A total of almost $13,000 in arts sponsorship grants has been awarded by the Louisiana State Arts Council through the Division of the Arts for support of an Acadiana Cooperative Arts Education Initiative. Eight parishes in Acadiana, including Acadia, Evangeline, Iberia, Lafayette, St. Bernard, St. Martin, St. Mary and Vermilion are expected to join in the program coordinated by the Acadiana Arts Council.

In the program, nationally-renowned touring performing artists will give performances and workshops for public and private school children during five different professional touring artist groups have been scheduled for the sessions which will begin in September and continue through next spring. The groups include: Texas Opera Theatre, a group of singers associated with the Houston Grand Opera, who will perform short musical programs introducing students to opera; Blair String Quartet, composed of four teachers from the Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University, Nashville; The Quartet will give short concerts during which each instrument and piece of music played will be discussed and explained; The North Carolina Dance Theatre, a group of sixteen professional dancers which has its roots in traditional ballet. The troupe performs modern classics and will present short dance performances as well as conduct classes in the schools.

National Players is a group of young actors and actresses who perform short versions of Shakespeare’s plays as well as other classics, and conduct workshops in all aspects of the theatre; Children’s Musical Theatre, another theatre group, performs plays incorporating music for young children; American Mime Experiment (G.A.M.E.) will introduce students to the art of mime in early childhood.

In November, the three performers are based in Atlanta: David Holt, a folk entertainer from North Carolina, plays many instruments no longer in everyday use, and will perform and discuss Appalachian and other cultures in September; Howard Hangar Jazz is a musical group which conducts sessions in all phases of development of jazz. A variety of instruments will be used when the group comes to Acadiana in November.

Ron Borccon is a conductor and classical guitarist now residing in Baton Rouge. He will be in residence the month of April and will perform and discuss the many varieties of guitar music with students of all ages; A chamber orchestra is currently under negotiation, and will perform and hold workshops for public and private school children through April. The groups include: Texas Opera Theatre, a group of singers associated with the Houston Grand Opera, who will perform short musical programs introducing students to opera; Blair String Quartet, composed of four teachers from the Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University, Nashville; The Quartet will give short concerts during which each instrument and piece of music played will be discussed and explained; The North Carolina Dance Theatre, a group of sixteen professional dancers which has its roots in traditional ballet. The troupe performs modern classics and will present short dance performances as well as conduct classes in the schools.

The state awarded funds will be matched on a dollar-for-dollar basis in each parish. Local money is being raised from individuals and corporations sponsoring arts programs in the public schools. The local groups are: Acadia Arts Council, Lafayette Parish School Board, St. Mary Parish School Board, The North Carolina Dance Theatre, a group of sixteen professional dancers which has its roots in traditional ballet. The troupe performs modern classics and will present short dance performances as well as conduct classes in the schools.