

# Discovering and Influencing Outcomes: Policy Implementation in K-12 Arts Education

An Exploratory  
Quality Improvement  
Capstone Project

Amanda Galbraith

December 2021

Faculty Advisor: Dr. Chris Quinn Trank



**VANDERBILT**  
Peabody College

## Table of Contents

About the Author & Dedication	3
Executive Summary	4
Introduction	6
Arts education for K-8th grade students	6
Arts education for high school students	7
Arts in other policies	8
Organizational Context	8
Purpose of the Study	10
Problem of Practice	10
Literature Review	11
Impact of legislation on arts education	11
Impact of policy on arts education	12
Impact of arts education on legislation and policy	15
Conceptual Framework	17
Research Questions	18
Project Design	18
Recruitment	18
Data Collection	20
Quantitative Analysis	23
Qualitative Analysis	34
Findings	42
Recommendations	43
Project Limitations	44
References	46
Figure 1: Courses offered during the 2019-2020 school year	8
Figure 2: Art Education Ecosystem Map	9
Figure 3: Conceptual Framework	18
Figure 4: Educator context questions and research question map	21
Figure 5: Educator efficacy in advocacy questions and research question map	22
Figure 6: Potential focus areas for ArtsEd TN questions and research question map	23
Figure 7: Survey responses for courses offered by educator's school of employment	24
Figure 8: School-based Participant Responses: Resources and Standards	26
Figure 9: District-based Participant Responses: Resources and Standards	27
Figure 10: School-based Participant Responses: Professional Support	28
Figure 11: School-based Participant Responses: Advocacy Landscape	30
Figure 12: District-level Participant Responses: Advocacy Landscape	31
Figure 13: School-based Participant Responses: Advocacy Efficacy	32
Figure 14: Top Five Priorities for ArtsEd TN as Indicated by Survey Participants	34

## About the Author

Amanda Galbraith is an art educator with the Bartlett City Schools in Tennessee. Her students have consistently received recognition and awards, and many have gone on to successfully pursue further studies in the arts. Galbraith has served on the Tennessee Department of Education’s subject matter expert committee, two standards revision committees, a textbook and instructional materials advisory panel, grant evaluator for Tennessee Arts Commission, and numerous curriculum development teams. She serves as the co-director for Arts Leadership and Administration at the Tennessee Arts Academy. She has received the Tennessee Art Education Association’s West Tennessee Art Educator of the Year award two times—in 2011 and 2013. In 2019 Galbraith was named the Tennessee Art Education Association Art Educator of the Year. In 2017–2018, she was an educator fellow with the State Collaborative on Reforming Education, a Tennessee-based nonprofit education research institution. She is a frequent presenter at local, state, and national conferences. She earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts with a concentration in painting from Memphis College of Art and a Master of Arts in Education and Education Specialist from Union University. Along with her service in education, she has coached competitive swimming for over 15 years.

## Dedication

This capstone project is dedicated to those who encouraged during this journey: my family for the patience and encouragement; the duck rabbits for the laughs, shared endurance, and love through this journey; Chris Quinn Trank, and the amazing faculty and Cohort 5 for sharing your knowledge, experience and inspiration. Thank you to the Counterpoint team, my friends, and colleagues who showed what it looks like to generously give thoughtful feedback, support, and nurturing through this project. I hope I can reciprocate and pass it forward to others.

## Executive Summary

Arts education is associated with academic achievement, higher graduation rates, and has broad public approval (AFTA, 2014). However, not all of Tennessee's students currently have access to arts education despite supportive legislation, a widespread presence of successful programs, and an active ecosystem of supportive arts-education focused professional organizations.

### Problem of Practice

As an active member of the Tennessee arts education ecosystem, ArtsEd TN has made it their mission to work toward creating access to arts education for all students. Currently ArtsEd TN is faced with decisions about where to focus its efforts to achieve its mission of providing arts education to all students. To do so, the organization must have information about educators' perceptions of the state of arts education. The purpose of this project is to provide that information.

### Research Questions and Findings

Research Question 1: How do those involved in arts education legislation, policy and implementation describe the current status of arts education in Tennessee?

Participants described the status of arts education in Tennessee a varying landscape due to competing priorities and differences in the perceived value of arts education. Survey responses suggested access to arts education for students is influenced by resource allocation at the school, district, and community levels.

School-based participants reported materials, equipment and facilities were more sufficient than funds and instructional time to teach their content area standards. School-based participants described competition for resources in the areas of scheduling and physical classroom space within schools as well as differences in resources between schools within the same districts and communities. In contrast district level participants differed from school-level participants only in that they did not perceive access to funds and instructional time for teachers to teach their content area standards as an issue. This different perception may reflect the advocacy and influence district arts leaders have on allocating resources.

Participants also described differences in value placed on arts education within schools, districts, and communities. Among the indicators of positive value within schools was an appreciation of a school's ability to offer arts classes to benefit students. However, there was some concern from school-level participants that arts classes are perceived to be scheduling tool that serves the needs of other areas. Participants also reported variation in resource allocation decisions at the district level and in community interest and support.

Research Question 2: How are arts education legislation and policies implemented in Tennessee?

Arts education legislation and policies are inconsistently implemented across Tennessee. Survey participants, who represented 40 out of 147 districts reported variation between

schools in access to arts education for students. Arts education is thriving in some schools and districts while it is non-existent in others.

Research Question 3: How do arts education stakeholders envision their role in implementing arts education in Tennessee?

Arts educators and supporting organizations reported taking consistent action to assure that policy is implemented. They intended to remain in the profession and are personally committed to implementing arts education. Many indicated that they hoped a role for ArtsEd TN was to educate the community outside of schools of the value of arts education so that the responsibility did not fall only on educators.

## Recommendations

1. Connect with public and non-profit partners to influence federal policy
  - Establish relationships with regional and national organizations that are working to advance arts education, including professional associations such as National Art Education Association (NAEA), National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), National Dance Organization (NDO), Educational Theater Association (EdTA), Country Music Association (CMA) Foundation, National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation, Americans for the Arts, and others.
2. Continue implementing strategies to influence state policy.
  - Continue to build knowledge and relationships with Tennessee legislators, especially Tennessee's House and Senate Education Committee through meetings.
  - Continue to track and monitor proposed legislation and provide consultation to policymakers when needed.
  - Evaluate expanding relationships to include the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA), the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), and others who may have influence in the education sector.
  - Invest in developing briefing papers to inform policymakers about the value and benefits of arts education.
3. Invest in local policy and implementation.
  - Invest in building capacity at the local level, including but not limited to goal setting, coalition building, and advocacy training.
  - Invest in research that will highlight best practices on issues such as scheduling, facility use, funding, and arts education expansion models.

## **Introduction**

Arts education is associated with academic achievement, higher graduation rates, and has broad public approval (AFTA, 2014). However, not all of Tennessee's students currently have access to arts education. According to the most recent available data from the Tennessee Arts Education Data Project (2021) out of 1,684 traditional public schools there were 218 schools without art programs in 2020. This represented an increase from 145 traditional public schools without arts programs in 2015. Schools without arts programs impacted 66,136 students in 2020, an increase from 49,711 in 2015 (TNAEDP, 2021).

While the data indicates 65% of elementary schools, 73% of middle schools, 78% of high schools, and 53% of mixed-grade schools (TNAEDP, 2021) offered access to music and art education as outlined in the law in 2020, it also suggests there are gaps between policy and access to arts education for all K-12 students.

### **Arts education for K-8<sup>th</sup> grade students**

State legislation mandates arts education for students in K-8<sup>th</sup> grade. Tennessee Code Title 49 states the following:

- a) The course of instruction in all public schools for kindergarten through grade eight (K-8) shall include art and music education to help each student foster creative thinking, spatial learning, discipline, craftsmanship and the intrinsic rewards of hard work.
- b) Local boards of education are encouraged to fully implement the art and music standards adopted by the board of education through both art and music classes, as well as integration into other core academic subjects (Tennessee Code Title 49-Education Chapter 6 Elementary and Secondary Education Part 10- Curriculum Generally 49-6-1025 Art and music education, 2016).



Additionally, the Basic Education Program (BEP) funding formula funds one art teacher and one music teacher at the elementary level for every 525 students (TNSBE, 2020) and there are State Board approved academic standards for dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual art for each grade level from kindergarten through eighth grade. During the 2019-2020 school year, elementary students were enrolled in fine arts classes at a rate of 82% overall, with 1% of students enrolled in dance, 2% in media arts or other, 81% in music, 1% in theater, and 69% in visual arts (TNAEDP, 2021). Middle school students were enrolled in fine arts classes at a rate of 74% overall, with 1% of students enrolled in dance, 3% in media arts or other, 51% in music, 5% in theater, and 44% in visual arts (TNAEDP, 2021). Therefore, even though more schools at the middle level offer arts programs than their elementary counterparts, the percentage of enrolled students was lower across middle school arts disciplines. This difference is likely a result of differences in class scheduling between elementary and middle schools. A middle school student usually takes a class in one art content area multiple days per week rather than taking classes in multiple art content areas, which is more typical in an elementary schedule.

### **Arts education for high school students**

Tennessee's high school graduation requirements include one full Fine Arts credit as well as an optional elective focus of three full credits in the Fine Arts (SBE Policy 2.103). There are State Board approved standards for all high school Fine Arts courses including dance, media art, music, theater, and visual arts. During the 2019-2020 school year, students were enrolled in Fine Arts courses at the high school level at a rate of 49% overall, with 1% of students enrolled in dance, 1% in media arts/ other, 23% in music, 23% in visual arts, and 9% in theater (TNAEDP, 2021).

Figure 1: Courses offered during the 2019-2020 school year

% Courses offered by type and arts discipline at the school level for all schools, 2019-2020 school year				
	ES	MS	HS	Mixed
Dance	1%	1%	1%	0%
Media Arts/Other	2%	3%	1%	4%
Music	78%	49%	23%	41%
Theater	1%	5%	9%	2%
Visual Arts	67%	43%	23%	39%
Total	80%	72%	47%	57%
Source:TNAEDP2021				

### Arts in other policies

Arts education at the district level is mentioned in most local school board policy manuals. Most districts (N=122, 83%) mention arts education in board policy manuals using the sample text from the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA) sample policy manual. Nineteen districts do not include a mention of arts education and 4 districts include more vague language than the TSBA sample policy. Two districts have policies that are more specific, defined, and supportive of arts education than the TSBA sample policy.

### Organizational Context

ArtsEd Tennessee is an organization that seeks to advance, promote, and support visual and performing arts education by influencing legislation and policy implementation. It is situated among the landscape of organizations with missions that influence and are influenced by arts education programs for students.

ArtsEd TN was founded in 2017 with a primary focus on ensuring all students have



Figure 2: Art Education Ecosystem Map

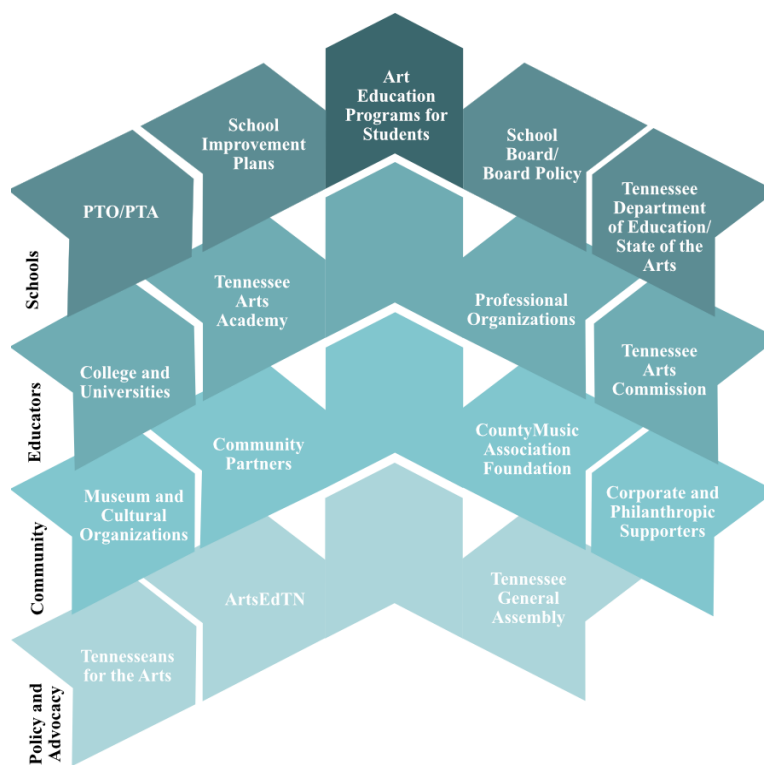
“access to a comprehensive and sequential art education provided during the school day as a part of the core curriculum, and provided by a highly trained, qualified and licensed arts teacher, skilled in the subject area they teach”

(ArtsEdTN, 2021).

ArtsEd Tennessee’s leadership team consists of experts in the education and policy fields

(ArtsEdTN, 2021). Core members include representatives from state professional arts education associations and arts education corporate partners. Core members facilitate collaboration across the arts education landscape. Supporting members include arts policy and arts education foundations. These members provide funding and support for initiatives like training and workshops. General membership is open to constituents with an interest in legislative updates, field resources, and calls to action related to arts education (ARTSEDTN, 2020). Arts educators make up most of the general membership. General members can also become designated as member advocates. Member advocates are members who serve as connectors between legislators and policy implementation at the local level and ArtsEd TN.

ArtsEd Tennessee has been actively working toward several goals. One primary goal is monitoring any bills in the state legislature with potential impact on arts education. Strategies for achieving this goal include building relationships with legislators, using these relationships to



advocate for the sponsorship of arts education resolutions, and influencing bills while they are in committee and before they reach the floor in order to have an impact on any arts education related content. A related goal is to build capacity for advocacy at the local level using customized technical assistance, messaging, and advocacy templates. The desired outcome is a broad coalition of advocates with a target of one member advocate to represent each of the state's 147 districts.

### **Purpose of the Study**

The primary goal of this project is to inform ways ArtsEd TN can focus their resources to make the most impact toward the mission of the organization, which includes the goal of access to sequential art education for all students. Therefore, this project will gather the perspectives of members of ArtsEd TN as well as other stakeholders across the landscape of art education. These perspectives will describe the status of arts education, illuminate trends and unique contexts, and examine how stakeholders perceive their position and role in advocacy and policy implementation. The results of this project will inform action steps ArtsEd TN might use to apply their resources to craft a strategy to have the greatest positive impact on arts education in Tennessee.

### **Problem of Practice**

Despite the existence of legislation supporting the implementation of arts education for all students, there are students that do not have access to art education. Quantitative data from the 2020 TN ArtsEd Data Project showed an increase of schools without access to arts programs for students. This data suggests a need for additional resources to comply with the legislation. As an active member of the Tennessee arts education ecosystem, ArtsEd TN has made it their mission to work toward creating access to arts education for all students. This project will provide ArtsEd

TN insight on where to focus their efforts for the most impact towards accomplishing and sustaining their mission of access to arts education for all students.

## **Literature Review**

### **Impact of legislation on arts education**

The first specific mention of arts education in federal legislation was in 1994 as part of the Goals 2000: Educate America Act (Ruppert, 2006). Following Goals 2000, the probability that a high school would require an arts credit for graduation increased significantly across a sample of 670 schools in the United States (Elpus, 2013), demonstrating a potential connection between federal legislation, policy, and local implementation of arts education. The arts were again mentioned as a core subject in the 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, known as No Child Left Behind (NCLB) in 2001.

Even with this support, there was no accountability process or measurement attached to the law for arts education, although there was strong accountability language for math and reading goals (Vasquez Heilig, Cole, & Aguilar, 2010). The increased accountability measures for tested subjects led to a diversion of resources away from arts education in some cases despite broad public support for arts education (Major, 2013). In other cases, arts education became more integral into schools because of the legislation designating arts as core subjects under the law (Ruppert, 2006). The divergence suggests there may be differences in state and local interpretations of federal goals. This project will explore how local and state actions affect the likelihood of integral implementation, with a focus on the state of Tennessee.

The most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESSA) designated education in the arts as part of a well-rounded education (Title IV Part A Subpart 1 ESSA, 2015) and provided ten different funding opportunities for arts education (Wan, Ludwig,

& Boyle, 2018). Title IV outlined how funding can be used to provide a well-rounded education including the arts for all students, increased technology access, and a healthy and safe learning environment (Wan, Ludwig, & Boyle, 2018). Title I Part A allowed funding for educational programs that support academically at-risk students to meet state academic standards (Wolff, 2017). This provision allowed for federal funds to support visual and performing arts instruction, arts programs that engage parents, and whole school arts turnaround models (Wan, Ludwig, & Boyle, 2018). Title II provided funding for a variety of professional development opportunities, including arts-based professional learning, collaboration time between arts teachers, curriculum development, and recruitment of arts teachers (Wan, Ludwig, & Boyle, 2018). Title IV Part B Section 4203 provided funding for educational opportunities for low performing schools including before and after school arts programs and summer arts learning opportunities (Wolff, 2017).

The act also required interventions that used ESSA funds be based on evidence-based practices (Gross, 2016). This was not a new requirement for federal funding, but the ESSA act provided a broader definition of evidence-based practice than the previous reauthorization by grouping evidence into four tiers and two categories (Wolff, 2017). This expanded definition gave states more control over accountability and school improvement (Gross, 2016) but led to some ambiguity on effectively selecting evidence (Wolff, 2017). This prompted the release of *Non-Regulatory Guidance: Using Evidence to Strengthen Education Investments* by the United States Department of Education, which provided additional guidance but still allowed states to adopt their own processes of defining evidence-based practices (Wolff, 2017).

### **Impact of policy on arts education**

Before looking specifically at the relationship between arts education legislation, policy, and implementation, it is necessary to examine the ways policy is described and differentiated from advocacy. Advocacy can proactively inform policy by communicating experiences and framing issues for an audience of decision makers (Schmidt, 2020). An advocacy coalition framework is characterized by a group of people from various roles who share a belief system and act over time to enact stable policies and incremental changes (Weible, Sabatier, & McQueen, 2009). In contrast, a policy entrepreneurship framework is a more dynamic process of innovation, risk-taking, and collaboration when compared with advocacy coalition framework (Mintrom & Vergari, 1996).

Policy is what “can and should be done” as it “(a) defines reality, (b) orders behavior, and (sometimes) (c) allocates resources accordingly” (Levinson, 2009, 767) through a systematic sequence of steps to create desirable conditions (Schmidt, 2020). Policy is further differentiated as a noun and as a verb. As a noun policy describes texts that guide actions and as a verb policy describes actions that lead to outcomes (Schmidt, 2017, Aguilar & Richerme, 2020). Although policy implementation is sometimes interpreted as a process that excludes some stakeholders, it is a relational process influenced by logic and emotion (Schmidt, 2020) and a social practice that generates power through the interactions of individuals and groups (Levinson, 2009). Policy interpretation and implementation exists in a complex ecosystem comprised of microsystems, exosystems, and macrosystems illustrated in a socioecological framework for arts education policy by Abril & Gault (2020). The people who work within these systems interpret and implement policies (Hamman & Lane, 2004) and interact in the mesosystem (Abril & Gault, 2020). The process of interpreting and implementing policies has many stages and often depends on “local capacity and will” (McLaughlin, 2016, 172).

The framework of policy as the confluence of behaviors, outcomes, and social practice to influence the distribution of resources aligns with what has been observed in the implementation of arts policy. Major (2013) investigated what factors influenced one school district to continue supporting arts instruction as set by policy despite revenue losses and found the policy makers considered “personal values and philosophies of music education, the values and demands of the community, the quality of teaching...the aesthetic and utilitarian purposes of keeping music education in the curriculum, the economic value that music added, and how the program contributed to the overall image of the school district” (Major, 2013, 17). A study using a regression model conducted by Miksza (2013) found that the factors that most influenced educators to report “adequacy of resources” including instructional time, funding, and qualified teachers in the implantation of arts education instructional programs were the presence of parent and community support, representation of arts specialists in school leadership roles, and having an arts curriculum program coordinator. Other significant influences on opportunities to learn in the arts included student demand for arts classes, the incorporation of grades from arts course in grade point averages for secondary students, and the attendance of elementary school principals at arts events (Miksza, 2013).

Data on the implementation of legislation and policy in arts education has not been consistently collected on a national scale. (Silk, Mahan, & Morrison 2015). It has been more common for data to be collected by state or by groups of states. The implementation of policy and legislation has mainly been measured in arts education using two approaches, gathering information through surveys and counting things such as program availability and enrollment years (Silk, Mahan, & Morrison 2015). These studies ranged from those conducted across multiple states to those that focused on one area or district.

## **Impact of arts education on legislation and policy**

In 2017 Americans for the Arts conducted a State Policy Pilot Program across ten states with the goal empowering leaders in arts and education to influence federal and state programs, expand state policies and appropriations and improve access at the local level. This three-year initiative resulted in the recommendation of five policy goals for state level advocates to work toward. Those trends included sustained support for statewide initiatives, the implementation of arts provisions in ESSA, activation of Title 1 resources, constructing pathways for stakeholder engagement, and the voluntary revision of the national K-12 Standards for Fine Arts (AFTA, 2017). This built on the work conducted two years earlier by research teams from Americans for the Arts who reviewed twenty-two state level reports and two regional studies and determined that school size was the most influential factor in predicting the availability of arts education (Silk, Mahan, & Morrison 2015).

A case study of Boston Public Schools (Gibson, 2018) offered a look at how collective action from public and private partnerships impacted the development of arts education policy and the implementation of action steps to work toward the goals outlined in the policy. The partnership between the Boston Public Schools Visual and Performing Arts Department, EdVestors, local foundations, arts organizations, higher education institutions, and the Mayor's office was launched in 2009 with the purpose of expanding arts access for Boston Public School students. As a result of this partnership the percentage of year-long weekly arts instruction for students in grades K-8 moved from 67% in 2009 to 93% in 2015 while the percentage of any arts instruction for high school students moved from 26% to 67% across the same time span (Gibson, 2018). The number of full-time arts specialists increased by over 120 positions and the total investment by the district totaled 26 million in 2015, compared to 15 million in 2009 (Gibson,



2018). Bowen and Kisida (2019) noted that student interest, attendance rates, and parent engagement and all improved in Boston schools with arts programs. This is only one example of how changes in policy are impacting arts education. However, resources that connect data and case studies from across states are increasing in availability.

The Arts Education Data Toolkit was developed as the result of a partnership between the National Endowment for the Arts and Education Commission of the States in 2020 as part of the State Data Infrastructure Project for Arts Education (Carter & Anderson, 2020). The toolkit is divided into sections that define goals and capacity, determine needed data, offer guidance for processing that data, identify audiences, and use the data for decision making (von Zastrow, 2020). Additionally, Education Commission of the States maintains a state policy database that groups legislation by decade from 2006-2016 and 2017 to the present called the State Education Policy Tracking resource (ECS, 2020). This serves as a resource for tracking enacted and vetoed bills organized by topic and by state, including Tennessee.

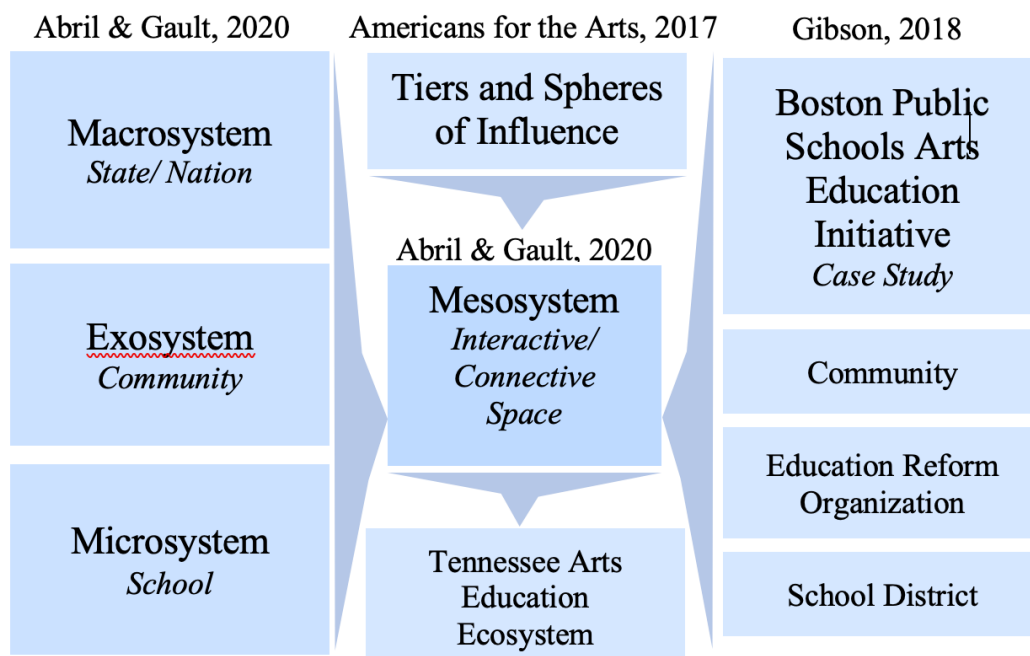
Within Tennessee there are multiple groups responsible for the governance and operations of traditional public schools. The House Education Committee and the Senate Education Committees within the Tennessee General Assembly are responsible for legislation related to all education, including K-12 public schools (TNGOV, 2020). The State School Board of Education consists of one appointed member from each congressional district, a student member, and a non-voting position reserved for the director of the Tennessee Higher Education Commission. They set rules, policies, and guidance for education. The Tennessee Department of Education works to implement the legislation and policies. In 2018 the Country Music Association (CMA) Foundation and Tennessee State Government launched the State of the Arts partnership with the purpose of “expanding students’ access to high-quality music and arts

education” (TDOE, 2020). This initiative centered around implementation with the funding of three-year grants to eight districts to expand music and arts education access through a partnership with the CMA foundation and the Tennessee Arts Commission. This partnership was also largely responsible for the creation of the Tennessee Arts Education Data Project (TDOE, 2020). A partnership between the TDOE, the CMA foundation, and the Mr. Holland’s Opus Foundation created the Tennessee Arts Landscape Study and the Arts Education Network (TDOE, 2021).

### **Conceptual Framework**

With many organizations involved in arts education policy implementation in Tennessee, ArtsEdTN will have the greatest impact by identifying and sustaining their unique niche within this collection of organizations. This project seeks to collect the perspectives of educators who are impacted by the work of ArtsEdTN. This project adds to the data collected by the Tennessee Arts Education Data Project because it collects the voices and experiences of educators in the arts education ecosystem across the state. Building on the Americans for the Arts tiers and spheres of influence in the arts education ecosystem (AFTA, 2017), the Boston Public Schools Arts Education Initiative (Gibson, 2018), and the socioecological framework for arts education policy (Abril & Gault, 2020), this project seeks to examine how policy implementation is influenced across the organizations involved in arts education in Tennessee with a focus on the influence of ArtsEd TN.

Figure 3: Conceptual Framework



## Research Questions

Research Question 1: How do those involved in arts education legislation, policy and implementation describe the status of arts education in Tennessee?

Research Question 2: How are arts education legislation and policies implemented in Tennessee?

Research Question 3: How do arts education stakeholders envision their role in implementing arts education in Tennessee?

## Project Design

### Recruitment

This project set out to gather perspectives of people involved in the implementation of arts education policies. I leaned on themes from the literature and worked with ArtsEd TN to develop questions for the survey. ArtsEd TN initially sent an email invitation to participate in the survey to their membership roster of 1,500 members. A week after the initial invitation, the Tennessee Arts Academy, a partner organization, also sent a link to their email database with an

invitation to participate. This resulted in a response of 175 participants, or a response rate of 11.6%. However, 23 of the responses were 5% complete and 9 of the responses were 26% complete. Those responses were not included in the data analysis or findings, which brought the sample size to 143. There are 1,684 traditional schools in Tennessee (TNAEDP, 2021). Of those schools, 962 (57%) are elementary schools, 296 (18%) are middle schools, 377 (22%) are high schools, and 49 (3%) are mixed grade schools (TNAEDP, 2021). Of the 143 responses, 40 (28%) represented elementary schools, 41 (29%) represented middle schools, 38 (26%) represented high schools, 10 (7%) represented districts, and 14 (10%) represented other, which included mixed-grade schools, higher education, or community partners. Overall, 40 out of Tennessee's 147 school districts were represented in this project. Additional demographic information was not collected because it was not relevant to this project.

I worked with ArtsEd TN to develop additional questions to be used in interviews that would add depth and context to the trends that emerged from the survey results. I recruited interview participants through an optional open-ended response question on the survey. Over fifty people indicated interest in a follow up interview. I selected every 5<sup>th</sup> name and sent an invitation to participate in a follow-up interview. Six people responded to the email, and I was able to conduct five follow-up interviews, with one being rescheduled several times due to scheduling challenges and a catastrophic flood. I opened each interview with an expression of gratitude for volunteering to participate, stating the purpose of the interview as giving context to the survey results, providing a reminder that information would be coded for anonymity, and reminding participants that interviews would be recorded to accurately capture the conversation. The duration of the interviews varied from just under an hour to a little over an hour. Interview participants were invited at the close of the interview to ask questions or add comments.

## Data collection

The data collection occurred using three strategies: analyzing written documents, a survey, and semi-structured interviews. For the written document analysis, I analyzed school board policy manuals for each of Tennessee's 147 districts for mentions of arts education. I also analyzed the mission statements for each of the organizations that influence or are influenced by art education programs. That analysis is in Appendix \_\_\_\_.

For the survey I worked with ArtsEd TN to develop a survey in Qualtrics. I also worked with the Tennessee Department of Education avoid duplication with the State of the Arts initiative. I titled the survey I developed "Arts Education Implementation" and it contained the following text to inform participants of how their responses would be used if they completed the survey:

"The purpose of this survey is to collect information about your experiences with arts education in Tennessee. Your responses will be reported anonymously and will be used by ArtsEd TN to influence arts education policy development and work with districts on policy implementation. This exploration is being conducted as part of the Learning and Leadership in Organizations doctoral program at Vanderbilt University. It should take about 10-15 minutes to complete this survey. Progressing to the next question indicates:

1. You work in a K-12 school district in Tennessee
2. Your willingness to voluntarily participate in this study."

The survey included closed and open response items to gather the perspectives of ArtsEd TN members and other educators. The survey branched depending on the participant's self-identified work context. School-based educators answered different questions than district-based educators. The survey questions focused on three areas of investigation: educator context,

educator efficacy in advocacy, and preference for priorities for ArtsEd TN to address. The areas of context and advocacy connect to the Americans for the Arts tiers and spheres of influence and the macro, exo, micro, and mesosystems from Abril and Gault (2020) and the area of priorities connects to the Boston Public Schools Arts Education Initiative (Gibson, 2018).

The first section provided participants a place to describe their professional contexts and work environments. For the school-based art educators, there were 12 Likert scale questions and one constructed response question to provide additional information about the other questions. The district-based art educators survey had 5 Likert scale questions and one constructed response question to provide additional information about the other questions.

Figure 4: Educator context questions and research question map

	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3
Which best describes your education setting? Elementary Middle High District (splits to survey branch: district leader if selected, see below) Other			
School-based educator branch			
To what extent are the following classes offered for students in the school where you teach? Dance Media Arts Music Theater Visual Arts			
To help us better understand the conditions in your school please add any details about the above questions here:			
I can teach my content standards with the equipment and supplies that are provided by my school or district.			
I can teach my content standards with the facilities that are provided by my school or district			
I can teach my content standards with the funds that are provided by my school or district			
I can teach my content standards with the time that I am given			
I have access to content specific professional development			
My district has a designated district leader for arts education			
My district provides a standards-based arts curriculum			
My school receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district			
There is community and parent support for arts education at my school			

To help us better understand the conditions in your school please add any details about the above questions here:			
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District-based educator branch	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3
Teachers can teach content standards with the funds that are provided			
Teachers can teach content standards with the facilities that are provided			
Teachers can teach content standards with the materials and equipment that are provided			
Teachers can teach content standards with the time that is provided			
The district receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district			
To help us better understand the conditions in your district, please add any details about the above questions here:			

The second section for educators working in a school setting examined potential policy and implementation changes and opportunities for advocacy. There were also questions to assess how participants viewed their efficacy in advocacy and policy implementation. There were 10 Likert scale questions and one constructed response question in this section.

Figure 5: Educator efficacy in advocacy questions and research question map

	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3
There have been changes to arts education programs in my school/ district during the 19-20 or 20-21 school years			
I have heard there may be changes to arts education programs in my district for the 21-22 school year			
My district seeks recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are made			
I can share an example of an arts education program in my school that is working well			
I have an understanding of how things really get done in my school/school district			
I have access to community members/ parents who I can call on for support when I need to get things done			
I have access to policy makers in my district			
I have access to policy makers outside of my school/school district			
I plan to continue being an arts educator for at least the next three years			
I know people who would be interested in becoming members of ArtsEd TN			
To help us better understand the conditions in your district, please add any details about the above questions here:			

The third section outlined potential actions ArtsEd TN aligned with the mission of ArtsED TN. Rather than asking participants to rank order the options due to the number of potential actions, participants were asked to select three most valuable actions.



Figure 6: Potential focus areas for ArtsEd TN questions and research question map

	RQ 1	RQ 2	RQ 3
<p>As ArtsEdTN pursues its mission to support, advocate and advance arts education in TN, please select the three actions below that would be the most important to you.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Build a repository of effective advocacy stories</li> <li>Conduct advocacy training targeting school leadership</li> <li>Conduct public will campaign on the importance of arts education</li> <li>Continue to monitor and/or propose legislation that impacts art education</li> <li>Create customized advocacy support for individual teachers around specific local issues</li> <li>Create opportunities to showcase student voices</li> <li>Provide resources for effective diversity, equity and inclusion training</li> <li>Host regional stakeholder convenings</li> <li>Conduct relationship building and advocacy training targeting state legislators</li> <li>Continue regular communication regarding state legislative and budgetary matters that impact arts education</li> <li>Showcase effective collaborations with business and community partners</li> </ul>			

For the qualitative portions on the survey, I used the textIQ feature in Qualtrics to code the constructed response questions. I constructed themes beyond the codes from the constructed responses in the survey. For the interviews, I downloaded the transcription from Zoom and corrected inaccurate transcriptions. I also created an alternate version of the transcript that removed my questions and responses so only participant responses remained. These responses were coded using a word processing program.

## Quantitative Analysis

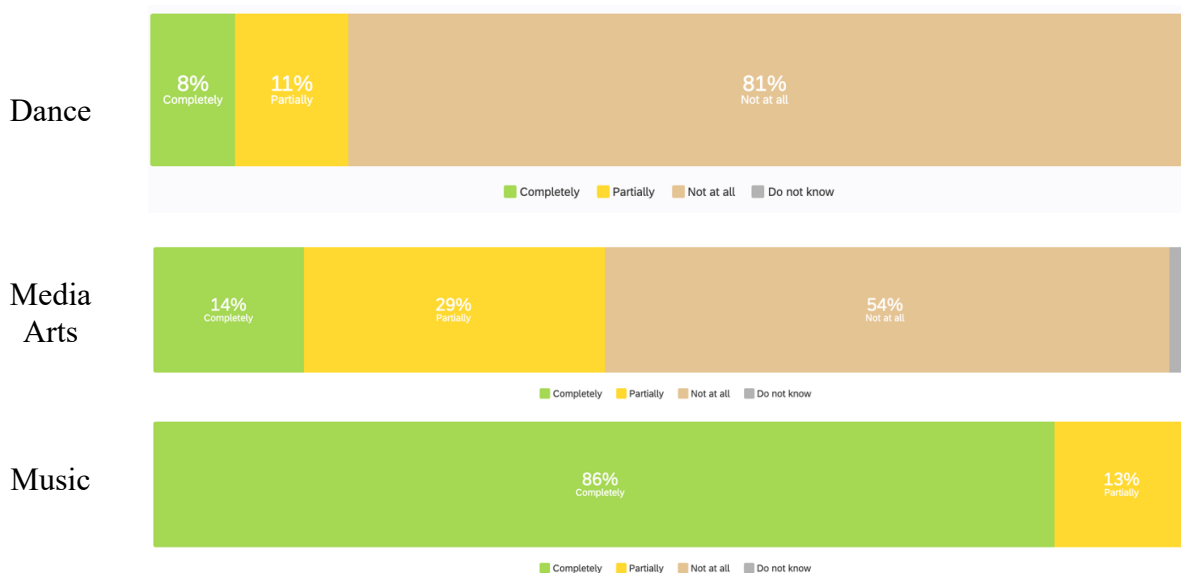
Research Question 1: How do those involved in arts education legislation, policy and implementation describe the status of arts education?

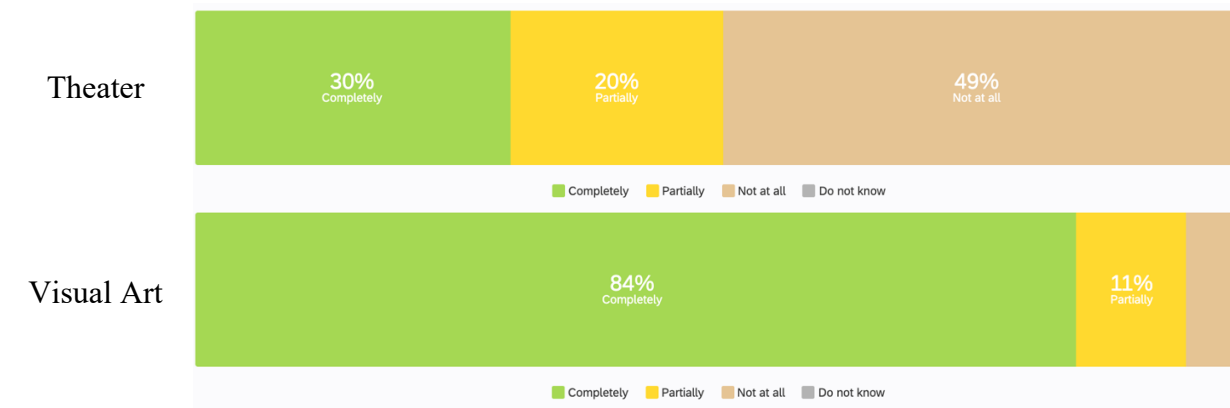
One goal of this project was to gather context around how art educators view the status of arts education. This question sought to provide context around opportunities for students in arts education, in line with ArtsEd TN’s mission of “...ensuring every Tennessee student has access to comprehensive and sequential arts education (dance, music, theatre, visual art).” I took the approach of starting with courses offered within schools as an entry point to understanding the complexity of what is happening in different contexts focusing on the aspect of opportunities for

students. The graph below is a visual of survey responses about the extent to which courses are offered in the participant's school of employment. According to the Tennessee Arts Education Data Project (2021), there are schools that offer complete access to arts education, some that do not offer access, and some that have partial access, such as classes that are only available for part of the year rather than entire year.

Of the five fine arts areas with state academic standards, music classes were most reported by survey respondents as being completely offered in schools (N=101), followed by visual art (N=98), theater (N=34), media arts (N=16) and dance classes (N=9). Dance classes were reported most frequently as not offered at all (N=89), followed by media arts (N=60), theater (N=55), visual art (N=6) and music (N=1). These numbers were consistent with the most recent data reported by Tennessee Arts Education Data Project. That report showed 55% of schools offered music as stated in legislation during the 2019-2020 school year, while 48% offered visual art, 4% offered theater, 1% offered dance, and 2% offered other arts courses, such as media arts, dual-enrollment, or art history courses.

Figure 7: Survey responses for courses offered by educator's school of employment





## Research Question 2: How are arts education legislation and policies implemented in Tennessee?

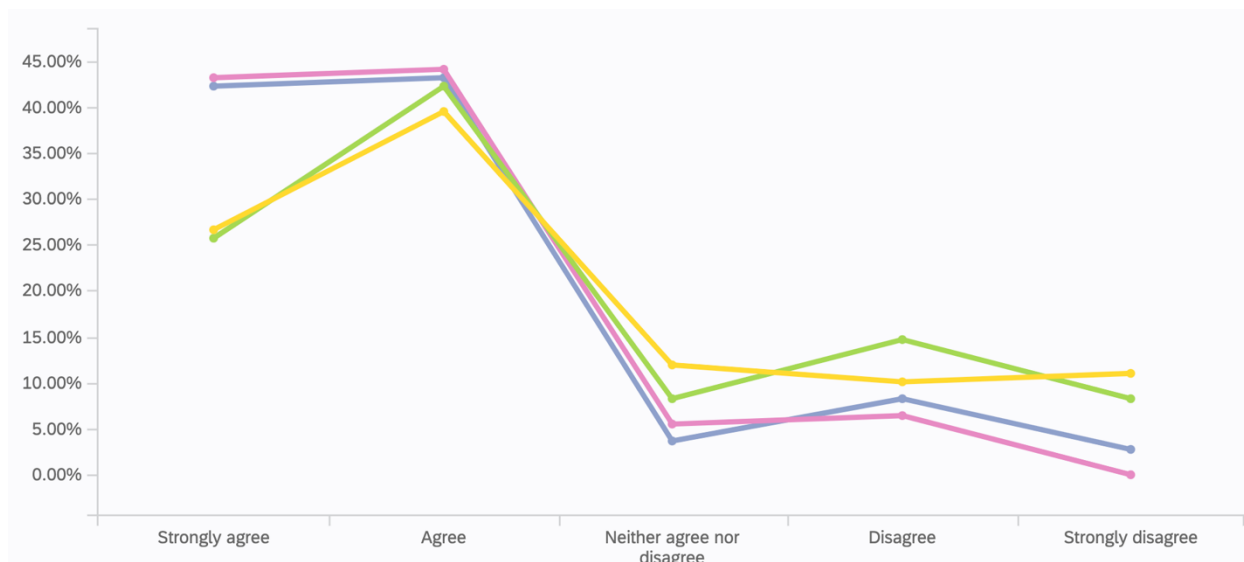
Another area my partner organization was interested in assessing was how supported and equipped educators felt in their role of implementing arts education policy in their work with students and as a professional educator. A series of questions related to the availability of equipment and supplies, facilities, funds, and time (Miksza, 2013) was designed to assess the availability of resources for teaching the state academic standards for fine arts content. School-based participants answered one version of the questions while district-based participants answered another.

On a scale with one representing strongly agree and five representing strongly disagree, school-based participants reported their ability to teach the standards with the equipment and supplies provided by the school or district at a mean was 1.86 with a standard deviation of 1.01, facilities at a mean of 1.75 and a standard deviation of .83, funding at a mean of 2.37 with a standard deviation of 1.24, and instructional time at a mean of 2.39 with a standard deviation of 1.28.

On a scale with one representing strongly agree and four representing do not know, district level participants reported teachers were able to teach the standards with the equipment and supplies provided by the school or district at a mean of 2.0 with a standard deviation of 1.02,

facilities at a mean of 1.86 with a standard deviation of 1.04, funds at a mean of 2.0 with a standard deviation of 1.02, and instructional time at a mean of 2.05 with a standard deviation of .95.

Figure 8: School-based Participant Responses: Resources and Standards

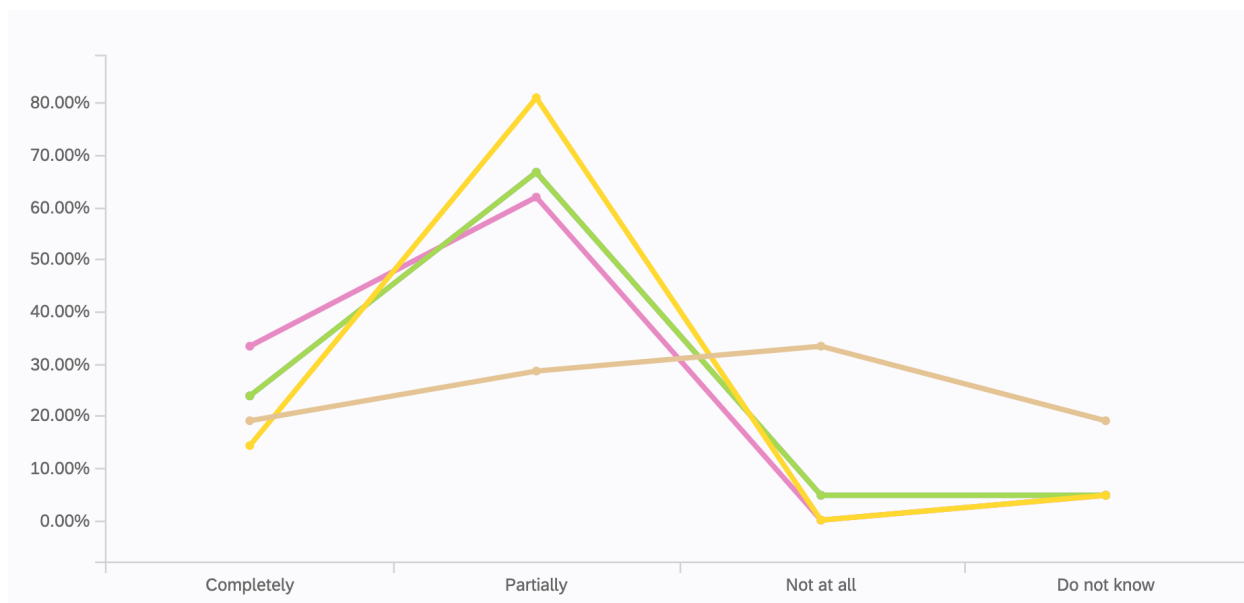


■	I can teach my content standards with the equipment and supplies that are provided by my school or district
■	I can teach my content standards with the facilities that are provided by my school or district
■	I can teach my content standards with the funds that are provided by my school or district
■	I can teach my content standards with the time that I am given

- 93% of school-based participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed they could teach their content standards with the equipment and materials provided by their district
- 94% of school-based participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed they could teach their content standards with the facilities provided by their district
- 74% of school-based participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed they could teach their content standards with the funds provided by their district
- 72% of school-based participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed they could teach their content standards with the instructional time provided by their district

- 72% of school-based participants reported they strongly agreed or agreed they could teach their content standards with the instructional time provided by their district

Figure 9: District-based Participant Responses: Resources and Standards



	Teachers can teach the content standards with the funds that are provided
	Teachers can teach the content standards with the facilities that are provided
	Teachers can teach the content standards with the materials and equipment that are provided
	Teachers can teach the content standards with the time that is provided
	The district receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district

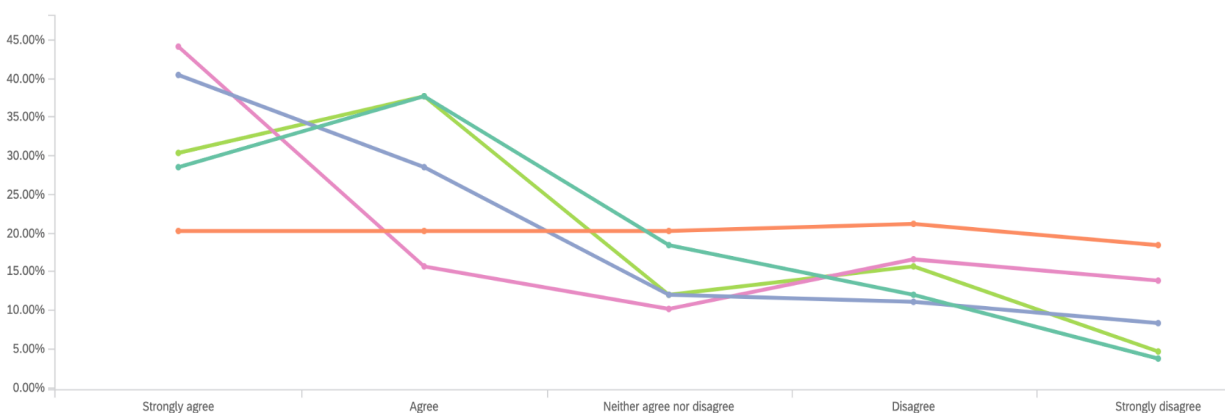
- 90% of district level participants reported teachers were able to completely or partially teach their content standards with the equipment and materials provided by their district
- 95% of district level participants reported teachers were able to completely or partially teach their content standards with the facilities provided by their district
- 90% of district level participants reported teachers were able to completely or partially teach their content standards with the funds provided by their district
- 95% of district level participants reported teachers were able to completely or partially teach their content standards with the instructional time provided by their district

- 47% of district level participants reported their district receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district

The next section of questions on the survey explored how legislation and policies related to arts education are implemented through the lens of professional support available to school-based art educators. The questions centered around professional learning, arts education leadership, curriculum, outside funding, and parent and community support.

On a scale of 1 representing strongly agree and 5 representing strongly disagree school based participants reported their access to content specific professional learning at a mean 2.87 with a standard deviation of 1.18, the presence of a designated arts leader at a mean 2.40 with a standard deviation of 1.51, a district provided curriculum at a mean of 2.18 and a standard deviation of 1.29, outside funding or support at a mean of 2.97 and a standard deviation of 1.40, and community and parent support at a mean of 2.25 and a standard deviation of 1.10.

Figure 10: School-based Participant Responses: Professional Support



	I have access to content specific professional development
	My district has a designated district leader for arts education
	My district provides a standards-based arts curriculum
	My school receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district
	There is community and parent support for arts education at my school

- 67% of school-based participants reported they have access to content-specific professional development
- 59% of school-based participants reported they have a designated leader for arts education
- 68% of school-based participants reported their district provides a standards-based arts curriculum
- 40% of school-based participants reported their school receives funding or support for arts education from organizations outside the district
- 66% of school-based participants reported parent and community support for the arts in their school

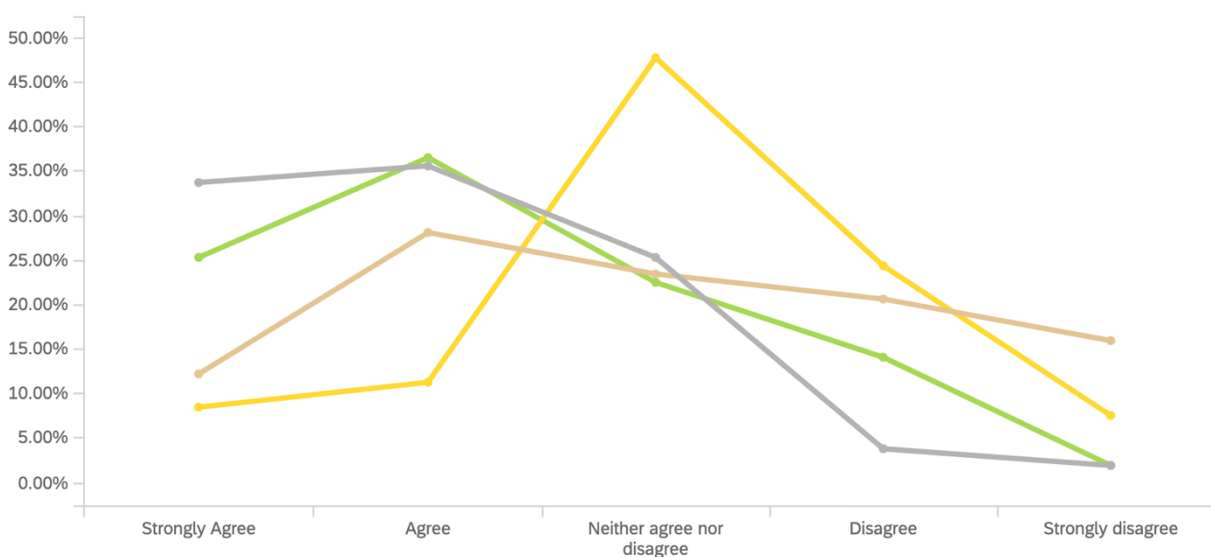
### Research Question 3: How do arts educators envision their role in influencing policy?

The next group of questions investigated awareness of areas where advocacy might be needed, perceived self-efficacy for being an advocate, and potential bright spots within the implementation of arts education policies. School based participants answered one set of questions and district-based participants answered a similar set of questions.

On a scale where one represented strongly agree and five represented strongly disagree, school-based participants reported they knew of changes in their districts during the two school years prior to this project at a mean of 2.31 and a standard deviation of 1.05, and that they have heard of potential changes during the current year at a mean of 3.11 and a standard deviation of .99. School based participants reported their districts seek recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are being made at a mean of 3.0 and standard deviation of 1.27. School-based participants reported they could share an example of an arts education program that is working well at a mean of 2.05 with a standard deviation of .95.



Figure 11: School-based Participant Responses: Advocacy Landscape



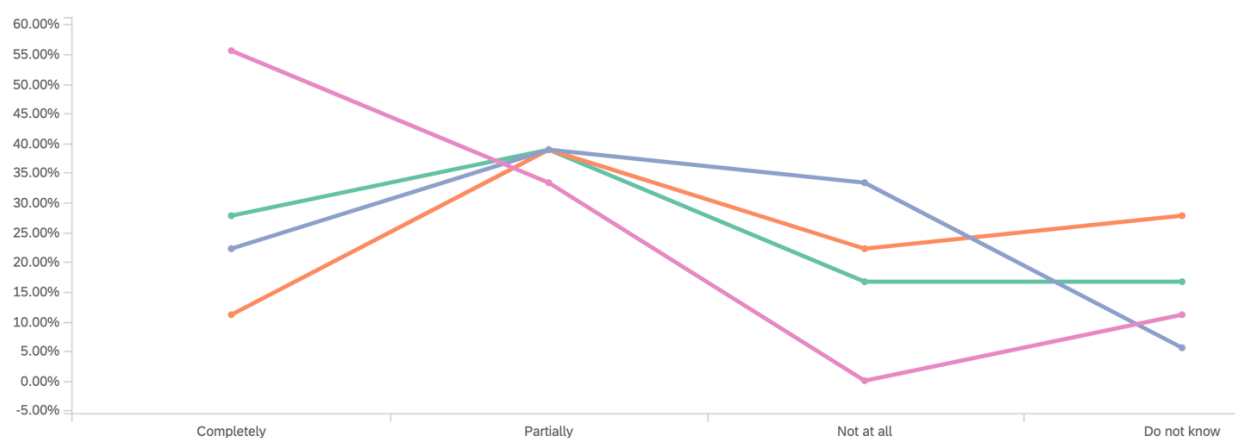
	There have been changes to arts education programs in my school/ district during the 19-20 or 20-21 school years
	I have heard there may be changes to arts education programs in my district for the 21-22 school year
	My district seeks recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are made
	I can share an example of an arts education program in my school that is working well

- 61% of school-based participants reported changes to arts education programs within the two years prior to this project
- 19% of school-based participants reported changes to arts education programs within the year of this project
- 40% of school-based participants reported their district seeks recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are made
- 69% of school-based participants reported they could share an example of an art education program that is working well

On a scale where one represented completely present and four represented do not know, district level participants reported they knew of changes in their districts during the two school

years prior to this project at a mean of 2.22 and a standard deviation of 1.03, and that they have heard of potential changes during the current year at a mean of 2.67 and a standard deviation of 1.00. District level participants reported their districts seek recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are being made at a mean of 2.22 and standard deviation of .85. District level participants reported they could share an example of an arts education program that is working well at a mean of 1.67 with a standard deviation of .94.

Figure 12: District-level Participant Responses: Advocacy Landscape



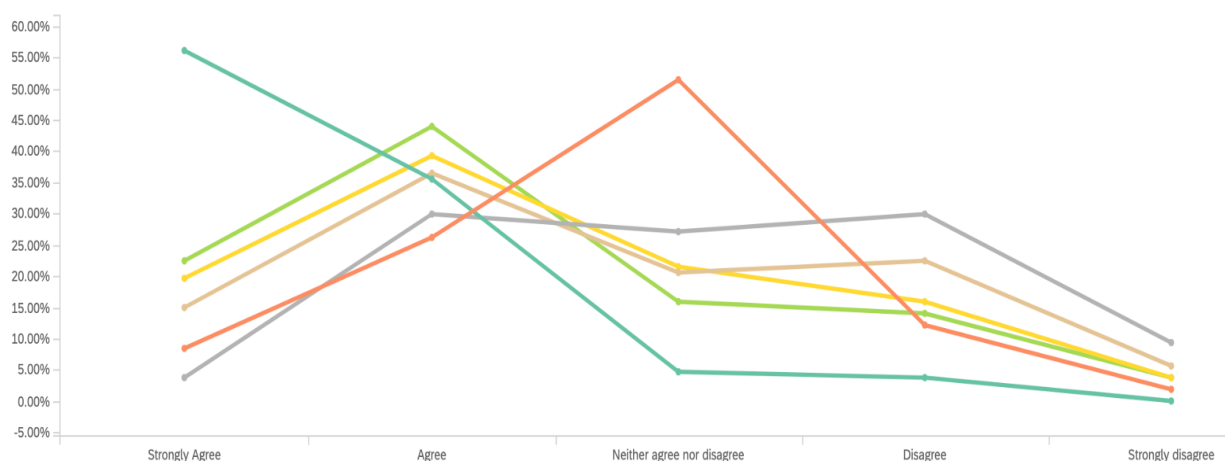
	There have been changes to arts education programs in my district during the 19-20 or 20-21 school years
	I have heard there may be changes to arts education programs in my district for the 21-22 school year
	My district seeks recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are made
	I can share an example of an arts education program in my district that is working well

- 67% of district level participants reported changes to arts education programs within the two years prior to this project
- 50% of district level participants reported changes to arts education programs within the year of this project
- 61% of district level participants reported their district seeks recommendations from arts teachers when decisions related to arts education programs are made

- 89% of district level participants reported they could share an example of an art education program that is working well

On a scale where one equals strongly agree and five equals strongly disagree school-based participants reported an understanding of how things get done in their districts at a mean of 2.33 with a standard deviation of 1.08, access to community members or parents when action is needed at a mean of 2.45 with a standard deviation of 1.09, access to policy makers within the district at a mean of 2.67 with a standard deviation of 1.14, and access to policy makers outside of the district at a mean of 3.11 with a standard deviation of 1.05. They also reported their intent to remain in the profession for three years at a mean of 1.56 with a standard deviation of .75, and an awareness of others who would want to join ArtsEd TN at a mean of 2.73 and a standard deviation of .85.

Figure 13: School-based Participant Responses: Advocacy Efficacy

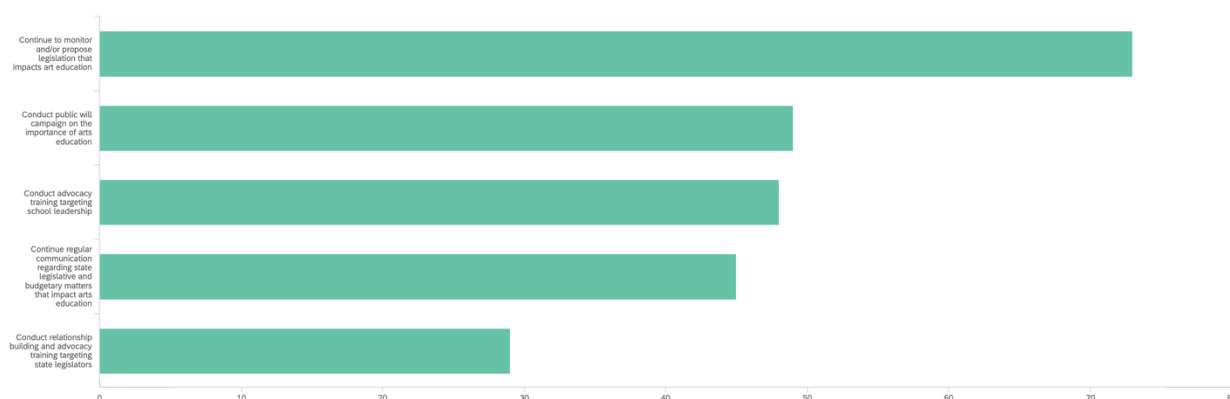


	I have an understanding of how things really get done in my school/school district
	I have access to community members/ parents who I can call on for support when I need to get things done
	I have access to policy makers in my district
	I have access to policy makers outside of my school/school district
	I plan to continue being an arts educator for at least the next three years
	I know people who would be interested in becoming members of ArtsEd TN

- 66% of school-based participants reported having an understanding of how things really get done in my school/school district
- 58% of school-based participants reported having access to community members/ parents to call on for support when to get things done
- 50% of school-based participants reported having access to policy makers in their district
- 33% of school-based participants reported having access to policy makers outside their district
- 91% of school-based participants reported planning to remain the profession for at least three years
- 34% of school-based participants reported knowing people who would be interested in joining ArtsEd TN

In another section of the survey, participants were asked to select three priorities from a list of 11 options as most important for them to see ArtsEd TN focus on. The most frequently selected item was for ArtsEd TN to “Continue to monitor and/or propose legislation that impacts art education.” The second most selected option was for ArtsEd TN to “Conduct a public will campaign on the importance of arts education.” The third most popular action that was selected was to “Conduct advocacy training targeting school leadership.” These priorities were followed by “Continue regular communication regarding state legislative and budgetary matters that impact arts education,” and “Conduct relationship building and advocacy training targeting state legislators.”

Figure 14: Top Five Priorities for ArtsED TN as Indicated by Survey Participants



## Qualitative Analysis

Research Question 1: How do those involved in arts education legislation, policy and implementation describe the status of arts education?

I coded the survey open response items related to how art educators defined the status of art education based on participant responses. Participants' written comments were grouped into scheduling, extra-curricular, personnel, course descriptions, motivation, funding, and facilities. In instances where the Covid-19 pandemic was mentioned, it was always connected with another code and therefore it was not identified as a unique code.

Research Question 2: How are arts education legislation and policies implemented in Tennessee?

I coded the constructed responses about implementation of legislation and policies based on the content of the questions in that section of the survey. The codes that related to one question sections were equipment and supplies, funding, facilities, and time. The codes for the other question section related to the implementation and policies were professional learning, arts education leadership, curriculum, outside funding, and parent and community support.

Research Question 3: How do arts education stakeholders envision their role in influencing policy?

I coded the open response items related to how arts educators envision their role in influencing policy according to the content of the questions in the corresponding section of the survey. The codes were changes that have taken place, potential changes, influence, and bright spots.

Connecting with the ideas of the mesosystem (Abril & Gault, 2020), or spaces of interaction, I looked for themes that emerged related to the spaces of interaction. The themes that emerged from the collective responses were competing priorities, inconsistent implementation, and value. I further defined value as positive internal (within a school) value, negative internal value, positive external (beyond a single school) value, and negative internal value.

### **Competing Priorities**

Schools are places where scarce resources must be allocated. One of these resources is time. Scheduling was frequently mentioned as related to art education implementation. One participant noted challenges with a hybrid schedule, another cited the lack of elementary arts classes in their feeder school, and another who wrote "... students only receive approximately 36 hours of art instruction per school year, by attending art and music only 50 minutes a week for approximately 36 weeks. That is less than one full week of school (37 hours) of instruction to teach our entire art/music curriculum." Participant responses also reported the challenges of balancing competing demands for time within the week "Our music and arts classes meet three days a week. On the other two days students attend a PE class. We do have a seven period schedule but our school has chosen to use the extra class period to provide a five day a week stem or foreign language class." This challenge was reflected longer spans of time by participants who commented "K-5 has art and music each for only one semester." and "My position is split with an art teacher. We move every year at Christmas. Our students get one

semester of art and music.” Scheduling models also presented challenges as one participant from a middle school reflected on the lack of opportunities available at one high school “...some kids that were very good at art and never got in. I was so furious because those kids needed to be in there. They never have room.”

Other resources that emerged under competing priorities were space and community support. One participant described the competition for space as “Band and Orchestra share a room. The Choir room is regular classroom. Theater meets in the auditorium. Space is tight!” Another participant described competition for community support as “places like (name removed) county and (name removed) county have an advantage, because they have one high school or two high schools, you know businesses aren't going to be as put out as seven.”

### **Inconsistent Implementation**

The delegation of scarce resources led to inconsistent implementation of arts education. Participants mentioned a wide range of ways arts education is implemented based on their experiences including one who wrote “My answers are vague because my setting changes between schools.”

Inconsistent student access to arts instruction was mentioned with comments such as “...Students who get visual art and general music typically do not elect it, but get it assigned to them randomly as part of the scheduling process...” Another participant stated “Dance, Media Arts, and Theater are offered as after school clubs through volunteer sponsors. The clubs only meet weekly or bi-weekly, while another stated “We do have a theater program at our school, but it is an after-school activity and not offered as a class.”

Inconsistent access to arts instruction was also frequently connected with personnel availability. Comments such as “We have band, choir, and art. We used to offer our students

theater, however, with that teacher resigning their position, no one has been hired to fill it,“ “Music is instructed by a certified music teacher. Visual arts and computer are covered as classified positions,” “Chorus, theater, and dance were not offered because those teachers chose not to teach during covid,” demonstrate the importance of having qualified personnel who can serve in teaching roles.

Inconsistent program development also emerged in comments such as “We have a CTE program for media arts, but it is not in the "Fine Arts" category,” “We have a broadcasting class that is considered Technology path,” and “There seems to be no drive to create a dance program. There's also no space for one.”

Funding also emerged as an inconsistency both within and between districts. One participant stated that their district “is open to helping any teacher who has needs in regards to materials or supplies,” which contrasted with a participant from a different district who wrote “...The lack of funds inhibits the ability to fully implement content standards...” Another participant noted that music and art at their school are “generously funded” and “funding alone does not guarantee a ‘great’ arts ed program” while another school-based participant from a different district wrote “The arts are not funded.” Participants also mentioned a variety of other funding sources such as grants, teacher managed fundraisers, and student fees to sustain the implementation of arts education in some cases without any district funding. Another participant mentioned their school provided funding had only increased “one dollar per student over the last 23 years.”

Access to facilities and materials was another area mentioned by participants where inconsistencies emerged. One participant noted their school had a “dedicated classroom” for music and arts instruction, which contrasted with comments from other participants, such as one



who mentioned a lack of “usable storage” and a need for “additional construction to meet a fire marshal requirement.”

Arts educators also reported inconsistent access to professional supports and content specific leadership. One participant reported that professional learning is “another strong area” in their district, which contrasted with a participant from another district who reported their time for professional learning was consumed with training for “non-arts-based classes.” Other participants reported having access to content specific development was “difficult,” “only available if we go out and find it ourselves,” and has never been available during “8 years in the district.” Content specific leadership also emerged from participant comments. One participant reported their district arts leader was also responsible for several other content areas and one reported a lack of district arts leader resulted in a “lack of common goals” and that the “quantity and/or quality of arts opportunities for students is not the same in all schools.” Two participants reported feeling supported by their district arts leaders including one who wrote their district arts leader “will move heaven and earth to get...teachers what they need for instructional purposes.”

Community support also varied greatly among participant responses. Responses ranged from the presence of “a strong connection between the school and music/arts organizations within the community. They provide additional opportunities and experiences for students” to another participant who reported “close to no outside financial aid” from community organizations. Other participants commented on variations either between years or between school locations, as stated “one of my schools receives support from an outside community initiative, while the other does not.” One participant expressed “we've tried to do some things with the community but we've had some issues, because a lot of it's very political or just a big

hot mess so we kind of just focus within our schools,” showing another ways that inconsistent community support creates a focus on more site-based programs.

## **Value**

Competing priorities lead to inconsistent implementation and are informed by internal and external value of arts education. Participant responses mentioned the value of arts within the school, sometimes framing the value as positive and sometimes as negative. The value of arts beyond the school, including in the district and community was also characterized at times as positive and at other times as negative by participants.

### **Positive Internal Value (PIV)**

Participants reported positive value within schools for arts education. One participant reported “We are proud to offer very strong programs in instrumental music, choral music, and visual arts.” Another participant’s comment mentioned a lack of funding, the positive value for arts education was expressed in the statement “We are very limited in our budgets, but we do offer the kids the chance at the classes.” One participant mentioned success in advocating for some needed equipment by leveraging the value of the arts within their school, stating “I want them to see their imagination come to life... hold it in their hand and see it and touch it and feel it and know what they made didn't exist before they imagined what it was...I told them that's what the world needs to go... you need those kids that can take an idea and turn it into a real life object or something, so yeah, they didn't have any reason to tell me no.”

### **Negative Internal Value (NIV)**

Some participants reported a lack of value for arts education within schools. One participant expressed “...Music and art teachers are regarded as vital in that they provide the

regular classroom teachers with a planning time and also can do bus duty and lunch duty and any other duty that needs tending to.”

#### Positive External Value (PEV)

Participants also commented on how arts education is valued beyond the school. One participant who self-identified as teaching in a rural district stated “the community values the arts to a high degree” and another who stated “We have a parents club that is very active and supports the teachers.” Another mentioned an overall low level of parent support but added “Parents that are involved in supporting anything in our school are supportive, but there are few.” Support from the school board was also noted by a participant from a small district who stated “the school board is very vocal and very supportive and all of them are really invested in art so we're very, very blessed that everybody's on the same page right now.” Another participant from a suburban district spoke the impact of long-term community value “...one of the local bankers in town well he's retired now, but he was a huge supporter of the arts, when I was a kid and you know that made a big difference about what we got to do here in town and I think having people like that influencing the decisions at the schools, you know and supporting willing to back it up, not only with words but with fundraising and support.” Another participant described a partnership with a local institution of higher education, stating “it's kind of spurred from the College here and it is helping tremendously because it's putting a voice behind the teachers; our voice is so small, but this is a little larger.” A district level participant shared about creating an arts leadership council in their district and added “if I expect to do more, that they should I should value their time and compensated for that so we've got a compensation plan there.”

#### Negative External Value (NEV)

Other participants described a lack of value for arts education in the community beyond the school. Participants mentioned a lack of support among the parents “very low parental volunteers” and among the surrounding community “there is not a lot of community interest in the arts.” One participant reasoned that “Our district is all about sports since it is a small-town rural school. They do not see the value in the arts as anything more than “something fun.” There were also some participants who communicated variation within their answers. One participant wrote there was community support for “sports but not for the arts” while another specified there was “community support for music, but not for art”.

Participants also described areas where value for arts education was lacking or unknown within the school district. One participant commented “The district I teach in baffles me. I have no clue what they value or how things are accomplished. It seems like it's all based on money and power.” Another school-based participant noted despite parent appreciation and support that “school leaders and community are unaware of the qualities that distinguish "good" from "great" arts education programs.” This was emphasized by a district level participant who commented “We need district leaders to not only value the arts but have a true understanding of what it takes to "support" the arts. Teacher morale is low because time and time again they are not seeing "support" by their district leaders - no new equipment, curriculum, materials or updates to their facilities. I'm advocating from my end but I need more help” Another district level participant also expressed a desire for district decision makers outside of the arts to dedicate more support for arts education “The district needs additional, adequate funding, engagement, commitment and resources to demonstrate consideration and support for "The Arts" worldwide because "The Arts" impact, influence and affect all other disciplines, professions, ethnicities and organizations directly and indirectly.”

## Findings

Research Question 1: How do those involved in arts education legislation, policy and implementation describe the status of arts education in Tennessee?

Participants described the status of arts education in Tennessee as a landscape with variation due to competing priorities and differences in value. Survey responses suggested access to arts education for students is influenced by resource allocation at the school, district, and community levels. School-based participants described competition of resources in the areas of scheduling and physical classroom space within schools as well as differences in resources between schools within the same districts and communities.

Participants also described positive and negative value for arts education within schools and within districts and communities. Participants expressed positive value for arts education within schools as an appreciation of a school's ability to offer arts classes to benefit students. They described a negative value of arts education within schools as offering arts classes as a scheduling tool to serve the needs of other areas. Participants characterized positive value for arts education in districts and communities as appreciation among parents and community members and resource allocation at the district level. Participants expressed negative value for arts education beyond the school as a lack of interest among community members and a lack of resource allocation within districts.

Research Question 2: How are arts education legislation and policies implemented in Tennessee?

Arts education legislation and policies are implemented inconsistently across Tennessee. Survey participants reported inconsistencies between schools in access to arts education for students. Arts education is thriving in some schools and districts while it is non-existent in others. School-based participants reported greater access to materials and equipment and

facilities and less access to funds and instructional time to teach their content area standards. District level participants reported access to materials and equipment, facilities, funds, and instructional time for teachers to teach their content area standards than what was reported by school-based participants. This may reflect the advocacy and influence district arts leaders have on allocating resources. Community support was more significant for student access to arts education than funding, materials and equipment, instructional time, facilities, professional development, and arts curriculum.

Research Question 3: How do arts education stakeholders envision their role in implementing arts education in Tennessee?

Arts educators and arts education organizations are active in implementing policy within and beyond schools. Participants were quick to share stories of successes with influencing policy and implementation. School-based participants noted more access to policy makers within their districts than outside of the districts. Most participants expressed an intention to remain in the profession for at least three years on the survey, and each interview participant expressed a future goal related to arts education implementation. The priorities participants selected as focus areas for ArtsEd TN suggest that while legislation and policy are seen as important, participants see educating the community beyond the school and school administration as the responsibility of partner organizations such as ArtsEd TN rather than a responsibility of educators.

### **Recommendations**

1. Connect with public and non-profit partners to influence federal policy
  - Establish relationships with regional national organizations who are working to advance arts education, including the professional associations National Art Education Association (NAEA), National Association for Music Educators (NAfME), National

Dance Organization (NDO), Educational Theater Association (EdTA), Country Music Association (CMA) Foundation, National Association of Music Merchants (NAMM) Foundation, Americans for the Arts, and others.

2. Continue implementing strategies to influence state policy.
  - Continue to build knowledge and relationships with Tennessee legislators, especially Tennessee’s House and Senate Education Committee through meetings.
  - Continue to track and monitor proposed legislation and provide consultation to policymakers when needed.
  - Evaluate expanding relationships to include the Tennessee School Board Association (TSBA), the State Collaborative on Reforming Education (SCORE), and others who may have influence in the education sector.
  - Invest in developing briefing papers to inform policymakers about the value and benefits of arts education.
3. Invest in local policy and implementation.
  - Invest in building capacity at the local level, including but not limited to goal setting for local advocates, coalition building, and advocacy training.
  - Invest in research that will highlight best practices on issues such as scheduling, facilities, funding, and arts education expansion models.

### **Project Limitations**

The limitations to this project were tied to selection bias. The sample frame for this project was existing members of ArtsEd TN. Therefore, their experiences may not accurately reflect the experiences of all arts educators because educators who were involved in this project may already be more involved in policy and advocacy activities than non-members.

## **Conclusion**

This project collected the perspectives of art educators working in Tennessee to inform the next steps ArtsEd TN should take to achieve their mission of sustaining access to arts education for all students across the state. This work serves as a bridge between the data collected by the TN Arts Education Data Project and the forthcoming findings from the Arts Education Landscape study. As the inclusion of teacher voice remains vital in the decision making and policy creation process (Schmidt, 2015), ArtsEd TN is positioned to work at the national, state, and local levels to positively impact written policy and implementation to support arts education.



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