



DC COMMISSION ON
THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

ARTS EDUCATION CENSUS

Executive Summary 2013-2014 Academic Year

Inspiring Creativity through the Arts





INSPIRING CREATIVITY THROUGH THE ARTS

INTRODUCTION

DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities' (DCCAH) goal is to ensure that every child has access to a robust and high quality education in, through, and about the arts by the time he or she graduates from a public high school in the District of Columbia.

DCCAH holds the belief that the arts provide an entry point for young people to build knowledge, skills, and ultimately understanding not only in the discrete disciplines of the arts themselves, but also in other content areas. The arts promote valuable 21st Century skills and “habits of mind” including; critical and creative thinking, and academic success. They help young people transition from the realm of the literal, linear thinker into that of the abstract, conceptual one. The cultivation of imagination through the creative process has the potential to lead to the generation of innovative ideas. The arts foster a sense of self in children that builds their socio-emotional capacities and opens them to the realm of possibilities for their own potential. In essence, the arts are fundamental not only to the survival of children in their education, but also to them thriving in the greater world in which they live.

“It is clear from the research that learning in and through the arts provides the type of emotional, creative and expressive development that students can benefit from throughout their lives. If we as a nation are serious about building a road to success for every student we must include the arts in curricular planning from the elementary through college levels.”

Dr. Nancy Rubino, Senior Director in the College Board, Office of Academic Initiatives

ARTS EDUCATION POLICY IN DC PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The District of Columbia State Board of Education approved standards for arts education in 2008. The arts education standards provide specific grade level requirements for students from Pre-K through 8th grade as well as high school standards to be met by 12th in each of the four arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual arts.

In order to graduate from high school, students must earn 0.5 credit — or one semester — in visual art and 0.5 credit in music. Students may choose to satisfy these requirements by achieving proficiency in several disciplines or mastery in a single course of study.

The District of Columbia Public Schools requires teachers be licensed in their respective disciplines to meet the “highly qualified” requirement as established by current Federal education policy.

METHODOLOGY

In the Spring of 2014, DCCAH engaged Quadrant Research to work in collaboration with key stakeholders in District of Columbia Public School (DCPS) and District of Columbia Public Charter School (DCPCS) systems to both craft and implement a comprehensive study on the status of arts education. The purpose of this study was to determine the breadth and depth of arts education programming and resources currently in place in the city's schools in order to create a baseline of knowledge on which to build. This document holds many positive indicators as to what is currently in place in both public school systems in the city. It also includes recommendations for further steps that would complement and supplement what is currently in place to ensure that DCCAH's goal is realized in the years to come.

The principals of 234 schools, including 111 district schools and 123 charter schools/campuses, were asked to complete an on-line survey to provide detailed information on arts education in his or her school. A single questionnaire was used. The survey was programmed to only show relevant questions based on the school grade range (Elementary, Middle, High, District or Charter).

The on-line survey captured numerous details on arts education, more specifically:

- Types of arts courses (curricular and extra-curricular) offered, by grade level (for music, visual arts, theatre, and dance);
- Number of students enrolled in arts courses;
- Number of hours in a year dedicated to arts education, by arts discipline;
- Certification level of teachers providing arts education;
- Non-salary budgets allocated to arts education;
- Use of visiting artists, field trips, and artists-in-residence;
- Professional development offerings to art and general classroom teachers; and
- Policies in place regarding arts education (adoption of standards, high school arts graduation requirements, etc.).

In addition to the survey responses, the District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS) provided teacher, course and enrollment data for arts education (based on DCPS course assignments) for all education campus (EC), middle (MS) and high schools (HS) as well as certified educator assignment data for all elementary schools (ES). This data included:

For each EC, MS and HS:

- Number of dance, music, theatre and visual art educators;
- Arts courses provided and course enrollment;
- Music Grad Requirement (Credits);
- Visual Art Grad Requirement (Credits); and
- Number of seniors that will exceed arts graduation requirement.

For each ES

- Number of dance, music, theatre and visual art educators; and
- Arts education programs are provided by the Fillmore Center.

SURVEY PARTICIPATION

A total of 55 schools completed a questionnaire, which is a 24% response rate. A total of 19,521 students were represented by responding schools.

DISTRICT DATA

The District of Columbia Public Schools provided course name and enrollment data for the 2013/2014 school year from the 51 Educational Campuses, Middle Schools and High Schools representing 24,231 students. In addition, the DCPS provided a teacher assignment file covering 60 elementary schools representing 22,162 students. The total DCPS schools covered by DCPS data are 111 (100%) with a total DCPS student enrollment of 46,393 students (100%).

Only 7 DCPS schools reported no arts education programs (representing 1,887 students or 4% of the total DCPS student population).

The combination of the Survey data along with the DCPS arts education course data and teacher assignment information allowed the research team to create a complete and detailed assessment of arts educations in the District of Columbia.

DEFINING SCHOOLS FOR THIS REPORT

For the survey data, school types are not mutually exclusive; a single building could be designated as being an elementary school, a middle school, and/or a high school, depending on which grades in which they have enrollment. Schools with 'elementary grade' are those with at least one grade from kindergarten through fifth grade. Middle school grades are grades six through eight. High school grades are grades nine through twelve.

For DCPS provided data the school type designation assigned by the district was used: Elementary (ES), Education Campus (EC), Middle School (MS) and High School (HS). These schools are mutually exclusive.

When referring to schools in this report "all schools" represents both DCPS and charter schools, "DCPS" represents only DC Public Schools and "charter" represents data for only charter schools.

Note: Data presented in the report is identified as follows: No asterisk = Survey Data, * = DCPS Data Only, ** = DCPS Data and Survey Data Combined.

KEY FINDINGS

Data was collected in six domains i.e. Policies, Student Enrollment, Certified Educators, Resources, Course Offerings, and Arts Community Partnerships.

Things to Celebrate

Of the schools surveyed

- At least 85% of elementary, 50% of middle and 42% of high school students participate in at least one arts course with music and visual arts being the most popular;
- 96% of DCPS students have arts education courses in their schools, with both music and visual art nearly universally available (85% of students);
- 91% of DCPS schools have at least one full time arts educator with music and visual art being the most common;
- All high schools meet the current graduation requirements and 23% of high schools EXCEED them;
- More than 50% of all schools have arts education goals;
- Only 18% of schools reported using outside funding to offset budget decreases;
- 65% of all DC schools have long term partnerships with cultural organizations. This is significantly

higher than what is seen in any other state where this area has been measured; and

- 93% of all schools reported providing students field trips to museums, theatres, musical performances and exhibitions to engage students in artistic experiences.

Things to Watch

Of the schools surveyed

1. Access to dance and theatre opportunities are significantly reduced from music and visual arts;
2. Arts Courses are not mandatory. Increase participation in all 8 wards;
3. While most students participate in the arts fewer students are receiving deeper experiences (For example: only 3 middle schools have band and only one has a chorus or orchestra);
4. More than 60% of schools spend less than \$10 per pupil per year for arts instructional materials. At the elementary level, the per-pupil arts spending is only 2.5 cents per day;
5. Charter schools have significantly lower student participation and fewer course offerings in the arts;
6. Assessment of student skills and knowledge in the arts is mostly driven by teacher-developed assessments (86%) with less than 1 in 10 schools reporting district developed assessments in the arts and 14% reporting "no assessment"; and
7. Less than 25% of schools have an arts education strategic plan.

INITIAL RECOMMENDATIONS

DCCAH should become a bridge between arts partners and schools in order to build a better understanding of the benefits and value of the arts, and the needs of schools in order to build a more cohesive community of arts education practitioners in the city.

DCCAH recommends:

1. The Office of the State Board of Education (OSBE) and representative stakeholders commence a review of the current arts education standards in comparison to the new Core Arts Education Standards to determine what, if any, additional modifications should be made;
2. DCCAH works more closely with school administrators to ensure students have access to opportunities in all arts areas with special attention paid to increasing access to dance and theatre;
3. DCCAH works with school systems to ensure greater engagement with stakeholders to develop consistent and appropriate measurement strategies for student assessment and achievement, teacher evaluation, and overall school performance in the arts;
4. DCCAH facilitates collaborations with District of Columbia Public Schools to develop and expand professional development opportunities for visual and performing arts educators in partnership with other like-minded organizations;
5. DCCAH works with charter schools to investigate strategies to share personnel and other resources to provide high quality arts instruction to more students;
6. School systems consider allocating a minimum line item to the total school budget to support arts education;
7. District of Columbia Data Reports include an inventory of dedicated space for arts education for every public school;
8. DCCAH works with the DC Arts and Humanities Collaborative to develop and maintain a centralized clearinghouse for information about visual and performing arts education programs, policies, best practices, models, news and information as a resource for schools across the community;
9. School systems consider ways to provide additional opportunities in dance and theatre;
10. Charter schools gather and report data on student enrollment in arts education courses; and
11. Charter schools explore a shared resources strategy to provide more diverse arts experiences for students.

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