

ARTS EDUCATION PROFILE:

Report on public schools, 2015-17

December 2017

The Arts Ed Profile school survey was administered to all 2,277 schools across LA County over an 18 month period. Schools in all 81 districts, four charter school networks, and a number of other individual charter schools were surveyed. A companion district-level survey was sent to administrators in the same districts and networks. In total, 924 schools in 78 districts completed at least part of the survey for a response rate of 40.6 percent. In order to generalize the responses to all schools in LA County, survey weights for schools were calculated, and an adjustment for non-response was implemented. Using these statistical tools, it is possible to state with a high degree of confidence that the findings presented here apply to all schools in LA County, not just those that responded to the survey. This, then, is a story about the current state of public arts education in LA County.



This study piloted a new tool for measuring arts education in elementary grades. To create this profile, a series of indicators were developed to measure the quantity and quality of arts education,



based on standards in the field. To understand overall trends in public arts education in LA County, read the countywide report (lacountyartsedcollective.org/profile/report). In addition to the report, there is an online data tool showing arts instruction at the school and district level. To learn about a specific school or district, visit the online tool (lacountyartsedcollective.org/profile/tool).

These findings on the quantity, quality and equity of arts education suggest specific action steps that school districts, schools, parents, advocates and other stakeholders can take to improve arts education.

For example:

- A school can select a particular measure of quantity or quality and set a goal of improving it.
- School districts can look at whether the arts instruction offered in their schools with larger numbers of students receiving free and reduced price meals, English learners and students of color, is equal to the schools with the best and most arts education in their district.
- Districts can examine feeder patterns for each discipline, and parents can ask whether their children will be able to continue to study the discipline they begin in elementary school through to graduation.

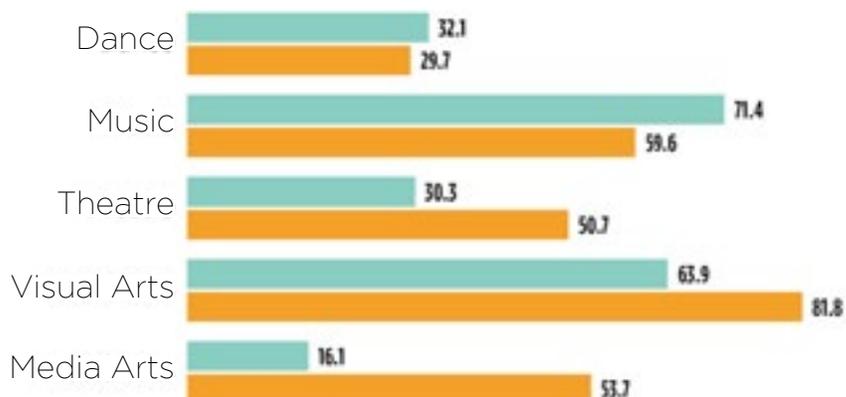


KEY FINDINGS

- Arts instruction is offered in nearly every school in LA County, and most schools offer two or more disciplines. Figure 1 shows the percent of schools that offer each discipline, for elementary (Pre-K/TK – 8) and secondary (9 – 12) grades. Figure 2 shows the breakdown of arts disciplines offered.

Figure 1:

Percent of schools offering each discipline



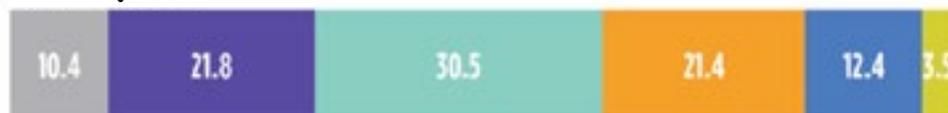
- Very few schools offer year-long arts instruction to all students.
- Grades 7-8 are the peak years for arts instruction, when all disciplines are offered in nearly every school.
- In general, the quantity of arts instruction is higher in elementary grades, while the quality of instruction is higher in secondary grades.
- Nearly every school has at least one credentialed arts instructor (full or part time) teaching an arts discipline.

Figure 2:

Percent of schools offering multiple arts disciplines



Elementary Grades



Secondary Grades



- Nearly every school district has an arts coordinator on staff responsible for overseeing arts education, who usually does this work part time along with other job responsibilities.
- Teaching artists and arts nonprofits play a critical role in arts education, providing arts instruction in more than half of all public schools in LA County.
- Equity continues to be a challenge in arts education. Schools with a larger share of English learners, more students eligible for free and reduced price meals (a proxy for low income) and more students of color tend to provide less arts instruction which is of lower quality. The evidence for this is stronger in elementary grades than secondary.

In sum, this study finds that arts education is part of the curriculum in most LA County public schools, that its quality can be improved, and that persistent problems of equity must be addressed if we are to ensure that all students have the benefits of high quality arts education.