

Arts in Education **R**^{NYC}**UNDTABLE**

New York City Arts in Education Roundtable *Live Testimony*

Thank you for the opportunity to testify and Council Member Cumbo and Council Member Van Bramer for your leadership and commitment to arts and arts education. My name is Kimberly Olsen, and I come to you today as Executive Director of the NYC Arts in Education Roundtable and as a proud District 26 resident.

On behalf of the Roundtable's membership, I am here to highlight the importance of continuing existing partnerships between NYC cultural arts organizations and our public schools to support the financial sustainability of our cultural community.

*The New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is a service organization who builds its efforts around the values that **arts are essential** and that arts education is a right for all NYC students. We represent over 120 cultural organizations and 2,000 teaching artists in every discipline. These creative thinkers quickly pivoted in the spring/summer to partnering with educators on curriculum, delivering art supplies to families, and creating engaging videos to promote art-making at home.*

Over 310 arts organizations partner with public schools each year. These organizations hope to continue these arts learning opportunities and support the city's recovery process, despite the financial hardships and burden they now face due to COVID-19. These partnerships employ thousands of artists, give students space to process trauma and think critically about the world around them, and help students build important skills that will help them move beyond the pandemic.

Going into this unprecedented school year, we understand that the dynamics of both remote and in-school learning will be tested and adjusted throughout the year. However, the critical services provided by our cultural community have proven to be an uplifting creative outlet for our students, supports NYC DOE's goals of equity & excellence for all, and provides critical employment opportunities -- specifically for Arts Education organizations, who collectively reported artistic employment decreases of over 2,100 artists, or 78% of artist staffing, as of May 8th.

Given the importance of these partnerships in filling the gap in arts instruction, we request City Council's help in preventing schools from eliminating arts education in order to make up for budget shortfalls.

Please help to ensure that arts are an essential part of a student's curriculum to ensure student success and social-emotional well being this year alongside employment opportunities to out-of-work artists.

The arts are essential for our city, now and forever.

Thank you for your time and consideration.