



K-12 Arts Education
EVERY STUDENT
EVERY SCHOOL
EVERY YEAR





The Arts: Integral to a Complete Education

“Providing a world-class education for all K–12 students in Washington is among my highest priorities, and research has demonstrated that learning in and through the arts contributes to a high-quality, balanced education for our students.

Through arts education, students gain skills in critical thinking and creative problem solving, among many other 21st century skills that today’s employers require. I applaud efforts to ensure that all students experience high-quality arts instruction throughout their K–12 education.” — **GOVERNOR CHRIS GREGOIRE**

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THIS REPORT IS essential reading for anyone who cares about the quality of public education in our state—and for everyone who cares about the educational preparation of the next generation of Washington citizens. It provides information about the vital role that arts learning plays in K–12 education and identifies the gaps and strengths in our system. Most importantly, it outlines steps for improving arts learning for Washington State students.

The Arts Education Research Initiative was developed to assess the state of arts education in our state—what’s working, where to improve, and what can be done to provide better arts education for our students. On the following pages you’ll find sobering facts about the status of arts education, good news about areas of improvement, stories of strong practice, and action agendas to support arts education efforts.

The Washington State Arts Commission has a longstanding commitment to arts education. We provide funding, training, research, and policy initiatives to increase student access to effective arts learning programs. Our goal is arts education for every student, in every school, every year. Unfortunately, in spite of strong state policies, Washington is still far from that reality.

Yet there are signs of promise. In communities across the state, we see the positive results when arts organizations and artists, businesses and civic leaders, schools and educators, and public and private funders all work together in support of arts education in K–12 public schools.

By working together we can ensure that every student—kindergarten through grade 12—gets a well-rounded education that includes the arts. Let’s make it happen.

Kris Tucker

KRIS TUCKER
Executive Director, Washington State Arts Commission

Though the arts are recognized as a core academic subject in Washington State and across the nation, K–12 arts education is fraught with inequities. Less time and attention are given to the arts compared to other core subjects; support and resources for teaching the arts varies widely from district to district and from school to school. In spite of all we know about the benefits of arts learning—and strong policies to support arts learning—the overall level of arts education is inadequate.

Washington State is a leader in the national campaign to document and improve K–12 arts education; Washington State Arts Commission’s (WSAC) Arts Education Research Initiative (AERI) is a central piece of this effort.

The AERI provides sound data about the state of K–12 arts education in Washington and offers encouragement and information to those striving to

boost arts learning. The numbers tell a compelling story. The innovative solutions, attributes of effective practice, and action agendas contained in these pages provide a valuable resource for educators, policy makers, parents, and community partners.

For this study, all Washington K–12 principals were invited to participate in an online survey about arts education in their schools. A total of 478 principals participated, providing information about curriculum, funding, and other factors that impact teaching and learning in the arts. The schools included in this survey represent urban, suburban, and rural areas across the state, from all nine of our state’s Educational Service Districts (ESDs); combined, they account for 25% of the state’s total public school population. Overall, student and school demographics in the AERI survey sample mirror state averages. (See additional demographic information on page 6.)



ARTS EDUCATION IS BASIC EDUCATION

State & National Context

ACROSS THE NATION, policy makers, educators, arts leaders, and families agree that instruction in the arts is essential to every student's basic education. Here in Washington State, Governor Gregoire and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) work with many dedicated partners to develop a world-class education system. The AERI is one of many efforts aimed at supporting this goal and ensuring the place of the arts in our students' education.

All students benefit from learning in the arts—today and tomorrow.

In the creative economy of the 21st century, arts education is vital. It helps students develop essential skills that prepare them to become the innovators, problem-solvers, and collaborators our world needs. National research shows that involvement in the arts has an immediate, positive impact on students—elevating academic performance, deterring delinquency, and raising graduation rates. According to the Center for Arts Education's recent report, *Staying in School*, some students at risk of dropping out have cited involvement in the arts as their reason to stay in school. New neuroscience research also documents the positive effects of arts learning on cognitive function.

There is a gap between policy and practice.

Washington State law defines the arts as a core subject, a part of basic education for all students. In addition, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (also known as No Child Left Behind), passed by the U.S. Congress in 2001, recognizes the arts as a core academic subject along with mathematics, language arts, and other subjects. But there is a lingering misconception that the law ranks subjects such as math and reading above the arts. Despite growing awareness that learning in the arts is integral to a basic education, this misunderstanding combines with other factors to force the arts into the margins of the school day.

Positive change requires evidence.

Positive change can be forged through policy change. And policy must be built upon data. Until recently, discussions about arts education relied heavily on anecdote—the breadth of research required to help create policy change simply did not exist. In recent years, however, studies nationwide have

contributed to a growing body of research that articulates the value and need for arts education, the gaps in provision, and strategies that can support its expansion in grades K–12.

What do we need to know?

- How much time do students spend learning in, through, and about the arts?
- Who provides the arts instruction that students receive?
- What are the barriers to increasing arts instruction?
- What are attributes of strong arts education practice?

“The arts can help students become tenacious, team-oriented problem solvers who are confident and able to think creatively.”

U.S. Secretary of Education
ARNE DUNCAN,
in a letter to *Education Leaders*, August 2009

The first AERI report, completed in 2005, investigated these questions and addressed both the ways student learning in the arts is measured and the ways teachers, principals, and administrators gain the support they need to provide arts learning opportunities for students. The report helped spur policy discussion here in Washington and was included as one of five examples in the Arts Education Partnership's research and policy brief, *From Anecdote to Evidence: Assessing the Status and Condition of Arts Education at the State Level*.

Four years later, the 2009 AERI report reveals both progress and ongoing needs in the drive to strengthen opportunities for K–12 arts education throughout Washington State. It also offers the potential to foster connections between schools seeking solutions and those who have found ways to maximize their opportunities for arts education.

Research Highlights

ALTHOUGH WASHINGTON ARTS education shows some improvements since 2005, our 2009 study reveals some concerning findings. The total number of hours of arts instruction at the elementary level has dropped. Formalized curricula remain scarce. Assessments of student learning in the arts are becoming a more common practice, but they are not yet universally understood or applied. Teachers need more time and support to effectively provide arts instruction. And while principals are generally satisfied with the quality of arts education they have, they want more arts learning in their schools—but lack needed resources and support.

What we know

In Washington State, the arts—dance, music, theatre, and visual arts—are defined by law as a core subject area. Learning standards in the arts, as put forth by OSPI, are well defined through both the Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRs) and Grade Level Expectations (GLEs). Currently, the state requires that all students graduate with one credit in the arts; new graduation requirements, including two arts credits, have been proposed, though funding to implement the legislation has yet to be secured.

However, a gap separates these strong policies from effective and consistent practice. The 2009 AERI report reveals there is much to accomplish in order to reach the goal of ensuring ongoing, in-depth, and consistent arts learning for every student—in every school, every year.

TAKE ACTION

How can we address the gap between arts education policy and practice, while ensuring consistent opportunities for all students?

Improve access to arts curricula

- * Share resources. Schools, districts, and funders can work together to make written arts curricula accessible to all teachers.
- * Encourage local school boards to adopt a district-wide arts curriculum that aligns with state standards.

Measure what students learn

- * Build statewide support for assessment of student learning in the arts by advocating for continuing development of assessment tools and approaches.
- * Train teachers to conduct, document, and report arts assessments—and use the results to improve instruction.

Support arts teachers

- * Provide resources to support arts specialists, including increased staffing budgets, planning time, and professional development.
- * Increase arts education training and certification opportunities in colleges and universities.

Advance arts partnerships

- * Support collaboration between schools and cultural organizations in which resources can be shared to support common educational goals.
- * Develop long-term partnerships that support sequential arts learning aligned with state standards.

Leverage sustainable funding

- * Establish and support specific line items for arts education within school and district budgets.
- * Engage the community and local stakeholders in safeguarding arts funding by communicating the importance of resources for arts education.



42% of principals say statewide testing gets in the way of meeting arts learning goals.

33% of elementary students are getting an average of less than one hour of arts instruction per week.

47% of schools offer instruction in only one of the four primary arts disciplines (most often music).

8% of elementary schools and 4% of secondary schools provide formal arts instruction in all four arts disciplines.

91% of high school students meet the current graduation requirement of one credit in the arts; 43% graduate with more than one credit.

63% of principals are dissatisfied with the quantity of arts education in their schools.

41% of schools are using ongoing, criteria-based assessments, up from 32% in 2005.

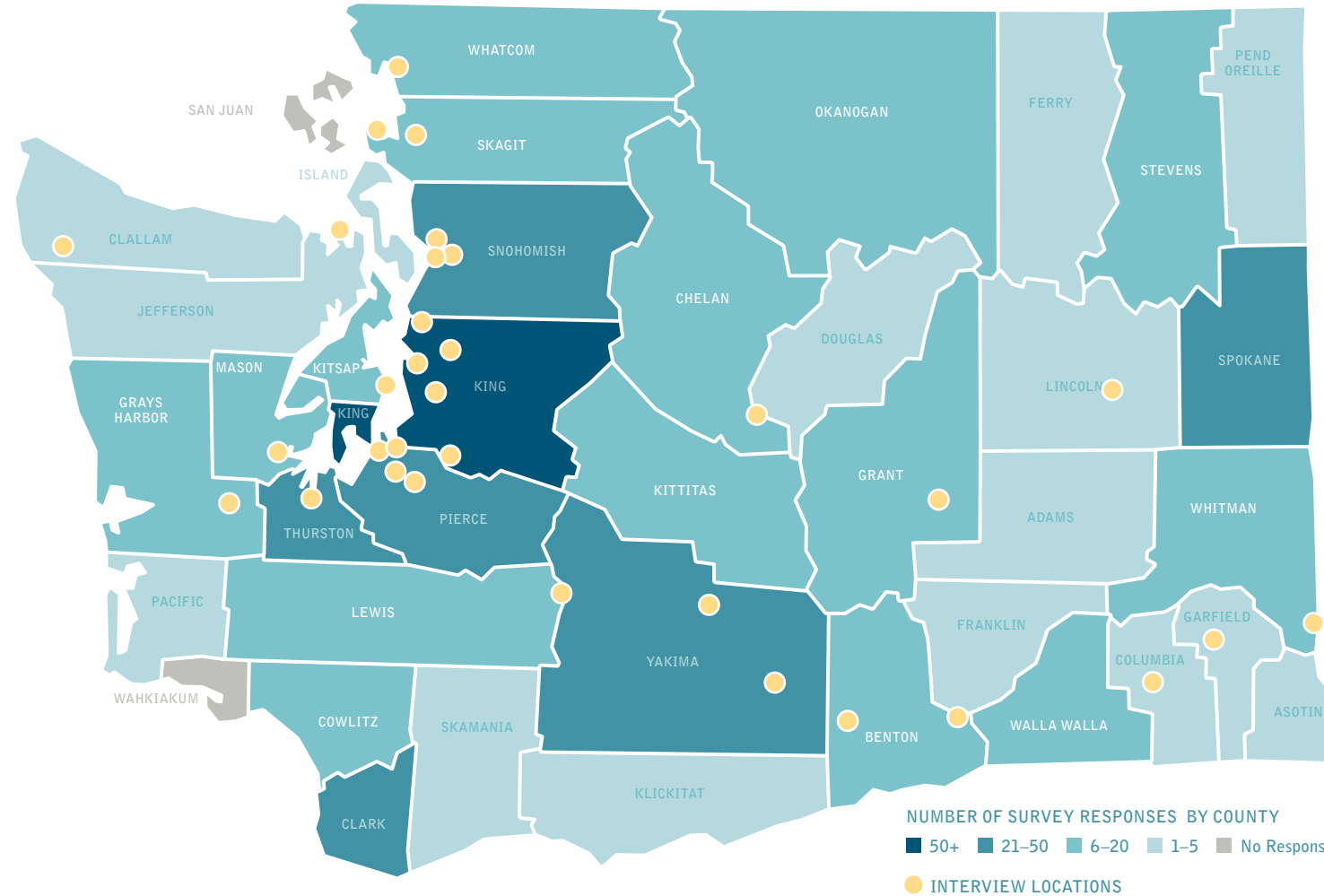
9% of schools are offering no formal arts instruction at all.

Survey Demographics

THE AERI REPORT is based on a survey given to K–12 principals in Washington State. A total of 478 principals participated in the survey, from 171 districts throughout the state. The alignment of characteristics between the AERI sample and state averages indicates a strong representation of the state as a whole, based on school and student demographics, the numbers of responses coming from elementary, middle, and high schools, and the geographic distribution of participation. Principals from 37 out of 39 counties responded to the survey, and the counties with the highest response rates also have the highest K–12 populations in the state.

In order to gain in-depth information about arts education in Washington, researchers followed the statewide survey with site visits to 39 schools in 31 districts that demonstrated promising practices and solutions to common challenges. The interviewees represented urban and rural regions, in eight of our state’s nine ESDs—and included both small and large schools serving a variety of grade levels. During these on-site interviews, principals, teachers, and arts specialists spoke about the challenges they’ve faced and solutions they’ve forged.

“As superintendent of public instruction, I urge all school districts to ensure that all students have access to the highest-quality opportunities in arts education. We want every student engaged, not just most.” **RANDY I. DORN**, Washington State Superintendent of Public Instruction



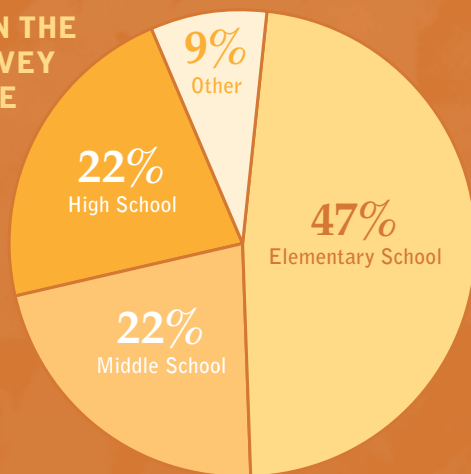
21% of schools in Washington State participated in the AERI survey.

25% of the state’s total student population is represented.

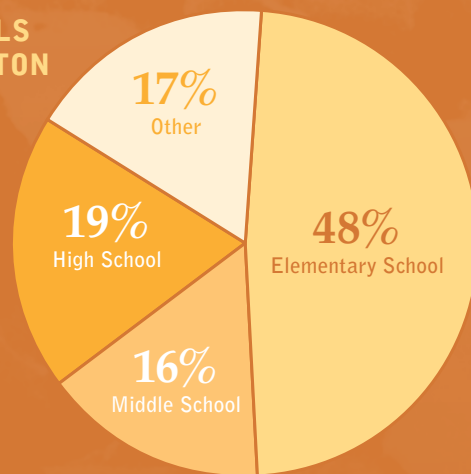
58% of districts are represented in the survey sample.

DISTRIBUTION OF ELEMENTARY, MIDDLE, AND HIGH SCHOOLS

SCHOOLS IN THE AERI SURVEY SAMPLE



ALL SCHOOLS IN WASHINGTON STATE



The "Other" category includes multi-level schools, e.g. K–8, K–12.

SCHOOL AND STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS — AERI SAMPLE AND STATE AVERAGES

	AERI RESPONDENTS					WA STATE
	Urban	Suburban	Rural	Remote	All	
Percentage of AERI Respondents	17%	41%	39%	2%	100%	–
Average School Enrollment	612	702	464	222	563	431
Free/Reduced-Price Lunch	49%	31%	44%	37%	40%	37%
American Indian/Alaska Native	2%	2%	5%	24%	4%	4%
Asian	13%	9%	2%	1%	7%	6%
Black	16%	5%	1%	0%	5%	5%
Hispanic	16%	11%	19%	18%	15%	13%
White	51%	68%	70%	55%	66%	61%



AVAILABILITY OF ARTS EDUCATION

All core subjects need class time

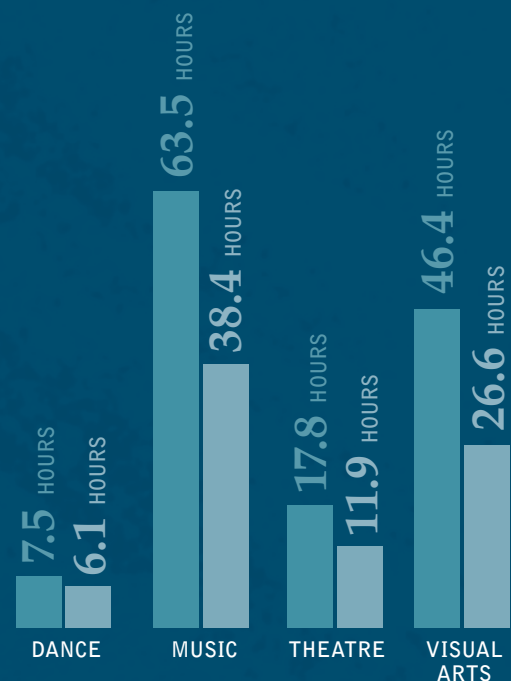
There is little time devoted to arts classes.

63% of principals are dissatisfied with the quantity of arts education in their schools, saying that a priority on test preparation in other core subjects leaves less time for instruction in the arts in the early grades.

In fact, while most elementary students receive at least one hour of both reading instruction and math each day, these students spend far less time studying the arts: 33% of elementary students receive less than one hour of arts instruction per week, and 42% receive between one and two hours per week. These figures include all arts disciplines combined; the chart at the left shows average annual hours of instruction for each discipline.

The AERI data indicates that arts instructional hours have, on average, gone down in recent years. Even in music, elementary students are receiving an average of less than 40 hours of instruction for the entire year.

The state requires one arts credit for high school graduation, and most students meet this requirement. But the frequency of arts classes at secondary schools



ANNUAL ARTS INSTRUCTION HOURS OFFERED BY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS IN DANCE, MUSIC, THEATRE, AND VISUAL ARTS

■ AERI 2005 ■ AERI 2009

is still substantially below that of other core subjects, and only 43% of students take more than the one-credit minimum in the arts over the course of four years.

Music remains the most commonly taught arts discipline.

Principals at the elementary school level report that students receive the most instructional time in music; 58% say students participate in music for more than one hour per week. Visual arts is the next most commonly taught, with 29% of principals reporting that students receive one hour or more per week. Far fewer students receive one hour or more of instruction on a weekly basis in theatre (8%) or dance (4%). At secondary schools, this ordering of arts disciplines is generally the same; band, choir, and general visual arts are the most commonly offered high school arts courses.

We need more time for arts learning—and arts teaching.

Not only do students need ample opportunities to learn the arts, but teachers need time, too—to plan, schedule, and obtain the support and professional development opportunities they need to effectively teach. “You can’t do your best work for kids if you don’t have any time to plan,” said Michael Merrin of Elk Plain School of Choice in the Bethel School District. But in a schedule dominated by the pressures of state testing, finding that time can be difficult.

Innovative scheduling can increase learning opportunities.

Schools across the state are finding ways to make arts instruction more abundant and consistent through a range of innovative scheduling practices. At the secondary level, some principals have found that

nontraditional scheduling models allow more access to arts courses; others work with the overall class schedule to make sure that arts courses are scheduled in the most accessible slots. At the elementary level, more schools are pursuing arts integration models in which meaningful connections are made between the arts and other core subjects. Some schools are also providing additional opportunities through before- and after-school enrichment programs. While

these opportunities do extend arts learning options for some students, they do not reach all students as part of their basic education.

Geography affects the frequency and intensity of arts participation.

Urban schools tend to have more arts teachers and a greater variety of formal arts courses. Rural schools, however, provide more arts participation experiences than their urban counterparts—particularly in theatre. This may be partly because rural districts more often have only one high school, which gives them greater autonomy and flexibility to make budgetary choices that encourage arts education.

“If you’re studying geometry in math, you give the kids a geometry experience through the arts. Embedding an art lesson is one of the best ideas to come around in a long time. Kids need to see a better-connected world. Every child should have the opportunity to see and interact with the world in a creative way.”

ANTONIETTE HULL
principal, Barge-Lincoln Elementary, Yakima School District

TAKE ACTION

- * Share effective scheduling techniques at elementary and secondary levels.
- * Increase arts learning opportunities in both elementary and middle school to build demand and readiness for arts instruction in later grades.
- * Cross-credit arts classes with other core classes in high school.

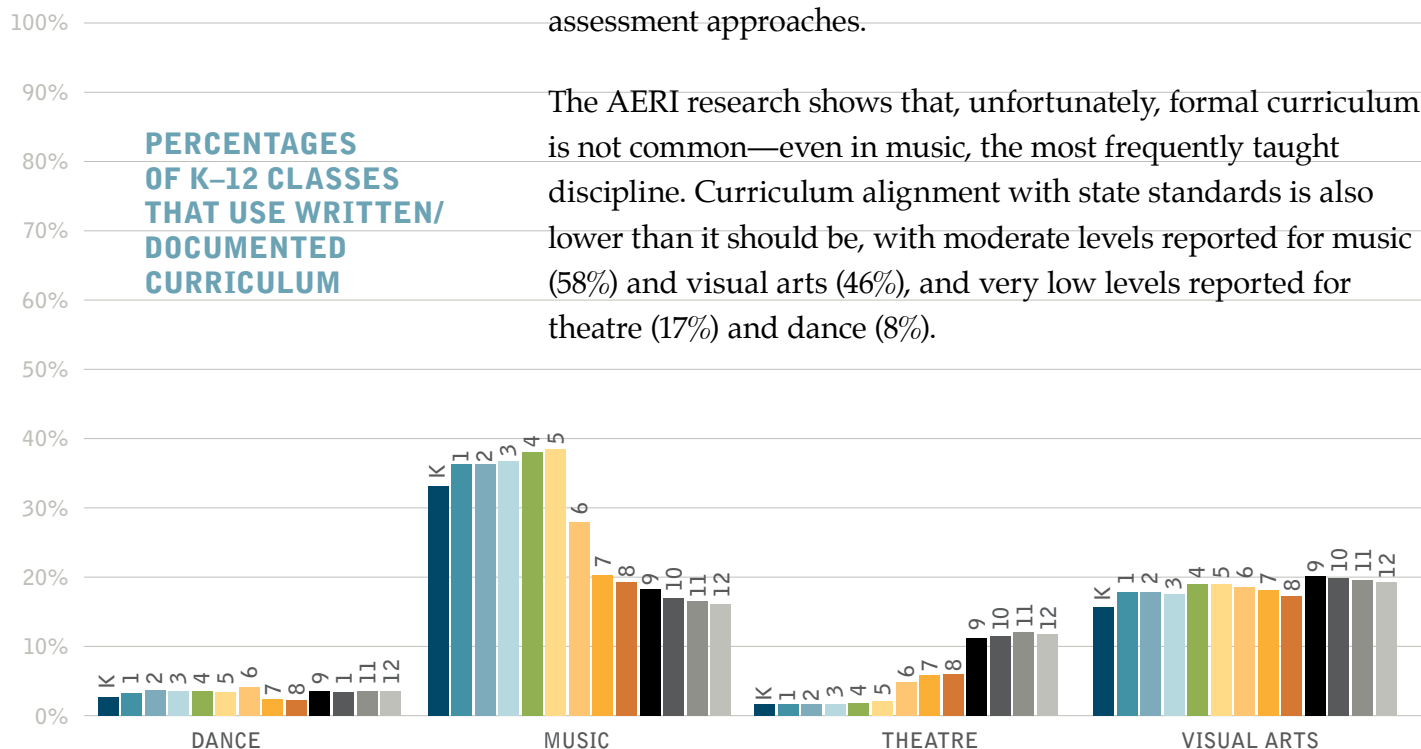


CURRICULA

Formal instructional materials support consistent and sequential arts learning

STATE STANDARDS SET expectations for student learning in all four arts disciplines at each grade level. While these standards can help lay the foundation for effective classroom instruction in the arts, written curricula provide the details of scope and sequence teachers use to guide their day-to-day arts instruction. Formalized, written materials are vital and can help provide consistency and quality from classroom to classroom by articulating sequential learning goals, teaching strategies, and assessment approaches.

The AERI research shows that, unfortunately, formal curriculum is not common—even in music, the most frequently taught discipline. Curriculum alignment with state standards is also lower than it should be, with moderate levels reported for music (58%) and visual arts (46%), and very low levels reported for theatre (17%) and dance (8%).



When district-provided arts curricula are unavailable, teachers often use syllabi or teaching frameworks they've created on their own. With adequate time and support, the most effective of these frameworks can be developed into formalized curricula that teachers can use districtwide. Without a formal curriculum, staff turnover can disrupt the continuity of instruction.

As teachers begin to create these materials, many are turning to the state standards to identify the concepts, skills, techniques, and processes students need to learn. "Matching lessons with the EALRs and the frameworks was the biggest thing that helped me. It gave me what I needed," said Paul Brooks, an integrated arts specialist at Whitstran Elementary School in the Prosser School District.

Partners from outside of the school system can be another key resource in the effort to formalize teaching materials, as when external arts organizations support teachers with curriculum development.

Customized curricula can link to community.

Not all schools are alike, so there can be advantages to developing customized curricula in the arts. In Marysville, staff at Heritage High School collaborated to create an arts curriculum that met state standards while also recognizing the community's Native American culture. "All the art teachers in the district got together to map curriculum and write lesson plans around the district standards ... Whether the students are doing computer art and silkscreens or more traditional beading and carving, they incorporate the Salish elements of oval, crescent, and trigon into their art. The Tribal community recognizes this is their art," said Courage Benally, an arts teacher at Heritage High School in the Marysville School District.

MARKERS OF QUALITY

To provide strong instruction in the arts, teachers need curricula that include:

- ✓ A **CLEAR SCOPE** that identifies what to teach—the specific arts concepts, skills, techniques, and processes
- ✓ A **SEQUENCE** that presents an order for teaching concepts and skills
- ✓ **TEACHING STRATEGIES** that suggest how to present content in multiple ways
- ✓ **ALIGNMENT** between instruction and state learning goals
- ✓ **REVIEWS** at regularly scheduled, district-level evaluations

TAKE ACTION

- * Share curriculum resources, identify and distribute effective curricula, and develop new resources collaboratively.
- * Provide training and build teacher capacity to develop effective curricula.
- * Develop integrated approaches—including both elementary curriculum that makes authentic connections between the arts and other core subjects, as well as secondary courses, where the arts and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses are cross-credited.
- * Engage local school boards in support of districtwide arts curricula that align with state learning goals.



ASSESSMENTS

Assessing student learning is key to progress in arts education

IN RECENT YEARS, Washington has made significant progress in the area of arts assessments. Classroom Based Performance Assessments (CBPAs) in the arts, developed by OSPI, were piloted and field-tested over the last six years. Beginning in the 2008–2009 school year, OSPI required districts to report on arts assessments administered in their schools. As a result of this focus, there has been a clear shift in practice since the previous AERI report: The number of schools in the AERI survey that reported using no arts assessments, or non-criteria based assessments, has dropped significantly, while the number of schools reporting ongoing criteria-based assessments has increased from 32% in 2005, to 41% in 2009. Recent data collected by OSPI shows strong district-level reporting for 2008–2009 (see sidebar).

“Our teachers are using formative assessments and self-assessments for the students. With learning targets on board, it has meant the world of difference. The students know when they are hitting the target. Their self-reflection is criteria-based.”

MICHAEL MERRIN, principal, Elk Plain School of Choice, Bethel School District

How is learning in the arts measured?

A framework defined by the National Assessment of Educational Progress lays out assessment of arts learning not only in the four disciplines—dance, music, theatre, and visual arts—but also in three practices specific to the arts: creating, performing, and responding. Each of these concepts requires criteria-based approaches to effectively measure student understanding and achievement.

Students, teachers, and schools benefit from assessments.

Assessments help identify what students know and can do in the arts. And, by fostering students’ appreciation of their own achievements, assessments can help build confidence and enthusiasm.

By approaching assessments as constructive, ongoing feedback mechanisms, teachers can gauge the effectiveness of their work in the classroom; using assessments to refine teaching methods and strategies, improve curricula, strengthen instruction in the arts, and serve as an objective communication tool with students and their families.

Assessments can help principals understand, measure, and communicate the quality of arts education in their schools. A culture of assessment can also help keep teachers and staff engaged in ongoing efforts to improve instruction.

STATEWIDE ASSESSMENT DATA FROM OSPI

While the AERI survey demonstrated that principals are still on a learning curve regarding assessment-reporting requirements, data from OSPI’s first year of required assessment reporting shows a high level of arts assessment implementation.

- 88% of districts reported using CBPAs or other assessment strategies during the 2008–2009 school year.
- This translates to 83,337 CBPAs reported as administered at the elementary level; 50,949 at the middle school level; and 56,037 CBPAs at the high school level.
- The breakdown of the arts disciplines in which assessments were administered mirrors the AERI findings for the disciplines which are most taught: 49% of the CBPAs were given in music, 35% in visual arts, 11% in theatre, and 5% in dance.

✓ MARKERS OF QUALITY

Effective assessments of arts learning include:

- ✓ **CLEAR CRITERIA AND INDICATORS** for teachers and students to use in assessing student work
- ✓ **FORMATIVE AND SUMMATIVE ASSESSMENTS** that are an ongoing, embedded part of the teaching and learning process for both teachers and students
- ✓ **VARIED ASSESSMENT STRATEGIES**, such as checklists, rubrics, self-assessments, peer critiques, and portfolios
- ✓ **ALIGNMENT** with state learning goals in the arts
- ✓ **STUDENT-FOCUSED APPROACHES** in which students are engaged in and understand the assessment process
- ✓ **FEEDBACK LOOPS** in which assessment results are shared with students, families, districts, and stakeholders at the local and state level

* TAKE ACTION

- * Track results at classroom, school, district, and state levels; use results to inform curriculum approaches and teaching practices.
- * Train educators on how to plan and conduct valid and reliable assessments, and how to document, report, and use the results.
- * Recognize students as the primary users of assessments by making sure they receive ongoing feedback on their progress.
- * Use technology to enhance assessment opportunities; consider new media tools for easier documentation and sharing of student work.
- * Build statewide support for assessments and advocate for continued development of strong assessment tools and reporting approaches.

How can assessments be most effective?

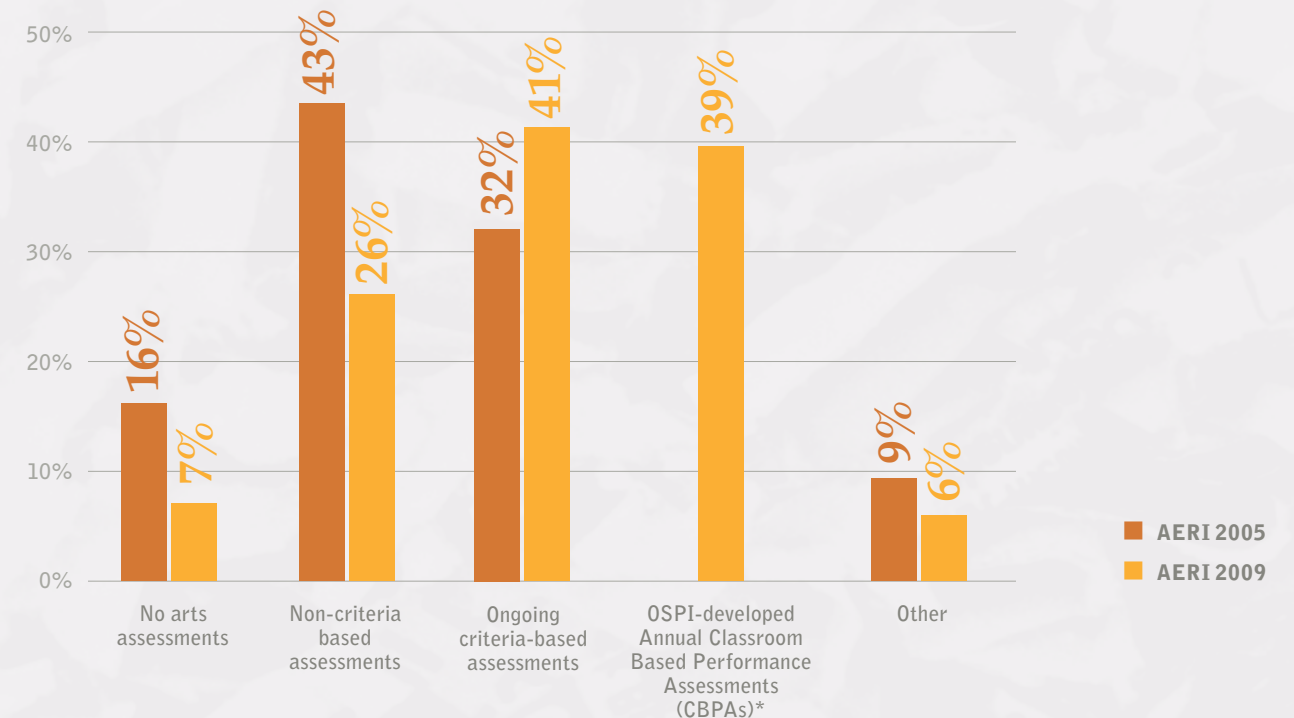
While the CBPAs are based on state learning standards, many schools lack standards-aligned curriculum—and this incongruence can pose challenges for teachers who need more formalized approaches to teaching the arts. Developing stronger alignment between state standards, classroom curriculum, and assessment approaches will make assessment results more meaningful and contribute to more effective arts education.

While many schools find that assessments encourage improvement in their arts education programs, some schools want the requirement taken to the next level. Principals with a more defined culture of arts education in their schools would like to see the state-level reporting requirement include information about student achievement. Some principals are sharing assessment results with their local community. Scott Harker, principal at Port Angeles High School, explains, “Our Continuous School Improvement Plan has a data category for classroom-based assessments. While the state only requires reporting how many students were assessed, we will report aggregate student performance to the school board and public. Students participate in evaluation.”

The chart on the right shows the shift over the past four years towards more criteria-based assessments; this practice gives educators more precise language to use when talking about arts learning. Solid data about student achievement in arts education can help schools tell their story—and thereby generate community support for their students’ arts learning opportunities.



TYPES OF ASSESSMENTS PERFORMED



* The CBPA response was not an option on the AERI 2005 survey

A NATIONAL LOOK AT THE MIDDLE SCHOOL CHALLENGE

Eighth grade is a pivotal year for all students



IT'S WIDELY UNDERSTOOD by educators and researchers that eighth grade is a crucial year. As students prepare to transition from middle school, signs of their future success or failure in high school grow more evident.

Research tells us that access to arts education makes a difference for eighth graders. Students who are highly involved in the arts by eighth grade do well academically and have better attitudes about school, according to *Champions of Change: The Impact of the Arts on Learning*, a report by the Arts Education Partnership. For struggling and disadvantaged students, the arts can be a lifeline—fostering self-esteem and confidence, and sometimes even helping them to reclaim enough interest in their education to keep from dropping out.

However, as the 2008 National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) shows, eighth graders across the nation are receiving a less-than-excellent arts education. According to *The Nation's Arts Report Card*, students have a 50-50 chance of possessing basic knowledge of music and visual arts. Moreover, there are troubling achievement gaps in these disciplines based on factors such as socioeconomic status, race, and school location.

Research shows that eighth graders who are benefitting from a high-quality arts education attend schools where formalized arts curriculum is provided by the district. Their schools have adequate facilities and the necessary equipment and supplies for arts education. And their classes are taught by certified arts specialists. Unfortunately, students of color and those from low-income families often attend schools where these conditions do not exist.

EIGHTH GRADERS WHO WERE TAUGHT BY A FULL-TIME ARTS SPECIALIST IN MUSIC AND VISUAL ARTS NAEP 2008 v. AERI 2009

MUSIC



VISUAL ARTS



MIDDLE SCHOOL ARTS IN WASHINGTON

The chart above shows Washington State is below the national average on this measure of 8th grade arts instruction, and AERI respondents report that a majority of districts in Washington State do not require any credits in the arts over the course of three years of middle school (grades 6, 7, and 8).

Certainly, many middle schools offer arts courses, and some are building strong programs that support readiness for high school level courses, especially in music. However, data from NAEP and AERI suggest that far too many middle school students in Washington are being denied an important learning opportunity at an especially critical time in their social and academic development.



STAFFING

Schools report modest increases in arts staffing

IN COMPARISON TO the 2005 study, fewer schools today report having no arts instructors at all. Yet arts teachers still account for only 6% of an average school's teaching staff, which is rarely enough to provide regular arts instruction for the entire student body. Urban schools have more full-time arts instructors than rural ones, and more arts teachers can be found in secondary schools than in elementary schools. While fewer arts coordinators are employed at the district level compared to five years ago, it is encouraging that fewer schools are going without any arts teachers at all.

"The music teacher sees every grade K–6 once a week; in addition she teaches middle school band every day, high school band every day, and a choir. She also assists with drama at the high school and does the pep band, too. She receives only a slight stipend."

KATIE LEID, principal, Dayton Elementary School, Dayton School District

Many schools rely heavily on their music teachers.

Given that music is the most frequently studied arts discipline in Washington schools, it's no surprise that the majority of arts specialists are music teachers, with an average of 1.16 full-time equivalent (FTE) music teachers per school—compared to .71 FTE for visual arts, .12 FTE for theatre, and .05 FTE for dance. With ever-increasing pressures on school budgets, some principals face the possibility of sharing their music teachers with other schools, losing valuable hours of instruction. In some cases, music specialists are being asked to provide instruction in other disciplines, like dance and theatre. While there are positive aspects of this trend—such as increased interdisciplinary learning and modestly increased access in schools where previously there was none—it indicates how under-resourced other arts disciplines are, and places additional stress on an already fragile system.

A reliance on music teachers can carry particular risks for schools, especially in rural communities. Historically, many music teachers have become indispensable to their schools and districts, often going beyond their job descriptions to volunteer time for other school programming. When these teachers retire, principals are concerned they won't have the budgetary resources to attract strong replacements. In many cases, the concern goes a step further: Budgetary constraints mean they could lose their music programs entirely.

✓ MARKERS OF QUALITY

Schools that attract and retain qualified arts specialists offer the following:

- ✓ **LEADERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES** for arts specialists, and expectations that they will be collaborative partners in meeting state standards, curriculum integration efforts, and school improvement teams
- ✓ **BALANCED SCHEDULING** that allows arts staff sufficient time to teach arts curriculum
- ✓ **COMMON PLANNING TIME** during which arts specialists and other classroom teachers can plan curriculum collaboratively
- ✓ **PERFORMANCE EVALUATIONS** and professional development opportunities on par with those offered to teachers in other core subject areas

* TAKE ACTION

- * Identify and expand university programs that train qualified arts educators in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.
- * Train district administrators and principals in how they can support arts specialists in multiple arts disciplines in elementary and secondary schools.
- * Develop recruitment strategies to ensure that existing arts positions remain filled.
- * Support the work of highly qualified teaching artists both as a complement to staff arts specialists and as providers of professional development.



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

When teachers are supported, arts education improves for students

Increased professional development can improve arts education across the state.

The more principals invest in professional development for their teachers, the more satisfied they are with the quality of arts education in their schools. Inversely, principals who are unhappy with the quality of their arts instruction express a greater desire for professional development opportunities for their teachers.

“We have tons of professional development at the district, but I can’t think of anything offered in the arts right now. We have had to focus really hard on improving reading, writing, and math instruction.”

CYNTHIA JONES,
principal, Emerson Elementary
School, Everett School District

Professional development helps teachers as they strive to better educate their students—and to meet arts learning standards set by the state. Yet across Washington, levels of professional development in the arts are low and most prevalent in music and visual arts. Release time, clock hours, and paid substitutes can help make professional development possible for both arts specialists and generalist teachers.

Arts Impact, a Puget Sound-based program that provides professional development in the arts for elementary school teachers, uses collaborative techniques to build schools’ organizational capacity over time. “Whole staff participation in Arts Impact brought us two years of high-quality professional development in the fundamentals of dance, theatre, and visual arts,” said Laura Ploudre, the principal at Parkwood Elementary school in the Shoreline School District. “It was an investment in ourselves that we could implement a sustainable and rigorous arts education program.” It takes ongoing commitment to build on this initial training, she adds. “Professional development is like a plant: It doesn’t grow if you don’t feed it.”

✓ MARKERS OF QUALITY

Effective professional development for teaching in the arts includes the following:

- ✓ **IN-DEPTH INSTRUCTION** over time, rather than one-time workshops
- ✓ **MULTIPLE STRATEGIES**, such as coaching, mentored practice, and modeling
- ✓ **VARIED CONTENT**, including curriculum design, arts concepts and skills, performance-based assessments, and arts integration
- ✓ **ALIGNMENT** with state learning standards
- ✓ **COLLEGE CREDIT** or clock hours for teachers
- ✓ **ACCESSIBLE SCHEDULING**, with programs offered regionally and regularly

* TAKE ACTION

- * Support and develop sequential professional development in the arts, including best practices in skill-building, curriculum development, and criteria-based assessment practices.
- * Provide on-the-job professional development, including coaching and feedback.
- * Develop training for all teachers of the arts, so that arts specialists, classroom generalists, and teaching artists have a consistent understanding of student learning goals.
- * Offer professional development locally and throughout the state.
- * Convene higher education institutions and continuing education providers to strengthen education in the arts for future teachers.



COLLABORATION

Working with outside partners can support a greater focus on arts education

Collaboration with outside partners can help energize schools' arts education efforts.

While the 2005 AERI report revealed that 54% of schools received support from external organizations, that figure dropped to 25% in the 2009 survey. An increased emphasis on mathematics, reading, and other core subjects may make it more difficult for schools to forge partnerships with nonprofit arts organizations, which may also be facing budget challenges that limit their capacity to support such partnerships.

Before- and after-school programs are the most common offerings of community partners. This benefits the school community, but since these programs generally reach a limited percentage of the school population, they do not ensure that arts learning is part of every student's basic education. Some external partners provide arts instruction within the school day; other organizations offer professional development for teachers and principals. These sustained, integrated approaches tend to

require more resources, but they also have a much greater impact for ongoing teaching and learning in the arts.

The AERI research suggests that when partnerships between schools and external organizations flourish, a greater focus on arts education follows. Schools with active partnerships tend to include the arts in their long-term improvement plans and boast higher levels of family involvement in their students'

arts experiences. Schools—and students—gain connections to communities and access to resources. Additionally, arts organizations are often able to provide experiences in dance and theatre, the two disciplines in shortest supply in most schools.

Statewide partners support collaboration.

For more than a decade, WSAC has supported long-term, systemic changes in K–12 arts education through Community Consortium grants. This funding program supports partnerships between schools, arts organizations, teaching artists, businesses, and local community partners who are jointly committed to expanding and improving teaching and learning in the arts as part of the regular school day. As one participant reports, “The arts consortia model is the best way to mobilize minimum dollars for maximum effect. It is the model which consistently shows positive change, and results in sustainable relationships being built over time.”

ArtsEd Washington is a nonprofit organization devoted to advancing arts education statewide. Its Principals' Arts Leadership program trains principals to lead arts education efforts in their schools. Principal-led teams develop arts plans and implement site-specific approaches that have led to great improvements in arts teaching and learning for these schools. “Arts opportunities for our kids are fairly limited now, but we created a five-year plan to increase classroom opportunities and classroom teacher expertise, and to increase FTEs for dance and visual arts,” said Steve Morse, principal at Roosevelt Elementary in the Bellingham School District.

✓ MARKERS OF QUALITY

In an effective collaboration between educators, artists, and arts organizations, partners work together on:

- ✓ **SHARED EDUCATIONAL GOALS** that align with state standards and ensure partnership programs are focused on student learning in the arts
- ✓ **CURRICULUM** that is developed collaboratively between teaching artists, classroom teachers, schools, and organizations
- ✓ **MENTORSHIPS** and coaching relationships that provide professional development opportunities for classroom teachers and teaching artists
- ✓ **RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT**, which includes joint efforts for securing financial and other resources

* TAKE ACTION

- * Identify potential local partners who work in the arts, cultural, and education organizations, and opportunities for sharing resources among these organizations.
- * Expand and replicate effective partnership models that are successful locally and nationally.
- * Pursue long-term projects, such as full-year partnerships and professional development programs, rather than short-term or one-time experiences.
- * Capitalize on cultural arts opportunities present in and reflective of the local community; consider schools' family engagement goals and opportunities for engaging diverse family populations through the arts.
- * Share evidence of success with education leaders and policy makers when involved in a productive partnership.

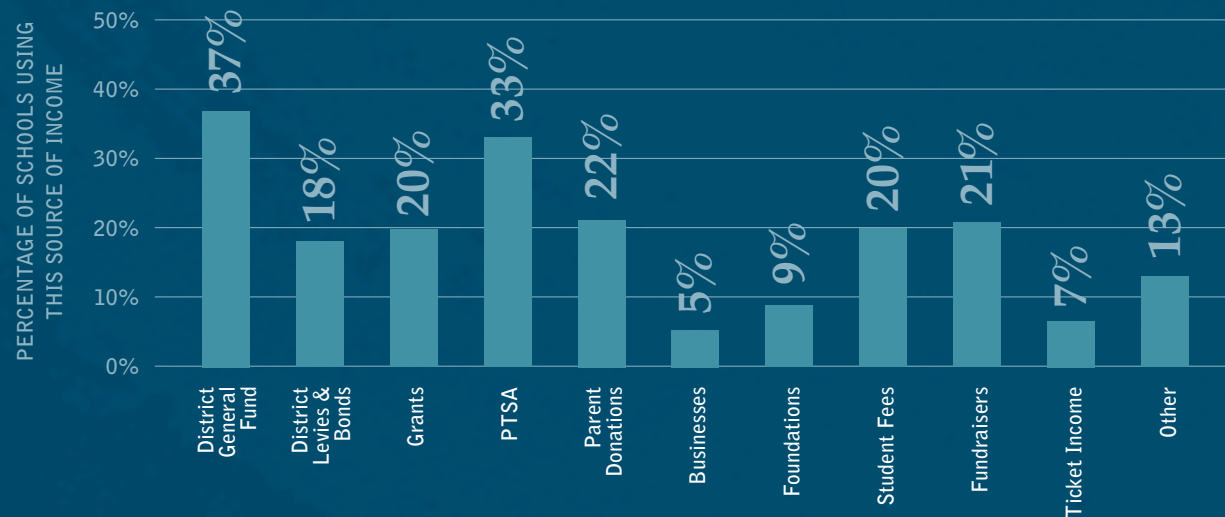


FUNDING

With increased support, arts education can be a force for education reform

IN MOST SCHOOLS across Washington, opportunities for arts education have held steady over the last three years. This is good news—but while five years ago, 51% of schools reported increased opportunities, today only 15% say they’ve seen improvement. In order to give our students the high-quality and comprehensive education they need, we must invest in arts instruction as we do in other core subject areas. That means strong financial support, intentional planning, and effective advocacy. The role of arts learning in child development, academic achievement, and in a 21st-century workforce makes arts education a catalyzing force in the national effort to raise the overall quality of K–12 education.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS EXCLUDING STAFFING



Create a sustainable funding stream.

Regardless of the national economic climate, arts education is often an underdog when it comes to funding. Effective arts education requires—and deserves—stable funding that can include a variety of funding sources. As the chart on the previous page shows, schools often need to seek funding from a wide variety of sources in order to sustain their arts programs.

Include the arts in school budgets.

Four years ago, many principals said including budget line items for the arts was the best way to secure arts funding in their schools. This year, approximately half of all schools reported including a specific line item for the arts in their budgets—and several principals credit their inclusive budget process in preserving their arts education funding. “In these hard economic times, everybody across the board took 10% team budget cuts. Fine arts wasn’t hit any more than first or second grade,” said Mark Keating, principal at Elma Elementary School in the Elma School District. “It’s an inclusive process.”

Pursue outside fundraising.

Grants from foundations and donations from the community can be instrumental in launching initiatives that promote arts education. In a recent report by the Center for Arts Education linking graduation rates with arts learning, schools in New York City that raised money for arts education from external sources boasted higher graduation rates than other schools. However, sole reliance on outside support can lead to sporadic arts programming; arts efforts are more likely to be sustainable when funding sources are consistent and not dependent on volunteer fundraising efforts.

Convey the value of arts education.

Principals report that sound research helps them explain the purpose and value of their arts programs to families. Communities who understand that the arts are critical to their children’s development are motivated to support arts programs in schools—even in lean times. In these schools, parents and community members tend not only to support and participate in their students’ arts education—they also demand ongoing arts opportunities.

MARKERS OF QUALITY

In an effective funding structure, schools and districts include:

- ✓ **LINE ITEMS FOR ARTS EDUCATION** within school budgets designed to preserve and expand arts funding
- ✓ **SUSTAINABLE FUNDING** that is consistent year to year
- ✓ **BALANCED FUNDING FOR THE ARTS** that proportionally allocates funds for arts instruction and resources
- ✓ **STAFFING BUDGETS** that specifically support arts specialists
- ✓ **MAINTENANCE BUDGETS** to ensure the availability of the arts equipment and supplies needed to meet curriculum expectations

TAKE ACTION

- * Identify opportunities for collaboration with other schools and with local arts organizations in order to both share resources and seek joint funding.
- * Educate local policy makers in support of a dedicated, consistent funding stream to support arts learning.
- * Seek arts grants from local, state, federal, corporate, and foundation resources to supplement—but not supplant—line items for the arts.
- * Build community awareness of the importance of funding for arts education, then involve the community in safeguarding that funding.



TAKE ACTION

Everyone can play a role

EDUCATORS, PARENTS, CULTURAL organizations, policy makers, funders, and community leaders can all play a role in achieving ongoing, in-depth, and consistent arts education for all K–12 students.



Schools and school districts

- * Establish clear, long-term plans for advancing arts education.
- * Support and advocate for state and local policies that support these efforts.
- * Develop arts education committees to plan, implement, and monitor arts education policies and programs; include teachers, school leaders, parents, and community advocates in these efforts.
- * Establish guidelines for minimum funding levels and staffing requirements to fully support arts instruction, curriculum development, professional development, materials, and planning time.

Principals and teaching faculty

- * Adopt flexible schedules that provide time for arts education during the regular school day.
- * Provide common planning time for arts educators and classroom teachers to develop connections between different areas of classroom curriculum.
- * Work with parents to increase community understanding and support for arts education.

State partners and funders

- * Establish and support policies that advance arts education for every Washington student.
- * Provide professional development for principals and teachers in arts education implementation.
- * Evaluate ongoing statewide progress in arts education at regular intervals using the baseline established in AERI research, as well as OSPI assessment implementation reports.
- * Educate policy makers, boards, and the business community about the central role of the arts in basic education.

- * Identify public and private funds to support and increase effective, systemic approaches for arts education.

Cultural organizations

- * Work with schools and districts to develop long-term, sustainable partnerships characterized by collaborative planning, in-depth arts learning, and ongoing assessment.
- * Showcase successful school partnerships and advocate for K–12 arts education as part of the regular school day.
- * Train organization staff and teaching artists to work collaboratively in the K–12 environment and provide professional development in the arts for classroom teachers.

Parents, families, and community members

- * Find out which arts disciplines are being taught at which grade levels in the schools in your area. Support successful programs and advocate for new programs to address needs.
- * Encourage schools to develop demonstrations of arts learning to share with the school community.
- * Talk to educators, school board members, and other policy makers about the benefits of arts learning that you've witnessed in your own family members.

Partners at all levels

- * Report regularly on growth in arts education at all levels and share information with students, families, local and statewide community members, arts education advocates, and legislators.
- * Work together as partners with a common goal: arts education for every student, every school, every year.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

WASHINGTON STATE

Washington State Arts Commission
www.arts.wa.gov

Office of Superintendent
of Public Instruction – Arts
www.k12.wa.us/arts

ArtsEd Washington
www.artsedwashington.org

NATIONAL AGENCIES AND ORGANIZATIONS

Americans for the Arts
www.americansforthearts.org

ArtsEdge (The Kennedy Center)
www.artsedge.kennedy-center.org

Arts Education Partnership
www.aep-arts.org

The Dana Foundation
www.dana.org

Keep Arts In Schools
www.keepartsinschools.org

National Endowment for the Arts
www.arts.endow.gov

Project Zero
www.pzweb.harvard.edu

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This booklet is based primarily on the 2009 AERI report, by researchers from The BERC Group, with independent researcher Susy Watts. The foundation of the AERI report was a survey to K–12 principals across the state, which was conducted fall 2008–winter 2009; the survey was designed by The BERC Group, Ms. Watts, and WSAC staff, with input from key arts education stakeholders. The BERC Group led the quantitative research related to the survey; Ms. Watts conducted site visits and principal interviews around the state in spring 2009, and added qualitative analysis to the report.

The full research report is available online at
www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml.

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"Learning through the arts reinforces critical academic skills in reading, language arts, and math, and provides students with the skills to creatively solve problems. My husband and I believe strongly that arts education is essential for building innovative thinkers who will be our nation's leaders of tomorrow."

First Lady **MICHELLE OBAMA**, May 2009

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IMAGES COVER: (upper left) 4th grade students from Eastgate Elementary School participating in the Pacific Northwest Ballet's (PNB) Discover Dance Consortium. (lower left) 5th grade students from Roosevelt Elementary School in Bellingham creating shadow sculptures. (right) A student participates in the International Arts Consortium at Hamilton International Middle School.

INSIDE COVER: (left) Detail of an art card created by a student as part of the Allied Arts of Whatcom County

Arts Education Project consortium. (right) 3rd grade student is focused on a watercolor exercise during the hands-on portion of a school field trip to the Museum of Northwest Art (MoNA) in La Conner.

PAGE 2: (left) A student from Kimball Elementary School in Seattle plays a drum during a recording session at Jack Straw Productions in Seattle. (right) Students painting paddles during a workshop of the Wenatchee Arts Education Consortium.

PAGE 5: (left) Students from the Elk Plain School of Choice participating onstage at the Broadway Center for the Performing Arts in Tacoma. (right) Students from Hamilton International Middle School recording a three-person play at the studios of Jack Straw Productions.

PAGE 8: (left) Detail of an art card created by a student. (right) A student creates a Hmong story cloth as part of the International Arts Consortium.

PAGE 10: (left) Primary students at Rosa Parks Elementary in Redmond reenacting scenes from a book in a study of the theatre elements of movement and emotion. (right) Elementary, junior high, and high school orchestra students from throughout Bethel School District participate in the annual Orchestra Festival.

PAGE 12: A teaching artist works on a mural project with Whitson Elementary school students as part of the White Salmon Arts Consortium.

PAGE 15: (left) *Denise* by artist Bailey Anderson of Mossyrock High School was the "State Board of Education Choice" in the 2009 Superintendent's High School Art Show held by OSPI. (right) Puppet creation workshop and showcase during the annual Children's Gallery walk as part of the Allied Arts of Whatcom County arts education consortium.

PAGE 16: A student at Ridgeline Middle School works on a project as part of the Yelm Arts in Education Consortium.

PAGE 18: (left) Teaching Artist Ramon Murillo helps a student at the Whatcom Museum's Syre Center during Children's Gallery Walk. (right) Students from Kimball Elementary learn about digital sound recording at Jack Straw Productions.

PAGE 21: (left) Detail of an art card created by a student. (right) Drumming circle as part of the Yelm Arts in Education Consortium

PAGE 22: (left) 3rd grade students ponder MoNA's new exhibit during a field trip. (right) Students work with clay as part of the International Arts Consortium.

PAGE 24: (left) Detail from an art card created by a student. (right) Whitson Elementary students working on a mural project.

PAGE 26: Students under the instruction of teaching artist Shannon Barnes at Rose Hill Elementary as part of PNB's in-school Discover Dance Consortium.



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“We must take seriously our commitment to close achievement gaps. Arts learning opportunities—both as stand-alone classes and integrated with other subjects—must play an integral role in providing students with the complete education they need to succeed.”

SANDRA RUPPERT,
director, Arts Education Partnership

This publication includes highlights from the complete AERI research report, which is available at www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml.

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