

**ARTS AT THE CORE:
EVERY SCHOOL, EVERY STUDENT**



ILLINOIS  CREATES
THE ILLINOIS ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

ILLINOIS CREATES LEAD PARTNERS



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02 FOREWORD
 04 VISION
 06 ABOUT ILLINOIS CREATES
 07 RESULTS OF STATEWIDE RESEARCH
 22 THE BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION
 26 ENVIRONMENTAL ANALYSIS
 NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE & ILLINOIS TIMELINE
 30 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR CHANGE
 32 ADVOCATING FOR ARTS EDUCATION
 33 RESOURCE GUIDE & FOOTNOTES

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NINETY-THREE PERCENT OF AMERICANS AGREE THAT THE ARTS ARE VITAL TO PROVIDING A WELL-ROUNDED EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN. MORE THAN THREE OUT OF FOUR AGREE THAT INCORPORATING ARTS INTO EDUCATION IS THE FIRST STEP IN ADDING BACK WHAT'S MISSING IN PUBLIC EDUCATION TODAY.

- JUNE 2005 HARRIS POLL, AMERICANS FOR THE ARTS

The profound impact of arts education on children and youth follows them throughout their lives. Arts education rewards our children by helping them to reach practical goals such as academic achievement and career success. Arts education enriches our youth with social, cultural and emotional benefits. As shown in study after study, a widely held belief in the positive value of arts education is shared by parents, teachers, school administrators and arts education experts.

This belief is the reason that arts education has historically been an important part of the education of our children in the United States. However, deeper analysis both nationwide and here in Illinois reveals a gap between what individuals, educators and elected officials profess as the value of arts education and what is allocated to arts education in terms of budget, faculty, class time, curriculum, planning and evaluation.

Illinois Creates is a broad-based statewide coalition of 150 education, business, civic and arts advocates dedicated to promoting a comprehensive, standards-based arts education program for all Illinois public school students.

FIRST STATEWIDE ARTS EDUCATION SURVEY

In the spring of 2005, Illinois Creates commissioned the first statewide survey of principals and superintendents to assess the status of arts education in Illinois, and to understand the

challenges in delivering arts education instruction in Illinois public schools. The research, conducted with support from the Illinois Arts Council, The Field Foundation of Illinois, The Joyce Foundation and the Polk Bros. Foundation, provides information never before available to form the basis of statewide policy initiatives and priorities for arts education. It also creates a baseline for tracking and measuring progress in our state.

BROAD DISPARITIES IN ARTS EDUCATION

The research identified broad disparities in the levels of arts education offered in Illinois schools and school districts.

The data is clear that some schools are doing better and some schools are doing worse. This research also helped to identify what types of schools or school districts are inclined to offer lower or higher levels of arts education. The results of this research will enable policymakers and educators to focus attention on the schools that need it most.

The Illinois Creates survey found that the strongest correlating factor to the amount of arts education students receive is where they live. Students in rural areas and in small school districts tend to receive the least amount of instruction in the arts. This problem is magnified further by the fact that the majority of Illinois school districts are small, both in terms of the number of schools and the number of students in a school district. In fact, the research showed that arts education levels are lower in rural districts

regardless of socioeconomic indicators, level of social problems (attendance and dropout rates) or dominant race of students. Urban and suburban schools tend to have more arts education than schools in rural areas; however, disparities also exist within urban and suburban areas, with the size of the school and school district continuing to be a factor.

BUDGET AND TIME CITED AS BARRIERS

Among many important findings, the research points to a discrepancy between the desire of superintendents and principals to offer quality arts education and their ability, or perhaps determination, to do so. Despite strong support of arts education, almost 20% of principals surveyed reported having no arts program in their schools. According to these same principals, the biggest barrier to providing arts education is lack of funding. Lack of available time in the school day is also reported as a significant hurdle.

In Fiscal Year 2006, Illinois appropriated \$2 million for arts education and foreign languages – the most the state has ever appropriated for arts education. The \$2 million was proposed in Governor Rod Blagojevich's "Higher Standards, Better Schools" plan and supported by the state legislature as part of a \$300 million increase in funding for Illinois schools.

Illinois Creates commends Governor Blagojevich and the many state legislators who fought for this provision during the difficult budget negotiations. Advocates of arts education can take heart in the leadership and commitment demonstrated by the arts education appropriation. But Illinois has a long way to go. Increased funding is only one of many ways to fill the gaps in arts education identified by this research. Stronger standards for arts education, more effective assessment of student performance in the arts, additional resources for professional development for teachers, standardized curriculum, high school graduation requirements in arts education and arts education credit requirements for entrance to college are just a few of the strategies other states have successfully implemented as incentives.

Illinois children deserve an educational experience that gives them a solid foundation for success in the future. The arts are integral to a comprehensive education and should be a part of every child's academic experience. These research findings are the first step to fully understanding the current status of arts education in Illinois, identifying where the gaps are and eliminating them. Illinois Creates invites you to join us in working together to ensure that all students in Illinois have access to comprehensive, standards-based arts education.

VISION



ALL ILLINOIS CHILDREN DESERVE A QUALITY, COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION THAT PROVIDES A SOLID FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS. THIS MUST INCLUDE THE ARTS AS PART OF THE CORE CURRICULUM. ARTS INSTRUCTION, LIKE OTHER CORE SUBJECTS, MUST BE STANDARDS-BASED, SEQUENTIAL, EQUITABLE AND SUSTAINABLE.

ILLINOIS CREATES

THE ILLINOIS ARTS EDUCATION INITIATIVE

Illinois Creates was launched in 2004 by the Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation (IAAF), an organization with a 23-year history of successfully advocating on behalf of the arts, and The Chicago Community Trust, which has served the charitable needs of greater Chicago since 1915 through the combined strength of \$1.2 billion in individual and collective charitable funds, and which has a long history of supporting the arts and arts education in Illinois.

As part of The Chicago Community Trust’s Education Initiative, a study on the availability of arts education in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) was conducted in 2001. The study found broad disparities in the amount of arts instruction students receive. Although the average was 40 minutes of arts instruction per week, many students received none. The Chicago Community Trust Arts Education Initiative is currently supporting arts education demonstration projects in 17 Chicago Public Schools, which are implementing music, visual arts, theater and dance as core subjects in the curriculum.

CALL FOR STATEWIDE DATA AND ADVOCACY

Recognizing that disparities in arts education is not an isolated issue in Chicago Public Schools and that to effect long-term,

systemic change, education funding and policy issues must be addressed at a broader, statewide level. The Chicago Community Trust has partnered with the Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation to advocate for stronger state and local policies and corresponding budget appropriations to ensure that arts education is provided to students statewide. From this partnership a statewide arts education initiative, Illinois Creates, began.

Illinois Creates has grown into a broad-based, statewide coalition of nearly 150 education, business and civic organizations and schools. In its first year, the coalition has made great strides in raising awareness among Illinois policy makers of the value of arts education, as well as utilizing its e-advocacy system to link coalition members and supporters to their respective legislators on critical arts education policy matters. Last year, to promote the statewide arts education initiative and discuss the importance of state funding for the arts, the Illinois Arts Alliance held a series of meetings and advocacy events with more than 20 legislators throughout the state. In addition, the Illinois Arts Alliance Foundation’s annual statewide conference convened a national and local panel of arts education experts for a plenary session titled “Forging a Vision for Arts Education in Illinois.”

FOR A FULL LIST OF ILLINOIS CREATES COALITION MEMBERS GO TO: WWW.ILLINOISCREATES.ORG

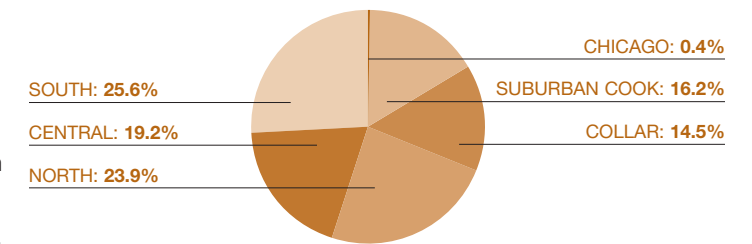
Illinois Creates and the research firm Metro Chicago Information Center (MCIC) developed two survey questionnaires, one for principals of Illinois public schools and one for school superintendents. The Illinois State Board of Education provided a list of all schools (3,892) and all school districts (881) in the state. The surveys sought information on a variety of factors and allowed for a wide range of responses. The Illinois Principals Association and the Illinois State Board of Education endorsed the research and encouraged Illinois principals and superintendents to respond. To ensure that responses from principals and superintendents mirrored the distribution of schools and districts throughout the state of Illinois, MCIC developed a stratification process that divided the state into six study areas (Chicago, Suburban Cook County, Collar Counties, Northern Illinois, Central Illinois and Southern Illinois). This process ensured a reliable, statistically sound sampling of school leadership that allowed Illinois Creates, in collaboration with the research firm conducting the analysis, Cypress Research Inc., to produce a report that accurately quantifies the state of arts education in Illinois.

In total, 234 superintendents and 751 principals responded to the survey for a total of 985 cases and a response rate of 20.6% (26.5% for superintendents and 19.2% for principals). The respondents reflected a representative, statistically sound sample with respect to location, size, student population and school type (elementary, middle and high schools).

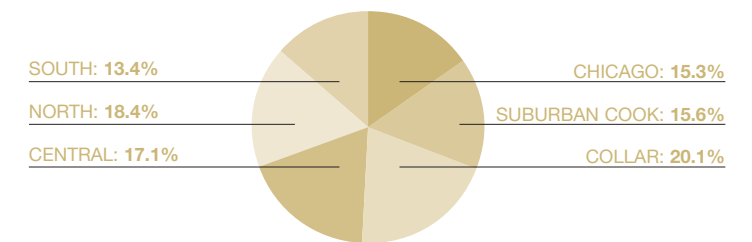
The demographics of the raw sample were compared to Illinois State Board of Education data for schools and districts in the State of Illinois to correct for any potential over- or under-sampling and to assure sample validity.

The Illinois Arts Alliance would like to thank the many superintendents and principals who took the time to respond to this survey. Because of their responses we now know the status of arts education in the state of Illinois and better understand the strengths and challenges of implementing quality arts education programs.

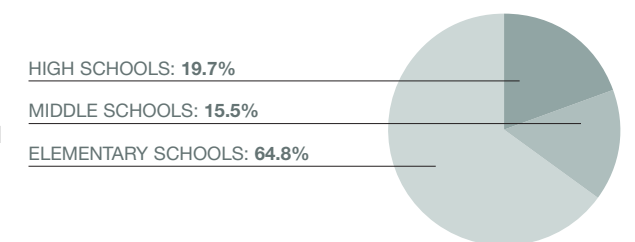
SCHOOL DISTRICT RESPONSE BY GEOGRAPHY



SCHOOL RESPONSE BY GEOGRAPHY



SCHOOL RESPONSE BY SCHOOL TYPE



MAJOR FINDINGS

1



ALMOST ALL SUPERINTENDENTS AND PRINCIPALS AGREE THAT “THE ARTS ARE AN ESSENTIAL PART OF A QUALITY EDUCATION,” THAT “ARTS EDUCATION HELPS STUDENTS PERFORM BETTER ON STANDARD ACHIEVEMENT TESTS” AND THAT “ARTS EDUCATION IS IMPORTANT TO SUCCESS IN LIFE.”

When asked whether or not they believe that the arts are an essential part of a quality education, 92% of superintendents and 94% of principals surveyed agreed or strongly agreed. Furthermore, 84% of superintendents and 87% of principals agreed that students who study the arts have greater success in other academic subjects.

Superintendents and principals also overwhelmingly agreed that all students in Illinois deserve equal access to arts education regardless of where they live or economic status. Additional attitudinal measures indicated consistently favorable

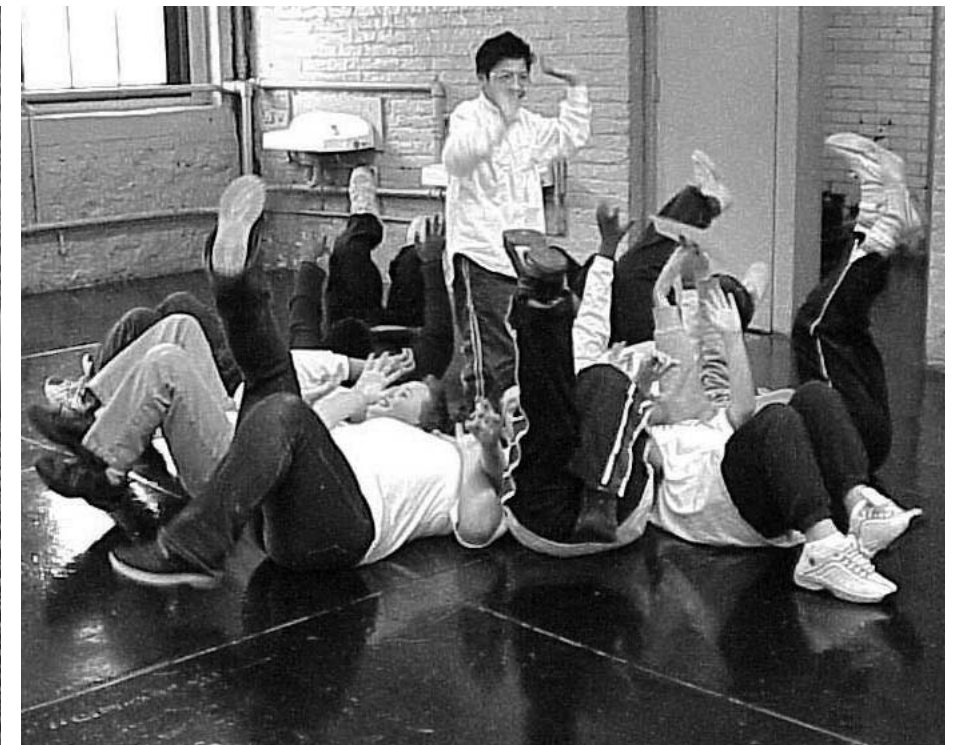
feelings toward arts education. Strong majorities report that they believe:

- Students who study the arts perform better on standard achievement tests and college entrance exams.
- Knowledge of the arts and cultural literacy is important to success in life.
- Students with learning disabilities or behavioral challenges make particular progress when they study the arts.
- Arts education motivates students to come to and remain in school.

The research indicates virtually no opposition to the notion that the arts should be an integral part of education for Illinois public school students. This corresponds to national attitudes toward arts education. A June 2005 Harris Poll released by Americans for the Arts revealed that 93% of Americans agree that the arts are vital to providing a well-rounded education for children. Additionally, 54% rated the importance of arts education a “ten” on a scale of one to ten.

I STUDIED PERFORMANCE ARTS AS AN UNDERGRADUATE AND VALUE THE EXPERIENCE TREMENDOUSLY. THE ARTS ADD CULTURAL VALUE IN ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY, AND I AM A STRONG SUPPORTER.

– REP. SARA FEIGENHOLTZ (D-12)



MAJOR FINDINGS

2



DESPITE STRONG SUPPORT FOR ARTS EDUCATION, ALMOST 20% OF ILLINOIS PRINCIPALS SURVEYED REPORT HAVING NO ARTS PROGRAM IN THEIR SCHOOL (VISUAL ARTS, THEATER, MUSIC OR DANCE), AND 28% OF SUPERINTENDENTS REPORT THAT NONE OF THE FOUR ARTS DISCIPLINES WERE CONSIDERED PART OF THE CORE CURRICULUM IN THEIR SCHOOL DISTRICT.

I AM A TEACHING ARTIST WHO BRINGS THE VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS INTO CHICAGO'S CLASSROOMS. I'VE WITNESSED KIDS WHOSE PARENTS ARE GANG MEMBERS BREAK DOWN THEIR OWN BARRIERS AND MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT LIFE AND PEOPLE THROUGH THE ARTS. NOW THEY ARE THE FIRST KIDS TO SHOW UP FOR MY AFTER-SCHOOL ARTS PROGRAM IN HUMBOLDT PARK.

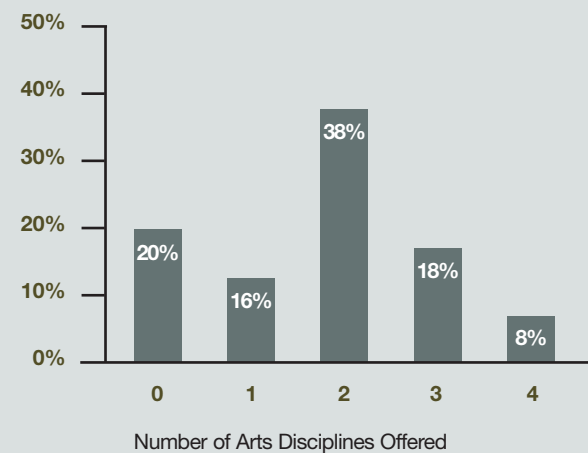
– JESSI WALSH, CHICAGO

Though the arts are considered to be a fundamental learning area in Illinois according to legislation adopted in 1985, about one-third of the students in any elementary grade receive no instruction in the arts. The amount of arts instruction decreases as students advance in school. About half of students in the middle school years and less than one-third of high school students receive arts instruction. On average, only 25% of Illinois public high school students are enrolled in any arts course in a given year.

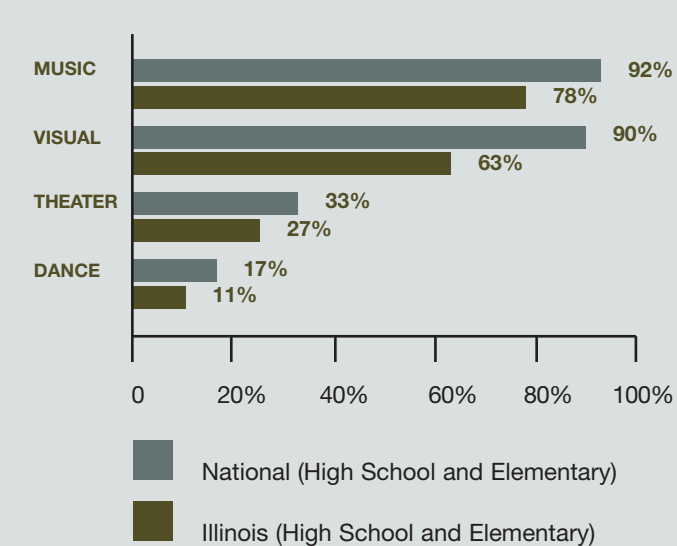
Of those principals who reported having an arts program in their schools, many have a program in music and visual arts, but few have a theater or dance program. Compared to a study done by the National Center for Education Statistics in 1999-2000, Illinois is lower than national averages when it comes to availability of arts education programs in elementary and secondary schools.

According to principals statewide, elementary school students receive an average of only 40 minutes of arts instruction a week. This is consistent with data collected on arts education in Chicago Public Schools (CPS) in 2001. The study, conducted by The Chicago Community Trust, found that a majority of elementary schools in CPS provided only 40 minutes of arts instruction a week. Fourteen percent of elementary schools did not offer at least a class a week for students. The study also reported substantial disparities among Chicago elementary schools in terms of minutes per week offered, scope of disciplines and availability of qualified personnel with training in the arts.

PERCENTAGE OF ILLINOIS SCHOOLS OFFERING 0 TO 4 ARTS DISCIPLINES (MUSIC, VISUAL ARTS, THEATER, DANCE)



PERCENTAGE OF SCHOOLS OFFERING ARTS PROGRAMS BY DISCIPLINE





STUDENTS IN ILLINOIS DO NOT HAVE EQUAL ACCESS TO ARTS EDUCATION, THE STRONGEST CORRELATING FACTOR BEING WHERE THEY LIVE. STUDENTS IN RURAL AREAS AND SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS TEND TO RECEIVE THE LEAST AMOUNT OF ARTS EDUCATION. INCONSISTENCIES IN THE DELIVERY OF ARTS EDUCATION ALSO EXIST AMONG SCHOOLS WITHIN LARGE URBAN DISTRICTS AND BETWEEN SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICTS.

MY 16-YEAR-OLD SON HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN INTROVERT WITH VERY LOW SELF-ESTEEM. FOR ECONOMIC REASONS, WE HAD TO MOVE LAST YEAR. THIS MEANT A NEW SCHOOL FOR HIM. HE WAS MISERABLE. HIS DRAMA INSTRUCTOR SAW HIS SADNESS AND REACHED OUT TO HIM... THE NEXT THING I KNEW, HE WAS ON THE SPEECH TEAM AND HAS BEEN IN TWO SCHOOL PLAYS... I CREDIT HIS GROWTH AS A PERSON TO THE OPPORTUNITIES THE DRAMA PROGRAM PRESENTED.

– MICHELLE WAIT, BLOOMINGTON

The Illinois Creates 2005 arts education survey identifies large disparities in the level of arts education in Illinois schools. The strongest predictors of the level of arts education students receive are the type of area each school is in (rural, urban, suburban) and the size of the school and the school district. Smaller schools and smaller school districts tend to have lower levels of arts education.

In fact, arts education levels are lower in rural districts regardless of socioeconomic indicators, level of social problems (attendance and dropout rates) or dominant race of students. These variables did not highly correlate with levels of arts education.

Whether defined by the number of schools in a district or the number of teachers or students in a school, small districts and small schools tend to have lower levels of arts education than medium and larger districts and schools. Smaller schools in particular tend to offer fewer arts education classes overall and less variety (fewer of the four common arts disciplines: visual arts, music, dance, theater). Many small schools employ no certified arts teachers.

The majority of Illinois' more than 890 school districts are very small in terms of the number of schools in the district. Many are found in rural areas, where arts education levels are significantly lower (than in urban and suburban areas). However, disparities also exist within urban areas and between suburban areas, with the size of the school or school district continuing to be a key factor.

There is an incredibly broad range in the size of Illinois school districts. The size of districts participating in the survey ranged from 1 school to 600 schools, but school districts containing 4 schools or fewer account for 75%. The median district size is 2 to 3 schools per district. The student population of schools surveyed ranged from 10 to 4,600 students with a median of 435 students. The student population of school districts surveyed ranged from 37 to 430,000 students with a median of 975 students.

When the results are organized according to six major geographic areas in Illinois (Northern Illinois, Chicago, Suburban Cook County, Collar Counties, Central Illinois and Southern Illinois), schools in Suburban Cook County have the highest levels of arts education and schools in the Southern Region of Illinois have the lowest.

In addition to the size of the school and school district and the population type of the district (urban, suburban or rural), another variable that accounted for differences among schools was per-pupil expenditure. Overall, rural schools had lower levels of arts education than suburban or urban schools. Within rural areas, the higher the per-pupil expenditure in a school, the higher the level of arts education. This was also true within suburban areas. In urban areas, there was a slightly different pattern. Schools with a mid-level per-pupil expenditure had a much higher arts education level than schools with either low and high per-pupil expenditures.

MAJOR FINDINGS

3



INDEX OF ARTS EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS SCHOOLS

One of the difficulties in measuring the amount of arts education in schools and school districts is that arts education is manifested in many different ways in different schools. We know that some schools focus heavily on hiring certified arts instructors while others focus on offering a variety of types of arts instruction but only to a small portion of their student population. Some focus on integrating arts into regular subject areas. Still others draw heavily from the community by tapping into local arts organizations and artists-in-residence and having an enriched extracurricular arts program for students.

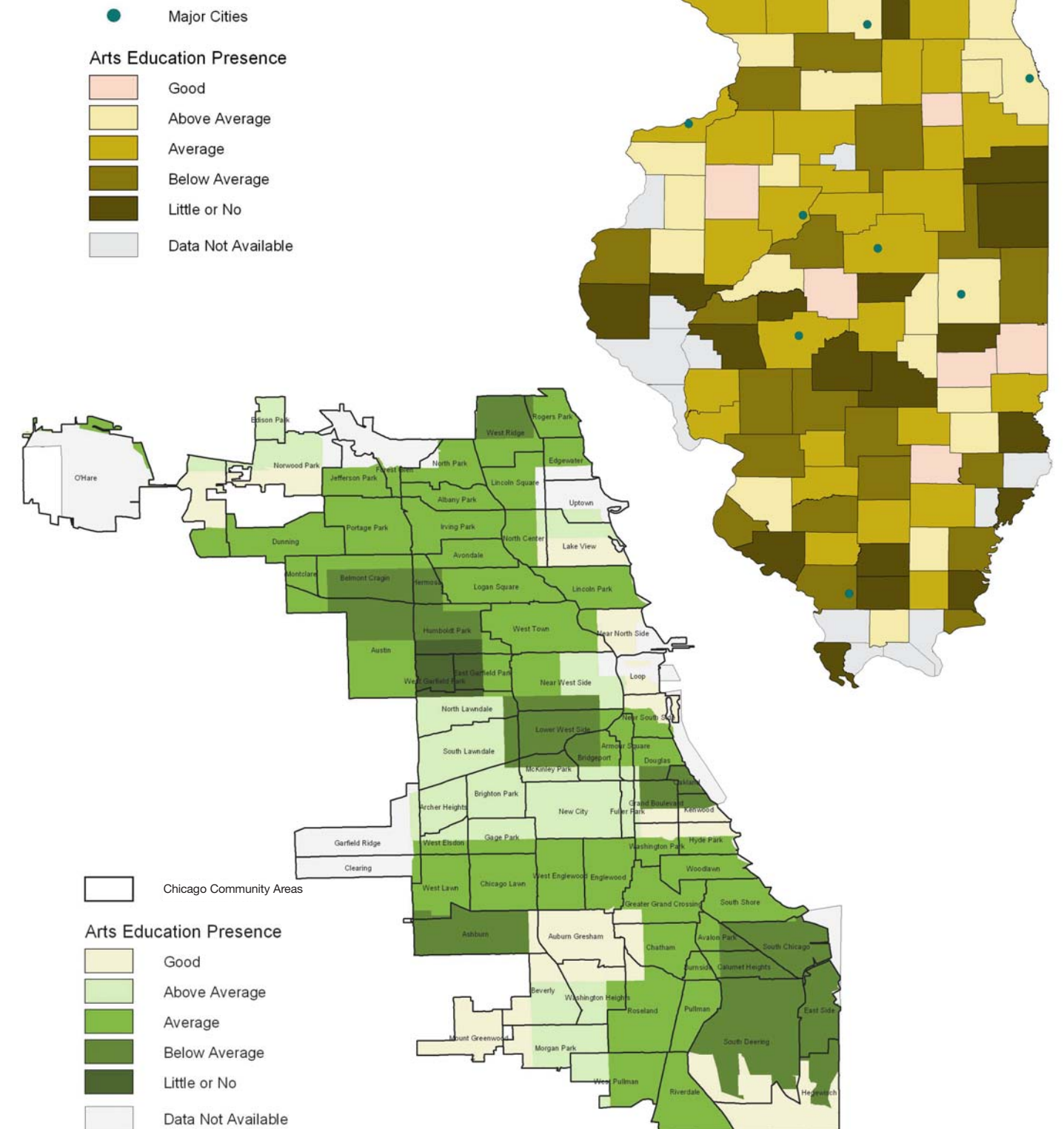
To account for these differences, and to give schools credit for different approaches to providing arts education, our study captured many different measures of arts education and combined them to create an index of the levels of arts education in Illinois. Each zip code was then assigned a score based on the combination of measures represented by schools in that zip code, enabling us to see differences in the levels of arts education across the state. In creating the scores, a few measures that are particularly critical in delivering arts education were weighted higher than others.

MEASURES OF ARTS EDUCATION USED IN ANALYSIS:

- Multi-Discipline Arts Education Program
- Full/Part-Time Arts Specialist(s)
- Grade Levels Receiving Instruction in the Arts
- Number of Minutes Per Week Students Receive Arts
- Updated, Written Arts Curriculum Guide
- Assessment of Student Performance in the Arts
- Inclusion of Arts Education in Mission and Planning Initiatives
- Other Arts Opportunities (i.e., extra-curricular activities, arts integration, artist residencies)
- **Arts-Specific Graduation Requirement
- **Breadth of Courses Offered
- **Advanced Learning Opportunities in the Arts

***High School Only*

PRESENCE OF ARTS EDUCATION IN ILLINOIS AND CHICAGO SCHOOLS



Please note: Arts education data was calculated at the zip code level.
Maps Provided By: Amy Krause, Northern Illinois University



ONE IN TEN ILLINOIS SCHOOL DISTRICTS HAS NO CERTIFIED ARTS TEACHERS IN ANY ARTS DISCIPLINE ANYWHERE IN THE DISTRICT. TWENTY-THREE PERCENT OF SCHOOLS EMPLOY NO ARTS SPECIALIST.

The No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 (NCLB), which defines the arts as a core subject area, requires that by the end of the 2005-06 school year, all teachers in core academic subjects must be “highly qualified” in the areas of teaching assignment. According to NCLB, teachers are considered “highly qualified” if they have a bachelor’s degree, full state certification and demonstrated subject matter competence in the area(s) taught. In June 2003, the Illinois State Board of Education adopted criteria for highly qualified teachers and specified that “the Illinois criteria for highly qualified

teachers are based on a definition of the arts as music and visual arts.”

Even while the federal government and the Illinois State Board of Education recognize the arts as a core academic subject and require core subjects be taught by “highly qualified” teachers, 9% of the school districts in Illinois have no certified arts teachers in any arts discipline anywhere in the district. When broken down by arts discipline, 11% of school districts have no certified arts specialist for music anywhere in the district, and 23% have no certified visual arts specialist. Drama/theater arts

specialists are even more rare – most districts (65%) have none at all. Arts specialists for dance are not found in 82% of Illinois public school districts.

The good news is most school districts report having an updated written curriculum guide for music (77%) and visual arts (72%). The great majority of those guides are aligned with the Illinois Learning Standards for Fine Arts. Unfortunately, updated written curriculum guides for theater and dance were reported less than 30% of the time.





ELEVEN PERCENT OF SCHOOL DISTRICTS IN ILLINOIS REQUIRE NO ARTS INSTRUCTION IN ANY GRADE. IN ADDITION, 80% OF HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPALS REPORT THAT STUDENTS IN THEIR SCHOOLS ARE NOT REQUIRED TO TAKE A SINGLE COURSE IN THE ARTS IN ORDER TO GRADUATE.

ALL ILLINOIS STUDENTS DESERVE A HIGH QUALITY, COMPREHENSIVE EDUCATION THAT INCLUDES THE ARTS AS WELL AS READING, WRITING AND MATH. THE ARTS GIVE KIDS THE SKILLS AND CREATIVITY TO ACHIEVE SUCCESS IN COLLEGE AND THE WORKPLACE, AND TO CONTRIBUTE FULLY TO THE RICH CULTURAL LIFE AND ECONOMY OF ILLINOIS.

– GOVERNOR ROD BLAGOJEVICH

While Illinois adopted Learning Standards for Fine Arts in 1997, unlike many other states, it still lacks a statewide mandate requiring arts instruction at any grade level. In addition, high school students are not required by the state to take a single course in the arts in order to graduate. Without a state requirement and with little oversight to monitor whether or not schools are implementing the Illinois Learning Standards for Fine Arts, it is not surprising that many students receive no instruction at all in the arts. In fact, 11% of Illinois superintendents report that arts instruction is not required at any grade level offered in their district.

Given that the creative industry is reported to be the largest growing sector in the U.S. workforce, employing nearly 3 million people (2.2% of all employees), it is essential, now more than ever, to prepare students to be creative thinkers and workers. Yet, here in Illinois, 80% of high school principals report that students are not required to take a single course in the arts in order to graduate. In addition, less than 25% of the high school student population is enrolled in arts courses.

Even if high school students wanted to take advanced courses or concentrate in the arts, few schools provide opportunities for them to do so before, during or after school. On average, high schools offer fewer than 4 visual arts courses each year, less than 3 music courses, only 1 theater course and no dance course. Nearly 30% of superintendents report that their school district does not offer any extracurricular activities in the arts. In addition, principals report that less than 10% of students are enrolled in extracurricular activities in the arts.

Of equal concern is the fact that the arts tend not to be assessed. Thirty-six percent of superintendents and 37% of principals report that they do not assess and report student performance in the arts as they do other core subjects. This is consistent with statewide trends. In 2003, the arts were eliminated from Illinois' standardized testing system. While many believe that standardized testing is not the most effective way to assess student learning in the arts, the lack of effective and consistent arts education testing is self-defeating. The full benefits of arts education and the quality of instruction students receive will never be fully understood if student performance is not assessed and reported.





ACCORDING TO PRINCIPALS AND SUPERINTENDENTS, THE MOST SIGNIFICANT BARRIER TO ARTS EDUCATION IS BUDGET CONSIDERATIONS, WITH LACK OF AVAILABLE TIME IN THE SCHOOL DAY ALSO A MAJOR BARRIER.

AS A K-8 ART TEACHER, I HAVE SEEN THAT ART REACHES STUDENTS WHO OFTEN STRUGGLE TO SUCCEED IN SCHOOL, INCLUDING DISADVANTAGED STUDENTS, STUDENTS WHO SEEM TO HAVE NO OTHER INTERESTS AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES.

– SUSIE RYAN, METAMORA

The survey asked principals and superintendents to rank 9 barriers to arts education in order of impact. The large majority of school principals (86%) and superintendents (88%) cite budget considerations as the number one factor impacting arts programming in their schools. More than half of principals (57%) and superintendents (51%) say available time is also a major influence on arts programming decisions.

Over the last five years, a majority (71%) of superintendents report that their budget designated for arts education has either stayed the same (47%) or decreased (19%). On average, 2 to 3% of school districts' total budget is allocated to arts education.

One in four principals report a decrease in the percentage of their budget designated for the arts. In addition, a majority of principals (62%) rely on outside sources of funding to support their arts programs. Schools in urban areas are especially reliant upon outside sources of funding. Seventy-four percent of principals in urban schools rely on outside sources of funding to support their arts programs compared to 56% in suburban areas and 59% in rural areas.

When asked to predict future levels of arts education over the next five years, 74% of superintendents believe that the level of arts education in their districts will remain the same, and 9% predict a decrease.

BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION

EXPOSING STUDENTS TO THE ARTS IS AN IMPORTANT PART OF THEIR EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HAS BEEN SHOWN IN STUDIES TO IMPROVE THEIR ACHIEVEMENT.

– RANDY DUNN, STATE SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION

During the past 20 years, arts education has risen to the forefront of education reform policy discussions at the national level, and many states have successfully integrated arts education into their plans for education reform.

Scientific research on the effect of the arts on cognitive functioning (right and left brain activity) and on early childhood development has been conducted by neuroscientists and educators for decades. Likewise historians and social theorists have focused on the important role that the arts play in society, national culture and identity and social reform movements.

In the meantime, a growing body of research continues to demonstrate the positive impact of the arts on the social and intellectual development of children. The resource guide at the end of this publication includes links to many of these initiatives and research publications. Both of these perspectives – the intrinsic and instrumental benefits of the arts – are useful and important in any attempt to fully characterize the value of the arts to individuals and our society as a whole. These truths and the research that supports them form the basis of the shared beliefs of the members of Illinois Creates about the benefits of arts education.

THE ARTS ARE FUNDAMENTAL TO OUR ABILITY TO INTERPRET THE WORLD AND COMMUNICATE.

“ Children respond to gestures and movement before they react to the spoken word. They understand and explore sound before they learn to speak. They draw pictures before they form letters. They dance and act out stories before they learn to read.”¹ This is why the arts have always been a fundamental part of all quality preschool education curricula. A strong argument can be made that the value of the arts as a core subject does not diminish as children grow, but continues to impact youth in profound ways.



ONGOING, CONSISTENT EXPOSURE TO AND PARTICIPATION IN THE ARTS ENHANCES STUDENTS' COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT, PROVIDES THEM WITH MEANING, ENABLES THEM TO EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND PROFOUNDLY IMPACTS THEIR CAPACITY FOR EXPERIENCE.

“ When students focus their attention on a work of art, they are invited to make sense of what is before them. Because meanings are embedded in the experience rather than explicitly stated, the individual can gain an entirely new perspective on the world and how he or she perceives it ...”²

“ The artist provides individuals with an imaginative experience that is often a more intense, revealing and meaningful version of actual experience. Such an experience can produce pleasure in the sense of a deep satisfaction, the deeply unsettling, disorienting or tragic.”³

THE ARTS BENEFIT SOCIETY AS A WHOLE BY PROVIDING INDIVIDUALS WITH GREATER CAPACITY FOR EMPATHY, A SET OF COMMUNAL FRAMES OF REFERENCE AND A SENSE OF CULTURE.

“ The arts expand individuals' capacities for empathy by drawing them into the experiences of people vastly different from them and cultures vastly different from their own... Intrinsic benefits accrue to the public sphere when works of art convey what whole communities of people yearn to express. Art can commemorate events significant to a nation's history, provide a voice to communities the culture has largely ignored and ... change people's views.”⁴

BENEFITS OF ARTS EDUCATION

RESEARCH REVEALS CORRELATIONS BETWEEN ARTS EDUCATION AND IMPROVED ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE.

A growing body of research has identified many correlations between involvement in the arts and academic success in other subjects, including math, science and reading. Although more study in this area is needed, these studies substantiate what many educators and parents already believe, that the arts provide students with critical skills for learning that impact their overall academic performance, and indeed, all areas of their lives.

Students consistently involved in music and theater show higher levels of success in math and reading.⁵

“Students who take four years or more of arts and music classes while in high school score 100 points higher on their SATs than students who took only one-half year or less.”⁶

“In 1998, the difference in the Iowa Basic Skills Test for sixth-grade reading at 19 schools participating in the Chicago Arts Partnership in Education (CAPE) program was 14 percentage points higher than at 29 other Chicago Public Schools with the same family income, neighborhood and academic characteristics.”⁷

Data from 25,000 8th- and 10th-grade students revealed that involvement in the arts resulted in lower dropout rates and more community service.⁸

ARTS EDUCATION PREPARES YOUTH FOR SUCCESS IN THE WORKING WORLD AND REAPS ECONOMIC REWARDS.

A well-rounded education that includes the arts improves students’ chances of success after graduation, both within and outside of traditional creative industries. Arts education plays an important role in preparing students for a growing knowledge-based global economy and helps students develop skills that employers are seeking. Our economy is increasingly based on careers in sectors that require creativity, problem solving and analytical thinking.

The Secretary’s Commission on Achieving Necessary Skills (SCANS) 2000 Report links arts education with economic realities, asserting that young people who learn the rigors of planning and production in the arts will be valuable employees in the idea-driven workplace of the future.⁹

“Arts education opens doors for students to a growing number of careers with employers even beyond the creative industry job sector. Employers in today’s information-driven, service sector workplace value creative thinking, problem solving and analytical thinking.”¹⁰

Controlled research conducted for the YouthARTS Development Project by the U.S. Department of Justice demonstrates that arts programs improve communication skills with peers and adults.¹¹

Arts education is essential to our state’s economy in which creative sector and arts sector jobs are at an all-time high and growing. The nonprofit arts alone have an annual economic impact of \$2 billion and are responsible for more than 24,000 jobs in the State.¹²

AS AN ARTIST AND ART INSTRUCTOR WHO GOES INTO THE SCHOOLS TO TEACH ART, I KNOW THE STUDENTS AND FACULTY ARE HUNGRY FOR ART EDUCATION. MANY OF THE SCHOOLS I VISIT HAVE MUSIC BUT LITTLE ELSE UNLESS THE PTO SUBSIDIZES SHORT TERM PROGRAMS. SEQUENTIAL LESSONS OVER THE LONG TERM HAVE MORE IMPACT ON THE STUDENTS.

– BARBARA DOVE, DECATUR

ARTS EDUCATION BENEFITS YOUTH AT-RISK.

Arts programs decrease dropout rates and encourage youth at-risk to stay in school. In this way, arts education can impact both our children and our communities.

Three cities participating in a recent national study found that their arts programs for youth at-risk decreased involvement in delinquent behavior, increased academic achievement and improved youth’s attitudes about themselves and their future.¹⁴

“Youth in low-income neighborhoods who participate in arts programs are much more likely to be high academic achievers, be elected to class office, participate in a math and science fair, and win an award for writing an essay or poem.”¹⁵

“Various disciplined attitudes and behaviors were observed in underprivileged students who were given instruction in an art discipline. The effects of students’ involvement with the arts were tracked over time. These effects included artistic, academic, and personal achievement and states of mind. Common characteristics across all age groups (elementary through adult) were: resilience, self-regulation, (constructive) identity, and the ability to experience flow (total focus and absorption in a task).”¹⁶

STUDENTS WITH SPECIAL NEEDS BENEFIT FROM ARTS INSTRUCTION.

Students with learning disabilities, language and social barriers and behavior challenges make particular progress when provided with significant arts instruction.

“Through a creative drama program, students with learning disabilities improved their social skills including: courtesy to others, self-control, ability to focus and following direction, and showed improvements in their oral language skills more than a control group receiving non-drama language therapy.”¹⁷

“Students with learning disabilities, including autism and severe dyslexia, become engaged in learning through the arts, developing cooperative and interpersonal skills, self-confidence, motivation to learn, problem solving skills and independent thinking and action.”¹⁸

AMERICA NEEDS A WORKFORCE THAT IS FLEXIBLE, ADAPTABLE AND HIGHLY CREATIVE; AND IT NEEDS AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM THAT CAN DEVELOP THESE QUALITIES IN EVERYONE.

– SIR KEN ROBINSON, SENIOR ADVISOR FOR EDUCATION POLICY, THE GETTY FOUNDATION

NATIONAL PERSPECTIVE ON ARTS EDUCATION

Arts education plays a critical role in fueling the economy and the job market by preparing skilled workers to be successful in a variety of creative industries, such as design, publishing, photography and performing arts. In 2004, Americans for the Arts released a study that showed that nationally more than 548,000 businesses are involved in the production and delivery of America’s creative industries (4.3% of all businesses), employing 2.99 million people (2.2% of all employees). Even though the creative industry is the fastest growing segment of the nation’s economy, arts education is still at risk in schools throughout the country.

In recent years two major factors have generated a great deal of controversy regarding schools’ ability to provide quality arts instruction as part of the core curriculum. The first is the federal No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation enacted in 2001, and the second is the downturn in most states’ economies. While it is hard to quantify the actual impact of these developments on arts education, there has been a response by many individuals and initiatives nationally to secure arts education’s role in school reform.

THE ARTS DEVELOP SKILLS AND HABITS OF MIND THAT ARE IMPORTANT FOR WORKERS IN THE NEW ECONOMY OF IDEAS.

– ALAN GREENSPAN, U.S. FEDERAL RESERVE CHAIRMAN

During the fall of 2003, the Council for Basic Education undertook a study of American K-12 students’ access to a complete curriculum in the liberal arts. Nine hundred fifty-six principals in Illinois, Maryland, New York and New Mexico were surveyed. The research found that “of all the academic subjects, the arts and foreign languages seem at greatest risk, especially in schools that serve mostly minority students.” The Council for Basic Education’s study further reports that “without the help of policies that support the liberal arts, principals may prove unable to resist curricular erosion.”

In response to the many claims that NCLB is doing more harm than good, in July 2004, former U.S. Secretary of Education Rod Paige issued a letter to all school superintendents reminding them that “the arts are included in the No Child Left Behind Act’s definition of core academic subjects. In that respect, the arts have equal billing with reading, mathematics, science and other disciplines.” Paige goes on to say that “in keeping with NCLB’s

principle of classroom practices based on research evidence, studies have shown that arts teaching and learning can increase students’ cognitive and social development. The arts can be a critical link for students in developing the crucial thinking skills and motivations they need to achieve at higher levels.”

To put the arts front and center on the education agenda, The Education Commission of the States (ECS) undertook an initiative in 2004 to ensure that high-quality arts education experiences are available not just to the gifted or the most fortunate, but to every child from kindergarten through grade 12. Under the leadership of Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, ECS has called on all states to pass legislation requiring opportunities for every child to participate in the arts. In addition, ECS is actively working to deepen the level of understanding among state policymakers and is working with state-level initiatives to develop policies and practices designed to improve educational outcomes for all students through the arts.

1977

The Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) appointed a task force on arts education. The task force published a report that concluded that, although Illinois schools had a tradition of providing “exemplary and innovative” programs in the arts, those programs were not available to all students. The task force went on to recommend that a comprehensive arts education program be made available to all Illinois students.

1985

Education reform legislation was passed specifying the six “fundamental learning areas.” The Fine Arts were one of the six areas identified as “fundamental.” State Goals for the Fine Arts were established through this legislation.

1989

The state developed a Comprehensive Arts Grant (CAG) program to support teacher training/professional development in the arts.

1994

The Goals 2000: Educate America Act became law. Through this federal legislation the arts were listed as core subjects.

1997

Illinois became one of the first states to develop and adopt Learning Standards for Fine Arts.

Statewide student assessment in the fine arts began through the Illinois Standards Achievement Test. By 1998, a sample of six fine arts questions were included in the social sciences section given to all students in grades 4, 7 and 11.



PROGRESS AT THE STATE LEVEL

Even with budget constraints and mounting pressure to meet NCLB requirements, many states have supported and promoted the arts in the core curriculum through policies such as high school graduation requirements, mandated amounts of instruction time and assessments. In recent years – thanks in large part to new research that points to the important role of the arts in improving students' achievement and preparing them for an economy that demands creative solutions to challenging problems – efforts to keep, expand and sustain the arts in schools appears to be gaining momentum. Here are some of the ways state policymakers, educators and others are ensuring that the arts continue to play a priority role in education.

ARIZONA

Arizona Superintendent Tom Horne announced in his January 2004 State of Education speech, "We must enrich every student with a thorough exposure to the arts." To that end, the Department of Education has launched an initiative to incorporate arts into the curriculum in every school in the state.

www.ade.az.gov/asd/arts

ARKANSAS

Arkansas HB 1883 requires every public elementary school in the state to provide at least 40 minutes of instruction in music and visual arts every week to every student in grades 1-6. Every class in every school is allocated a minimum of \$100 to obtain needed supplies and equipment for music and art classes. Instruction must be provided by a teacher certified in art or music. According to Arkansas Governor Mike Huckabee, "It disturbs me when people speak of the arts as if they're extracurricular, extraneous and expendable. A quality arts education is an essential part of a well-rounded education. If we're not providing courses in music, theater, dance and the visual arts, then we're not doing enough."

www.arkansas.gov/governor/media/radio/text/r11132004.html

CALIFORNIA

The University of California and California State University systems have instituted a freshman admissions requirement of one year in visual or performing arts. All high school students need to complete an approved course in dance, music, theater or visual arts before applying to these post-secondary institutions. In addition, the California Education Code requires "the adopted course of study for grades 1 to 6, inclusive, shall include instruction, beginning in grade 1 and continuing through grade 6, in the subjects of dance, music, theater and visual arts, aimed at the development of aesthetic appreciation and the skills of creative expression."

www.artsed411.org/artsed/index.stm

MINNESOTA

In May 2003, the Minnesota legislature passed a law to establish new educational expectations for Minnesota's students [120B.02]. Public elementary and middle schools must offer at least three and require at least two of four arts areas – dance, music, theater and visual arts. Public high schools must offer at least three and require at least one of five arts areas – media arts, dance, music, theater and visual arts. By the 2007-2008 school year, all school districts must adopt graduation requirements that meet or exceed state graduation requirements established in law or rule. In addition, Minnesota's systems of higher education (Minnesota State College and Universities and the University of Minnesota) require one year of arts for admission.

<http://education.state.mn.us/content/087228.pdf>

OKLAHOMA

Oklahoma requires district-level arts assessments in grades 3-8. The state also has created a new Web site designed to share research findings and to help teachers in all subject areas develop assessment strategies and integrate the arts into their lesson plans.

www.sde.state.ok.us/Art/default.html



2002

The federal No Child Left Behind Act, which recognizes the arts as a core academic subject, was signed into law.

2003

After 14 years, the state eliminated the Comprehensive Arts Grant through the Board of Education. As of May 2003, through the Comprehensive Arts Grant program, \$499,700 had been awarded to 48 schools for teacher training/professional development.

2004

As a result of the FY05 state budget, the arts were eliminated from the Illinois State Assessment.

2005

The arts contact in the Curriculum & Instruction Division at the Illinois State Board of Education retired. No replacement was named. According to the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education (SEADAE-www.seadae.org), Illinois is the only state in the country without a dedicated staff-person/consultant for arts education.

2005

The Illinois General Assembly passed a \$2 million appropriation for arts education and foreign languages through the Illinois State Board of Education for the FY06 school year.

ILLINOIS CREATES VALUES, ADVOCATES AND INITIATES POLICIES TO ENCOURAGE QUALITY, CONSISTENCY AND EQUITY IN ARTS EDUCATION PROGRAMS THROUGHOUT THE ILLINOIS PUBLIC EDUCATION SYSTEM. TOWARD THIS END, THE ILLINOIS ARTS ALLIANCE AND THE ILLINOIS CREATES COALITION HAVE DEVELOPED REASONABLE POLICY PRIORITIES AND RECOMMENDATIONS.

ON BEHALF OF THE DESERVING STUDENTS OF ILLINOIS, WE SUBMIT AND URGE ACTION ON THE FOLLOWING RECOMMENDATIONS.

- 1** That the Illinois State Board of Education and the Illinois General Assembly continue their commitment to the arts as one of Illinois' six fundamental learning areas and that this commitment be strengthened by enhancing incentives to ensure all schools implement a quality, standards-based arts education curriculum.
- 2** That every school district in the state of Illinois develop a strategic plan for comprehensive arts education to measure the effectiveness of their existing arts education programs, identify areas for improvement and establish a realistic timeline for improving arts education programs throughout their district.
- 3** That the Illinois General Assembly, the Governor, the Illinois State Board of Education and other state agencies work individually and collectively to identify funding to ensure that all Illinois public schools can offer quality instruction in the arts.
- 4** That each public elementary, middle and high school employ at least one certified arts specialist to deliver standards-based arts curriculum and that at least one unit of credit in the arts be required of all high school students in order to graduate.
- 5** That meaningful ways to measure student and school performance in arts education (such as assessment tools, arts report cards, etc.) be developed collaboratively by key stakeholders and that the Illinois State Board of Education require schools to report certain arts education measurements annually.
- 6** That equitable, consistent, high-quality professional development opportunities in arts education are identified, encouraged and supported for K-12 arts specialists, as well as classroom teachers.
- 7** That the Illinois State Board of Education provide expert guidance and technical support to improve the capacity of school districts and/or individual schools to implement a comprehensive, standards-based, sequential arts education program.
- 8** That Illinois state colleges and universities include arts coursework in the high school GPA calculations used to determine eligibility for enrollment, and that at least one unit of credit in the arts be required for entrance in all Illinois institutions of higher learning.

A major focus for Illinois Creates at this time is to strategically expand the coalition, further engage coalition members in creating and launching an arts education public policy and legislative platform based on the results of the research and gather input at forums throughout the state.

No single organization can evolve, adopt and successfully champion a statewide arts education policy platform. The work ahead will require the active participation of many different people. Whether you are a parent, teacher, principal, legislator, administrator or an individual who believes in the value of arts education, you can make a difference.

**FIRST, YOU CAN SIGN ON TO THE COALITION, EITHER ONLINE AT
WWW.ILLINOISCREATES.ORG**

**OR BY CALLING THE ILLINOIS ARTS ALLIANCE AT
312-855-3105**

HERE ARE SOME OTHER THINGS THAT YOU CAN DO

- Recruit members for the coalition, including your local school, school district, employer or other organizations.
- Attend local school board meetings and community events to talk about the importance of arts education.
- Help create or serve on local arts education advocacy coalitions, task forces or parent advisory committees.
- Contribute information and updates on arts education activities in your area to the quarterly Illinois Creates electronic newsletter.
- Communicate your support of arts education to the governor, your member of congress and your representatives in the state legislature and respond to arts education e-advocacy alerts when funding or issues are at stake.
- Tell your story. Your personal testimonial about the value of arts education can be a compelling and powerful advocacy tool. Please share your personal arts education story with us. Illinois Creates can use your testimonial in newsletters, stories in the news media, stakeholder forums and legislative hearings and meetings.

PUBLICATIONS

Academic Atrophy: The Condition of Liberal Arts in America's Public Schools

<http://downloads.ncss.org/legislative/AcademicAtrophy.pdf>

Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning

<http://aep-arts.org/PDF%20Files/ChampsReport.pdf>

Critical Links: Learning in the Arts and Student Academic and Social Development

<http://aep-arts.org/PDF%20Files/CriticalLinks.pdf>

Eloquent Evidence: Arts at the Core of Learning

<http://www.nasaa-arts.org/nasaanews/ee.pdf>

Finding the Will and the Way to Make the Arts a Core Subject

http://www.nasbe.org/Standard/15_Winter2004/Herbert.pdf

No Subject Left Behind: A Guide to Arts Education Opportunities in the 2001 NCLB Act

<http://www.aep-arts.org/PDF%20Files/NoSubjectLeftBehind.pdf>

Putting Arts Education Front and Center

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/58/06/5806.pdf>

The Progress of Education Reform 2004/ Arts in Education

<http://www.ecs.org/clearinghouse/49/91/4991.pdf>

RAND/Gift of the Muse

<http://www.rand.org/publications/MG/MG218/>

National Standards for Arts Education

<http://artsedge.kennedy-center.org/teach/standards/>

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Illinois State Board of Education, Illinois Learning Standards, www.isbe.state.il.us/ils/fine_arts/standards.htm. (Fowler, CA, 1984.)
- 2, 3, 4 Gifts of the Muse: Reframing the Debate About the Benefits of the Arts, The Rand Corporation, 2004.
- 5 Champions of Change: The Impact of Arts on Learning, Arts Education Partnership, President's Committee on the Arts and Humanities, 1999.
- 6 College Entrance Examination Board 2000.
- 7 Chicago Arts Partnerships in Education Summary Evaluation, 1999.
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- 9 Champions of Change, p. 32, Stanford University and Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching. Study: Imaginative Actually: Learning in the Arts During Non-school Hours, 1999.
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- 12 Illinois Arts Alliance, Economic Impact of the Nonprofit Arts Industry in Illinois, 2003.
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- 14, 15 YouthARTS Development Project, US Department of Justice, National Endowment for the Arts, Americans for the Arts, 1996-1999.

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