly Members Barrett, Beephan, Bologna, Brown, De Los Santos, DeStefano, Durso, Eachus, Gray, Griffen, Hevesi, Jacobson, Jones, Kassay, Kay, Kim, Lavine, Levenberg, Lunsford, Lupardo, Manktelow, McDonald, McMahon, Mikulin, Miller, Norber, O'Pharrow, Ra, Ramos, Raga, Rozic, Schiavoni, Seawright, Shrestha, Simpson, Steck, Stern, Tague, Torres, Valdez, Zinerman

Background:

- *The current law has 12 areas that are considered statutory such as Math, English, PE, etc...The law for grades 1-8 was written in 1951 and the law was amended in 1958 to extend the statute through grades 9-12 as well. Since then, no changes have been made to this law. We are seeking support for this to update this law to be inclusive of arts and music as the only change to this law in 65 years.*
- *Bills seeking this change have been introduced in several prior legislative sessions with verbiage modification clearly indicating this is a codification bill; not curricular. We have seen increasing support for this initiative as more legislators have initially agreed to co-sponsor the bills and endorsements have been issued by the NYS School Boards Association, NYS Council of School Superintendents, School Administrators Association of NYS, NYS United Teachers, NYS Parent-Teachers Association, NYS Rural Schools Association and NYS Education Department.*

Is this another unfunded mandate?

- *No. We have worked with resources throughout NYS and learned that all public-school districts currently offer arts and music. This amendment to the law will ensure that with the 2% tax cap and other economic factors, devastating cuts to arts and music will not occur. Since all public schools already have what we are seeking, this would not create undo financial burden to school districts, administration and the Board of Education. This is a codification bill aligning the current law to NYS ESSA in support of the new NYSED Portrait of a Graduate.*

How will this be enforced?

- *State Education Department Office of Curriculum Arts Specialists will be able to monitor the continued provision of arts and music instruction.*

Benefits – What We Know: Students involved in high quality sequential arts and music education:

- *Garner, develop and maintain the 21st Century soft skill sets being sought by employers in today's job market.*
- *Develop life-long intrinsic positive social and emotional wellness processes.*
- *Have better critical and creative thinking skills so important to long term economic and personal success.*
- *Have exceptional communication skills.*
- *Outscore students globally in mathematics and sciences in standardized testing.*
- *Learn, participate in and provide community service.*
- *Possess and demonstrate cultural and civic understanding.*

Created By NYS Alliance For Arts Education

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Foundation & Expense Based Aid 2026-2027

The Ask:

- 1. Are you willing to support maintaining of full School Foundation Aid funding?***

Background: *The Governor has proposed a 2.96% raise in Foundation Aid to ensure that every school district in New York State receives at least 1% year to year increase in Foundation Aid.*

Since state law omits any reference to the arts and music as essential components in a well-rounded education, any decrease would represent an existential threat to arts education, already inconsistently delivered across the state. We support continued full funding of foundation aid, a formal review of funding formulas, and full funding of expense-based aid.

Access to a comprehensive, sequential arts education provides unrivaled opportunities for Academic, Applied, Cultural, and Social Emotional Learning.

The power of arts has been specifically recognized by the NY State Regents in their Report on Graduation Measures. The Governor, in her State of the State noted that: In every corner of the state, (the arts) provide programming that supports healthier, happier, more connected, engaged, and equitable communities.

The quality of education should not be constrained by zip-code, socio-economic standing, or demographics. Full funding of Foundation and Expense-based aid is the only sure path to equity.

The Ask:

- 1. Are you willing to support and institute the NYS Regents request for an increase of \$12 million for Cultural Education funding?***

Background: *The Cultural Education Office of the NY State Education Department oversees the operations of the State Museum, State Library, State Archives, Public Broadcasting, the NY State Summer Schools of the Arts. The NY Regents are requesting a \$12 million increase in Cultural Education funding to close gap fundings due to inflationary costs. Cultural Education plays an increasingly significant role in ensuring that our students graduate prepared for career, college, and citizenship. In these divisive and uncertain time, cultural literacy plays a vital part in students' self-awareness and self-confidence and community harmony.*

This may seem a small, even mere housekeeping, matter in a \$260 billion budget, but we can assure you that such adjustments will go a long way to ensuring that no student is denied the creative opportunities (s)he deserves regardless of zip code..

Benefits of Both – What We Know: Students involved in high quality sequential arts and music education:

- *Garner, develop and maintain the 21st Century soft skill sets being sought by employers in today's job market.*
- *Develop life-long intrinsic positive social and emotional wellness processes.*
- *Have better critical and creative thinking skills so important to long term economic and personal success.*
- *Have exceptional communication skills.*
- *Outscore students globally in mathematics and sciences in standardized testing.*
- *Learn, participate in and provide community service.*
- *Possess and demonstrate cultural and civic understanding.*
- *Ensure skills necessary for a well-rounded, informed citizen of society.*
- *Establishes knowledge of empathy, kindness, and cultural awareness for social-emotional well-being.*
- *Provides a stable and well-equipped future workforce for economic stability in NYS.*

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THE ALLIANCE
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State Budget 26-27 Information – Additional Curriculum Associate In the Arts @ SED

The Ask:

- 1. Are you willing to support the addition of a line item in the Governor's Proposed Budget?*
- 2. Are you willing to support maintaining its inclusion in the finalized version of the Budget?*
- 3. Are you willing to follow-up after the budget is finalized to assure that the Executive Office of the Budget releases the funds for State Education Department Curriculum Associates?*

Budget Background:

- Vital Curriculum Associate staff positions in the State Education Department were included in New York State's approved budget for the last six budget cycles.*
- We have advocated for years that these positions be filled.*
- This year, SED and the Regents requested funding for an additional Curriculum Associates, but the Governor has not included this position in her proposed budget.*
- We would appreciate support to insert this position in the finalized budget.*
- Importantly we would appreciate follow-up to assure that:*
 - The State Education Department of Personnel follows through to request filling these budgeted positions, and*
 - The Office of the Budget releases the funds for State Education Department Curriculum Staffing as per the approved budget.*

Curriculum Background:

- Historically, there was once a thriving Office of Arts Curriculum in the State Education Department that provided support to districts, schools, administrators, teachers and communities across New York State in their quest to offer access to a wide range of quality study K-16 in dance, music, theatre and visual arts.*
- By the beginning of the 21st Century, this office dwindled to one, sole Arts Curriculum Associate, a level that remains today.*
- With the advent of updated Learning Standards in the Arts in the 2017, the need for curriculum support in Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts, plus the newly added genre of Media Arts became paramount.*
- In addition to support for the development of standards-based curricula in the five arts genres, the field requires specialized guidance in other state Arts Education initiatives, including Alternate Graduation Pathways in the Arts and Individual Arts Assessment Portfolios at the high school level.*

Benefits:

- An additional specialist in the Arts disciplines will be available to support*
 - School Districts as they develop curricula aligned with the most recent learning standards in the Arts.*
 - Certified subject specialists as they seek to develop innovative materials and methodologies in the Arts.*
 - The Board of Regents as they continue to develop new strategies to assure access to equitable arts education opportunities to students across New York State.*

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THE ALLIANCE
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State Budget 26-27 Information – Support of the New York State Summer School of the Arts

The Ask:

- 1. Are you willing to restore full funding (\$2 million) for the state's New York State Summer Schools of the Arts, proven training ground for outstanding talent.***
- 2. Are you willing to support maintaining its inclusion in the finalized version of the Budget?***

Budget Background:

- The NYS Summer School of the Arts was first funded by the State Legislature in 1976 as a site-based, intensive pre-professional training and career development program.*
- Significant reduction in budgeted funding occurred in 2021 in response to COVID as the program was re-imagined as a regionally-based arts enrichment opportunity.*
- The currently proposed Governor's budget maintains funding for the regionally-based arts enrichment programs AND provides funding to redevelop the site-based program to take place once more in Summer 2026.*
- We would appreciate support to this support funding in the finalized budget.*

Program Background:

- Founded in 1976, the NYS Summer School of the Arts provided a multi-week intensive training in Dance, Music, Theatre and Visual Arts at creative hubs in Saratoga Springs and Fredonia.*
- Admission was through a highly competitive application and audition process to identify tomorrow's leaders in the arts.*
- Scholarships and financial aid made the program available to students from every area of the state, representing the full spectrum of New York's cultural, economic and racial diversity.*
- With the arrival of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2020, that summer's program was cancelled.*
- Going forward from 2021, greatly reduced funding and public health concerns saw the program pivot to a regionally-based enrichment activities provided by local arts institution providers. This served as a tool for stimulating local economies as well as serving a highly diverse pool of student participants.*
- As the state recovers both fiscally and medically, the Governor's proposed budget envisions the continued support of the regionally-based enrichment activities as well as the reinstatement of the site-based pre-professional programs.*

Benefits:

- Graduates from NYSSSA are in the forefront of their professions including the arts.*
- It is virtually impossible to see an arts presentation without seeing a NYSSSA grad. Many students say it is the hardest thing they have ever done and the most important experience in their life, even many years later.*
- NYSSSA serves as a laboratory for best practices and innovative teaching strategies for high-achieving as well as at-risk students.*
- The schools are models of excellence, functioning at the highest levels of academic achievement regardless of economic, cultural, demographic and racial backgrounds.*
- NYSSSA has always been a partner with the most renowned artists and artistic companies in the world.*
- NYSSSA identifies and trains the next generation of New York's great artists and leaders who contribute to what is a significant portion of the state's gross domestic product.*
- This program is a New York State treasure and should be provided with full funding.*

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