

# SUCCESS STORY: Arizona State Arts Proficiency Seal



## Raise Student Achievement and Success



Image courtesy of the Arizona Department of Education.

Congratulations to Chloe Ball, senior from Pinnacle High School in the Paradise Valley School District, for creating this winning design for the State Seal of Arts Proficiency, which was selected by a panel of judges!

## About AEP Success Stories

The Arts Education Partnership at Education Commission of the States is a national network of more than 100 organizations dedicated to advancing arts education. AEP has been supported by the National Endowment for the Arts and the U.S. Department of Education since 1995 and is administered by Education Commission of the States. AEP is the nation’s hub for arts and education leaders, building their leadership capacity to support students, educators and learning environments. Through research, reports, convenings and counsel, leaders gain knowledge and insights to ensure that all learners — especially those that have historically been marginalized — receive an excellent arts education. To achieve its goal to expand access to high-quality arts learning opportunities for all learners, AEP gathers detailed information on success stories with the potential to be replicated in communities across the country.

In support of AEP’s new strategic mission, AEP developed a new category of partnership for AEP affiliates. AEP affiliates include organizations and individuals who are constituents of AEP partner organizations, as well as stakeholders in the broader arts and education field.

This success story highlights the work of AEP affiliate, the Arizona Department of Education (ADE) Arts Education Division, a constituent of AEP’s federal partner, the U.S. Department of Education. This success story aligns with AEP’s priority areas to “Raise Student Achievement and Success” and “Transform the Teaching & Learning Environment.”

## Organization Background

[The Arizona Department of Education \(ADE\) Arts Education Division](#) is housed within the Educator & School Excellence Unit, which oversees federal funding for Title I, Title II-A, Title IV-A and the Rural and Low-Income School program in Arizona. The mission of the ADE Arts Education Division is to provide support to arts educators, classroom teachers, school and district administrators

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and arts stakeholders so that every student has the opportunity to experience the power and beauty of the arts and the joy, creativity and intellectual stimulation that high-quality instruction in the arts provides. The goal of a high-quality arts education is to prepare students with the skills to thrive in the 21st century and to pursue a future in the creative industries, if they choose.

## Introduction

The [Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency](#) (R7-2-321) provides students in the state with a pathway to high-quality, student-driven and sequential arts instruction during their high school years. [Recent Arizona arts education data](#) show that students are disproportionately impacted by lack of access to arts instruction during their high school years.

In this success story ADE Director of Arts Education Dustin Loehr and ADE Arts Education Specialist Haley Honeman highlight the history and goals of the R7-2-321 legislation including:

- How the seal came to be.
- How the seal drives quality arts instruction.
- How the seal elevates the role of sequential study of the arts in high schools around the state.
- How the seal prepares students for a future in the creative industries sector.
- How the seal provides students with 21st century skills needed for future success.

## A Brief History of the Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency

- In **August 2017**, Dustin Loehr, Director of Arts Education & Title IV-A, created the Roundtable Advisory Committee (RTAC) to convene a diverse representation of stakeholders to steer direction and decisions made regarding arts education initiatives. This group acts as an advisory body to ADE.
- In **May 2018**, RTAC asked ADE to begin discussions on developing an arts proficiency seal and then collaborated to create a subcommittee to explore the arts proficiency seal option for Arizona. Arizona already had in place three other [diploma seals](#) at the time, and stakeholders agreed to use [Georgia's Fine Arts Seal](#) as a model for the Arizona Seal.
- In late **February 2019**, the state arts advocacy organization [Arizona Citizens for the Arts](#) identified a legislative champion (Senator Paul Boyer) who drafted SB1111; the bill received bipartisan support.
- On **May 14, 2019**, Governor Doug Ducey signed SB1111 into law late in the legislative session. The enacted legislation required approval from the Arizona State Board of Education.

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- During the **summer of 2019**, ADE worked with arts education stakeholders from across the state to design student minimum requirements and overarching goals of the program for a draft of state board rule. Stakeholders additionally requested that the ADE Arts Education Division develop [Guidance for Seal Implementation](#) to provide more specific information related to the seal. The guidance document was based on four goals:
  - To celebrate students who demonstrate high levels of proficiency in the Arizona Arts Education Standards through personal expression and creative experiences in arts education programs.
  - To identify pathways of artistic literacy that cultivate skills for 21st century success.
  - To prepare students for college and career readiness, including active participation in the creative industries sector.
  - To promote increased access to well-rounded, high-quality arts education across the state.

**To qualify for the Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency, a student must complete:**

- A final GPA of 3.0 or 4.0 in each qualifying arts/career and technical education (CTE) course.
- 4 minimum credit requirements in one of the following ways:
  - A minimum of 4 credits in one artistic discipline: (dance, music, theatre, visual arts or media arts) OR
  - 3 credits in one artistic discipline, and 1 qualifying creative industries CTE credit or separate artistic discipline OR
  - 2 credits in one artistic discipline, and 2 credits in a qualifying creative industries CTE class or a separate artistic discipline.
- 80 hours of arts-related extracurricular activities.
- A student capstone project.
- In **October 2019**, the State Board of Education closed rulemaking and adopted the Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency Program.
- In **November 2019**, districts submitted applications to participate in the program.
- In **April 2020**, participating districts and charter schools reported 585 graduates from 58 schools that met minimum requirements to achieve the State Seal of Arts Proficiency. Amidst the COVID-19 pandemic, staff, teachers and students faced the added challenge of last-minute shifts to distance-learning formats for students to complete requirements.

\*Beginning in 2019, the group transitioned to a community-led model. Representatives met with ADE’s leadership team to identify action items to bring to the community.

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## Current Locations of Arts Diploma Seals/Pathways

- Arizona Department of Education: [Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency](#)
- Georgia Department of Education: [Fine Arts Diploma Seal](#)
- Nevada Department of Education: [State Seal of STEAM](#)
- New York State Education Department: [Multiple Pathways Arts Pathway](#)

## Populations Served

High School Students

## Conditions for Success

The successful adoption of the State Seal of Arts Proficiency Program in Arizona required effective collaboration and input between multiple arts education stakeholders and organizations. Arts education advocates identified a policy strategy to elevate high-quality arts instruction at the high school level. ADE Arts Education Division staff members and advocates collaborated on the creation of the program and policy to meet identified needs and objectives. [Arizona Citizens for the Arts](#), the state arts advocacy organization, identified a legislative champion to draft a law. Arts education stakeholders contributed input for what would later become a State Board of Education rule. ADE Arts Education Division staff members worked with internal policy advisors who provided guidance throughout the process. ADE Arts Education Division oversees the program at the state level, and districts and charter schools may choose to participate each year. ADE leverages a portion of their Title IV-A state allocation to provide physical seals affixed to diplomas to qualifying students at no cost to participating districts and charter schools.

## Interested in developing a Seal of Arts Proficiency for your state? Here are some questions to consider:

- Does the State Educational Agency (SEA) in your state offer other diploma seal programs?
- How will the SEA gather relevant stakeholder input to develop and tailor the program to meet objectives for a State Seal of Arts Proficiency Program?
- What are the objectives/intended outcomes of offering a state diploma seal/pathway in the arts?
- What minimum arts education requirements would best prepare students for future success?
- What policy procedures must you navigate, and what partnerships must you leverage to successfully adopt an arts diploma program in your state?

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- How can arts education programming support and enhance the creative industries sector and career and technical education (CTE) partnership in your state?

## Learn More

- [Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency Website](#)
- [National Association of State Boards of Education's "Advancing Arts Education in Arizona"](#)
- [2019-2020 Arizona State Seal of Arts Proficiency Year End Report](#)