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**AS NEW JERSEY APPROACHES 'UNIVERSAL ACCESS' TO ARTS EDUCATION,
STUDENT PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS INCREASED TO 76%**

**Third Installment of the New Jersey Arts Education Census Project Reveals
Only 11% of Students Have Access to All Four Arts Disciplines**

WARREN, N.J. – Widely acknowledged as a national leader in arts education, New Jersey is now reaching the point of “universal access” to arts education for all students, according to a new research study by Arts Ed NJ as part of the New Jersey Arts Education Census Project. The census report, *ARTS ED NOW: Every Child, Every School* revealed that during the 2015/2016 school year, 99% of New Jersey schools representing 99.4% of students provided arts education.

The census also showed that only 26 schools statewide (serving 9,160 students) reported offering no arts instruction, a dramatic reduction from a decade ago when more than 77,000 students did not have access. Once universal access is achieved, New Jersey will be the first state in the nation to be able to make this claim, according to Robert Morrison, director, Arts Ed NJ, which co-sponsored the census. However, while statewide arts education access is broad, only 11% of students enjoy access to all four arts disciplines – dance, music, theater and visual art – as required by state code.

There is more positive news: Seventy-six percent of all students (nearly 1 million) participated in one or more arts education offering during the census year, including 93% of elementary, 86% of middle and 46% of high school students. Overall participation has shown steady gains, increasing by 11%, or more than 105,000 students since 2011, and 140,000 students since 2006. Likewise, Per-Pupil Arts Spending (PPAS) has increased by 12% in elementary and middle schools and 15% in high schools since 2011.

“This report shows how educators and communities are working hard to provide all students access to arts education,” said New Jersey Education Commissioner Kimberley Harrington. “By working to engage all students with high-quality arts education across the state, we are giving our students more opportunities to use their voice of creativity and providing them skills that will help them be successful beyond high school.”

Morrison cautions that more work needs to be done, noting that there are still more than 80,000

elementary and middle school students who should be participating in the arts (based on state policies) that are not, as well as another 40,000 or so high school students who could also be participating that are not.

Moreover, when it comes to per-pupil arts spending and student/arts teacher ratios, the census revealed that both measures are more favorable in schools serving more affluent populations – something not found a decade ago.

“This is an equity issue of great importance, centered on the significant documented benefits provided through active participation in arts education,” said Morrison. “In a world where imagination, creativity and innovation are sculpting our future, ensuring we provide the inspiration for these skills for *all* students must be our goal.”

The New Jersey Arts Education Census Project is a collaborative partnership with the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, the New Jersey Department of Education, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, Arts Ed NJ, ArtPride New Jersey Foundation and Quadrant Research. *ARTS ED NOW: Every Child, Every School* is the follow-up report to the nationally acclaimed 2007 and 2012 reports, *Within Our Power: The Progress, Plight and Promise of Arts Education for Every Child* and *Keeping the Promise: Arts Education for Every Child, The Distance Traveled – The Journey Remaining*. The release coincides with the expansion of the Arts Ed Now statewide public awareness campaign to raise the visibility of arts education in schools and communities, and comes on the heels of a Rutgers-Eagleton Poll released last week showing that most New Jerseyans believe that arts education is important for all students.

Other key findings of the third census include:

- More than 83,000 elementary and middle school students who should be participating in arts education (based on state requirements for elementary and middle school students) do not.
- Participation in art (69%) and music (62%) were highest among the four arts disciplines. Visual art and music are also the most widely available of the arts disciplines, at 94% and 96%, respectively. Only 6% of schools offer all four arts disciplines, as required by state policy.
- Per-Pupil Arts Spending (PPAS) increases as poverty levels (measured by free and reduced-price lunch and District Factor Groups) decrease. Additionally, as chronic absenteeism increases, PPAS decreases.
- There are 8,046 arts educators employed state-wide. There are 3,521 visual art, 3,864 music, 420 theater and 241 dance educators state-wide.
- The overall student-to-arts-teacher ratio is 162:1. For visual art, the ratio is 377:1; for dance, it is 5,713:1; for music, it is 333:1; for theater, it is 3,199:1. The ratio becomes less favorable as

the percentage of students receiving free/reduced price lunch or the level of chronic absenteeism increases.

- Ninety-three percent of all schools in the state participate in some cultural activity. This includes field trips (83%), assemblies (69%), long-term partnerships (28%) and artist-in-residencies (17%). These represent declines in all categories since 2006. The majority of schools (65%) engage in two or more cultural activities. However, cultural participation has declined significantly since 2006.
- Forty-six percent of all schools reported using arts integration. Yet, only 3% of all schools report regularly planning lessons between the arts specialist and the classroom teacher.

“The Arts Education Census data identifies the status and condition of arts education which is so important to our children's success—both academically and socially,” said Chris Daggett, President and CEO of the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation. When it comes to educating our children, everyone has something at stake, and we hope that more New Jerseyans use their voices and the Arts Ed Now campaign tools to ensure that all children from pre-K through high school have access to arts education.”

“Third time’s a charm. Once again, this groundbreaking research has given us something to both celebrate and to shoot for: universal access and universal participation,” states Nick Paleologos, executive director, the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. “But most important, it has underscored New Jersey’s leadership role nationally in arts education advocacy.”

Methodology

All public school principals in New Jersey were required by the Commissioner of Education to provide data on arts education from their school for this Arts Education Census Project. The participation rate is 99.3% of the 2,329 public and charter schools required to take part representing 1,295,466 students. Data were provided by the schools via a special on-line questionnaire to Quadrant Research. The data were then forwarded to Cypress Research for statistical analysis, which forms the basis of this report. The complete report may be downloaded at <http://artsednj.org/2017-arts-education-census/>

Individual school information may be found at <https://artsednow.org/>

Information about the 2017 Rutgers-Eagleton Public Opinion Survey on arts education may be downloaded at <http://eagletonpoll.rutgers.edu/rutgers-eagleton-arts-education-nj-sept2017/>

About Arts Ed NJ

Arts Ed NJ is the unified voice for arts education in New Jersey. Formerly the New Jersey Arts Education Partnership, Arts Ed NJ was founded in 2007 by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation, New Jersey Department of Education and Music for All Foundation with additional support from the ArtPride New Jersey Foundation. The mission of Arts Ed NJ is to provide a unified voice for a diverse group of constituents who agree on the educational benefits and impact of the arts, specifically the contribution they make to student achievement and a civilized, sustainable society. Additional information is available at www.artsednj.org.

The New Jersey Arts Education Census Project is made possible in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State, a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts, the Geraldine R. Dodge Foundation and Quadrant Research.

About Arts Ed Now

Arts Ed Now is a statewide campaign to increase active participation in arts education in all schools in New Jersey. Studies show that students who participate in arts education do better in school and in life. Unfortunately, not all NJ students have the access or information to increase their participation in arts education. The Arts Ed Now campaign identifies ways to increase participation in arts education and garner public support to put a spotlight on the issue - and is designed to be customized at a local grassroots level for more impact. The "Campaign Central" website <https://artsednow.org> features stories, tools and ways for citizens to become better ambassadors - together. This project is supported in part by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, Geraldine R Dodge Foundation, Jay and Linda Grunin Foundation and an award from the National Endowment for the Arts. To find out more about how National Endowment for the Arts grants impact individuals and communities, visit www.arts.gov