

California Proposition 28 Arts and Music Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act

Initial Impact on Arts Organizations

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Executive Summary

In 2022, California voters passed Proposition 28 (Prop 28), the Arts and Music (AMS) Funding Guarantee and Accountability Act, which established annual funding (ranging from \$938 million to over \$1 billion) for arts education for all schools across the state. This first-of-its-kind legislation provides a permanent funding source dedicated to arts education for California's public school students. WestEd, in partnership with Create CA, received a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts to study the initial impact of these funds on the state's arts education landscape.

This research included surveying staff from schools, districts, county offices of education, and arts organizations across the state to understand the initial impact of this funding. This report focuses on and begins to explore how community arts organizations in California were impacted by Prop 28 AMS funding. Research questions guiding this work examined how Prop 28 AMS funds expanded access to arts education for students in California, what has facilitated or created barriers for some students to access the arts, and what other factors might be needed to ensure access to arts education. A mixed-methods approach was utilized, comprising exploratory interviews, surveys, and supplemental quantitative data collection.

KEY FINDINGS REGARDING IMPACTS ON ARTS ORGANIZATIONS

- Confusion remains at the school and district level related to allowable expenses under Prop 28 AMS, which resulted in less funding directed toward community arts organizations.
- Community arts organizations must shift their services and programs offered to stay relevant to and engaged with schools and districts.
- Thus far, community arts organizations have been negatively impacted by Prop 28 AMS because of the requirement for most schools and districts to spend 80% of funds on staffing; however, many foresee Prop 28 AMS helping a greater number of students gain access to the arts in the long run.

Recommendations

Prop 28 AMS promises to enhance arts education in California by increasing access and ensuring quality programs through dedicated funding. Although this benefits students greatly, it challenges community arts organizations that historically supplemented school arts programs. To remain relevant, these organizations need to adapt by diversifying services and forming strategic partnerships with schools. This adaptation will ensure they continue contributing to the evolving landscape of arts education, while taking advantage of new opportunities presented by the increased focus on arts in schools.

Introduction and Overview

Prop 28 AMS Overview

In November 2022, California voters overwhelmingly passed Prop 28 AMS to establish a dedicated funding source for arts education. This measure requires the state to allocate 1% of the kindergarten through grade 12 (K–12) portion of the state’s general fund toward arts education, which equates to approximately \$800 million to \$1 billion per year. In the first year of funding, the 2023–24 school year, \$938 million was funded to California public schools for the arts.

These funds are intended to directly supplement arts education in the state and are allocated to schools based on a formula. Seventy percent of available funds are allocated to schools based on their share of statewide student enrollment, with the remaining 30% allocated based on the percentage of low-income students enrolled. Prop 28 AMS funds must be spent on expanding arts education programs and cannot be used to replace existing expenditures (i.e., funds must supplement and not supplant existing arts education funding).

Prop 28 AMS requires districts serving 500 or more students to use at least 80% of their allocated funds to hire and employ arts staff (e.g., arts teachers) and the remaining 20% may be used for training, supplies, materials, and arts educational partnership programs; no more than 1% of total funds can be used for administrated expenses. Districts serving fewer than 500 students are not held to this requirement. A waiver from these allocation requirements may be requested by districts and approved by the California Department of Education. Each year, local governing boards are required to certify how their schools spent the funds on arts education and report how they spent them. Funds can be spent on costs associated with instruction and training, supplies, materials, and arts educational partnership programs for instruction to support dance, media arts, music, theatre, and visual arts.

Study Purpose

This study was guided by the following broad research questions:

- How are Prop 28 AMS funds used to expand access to arts education in California?
- How has Prop 28 AMS funding affected access to the arts in different educational settings (e.g., district size, urban/suburban/rural locale)?
- What factors facilitate or hinder access to arts education, and how can such factors be replicated or mitigated?
- What is needed to offer an equitable and inclusive arts education?

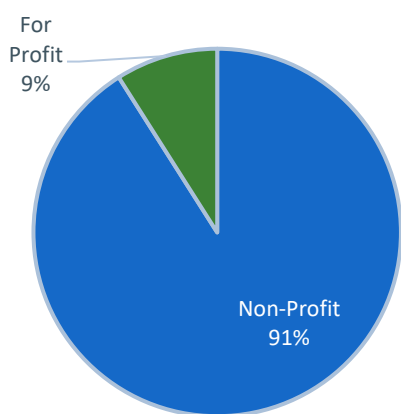
This report narrows the focus to how Prop 28 AMS funds have impacted arts organizations across the state. Nonprofits, community organizations, and for-profit arts providers across the state have historically provided a menu of services to schools and districts to supplement arts education. Prop 28 AMS funds are sent directly to districts and schools, which has significantly impacted the part arts organizations now play. This study sought to understand how this influx of funding has changed the role these organizations now play in facilitating access to arts education for California public school students.

Research Design

The WestEd team addressed the research questions using a sequential mixed-methods design with three main phases of data collection and analysis. This methodology was used because of the timing of the implementation of Prop 28 AMS. Districts received Prop 28 AMS funding for the first time in the spring of 2024 and were in the first years of implementation as this study was conducted. This exploratory sequential approach allowed the team to build better context regarding how these funds were (or were not) spent and what impact this had on community arts organizations in California. The three phases entailed

- **Phase I: Exploratory Interviews.** A series of interviews was conducted with school, district, and county staff to gain a deeper understanding about how Prop 28 AMS was and could be implemented. These interviews informed survey development for Phase II.
- **Phase II: Survey Collection.** A statewide survey was administered to gain broad perspectives about Prop 28 AMS implementation.
- **Phase III: Supplemental Quantitative Data Collection.** Publicly available quantitative data were gathered (e.g., school site expenditure plans, annual reports) to understand how schools and districts allocated funds on staffing, materials, and equipment.

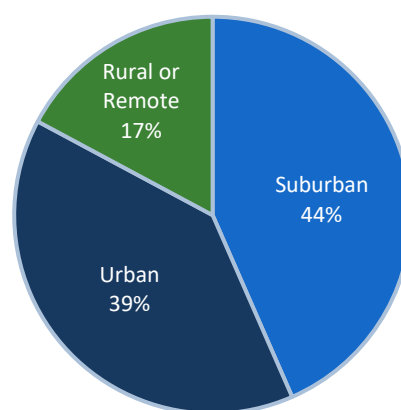
Characteristics of Participating Arts Organizations



91% of respondents were employed at a nonprofit arts organization

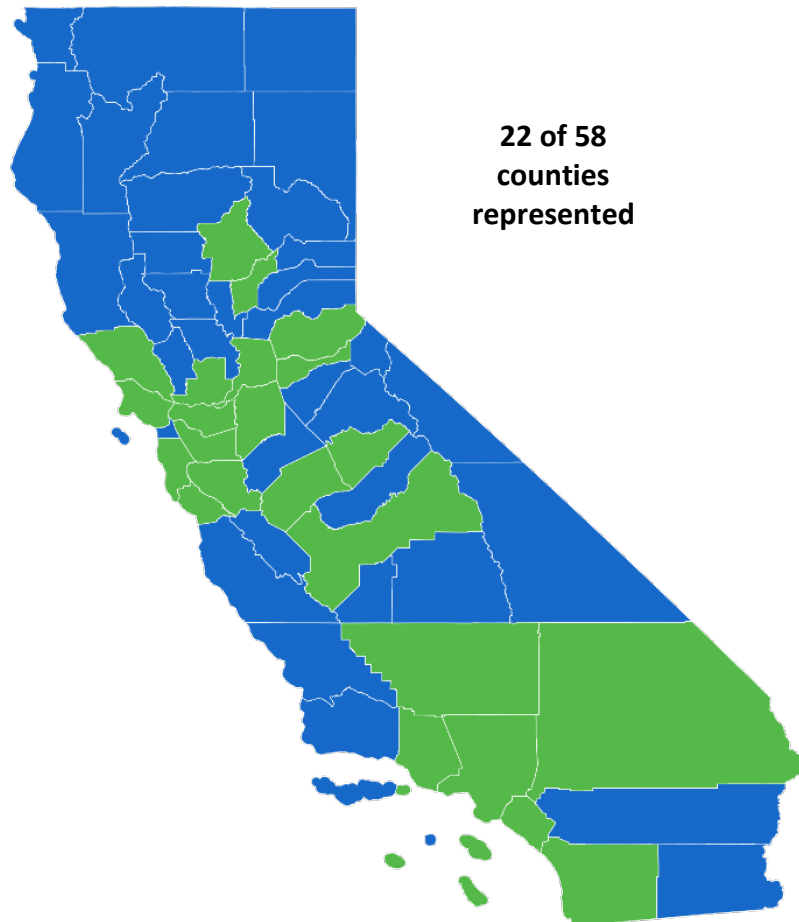
The Phase II survey included four paths based on a respondent's primary role, with separate questions for district-, school-, and county-level staff as well as a path for arts organizations. The survey was anonymous to encourage honest and thoughtful answers; however, certain demographic data were collected to analyze responses. Although the survey remained open, a preliminary analysis was conducted using the arts organization data. Data from 78 arts organization respondents are included in this preliminary summary. Of these organizations, 91% of respondents noted they were employed by a nonprofit or community organization, whereas 9% worked in the for-profit sector.

Respondents also self-identified the geographical area in which their organizations were located. Forty-three percent of respondents stated they were located in a suburban area, 39% in an urban area, and 17% in a rural or remote area.



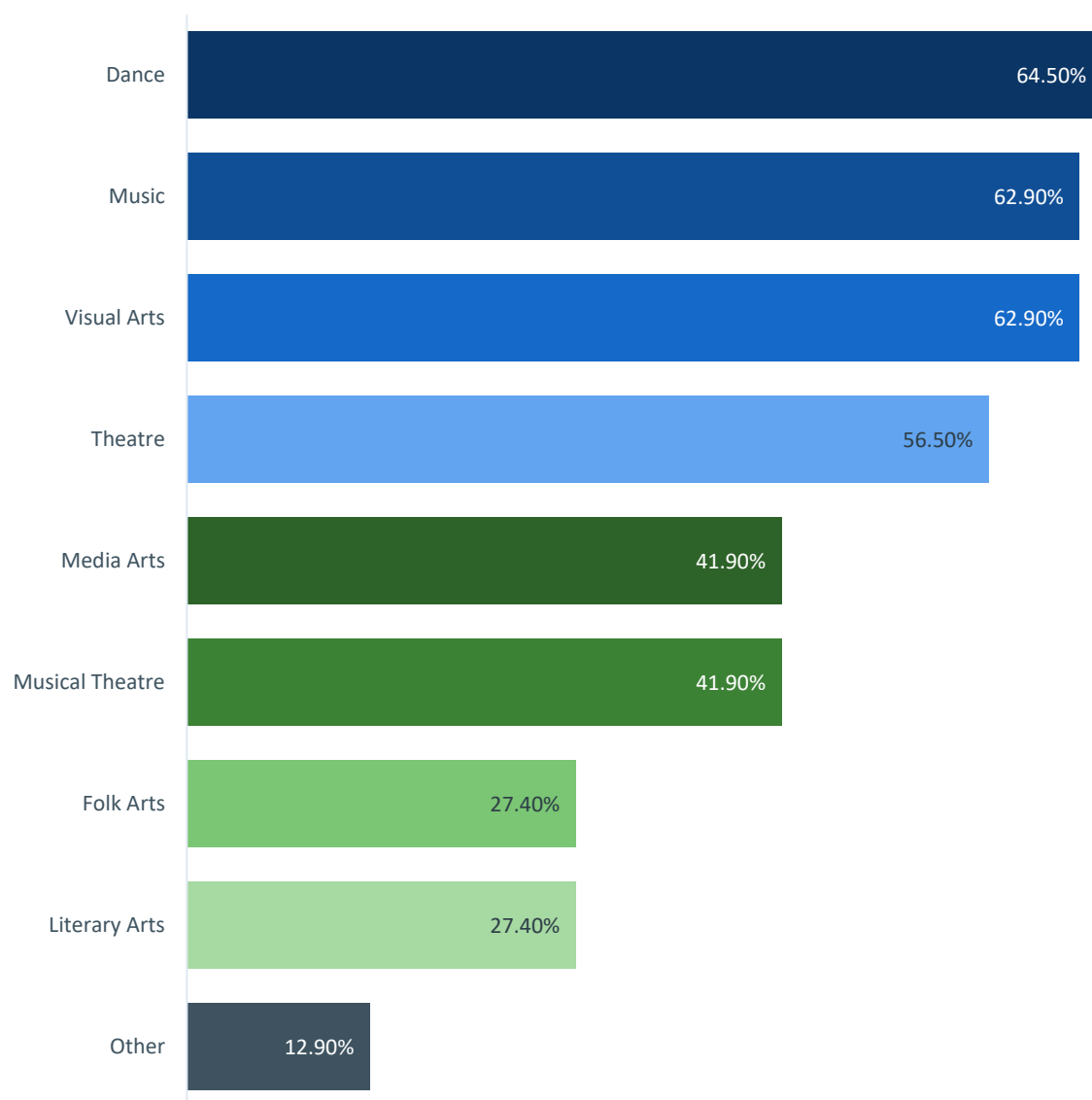
Of California's 58 counties, 22 were represented among survey respondents, as noted in green on the map. Central and southern California were well-represented, and approximately 28% of respondents were from Los Angeles County. It should also be noted that this represents where the organization is located, and these organizations may provide services beyond their own county.

Many of these organizations supported multiple art disciplines, as shown in Exhibit 1 below. More than half the organizations worked with dance, visual arts, music, and/or theatre, with nearly half supporting musical theater and/or media arts and just over one-quarter supporting literary arts and/or folk arts. Disciplines represented in the *other* category included art history, industrial arts, children's outreach, career and technical education, and crafts.



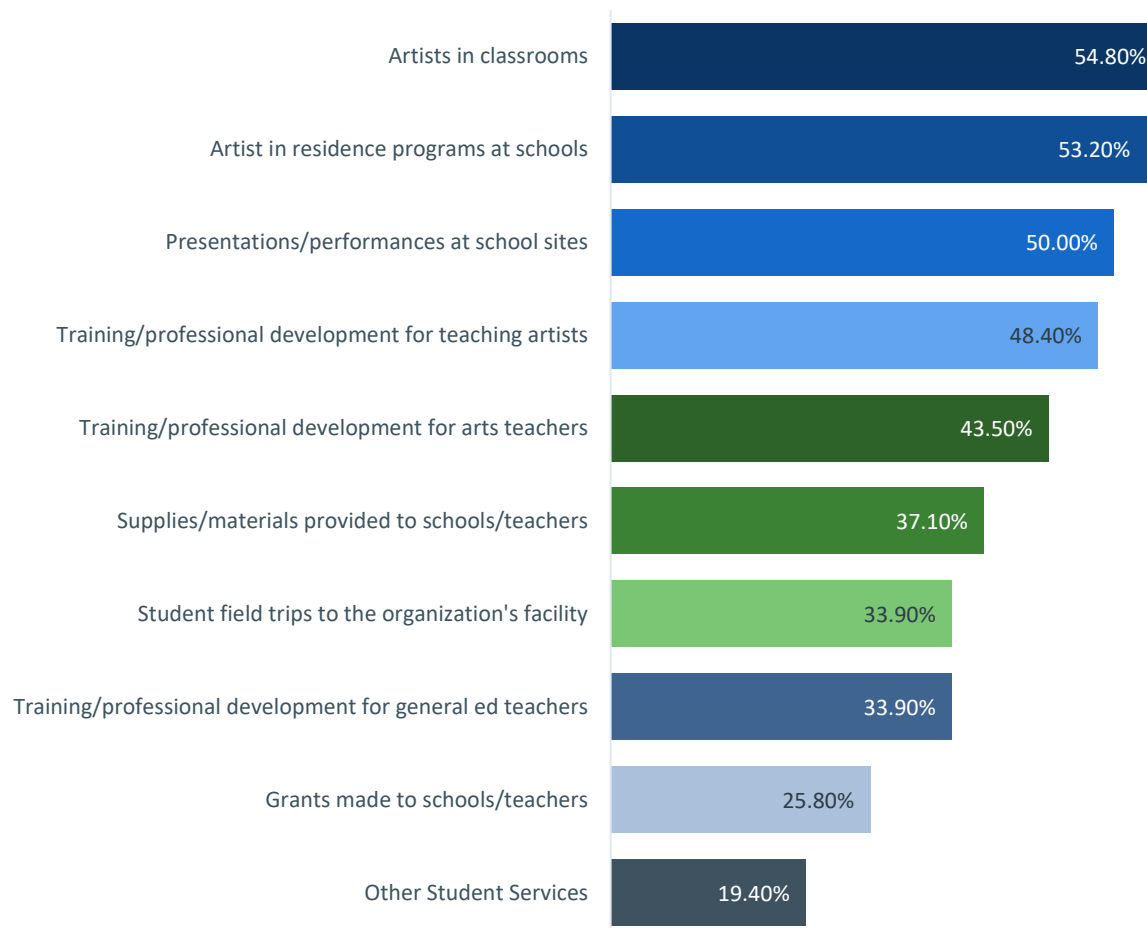
Note. Represented counties include Butte, Yuba, Sonoma, Marin, Solano, Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, San Mateo, Santa Cruz, Sacramento, San Joaquin, El Dorado, Amador, Merced, Mariposa, Fresno, Kern, San Bernardino, Ventura, Los Angeles, Orange, San Diego.

Exhibit 1. Art Disciplines Supported by the Organizations



The arts organizations also provided a wide range of services, with most offering multiple services. As shown in Exhibit 2, the most common response was artists in classrooms, meaning the organization sent artists into schools for single-day or short-term engagements to work with students. This is in contrast to the longer-term artist-in-residency programs, which were the second most often reported service. Half of the organizations offered on-site performance or presentations to schools. The provision of professional learning (PL) opportunities was also a common activity, with 48.4% providing PL to teaching artists, 43.5% providing PL to arts teachers, and 33.9% providing PL to general education or multisubject teachers. Organizations also provided supplies and materials to schools and teachers, supported student field trips to the organization's facility, or made grants to schools or teachers. Services cited in the *other* category included supporting arts education strategic planning, offering after-school and summer programming, engaging in or leading advocacy efforts, and direct arts instruction to students.

Exhibit 2. Services Provided by Arts Organizations



Survey Findings

Respondents had the opportunity to provide their thoughts related to the impact of Prop 28 AMS funds on their organizations through a series of open-ended questions:

- In what ways has Prop 28 AMS affected your organization thus far?
- What do you foresee as the potential impact of Prop 28 AMS on your organization in the future?
- Please share any additional thoughts, comments, or concerns regarding Prop 28 AMS.

The responses to these questions were coded and analyzed to develop the findings below, with sections for each of the research questions.

Initial Impact of Prop 28 AMS

Finding 1: Confusion remains related to Prop 28 AMS funding allowability

When this research was conducted, schools and districts were nearing the end of their second year of having access to Prop 28 AMS funds. The first round of funding was allocated during the 2023–24 school year, but funding was not released to schools and districts until February 2024. This resulted in many schools and districts not using any Prop 28 AMS funds in the 2023–24 school year. Even in the second year of fund availability, many schools and districts still had questions and hesitations about spending and allowability. Survey respondents noted this hesitation in spending has been felt by their organizations.

As an example, the language in the proposition clearly states that for districts with 500 or more students, at least 80% of funds must be used on staffing certificated or classified employees, leaving up to 20% of a district's available funds for purchasing supplies and materials or as potential funding to work with community arts organizations. Districts may request a waiver from this 80% staffing requirement; however, information on how to apply for a waiver was not published on

"[Prop 28 AMS has] slowed down the contracting process because school partners didn't fully understand how to use the funding. 20% for arts ed orgs is not a lot of money."

the California Department of Education's website until April 2024. Districts that are not interested in or eligible to waive this requirement were then left with 20% of their total allocation to potentially be used for many services arts organizations provide.

Several community arts organization respondents noted this 80% staffing requirement had a negative impact on their organization, including two who indicated their organization was preparing to close its doors. For some, the staff they employ are professional artists and teaching artists who do not possess a California teaching credential. One respondent noted,

"In order to access 80% of funding, districts are on a continual search for credentialed VAPA teachers. As a nonprofit arts ed provider that has highly skilled yet often non-credentialed artists, we are being put on hold until districts prove their due diligence to find credentialed teachers. Therefore, even though we have the resources and expertise, we are unable to service the schools due to the restrictions on funding. Typically, after months of due diligence, the districts contact us for programming months into the school year. This makes it challenging for arts providers to plan and prepare staffing and resources."

For other organizations, districts may be looking to hire service providers and teaching artists directly, cutting out the need for community arts organizations to provide their services. One respondent shared,

"Schools are very confused as to how they are able to use their money. Some districts have proposed "poaching" our artists and turning them into classified staff, basically cutting our organization out of the picture. On the positive side, some are using part of their money to fund new programs or expand the programs through us."

Overall, arts organizations are seeing the confusion or lack of information that schools and districts have regarding the use of their Prop 28 AMS funds. This was the most common response to the question about the impact of Prop 28 AMS thus far. This uncertainty has had mixed impacts on community arts organizations, with some experiencing delays in the contracting process, losing contracts, or having their staff poached, whereas others were able to continue working with schools and districts, although potentially in a different capacity than in prior years.

“Many schools seem unsure how to use the funds, but a couple use them to fund afterschool arts enrichment programs.”

Finding 2: Community arts organizations have needed to alter their services and have experienced a loss of funding

Several community arts organization respondents noted that the implementation of Prop 28 AMS resulted in less direct funding from schools and districts for their organizations. In response, some organizations have shifted the services they offer, such as providing before- or after-school programming, adding professional development services, or designing support initiatives to help general education classroom teachers integrate arts into their lessons. For example, one respondent shared,

“Prop 28 AMS may have shifted priorities away from our programming as schools prioritize hiring teachers in their district.”

“At my organization, we have developed a Prop 28 AMS support initiative to help non-arts teachers develop arts integrated lessons and lead them in their classroom with teaching artist observation, coaching, and online support. This enables schools to deliver arts experiences for all their students through their regular classroom teachers even if they are unable to hire discreet arts instructors at their school and/or district. ”

Other organizations noted that Prop 28 AMS resulted in a loss of funding for their organization. Two respondents shared how this resulted in their organizations permanently closing. Others also reported a loss of contracts for community arts organizations as districts and schools

“[Our organization had a] loss of opportunities since funds go to staff positions rather than student programming as they had in the past.”

moved to hire staff in compliance with the 80% requirement. Despite losing some or even much of their funding, many respondents still praised Prop 28 AMS for its potential long-term positive impact on schools and students. One respondent noted that Prop 28 AMS felt like a “double-edged sword,” providing a greater spotlight on the importance of

arts education, but potentially resulting in less site-based funding and requiring new ways of thinking for arts organizations. Respondents also shared mixed experiences, such as one person who explained,

“We work with a number of different school districts in LA County. Some of those school districts have hired music teachers, negating the need for our music residency services. One district used the arts funding for other purposes, which has reduced our work in that district. One school is using their Prop 28 AMS funding to expand their music residencies with us.”

Finding 3: Prop 28 AMS has yet to impact most community arts organizations

Several respondents from community arts organizations indicated it was too early in the implementation of Prop 28 AMS for their organizations to feel an impact. During the time of this research, schools and districts were in their second year of receiving Prop 28 AMS funds. For some community arts organizations, there was speculation about what may happen if districts no longer need their services, but it was still too soon to discuss outcomes and impacts to date. For example, one respondent shared,

“[There’s been] no noticeable impact. It may have shifted priorities away from our programming as schools prioritize hiring teachers in their district.”

For others, their main source of funding remained the same, such as through federal grant programs or their own fundraising efforts. One participant stated how a school used their Prop 28 AMS funds to pay for a few classroom visits, but otherwise the organization’s services were covered by the school’s parent-teacher association, as they had been in prior years. As schools and districts continue to receive Prop 28 AMS funds, there may be a greater impact on community arts organizations, or community arts organizations may need to seek out funding from other sources or adapt their services. As one respondent noted,

“Because of the impact of Prop 28 AMS, our Board decided to dissolve our nonprofit at the end of this fiscal year, June 30, 2025.”

Potential Future Impact of Prop 28 AMS

Finding 1: Community arts organizations expect to expand or shift services

Although it may be too early for organizations to assess the full impact Prop 28 AMS has had on their organizations, several believe they will need to expand the services they offer to schools and districts to stay relevant. For some, this means adjusting the types of services offered and shifting their programming to be outside of the typical school day. As one respondent said,

“If Prop 28 AMS is implemented according to the letter of the law, we assume that in 10 years, we will have greatly reduced our in-school programs and pivoted to professional development, after school, and/or more experimental programs.”

In addition to shifting to a focus on professional development for teachers and teaching artists, other organizations foresee their role as shifting to support schools and districts in understanding how to use their Prop 28 AMS funds effectively. This is a new type of service for several community arts organizations, as they previously focused on providing arts programming directly to schools and students. This was highlighted by one respondent who indicated,

“Prop 28 AMS has also pushed us to look at ways to serve students outside the school day.”

“Prop 28 AMS has become a focal point of our work in advocating and activating the community. I foresee several years of supporting schools with launching their programs.”

Finding 2: Community arts organizations expect to lose work

In addition to those organizations that reported already losing some funding and contracts, many more respondents anticipate they will lose work because of Prop 28 AMS. Several arts organizations noted their funding and programming were dependent on schools and districts in the past, and although those schools now received additional funding to support arts education, the parameters of spending allowability meant funding was no longer flowing to community arts organizations. This was highlighted by one respondent who noted,

“There will be less opportunity for in-school arts residencies.”

“I am beginning to get concerned that our contracts will decrease, resulting in our experienced and talented teaching artists losing consistent work and enough placements to continue to sustain working as teaching artists/artists. Initially, we had been assured that we would need more, so we had prioritized hiring more teaching artists this past year, and then have not had increased residency placements for them.”

Finding 3: Community arts organizations foresee expanded access to the arts for students

Survey respondents noted several negative ways that Prop 28 AMS funding will impact their organizations; however, the majority of respondents agreed that this funding will likely have a positive impact on students. This funding allows schools to invest in qualified arts educators and provide the necessary materials and supports schools and districts need in developing standards-based arts programs, giving students further avenues to explore and grow their artistic talents. For example, one respondent shared,

“This will allow schools to provide arts education in a meaningful and impactful way.”

Ultimately, Prop 28 AMS funding is prioritizing arts education, which should lead to increased arts programming that is accessible to all students, fostering a more inclusive environment that promotes creativity, cultural awareness, and personal growth. A comment that highlighted the sentiments of many respondents was

“If fully invested, Prop 28 AMS will enhance the arts education ecosystem in our community.”

Conclusion

Additional Guidance is Needed

Additional guidance is needed to ensure Prop 28 AMS funds are optimally utilized to benefit students and provide accessible arts education in schools across California. It was clear from respondents that schools and districts are eager for additional guidance to understand how to allocate funds aligned with their unique community needs and educational goals related to their arts programming, and community arts organizations are anxiously waiting for clear and comprehensive guidance so they can offer their services and support. Specific guidance is needed to clearly define eligible expenses, support districts interested in spending more than 20% of their funding on equipment and supplies via the waiver process, and support smaller districts and schools that may not have a large allocation and are unsure how to effectively allocate their funds.

Guidance is also crucial to foster collaboration between schools and community organizations, ensuring partnerships are strategic and contribute to robust arts programming. Professional development and training for school administrators and educators are needed to help them navigate new funding structures, think creatively related to staffing and scheduling, and consider how to integrate arts education seamlessly into the broader academic framework. With comprehensive guidance, Prop 28 AMS funding has the potential to enhance arts and music education, ensuring equitable access and substantial benefits for all students.

Community Arts Organizations Need to Diversify Services to Remain Relevant

With the infusion of Prop 28 AMS funding into schools, community arts organizations must strategically diversify their services to remain relevant and valuable partners to schools and districts. Schools and districts received an increased stream of resources specifically earmarked for arts and music education, and for districts in the state serving more than 500 students, 80% of this funding must be spent on hiring arts staff. They will likely need support from community organizations that can help in finding and training these staff, or in developing innovative, comprehensive arts programs aligned with their educational objectives and the diverse needs of students. Community arts organizations may need to provide such services or consider other opportunities and programming, such as developing professional learning for arts teachers, designing programs to help teaching artists obtain a teaching credential, working with general

education teachers to integrate the arts in their instruction, or offering after-school programming to students.

Based on the findings of this survey, arts organizations will need to broaden their offerings to include not just traditional arts programs, but also interdisciplinary initiatives that integrate arts with other subjects, or services such as supporting districts with strategic arts plans. By diversifying services in these ways, community arts organizations may be able to position themselves as collaborators and strategic partners in addition to being service providers. Organizations that cannot diversify their services may be forced to close unless funding is secured through other avenues.

Prop 28 AMS Will Have Mixed Effects on Community Arts Organizations

Prop 28's focus on enhancing arts education through dedicated funding in California schools is poised to have mixed effects on community arts organizations. On one hand, students will benefit significantly from increased access to arts education, as schools can now expand their arts programs, hire specialized instructors, and invest in high-quality materials. This should lead to more students who can participate in and experience the transformative power of the arts, fostering creativity and enriching their educational journey.

However, these advancements may come at a cost to community arts organizations, which historically served as key providers of arts programs to schools. As schools become more self-reliant with their newly allocated funds, the demand for external arts services from community organizations may diminish, challenging these organizations to redefine their roles and adapt their offerings to remain relevant. This shift may require organizations to innovate their services, employ new strategies for partnership, or expand their outreach to maintain their influence and sustainability in a changing landscape.

Closing

Overall, the impact of Prop 28 AMS on community arts organizations remains to be seen. Initial indications suggest arts organizations may be negatively impacted as schools and districts apply those funds internally rather than continuing to contract with external service providers. This may result in the closure of some arts organizations that rely on those contracts, whereas other organizations may shift their programming and services to remain relevant to schools and districts or identify alternative funding sources to continue offering their programs. Regardless, arts organization staff consider Prop 28 AMS a positive as it benefits students who should have more access to a quality arts education.