



# Tool S: Recommendations for In-Person Meetings in State X

In addition to providing materials and engaging on social media, you can organize in-person meetings to communicate and connect with key audiences who can influence arts education in your state. This document describes the participants, topics and locations to consider when planning a meeting.

## Step 1 – Determine Who Should Be There

An initial question to answer when planning a meeting is which stakeholders you should invite to the meeting.

Key questions to consider:

- Who has decision-making power in arts education?
- Which organizations or individuals influence those decision-makers?
- What partners could serve as champions or key messengers around the importance of arts education and allow you to be more successful?
- Which partners' buy-in do you need in order to sustain the work?
- Which individuals and organizations bring particular knowledge or expertise in arts education?
- Which individuals and organizations have led successful projects with similar goals?
- Who are potential funders of efforts to support arts education?

Additionally, you should understand which individuals or organizations are critical to the success of each meeting and which would be nice to have but are not essential to your meeting's success. You must ensure that your must-have guests are available before finalizing the meeting.

## Step 2 – Determine What Topics to Discuss

As you prepare to convene your stakeholders, develop agendas that provide information and allow for time for interaction and discussion among participants.

**Initial Meeting:** Below is a sample meeting agenda for an initial meeting.

### INTRODUCTIONS AND VISION FOR ARTS EDUCATION IN STATE/JURISDICTION

(Someone provides a high-level overview of the importance of arts education.)

- Who you are; what organization you represent.
- Hopes for arts education in your state/jurisdiction.

## THE WHAT - THE DATA

- Present the current state of arts education in your state or jurisdiction.

## SO WHAT - THE EFFECTS

What are the implications of these data on our students, schools and communities?

Small group discussions, followed by the group reporting key points raised in conversations.

## NOW WHAT - MOVING FORWARD

What improvements would we like to see in the data, as measured against clear metrics? Discuss possible goals, including higher numbers of students attending schools with arts education; improvements for particular populations (rural, African American, etc.); and a focus on one or more education levels (elementary, middle or secondary).

## SET IMMEDIATE NEXT STEPS FOR ACTION

Agree on timing for the next session and ways to communicate in the meantime.

## Step 3: Follow-Up Meetings

Once you have convened your stakeholders to begin the discussion, there are a variety of other topics you should discuss in future meetings around goal setting. Below is a list of additional topics for your consideration:

### OPPORTUNITIES

- What opportunities do you see ahead?
- Are there state policies that can support expansion of arts access and participation?

### PITFALLS

- What do you see as your biggest challenges? Could state policies or limited resources stand in the way of your goals?
- Are the measurable goals you set feasible for schools that face challenging conditions, such as funding challenges or challenges attracting teachers?

### TIMELINE

- What specific timeline would be appropriate for milestones on the way to the goal?
- How can you keep time frames clear so that partners can identify short, intermediate or long-term goals?



## COMMUNICATIONS

- How do you plan to make your goals public?
- Which organization(s) will lead communications efforts?

## Connecting to Existing Meetings

While it is possible to coordinate and host your own meetings, it is also a good idea to tie your meeting to existing meetings that convene important stakeholders whose attendance is otherwise difficult to secure. Key meetings to connect with include:

### SCHOOL BOARD MEETINGS

- **Opportunity:** Request that arts education be placed on the agenda for a board meeting.
- **Recommendation:** Bring students and community members to make public statements on state of county or city arts programs at area schools.

### CITY COUNCIL OR COUNTY SUPERVISORS MEETINGS

- **Opportunity:** Request a city or county proclamation recognizing the importance of arts education.
- **Recommendation:** Bring students and community members to make public statements on state of county or city arts programs at area schools.

### PTA MEETINGS

- **Opportunity:** Request a session at a PTA meeting for students to share their experiences with arts education.
- **Recommendation:** Identify students who have benefited from arts programs to speak at PTA meetings. Hearing from students is often much more meaningful than hearing from adults).
- **Recommendation:** Bring students and community members to make public statements on the state of county or city arts programs at area schools.