

# 2024 Annual Report



Consulting and Training

Culture, Community, and the Classroom



Publishing and Resources

2024: Volume 11



- THE NATIONAL NETWORK FOR FOLK ARTS IN EDUCATION

Local Learning envisions a nation of lifelong learners who understand traditional arts and knowledge as critical tools for transformative solutions to the complex challenges of today's world.

*To build a more equitable and inclusive world, learners of all ages must purposefully develop the skills embedded in folklife methods to explore local knowledge, thereby recognizing one another's humanity while learning more about themselves and their communities.*

—2023 Strategic Plan  
Adopted May 23, 2023

<https://locallearningnetwork.org>



# A Note from the Executive Director

Friends, my 2024 letter reflects a depth, reach, and integrity of programs that I am deeply proud to share.

Paddy Bowman and I continued our important tradition of identifying local traditional artists to inspire art teachers, folklorists, and other attendees from around the nation at conferences. This year, National Heritage Fellow Karen Ann Hoffman wowed the audience at her Artist Showcase at NAEA in Minneapolis (top photo). I also share these powerful words from J. Brophy Toledo (Jemez Pueblo, 2<sup>nd</sup> photo) reflecting on the Local Learning session at AFS where his story informed our practice: "This day was meant to happen, right here and right now.... as that power lays on the ground (in the drawings completed during the interview) with all these stories behind it—with that one world we are talking about, with all the water, the plants, and everything—and how that connectivity leads to that Earthpeople-action-part, you know—that we are all stewards of the land, taking care of her. And taking care of her, takes care of you... **We need each other.** Because that's what that concept is all about. That is what I see in here." Local Art Teacher Karl Orozco facilitated the arts interview process. I'm grateful for our National Endowment for the Arts grant that supported in part our efforts to showcase artists and culture bearers at professional meetings.



Through consulting work, Local Learning reaches diverse communities. Some offer ongoing program building, such as our second Museum Studies educator training in partnership with the Art in Motion School of Chicago through the REACH grant. Teachers visited the Museum of Contemporary Art of Chicago and the Chicago History Museum, exploring the theme of traditions of story and art in activism through our resource guide and facilitation (3<sup>rd</sup> photo). Local Learning also continues our important partnership with New York Folklore. We hosted a deep dive into core issues in folk arts education at the NY Folk Arts Roundtable with traditional artists and folklorists (4<sup>th</sup> photo).



Our annual Culture, Community, and the Classroom program continues to expand. As staff member Mira Johnson reflects, "**Over the past eight years, we've had a chance to work with over 160 inspiring teachers and 66 amazing artists across New York**, and we've witnessed many powerful residencies that came out of those collaborations." I'm happy to share that our 2024 CCC programs included not only New York (5<sup>th</sup> photo is our 2024 NY cohort of artists), but two series in New Jersey in partnership with the Middlesex County Arts and Culture Institute and Perkins Center for the Arts in South Jersey.



Thank you for your support!  
Lisa Rathje, Executive Director



# Journal of Folklore and Education

## On Shifting Ground

Volume 11 of the *Journal of Folklore and Education* featured topics focused upon the topics of Migration, Disruption, and the Changing Contours of Home. Guest Editors Michelle Banks and Sojin Kim note:

“Folklore and other traditional expressive forms offer tools, strategies, and resources for both responding to and catalyzing change. Whether adapting traditional expressive behavior to meet new circumstances during and after migration or asserting them to challenge the status quo, people productively leverage the durability and dynamic nature of culture to strengthen community life through changes of many sorts—whether political, social, environmental, or cultural.”

[Read it here.](#)

### On Shifting Ground

### Migration, Disruption, and the Changing Contours of Home

Migration is not a straightforward, singular, linear process of leaving one place and arriving in another. Being on the move involves infinite motivations and circumstances. It always involves interaction, adaptation, creativity; it is multifaceted, multi-routed, sometimes circular or cyclical. And what we find resoundingly essential to recognize—whether we work in the classroom, at museums, or directly in community—is that all of us live and produce our senses of community, and by extension home, on shifting ground.

The *Journal of Folklore and Education* (ISSN 2573-2072) is a publication of Local Learning: The National Network for Folk Arts in Education. Volume 11 (2024) featured 14 articles and 3 reviews. We accepted 45% of submissions, following peer review.

Guest Editors: Michelle Banks and Sojin Kim; Editors: Paddy Bowman and Lisa Rathje; Managing Editor: Cassie Rosita Patterson; Design: Lisa Rathje; Review Editor: Taylor Dooley Burden

### 2024 *Journal of Folklore and Education* Editorial Board and Advisory Committee

#### Editorial Board

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Maida Owens  
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Read it here: <https://JFEPublications.org>

# Professional Development

*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.*

In 2024 we facilitated professional development workshops in 10 states for educators, folklorists, and artists. Our consultancies included customized programs for museum professionals, teachers, and artists, and we offered presentations for diverse public groups in a variety of formats.

Some highlights from the year include:



## Partnerships with National Reach

Local Learning continued its 5-year consultancy for the REACH project, funded through a U.S. Department of Education grant awarded to the Distinctive Schools Network and University of Southern Florida PAInT Program, directed by Dr. Denise Davis-Cotton. Lisa Rathje represented Local Learning in Tulsa, Oklahoma at the REACH education think tank (photo). She was joined by Dr. Autumn Brown to share and discuss their 2024 curriculum packet on teaching the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre, developed through our participation in the Library of Congress Teaching with Primary Sources program.



## Culture, Community, and the Classroom—A National Scope

We continue to invest in our New York Folklore and Education Network in collaboration with New York Folklore. Our 7<sup>th</sup> year of CCC created a deep partnership with Mid-Hudson Teachers Center, resulting in a waitlisted summer institute! Thirty-five teachers and 9 artists completed the professional development program, which included an extra day-long workshop with Julia Gutierrez-Rivera for invited Teaching Artists. And CCC is expanding! With Mira Johnson directing CCCNY, we have had time to build the program with 2024 workshops hosted at three sites in New Jersey (photo) and planning started for a two-year series in Wisconsin, coming in 2025.

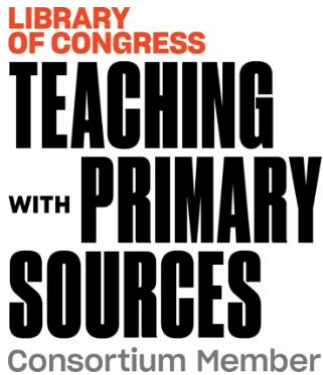


## New Opportunities for Learning and Sharing

Paddy Bowman joined Jenna Ehlinger, Administrator of the Chase Home Museum of Utah Folk Arts, and folk artists Terry Goedel and Judy Mansfield at Arts Express Utah to spark ideas of how educators and their students can engage with artists and traditional culture bearers in their own families and communities. Teacher evaluations included comments like: "I've loved learning about how we shouldn't shy away from teaching about cultures. I want to do better at opening my students' eyes and hearts to be themselves. Absolutely loved this point!" Bowman also led a three-day folk arts integration track for the Oklahoma Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain State Park. Teachers created seasonal rounds

collages, self-portraits, and classroom applications and practiced interviewing and documentation (top right cover photo). Finally, thank you Maria Puente Flores (photo) for being a part of the Local Learning team this fall to coordinate our Culture, Community, and the Classroom program.

# Dissemination of Research and Curriculum



Teaching with Primary Sources is the Library of Congress's 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.

The Local Learning team published four new Teaching with Primary Sources units of study in 2024. Designed for middle grades and high school, these guides connect local resources in Vermont, Washington, and Oklahoma to the Nation's library:

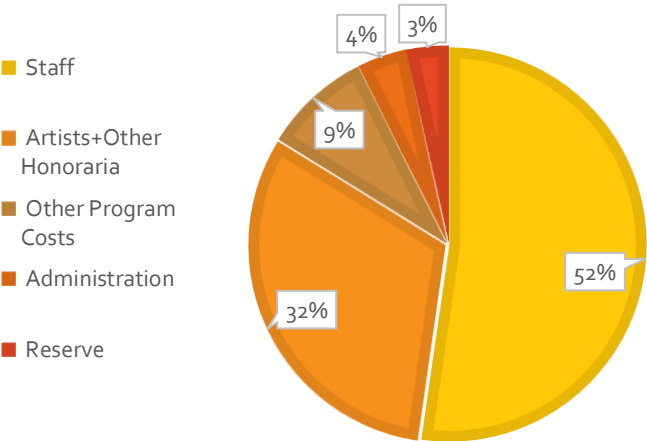
1. We offered a curriculum packet designed for a Teaching with Primary Sources workshop titled [Oral History and Interpretation](#) offered by Local Learning in partnership with Vermont Folklife and Washington State Parks featuring content from the Mount St. Helens Oral History Project.
2. A [curriculum guide focused upon the art classroom](#) featured an 8-class period lesson plan by Kuen Kuen Spichiger using Mount St. Helens primary sources from the Library of Congress, Mount. St. Helens Oral History Project, and Washington State Archives. Content developed and presented at the National Art Education Association (NAEA) conferences over the past three years rounds out this packet.
3. The [Oklahoma Curriculum Guide](#) represents one part of a three-year study engaging the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre through primary sources. It was disseminated at a public talk given by Dr. Bettina Love in Tulsa and features new content from both Stevie "Dr. View" Johnson and a full unit of study crafted by Dr. Autumn Brown centering survivor oral histories from the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre.
4. The [Vermont Folklife in the Seasonal Round](#) unit asks: What can students learn about themselves, their families, their region, and the world by examining the seasonal round in their own lives and through primary sources?

Local Learning offered professional development through our TPS project in Washington, Vermont, and Oklahoma and presented various resources from the project at national conferences including the National Council for Social Studies (photo by Crystal Payne, Library of Congress).



# Financial Statement

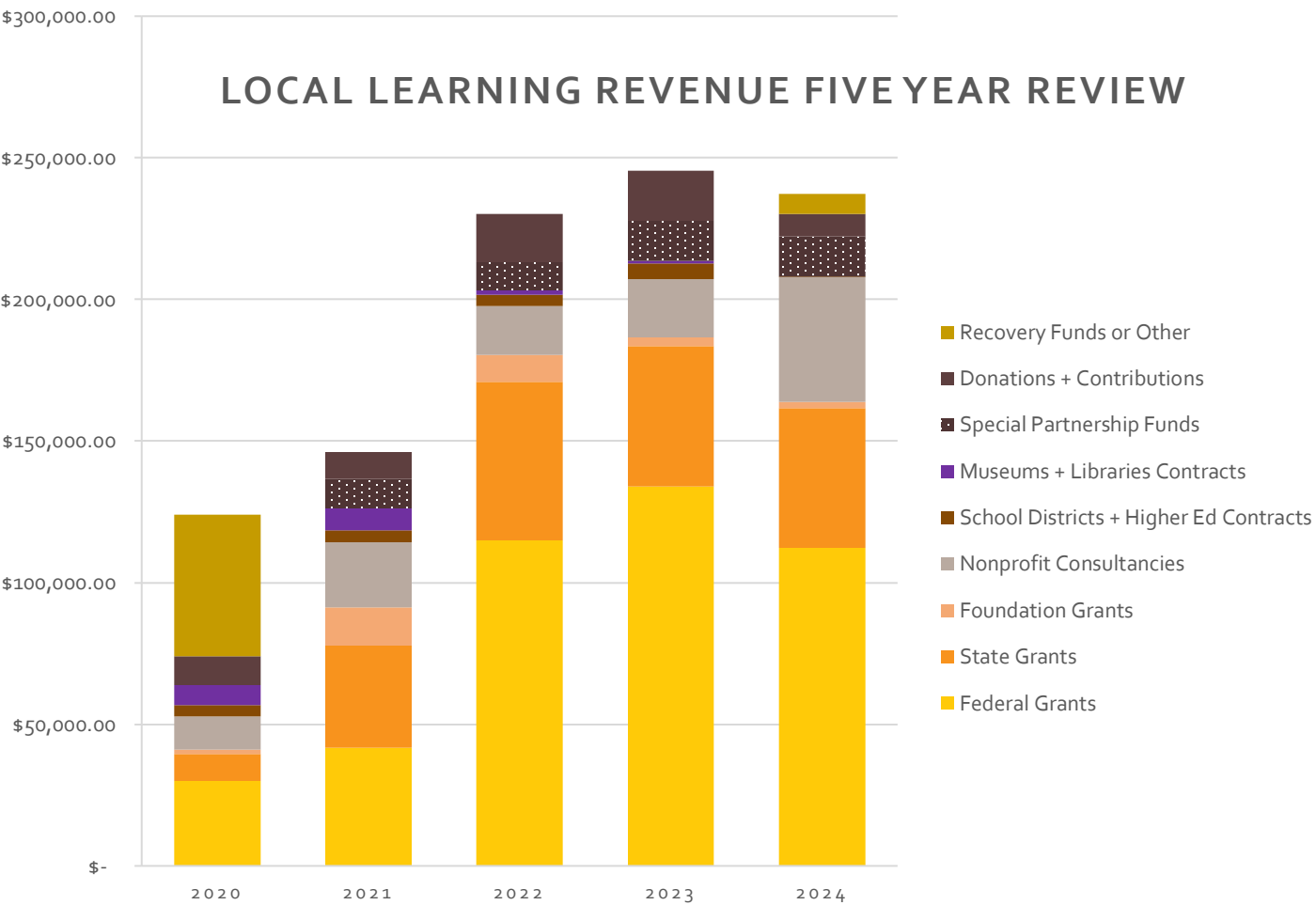
## 2024 EXPENSES



## Highlights

- Representing 84% of our expenses, Local Learning continues to invest in our staff and collaborators, including artists. This aligns with our values to center people and relationships in our work. We also know local programming is better and the outcomes are more sustainable when we contract local artists and experts as partners.
- The Board-Directed Reserve supports organizational sustainability and long-term investment. It is currently fully funded for 3 months of expenses.
- The Local Learning 2024 income was \$241,342. Our expenses were \$235,864.

## LOCAL LEARNING REVENUE FIVE YEAR REVIEW





# Local Learning Board Updates

The Board elected Jean Tokuda Irwin as Secretary at our November meeting during AFS in Albuquerque. We are grateful to Ellen McHale for her service as Secretary through 2024. Reese Tanimura was elected Vice-Chair, and will serve one year in this role, with candidacy for the Board Chair in the coming year.

## Local Learning Board

**Halle Butvin** (Chair) is Director of Special Projects at the Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

**Reese Tanimura** (Vice Chair) is Managing Director of Northwest Folklore.

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

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

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

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

**B. Marcus L. Cederström** is community curator of Nordic American Folklore at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.\*

**Marit Dewhurst** is Director of Art Education and Professor of Art and Museum Education at The City College of New York.

**Maxwell Kofi Donkor** is an African Master Drummer, Cultural Educator, and Director of Kofi & Sankofa African Drum & Dance Ensemble.\*\*

**Minuette Floyd** is Professor of Art Education at the University of South Carolina.

**Rosemary Hathaway** is Professor Emerita of English at West Virginia University.\*\*

**Sahar Muradi** is Director of Education Programs at City Lore.

**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.



\*Ended terms in November, 2024.

\*\*Started terms in November, 2024.

The **Local Learning staff** are Lisa Rathje, Executive Director and Mira Johnson, New York Folklore in Education Network Coordinator. Paddy Bowman is Founding Director and Senior Consultant.

Local Learning Board members Lisa Higgins and Jean Tokuda Irwin.  
Photo courtesy Ian Hallagan.

# 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.

## 2024 Funding and Gifts including Grants, Fees, and Honoraria

National Endowment for the Arts  
New York State Council on the Arts  
Library of Congress  
New York Folklore  
Govenar Family Fund of Communities Foundation of Texas and Documentary Arts  
Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures  
REACH, a program funded by the U.S. Department of Education through the University of South Florida and Distinctive Schools  
Full Service Community School El Centro, a U.S. Department of Education program through the University Center of Lake Co.  
Perkins Center for the Arts  
Arts Express Utah, Utah Arts Council  
Oklahoma Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain  
The Birthplace of Country Music Museum  
The Spellman Trust  
Tuckerton Seaport Folklife  
Goucher College  
And many individual donors.

## 2024 Partners who donated in-kind time, space, and services include

Mid-Hudson Teacher Center  
City Lore  
JFE Guest Editors, Editorial Board, and 2024 Advisory Committee

## How can you help Local Learning?

- [Follow us on Facebook](#) and [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!

Local Learning:  
The National Network for Folk Arts in Education  
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<https://locallearningnetwork.org>



### A Note.

We are grateful for the support of nonprofit partners, foundations, and individuals in 2024—this accounted for almost 25% of our total budget. Local Learning is committed to our mission, our values, and the people we center in every program. The coming years may bring significant shifts in our revenue streams. We will not likely sustain current levels of direct and indirect federal funding at 60%. This is being actively addressed, and Individual Donors and Private or Family Foundations will matter more than ever.

**Thank you** for supporting our work to transform learning, build intercultural understanding, and strengthen communities through Folk Arts in Education since 1993.