



CULTURE
KING COUNTY LODGING TAX



Cornerstones
of Creative
Capacity



King County School Districts
Study on Arts Education Infrastructure and Administrative Perspectives

ArtsEd
washington



The Cornerstones of Creative Capacity project was funded by 4Culture King County lodging tax and administered by 4Culture arts, heritage and preservation. The project was implemented by its grantee ArtsEd Washington.

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Visual artwork, 5th grade—Tahoma School District
Students discussing illuminated manuscripts, 7th grade humanities class—Vashon School District
Fiddler on the Roof, dance scene, Woodinville High School—Northshore School District
Photograph, Bothell High School Student—Northshore School District
High school flutists playing in orchestra—Enumclaw School District

Note: Photographs available for cover design were selected from images sent by school districts who responded to the ArtsEd Washington C3 project request to send 2014-15 photographic documentation of arts education in action.

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PROJECT CONTEXT

PROJECT GOAL. Washington mirrors federal policy and law. It defines the arts (dance, music, theater and visual arts) as core academic subjects along with English, reading or language arts, mathematics, science, foreign languages, civics and government, economics, history, and geography).ⁱ The Washington state definition of arts education includes a standards-based approach to teaching and assessing arts learning.ⁱⁱ

Cornerstones of Creative Capacity (C3) is a project designed by *ArtsEd Washington* to identify the essential components of arts education infrastructure needed to sustain arts education at the school district level as defined by Washington state policy and law.

CORNERSTONES OF CREATIVITY—THE VALUE OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ARTS EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

The identification of infrastructure key features has the potential to ensure that arts education:

- 1) meets basic-to-education core standards;
- 2) survives through fluctuating economic environments;
- 3) improves and thrives within developing pedagogical understandings; and
- 4) endures through political and leadership changes.

SEARCH FOR AN ARTS EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE MODEL. This project was motivated by knowledge of a Los Angeles County study. In 2000, senior Los Angeles County arts leaders, concerned about arts education, commissioned Arts in Focus, a 2001 Los Angeles County school districts-wide arts education study. The study revealed four major contradictions between value/desire for the arts in education and implementation and access to the arts for all students. Study findings showed a discrepancy between recognized obstacles and the abilities of some school districts to overcome those obstacles.ⁱⁱⁱ *Arts for All*, adopted by the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors in 2002, was designed to support systemic change in the 80+ school districts of Los Angeles County in order to implement comprehensive, sequential K-12 arts education for every public school student. Beginning in 2003, 34 of the 81 Los Angeles County school districts committed to realizing five critical factors identified for district arts education infrastructure: 1) a board-adopted arts education policy; 2) an arts education plan; 3) an arts education budget of 5% or more of the total budget; 4) a district level arts coordinator; and 5) a student-to-credentialed arts teacher ratio of no more than 400:1. In 2003, 2005, and 2008 *Arts for All* published and disseminated Arts Education Performance Indicators Reports with findings about the progress of Los Angeles County school districts in meeting the five critical success factors discovered for Los Angeles County school districts to implement and sustain comprehensive arts education. The reports presented a countywide picture of the status of arts education infrastructure. The *Arts for All* report was disseminated locally to school districts resulting in a higher accounting for arts education and inspired discussion nationally about arts education infrastructure.

DEFINING AN INITIAL ARTS EDUCATION COUNTYWIDE STUDY PROJECT. The *ArtsEd Washington C3* project is funded by a grant from *4Culture*, the cultural services agency for King County, Washington, committed to creating arts and cultural opportunities for residents and visitors. With this funding base in King County, *ArtsEd Washington* selected to focus its pilot study on arts education in King County school districts. While inspired by the Los Angeles County project, C3 is different in scope, process and methodology in order to fit the project design to its locale.

LARGE-SCALE WASHINGTON STATE ARTS EDUCATION RESEARCH INITIATIVES. Arts education research initiatives have been conducted previously in Washington. In 2004, the Washington State Arts Commission undertook a multi-year project, named the Arts Education Research Initiative (AERI). Focused on the individual school level, the purpose of the AERI project was to gather and share quantitative and qualitative data about arts education in K-12 schools, so that educators, policy makers, arts leaders, and community members would have the information they needed to support positive change for arts education in schools. The first report summarizing the data collected was published in 2006, titled "Arts for Every Student." A second report, "K-12 Arts Education: Every Student, Every School, Every Year," was completed in 2009. Principals from 37 of 39 Washington counties responded. A researcher conducted site visits to a subset of schools to learn more about the schools' successes and challenges. Reports include context from external state and national research, and markers of quality and suggestions for taking action. The reports can be referenced at: <http://www.arts.wa.gov/arts-in-education/research--special-projects#sthash.0JL1dkbz.dpuf>. The researcher for this report served as co-researcher for the 2006 and 2009 Arts Commission reports. Additionally, Seattle and Highline school districts have conducted district studies on the status of arts education in their school districts.

ARTSED WASHINGTON CORNERSTONES OF CREATIVE CAPACITY PROJECT DESIGN. Unlike the aforementioned state level and school building-focused reports, *ArtsEd Washington* created C3 to establish baseline data about the current strengths and challenges at the school district level. The report provides data the community can use to identify the needs of school districts and begin to build collective solutions, making arts education more equitable for all students and families. The project design was intended to provide findings emanating from the highest school district administrative levels with the belief that administrative understandings inform communication to school boards and guide and determine ultimate school district policies and decision-making. Administrative input provided findings to create a Key Features for Equity in Arts Education document to disseminate across school districts in King County and inform school districts throughout Washington. The intentions of the project as defined by *ArtsEd Washington* are to:

- Help educators, funders, and civic partners identify priorities for their attention and action.
- Create a shared vision in response to the findings to catalyze advocacy and engage a strong, countywide leadership group.
- Provide support to districts in developing arts education policies and plans through capacity-building programs.
- Provide information to support funding sources for further district-level arts education implementation support.
- Provide understandings for the County and 4Culture to enable arts education infrastructure work.
- Help districts create effective partnerships and access existing resources.

The project design gathered data at two levels:

- 1) In-depth interviews of eight district superintendents, ten directors of teaching and learning and one arts supervisor.
- 2) A detailed arts education electronic survey conducted by *ArtsEd Washington*, most often completed by district personnel, including arts coordinators, with detailed knowledge of arts education in their district, to serve as a data baseline and resource.

STUDY METHODOLOGY AND SCHOOL DISTRICT DEMOGRAPHICS

COLLECTING INFORMATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL: ADMINISTRATIVE INTERVIEWS. District administrative offices and high-ranking personnel lead decision-making as they understand information gained at multiple levels within the district and implement state mandates in education. In-depth interviews with school district superintendents were identified by *ArtsEd Washington* as the most valid and reliable way to gain accurate information about overall district policies, plans and understandings, existing district infrastructure and priorities for arts education within the greater spectrum of other educational mandates. A listing of administrative personnel interviewed is noted below. Oral interviews lasted 30-50 minutes. All interviewees completed consent forms. Interviews were conducted between February and April 2015 at school district offices, with the exception of one interview which was conducted by telephone upon district request. The personal interviews used a standard protocol that allowed for discussion of complex understandings and follow-up questions for clarification. Analysis included coding district responses for common categories and was designed to capture overall understandings, not to compare one school district with another. Interviewees were sent a synopsis of their interview findings and given opportunities to review and correct written documentation after data was analyzed and summarized from the interview; eighteen of nineteen school districts responded with approvals or corrections. Only approved quotes are used in this report.

KING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND SCHOOL DISTRICT INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS. All nineteen school districts in King County participated in interviews. Eight superintendents participated in interviews; superintendents of both large and small school districts gave personal interviews. Other school districts offered access to key high level administrative personnel: assistant superintendents, directors of teaching and learning, directors of learning services, directors of curriculum and instruction, and a director of STEAM—Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Math. In one school district, key administrators requested interview support by the arts manager. In one of nineteen school districts the interview was assigned to an arts coordinator, in lieu of a cabinet level administrator.

KING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS AND INTERVIEW PARTICIPANTS

Auburn School District—Kip Herren, Superintendent
Bellevue School District—Sharon Kautz, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction and School Support
Enumclaw School District—Michael Nelson, Superintendent
Federal Way School District—Sally McLean, Superintendent
Highline School District—Stefan Nelson, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator
Issaquah School District—Dawn Wallace, Director of Instructional Support
Kent School District—Tony Apostle, Interim Superintendent; Ann Valanzuolo, Executive Director, Standards-Based Instruction
Lake Washington School District—Mike VanOrden, Director of Curriculum; Karen Ollerenshaw, Cur. Specialist
Mercer Island School District—Fred Rundle, Director of Learning Services
Northshore School District—Larry Francois, Superintendent
Renton School District—Monica Chandler, Superintendent
Riverview School District—Roni Rumsey, Director of Teaching and Learning
Seattle Public Schools—Michael Tolley, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning; Shauna Heath, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction; Gail Sehlhorst, Visual and Performing Arts Program Mngr.
Shoreline School District—Teri Poff, Director of Teaching and Learning
Skykomish School District—Martin Schmidt, Superintendent
Snoqualmie Valley School District—Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent
Tahoma School District—Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning
Tukwila School District—Gregory King, Executive Director of STEAM
Vashon Island School District—Michael Soltman, Superintendent

COLLECTING INFORMATION AT THE DISTRICT LEVEL: ELECTRONIC SURVEY. An electronic survey seeking detailed school district arts education data was sent to district personnel following each interview. District administrators were encouraged to seek arts education personnel as resources to supply accurate information; districts were given the time needed to complete the survey, extending the project calendar to make this possible. Survey data will be available from *ArtsEd Washington*. For many of the school districts, reporting accurate, detailed arts education information is difficult because the information is not routinely collected or compiled, resulting in some districts only completing portions of the survey, and a few school districts opting not to participate in the survey. Sixteen school districts in King County entered at least partial data in the electronic survey.

RESEARCHERS/REVIEWERS/SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY ARTS EDUCATION LIAISONS. Susy Watts, independent Consultant for Strategic Planning, Evaluation and Assessments, served as primary researcher for the project. She wrote the protocols for the research and identified key questions for the electronic survey to be conducted by *ArtsEd Washington*. She sought project advisement and edits from Anne Banks, Arts Program Supervisor for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and Lisa Jaret, Arts in Education Program Manager, Washington State Arts Commission. Mike Sandner, Director of Arts Education and Curriculum Integration, Bethel School District, and Dave Weatherred, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Spokane School District, further reviewed and edited interview and survey questions and offered advisement. Susy Watts leads large-scale research projects ranging from Los Angeles, California to Chicago, Illinois. She served as co-researcher on the status of arts education in Washington resulting in the publications *Arts for Every Student: Arts Education Resource Initiative* (2006) and *K-12 Arts Education: Every Student; Every School; Every Year* (2009). She contributed to the Arts Education Partnership national publication *From Anecdote to Evidence: Assessing the Status and Condition of Arts Education at the State Level* (2006). She was selected as one of seventeen U.S. presenters for the UNESCO World Conference on Arts Education, Lisbon, Portugal (2006). She has presented nationally at the U.S. Department of Education, Arts Education Partnership, Learning Forward (National Staff Development Council), Americans for the Arts, League of American Orchestras, Opera America, American Alliance of Museums, The Kennedy Center, VSA National Conference (international organization on arts and disability), 21st Century Community Learning Centers, and the National Arts Education Association.

She was supported in conducting interviews by Una McAlinden, former Executive Director of *ArtsEd Washington*, at the time of the interviews serving as an independent arts education consultant. The two interviewers calibrated the interview protocol and implementation. Interviews were attended by local constituents of each school district when a community advocate could be identified. The purpose of attendance by local community arts education supporters was to represent the voice of the local community at the interviews. Nine community supporters accompanied lead researchers during interviews in their local school districts and each asked four constituent-focused questions within the overall interview protocol. All community volunteers participated in interview training prior to participation, took no interview notes, and agreed to strict confidentiality of all information heard during the interviews. Interview trainings were held on two days, 22 January 2015 and 2 February 2015, by *ArtsEd Washington*. Local constituents who participated in district interviews are listed here.

SCHOOL DISTRICT COMMUNITY ARTS EDUCATION SUPPORTERS

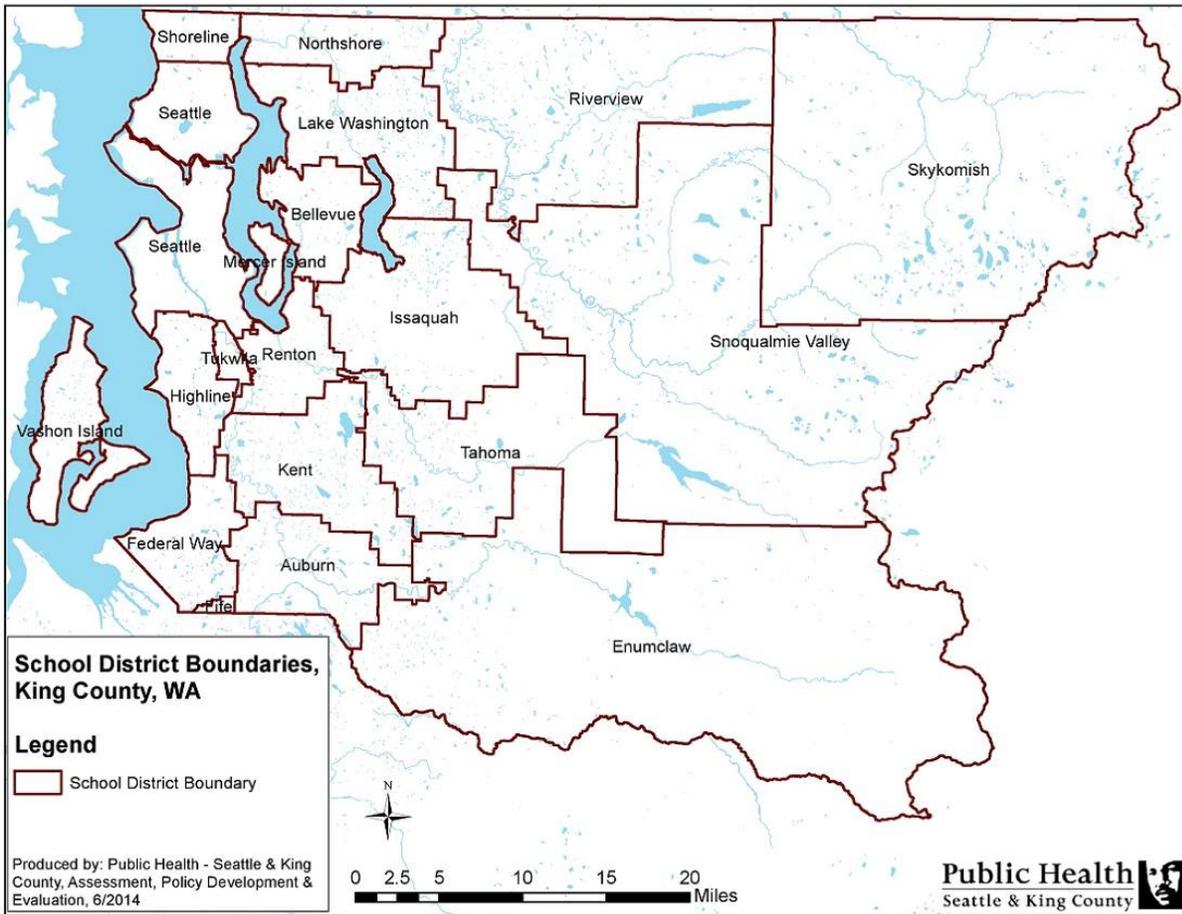
Auburn School District—Colleen Maloney
 Bellevue School District— Genevieve Tremblay
 Enumclaw School District—Samantha Rheinford
 Federal Way School District—Peter Speelmon
 Highline School District—Nancy Gosen
 Issaquah School District—NA
 Kent School District—Christy Caravaglio
 Lake Washington School District—Ramu Iyer
 Mercer Island School District—NA
 Northshore School District—NA
 Renton School District—NA
 Riverview School District—Badieh Bryant
 Seattle School District—NA
 Shoreline School District—NA
 Skykomish School District—NA
 Snoqualmie School District—NA
 Tahoma School District—NA
 Tukwila School District—Marie Parrish
 Vashon School District—NA

DEMOGRAPHICS FOR KING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS. King County has the largest population of any county in Washington state. The 2014 Census Bureau population estimate is 2,079,967 people with 21% of the population 18 years and younger. The County covers 2,115 square miles. King County includes 26% of the overall state public school students, and selected as the pilot school district for this project. Demographics for individual King County school districts vary widely. The table below is organized by district population size from largest to smallest. Key demographics are noted for school districts for sake of reference, as listed on the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction Washington State Report Card (2013-14) and K-12 Data and Reports current to this report date. The data for this report is not disaggregated by any one school district demographic factor.

Table 1
King Co. School District Demographics, OSPI WA State Report Card and K-12 Data and Reports (May 2014 Student Count)

School District	# of Students	# of Schools	Transitional Bilingual	Free or Reduced-Price Meals	Expenditures	\$/per Student
Seattle Public Schools	51,918	97	11.6%	39.9%	\$569,820,480	\$11,766
Kent School District	27,484	41	17.9%	52.4%	\$249,277,721	\$ 9,354
Lake Washington School District	26,147	49	7.1%	14.5%	\$233,561,591	\$ 9,390
Federal Way School District	22,420	35	15.5%	58.8%	\$207,836,156	\$ 9,782
Northshore School District	20,653	30	5.9%	17.3%	\$188,053,319	\$ 9,628
Bellevue School District	19,085	28	10.1%	19.6%	\$191,035,867	\$10,454
Issaquah School District	18,729	25	4.7%	9.3%	\$160,690,555	\$ 9,127
Highline School District	18,826	35	21.5%	69.3%	\$189,740,834	\$10,380
Auburn School District	14,987	22	14.0%	54.3%	\$140,007,695	\$ 9,773
Renton School District	15,135	22	16.1%	53.7%	\$143,554,644	\$ 9,983
Shoreline School District	9,054	14	6.7%	27.1%	\$ 86,092,852	\$10,131
Tahoma School District	7,837	9	1.8%	14.5%	\$ 67,553,904	\$ 9,109
Snoqualmie Valley School District	6,402	9	1.7%	12.6%	\$ 53,504,429	\$ 8,796
Mercer island School District	4,357	6	1.9%	3.7%	\$ 43,397,579	\$10,456
Enumclaw School District	4,386	8	4.6%	30.4%	\$ 41,282,880	\$ 9,574
Riverview School District	3,303	6	2.7%	17.4%	\$ 29,018,825	\$ 9,118
Tukwila School District	3,000	5	40.0%	79.4%	\$ 41,421,410	\$10,845
Vashon Island School District	1,555	3	2.4%	22.6%	\$ 15,323,673	\$10,488
Skykomish School District	37	1	0.0%	81.1%	\$ 1,789,622	\$52,482

MAP OF KING COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICTS.



Note on Report Format: Charts and graphs are used for elucidating topics when further illumination of data can be better understood through use of graphic organizers. Each area of investigation includes findings with explanatory narrative, implications for arts education at the school district level based on the overall findings, quotes from district administrators to reference findings to a particular context, and when available specific examples of work.

SCHOOL DISTRICT ADMINISTRATIVE PERSPECTIVES/STUDY FINDINGS

ARTS EDUCATION POLICY. Interviews began with questions about written policy, arts education reporting practices from schools to districts, and the advisement received from arts education advisory committees and councils.

Q1: Does your district or school board have a written arts education policy or mission statement?

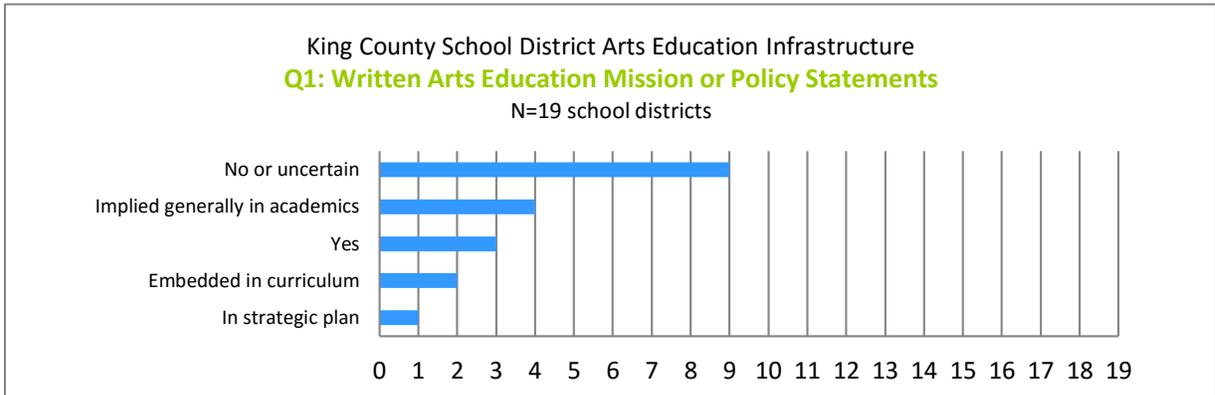


Figure 1. Mission or policy statements.

Findings. King County school district governance and written mission statements and policy for arts education vary significantly from district to district. A few school districts tended to use generalized language for mission and policy statements, e.g. “preparing global citizens,” “preparing students for college, career and life” and noted the arts are implied as basic to education. In the case of other school districts board policy references to arts education are highly specific such as noted at right for Highline School District. In yet other school districts policy is general but calls out the arts as a specific discipline as in Mercer Island School District: “maintain the highest standards in the areas of... fine arts.” Administrators noted any changes in school district policies or mission statements, to include specific references

HIGHLINE SCHOOL DISTRICT BOARD POLICY 2160

The Board recognizes that an arts education (defined as dance, music, theater, and visual arts) is an essential part of the learning experience for all Highline students. The Board believes that through arts education, students learn to develop creativity, discipline, perception, perseverance, self-expression, and critical thinking. These capacities are fundamental in preparing students for college, career, and citizenship. The Board further believes that a comprehensive arts education program promotes and strengthens our cultural diversity. Therefore:

A. The Board encourages development, implementation, and evaluation of standards-based, sequential, comprehensive, and culturally responsive K-12 arts education.

B. The Board supports the following elements, among others, in developing and implementing the arts education across all the schools: a. Standards-based arts curriculum and assessment; b. Qualified teachers in the arts; c. Professional development for classroom and arts teachers consistent with Washington’s Arts content standards; d. Facilities, equipment, and materials appropriate to achieve educational standards; e. Opportunities to showcase student learning and student work; f. Integration of and access to professional artists, cultural organizations and other community arts resources; and g. Provision for ongoing review, program evaluation, and development of arts education across all schools.

C. The School Board recognizes the importance of equitable access to an arts education. The Board expects close attention to these arts education ideals through goal-setting and planning by key staff. Specifically, the superintendent or designee is directed to: a. Define one or more metrics to track progress in the arts at the school and system level, including reporting at the sub-group level where practical. b. Prepare goals and strategies on annual basis, and use specific data to report on the extent to which the goals are achieved; c. Sustain an Arts Council composed of student, parent, staff, and community representatives that will support development of plans and evaluate progress. Highline School District 401. Adopted by the Board: August 2011 http://www.highlineschools.org/cms/lib07/WA01919413/Centricity/domain/1147/school%20board%20policies/series_2000/2160.pdf

to arts disciplines, would require parallel notation of all other core subjects and need school board approval.

Implications. Findings can be interpreted to indicate that listing the arts, along with other state-mandated disciplines, in a mission statement or district policy statement points out the arts are a core subject and bring the arts to the district attention internally and externally in the community.

Q2: In what ways is arts education made compulsory at the school building level? In what ways do schools report arts education to the district?

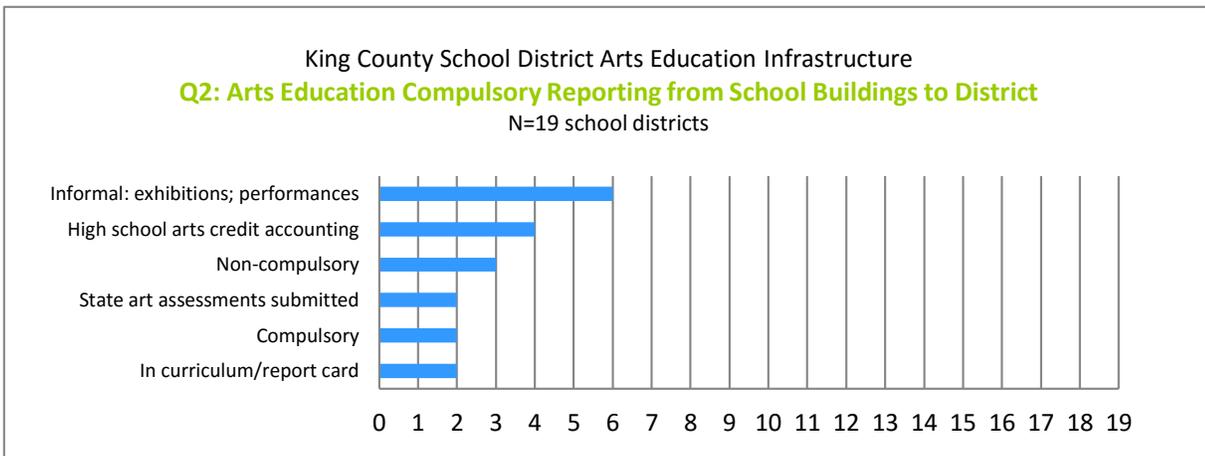


Figure 2. Arts education compulsory reporting from school buildings to district.

“Equity of opportunity is essential, but it is not without struggle. It’s been the school board’s and the superintendent’s prerogative for 40 years to provide those opportunities for students for a total program.” Kip Herren, Superintendent, Auburn School District

“We have a three-year rotation of school improvement visits where senior level administrators and the school board visit each school and dig deeply into their data, which tends to be more math and reading focused, but usually also the school is telling their story of what makes their school unique, and oftentimes their arts programs become part of that story.” Larry Francois, Superintendent, Northshore School District

Findings. Variance in the ways arts instruction is reported from school buildings to the district included diverse perceptions about instructional accountability. At six school districts accountability and reporting to the district were informal: visits to classrooms by school board members, performances/exhibitions, and historical public mandate. Four school districts reported high school arts credits as a level of accountability. In three cases, accountability for and reporting arts education from school buildings to the school district was non-compulsory. In two of the districts with the smallest student populations, reporting instruction in arts education was compulsory. Two districts reported their level of accountability rested on whether state performance-based assessments had been administered. Still other districts said accountability was subsumed into general statistics.

Implications. Since administrators say compulsory instructional accountability for arts education differs from reporting on language arts and math, there seems to be sufficient reason to align arts education compulsory reporting with the ways schools

report on implementation of other core subjects. In the C3 survey conducted by *ArtsEd Washington* as part of this project, the difficulty for school districts in reporting key statistics on arts education underlines that documentation may not be readily available or in some cases records may not be kept.

Q3: Describe any district arts education council, arts committee, and/or arts advisory group that meet regularly.

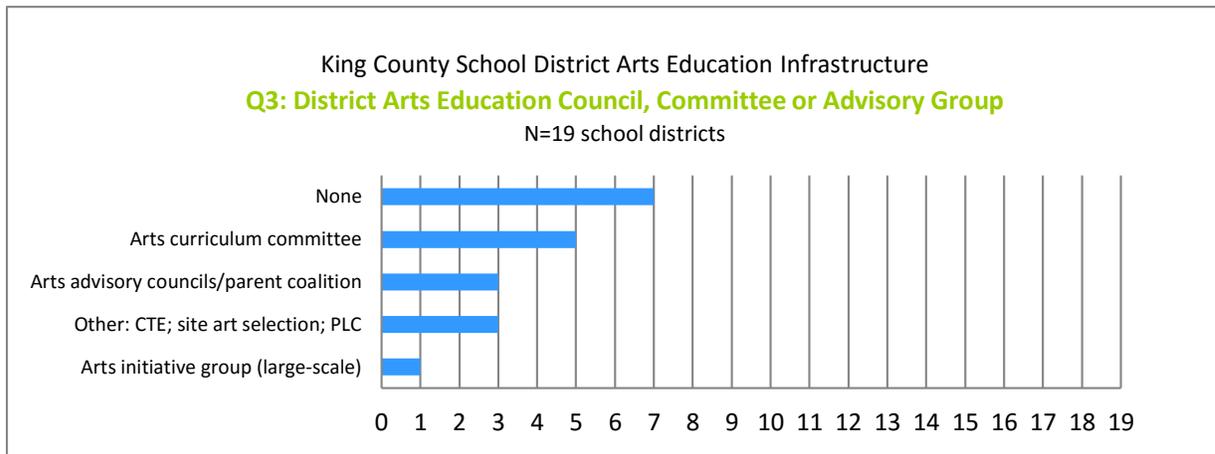


Figure 3. District arts education council, committee or advisory group.

Findings. Seven of the nineteen school districts do not have ongoing committees or groups related to arts education. Arts curriculum committees comprise the largest sub-group of arts committees and are brought together for one specific purpose. They meet regularly, but for some, only when arts curricula are up for adoption. Other groups met for varying reasons: e.g. coordination for credit alignment with Career and Technical Education (CTE); artwork selection as part of the 0.5% for the arts associated with new school buildings by state law: “All state agencies including all state departments, boards, councils, commissions, and quasi-public corporations shall allocate, as a nondeductible item, out of any moneys appropriated for the original construction of any public building, an amount of one-half of one percent of the appropriation to be expended by the Washington State Arts Commission for the acquisition of works of art.” RCW 43.17.200.

Seattle School District is engaged in a large-scale arts initiative with the goal that by 2020 all Seattle School District students will have access to a continuum of arts classes (http://www.seattle.gov/arts/creative_advantage/). A specific goal of the initiative is to address the inequities in access to arts education and highly qualified arts teachers contribute to this committee.

Implications. The addition of ongoing, regular arts committees with specific work in support of arts education can keep the arts central to the larger education conversation at the school district level. Only a few of the committees mentioned were long-running and one in particular, a pre-existent fund-raising committee at one school district, was no longer in existence.

ARTS EDUCATION IMPLEMENTATION/ARTS EDUCATION HIRING PRACTICES.

Administrators were asked to discuss their approach to arts education implementation: the existence or use of a specific plan or pacing calendar, extent of job descriptions, and hiring practices.

Q4: Describe your district’s implementation approach/plan for arts education.

Due to the wide diversity of responses to this query, with 18 of 19 respondents listing multiple implementation approaches, use of a bar chart does not accurately represent the data. Responses are

clustered categorically in a table found below. Response numbers are noted only when there were similar responses from multiple school districts; all other responses were noted by one school district.

Table 2
Arts Implementation Practices

King County School District Arts Implementation Practices and Approaches (# of school districts is shown when appropriate)	
Arts Education Implementation Practice	Approach
Grade level and arts-discipline specific focus	Focus on middle school/high school (5); music weekly K-5 (4); visual arts weekly K-8; K-5; all arts disciplines-all grade levels.
Implementation Plan	Mission-based plan for arts equity; 3-year plan; roadmap review every 6-7 years.
Staffing recruitment	Recruitment of highly qualified staff (2); oversight by an arts coordinator.
Cross-subject or cross-course or arts integration practice	CTE cross-crediting coursework (2); STEM/STEAM programs (2); Reliance on generalist classroom teachers.
External district support	Reliance on arts foundation.
Budget line items	Arts included as line item in school district budget; fee-based approach.
Scheduling	Seven-period day; arts taught during planning periods.
Curricula adoptions	Curriculum adoption; subject review committee.
Assessment	Common arts assessments across district.
Standards-based education	Alignment with national standards.

“What we have done is save the arts during difficult budget times in a K-12 district. Not all districts include all of the arts. We have chosen to keep a solid expanse of arts programs.” Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District

“It is very competitive in nature to hire strong, talented, skilled teachers of various art forms. We are in competition to gather the very best folks here. We staff with a high degree of advocacy within our schools. This community cannot do without the arts. They insist that the district have strong arts programs.” Tony Apostle, Interim Superintendent, Kent School District

“Whenever we do new curriculum and implementation we think in a three-year process. We do training up front to understand the new curriculum. In the second and third years, we look at things that go well and build off that with additional training and support. We look at student work and experiences, develop and revise common assessments, calibrate our expectations across teachers, and share strategies that are working.” Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Federal Way School District

Findings. As school administrators discussed arts education implementation, they responded by noting multiple practices and approaches within their school districts to carry out arts education. The implementation approaches administrators valued were as often philosophical as they were logistical. Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District emphasizes arts education implementation includes the decision whether to focus on one arts discipline or ensure that the district offers all four arts disciplines K-12 (dance, music, theater, visual arts). One administrator states implementation of arts education is more than just offering courses or classes, but hinges on hiring quality instructional staff. Cross-crediting CTE classes was noted as a more recent approach to ensure school-to-career artistic options for high school students. Seattle Public Schools, supported initially by a Wallace Foundation grant, and with continued funding through the City of Seattle Arts and Culture office has written a comprehensive implementation plan: The Creative Advantage. The Seattle Public Schools targets a specific goal of fully implementing their plan in 2020, as well as establishing CTE career centers, further community-based partnerships, extended professional development and classroom generalists integrating the arts with other classroom disciplines. An excerpt from the plan is shown, with the full plan available online.

SEATTLE SCHOOL DISTRICT—THE CREATIVE ADVANTAGE—2013 K-12 ARTS PLAN (GOALS)

Every SPS elementary student receives:

- A minimum of 60 minutes per week of visual arts taught by a certified arts teacher.
- A minimum of 60 minutes per week of music taught by a certified music teacher.
- Instruction from master cultural artists integrated into core arts classrooms and responsive to the school’s community.
- Integrated arts instruction in every K-5 classroom.
- Dance instruction in physical education classes, supported by community arts organizations.
- Sequential arts education that leads to participation in secondary arts programs.

Every SPS middle school student receives:

- A minimum of two semesters of visual, performing, or media arts classes.
- Integrated arts instruction in a sixth-grade language arts, science, or social studies class.
- Arts options that are diverse and relevant, and lead to sequential learning opportunities in high school.

Every SPS high school student receives:

- A minimum of four semesters of visual, performing, or media arts classes.
- Integrated arts instruction in a ninth-grade language arts or social studies class.
- Sequential learning opportunities in visual arts, music, theater, and media arts programs.
- Opportunities to connect arts to careers at Media Arts Skills Centers, available to juniors and seniors District-wide.

These three strategies frame the Seattle K-12 Arts Plan:

1. Transform the District central office in support of schools and regional K-12 arts learning pathways.
2. Provide culturally relevant K-12 arts curricula and instruction that emphasizes development and assessment of 21st century skills.
3. Implement a coordinated citywide support structure for partnerships, governance, and evaluation.

Read the complete 2013 Seattle Public Schools K-12 arts plan at:

http://www.seattleschools.org/UserFiles/Servers/Server_543/File/Migration/Departments/Arts/SPS%20Arts%20Plan%20Final.pdf

Implications. The responses received concerning arts education implementation bring to question the level of strength the arts possess as central disciplines for education and the management priority levels for the arts as a core subject. One superintendent did not know the arts were core disciplines. However, administrators’ inventive and diverse implementation responses could also be interpreted as a level of commitment to sustaining some level of arts education, even when other classroom disciplines take precedence in their districts. Fee-based implementation approaches noted by one superintendent do not satisfy student access and equity. While principals remain the school-based decision makers, specific district implementation plans, as well as a means to achieve implementation, are crucial. Without a clear and specific K-5 arts implementation plan that guarantees access to the arts for all students, middle and high school students will not be prepared to continue arts classes.

Q5: What is the comparison of arts education implementation timelines (pacing) to other subjects?

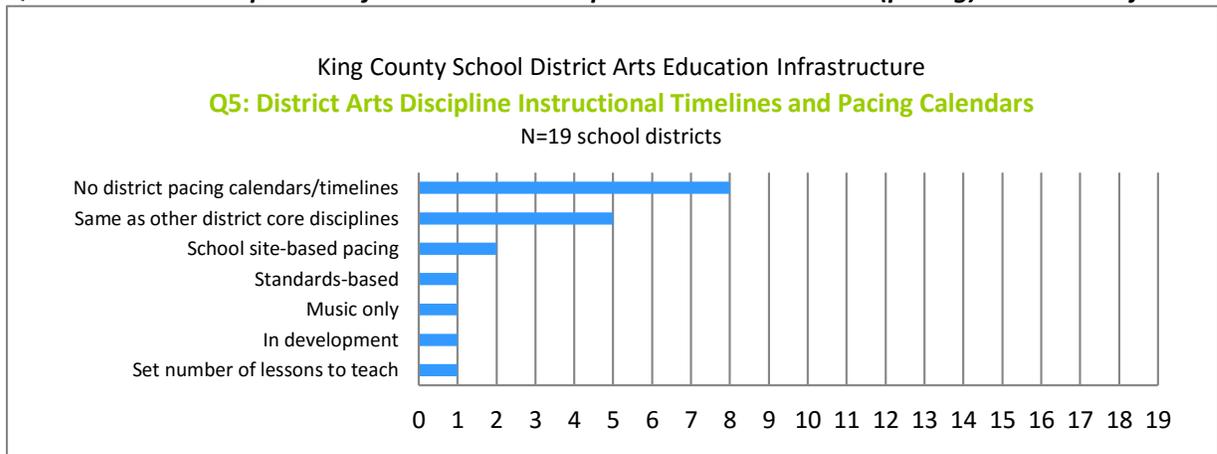


Figure 4. Arts discipline instructional timelines and pacing calendars.

Findings. Without the expectation that all teachers would be lock-step in their timing of implementation, existence of a pacing guide was explored by the study as one possible element of

infrastructure that might mirror other classroom disciplines and point to greater rigor in instruction, Data shows less attention or rigor than other core disciplines for use of pacing calendars to ensure instructional content coverage over the course of a school year. In the case of Lake Washington School District, the use of Power Standards and assessments related to specific grade levels could be relational to a pacing calendar, though only in a summative fashion. Administrators noted that while pacing calendars do exist in many areas of the language arts and math, they are less frequently applied to the arts disciplines, leaving instructional timing and coverage decisions to individual arts instructors or generalist classroom teachers.

Implications: For overall infrastructure key features, it appears other areas of infrastructure need to be in place first before pursuit of pacing calendars or instructional guidelines for timelines are put into practice. The practice of dictating the number of lessons that should be taught to any one student would not appear to align with comprehensive content coverage or meeting arts education guidelines at specific grade levels.

Q6: Who writes arts education job descriptions? Who submits questions, interviews and hires highly qualified arts education teachers?

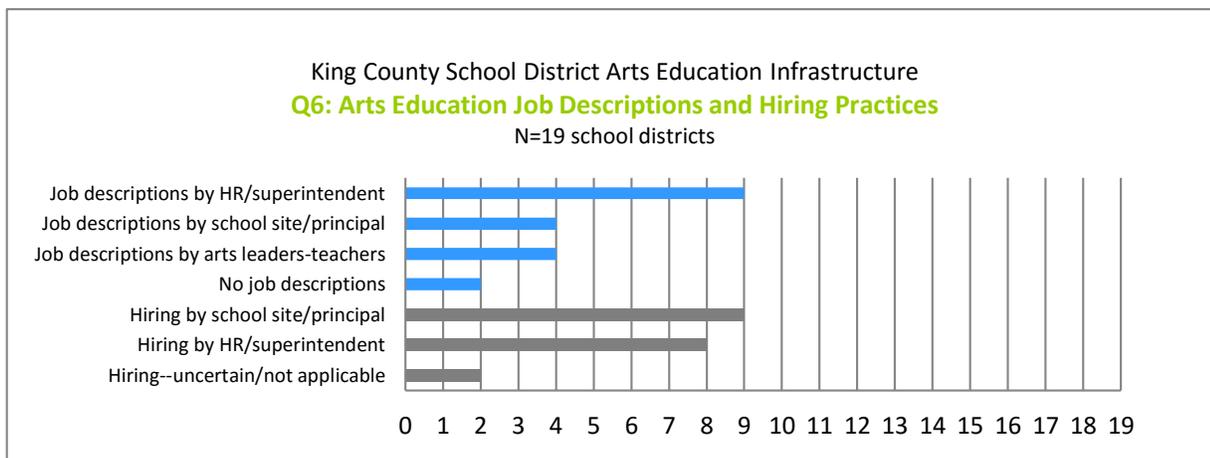


Figure 5. Arts education job descriptions and hiring practices.

Findings. School district Human Relations Departments take responsibility for job descriptions and hiring most frequently in larger school districts. Since the increase of building-based school management, Seattle Public Schools administrative staff described a surge of greater authority and decision-making occurring at the school site level for arts education. Across school districts, job descriptions and parts of the interviewing process are influenced by arts teachers and coordinators, often as a team approach with others. Smaller school districts, not unexpectedly, relied on final hiring decisions made by the district executive lead. However, two larger school districts described active participation by the superintendent in making ultimate hiring decisions for highly qualified arts specialists.

“We have ‘boutiqued’ our schools a lot. If a Spanish teacher is leaving, a school (may) have decided to hire a multi-arts teacher. That communication does not come out through the district.” Shauna Heath, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Seattle Public Schools

Implications. Ultimate hiring is attributed to high level administrators, usually with input from arts specialists and arts coordinators, but not consistently. In responses to several questions in the interview process for this study, district administrators underlined the importance of highly qualified arts teachers for the growth of the arts in their school districts. Given this factor, a rigorous, informed job description, and a substantive interview and hiring process would be key to discriminating the most qualified personnel for arts positions.

ARTS EDUCATION FRAMEWORKS/SEQUENTIAL ARTS EDUCATION CURRICULA. For the purposes of this study, arts curriculum was defined as: cumulative progression with each learning unit building upon the previous one—not random or occasional.

Q7: In what ways have the Washington State Arts Standards/Arts Grade Level Expectations been disseminated by the district to personnel? Is the dissemination of standards a similar or different process than for other core subjects?

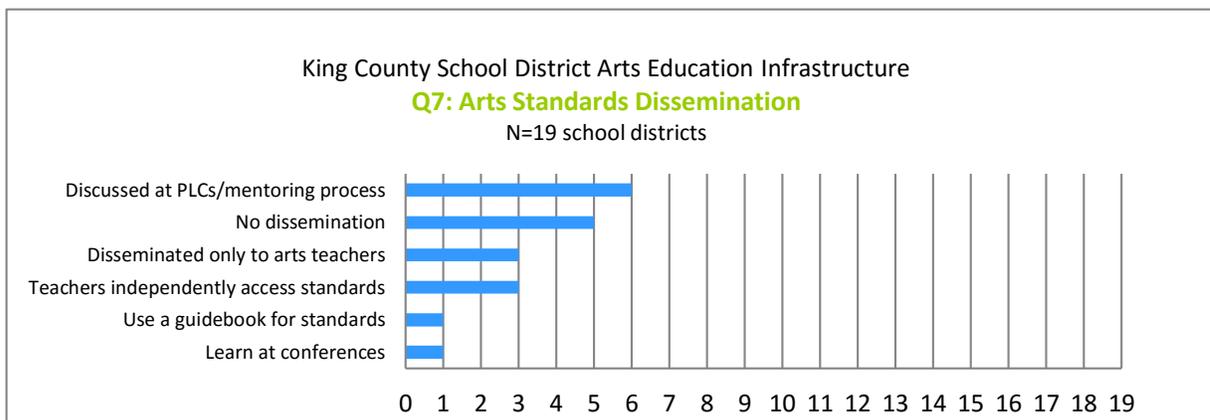


Figure 6. Arts standards dissemination.

Findings. School districts vary in arts standards dissemination. Five school districts did not disseminate arts standards or reference expectations for arts standards-based teaching; six districts either disseminated arts standards only to arts teachers or expected teachers to independently access standards. Six school districts discussed standards at PLCs designed for arts specialists or used a peer-to-peer mentoring process for standards-based focus. Only three of the administrators addressed the similarities or differences between dissemination of discipline-specific standards in the arts versus other classroom disciplines—one district felt it was a similar approach, one felt the dissemination process was less rigorous, and one was not aware of a standards dissemination process.

“For the state standards piece, if it is a new teacher we partner them with a mentor teacher in their same content area.” Fred Rundle Director of Learning Services, Mercer Island School District

Implications. School districts overall, and their administrators, were highly aware of the mandate for standards-based education. And yet, for the arts, less than half of the King County school districts have a formal process to ensure that teachers use arts standards. While teachers may be holding themselves personally accountable to standards, there is minimal formal assurance at the district level concerning standards-based expectations and instructional alignment.

Q8: In which arts disciplines does documented sequential curriculum exist in the district? For dance; music; theater; visual arts? How is curriculum disseminated?

Three qualifiers were crucial to questions concerning arts curriculum, as evidenced in previous statewide research from school principals during the Arts Education Research Initiative projects. For some schools who attested to using an arts curriculum, there was no documented, written evidence of the curriculum; curriculum was interpreted as a teacher’s experience and historical approaches to teaching. For some schools who attested to curriculum there was no consistent grade-to-grade progression of concepts and skills, only a series of lessons. And for other schools crucial curricular approaches were random and occasional, not regular. This study makes an effort to discriminate between existences of written, documented curricula in each of the state-mandated arts disciplines versus a more randomized approach to documentation that may occur only through occasional arts lessons. This study did not review all curricula noted by all respondents and so, when school districts indicated existence of curricula for arts disciplines, it is uncertain if each grade (K-12) is covered.

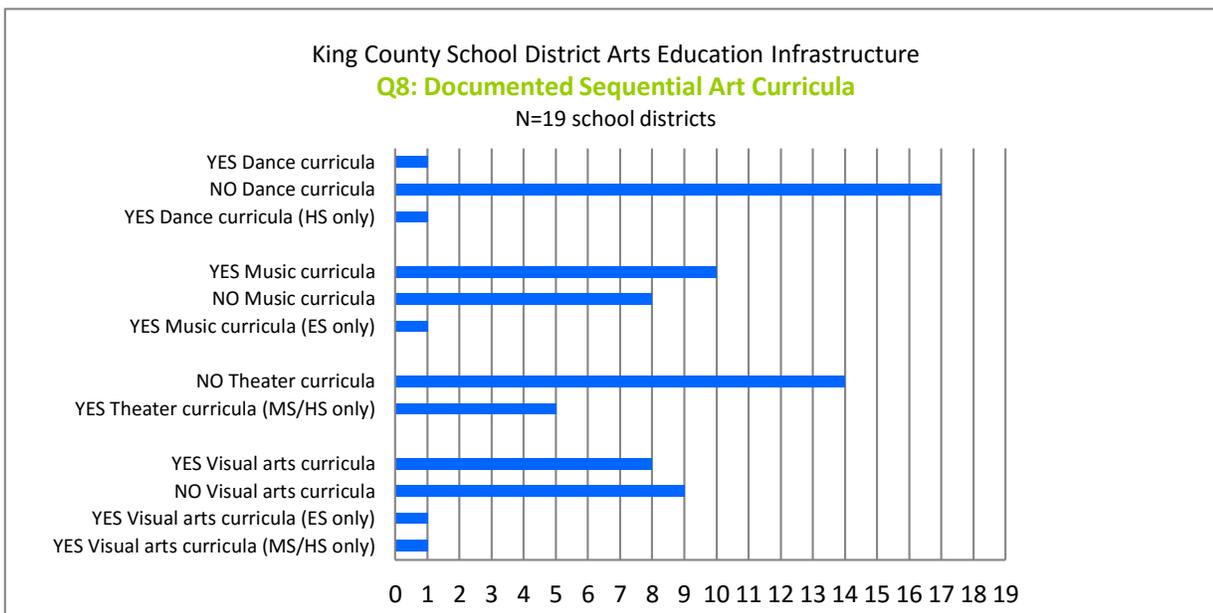


Figure 7. Documented sequential arts curricula.

Findings. While curricula tallies from interviews do not correspond consistently with the *ArtsEd Washington* survey findings on curricula, understandings by administrators about arts curricula approximate the same moderate levels of documented arts curricula in music and visual arts, and both interviews and surveys note a weak level of documented curricula in dance and theater. At the middle and high school levels, syllabi written by instructors were listed as substitutes for curricula making instructional alignment school-wide and district-wide less consistent. Three districts were currently in the process of reviewing arts curricula. Two music and two visual arts curricula were commercial products. Teachers in three school districts had been encouraged to write a scope and sequence for the arts. Two school districts used bodies of visual arts lessons in lieu of curricula. One school district referenced cross-crediting the arts with CTE in lieu of curricula and another school district relied solely on teacher expertise in lieu of curricula.

“There are skills and techniques as well as instructional strategies around 21st Century skills. As Curriculum and Instruction moves forward next year, our plan is to create a teacher-driven Scope and Sequence. Over the next year (2015-16) a Scope and Sequence will be created for visual and performing arts, as well as finalizing the series of Baseline and Cornerstone Unit assessments.” Gail Sehlhorst, Visual and Performing Arts Program Manager, Seattle Public Schools

Implications. The Washington State Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction places its statewide focus on the Washington State K–12 Learning Standards and Guidelines as well as offers a support system and guidelines for teachers and school districts. Detailed curricula are more likely found at the school district level. The diversity of research and viewpoints on curriculum and curriculum development are as deep and wide as the field of education itself, with much debate. When reviewing curriculum literature, a few key curriculum attributes seem to be held in common: a vision or purpose for the curriculum specific to the locale; development of an overall structure of contents (in the case of the arts e.g., concepts, skills/techniques, and dispositions); instructional delivery strategies; and comprehensive assessments.^{iv} Two administrators stated the state standards satisfied

issues of content. However, issues of balance of time within instructional content areas, instructional strategies, day-to-day formative classroom-based assessments with specific objectives/outcomes and clear criteria/indicators, summative assessments with formats reportable clearly and authentically to students and families, and classroom extended resources are curricular components not addressed in standards. One of the greatest challenges in sharing curricula between school districts is that most existing King County school district curricula rest in two non-accessible types: copyright-protected commercial curricula or district-protected web-based work requiring district usernames and passwords. These stumbling blocks make sharing existing curricular work between King County school districts a challenge. Lake Washington School District released some curricular examples for the purpose of this study. Bellevue School District uses Brightspace as a shared site for curriculum online and considers this a level of accountability to students and families who have access to the site. Some arts curricula are available from school districts outside of King County such as Tacoma Public Schools. Curriculum existence is no guarantee the subject is taught, noted one administrator, or at what qualitative level.

Q9: In what ways does the district connect the arts and other core subjects in the classroom?

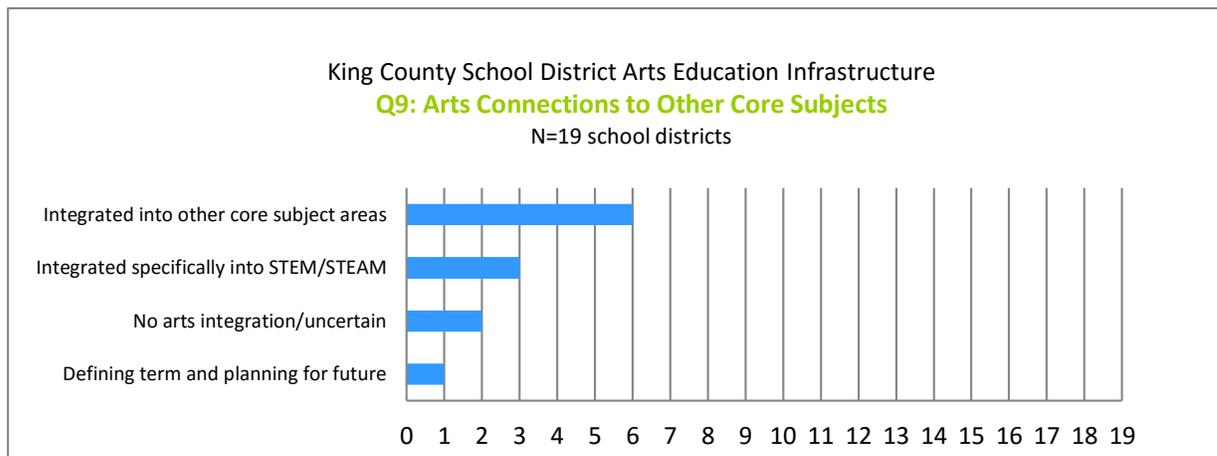


Figure 8. Arts connections to other core subjects.

“While at times (integration) is random acts of alignment, at other times arts integration is well thought out. Teachers are not just about doing something; they are applying it.” Fred Rundle, Director of Learning Services, Mercer Island School District

“We plan to use the arts as a means to leverage other content areas while teaching the quality arts skills and techniques as concept and standards you are trying to meet in other content areas. But (integration) is a term that needs to be clarified.” Gail Sehlhorst, Visual and Performing Arts Program Manager, Seattle School District

“Especially at the elementary level, the arts lessons typically go with integrated units. Integrated units have either a science or social studies content core, and then Literacy components are connected. We integrate through both process and content.” Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Tahoma School District

Findings. School districts primarily integrate the arts into other content areas at K-5 grade levels. Six school districts relied on individual teachers to connect the arts to other core disciplines. Only in two instances did school districts specifically integrate the arts at the middle school or high school levels. For three school districts, large-scale grants reinforced arts integration; U.S. Department of Education AEMDD and Gates grants were noted as funding arts integration efforts at the time of this study. Vashon Island School District focused on using artists in the schools to connect the arts to other core disciplines. In the case of one school district, the administrator felt Common Core had taken precedence over arts integration.

Implications. King County school district administrators were clear in defining arts integration as primarily a K-5 approach to learning. Though several administrators referenced grants and projects that had implemented arts integration in their school districts previously, generally the practice of arts integration is implemented occasionally and primarily at the discretion of the

individual classroom generalist teacher. Tracking STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Math) /STEAM (with Arts added) grant projects may further elucidate the practice of connecting arts core concepts and other subject core content in King County school districts. Tracking the decisions made by Seattle Public Schools as they continue to flesh out their approach to arts integration may also be valuable across King County school districts.

Q10: What is the policy/schedule for arts curricula review? Is it similar or different than the other core subjects?

Since existence of arts curricula in King County school districts is moderate to weak, an arts curricula review became a less relevant question in the search to define key elements of school district infrastructure for arts education. Responses ranged from mirroring the schedule of curricular review in other core discipline areas to sporadic review to no review. No significant trends emerged in this study.

ARTS EDUCATION BUDGETS. Budget expenditures can be a significant indicator of school district commitment to and focus on a subject/discipline content area. For the *Arts for All* project that inspired this pilot study, the sponsoring organization selected an infrastructure goal of school districts spending at least 5% of the school district budget on arts teaching and learning. When selecting King County school district art education infrastructure key features, budget will assuredly be a significant factor. The nuances of budget expenditures can be difficult to track due to lack of solid data on school district expenditures for arts education. Additionally, another factor to consider is that gross budget expenditures for the arts may not represent equity for all students in the school district. Budget expenditures may represent arts education for only some of the students in a school district; budget

expenditures may reflect greater expenditures for advanced students, not for students who are novices in the arts disciplines with potential to continue study throughout their K-12 education.

Q11: How does the school district define a sustaining line item for arts education in the district budget?

Of particular interest were two queries that might lead to a better understanding of budget infrastructure key features: 1) evidence of sustaining line items for arts education, and 2) strategies that precluded elimination of the arts during difficult economic times.

The figure below represents types of budget line items for the arts represented in school district budgets.

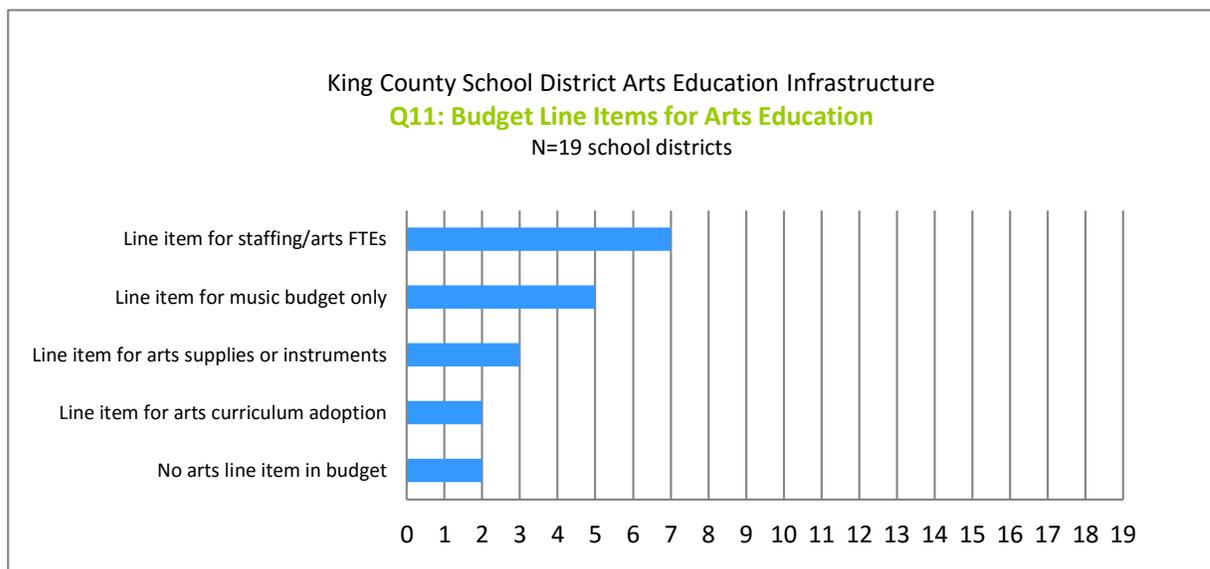


Figure 9. Budget line items for arts education.

“Evidence of how we didn’t reduce the arts is seen in sustained funding. We tie it to personnel and content in a number of courses. We have retained our personnel in the arts during severe budget times; we didn’t lose any arts people.” Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District

Findings. Seven school districts include some type of line item or items in the school district budget for staffing arts positions. For some school districts arts funding resided in school site budgets instead of at the district level, to be used for the arts at the discretion of the principal. Other budget line items for the arts included travel for performing arts groups and consultancies. Two schools referenced raising “soft money” to support the arts through foundational support. For the smaller school district, Riverview School District, a line item was created for a .2 FTE for a Teacher on Special Assignment.

Implications. The existence of budget line items for the arts can be interpreted as a commitment to arts learning, as opposed to dependency on and the expectation that general education funding will be expended for the arts at some level. With individual school site-based decision making for arts expenditures, administrators noted there may be inequity in arts education between schools within one district. The findings of this study suggest that 17 of the 19 school districts have made some level of assurance about arts funding at the district level through line item funding for arts education. More

investigation into equity of funding for the arts at the school district level is needed. This can be achieved only with detailed accounting.

Q12: What factors are responsible for fluctuation in school district budget for arts education?

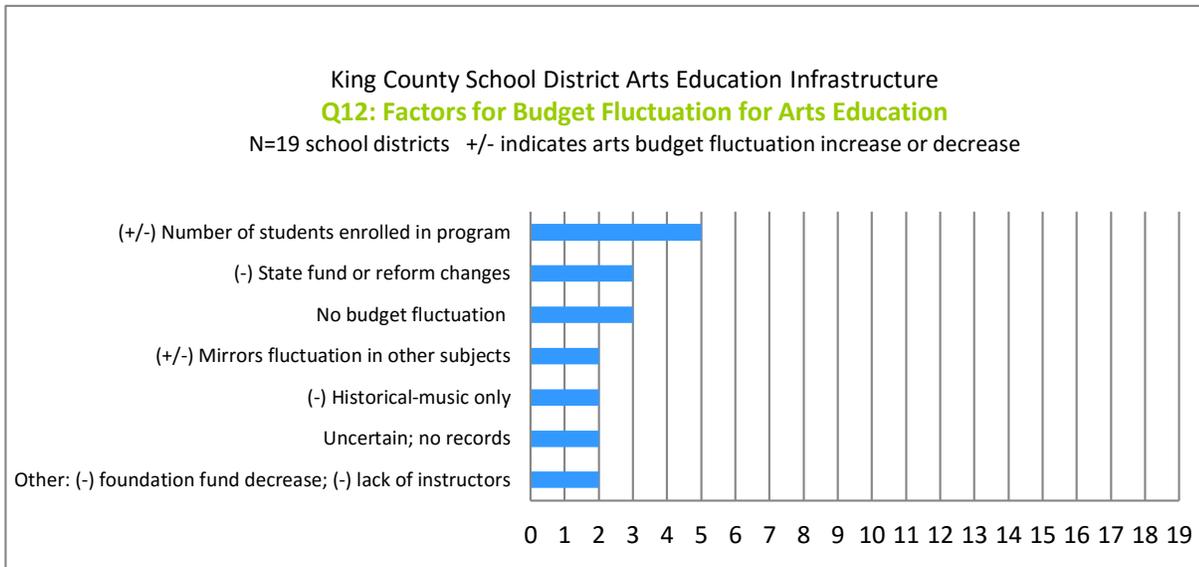


Figure 10. Factors for budget fluctuation for arts education.

Findings. Budget fluctuation varied significantly from school district to school district. Five school districts noted budget fluctuation in the arts, particularly at the middle and high school levels, depended more and more on the ability of teachers to market their classes in order to gain student enrollment and justify the class. Three school districts reported they were able to maintain the arts throughout difficult economic times due to three different reasons: 1) school district commitment to arts staff members; 2) the community mandate for the arts, and 3) foundational support. In the case of one school district the music coordinator was expected to balance any budget fluctuations in whatever way possible. Two school districts did not feel they had reliable records to trace changes in school district funding for the arts.

Implications. School district and community value for the arts appear to overcome difficult economic times, even for the smallest of school districts. With more school district mandates and competing

“It is honestly the competition for resources. With the challenging demographics, it’s about getting students to standards. For every third grader that can’t read with comprehension to standards, we pay \$1500 per year to catch them up. They have to read first.” Kip Herren, Superintendent, Auburn School District

“There is such great competition for talented music instructors. Quality instructors will drive the program. It is cause for celebration when we hire a highly qualified staff member in the arts. You need kid-magnet instructors to drive arts programs or they aren’t going to flourish.” Tony Apostle, Interim Superintendent, Kent School District

“Grant dollars have propelled baseline dollars. The intent of the work is for the district to pick up more and more as the grant dollars decrease.” Michael Tolley, Assistant Superintendent for Teaching and Learning, Seattle Public Schools

“Depending on the recruiting and the efforts by those teachers to market their programs, they might see things wane or increase based on those marketing efforts. But that might come at the expense of some other program where they’re not marketing as well.” Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent, Snoqualmie School District

interests, a commitment to equity for the arts as core, basic-to-education disciplines seems to be the tipping factor for sustaining budget funds for arts education. Student recruitment, as it related to course enrollment, was an indicator of a significant way community valuing translated to dollars expended on the arts for school districts.

STAFFING AND SCHEDULING FOR ARTS EDUCATION. With the wide range of district student population sizes in King County, this study explores the ability of school districts to expend funds for an arts coordinator staff member. Administrators were also asked about the common planning time between staff members, especially generalist classroom teachers and highly qualified arts teachers, and the ways art classes were scheduled to ensure access to the arts for all students.

Q13: Does your district have a designated staff member(s) for supervision or coordinator of arts education? What percentage FTE or stipend?

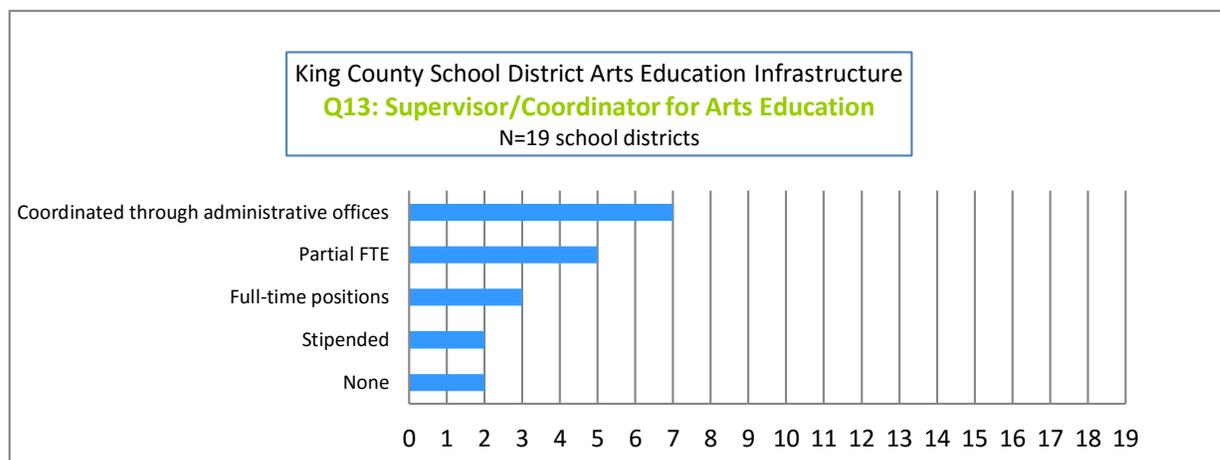


Figure 11. Supervisor/coordinator for arts education.

Findings. Staffing for a coordinator for arts education related closely to school district size; three larger school districts state having full-time positions. Most noteworthy is that school districts of small and large scale often placed coordination of the arts within the broader responsibilities for all academic areas. In smaller school districts it was not unusual for a superintendent or a director of teaching and learning to be responsible for the arts along with their other varied tasks. However, even smaller school districts allotted .2 FTE to .6 FTE for this position. The arts coordinator position involved arts budget decisions, curricular alignment, supply and instrument management and coordination of itinerant arts staff when teaching artists or consultants worked in the district. School districts administrators said they directed the staff member responsible for the arts to work closely and collaboratively with available highly qualified arts teachers.

Implications. Uncertain was how much time could be devoted to arts administration and coordination by staff members who were balancing responsibilities for most or all of the academic disciplines. Anecdotally, some administrators stated their arts coordinators put in more time than covered by either their FTE or stipend.

Q14: What is the availability of common planning time between certificated arts specialists? Between arts specialists and classroom teachers?

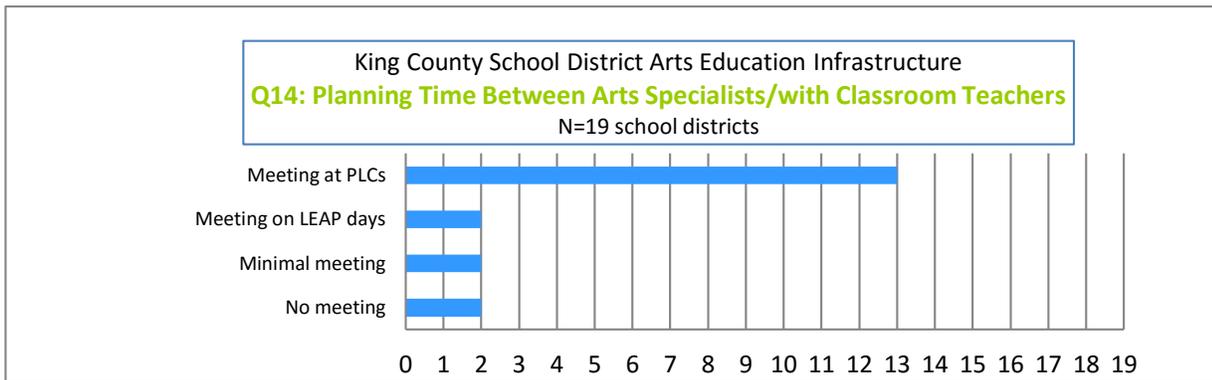


Figure 12. Planning time: between arts specialists/with classroom teachers.

Findings. Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) accounted for 13 of 19 instances when highly-qualified arts teachers met together. During the PLCs, highly qualified arts teachers were more likely to meet with each other than with generalist classroom teachers. The intensity (time) of the individual PLC meetings varied from one hour to ninety minutes, occurring weekly, most often on early release days or late start days. Other common planning time occurred on Learning Enhancement and Academic Planning (LEAP) days, which most often included longer, extended planning times. In the case of Riverview School District, one of the five smallest school districts in King County, the Teacher on Special Assignment (TOSA) typically conducts professional development and leads collaboration with one self-selected classroom teacher from each school, and meets with the visual arts and music teachers quarterly. In the very largest school districts and the smallest school districts meetings are minimal between arts specialists and generalist classroom teachers.

Implications. Administrators noted that PLC time, while an important contractual agreement with teachers, often had high demand for covering issues related to state policy and reform and to school district policy. Additionally, a certain portion of PLC time, they reported, was teacher-directed. Although noted earlier that six school districts intentionally connect the arts to other core disciplines, there appears to be minimal time devoted to planning for arts integration in the current staff schedules, which evokes a contradiction between intent and ability to plan for arts integration. When highly qualified arts teachers did meet together with classroom teachers, discussions were more often on school district policy than instructional integration. Though this study does not compare student learning to the ability of teachers to plan together, it would appear the ability of instructors to calibrate arts instructional alignment with school district priorities would hinge on the ability to meet together. The practice of meeting for arts curriculum adoption or renewal was occasional.

Q15: How does your school district schedule periods or classes to ensure arts education has a consistent slot on school schedules?

In 2005, in findings from Washington State Arts Commission’s first Arts Education Research Initiative, intentional arts class scheduling across K-12 grades proved to be one of the crucial factors in actualization of time for arts education. This question investigated the merit of purposeful scheduling as an arts education infrastructure key feature.

Table 3
Arts Classes Scheduling

King County School District Arts Classes Scheduling Practices and Approaches	
Arts Classes Scheduling Practice	Approach
Schedule singleton classes first	Schedule all the singleton classes first, followed by classes offered more than once a semester.
6 semesters of arts available in middle school	Across three years, middle school students would have access to an arts class each semester.
Student-driven schedules and teacher/student ratios	Organize all elementary arts specialists centrally so that, depending on how many students are enrolled at the school, there are sufficient arts teachers. Class offerings relate closely to student demand.
Teacher planning time as means for scheduling arts classes at elementary level	The amount of minutes for arts each week is determined by a combination of days and times available for planning in each school and by union contract.
Music leads arts scheduling choices	School districts schedule music for full-year implementation, visual arts courses scheduled for intermittent classes or tagged for classroom teacher instruction.

“We highly value the arts and we know that when you have a course like orchestra or advanced drama where there might be one section or perhaps two sections in the schedule, those become major drivers for the building schedule. You have ten sections of Chemistry, so you can place those in different periods and minimize the conflicts for a student who wants to be in orchestra.” Larry Francois, Superintendent, Northshore School District

“Washington State is changing to a mandatory 24 credits at high schools. We kept the arts alive in our district offering 23-½ credits (when the State only requested 20 credits for graduation). In the six-period model, you don’t get to make a mistake. The ability to earn up to 32 credits through a 4 x 8 schedule is what we will use.” Sally McLean, Superintendent, Federal Way School District

“The strength of the teacher determines the energy behind arts programming in schools. At the elementary level, the dosage of arts is tied to teacher planning by the union contract. Instruction is between 75-90 minutes depending on the combination of days and planning times.” Stefan Nelson, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator

“If I got all my students to meet competency-based assessments at the middle school level, then the master schedule opens up to students; then they can take more art. Scheduling falls apart if it is only teacher or principal driven—it needs to be systems driven.” Kip Herren, Superintendent, Auburn School District

Findings. Intentional scheduling for arts class inclusion removed obstructions for incorporating the arts in school districts highly supportive of the arts. In middle and high school, administrators carefully schedule singletons so they are secure on the schedule. At the middle and high school levels, students/families more typically drive arts class inclusion by demand. At the elementary level, principals and building-based teaching staffs more typically drive arts class scheduling. Enumclaw School District notes their willingness to offer classes with small enrollment (3-5 students) to satisfy student demand for arts classes. Federal Way School District, as they move to mandatory 24 credits at the high school level, plans to change to an eight day block rotation schedule to allow students better access to arts coursework.

Implications. One approach to scheduling arts classes that continues to ensure student access to classes is to schedule all the singleton classes (one section available) desired by students first, followed by doubletons, and finally block classes. This ensures that singleton classes are not scheduled for the “0” hour slot or held after school, but rather exist as part of the regular school day. Auburn School District is focused on creating access to the arts at the middle school level at the present time. It is the goal of the school district for all middle school students to have: one semester of visual arts; one semester of visual communication; two semesters of arts survey; and two semesters of music over the course of students’ three years of middle school study. The district further organizes the course catalog like the world of work, relating arts

classes to careers at the high school level. Shauna Heath, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction, Seattle Public Schools, notes when Seattle “went towards site-based management, there were some advantages and disadvantages. What is interesting is our collective bargaining with teachers actually voted upon the staff at their schools. So you will have a lot of variation in how the school builds the arts and the master schedule. It is hard to pull back from site-based management to create consistency.” Scheduling is challenging in small school districts as well. Martin Schmidt, Superintendent of Skykomish School District states, “You’d think that to build (a schedule) here for 17 high school students would be a piece of cake, but it’s actually not.”

FACILITIES, EQUIPMENT AND MAINTENANCE RESOURCES. Core arts disciplines, not unlike some of the other state-mandated core disciplines such as science and physical fitness require specific classrooms and equipment to teach subjects effectively. For that reason, this study explored three questions on: dedicated classrooms; input on building construction; and technical support.

Q16: What estimated amount (percentage/ratio/fraction) of arts specialists have dedicated rooms vs. multipurpose rooms vs. moving from classroom to classroom (elementary level)?

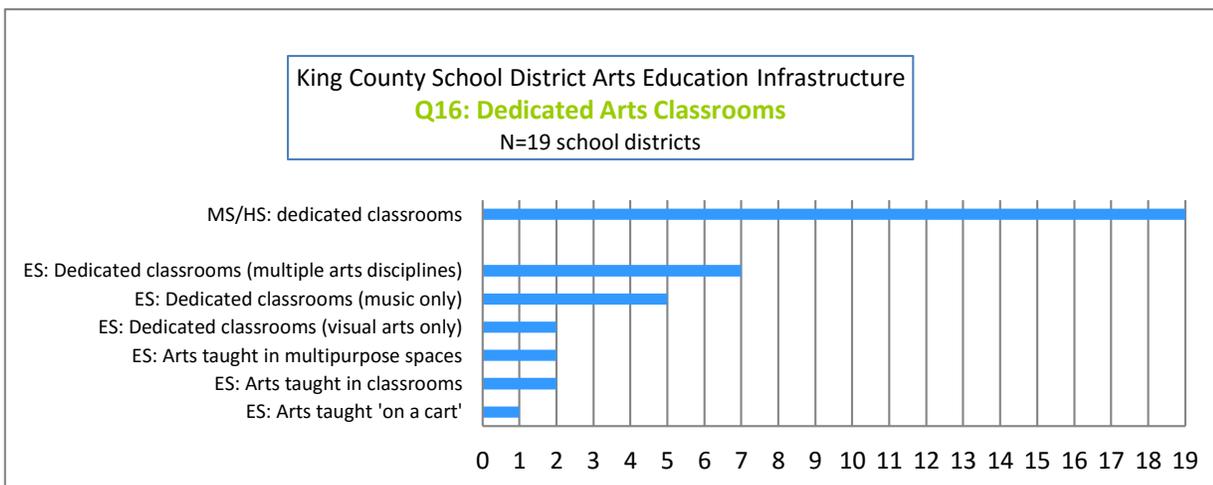


Figure 13. Dedicated arts classrooms.

“Arts programs are not going to go away, but they may be in a portable that turns into a dedicated classroom, or on a cart.” Stefan Nelson, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Highline School District

“We’ve just built new high schools and not only do we have auditoriums in both schools for performances, music and drama, but we also have smaller black box rooms for drama. They’re specifically designed for drama instruction and small productions. We also have designated classrooms for band, choir and orchestra classes.” Teri Poff, Director of Teaching and Learning, Shoreline School District

Findings. Nineteen of nineteen school districts reported designated arts classrooms at the middle school and high school level, with only one school district reporting only 50% of arts teachers at the middle school level having dedicated arts classrooms. Within that reporting is the notable factor that the school districts may not offer all arts disciplines: dance, theater, music and visual arts, with dance as the discipline most likely not taught. At the elementary school level, dedicated classrooms were available to arts teachers for music more often than any other arts discipline. One school district reported teaching all arts disciplines on a cart. Theater and dance, when taught at the elementary school level,

were more often taught in gymnasiums or lunchrooms. While no confirming data was available, administrators noted there were more arts dedicated classrooms than previously at the middle and high school levels.

Implications. There is a significant discrepancy between middle and high schools versus elementary schools in dedicated arts classrooms and spaces. Music classrooms show a moderate level of existence at the elementary level, but there remain few classrooms for dance, theater and visual arts—even shared multipurpose spaces. With increasing elementary school enrollments, two administrators believed there was potential for sustaining the arts in general at the current status, but by teaching arts in generalist classrooms, as existing arts classrooms may be repurposed to make more grade level classrooms available. At the high school level, administrators report more arts classrooms specialized for specific needs for music, theater and visual arts: black boxes for theater, sound systems for music practice rooms, and specialized equipment and adequate ventilation for the arts. Still at this point in researching arts education at the school district level, the perceived growth described by administrators for dedicated arts spaces and classrooms remains difficult to measure without accurate annual accounting and documentation.

Q17: What is the level of input of certificated/highly qualified arts specialists during new building construction?

“The visual and performing arts program works with architects and schools to make sure facilities and instructional materials are what the discipline needs. There is a basic scope and it gets adjusted from there. For example, new buildings have two visual art rooms; one music classroom; one music ‘performance’ area, though classes may occur in this space as well.”
Gail Sehlhorst, Visual and Performing Arts Program Manager, Seattle Public Schools

Findings. Eighteen of nineteen school districts reported arts teachers were integral to the design of new school buildings and facilities. Administrators reported arts content specialists sat on vision and design teams, just as science and math leads would participate in their respective disciplines. References to new building construction input by arts specialists focused primarily on middle and high schools. Specific references were made to design of state-of-the-arts band and orchestra rooms, performing arts practice spaces and theaters, and visual arts classrooms. No references were made to dance studios. Administrators valued the input of arts content

experts during the design phases of new construction. Administrators felt lessons were learned with each new building.

Implications. At this point in time, the infrastructure appears to be consistent for accessing arts specialists in all school design. While it remains crucial, this factor may have become an expected way to approach school design. Seattle Public Schools are moving a step beyond this expectation to create a basic scope for new building design to serve as a template.

Q18: How is technical support prioritized across disciplines and schools?

“We have a very well-staffed, well-trained technical staff that can deal with pretty much anything. We have the best equipment available and a cycle to repair and replace equipment when innovative technology is available.” Tony Apostle, Interim Superintendent, Kent School District

“We have a fairly new, but smaller performing arts center at Woodinville High School. It has hourly staffs who are assigned to manage and support the facility and the operation of the technology: on the lights, on the sound systems, those types of things that facilitate rehearsals and performances.” Larry Francois, Superintendent, Northshore School District

Findings. Eighteen of nineteen school districts reported support for technology was strong and prioritized issues based on the greatest impact on students; there appears to be equity between all of the core disciplines. Kent School District administrators reported a particularly strong centralized system that may serve as a model for other school districts. Federal Way School District reported there was one instance when a sound system was repaired through fundraising by parents.

Implications. The omnipresence of technology in schools presumes that technology is such an integral part of education overall that it is not a crucial infrastructure factor unique for the arts. That said, a few school districts reported that the more students were impacted in a

technology breakdown, the higher the work order or requisition rose to the top of the system. For smaller arts education class enrollments this could have a negative effect.

ASSESSMENTS OF ARTS EDUCATION LEARNING. OSPI has developed assessments for the arts disciplines designed to be used by teachers in classrooms to gauge student understanding of the learning standards for dance, music, theater and visual arts. There is also a system for reporting what assessments were given, one assessment choice being the OSPI-developed performance assessments. Districts report implementation of assessments, not results of student learning in the arts, to OSPI. For this reason, it was of interest in this study to determine in what ways levels of arts education learning are reported to students and families, and the overall impact of the OSPI-developed performance assessments reporting practice.

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE RCW 28A.230.095

ESSENTIAL ACADEMIC LEARNING REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS — VERIFICATION REPORTS.

- (1) By the end of the 2008-09 school year, school districts shall have in place in elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools assessments or other strategies chosen by the district to assure that students have an opportunity to learn the essential academic learning requirements in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness. Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, school districts shall annually submit an implementation verification report to the office of the superintendent of public instruction. The office of the superintendent of public instruction may not require school districts to use a classroom-based assessment in social studies, the arts, and health and fitness to meet the requirements of this section and shall clearly communicate to districts their option to use other strategies chosen by the district.
- (2) (Civics statement not applicable to arts education.)
- (3) Verification reports shall require school districts to report only the information necessary to comply with this section.

<http://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.230.095>

Q19: How is arts education learning reported to students and families?

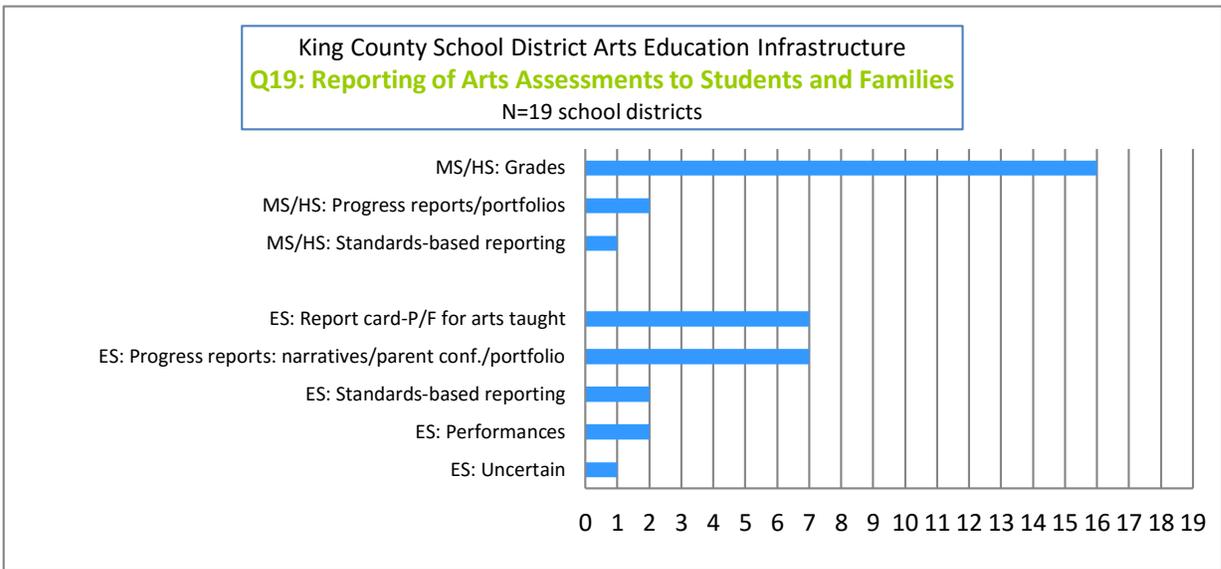


Figure 14. Reporting of arts assessments to students and families.

Findings. The majority of middle schools and high schools state student learning in the arts is reported through grades based on criteria from course syllabi. At the elementary school level, few grades are given, but rather report cards account for student learning as either pass/fail or unsatisfactory/satisfactory. An equal amount of school districts report out student arts learning at the elementary level as narratives with support evidence of portfolios in order to give families more conclusive understandings about student arts learning. Two administrators stated performances were the primary source of reporting for student arts learning and one was uncertain about types of assessments at the elementary school level.

Implications. The trends shown in this study suggest that many students and families do not have a complete understanding of student learning in the arts at the elementary level, while other school districts are moving towards more informative narrative and evidence-based approaches to reporting. At the high school level, traditional 1-4 or A-D grading systems remain in effect.

Q20: How have the OSPI-developed performance assessments and assessment reporting impacted arts teaching in your district?

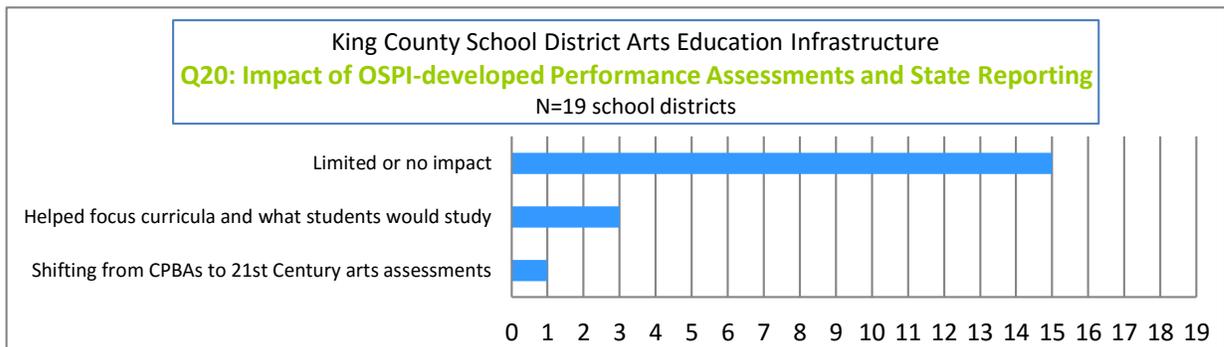


Figure 15. Impact of OSPI-developed performance assessments and state reporting.

"I don't think the State assessments have the impact to show our vision in the school district. We have prioritized the arts as important to our school district." Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District

"The OPSI-CBPAs are a blessing and a curse. Achievement is not reported, just the fact if students participated. It's nice to have the guidance of standardized accountability. The assessments are not robust and do not assess arts learning in the same way that other core subject areas can show accountability. Teachers want to adopt assessments, but there is not incentive to do that through pay or planning time, and no overall support from OSPI." Stefan Nelson, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Highline School District

Findings. Fifteen of nineteen school districts stated there was limited to no impact of the OSPI-developed assessments on arts teaching for two reasons. Administrators pointed out state assessments reflect only compliance for having given some form of assessments in their school district, and there is no place to report student achievement on the state assessments or report district-chosen assessments and levels of student achievement in the arts. Administrators also stated they believed the state assessments did not reflect the focus or depth of arts study in their school district. Three administrators felt there were benefits to the state arts assessments including availability of standardized accountability in the arts at even a moderate level, and believed that some arts instructors had a better sense of where to focus study or arts curricula in the school district to satisfy state standards.

Implications. Since 2008, Washington has implemented performance-based assessments statewide. With the passage of seven years, the finding that the statewide arts assessments have a lack of overall endorsement by school district administrators brings to attention the value of readdressing arts assessment guidelines and implementation for the future. The fact arts assessments are a legislative requirement is crucial to equity as a core discipline and as a holding place for future assessments work.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE ARTS FOR CLASSROOM-BASED TEACHERS. Given that state law mandates arts instruction in all four arts disciplines K-12 levels, this study inquired about the access to and requirements for continuing education associated with the arts for classroom and non-arts subject-based teachers.

Q21: Does the district provide teacher training in the arts to classroom/subject-based teachers (other than highly qualified arts teachers)?

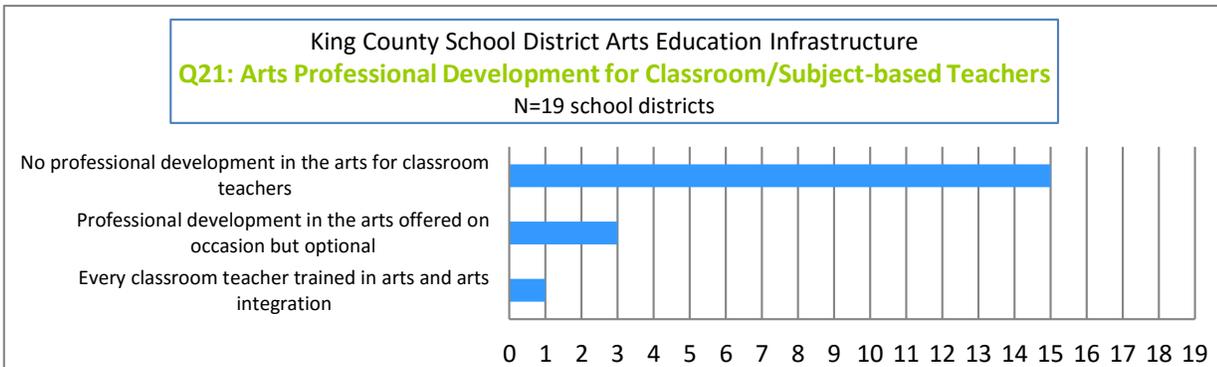


Figure 16. Arts professional development for classroom/subject-based teachers.

“Two (classroom) teachers went to Adams Elementary School in Seattle School District (from Skykomish School District) for their Lab Day where they learned about arts education embedded in the classroom.” Martin Schmidt, Superintendent, Skykomish School District

“So they opt into the training. It’s not like way say everybody is getting this STEAM training. Rather, we say, on Friday, we’re going to offer STEAM training, please come and we’ll compensate you for it. So not everybody comes. It’s self-select.” Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent, Snoqualmie School District

Findings. Fifteen of nineteen school districts stated there was no professional development in the arts routinely given to classroom or subject-specific teachers. One school district provided 90 hours of training for every K-5 classroom-based generalist teacher over the course of two years to further arts teaching and arts integration instruction. Three school districts offered optional classes for classroom-based teachers occasionally. One school district referenced supporting teachers who wished to

seek professional development from another King County school district with greater resources and an exemplar program.

Implications. With few courses required in pre-service training in the arts, depending on the college of education, classroom-based generalist teachers may be ill-prepared to take up the task of teaching the arts as required by state law. Enumclaw School District, with a total of approximately 4000 students, worked for two years to ensure that all K-5 classroom generalists received sufficient training to teach basic arts concepts/skills/techniques in dance, theater and visual arts, providing a model for other school districts. When professional development classes in the arts are offered on a self-select basis, teacher autonomy is preserved, but consistent instructional efficacy in the arts may be at risk across the district, with some students receiving arts instruction and others not receiving arts instruction.

Q22: How does teacher training in arts education mirror or differ from professional development required in the other core subjects?

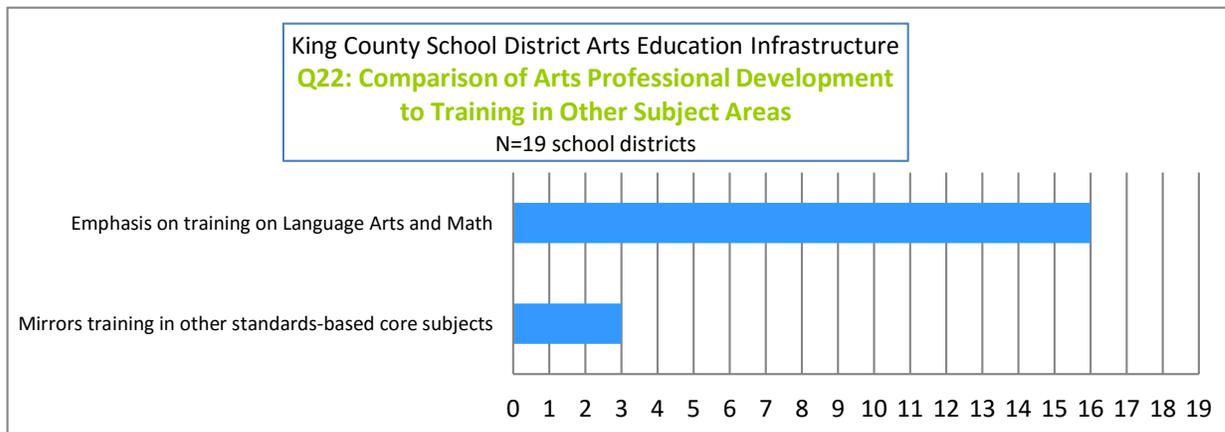


Figure 17. Comparison of arts professional development to training in other subject areas.

Findings. Sixteen of nineteen school districts stated there was a stronger emphasis on professional development in other subject areas than the arts, though there were self-select opportunities for training in the arts during district-sponsored summer institutes or all-day professional development service days.

HISTORY OF ESEA

The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was signed into law in 1965 by President Lyndon Baines Johnson, who believed that "full educational opportunity" should be "our first national goal." ESEA offered new grants to districts serving low-income students, federal grants for text and library books, it created special education centers, and created scholarships for low-income college students. Additionally, the law provided federal grants to state educational agencies to improve the quality of elementary and secondary education.

NCLB AND ACCOUNTABILITY

In 2002, with bipartisan support, Congress reauthorized ESEA and President George W. Bush signed the law, giving it a new name: No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While NCLB put in place measures that exposed achievement gaps among traditionally underserved and vulnerable students and their peers, and started an important national dialogue on educational improvement, the law is long overdue for reauthorization. Many parents, educators, and elected officials have recognized that a strong, updated law is necessary to expand opportunity for all students in America; to support schools, teachers, and principals; and to strengthen our educational system and economy. In 2012, the Obama administration began offering flexibility to states regarding specific requirements of NCLB in exchange for rigorous and comprehensive state-developed plans designed to close achievement gaps, increase equity, improve the quality of instruction, and increase outcomes for all students. Thus far 42 states, DC and Puerto Rico have received flexibility from NCLB. <http://www.ed.gov/esea>

Implications. Mandates and expectations of teachers, schools and school districts are increasing, including the expectation to teach the arts as a core discipline by state and federal laws. Significant to the beginning of school reform, The Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) began in 1965. The Washington Basic Education Act (BEA-RCW 28A.150.210) was established in 1993, including the arts as a core education discipline. This was followed by the 2002 No Child Left Behind (NCLB), again reinforcing nationally the arts as a core discipline for education. With 13 years transpiring since the establishment of NCLB there is discussion about new legislative action to ensure all students are prepared to succeed in college and careers, historically underserved populations are protected, and educators have the resources to succeed. The arts have

sustained as a core subject for over 20 years in Washington. However, professional development in the arts for classroom generalist teachers is the exception, not the rule. It would appear to remain necessary, as school districts continue to plan how they will reach all students with a complete standards-based education in dance, music, theater and visual arts, to strengthen professional development in arts education to ensure all students will receive an arts education. This study underlines the lack of required and/or available professional development currently.

"We're figuring out the ways arts specialists are preparing students for the Smarter Balance assessments. It's aligned, but then it's very differentiated." Sharon Kautz, Executive Director of Curriculum and Instruction and School District, Bellevue School District

"In recent years, we've had generally a broader focus on the core content areas of reading, math, science than perhaps the arts, but it's part of our menu of professional development offerings, but likely not as robust as in other (subject areas)." Larry Francois, Superintendent, Northshore School District

"I believe we need to have common assessments and connections in all subjects. That would be our biggest areas for professional development including the arts." Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS IN ART EDUCATION. With availability of diverse cultural partners in the majority of King County, and several nationally recognized and funded external professional development programs in the arts available in King County as well, this study investigated current use of partnerships to support arts education. The study investigated which partnerships sustained over four years or more and the type of role these partnerships held in the school district. The study investigated whether these partnerships were perceived as "replacement" instruction (satisfying Washington state standards) or as "enhancement" instruction.

Q23: Which partnerships with external organizations in arts education have worked collaboratively/actively in your school district for four or more years? Describe the role/instruction.

Table 4
Partnerships in Arts Education

King County School District Partnerships in Art Education	
Type of Partnerships	Role of Partnership
Community foundations and councils	Community foundations were noted as partners by seven school districts. The role of the community foundations was primarily for fund-raising for the arts.
City-based partners/arts commissions	City-based partners were noted by seven school districts. City-based partners sponsored arts festivals, arts competitions and opportunities for exhibiting student artwork.
Artists-in-residence	Either teaching artists responsible for instruction or artists-in-residence were noted by four school districts.
Visual arts docents	Specific to the visual arts, arts docents were noted by four school districts.
Cultural arts partners	Cultural partners were noted by three school districts: museums; symphony orchestras; and the ballet in one instance. These roles were considered enhancement instruction. Administrators noted the cultural organizations were fluent in standards-based education and contributed to students through reduced ticket prices as well as school-based programming and scholarships.
Parent organizations	Three school districts noted parent organizational support, most often financial including scholarships.
Professional development organizations	Three school districts noted the role of two nationally recognized and granted arts professional development programs housed in King County as crucial support.
Culturally-based organizations	Two school districts noted cultural organizations: Native American and Hispanic organizations were listed as partners related to and reflecting student ethnic and cultural heritage.
Other	Additional partners were noted who supported “used instruments for schools” campaigns and others who offered internships.

Findings. School districts in King County use diverse partners to support arts education. This study did not compare the use of partners to support education to community partner support in other core subject areas, but the diversity of these partners and the diversity of the ways they support arts education is noted above.

Implications. Arts education continues to rely on the support of local experts as exemplars of expertise, as exemplars of careers in the arts, and sometimes as instructors and for professional development in arts education. When arts experts are sought out, it could be interpreted, unlike other core disciplines, as either a need to reinforce educator understandings, or as sourcing the rich resources of King County cultural organizations available to students and teachers. As this study expands in the course of time throughout the state, King County may prove to be an exception in opportunity for cultural support.

Q24: Which partnership programs are considered ‘replacement’ instruction’ (satisfies Washington state standards)? Which partnerships are considered ‘enhancement’ instruction?

Findings. Thirteen of nineteen school districts consider partnerships as providing enhancements to arts education, not replacement instruction that would satisfy Washington state standards in the arts. Three of the school districts stated the cultural support satisfied standards—most frequently specific components of instruction as a skill base specific to the partner organization providing the support.

Three of the administrators responding were uncertain about whether partner support provided replacement instruction.

Implications. Appropriate to the intensity of the instruction the organizations provide, student learning was considered enhanced rather than satisfied or replaced by external instruction.

CHALLENGES AND ACCESSIBILITY. At the conclusion of administrator interviews, superintendents and administrative leads were asked to address two reflective questions about the challenges they have faced and any factors they would like to note as having changed accessibility to arts education (positive or negative) in their school district.

Q 25: What challenges would you cite, beyond time and money, for delivering high quality, standards-based arts education for all students in your school district?

School district administrators were highly specific in noting challenges when asked to cite barriers beyond time and money. Each challenge listed below was noted by multiple respondents and insights are added through direct quotes by superintendents and administrators.

Number of qualified arts teachers

“Teacher training is not producing enough (instructors). School districts are competing for hiring to fill these slots. Not enough graduates are coming out. The Arts Coordinator is really beating the bushes and we still have positions unfilled. Teaching salaries are not attracting them and they are driven into other arts industries.” Tony Apostle, Interim Superintendent, Kent School District

Competing interests/prioritization of subjects

“What is seen in this community is competing interests. We have strong advocates in our community—parents and teachers and people outside who want their niche and passions to be acknowledged. We have a ‘green team’—they think that sustainable education is important. Fine arts think the arts are most important. We have computer scientists who think coding and computer technology is most important. We have authors who think that writing is most important. Our greatest gifts from our stakeholders can be some of our biggest challenges.” Fred Rundle, Director of Learning Services, Mercer Island School District

Cultural barriers

“There are lots of cultural barriers. I think our families need to be engaged. They don’t know our school system. Most of the time we don’t represent their art. Family engagement is part of our strategic plan.” Kip Herren, Superintendent, Auburn School District

“Increased requirements in core academic subjects have decreased the opportunities for flexible inclusion of arts at the elementary level. We have very restricted budgets that eliminated band and orchestra from the upper elementary grades. An extended program would be necessary to make the arts accessible including funding for staff time in the school day to provide arts education for all students.” Merri Reiger, Superintendent, Renton School District

Competency requirements in literacy and math/high-stakes testing

“State assessments weren’t supposed to take as long. They’re actually taking twice as long and that’s impacting how often teachers are able to get art into their weekly and daily schedules at the elementary school level.” Roni Rumsey, Director of Teaching and Learning, Riverview School District

Transition to Core 24 for high school students

“I think the transition to Core 24 and the second fine arts requirement will change (arts education) significantly. You know we’re going to be required to ramp up and offer more art and we’ll need to recruit additional teachers to deliver that for next year’s freshman class because over their next four years of high school, they’re going to require a second art credit.” Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent, Snoqualmie School District

“Teachers are investing huge amounts of time to integrate Common Core Standards and the Smarter Balanced Assessments. This effort has narrowed the experience for students to the detriment of art, health and fitness and social studies.” Michael Soltman, Superintendent, Vashon Island School District

Common Core and Smarter Balanced Assessments

“It is a philosophical challenge. If you have a philosophy for arts education, you put your effort and money into it. Historically when you look at diverse school districts, poor students and students who are not performing well, a lot of resources go into reading and writing. But when you consider the arts, a lot of planning has to go into that too. How much do you value the arts as individual subjects and as a school district? If you value the arts, the resources follow.” Gregory King, Director of STEAM, Tukwila School District

Lack of arts education philosophy

Arts content knowledge
by classroom teachers

In-depth content knowledge about arts instruction and integration can be a barrier for some elementary classroom teachers. Shoreline School District does an excellent job delivering high quality instruction in music and our PE specialists offer high quality instruction, though limited, in dance. High quality instruction in visual arts and drama is definitely a challenge.” Teri Poff, Director of Teaching and Learning, Shoreline School District

Q 26: Describe any factors that have changed accessibility, positive or negative, to arts education for all students in your district.

School district administrators were able to pinpoint positive and negative change factors for arts education in their school districts. Each category listed below was noted by multiple respondents. Insights are added through direct, approved quotes by superintendents and administrators.

(+) Cross-crediting arts courses with CTE
courses

“In the last five years we have hired some amazing individuals that have built and created some incredible arts programs. Student demand for the arts has expanded the types of art classes we offer. We push ourselves to get arts teachers to teach specific classes (e.g. stage crew). We have qualified (arts) courses to be CTE courses so students can get dual credit.” Michael Nelson, Superintendent, Enumclaw School District

(+) More periods in high school day

“A positive factor, particularly at the high school level, is that we’re trying to expand our opportunities for students to take more than six periods in a day. In the past they have had to make some choices about what courses they would take, the arts or some other elective course would be what gets dropped off of their schedule. As we’re expanding our 7th period options, part of our drive is that students would be able to maintain those elective opportunities.” Larry Francois, Superintendent, Northshore School District

(+) Parent and family engagement

“As we get into middle and high school, we try to blow the doors open on additional choices for students. We will be asking for input from parents of dedicated music students about additional choices and what they want for their child. We want to have many choices.” Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning, Tahoma School District

“When you are measured by your results in reading, math and science, it’s hard not to focus on those areas. One of the great things about art is you don’t have to speak English to enjoy music or painting or taking pictures.” Sally McLean, Superintendent, Federal Way School District

(+) Language accessibility

“Highline School District has become increasingly diverse and there is high poverty. Many of our students are school-dependent. We want to be sure to have our equity lens on when serving all students. In arts education we have partnered with organizations to supply resources and opportunities where we have not been able to provide them. For instance, we didn’t have enough instruments to give to students in our beginning band and orchestra program; now we have 250 instruments. The culture of arts education exists in the district, but it is not provided to all with fidelity. Having equitable instruction is on the table in terms of realizing that this really is a social justice issue in that our data shows that the majority of our students who don’t get the arts are ELL learners and/or in high poverty households. The method to solve that problem has not emerged.” Stefan Nelson, Visual and Performing Arts Coordinator, Highline School District

(+/-) Equity in Education

STEPPING FORWARD.

School district superintendents and administrators were asked to address one final question to summarize their vision for arts education in their school districts.

Q27: What solutions do you feel are feasible in the near future for sustaining and/or improving arts education in your district?

School district administrators were forward thinking when asked to imagine solutions. The Vashon Island School District superintendent was confident all their students will engage and thrive in arts education coursework. The school district relies on experienced teaching artists and mentors to deliver arts education in addition to their highly qualified full-time arts instructors. Gregory King, Director of STEAM for Tukwila School District, will be focused on decisions to ensure equity for the arts: “I have changed my business card from STEM to STEAM.” Auburn School District Superintendent Kip Herren says that everyone is celebrating two credits of art being added to graduation requirements, but, “I’m mourning it because it becomes a ceiling and not a floor.” He believes two credits will not be enough for the future to create world class students with an arts education. Dawn Wakeley, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning in Tahoma School District suggests availability of models for what is working would help all school districts to see a successful pathway: “If we are feeling constrained and not able to do something, we could see it happen in one place and we would be more likely to be able to see possibilities and adapt it to our own local circumstances.” Michael Nelson, Enumclaw School District Superintendent notes, “We want to continue to expand and show that not only our words but our actions follow the arts expansion.”

Jeff Hogan, Assistant Superintendent, Snoqualmie School District says, “With funding coming back, it’s a perfect opportunity and time for us to take a hard look at the arts and where it makes strategic sense for us to put funding for additional arts education solutions.” Mercer Island School District Director of Learning Services, Fred Rundle notes, “(Arts) are a way for students to participate in society in unique ways and capture students who are not successful in all elements of school. As the world shrinks and the global piece increases, that creativity side for the job they go into is crucial. They will need the background in arts, even if their job is seemingly unrelated.”

CONCLUSION. Identifying the Arts in Focus study from the *Arts for All* organization in Los Angeles County provided the impetus to create a study specific to King County and Washington while learning from a previous model.

The decision to focus the exploration of school district arts education infrastructure by interviewing the highest level school district administrators, beginning with district superintendents, provided research that was built on the perceptions and insights used to make key district decisions about delivery of core subject education, including the arts. The study further opened the discussion and created a spotlight on arts education with school district administrators. Conversations were in-depth and revealed significant findings that support the project goal of a Key Features of Arts Education Infrastructure document.

The parallel arts education survey conducted by *ArtsEd Washington* provides a baseline for arts education data collection in King County while simultaneously pointing out the fact that further systems for arts education documentation and data collection are needed and can further support arts education.

The participation of constituents in nine of the interviews with district administrators created intentional encounters between school district administrators and their constituents. The interviews with constituents in attendance provided a dedicated time for arts supporters to hear discussions on arts education, including the challenges and solutions as envisioned by their local educational leaders.

The following document identifies School District Key Features of Arts Education Infrastructure as gleaned from the findings of this study, *Cornerstones of Creative Capacity*. These Key Features provide a clear countywide approach for adoption of a shared goal and heightened commitment by the district leadership and the community at large to increase the infrastructure for arts education across King County.

SCHOOL DISTRICT KEY FEATURES FOR EQUITY IN ARTS EDUCATION

The identification of School District Key Features for Arts Education Infrastructure has the potential to ensure that arts education: meets basic-to-education core standards; survives through fluctuating economic environments; improves and thrives within developing pedagogical understandings; and endures through political and leadership changes.

With the benefit of speaking in-depth to superintendents and highly placed administrators in the 19 King County school districts, Six Key Features for Equity in Arts Education became evident from the data.

Just as in Los Angeles County, there is potential for King County school districts to commit to realizing or improving critical factors identified for school district arts education infrastructure. With firm commitments by school districts, subsequent arts education indicator reports, conducted and conveyed a few years from present, have the potential to validly measure King County school district infrastructure for arts education in the future.

CORNERSTONES OF CREATIVITY—KEY FEATURES OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ARTS EDUCATION INFRASTRUCTURE

I. SUBSTANTIVE, ANNUAL DOCUMENTATION FOR INTENSITY OF ARTS INSTRUCTION FOR ALL STUDENTS

Without valid and reliable data on arts instruction implementation for all students, assertions about arts education remain uncertain. Reporting intensity data for all students can be achieved by using simple formulas and accurate record keeping. An effective system for tracking arts provision would:

- a. Measure annual intensity of arts instruction at each K-12 grade level, in each arts discipline, as implemented for ALL students.
- b. Measure intensity of arts instruction using a simple formula held in common by all school districts in King County: number of annual hours of instruction for each arts discipline, reported for each grade level, in every school.
- c. Report accurately and openly how arts education waxes and wanes across grade levels.
- d. Record and discuss the discrepancies between arts implementation for each of the four arts disciplines mandated by state law: dance; music; theater and visual arts.
- e. Measure separately enrollment in arts instruction by some of the students at each grade level versus arts instruction delivered to all students. Accurate data is needed to show instructional implementation in elementary schools for each arts discipline, with what intensity (number of hours annually), and measure and report the intensity levels (number of hours annually) to which generalist classroom teachers formally teach arts disciplines or integrate the arts. Accurate data is needed to show the percentages of middle school students who receive a specific number of arts classes (semesters) over the course of three years: none, one, two or more semesters of arts, and in which disciplines. Accurate data is needed to show the percentages of high school students who receive a specific number of arts classes (semesters) over the course of their high school life: none, one, two, or more arts credits and in which disciplines and classes of study.

Accurate documentation will ensure that references to arts reflect the education received by all students. This reporting will not account for quality of instruction but will certainly increase reliability and validity on implementation of arts education instruction.

II. A BOARD-ADOPTED ARTS EDUCATION PLAN

Administrative respondents emphasized the importance of vision and philosophy for arts education, which could be found occasionally in general arts education mission or policy statements. While these are crucial documents, not all of the King County school districts who have a policy statement inclusive of the arts have an arts education implementation plan. An arts plan forms the basis for how the arts are delivered, and should at a minimum:

- a. Identify the intensity (hours or minutes) of instruction per week for each elementary school and each arts discipline and who will teach.
- b. Identify arts intensity expectations (# of semesters/distribution of arts disciplines) for arts coursework at the middle school and high school levels.
- c. Identify how arts will be integrated into classrooms by generalists, how much arts integration will occur, and what arts content will be covered by this method of instruction.
- d. Address how the arts will be taught when there is discipline overlap: e.g. dance/physical fitness.
- e. Identify how the curriculum spirals across grades, supported by separate, written curricular documents for each arts discipline.
- f. Identify the role of teaching artists and artists-in-residence when they deliver arts instruction.
- g. Identify the method of data collection for evidence of intensity of instruction and evidence of content coverage.
- h. Provide an arts content review for culturally relevant materials.
- i. Address the ways CTE instruction and arts instruction meet the goals of each area.
- j. Identify lines of communication and reporting systems between the central district office, principals, highly qualified arts teachers and generalist classroom teachers.
- k. Select systems of arts reporting to students and families that portray specific arts learning.
- l. Include specific budget line items and funding sources for arts education.
- m. Identify assessment strategies for formative and summative assessments and reporting practices to students and families, as well as reporting to OSPI.
- n. Identify consistent professional development opportunities to sustain high levels of quality arts instruction when generalists deliver arts education content.

III. BUDGET EXPENDITURE FORMULA PER STUDENT FOR ARTS EDUCATION

One of the most difficult reporting areas for this study beyond intensity of arts education instruction was identifying accurate budget expenditures for arts education in any given school district. Administrators reported some line items existed in school district budgets; other line items existed in school building budgets. Many expenditures were difficult to track beyond general arts education budgets that included discretionary spending by either a principal or an arts coordinator. The following funding actions are essential for tracking accurate data:

- a. Measure arts education expenditures *per student* in order to demonstrate evidence of the equitable investment in all students.
- b. Identify arts education funding sources. School districts reported relying on “soft money” for arts education as well as general district funds. Districts should clarify the balance of funding from the general education funds of the district versus reliance on funding from outside the school district.
- c. Identify school district versus school site-based funding for arts education and the reason for specific expenditure decisions existing at specific levels.
- d. Separate reporting budget lines for: staffing for arts education; consumable materials, nonconsumable materials, curricula materials, equipment purchases; travel; special events; facilities; and maintenance and replacement of equipment (e.g. instruments).
- e. Create arts education budget reporting systems that allow those responsible in each district to easily note specific expenditures.

IV. FORMAL COMMUNICATIONS PLAN AND ANNUAL COMMUNICATION IMPLEMENTATION WITHIN SCHOOL DISTRICT AND TO THE OFFICE OF THE DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

One of the crucial findings of the study is the variation of understandings concerning arts education by district administrators. Anyone might agree that a superintendent of a large school district cannot possibly know all the finite details present in all core disciplines. However, there were administrators in large school districts who knew great detail about the arts education systems in their school district and administrators in smaller school districts who knew little detail about arts education in their school district. Administrators rely on pragmatic, but thorough, communication systems to readily access crucial information. Such communications plan should address how to:

- a. Include arts education within the school district communication system.
- b. Provide a reporting system so personnel can readily simplify and report out crucial data to the administrative central offices.
- c. Ask arts coordinators and highly qualified arts teachers to provide specific data at reliable intervals within the communications system of the school district.
- d. Hold information providers accountable, but support them with advance alerts about the timing to submit arts education reporting.
- e. Review disaggregated arts education data in firsthand and regular meetings with senior administrative staff, rather than relying on data to be interpreted or understood adequately from reports.

V. ARTS TEACHER HIRING PLAN TO MAKE ARTS EDUCATION ACCESSIBLE TO ALL STUDENTS

Consistently reported data for this study confirmed the value of highly qualified arts teachers. Administrators related that as mandates for class size reduction come into effect and Core 24 deadlines near, the need for highly qualified arts teachers will become ever more crucial if arts education is to reach all students equitably. Data presented by multiple school districts also confirm there is an expectation that enrollment in arts classes depends on effective marketing by arts teachers. In addressing and filling their need for highly qualified arts teachers, districts would:

- a. Consider the balance of students in arts classes—all of the students versus some of the students—and prepare to adjust arts positions accordingly for student equity.

- b. Review the distribution of arts education positions across state-mandated arts disciplines—dance, music, theater and visual arts. Music instruction remains the most commonly taught arts discipline.
- c. Review arts position hiring documents and arts position job descriptions with the Human Resources (HR) Department in the school district or, absent of a HR Department, appoint informed personnel to review arts job descriptions and hiring practices.
- d. Develop policy on whether arts educators are expected to market their own classes to sustain enrollment versus a district commitment to a specific level and focus for arts education including CTE, Advanced Placement courses, and career-focused courses.

VI. ONGOING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR ALL GENERALIST INSTRUCTORS WHO TEACH THE ARTS

Before discussion of quality of arts education can ensue, it is crucial to provide professional development for all generalist classroom teachers expected to instruct in the four arts disciplines. Administrators attest that not all elementary school teachers are prepared to teach dance, music, theater and visual arts at the elementary school level either as core subjects or through arts integration. A system-wide process to build teacher capacity would:

- a. Define school district expectations for the levels of instruction in the arts expected of generalist classroom teachers: core content versus arts integration. Define arts integration as a method and strategy of instruction, including arts integration content areas.
- b. Support innovative school scheduling that allows regular times to teach the arts at all school levels K-12.
- c. Provide regular, specific times when highly qualified arts teachers can support generalist classroom teachers in teaching the arts, or provide external support through professional development or consultants to support their arts instruction.

REFLECTIONS ON 2015 BASELINE SURVEY ON ARTS EDUCATION

In developing this initial, pilot study for defining school district infrastructure for arts education in King County, it was deemed crucial to explore the level of knowledge and values for arts education among the highest level school district administrators. Their visions, understandings and commitments to arts education are covered in this document.

However, it was also vital to determine a baseline of information about arts education in King County school districts which could not be gained in an in-depth interview. It was neither the forum for gathering this type of information, nor did *ArtsEd Washington* or the researcher hold the expectation that detailed arts education data would be readily available from all administrators.

A baseline survey was conducted by *ArtsEd Washington* from their offices. The researcher of this project designed an initial survey informed by previous AERI arts education surveys, other Washington state school district surveys, and national documents from other states and school districts who had conducted similar work. Many of these prior surveys were conducted at the school building level rather than the school district level. Additionally, arts leaders at OSPI, Washington State Arts Commission, Bethel School District and Spokane Public Schools reviewed and submitted edits and comments which were incorporated into the survey to make it as pragmatic and clear as possible, while maintaining the ability to produce valued data.

In 2009, 21% of schools in Washington participated in a similar AERI survey; conversely 79% of schools in Washington did *not* participate in that survey. In 2009, many of the schools reported difficulty in reporting arts education data due to lack of arts education data tracking, collection and reporting. Sixteen of nineteen King County school districts participated in the 2015 *ArtsEd Washington* survey, and many of those responders reported similar challenges in data collection and reporting.

While administered effectively by *ArtsEd Washington*, and having granted multiple deadline extensions for submission of the survey, discrepancies in the data remain. As many as fourteen respondents skipped various questions in the survey. Questions skipped include crucial areas of arts education data including: instructional intensity; instructional frequency; arts education accessibility; minimum hours of arts instruction for equity; availability of written arts curricula; and arts education budget figures.

RECOMMENDATION. Rather than publishing the results of the survey, it should be held as a pilot baseline document. School district support for the survey was substantial, but crucial statistics gained by a survey will be better served when school districts have put in place solid arts education documentation from which they can accurately report in the future.

ⁱ Federal: Elementary & Secondary Education Act, Title IX, Part A, Section 9101 (1)(D)(11), Definitions.

ⁱⁱ Washington State: RCW 28A.150.210.

ⁱⁱⁱ Arts Education Task Force of Arts for LA (2001), *Arts in focus: Los Angeles countywide arts education survey*. Retrieved from Arts for All: <http://lacountyartsforall.org/docs/downloads/2011/04/11/aifmay01.pdf?sfvrsn=1>.

^{iv} Anderson, T., Rogan, J. Bridging the educational research-teaching practice gap: Curriculum development, Part 1: Components of the curriculum and influences on the process of curriculum design. *Biochem. Mol. Biol. Educ.*, 39: 68-76. Doi: 10.1002/bmb.2470.