

Tool E: Tips for Speaking With Leaders About Arts Education Data

As you plan your outreach to state leaders or other potential partners in your arts education data initiative, consider the following recommendations for making the most of your conversations.

Be brief. Aim for concise language focused on the main point you want to make. Consider that you will likely have five minutes or fewer to make your case.

Be prepared to give state leaders or other potential partners brief documents that summarize your case. Use text sparingly, and use graphics and visuals when possible. The human brain decodes visuals [60,000 times faster](#) than text. For example, consider including:

- A visual representation of audiences/groups who would benefit from the system.
- A data graphic of the number of parents who support arts education.
- A data graphic of the possible outcomes resulting from collecting data.

Tie arts education data to current priorities in your state. Most states also have more specific priorities, such as expanding opportunities for STEAM education. Seize the opportunity to highlight how effective arts education data can support efforts like these.

Your governor's most recent State of the State Address could be a source for understanding your state's priorities. Look for keywords like innovation, creativity, equity, economic growth, workforce, next generation and problem solvers. Education Commission of the States provides an [analysis](#) of these addresses that can be helpful.

Cite existing examples of arts education data projects and the impact they've had. People are more likely to support an idea if they know another region or state has applied it successfully. Be ready to highlight where the work has been implemented elsewhere. Point to concrete examples. If possible, get a testimonial.

Most likely, the person you are speaking with will have to secure agreement from others for your effort. Make his or her life easy by highlighting results. Make the best case you can for what the potential results of your work will be.

The National Endowment for the Arts and Education Commission of the States have produced three case studies of states that have created arts education data dashboards that support better decision-making on arts education:

- [Getting to 100 Percent](#)
- [Mapping the Arts](#)
- [Data to Action](#)



Here are some other examples of state and local arts education data dashboards:

- Because of, in part, [New Jersey's](#) reporting and advocacy efforts, the state has achieved universal access to arts education.
- Chicago developed an [ArtLook Map](#), which provides data on schools' arts offerings. This tool helped increase access to arts education in the district.

Include a specific request. Both in your materials and before you end the meeting, include what you want your potential partners to do as a next step from your communications. Some specific next steps may include:

- Requesting a follow-up meeting to discuss key points further.
- Requesting that they reach out to a specific partner to gain their support.
- Asking them whether they can assist in making a data request on behalf of your organization.