



Elementary and Secondary Education

Request

- Encourage all school districts, schools, and teachers to take full advantage of museums' unique human and material resources to educate and inspire students.
- Fully implement the “well-rounded education” provisions in the Every Student Succeeds Act, which include the many subject areas in which museums help teach the curriculum.
- Support funding for federal education programs in which museums currently participate, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Assistance for Arts Education, American History and Civics, and the Magnet Schools Assistance Program.
- Support efforts to promote school-museum partnerships, including museum schools.
- Enact language (similar to language in H. Rept. 114-195 and P.L. 111-340) to encourage greater collaboration between the US Department of Education and the federal Institute of Museum and Library Services on initiatives, materials, research, or technology supporting educational, cultural, historical, scientific, environmental, and other museum activities.

Museums Are Critical Partners in Education

- Each year, museums spend more than \$2 billion on educational programming and provide millions of hours of instruction to students and teachers, including:
 - educational programming for students
 - museum staff programs in schools
 - traveling exhibits in schools
 - pre-service teacher development
 - professional development for current teachers
 - approximately 55 million museum visits each year from school students
- A recent, randomized study of students chosen for a half-day art museum field trip found that they demonstrated greater knowledge of and interest in art, but also scored higher than peers in measures of critical thinking, historical empathy, and tolerance. These impacts were even stronger for students in disadvantaged groups.
- The typical museum devotes three-quarters of its education budget specifically to K-12 students. Even with finances deeply strained during the most recent recession, 78 percent of museums maintained or expanded the resources devoted to K-12 education.
- Museums design exhibitions, educational programs, classroom kits and online resources in coordination with state and local curriculum standards in math, science, art, literacy, language arts, history, civics and government, economics and financial literacy, geography, and social studies.



- At dozens of museum schools nationwide, K-12 students make frequent expeditionary learning visits to local partner museums and use common museum practices—such as project-based learning and exhibit design—to blur the line between formal and informal learning.
- In recognition of the strong role museums play in K-12 education, they are expressly included in several sections of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA): American History and Civics as well as Assistance for Arts Education.

The Partnership between Museums and Schools Should Be Strengthened

- The partnership between museums and schools has served and benefited students, teachers, and communities immensely.
- Many museums already participate in 21st Century Community Learning Centers and magnet and charter school programs (under the rubric of “community-based organizations”). However, museums should be expressly included as eligible entities in these programs to facilitate better recognition by state and local education agencies and other key stakeholders in education.
- School districts that establish a staff position with the responsibility of ensuring that museum resources are well utilized by students and educators have proven extremely successful.
- Budgetary constraints and an increased focus on test preparation have both contributed to a decline in field trips, to the detriment of students and teachers. Inadequate funding continues to hurt schools’ ability to partner with museums.

Background

The 2001 reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act—known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)—placed an increased focus on reading and math tests, with strong accountability provisions that led schools to focus on these two subjects at the expense of others. In a 2011 national survey, two-thirds of teachers reported that some core academic subjects were being crowded out by NCLB’s focus on math and language arts tests. Partly as a result, museum visits and instruction related to other subjects decreased.

The Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) replaced NCLB when it was signed into law on December 10, 2015. It governs federal education spending under the Elementary and Secondary Education Act through FY 2020. ESSA maintains a similar federal role in financing elementary and secondary education, while giving states significantly more leeway. They are still required to develop accountability systems and to intervene in the lowest-performing five percent of schools, but have great flexibility in setting standards, indicators, and school interventions. Notably, states are now required to track at least one non-academic indicator of student performance, which could include student engagement.

Despite extensive efforts to eliminate programs, ESSA maintained or lightly modified many federal education programs in which museums currently participate, including 21st Century Community Learning Centers, Assistance for Arts Education, American History and Civics, and the Magnet Schools Assistance Program.