

Access to the

Arts



in Oregon Schools

Findings Based on 2009-10 Department of Education Data
Summarized by Sarah Katherine Collins, 2011



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Access to Arts in Oregon Schools

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A Baseline for Arts Education

Arts education plays a vital role in developing 21st century life skills and preparing students to become innovators in tomorrow's economy. Solid and sequential arts education for every child in every Oregon public school should be as integral to a quality education as reading, writing and math.

In order for today's students to succeed in school, work and life, they require a well-rounded education that thoughtfully weaves core subjects with the arts. To achieve this, our students must have access to quality arts instruction delivered by certified educators and supported by teaching artists and arts and cultural organizations.

Considerable research documents the many benefits arts education provides to all students - improved academic achievement, greater leadership and social skills, enhanced critical thinking and sharper problem solving skills.

Knowing those documented benefits, how present are the arts in Oregon schools?

This report synthesizes the landmark research of University of Oregon public policy graduate, Sarah Collins. Her examination and analysis of Oregon Department of Education data enables us to see, for the first time, detailed information about Oregon students' access to learning in, through and about the arts.

But this data only tells one piece of the story as it relates only to standalone arts classes taught by certified teachers. It does not begin to discuss the many residencies, arts integration efforts or community arts experiences. There is still much to be learned about the status the arts in our schools. In some ways, this publication raises more questions than provides answers. In a complex ecosystem, how can we as a state, join together to measure how our students are developing their creating thinking skills? It begins with dialogue, and the recognition that we can learn best from each other.

The Commission is not alone in thinking that imagination, creativity and the arts play a key role in the education of every child. Through participation in the National Endowment for the Arts' 2010 Education Leader's Institute, the Commission brought together leaders from public education, philanthropy, higher education, business and the arts to discuss how the arts might model a shift toward proficiency based learning. That commitment to cross-sector dialogue has been mirrored in the annual Arts Education Congress and the year-round dialogue taking place on online at www.oregonartscommisison.org/oaec/forum.php.

Now, more than ever, our students' creative capacity skills are increasingly valued by employers in the global economy. But arts education is not all about skills for the new economy, research or assessment. It's also about the thrill of creation, the wonder of a new question and the confidence of accomplishment.

Christine D'Arcy, Executive Director

Overview

In 1922, the *State Manual of the Course of Study for the Elementary Schools* was published to assist schools and teachers in their instructional efforts. Responsible citizenship and an understanding of pioneer history were identified as the primary educational goals of Oregon schools, and curricular support was also provided for individual subject areas. Alongside reading, arithmetic, and geography was guidance for teaching music, storytelling, and “picture study” art.¹

Fast forward to the 21st century, Oregon public schools are embedded within a much more complex educational system of increasing (and sometimes competing) federal, state, and local policy goals. Yet still, Oregon’s early commitment to providing instruction in the arts endures. Both federal and state legislation include the arts as part of the academic core. Oregon state content standards articulate rigorous, sequential expectations of what all students should know and be able to do in the arts.

Despite statutory commitments to providing arts instruction, and amid the well-documented benefits of arts learning, there is growing concern of a “narrowed curriculum” in our public schools. The *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001* (NCLB) mandates 100% proficiency in math and reading by 2014, and recent studies suggest that resources are increasingly focused on tested subjects to the detriment of other content areas such as the arts.² A 2010 news story from the *Oregonian* cited specific schools and districts where arts courses were cut due to local budget pressures.³ Caught somewhere between federal accountability and district accounting ledgers, little is known about the actual status and condition of arts education.

In order to maintain its position as a vital part of the academic core, more comprehensive information is needed on access to arts education in Oregon public schools. To that end, the following analysis mines existing Oregon Department of Education data sets to establish baseline measures of access to arts education, examine how access varies across the state, and identify relationships between access to arts education and other school characteristics.

The school data, from which this synopsis was developed is available at <http://bit.ly/artsedinoregon>

Methodology: Measuring Access

Each year, the Oregon Department of Education collects data on staff assignment: which teachers taught which classes. This brings Oregon into compliance with NCLB requirements for highly qualified teacher reporting; by default it provides an exhaustive list of every course that is taught in every public school every year.

This analysis mined the state’s 2009-10 staff assignment data collection to isolate the provision of discipline-specific instruction in music, theater, dance, media, and visual arts. Individual arts courses were aggregated up to the building level and matched with other school information such as location and graduation rate.

While this data does not indicate actual enrollment in an arts course or total instructional time, it does provide a standardized (and elegant) answer to the question of access: Are the arts taught, and in what disciplines?



THE ARTS ENRICH LIFE. THEY ARE CRITICAL FOR

nurturing creativity and achieving a broader set of education goals in core academic areas. They are one key to unlocking creativity and innovation. We need to imagine schools where arts go hand-in-hand with other subjects and where all the disciplines reinforce each other.”

–Duncan Wyse, Chairman, Oregon State Board of Education

Key Findings

Each year, the Oregon Department of Education collects data analysis mines the 2009-10 school year for discipline-specific

20%

of K-12 Oregon public schools did not offer any regular, stand-alone arts courses. One in ten students attended a school with no access to arts instruction.

49%

of Oregon's charter schools did not provide any arts instruction as standalone coursework, compared to only 16% of regular public schools.

73%

of rural schools and 86% of urban schools provided some arts instruction as part of the regular curriculum.⁴

27%

of elementary schools did not offer any arts instruction as standalone courses. 1 in 5 students attended an elementary school with no access to arts coursework, making lack of access more pronounced at this level than at any other.

98%

of Oregon middle schools provided some form of arts instruction, and 98% of students attended a middle school where the arts were taught.

6%

of Oregon high schools provided instruction in all five disciplines of dance, media, music, theater, and visual arts.

providing a list of every course that is taught each year. This instruction in music, theater, dance, media and visual arts.

74%

of Oregon public schools provided coursework in the discipline of music, and 86% of all students attended a school where music was taught.

34%

of Oregon public schools provided coursework in the visual arts, and 50% of all students attended a school where the visual arts were taught.

16%

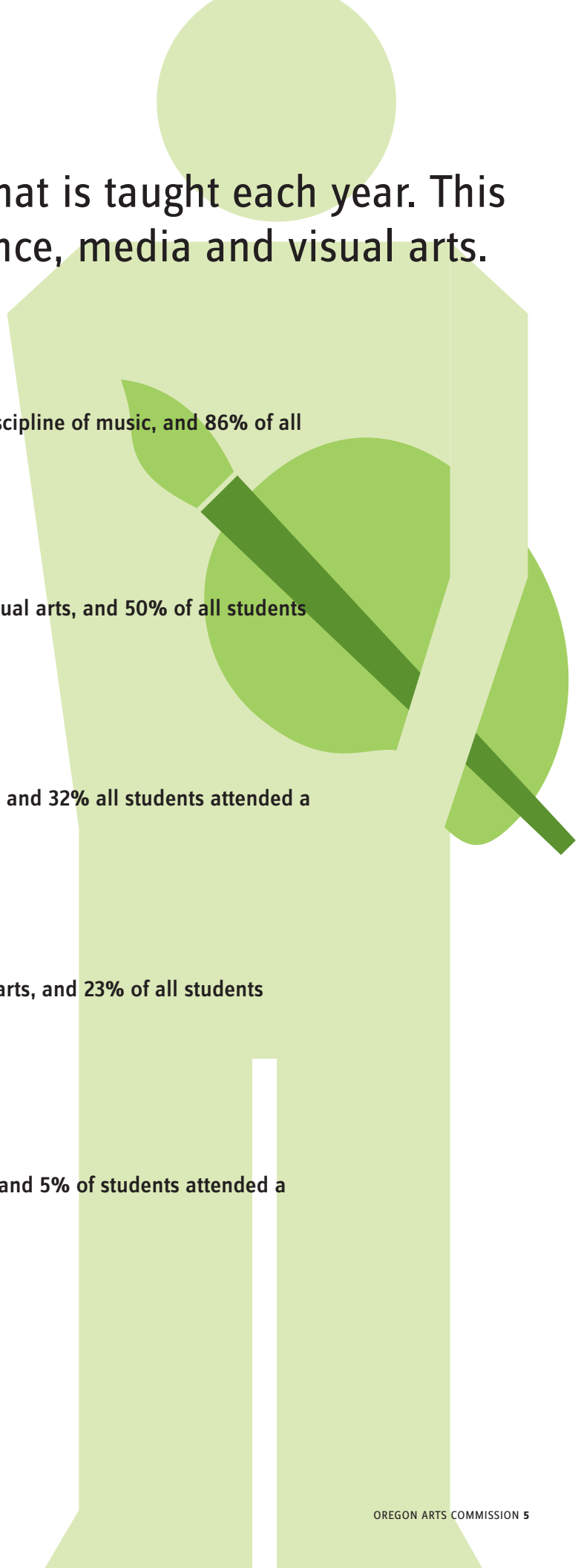
of Oregon public schools provided instruction in theater, and 32% all students attended a school where theater was taught.

13%

of Oregon public schools provided instruction in media arts, and 23% of all students attended a school where the media arts were taught.

2%

of Oregon public schools provided instruction in dance, and 5% of students attended a school where dance was taught.



Findings: All Schools

In the 2009-10 academic year, 552,680 students attended 1,280 public schools in Oregon.

20%

of all schools did not offer any regular-curriculum standalone arts courses.



10%

of students attended a school with no access to arts courses.

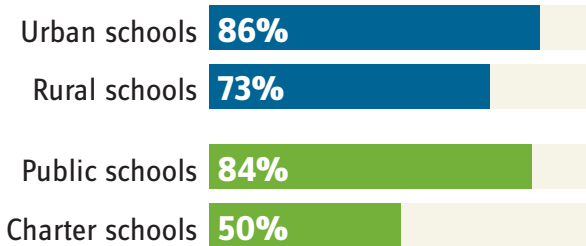


47%

of schools offered coursework in only one artistic discipline. Only 1% of schools offered all five disciplines - visual, music, theatre, dance, media arts.



Instruction in at Least One Arts Discipline



Comparing the ratio of students served at schools within each of these categories, a significant (and perhaps intuitive) trend emerges: as the number of disciplines increases, so too does the average size of the student body. Stated plainly, size matters. Larger schools tend to offer a greater diversity of arts education. Such a trend suggests that access to arts education is tied to economies of scale. Yet bundled alongside this issue of school size exists another set of school characteristics: geography, school type, and grades served.

Arts Courses Included in this Study

Based on the National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) codes

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| Advertising Design | Dance Technique | Intro to Theater |
| AP Art - History of Art | Digital Media Design and Production | Jewelry |
| AP Music Theory | Directing | Marching Band |
| AP Studio Art - Drawing Portfolio | Drama - Acting/Performance | Music - Independent Study |
| AP Studio Art - General Portfolio | Drama - Comprehensive | Music - Other |
| Art Appreciation | Drama - Stagecraft | Music - Workplace Experience |
| Art History | Drama - Workplace Experience | Music Appreciation |
| Art Portfolio | Drama/Stagecraft - Independent Study | Music History |
| Audio/Video Technology and Film-Independent Study | Drama/Stagecraft - Other | Music History/Appreciation |
| Audio/Video Technology and Film-Other | Elementary Art | Music Theory |
| Audio/Video Technology and Film-Workplace Experience | Elementary Drama | Orchestra |
| Audio/Visual Production | Elementary Music | Particular Topics in Audio/Video Technology and Film |
| Ceramics/Pottery | Exploration in Drama | Photo Imaging |
| Choreography | Expressive Movement | Photoengraving |
| Chorus | Film/Videotape | Photographic Laboratory and Darkroom |
| Commercial Graphic Design | Fine and Performing Art - Aide | Photography |
| Commercial Photography | Fine and Performing Art - Independent Study | Photography and Printing Technology |
| Composition/songwriting | Fine and Performing Art - Other | Photojournalism |
| Computer Assisted Art | Fine and Performing Art - Workplace Experience | Piano |
| Computer Graphics | General Band | Playwriting |
| Concert Band | Graphic Design | Printmaking |
| Contemporary Band | Graphic Technology | Printmaking/Graphics |
| Crafts | Guitar | Textiles |
| Creative Art - Comprehensive | History and Literature of Theater | Theatre Arts |
| Creative Art - Drawing | IB Art/Design | Topics in Printing Technology and Production |
| Creative Art - Drawing/Painting | IB Music | Video |
| Creative Art - Painting | Individual Technique - Instrumental Music | Visual Arts - Independent Study |
| Creative Art - Sculpture | Individual Technique - Vocal Music | Visual Arts - Other |
| Dance - Independent Study | Instrumental Ensembles | Visual Arts - Workplace Experience |
| Dance - Other | Integrated Fine Arts | Vocal Ensembles |
| Dance - Workplace Experience | Interactive Media | Web Page Design |
| Dance Appreciation | | |
| Dance Repertory | | |

Findings: Elementary Schools

In the 2009-10 academic year, 266,004 students attended 751 elementary schools in Oregon. Of all the grade levels, elementary schools displayed the greatest gaps in access to arts education.

27% of elementary schools did not offer any arts instruction as stand-alone courses.



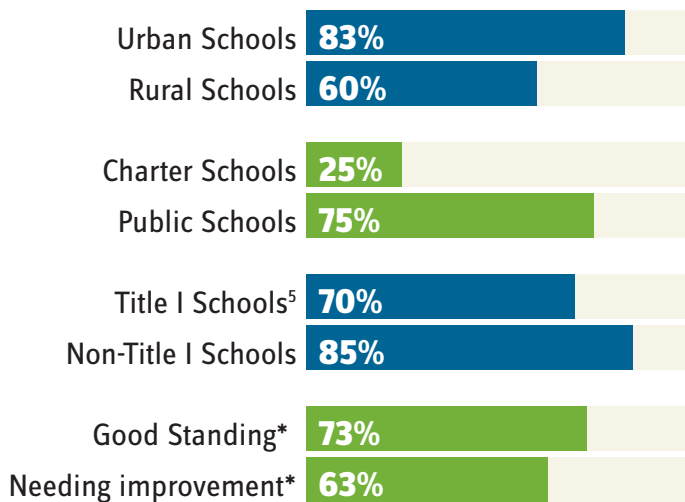
20% of students attended an elementary school with no access to arts coursework.



67% of elementary schools offered instruction in one arts discipline; 5% offered two arts disciplines; only 4 elementary schools in the entire state offered music, theater and visual arts.



Instruction in at Least One Arts Discipline



(*as measured by federal accountability standards)

Categorical inequities between rural/urban and charter/regular schools become even more pronounced at the elementary level. Further disparities in access emerge at the elementary level when poverty rates and school improvement designations are taken into consideration.

Filling the Gaps: General Elementary Teachers

Without standalone coursework taught by licensed arts specialists, general elementary teachers are often left with the responsibility of integrating the arts into their classrooms. This begs the question: How well are we preparing our general elementary teachers to teach in and through the arts?

Oregon Administrative Rule 584-038-0010 specifies 60 quarter hours of pre-service education are required to obtain a basic elementary teaching license, including 3 quarter hours in music education and 3 quarter hours in visual art education. While this rule places higher emphasis on other subject areas and at the same time lacks explicit training in dance and theater, Oregon's pre-service requirements are among the most rigorous in the nation. Only 10 other states have statutes specifying such course hours in arts education; 23 states have vague requirements of demonstrated proficiency; and 16 states have no statutory requirement for pre-service training in the arts.⁶

Pre-service coursework, however, rarely provides adequate support for general elementary teachers who are the primary providers of arts instruction.⁷ Ongoing training is needed for arts methods, integration, and assessment. While many regional and local arts organizations host arts learning institutes and workshops, the state lacks a comprehensive network of professional development specifically designed for general elementary teachers' arts instruction.

Findings: Middle Schools⁸

The wide disparities in access to arts education at the elementary school level are remarkably absent in Oregon's middle schools.

98% of middle schools provided instruction in at least one arts discipline.



98% of students attended a middle school where at least one of the artistic disciplines was taught.

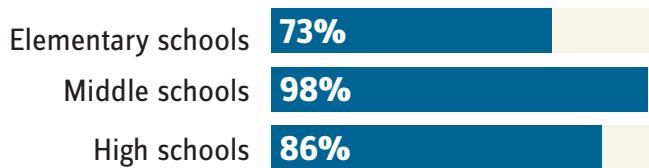


25% of middle schools offered instruction in one discipline, 50% offered two disciplines, and 25% offered instruction in three disciplines of music, theater and visual arts.



Instruction in at least one discipline

Percentage of schools that provided instruction in at least one arts discipline.



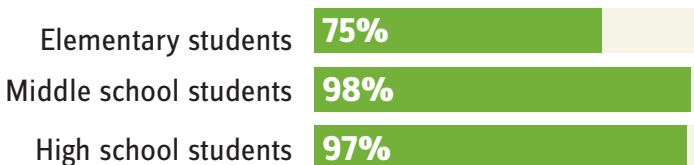
WE USE ARTS TO INCREASE ENGAGEMENT, DEEPEN

conceptual understanding and allow students to learn through multiple modalities. But beyond that, art projects increase students' confidence as they learn leadership, new technology and design skills."

- Travis Reiman, Principal, W.L. Henry Elementary

Instruction in at least one discipline

Percentage of students who attended a school where at least one artistic discipline was taught.



THIS TYPE OF [ARTS-BASED] LEARNING ENVIRONMENT WORKS

because it demands accountability from students for their own learning. It's not about gaming the system anymore. We've created a culture of learning where students are pushed, it's not about achieving that 100% on a test and then you're done."

- Michael Fisher

School Director, Springfield Academy of Arts and Academics

Findings: High Schools

In the 2009-2010 academic year, 182,341 students were enrolled in 329 public high schools. While the diversity of course offerings increases from middle to high school, overall access to arts education goes down.

86%

of high schools provided arts instruction as stand-alone courses.



97%

of students attended a high school where the arts were taught.

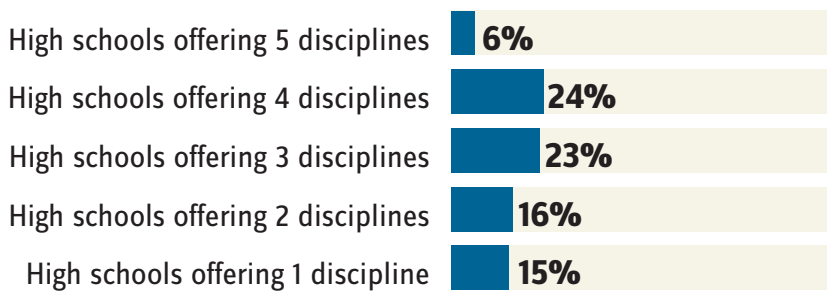


15%

of high schools offered instruction in just one discipline, 16% offered two, 23% offered three, 24% offered four, and 6% offered in five disciplines - music, theater, dance, media and visual arts.

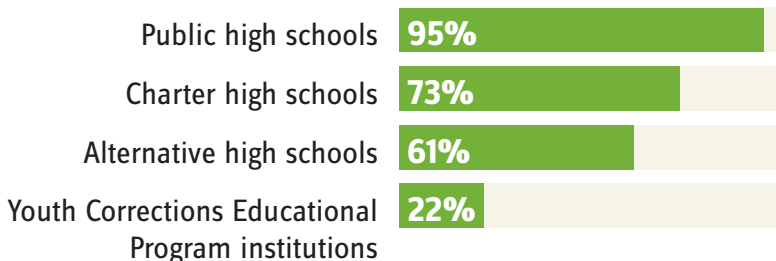


Instruction by Disciplines



Arts Instruction in at Least One Discipline

in Specific Types of High Schools



College & Career Pathways in the Arts

Across the country, increasing attention has been focused on how high schools prepare students for post-secondary success. This analysis identified curricular spaces that address college and career "readiness" in the arts, specifically in the provision of Advanced Placement courses and credit-bearing career explorations. AP courses are certainly not the only pathways to college success, but they do introduce students to the pacing, rigor, and cognitive demand of entry-level college courses in the arts. In 2009-10 academic year, just 14% of Oregon high schools provided AP coursework in music theory, art history, or studio art.

In 2007, Oregon instituted new graduation requirements around "career-related learning experiences" that connect classroom learning with real life experiences in the workplace and community.⁹ Across the arts disciplines, students can earn credit through individualized career exploration courses. In the 2009-10 academic year, however, only five Oregon high schools enrolled students in credit-bearing career explorations specific to an arts discipline.

Findings: by Arts Discipline

All Schools

Elementary Schools

Music



74% of all Oregon K-12 schools provided coursework in music, and **86%** of all students attended a school where music was taught.

Music was the most common arts discipline found in elementary schools, with **71%** of schools providing music instruction and **78%** of students attending a school where music was taught.

Visual Arts



34% of all Oregon K-12 schools provided coursework in visual arts, and **50%** of all students attended a school where visual arts were taught.

Only **6%** of elementary schools provided instruction in visual arts as standalone courses, and **7%** of students attended an elementary school where visual arts were taught.

Theater



16% of all Oregon K-12 schools provided instruction in theater, and **32%** of all students attended a school where theater was taught.

Just **1%** of elementary schools provided coursework in the theatrical arts and **2%** of students attended an elementary school where theatrical arts were taught.

Dance



2% of all Oregon K-12 schools provided instruction in dance, and **5%** of students attended a school where dance was taught.

At the elementary level, dance is not taught as a standalone course yet may appear in specialized units of physical education.

Media Arts



13% of all Oregon K-12 schools provided instruction in media arts, and **23%** of all students attended a school where media arts were taught.

At the elementary level, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course codes have not been developed to recognize instruction in media arts, though foundational skills may be developed in introductory computer courses and general elementary art.

Middle Schools

97% of middle schools provided coursework in music and **98%** of students attended a middle school where music was taught.

74% of middle schools provided instruction in the visual arts, and **81%** of students attended a middle school where visual arts were taught.

29% of middle schools provided coursework in theater and **15%** of students attended a middle school where theater was taught.

At the middle school level, dance is not taught as a standalone course yet may appear in specialized units of physical education.

At the middle school level, National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course codes have not been developed to recognize instruction in media arts, though foundational skills may be developed in introductory computer courses and general art courses.

High Schools

68% of high schools provided coursework in music and **92%** of students attended a high school where music was taught.

Visual arts were the most common type of arts course offered in high schools, with **73%** of schools providing visual arts instruction and **93%** of students attending a high school where visual arts were taught.

43% of high schools provided coursework in theater and **76%** of students attended a high school where theater was taught.

8% of high schools provided instruction in dance, and **15%** of students attended a high school where dance was taught.

51% of high schools provided coursework in media arts and **70%** of students attended a high school where media arts were taught.

Critical Evidence: How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement

In 2006, the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies published *Critical Evidence*, a monograph describing in nontechnical terms what research says about the benefits of arts education.¹⁰ The following provides excerpts from that monograph.

Learning in the arts is academic.

Learning experiences in the arts contribute to the development of academic skills, including the areas of reading, language development, and mathematics. In a well-documented national study using a federal database of over 25,000 middle and high school students, researchers from the University of California at Los Angeles found students with high arts involvement performed better on standardized achievement tests than students with low arts involvement.

Learning in the arts is basic. Arts learning experiences contribute to the development of certain thinking, social, and motivational skills that are considered basic for success in school, work, and life. These fundamental skills encompass a wide range of more subtle capacities of the mind, self-perceptions, and social relationships. Research shows that students at risk of not successfully completing their high school educations cite their participation in the arts as a reason for staying in school.

Learning in the arts is comprehensive. Learning in the arts is comprehensive in the true sense of the word; all three common definitions are applicable. Integration of the arts as a critical component of the school curriculum affords students a complete and well-rounded education. The benefits associated with study of the arts are inclusive of all students, although they can be greatest for those who are educationally or economically disadvantaged. And, an arts-rich learning environment can have far-reaching effects that extend to the entire school and surrounding community.

Conclusion

The level of information afforded by Oregon Department of Education data does not include all the modes and methods of a comprehensive arts education. Standalone coursework in the arts operates alongside arts integration with other subjects, teaching artist residencies, in-school workshops and performances, field trips, and out-of-school arts learning programs. Recent research studies from the Hewlett Foundation¹¹ and Harvard's Project Zero¹² have investigated this dynamic composition of high-quality arts learning systems. Both studies, however, identified arts instruction that is part of the regular school curriculum as the fundamental cornerstone of a comprehensive arts education. Borrowing terminology from the environmental sciences, access to arts coursework can be viewed as an *indicator species* that gauges the health of an entire arts learning ecology.

Based on the data provided in this analysis, how would we assess the health of Oregon's arts learning system? And, more importantly, what are some strategic actions we can take to provide every child access to a rigorous, sequential education in the arts?

Accountability through Transparency.

The Oregon Department of Education produces yearly report cards that provide information about how local schools are performing. The Oregon Arts Commission recommends that we not only continue to track state-level data on access to arts education but that we also include building-level accounts of access on schools' and districts' yearly report cards.

Find the Federal Funding.

The leadership of local school districts are encouraged to use a portion of eligible Title I funds to provide the benefits of arts education to students from disadvantaged circumstances and those needing remedial instruction. Similarly, districts should use eligible Title II funds to provide arts specialists and general classroom teachers with professional development in the arts as part of their efforts to prepare, train, and recruit high quality teachers and principals.

Strategic Partnerships and Networks of Support.

This analysis reveals several points of intervention where Oregon's nonprofit arts organizations can play a significant role in improving access to arts learning: long-term artist residency programs can be targeted for underserved schools, disciplines, and regions; professional development support can build teachers' capacity for arts and arts-integrated instruction; and strategic partnerships can provide students with career-related learning experiences in the arts.

This report is not the final word on arts education in Oregon public schools; it is the beginning of a statewide conversation between schools and arts organizations, state leadership and community stakeholders. Under the banners of equity and excellence, we must work together to ensure every student in every school access to a quality education in the arts.

Notes

- 1 Oregon Department of Education (2010). Academic Content Standards: Creating Consistency Across Oregon. Retrieved from Oregon Department of Education website <http://www.ode.state.or.us/go/real>
- 2 United States Government Accountability Office (2009). *Access to Arts Education: Inclusion of additional questions in Education's planned research*. GAO-09-286
- 3 "Marked Absent: Many Oregon Students will do without music and art classes." *The Oregonian*. September 7, 2010.
- 4 Just over half of Oregon public schools are located in rural areas, and 40% of students attend a rural school. For the purposes of this analysis, a school is designated "rural" if it is located more than 10 miles away from a population center of 40,000 people or greater.
- 5 *No Child Left Behind Act of 2001*. Title 1, Section 1001. Retrieved from the USDOE website <http://www2.ed.gov/policy/elsec/leg/esea02/pg1.html>
- 6 Artscan Database (2011). *Teacher Certification and Licensure Requirements - Arts in Education*. Denver, CO: Education Commission on the States. Retrieved from <http://mb2.ecs.org/reports/Report.aspx?id=781>
- 7 Gonzales, D. & Watts, S. (2010). *Training Classroom Teachers to Teach the Arts— Merits and Challenges*. Renton, WA: Arts Impact. Retrieved from <http://www.arts-impact.org>
- 8 This figure does not include all sixth, seventh, and eighth grade students. Some elementary schools and some high schools also contain middle grades.
- 9 Oregon Department of Education (2005). *Career-Related Learning Standards and Extended Application Standard: Guide for Schools to Build Relevant and Rigorous Collections of Evidence*. Retrieved from Oregon Department of Education website <http://www.ode.state.or.us>
- 10 Ruppert, S.S. (2006). *Critical Evidence How the Arts Benefit Student Achievement*. Washington, DC: National Assembly of State Arts Agencies. Retrieved from www.nasaa-arts.org/publications/critical-evidence.pdf
- 11 Woodworth, K. R., Gallagher, H., Guha, R., Campbell, A. Z., Lopez-Torkos, A. M., and Kim, D. (2007). *Unfinished Canvases: Arts Education in California*. Menlo Park, CA: SRI International.
- 12 Siedel et. Al (2009). *Qualities of Quality: Understanding Excellence in Arts Education*. Cambridge, MA: Project Zero.