



April 8, 2025

Arden Armbruster, Lead Budget & Policy Analyst, New York City Independent Budget Office
on Cultural Development Fund Programs in NYC Public Schools
Before the Committees on Education and Cultural Affairs,
Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations

Good afternoon, Chair Joseph, Chair Rivera, and members of the Committees on Education and Cultural Affairs, Libraries, and International Intergroup Relations. My name is Arden Armbruster, and I am a lead budget and policy analyst at the New York City Independent Budget Office (IBO). IBO is an independent, nonpartisan City agency that conducts fiscal and policy research for the City. Thank you for the invitation to testify today. I will be speaking about IBO's analysis of one aspect of NYC's arts education ecosystem: school-based programs funded through the Department of Cultural Affairs (DCLA) Cultural Development Fund (CDF). The CDF provides funding to more than one thousand nonprofit organizations each year through a competitive peer review process. In fiscal year 2022, there were 1,019 grantees, with awards totaling just over \$50 million, including Council Member items. The average award was \$49,000, and the median award was \$28,000.

Using addresses of programs funded by the CDF from fiscal year 2022 provided by DCLA, IBO matched to public school addresses to identify CDF programs that occurred at public schools. IBO used 2022 data because they were the most recent data provided by DCLA at the time of analysis. IBO identified about 1,900 CDF-funded programs (30% of all CDF program locations that year) located at traditional public schools. IBO further examined the distribution of these programs and of full-time licensed arts teachers—teachers who are hired into arts teacher positions—across the 1,584 schools active during the 2021-2022 school year. These schools include those within Community School Districts 1 through 32 and District 75, the citywide special education district.

Figure 1
The Majority of Public Schools Hosted At Least One CDF Program During Fiscal Year 2022

Table with 4 columns: School Borough, At Least One CDF Program, At Least One Licensed Arts Teacher, At Least One Certified Arts Teacher. Rows include Citywide, Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Queens, and Staten Island.

SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Cultural Affairs data and Department of Education HR data and New York State certification data, as of October 14, 2021.

IBO found that 72% of public schools hosted a CDF program in 2022, and 77% of schools had a full-time licensed arts teacher on staff during the 2021-2022 school year, as seen in figure 1. Teachers are required to have a State certification in a subject to teach that subject, and they can hold multiple certifications. However, teachers can only hold one license at a time—generally the subject that they teach. As a result, IBO found a somewhat higher share of certified arts teachers working in schools, 81% citywide, suggesting there are teachers qualified to work in the field who were teaching a different subject.

New York State standards and City guidelines for arts education [differ by grade level](#). From 1st through 3rd grades, students are recommended to receive 101 hours of arts instruction over the course of the year, evenly split across dance, music, theater, and visual arts; that number decreases to 93 hours per year for 4th, 5th, and 6th graders. In 7th and 8th grades, students must be provided with two semesters of instruction by a licensed arts teacher. High school graduation requirements include one year of instruction by a licensed arts teacher. IBO’s analysis showed that middle and high schools were much more likely than elementary schools to have a licensed arts teacher, but CDF programs were relatively evenly distributed across school levels.

Overall, the share of arts teachers has been steady in recent years. From school year 2021-2022 through 2023-2024, there were 3.8 full-time licensed arts teachers for every 100 full-time teachers citywide, as seen in figure 2. In the 2023-2024 school year, Manhattan schools had the highest ratio of arts teachers, with 4.7 arts teachers per 100 teachers. Staten Island had the lowest ratio, with 2.4 arts teachers per 100 teachers. At nine schools citywide, more than 20% of teachers were licensed arts teachers: four schools in Manhattan, two in Brooklyn, two in the Bronx, and one in Queens.

Figure 2
The Citywide Share of Teachers Who are Licensed Arts Teachers Has Been Steady in Recent Years

School Borough	Average Share of Teachers Per School		
	2021-2022	2022-2023	2023-2024
Citywide	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Brooklyn	3.9%	4.0%	4.1%
Bronx	3.2%	3.2%	3.4%
Manhattan	4.7%	4.7%	4.7%
Queens	3.8%	3.8%	3.8%
Staten Island	2.3%	2.2%	2.4%

SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Education HR data and New York State certification data, as of the snapshot date each year.
 NOTE: These figures include schools in Community School Districts 1 through 32 and District 75: 1,584 schools in the 2021-2022 school year, 1,588 schools in the 2022-2023 school year, and 1,592 schools in the 2023-2024 school year.

New York City Independent Budget Office



Looking at both CDF programs and licensed teachers in schools, 56% of schools citywide had both a CDF program and a licensed teacher in 2022, but IBO found substantial variation by borough, as seen in figure 3. Three-quarters of Manhattan schools had both, compared with 37% of Staten Island schools, with the other boroughs falling in between. On average, 21% of schools citywide had a licensed teacher but did not host a CDF program, with Queens far above the average at 37% of schools only having a licensed teacher.

On the other hand, 7% of schools citywide had neither a licensed arts teacher nor hosted a CDF program. In the Bronx and Staten Island, 9% of schools had neither. Brooklyn’s share was 8%, and Queens schools were similar to the citywide average. In Manhattan, only 2% of schools had neither. These schools could be receiving services elsewhere; the [Arts in Schools](#) report from the 2021-2022 school year showed that 80% of schools had a relationship with a cultural arts education organization. That is 8 percentage points higher than the share of schools IBO found to host a CDF program that year, indicating as expected that schools are not solely reliant on the CDF to partner with cultural organizations. While Brooklyn and Staten Island schools had a somewhat higher likelihood of partnerships compared with the citywide average (82% and 84% respectively) according to the Arts in Schools report, the share of Bronx schools with an outside partnership was lower than average at 76%. This suggests that, compared with schools in other boroughs, fewer schools in the Bronx have partnerships with cultural organizations, whether through CDF or other programs.

Figure 3
Arts Teachers and CDF Programs Were Not Evenly Distributed Across Boroughs (2021-2022)

School Borough	Licensed Teacher and CDF Program	Licensed Teacher Only	CDF Program Only	Neither
Citywide	56%	21%	16%	7%
Bronx	56%	16%	19%	9%
Brooklyn	54%	20%	17%	8%
Manhattan	75%	8%	15%	2%
Queens	46%	37%	11%	7%
Staten Island	37%	25%	29%	9%

SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Cultural Affairs data and Department of Education HR data and New York State certification data, as of October 14, 2021.
NOTE: Rows may not sum to 100% due to rounding.

New York City Independent Budget Office

IBO also compared where CDF grantee organizations were based and the locations of the schools they served (figure 4). Manhattan-based organizations were much more likely to work outside of their home borough: 65% of school programs provided by Manhattan-based organizations were at schools outside of Manhattan. Manhattan-based organizations also conducted four out of every five CDF programs in public schools. In contrast, organizations based outside of Manhattan primarily partnered with schools in their own borough. Less than half of school programs by Brooklyn and Queens organizations were outside of the organization’s home borough, and less than 10% of school programs by Bronx and Staten Island organizations were in other boroughs.



Figure 4
Manhattan-based Organizations Were More Likely to Work in Other Boroughs

CDF Grantee Location	Number and Share of Programs at Public Schools			
	Outside of Grantee Borough		Same Borough as Grantee	
Citywide	1,114	58%	794	42%
Bronx	5	9%	50	91%
Brooklyn	116	42%	161	58%
Manhattan	970	65%	531	35%
Queens	16	46%	19	54%
Staten Island	1	3%	33	97%
Westchester	6	100%	-	0%

SOURCE: IBO analysis of Department of Cultural Affairs data and Department of Education data.
NOTE: CDF programs at school campuses that could not be assigned to a specific school are included in these figures. These programs are excluded from other analyses.

New York City Independent Budget Office

The data IBO used for this analysis have some limitations. Charter schools and District 79 schools are not included. Where schools were co-located on a campus, IBO manually assigned programs based on location descriptions in the CDF location data. However, there were a very small number of programs on campuses where a specific school was not listed. This handful of programs is also excluded from most analyses. The intention of this analysis is not to equate CDF-funded programs to instruction by a licensed teacher, especially as the CDF data do not include the number or length of visits, nor do they specify the timing of the program. Some of the programs included in the data may be after school, for example. Rather, IBO’s hope is that this analysis can shed light on the distribution of services to help plan and coordinate the many programs through which the City provides access to arts education.

In addition to the borough-level analysis presented above, [IBO created a spreadsheet](#) detailing the distribution of licensed arts teachers and CDF programs by Community School District. The spreadsheet and documentation will be available on our website.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify. I’m happy to answer any questions.

