

2022 Annual Report



LOCAL **L**EARNING

- THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR FOLK ARTS IN EDUCATION

Bringing a cultural lens to complex subjects since 1993.

Local Learning connects folklorists, artists, and educators across the nation and advocates for the full inclusion of folklife and folk arts in education to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and create stronger communities.

www.locallearningnetwork.org

A Note from the Executive Director

As we reflect upon **2022**, I want to offer a few numbers to introduce this annual report.

17 articles were published in the *Journal of Folklore and Education* (pg 3). We have been hearing from teachers and our colleagues that this year has been the hardest in the schools because of the ongoing trauma and disruption caused by death and loss over the past number of years. Paying attention to this topic through the lens of folklife education offers an approach that is often asset-based and strengthens community and a personal sense of cultural connection.

[PEN America released a report](#) in Fall 2022 noting an increase in educational gag orders of **250%** over 2021. They found these increasingly punitive bills targeted teaching, for example, about race and LGBTQ+ identities, affecting higher ed. as well as K-12 education. The Local Learning network offers one antidote to this censorship. Using inquiry grounded in the methods of ethnography, Local Learning resources offered **300+** students agency to engage and document narratives that matter to them. Sherry Gupta's reflection after our workshop underscores why inquiry matters more than ever (pg 4). Partnering with artists and tradition bearers, Local Learning's **14** CCC residencies in 2022 mean that students see elders and community knowledge that reflect their unique communities. And with professional development and activities for teaching with primary sources, Local Learning provides access to narratives and counternarratives that may not be in a textbook, alongside tools for critical analysis to see and hear multiple perspectives. Understanding ourselves and our cultural communities contributes to our growth as learners, educators, and artists (pg 5).

37% of our budget went directly to artists, teachers, culture workers, and folklorists who co-facilitated, co-created, and co-invested in the deep, sustaining work that happens through Local Learning engagements (pg 6). We are supporting the mentorship and growth of practitioners throughout the folk arts education networks of the nation. The financial health of Local Learning is strong, and our expenses align with our mission to transform learning and strengthen communities. Our Board also undertook a big step in authorizing the first reserve fund as an investment for Local Learning's future. They will meet in early 2023 to do 5-year strategic planning, paying attention to the complex challenges within our educational and cultural landscapes. All of the individuals and members identified on the non-hierarchical organizational chart of Local Learning will support the goals of this planning (pg 7).

Since **1993** Local Learning has offered a cultural lens for complex subjects. Today, as we start our 30th year of supporting folk arts education, I do believe that Local Learning matters more than ever. I'm so grateful for all of our partners and funders (pg 8) who are a part of this vibrant network as we continue learning, building and connecting.

Lisa Rathje, Executive Director

Journal of Folklore and Education

Death, Loss, and Remembrance Across Cultures

Readers will consider their own complex and complicated relationship(s) to death and contemplate how people come to understand themselves, each other, and the world around them. Folklore can be a resource in helping heal from the trauma of loss and death while also aiding ongoing efforts to reckon with historical trauma from our shared histories. [Read it here.](#)



This image by Hayden Haynes with Jocelyn Jones is part of their photo essay looking to unpack the story of the Thomas Indian School in Irving, NY.

When people think of sovereignty they think about political sovereignty, but most do not consider the freedom to choose how they wish to educate their children. The history of the Thomas Indian School (TIS) still reverberates through our communities. Its effects manifest in many different ways for individuals and for our community as a whole.

From "The Thomas Indian School: Narrative Sovereignty and Healing," by Joe Stahlman and Hayden Haynes with Jocelyn Jones

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* (ISSN 2573-2072) is a publication of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Volume 9 (2022) featured 17 articles and 5 reviews. We accepted 70% of submissions, following peer review. Guest Editors: Bretton A. Varga and Mark E. Helmsing; Editors: Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje; Design: Lisa Rathje; Review Editor: Taylor Dooley Burden

2022 *Journal of Folklore and Education* Editorial Board & Advisory Committee

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Read the Journal here: <https://JFEPublications.org>

Professional Development

We facilitate a variety of professional development workshops for educators and artists and offer consultancies that particularly focus upon art forms that can be found in the communities of students of all ages (K-12–Adult).

Study of traditional arts and their creators contributes not only to students' understanding of culture and community, but also to their ability to think critically, gather and analyze evidence, learn key social-emotional skills, and express their ideas and interpretations through personal creativity. Some examples of what this looked like in 2022 include:



Filling the "Cup of Inquiry"

After a Local Learning workshop with CultureALL in Des Moines, Iowa, Executive Director Sherry Gupta reflected:

Another way to look at the Local Learning approach is through the empty cup and the "value of emptiness" metaphor:

The teachers create the cup. Teachers work with their students to prepare the clay and shape the cup so it is ready for the folk artist to arrive. Through this process, the students learn to ask questions, and they discover more about their own identities and cultures, their own similarities and differences, and they begin to appreciate their own uniqueness. **They shape the cup of inquiry.**

And then the folk artist arrives. The artist pours their art, their story, their activities into the clay cup of inquiry. The substance brought by the artist offers a rich blend of ingredients, but the blend, and the quantities, and the final form are shaped by the students who created the cup through inquiry.

In many cultural education models, the folklife presenter creates the cup AND fills it. Then serves it to the students to gobble up... In the Local Learning model, training of the "folk artists" does not start with artists building a workshop. Nor might it actually be called "training" so much as "orientation to presenting in classroom settings." The folk artist in the LL model already knows their "presentation." It is their art or other folkways. They simply come present what they already know.



Workshop photos courtesy of CultureALL.

Celebrating Five Years of Culture, Community, and the Classroom

We are continuing to invest in our NY Folklore and Education Network in collaboration with New York Folklore. Our fifth year of CCC saw an expanded program at two sites: Corning/Elmira and the Mid-Hudson region. 14 artists completed the professional development program, offering folk arts education programming for over 300 students in Upstate NY. Public showcases hosted by the Rockwell Museum in Corning and the Maritime Museum in Kingston offered additional opportunities for sharing culture and building community.



2022 Project Highlights

New Resource Alert! Cultural Conversations Guide for Adult Learners

Working with partners at the Rockwell Museum and the ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes, Local Learning supported a community conversation series featuring the self-documentation work created by members of the African American, Muslim American, and Seneca communities. These conversations were opportunities to present this work to a public audience, build relationships for future cultural documentation work, and engage in conversation with the audience about what it means to be a cultural steward. This project became a pilot to test our [Cultural Stewardship Conversation Activity and Discussion Guide](#). This guide includes links to the documentation media created by the three communities featured in the conversation series and provides discussion questions and engagement activities for use by teachers, museums, libraries, and community groups.

Documentary Arts Fund for *Journal of Folklore and Education* Authors Makes a Difference

JFE is grateful for the Govenar Family Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas and Documentary Arts' support of this important funding source for invited JFE authors. In 2022 we supported 12 individuals through this fund. As one author who received the fund shared: "I am writing to let you know that the funding available for authors that contribute to the *Journal of Folklore and Education* is greatly appreciated. The task of writing is long and involves many processes, so to get some funding for the work is a great reciprocal way of working together. Nya weh (thank you again) for all the work you are doing to amplify Indigenous peoples voices."

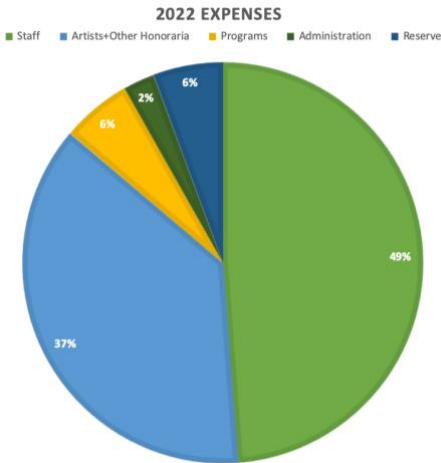
Local Learning leads a Teaching with Primary Sources (TPS) grant from the Library of Congress

TPS is the Library of Congress premier educational program, focused on helping educators enhance students' critical thinking and analysis skills and content knowledge using the Library's collections of millions of digitized primary sources. Local Learning and our partners Vermont Folklife, HistoryMiami Museum, Oklahoma State University Library and the OSU Writing Project offered professional development and began to pilot the curriculum that will be available in 2023.

Advocacy and Investing in the Folklore and Education Network

- As a member of the advisory group for a professional development series awarded by the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies (NASAA) to the **American Folklore Society** (AFS) we co-facilitated delivery of a module on Centering Equity in SAA practice with Selina Morales in April and Cross-Sector Models for Folklore with Reese Tanimura in September.
- We offered a virtual professional development session for members of the **Louisiana Association of Museums**.
- As a named consultant in the REACH grant from the Department of Education to the **University of South Florida and Arts Schools Network**, Local Learning is continuing to ensure that folk arts are included in the development of culturally-inclusive arts integration curricula.

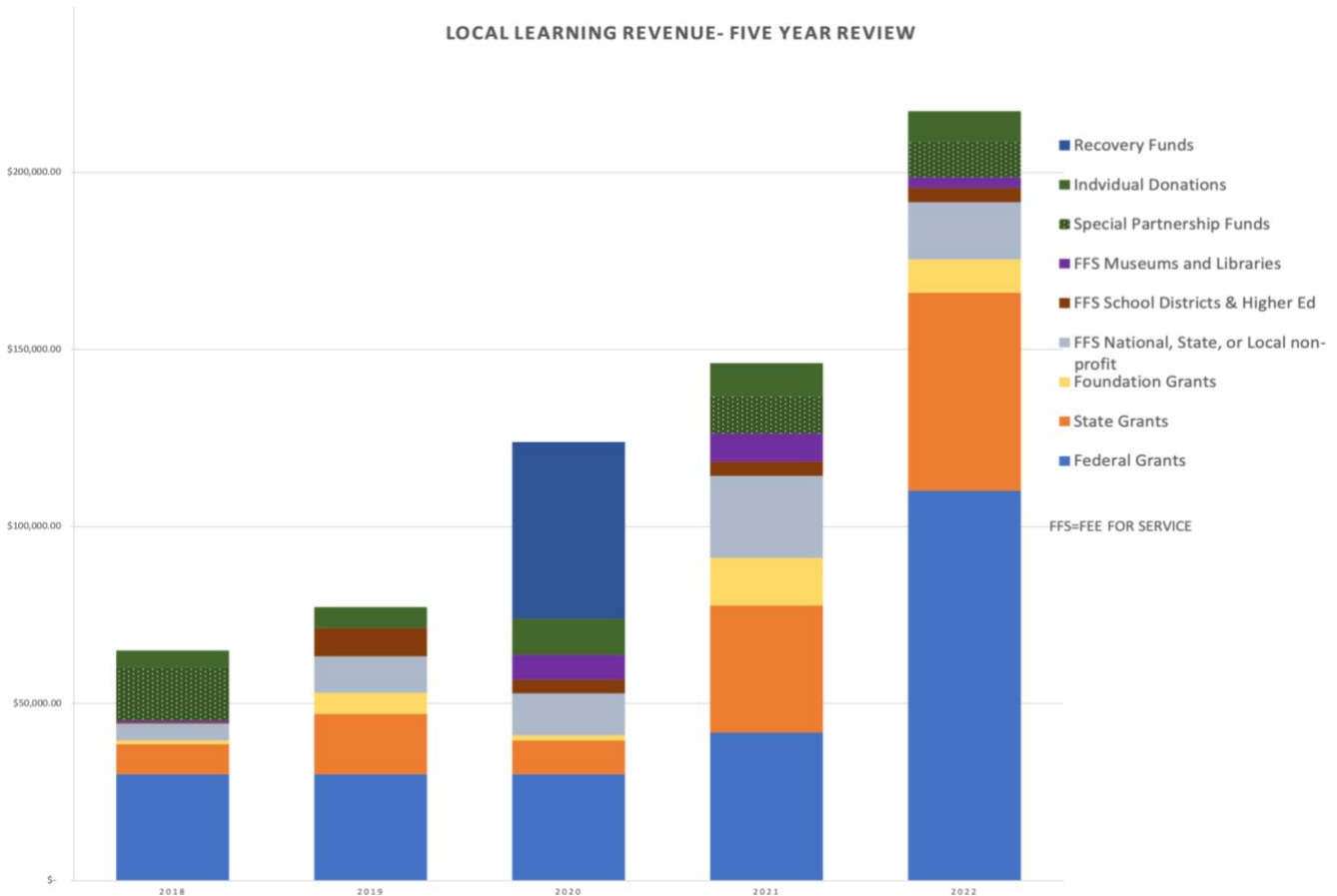
Financial Statement



Highlights

- We are growing. Local Learning now has two full time staff and one part-time, long-term contractor for the first time in the organization’s history.
- 2022 saw our first multi-year funding from the New York State Council on the Arts totaling \$148,500 (\$49,500/year). This supports our continued investment in the New York Folklore and Education Network with the move of our Coordinator Mira Johnson to fulltime status, as well as other professional development in the state.
- The Board funded our first Board-Directed Reserve to support organizational sustainability and long-term investment.

The Local Learning budget is growing. Our 2022 income (pending final accounting) was \$227,000 with expenses of \$227,000. A \$50,000 CARES grant accounted in 2020 was expensed in Fiscal Years 2021 and 2022. Given the multiple challenges of doing work in a time of COVID19, we see demonstrated resilience in our revenues.



Local Learning Board Updates

The Board elected the first Local Learning Vice-Chair Director at our 3rd Quarter Meeting in Tulsa, Oklahoma. Halle Butvin will serve in this position, succeeding Doug Blandy as Chair when his term finishes in 2023. Lisa Higgins was also elected to the Board Treasurer position. We thanked Linda Deafenbaugh, Michael Knoll, and Terry Liu for their service to the Board through 2022.

Local Learning Board

Doug Blandy (Chair) is a professor in the School of Planning, Public Policy, and Management at the University of Oregon.

Halle Butvin (Vice-Chair) is Director of special projects at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Lisa L. Higgins (Treasurer) is Director of the Missouri Folk Arts Program.

Ellen McHale (Secretary) is Executive Director of New York Folklore.

Maribel L. Alvarez is Associate Dean for Community Engagement & Jim Griffith Chair in Public Folklore, University of Arizona.

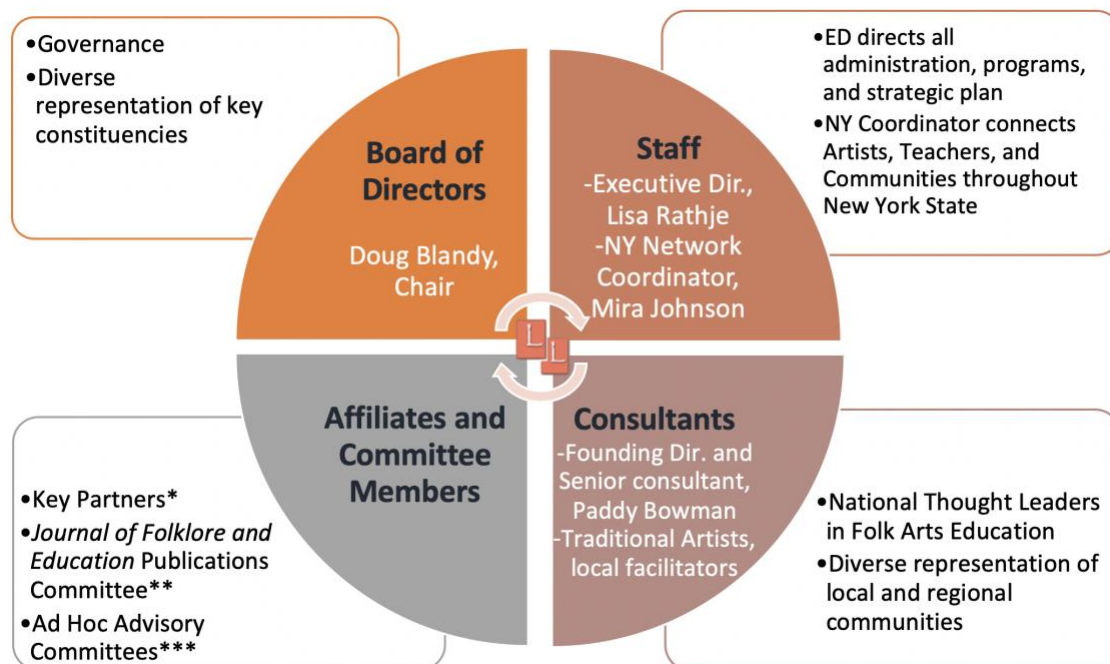
Flávia Bastos is a Distinct Research Professor and Associate Dean in the Graduate School at the University of Cincinnati.

Marcus Cederström is a community curator of Nordic-American folklore at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

Jean Tokuda Irwin is the Arts Education Program Manager for the Utah Division of Arts & Museums.

Shanendra Nowell is Associate Professor of Secondary Education at Oklahoma State University.

These **Founding Directors** serve as *Emeritus* board members. These positions are fully honorific and recognize the significant contributions of these individuals to our mission and organization: Betty Belanus, Amanda Dargan, Maida Owens, Anne Pryor, and Steve Zeitlin.



*Key Partners see page 7; **Editorial Board see page 2, *** JFE Advisory Committee see page 2

Key Partners and Funders

Strong partnerships are a core value for Local Learning and are necessary for sustaining and nurturing the field of Folk Arts in Education.

2022 Funding including Grants, Fees, and Honoraria

- National Endowment for the Arts
- New York State Council on the Arts
- Library of Congress
- New York Folklore Humanities New York
- Corning Incorporated Foundation
- Govenar Family Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas
- The American Folklore Society
- The Community Foundation of Elmira-Corning and the Finger Lakes
- The Ohio State University
- CultureALL
- REACH, a program funded by the Department of Education through the University of South Florida and Arts Schools Network
- The Louisiana Association of Museums
- Oklahoma Humanities
- Virginia Humanities

Support Local Learning in our 30th Year!

We are pleased to share that we raised \$13,625 through our 2022 Giving Campaign. We are grateful to the individual donors who all participated to support our mission. **Our fundraising goal for our 30th year in 2023 is \$30,000.** Please help by setting up a monthly donation, offering a challenge grant, or donating today!

Thank you for supporting our work to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and strengthen communities through Folk Arts in Education for the past thirty years.



2022 Partners who donated in-kind time, space, and services include

- | | |
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| The ARTS Council of the Southern Finger Lakes | The Rockwell Museum |
| The Maritime Museum of the Mid-Hudson | Arts Mid-Hudson |
| The Greater Southern Tier Teachers Center | Mid-Hudson Teacher Center |
| City Lore | JFE Guest Editors and Publications Committee Members |

How can you help Local Learning?

- [Follow us on Facebook](#)
- [Subscribe to our quarterly e-bulletin](#)
- Publicize our work among colleagues
- Volunteer to become a JFE peer reviewer
- Recommend potential networks and resources
- [DONATE](#)

Contact Us to Learn More!

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