

ARTS EDUCATION AND THE ARTS ARE ONE (HUFFINGTON POST)

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Envision a New York where arts education and the arts and culture are ever more meaningfully one.

This kind of New York is before us. Getting there requires, right now, supporting new City leadership in its efforts to universalize arts education. I believe it also requires, right now, turns and openings in advocacy and service provision by organizations like the one I run, Dance/NYC, whose priorities have been to serve those making livings in the arts, and the arts groups that employ them. It is time for us to realize greater contributions to arts education to achieve a stronger creative sector and a better New York.

Today, I thank new City leadership for its commitment to arts education. Mayor Bill de Blasio's [Executive Budget, FY 2015](#), includes an allocation of \$23 million in new funding to expand arts instruction, to continue over the next four years (see page 20). His vision statement and framework for addressing inequality, [One New York, Rising Together](#), sets a four-year goal of ensuring that every child in every school receives arts education.

The Mayor's Executive Budget follows an April 2014 report by the Office of the new Comptroller, Scott Stringer [State of the Arts: A Plan to Boost Arts Education in the New York City Schools](#). The report illuminates the inequitable and underfunded provision of arts education, as a result of which many schools are in violation of New York State instructional requirements. The report recommends building every school's capacity to have at least one certified arts teacher on staff, expanded outreach to arts and cultural partners (yes, to collaboration and oneness), protections for art spaces in the schools, and adequate funding. ([Click here](#) to thank the Comptroller.)

The Mayor's Executive Budget also follows a City Council response to his Preliminary Budget. [The response](#) acts on the Comptroller's recommendations by proposing increased funding for the Department of Education (DOE) and a budget designation to hire certified arts teachers. "It would cost the DOE \$26 million to place a full-time certified arts teacher in every school that does not have one. The DOE should earmark funds for these schools to hire at least one arts teacher."

Now, as we await the enacted budget for FY 2015 over the next few weeks, I join the [Center for Arts Education](#) and countless others who have made arts education their priority, and offer a common message: arts education and the arts and culture are one, and the universalization of arts education is imperative. Enacting a new \$23 million allocation to arts education would be a powerful step toward addressing inequality in arts education and a stronger creative sector.

The opportunity to realize the New York envisioned here is neither our government's alone nor simply a matter of messaging. There are, for example, roles for more inclusive private sector investment and practices, for artists and cultural groups to increasingly collaborate with schools, and for organizations focused on arts service delivery, like Dance/NYC, to achieve greater participation. For Dance/NYC, this means, right now, bringing educators to our table, data gathering and the opening up of leadership training and professional development to more fully embrace educational agendas and partners.

What organizations accomplish often comes down to their leadership, and Dance/NYC is bringing in some of the best. Consider this this statement on education from our newest advisor, dance educator and advocate Jody Gottfried Arnhold:

Dance/NYC's work is grounded in data, and its recent research offers meaningful dance education touch points. For instance, [State of NYC Dance 2013](#) shows that for nonprofit groups focused on the creation and performance of dance, revenue from tuition and workshops accounts for 15 percent of total earned income, and that this source grew 19 percent over a two-year period. A Dance/NYC Junior Committee-led [Dance Workforce Census](#) indicates that 13 percent of the jobs held by dance workers under 35 are in dance education, likely in addition to other work in creation and management. Dance education and dance practice and performance already exist on a continuum and cannot be separated out. As the organization scales up its activities to strengthen this continuum, we have made education a standing feature at our annual Symposium and other convening, including [a recent panel led by Susan McGreevy-Nichols of the National Dance Education Organization](#) and one led by Joan Finkelstein, formerly Director of Dance Programs at the New York City Department of Education. Earlier in May, we launched a new community partnership with [Lincoln Center Education](#) as part of its new Next Stage series, with a session focused on the role of arts education in the career of a dance artist. The session was moderated by Virginia Johnson of Dance Theatre of Harlem, also a Dance/NYC advisor and a New Yorker for Dance:

These are helpful new beginnings, but this work is ongoing and iterative, and it cannot be done alone. Again, today I am turning to you, and all New Yorkers, with an invitation to accelerate the universalization of arts education by advocating the enactment of a City budget that builds the capacity of every school. I am also inviting you and your organizations to consider how you can contribute to a future where arts education and the arts and culture are ever more meaningfully one. Let us move to a better New York together, as one, and move forward together from there.

This blog was published on [The Huffington Post](#) on May 22, 2014.