



Times Square Station  
P.O. Box 2094  
New York, NY 10108-2094  
212.642.5979  
[www.nycaieroundtable.org](http://www.nycaieroundtable.org)

Monday, April 6, 2020

Dear Chancellor Carranza,

As the main convening body for New York City's arts in education community, the New York City Arts in Education Roundtable is writing on behalf of the 310+ arts and cultural organizations that help ensure quality arts instruction is an integral part of an equitable education for all students across the five boroughs. Your presence at our Face to Face Conference in April 2019 at the City College of New York was a conference highlight and brought great inspiration to the over 550 arts educators and cultural organization representatives in attendance.

One year later, the arts education community has been hit hard with the closure of performance and exhibition venues and schools. The uncertainty of what lies ahead leads us to reach out to discuss the significant impact on individuals and organizations with contracted services with the New York City Department of Education. We are writing to ask for your support in making a more universal set of guidelines for all schools and vendors on how to proceed given the circumstances surrounding COVID-19.

We are so grateful for our partnership with the Office of Arts and Special Projects, as they have been diligent in providing our membership with instructions to encourage schools to maintain partnerships with institutions providing outside services. However, it has also come to our attention through a recent membership survey that several Roundtable member organizations operating as arts partners have faced challenges regarding billing, purchase orders, certifying services completed, and providing remote services. Those that completed the survey reported:

- On average, 41% of expenses associated with programs cultural organizations provide to NYC public schools are covered by contract revenue from the DOE.
- 44% of cultural organizations reported that partner schools have cancelled POs or outside providers due to COVID-19; 33% of cultural organizations are unsure of the status of their POs (largely due to lack of school response or decision-making).
- 86% of cultural organizations would experience financial hardship if all outstanding DOE invoices were not honored.
- 92% of cultural organizations reported difficulty in gathering rosters and other required documentation from partner schools.

In fact, some schools are even saying that they were told that they can't create purchase orders for work that has already been completed or certify work completed on existing purchase orders. 75% of our members reported that this loss in payment from the DOE will financially impact their ability to employ all or part of their staff. We are hoping you might consider the following to support the services the arts and culture sector provides to 1.1 million public school children in New York City:

- For incomplete work with current purchase orders, allow vendors to bill and receive payment or allow the promise of remaining services to be deferred until the next school year.

- For Work Orders sent by vendors to schools that are yet to be made into Purchase Orders, ask schools to ensure this happens so that vendors can be paid for completed services.
- Waive the required documentation for invoicing as long as schools certify that the services were completed.
- Have the DOE Accounts Payable office waive the typical 30 day wait period in order to have payment on invoices processed in a timely fashion.

We understand that these are very difficult times for all stakeholders, our goal is to at least be able to provide the much-needed contracted arts services to students in New York City public schools. The collective mission of our members has always been and continues to be to provide access to the arts for young people in order to contribute towards a well-rounded, culturally responsive-sustaining education. We know that for the 1,800 schools in New York City, these partnerships are vital to providing greater access to quality arts programming. While there are 200 Full-Time Certified Theatre Teachers, 1,329 Full-Time Certified Visual Art Teachers, 263 Full-Time Certified Dance Teachers and 1,057 Full-Time Certified Music Teachers, the services provided by these organizations are unique and benefit students by increasing exposure as well as opportunities to work with skilled artists in addition to the academic benefits.

We would greatly appreciate the opportunity to talk further with you and anyone else at the Department of Education you think would be appropriate, and we hope that you will support this request. On behalf of our membership, we'd like to thank you for your consideration and continued support of arts in education.

Sincerely,



Jennifer DiBella  
Co-Chair



Sobha Kavanakudiyil  
Co-Chair

CC: Maria Palma  
Audrey Cox