

New York State Education Department (NYSED) Office and Standards and Instructional (OSI)
Arts Request for Information (RFI) Questions

1. How does the New York State Education Department (NYSED) define an "arts-focused school community," and what guiding principles or frameworks inform this initiative?

The Department defines an "arts-focused school community" as a school environment that actively integrates arts education across curricula, builds sustainable partnerships with community arts organizations, and fosters a culture of artistic engagement that reflects students' diverse cultural backgrounds. This initiative is informed by the Department's [New York State Strategic Plan for the Arts](#), [Learning Standards for the Arts](#) and the [Culturally Responsive Sustaining Education Framework](#), emphasizing equity, sustainability, and the integration of arts with academic learning and community resources

2. What mechanisms or strategies does the NYSED envision for ensuring the long-term sustainability of arts-focused school communities, especially in districts with limited resources?

The Department envisions sustainability through multiple strategies, including:

- Identifying and promoting successful community-based arts education models that can be adapted across different school settings.
- Exploring funding opportunities at local, state, and federal levels to sustain arts programming.
- Providing guidance documents and professional development on this guidance, to support school and district leaders in maintaining arts-focused initiatives.
- Developing tools such as sustainability plan templates and evaluation matrices to assist schools in long-term planning

3. Will the NYSED establish a standardized framework for evaluating the success and impact of arts-focused school communities, and if so, what key indicators will be included?

The Department is gathering information on existing data and evaluation tools used by schools and organizations to measure the success of arts programs. Potential key indicators may include:

- Student engagement and participation rates in arts courses and programs.
- Academic performance and cross-disciplinary learning outcomes related to arts integration.
- Community involvement and partnerships with arts organizations.
- Social-emotional development and student well-being metrics.
- Longitudinal tracking of program sustainability and funding stability.

4. Are there specific criteria or best practices that the Department recommends for fostering successful collaborations between schools and community arts organizations?

The NYSED recognizes that strong partnerships between schools and community arts organizations are essential to sustaining arts-focused school communities. This RFI was issued to identify effective models and best practices that can be adapted and

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implemented at scale across the state. Through this effort the Department seeks to understand the key factors that contribute to successful partnerships, the challenges schools and organizations face in establishing and maintaining them, and the resources needed to support long-term collaboration. By gathering insights from the field, NYSED aims to develop comprehensive guidance that empowers schools and arts organizations to build sustainable, equitable, and culturally responsive arts communities. The findings from this RFI will help inform this guidance and future strategies to strengthen arts education across New York State.