



COLORADO VISUAL AND PERFORMING ARTS EDUCATION SURVEY STATISTICAL REPORT: A COMPREHENSIVE SURVEY OF ARTS EDUCATION IN COLORADO SCHOOLS



Dear Colleagues:

Colorado Creative Industries, a Division of the Office of Economic Development and International Trade, worked with the Colorado Department of Education to assess the current level of arts education in Colorado schools. The first such study of Colorado arts education was completed in 2008. With this baseline established, we conducted the 2014 Colorado Visual and Performing Arts Education Survey. The 2014 study identified progress, trends, and areas of need.

There are real and significant achievements in arts education since 2008 with two pieces of Colorado state legislation, SB 212/CAP 4K (2008) and HB 1273 (2010). These laws:

- Mandated the creation of academic standards in visual and performing arts;
- Led to district/teacher-created arts assessments, curricular templates, and educator effectiveness resources;
- Ensured ongoing tracking of arts programming in Individual Career and Academic Plans (ICAPS) for each and every student grades 9-12;
- Created a state "definition of arts disciplines", which can inform districts in understanding that arts are defined, specialized disciplines.

Colorado has "held the line" on provision of arts education in our public schools. This is no small feat given the tumult of the past several years as the nation has struggled to recover and regroup from the recession of 2008 and speaks to the resilience of Colorado's arts education community. Many of the broad trends identified in the 2008 study held firm in 2014. That said, 28,000 Colorado students attend schools that do not offer formal arts education, only half of our high school students are enrolled in arts classes, and educators report that both arts education and community arts partnerships struggle for funds and time in the school day.

The question we pose now: what are the priorities for the future of Colorado arts education? Even as we see the emergence of Colorado's creative industries, we have not grown arts education commensurately. This study includes calls to action for educators, parents, and representatives of cultural institutions to think collaboratively and creatively about how we can ensure arts education for all our students.

As you read the 2014 Colorado Arts Education study, envision how you will be part of Colorado arts education's bright future.

Sincerely,

Margaret Hunt, Director
Colorado Creative Industries

“The collaboration between Colorado Creative Industries and Colorado Department of Education to follow up on the 2008 study of Colorado arts education speaks to the smart and innovative partnerships that are important to cultivate to work toward a common goal of preparing all students in Colorado for a dynamic and creative 21st century workforce.”
- Robert Hammond, Colorado Commissioner of Education.

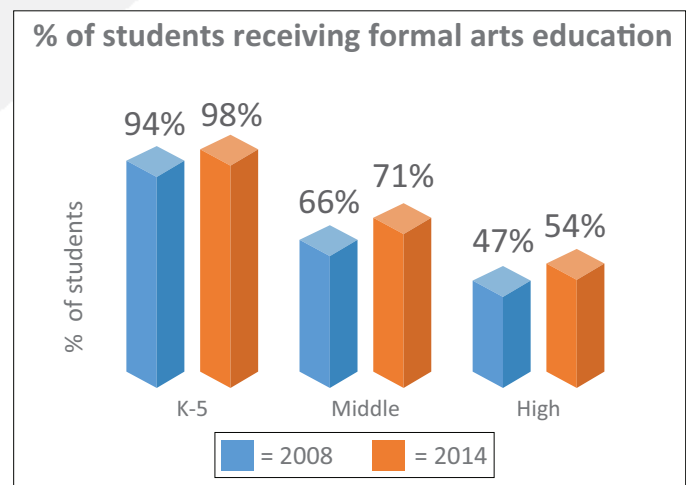
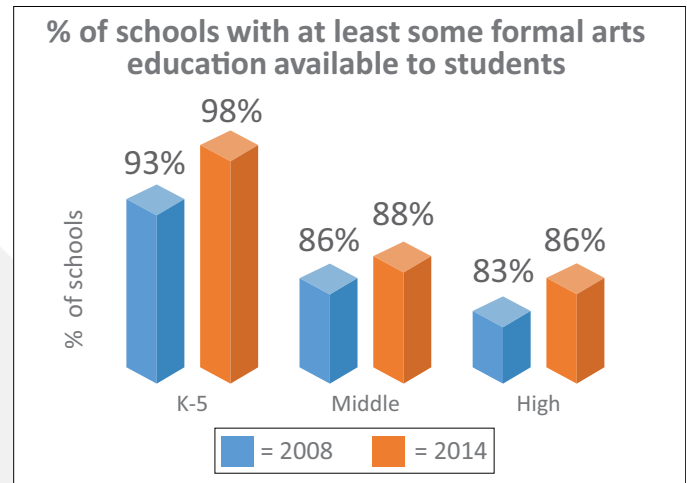
Learn more at www.coloradocreativeindustries.org

INTRODUCTION AND MAJOR FINDINGS

The objective of the “Colorado Visual and Performing Arts Education Survey” was to quantify the level, type and scope of arts education offered and delivered to Colorado public school students. The study builds on the first-ever survey of Colorado arts education, completed in March 2008. Response rate on the 27-question survey ranged from 20% to 33% of Colorado public schools, overall an increase from the 25% response rate in 2008. All Colorado principals received an invitation to participate in the voluntary study.

Major findings of the study:

- **Critical Leadership:** 95% of respondents showed very strong support for arts education as an integral and impactful component to a quality education; only a small percentage of respondents indicated that arts education is not critical to student success. Potential barriers to providing arts education include time and resources. As a local control state, unwavering support and belief in the importance of arts education by school and district leadership is a critical element to ensure arts program offerings are available to students.
- **Stable Trends:** Persistent local decisions to offer arts education in the majority of schools and districts in Colorado ensured that Colorado “held the line” on arts education program offerings since the last study in 2008, 96.7% (versus 93% in 2008) of Colorado public schools offer formal arts education to their students. Overall, Colorado arts education appears to have remained stable in the past seven years. As a result, of the 863,561 students enrolled in Colorado public K-12 education institutions, there are 28,150 students who are attending schools with no formal arts education. This number has remained stable despite the call to action in the 2008 study to reduce it.
- **Consistent Program Offerings:** When comparing grade level trends since the 2008 study, each grade level remained consistent: 98% of elementary grade schools (K-5) offer some formal arts education to students (compared with 93% in 2008) 89% of middle schools (grades 6-8) have formal arts education (86% in 2008) as do 86% of high schools (9-12) (83% in 2008).
- **Comparative Student Enrollment:** When combining all four arts disciplines of Dance, Drama and Theatre Arts, Music and Visual Arts, in 2014 98% of elementary school students received some type of arts instruction (94% in 2008), 71% of middle school students received some form of arts instruction (66% in 2008) as did 54% of high school students (47% in 2008). It is worth noting that high school students typically have some degree of self-selection in classes taken, and a decreased level of arts education in high schools is not necessarily a reflection of a reduction in high school program offerings.
- **Quality Instructors:** A strength of Colorado arts education offerings is the prominence of and commitment to use highly-qualified, licensed arts teachers. 100% of respondents indicated arts programs offered within the school day are taught by licensed arts teacher.
- **Average Time:** The average time students received arts instruction resulted in comparable data between the two studies. Students in elementary schools received 118 minutes per week of arts instruction in 2014 (120 minutes per week in 2008), and in 2014 24% of elementary schools (20% in 2008) offered an hour or less of arts education per week.
- **Reductions to Budget:** The 2014 study indicates that 35% of respondents reported budget reductions, contrasting with 40% of respondents reporting budget reductions in 2008. The 2014 study indicates that 21% of respondents had an increase in their arts education budget, and 28% reported the same level of funding as in 2008.



CONCLUSIONS AND CALL TO ACTION

- **For School administrators:** On the whole, Colorado school administrators and educators believe in the value of arts education. That belief is manifested through wide and deep arts education offerings throughout Colorado, and that Colorado appears to have “held the line” on K-12 arts education since 2008. Administrators can use this study to compare and contrast their programming information with state trends and access resources and support for developing a comprehensive arts strategic plan, strong arts standards-based curriculum and assessment and guidance on evaluating arts educators.
- **For K-12 Arts Educators:** This study provides state level data of the overall averages and percentage of arts courses by school level (K-5, 6-8, 9-12), offerings available to students during the school day versus out of school time, level of licensed arts teachers responsible for arts programming, time allotted for arts education instruction, commitment to dedicated arts education space and resources for arts education needs. Arts educators can use the information to advocate for the increase of support and resources at their school or district level.
- **For Parents:** This study shows the different ways that arts education is measured and can provide guidance for parents to learn whether their child’s school is offering below average, average, or an above average amount of arts education. Parents can use the data in this survey and the resources below to ask questions such as: Do students receive more than one type of arts education (e.g. music and visual arts; graphic design and theatre)? Are teachers licensed in the arts? How many hours per week are students instructed? Answers to these questions can indicate the status of arts education in the school.
- **For Arts Institutions/Organizations:** Many schools rely on outside resources to buttress their arts education programs. There is a clear role for cultural organizations to act as specialized partners within the K-12 school system. This study indicates a great opportunity and strong commitment to continue to forge relationships with principals and teachers in order to bring enriching and innovative real-world arts experiences to students. Arts institutions and organizations can use this study for support and guidance in determining the best approaches to supporting and enriching public school arts programs through committed partnerships.



RESOURCES

View the 2014 and 2008 summaries and full statistical reports here:

www.coloradocreativeindustries.org/schools/poetry-out-loud/resources/arts-creative-learning-student-achievement

View a comprehensive guide for high quality arts education programming here:

www.cde.state.co.us/coarts/ArtGuidebook

View the Colorado Department of Education Arts Education Fact Sheet here:

www.cde.state.co.us/coarts/arts-education-one-page-resource



"The Limit Has No Sky", a mosaic tile mural by Arts Street at 1079 Osage Street, Denver, Colorado June 2012

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