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15 | The State Status Report

A Review of State and Regional Arts Education Studies

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We know from research that students who have access to arts courses have a better chance of succeeding in school, work, and life. And yet access to arts education is uneven across school districts, communities, and states.[1] In order to address this gap in access to arts education, school leaders need data to determine which students are receiving education in which art forms, how often, and by whom.

While organizations like Americans for the Arts have requested this type of data be collected nationally, by the National Center for Education Statistics for instance, this has only happened twice in the last two decades, placing the burden of data collection on the states. Some states have engaged in surveys to get an idea of what is happening statewide and others are starting to tap into their department of education's longitudinal data system to collect real enrollment data for all students statewide.

"The State Status Report" provides a review of existing arts education surveys and studies from the state and regional levels in order to compare and contrast different methodologies and metrics employed in research initiatives. We hope that this analysis will assist states in planning their future arts education research endeavors.

This report compares several areas across states—availability of arts education, school and student outcomes, and policy compliance. This analysis illuminates key findings across all states, such as:

■ Overall, a majority of schools studied in these reports offer at least one art course. The reported availability of some arts instruction averaged 88 percent. Visual arts and music are still the two dominant disciplines offered in public schools, while dance and theater are lagging.

■ Student enrollment typically follows two different patterns. The first is a descending staircase with the highest participation levels in elementary school when arts classes are mandatory, a drop off in middle school when schools offer arts courses as electives, and a further drop off still in high school when typically only those who specialize in the arts continue. The other pattern is a backwards, diagonal "J" with high elementary school participation, a drop in middle school participation, and an uptick in high school arts participation.

■ Researchers found positive relationships between arts education levels and graduation rates, behavior, attendance, dropout rates, and intended college attendance.

> "This analysis will assist states in planning their future arts education research endeavors."

1   See a compilation of research in the Arts Education Navigator e-book "Facts & Figures": www.AmericansForTheArts.org/Navigator

- When taken as a whole, states perform unevenly in their ability to meet the established graduation requirements.

- School size was the biggest factor in predicting availability of arts education regardless of state.

With this kind of information, decision-makers can strategically think about ways to direct resources in their quest to ensure that all students in their state receive access to the benefits of arts education. We hope that advocates will use this report as a starting point to discuss with state education leaders about both their data collection efforts and the overall status and condition of arts education throughout their entire state.

INTRODUCTION

For more than a decade, arts and education practitioners and researchers have identified compelling questions about arts education at the state level. Their collective work resulted in nearly 30 state and two multi-state arts education studies.[2] These studies represent data collection efforts in 28 states. Seven of these states[3] participated in multiple study efforts.[4]

In 2014, Americans for the Arts launched a State Policy Pilot Program[5] including 10 state teams seeking to strengthen arts education by advancing state policy, making the methods and findings contained in the growing number of state arts education reports of significant interest. Americans for the Arts contracted Silk Strategic Arts to review the current body of state and multi-state arts education research[6] and summarize the work for state-level arts and education practitioners. The goals for this work are to increase the number of states engaging in this research and encourage future project partners to use and build upon emerging methodologies in order to strengthen the quality of available research overall.

The first half of this report summarizes the body of state and multi-state research by identifying trends in what was measured, how it was measured, and what was learned. The second half of this report outlines a framework for engaging in this kind of

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2   See Appendix A for a complete list of the reports included in this review.

3   California, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana, Michigan, New Jersey, and Washington

4   For example, California's 2009 report, *An Unfinished Canvas*, expanded the scope of study from music (the focus of its 2004 The Sound of Silence report) to all art disciplines. Louisiana shared findings from a public survey effort in 2009 and then participated in South Arts' regional study of arts education in Southern states (2014).

5   More pilot program information is available at: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3.

6   Publication dates for the reports included in this study range from 2001–2014.

This report is an overview of 24 published reports including 22 state and two multi-state arts education reports (the Western States Arts Federation study including Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming and the South Arts study including Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee). In cases where states published multiple studies or follow-up reports, the most recent report was included in the primary data set (though sometimes more than one report per state is referenced when relevant). In cases where states conducted a state-level study and then participated in a multi-state study, both efforts were reviewed.

It is important to note that these reports vary greatly in the level of detail they include. Typically, the more detailed reports with greater methodological rigor were more likely to publish complete data table reports, covering a broader range of arts education areas with greater detail than they included in the summary reports. Reviewing extensive data tables was beyond the scope of this particular project. The summary of summaries that follows presents the information included in the 24 reports and therefore does not fully represent the richness of the research efforts cited here.

AREAS OF STUDY

The first question this study explores is, "What did the state study research teams measure?" This section describes the range of ways that researchers defined the components of an arts education program and where there is emerging consensus around measuring the availability of, and access to, arts education opportunities.

Availability of arts education

Arts courses available

The primary focus of these reports is what coursework is available in each of the art disciplines at the school level. Results are most frequently aggregated at the state level and then further organized by elementary (ES), middle (MS), and high school (HS). In addition to measuring access to the arts by discipline, most reports include a summary finding of how many schools in the state offer at least one art form. Similarly, most reports identify the number of schools and/or students receiving no arts instruction.

After outlining what coursework is available, a subset of reports look at student participation levels in these courses (what percentage of the student population is enrolled in the arts classes) and whether or not courses are taught by certified arts specialists and

in designated/appropriate classrooms. A smaller group studies access to the arts by tracking weekly instructional minutes in each art form.

Community engagement

Approximately one-third of the studies focus on the role that outside cultural organizations and artists play in delivering arts learning opportunities. Specifically, this subset of reports all included findings about the availability of field trips and artist residencies, while 75 percent included assemblies, and 63 percent reported on the frequency of multi-year partnerships. Researchers collected community engagement data primarily through survey items and occasionally through interviews and site visits as part of a case study effort.

TABLE 1. Summary reports that include frequencies of specific community engagement measures.

	Field trips	Residencies	Assemblies	Multi-year partnership
CO	X	X	X	
FL	X	X		
KY	X	X		
MN	X	X	X	X
NJ	X	X	X	X
OH	X	X	X	X
South Arts	X	X	X	X
Western States	X	X	X	X

Arts integration

Nearly 40 percent of the reports address arts integration in some way, of which 44 percent define arts integration. School-level surveys included an item about whether or not teachers used arts integration strategies. In some cases, researchers described arts integration as a school practice as part of a case study approach. Researchers collected arts integration data primarily through survey items and infrequently through interviews and/or instructional observations.

Arts education supports

Arts coordinator

In addition to studying the availability of arts courses in the various disciplines, student enrollment, and access to arts specialists and designated arts classrooms, the collection of studies also examines the supports necessary to implement a high quality arts education program. About one-third of the research efforts tracked school access to a district- and/or school-level arts coordinator.

Professional development

Another focus area in this category was professional development. Surveys asked schools to report on which educators had access to professional development in the arts (e.g., arts specialists, classroom teachers with instructional responsibility for the arts, and general classroom teachers), what types of professional development opportunities are available (e.g., workshops, off-site seminars or conferences, and co-planning time), and who is delivering the professional development (e.g., the arts specialists in the district, followed by educational cooperatives and independent consultants at 40 percent each). A small number of studies also tracked professional development incentives such as release time, continuing education credit, travel reimbursement, and compensation.

Funding

Funding data fell into two basic categories. The first category is per pupil spending. This was typically presented as an annual and daily total. The reports that explicitly defined per pupil spending in the arts asked schools to report what they spent on materials and program while excluding teacher salaries, overhead costs, and capital expenses such as in the Minnesota report (Quadrant Research, 2012b). The second category includes information about how schools fund their arts programs. Sometimes this captured what percentage of the arts program was covered by the school budget versus all other sources. Other times, the reports include a breakdown of other funding sources such as parent teacher organizations/parent teacher associations (PTO/PTA) and local arts agencies. The South Arts effort reports how schools spent or planned to spend their arts education budget (i.e., release time, curriculum development, and field trips) based on survey responses (Bell, 2014).

Attitudes around arts education

A number of these studies also surveyed participants about their beliefs and perceptions around arts education. Only a handful reported these results in the summary reports. These items include identifying which community groups support arts education, gauging interest in increasing arts integration learning opportunities, comparing the importance of the arts to other content areas, and rating perceptions of the impact of arts education on students. Given the small group of summary reports highlighting this type of data and the diversity in question type, it is not possible to summarize the findings across reports.

School and student outcomes

More than 40 percent of the reports addressed the relationship between the availability of and/or participation in arts education opportunities and desired school and student outcomes. Four of these studies collected perception data, asking survey respondents

about their impressions of the impact(s) arts education makes. Seven of the more recent studies (Cirillo 2008; Quadrant Research, 2012b; Coachman, 2010; Kelly, 2012; Scheuler, 2010; Quadrant Research, 2012a; Quadrant Research, 2012d) took a quantitative approach to study the relationship between arts education availability/participation and school performance measures (2 reports), test scores (6 reports), graduation rates (4 reports), drop out rates (4 report), behavior (1 report), attendance (1 report), and intended college attendance (1 report). These studies and others in the full set examined more of these outcomes in the full data table reports, but only reported key results in the summary reports.

TABLE 2. Summary reports that include specific school and student outcome findings.

	School performance measure	Test scores	Graduation rates	Drop-out rates	Attendance	Behavior	Intended college attendance
CO		X		X			
FL		X	X	X			
MI		X		X			
MN	X	X	X				
MO		X	X	X	X	X	
NJ		X					X
TX	X		X				

Policies

Approximately two-thirds of the reports address specific policy issues. Sometimes the authors used policy information as introductory or background information and other times used it to contextualize a set of findings. Within this subset of reports, most addressed graduation requirements (86 percent), followed by curriculum requirements (79 percent) and assessment practices (71 percent), standards adoption (64 percent), grade weighting issues (57 percent), and course requirements and teacher certification (21 percent). The other category includes policy language around arts as a core subject and both identifying and serving gifted students in the arts (see Table 3).

For more information about each state's arts education policies, please visit the Arts Education Partnership's policy database, ArtScan.

TABLE 3. Summary reports that include data supporting compliance with specific arts education policies.

	Teacher certification	Course requirements	Curriculum	Standards	Assessment	Grade weighting	Graduation requirements	Other
AK			X	X	X		X	
AZ	X		X	X	X	X	X	
CO						X	X	
IL							X	
KY			X	X	X	X		
MI	X		X	X	X	X	X	
MN	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
MS			X	X				
MO		X					X	
NH	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
NJ	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
OH			X	X	X	X	X	X
OR	X						X	
WA			X		X		X	
WI			X		X			
Western States			X	X	X			

STUDY APPROACHES

There have been different reasons for engaging in state arts education research over time. Some of these include quantifying a perceived decline in availability, ensuring equitable access for all students, and confirming compliance with state policies. There has been a particular post-recession focus on rearticulating the research-supported arguments for including the arts in schools. Most recently, researchers are taking advantage of data available from their state's department of education, particularly enumerating registered arts courses and student enrollment in these courses. These and other longitudinal data sets allow states to create a baseline for arts education availability and then track change over time. By linking availability and participation data to school and student outcomes, this new body of research continues to define a strong relationship between arts participation and school quality, attendance, behavior, academic achievement, graduation rates, and college attendance. In many ways, arts education research at the state level is following trends in the general education field,

utilizing large, longitudinal data sets and applying rigorous analysis practices. These quantitative methods are still often balanced with supplemental survey responses and less frequently with site visits. The following section paints a picture of research practice in this body of work.

Research teams and funders

Half of these efforts relied primarily on external evaluators/researchers. Other approaches included assembling collaborative research teams comprised of participants from the arts, education, and research fields (17 percent), an arts organization taking the lead (25 percent), and other (8 percent). State and regional arts agencies, local and national foundations, and Departments of Education provided the financial support for this research.

Participation rate

Administering voluntary surveys to school sites to collect data on how schools deliver arts education is a prevalent strategy. These surveys are often directed to the principals for completion. Schools returned surveys at participation rate ranging from 16 percent to 100 percent,[7] with a median participation rate of 31 percent (N = 14 reports). Five reports shared their participation rate both in terms of percentage of participating schools and also in terms of 1) percentage of student population represented by the sample[8] or 2) total number of students represented by the sample.[9] This additional student information contextualizes the reach of the participating schools and the weight of the results.

Reporting level

State reports presented findings most frequently (63 percent) by elementary, middle, and high schools. Additionally, 29 percent reported findings at the district levels and 17 percent included school results aggregated at the state level without further delineation. Colorado and Ohio included arts availability at the grade level in its main public report (Cirillo et al. 2008; Georges & Quadrant Research, 2011). Many other states collected this information and made it publicly available in supplemental documents.

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7 Researchers achieved this participation rate in New Jersey because the state commissioner of education mandated survey participation, resulting in full participation and a robust data set.

8 For example, the Alaska study reports that 59 percent of schools responded to the survey, representing 89 percent of the student population.

9 For example, the South Arts study reports an overall 29 percent school participation rate, representing 2.87 million students.

Methodological approaches

Using available longitudinal data

An important first step in any research endeavor is to determine what data is currently available that could shed light on your research questions. For example, Oregon and Texas conducted state arts education studies that relied entirely on available data (Collins, 2011; Coachman, 2010).[10] The Oregon researcher used staff assignment data from one school year to determine which stand-alone arts courses were offered. The researcher aggregated this teacher-level data to the school level and was able to compare school-level arts education offerings to other school variables. The Texas work also focused on a narrow, but powerful data set. In this case, the researchers calculated student enrollment in arts courses as annual, school-level percentages over a five-year period. Then they compared these participation rates to the school's academic ranking and graduation rate data from 2006–2009.

Creating a school survey tool

The recent increase in utilizing the state's department of education (DOE) data to inform arts education research is an important trend for the field. However, rarely can these robust longitudinal data sets provide all of the answers to important research questions. Most of the studies in this review relied on school survey responses (either solely or in combination with DOE data[11]) to collect more descriptive information about areas such as professional development, access to arts coordinators, attitudes regarding the arts, funding, and barriers implementing arts education programs.

Developing a composite school-level score for arts education

A methodological approach that is frequently utilized by Quadrant Research is to identify approximately 20 data points from the longitudinal and survey data to create an Arts Education Index, an overall arts education score for each school.[12] These composite scores combine a range of indicators measured in the study, such as courses offered, student participation, and arts specialists. The range of items included allows schools to get credit for all of the arts education investments they make. Once these scores are calculated, researchers can conduct a range of analyses including, but not limited to the identification of potential model arts schools for additional study and multivariant analysis comparing high and low performing arts schools against key education variables.

> "Using the state department of education data to inform arts education research is an important trend for the field."

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10 Both the Oregon and Texas studies relied entirely on data sets that schools and districts are already required to report; they did not supplement their research with school survey data.

11 The Ohio study was the first to combine longitudinal data with school survey data.

12 Quadrant Research first used this approach in the 2007 New Jersey study.

Case studies

Researchers took two main approaches to identifying model schools to examine for case studies. The first approach was to study a set of schools that a state agency had vetted, using specific criteria and expert raters, and awarded for excellence. Florida's Arts Achieve! Model Schools Critical Success Factors (2010) adopted this approach. Another method was for researchers to use school composite scores (described above) to identify schools with high scores and then select a subset of these for further study of best practices, as was the case in the second New Jersey study (2012).

Limitations

All research has limitations and a small group of these reports explicitly describe these. For example, the Wisconsin report underscores that the findings rely on district-level data and therefore may not accurately represent arts education availability because differences between schools are unknown (Quadrant Research, 2008). Take as a theoretical example, a school district that reports 50 percent of its schools offer at least one art form. It is possible that within this collection of schools, there is a school that offers no arts instruction and another school that offers five art forms. This type of variation can only be detected if a study includes school-level data.

The Oregon team used DOE data to determine what art courses schools offer and in which disciplines. Their report makes it clear that their findings only tell us about what courses were available and further study is required to determine how many students enroll in these courses (Collins, 2011).

As described in the previous section, research teams tackled measuring arts education availability and enrollment using two primary approaches, both of which have limitations. The studies relying primarily on survey responses are dependent both on a high response rate and representative school sample. Also, the survey approach depends on the fact that the respondent (often the principal or another administrator) has accurate information about the arts education at the school. The enumeration approach, counting the arts courses registered, arts specialist assignments, and student arts enrollment at each school using DOE data, is a more accurate approach to determining what is offered and who is participating. However, this latter approach is narrow in scope and cannot shed light on other key elements to a school's arts education program (e.g., community partnerships and professional development).

Another study limitation relates to arts integration. This is an emerging area of research and presents some measurement challenges. One barrier to measuring arts integration is that it is an instructional strategy and not a content course. This means that there is no systematized data collection effort in place as there is for course availability. Another obstacle is that, currently, educators do not have a common understanding of what arts

integration is and what it looks like in the classroom. In fact, even state studies that refer to arts integration do not consistently define it. It is incredibly difficult to measure a teacher practice via survey items if the strategy in question means something different to each respondent. It is insufficient to survey teachers or principals and ask them to what extent arts integration is utilized at their school.

# EMERGING TRENDS IN RECENT STATE ARTS EDUCATION STUDIES

Availability of arts education

Overall, a majority of schools studied in these reports offer at least one art course. The reported availability of some arts instruction averaged 88 percent, with a minimum of 77 percent and a maximum of 98 percent of schools offering some arts. Given the different sampling approaches the studies took, it is beyond the scope of this summary to compare results at a finer level of detail (e.g., by arts discipline, elementary, middle, and high school, etc.). However, as a whole the state and multi-state report findings align with the National Center for Education Statistic's report, Arts Education in Public Elementary and Secondary Schools: 1999-2000 and 2009-10 (2012). Visual arts and music are still the two dominant disciplines offered in public schools, while dance and theater are lagging. Media arts courses are increasingly available, particularly at the high school level. It follows that there is significantly more technology in use in high school arts courses than in elementary and middle schools. Artist residencies and arts integration efforts are most prevalent in elementary schools. For reports that compared charter schools to other public schools, charter schools consistently offered fewer arts opportunities across the five disciplines.[13]

Student enrollment typically follows two different patterns. The first is a descending staircase with the highest participation levels in elementary school when art classes are mandatory, a drop off in middle school when schools offer arts courses as electives, and a further drop off still in high school when typically only those who specialize in the arts continue. A trend is emerging in states that have implemented an arts graduation requirement. Here the participation rates resemble more of a backwards, diagonal "J" with high elementary school participation, a drop in middle school participation,

> "Visual arts and music are still the two dominant disciplines offered in public schools, while dance and theater are lagging."

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13 For example, the Oregon study reports that 16 percent of the public schools and 49 percent of the charter schools in its sample offer no instruction in any of the art form. New Jersey's second report also looked at charter schools comparatively.
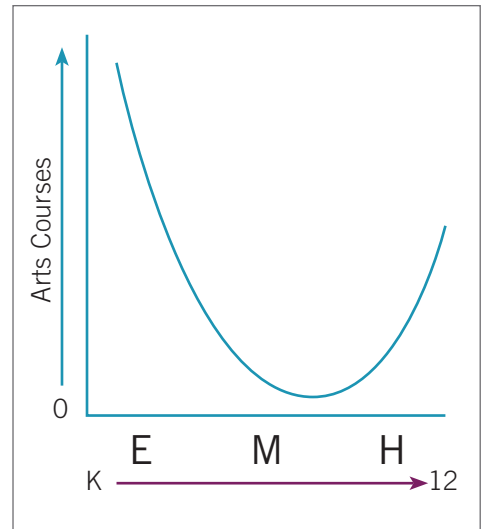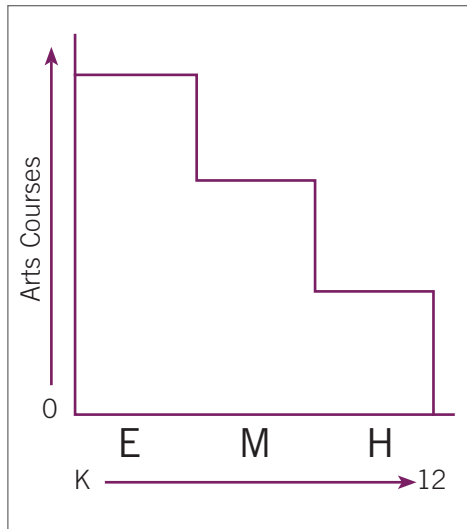
and an uptick in high school arts participation.[14] High schools are also more likely than elementary or middle schools to include three or more art disciplines in their programs.

The small amount of survey perception and availability data[15] along with case study findings[16] demonstrate that acceptance of arts integration as a viable teaching strategy is on the rise. This is particularly true at the elementary school level; where when asked, approximately 50 percent of schools reported implementing arts integration programs/curricula. Again, it is difficult to interpret this finding without a more robust arts integration measure.

School and student outcomes

School performance scores

Minnesota and Texas, among other reports, compared school-level arts education scores with their Annual Yearly Progress (AYP) equivalents (Quadrant Research, 2012b; Coachman, 2010). The Minnesota analysis revealed a higher arts education index score correlates to a component of the state's Multiple Measurement Rating. In Texas, higher enrollment in arts education courses at the school level correlates to higher Academic Rating scores on an annual basis, in addition to improvement over time (this study analyzed data from 2005–2010).

Test scores

The Colorado, Florida, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, New Jersey, and Texas reports published the relationship between arts education and academic achievement as

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14 This was first noted in the Wisconsin state study.

15 For examples, see the Louisiana, Minnesota, New Hampshire, and South Arts reports.

16 For examples, see the Florida and Montana reports.

measured by test scores (Cirillo et al., 2008; Kelly, 2012; Quadrant Research, 2012a; Quadrant Research, 2012b; Scheuler, 2010; Quadrant, 2012d; Coachman, 2010). Researchers found positive correlations with the following content areas: English language arts, writing, reading, math, science, and social studies.

Additional findings and analysis

Researchers also found positive relationships between arts education levels and graduation rates, behavior, attendance, drop out rates, and intended college attendance. These trends across reports reinforce the growing body of peer-reviewed research that articulates statistically significantly correlations between engagement in arts learning and desired outcomes. Five out of these six research teams engaged in additional statistical analysis to control for at least two of the following variables: percentage of minority students, socioeconomic status, school size, geography, and Title 1 status. These research findings are reported responsibly, indicating where results are significant, but small, clarifying where the analysis identified strong correlations in some areas, but not others, and defining the difference between correlational results and causal results.

Policy compliance

Throughout the state and multi-state reports, the authors align the findings to specific policies in place at the state level. For example, the Minnesota report contextualizes some results by noting that, "While access to arts programs is nearly universal (99 percent of schools) less than half of all middle and high schools and only 28 percent of elementary schools provide the required number of arts areas." When reviewing these reports as a whole, a number of policy-related trends emerge. For example, most states in this review have evidence that state standards in the arts have been adopted, however aligning curriculum to these standards is lagging.

TABLE 4. Examples of policy compliance frequencies included in summary reports.

	Regular arts courses weighted equally	Advanced arts courses weighted equally	Arts courses included in GPA	Arts used in determining honor roll
AZ	39 %	12 %	-	-
CO	-	-	96 %	-
KY	-	-	94 %	96 %
MI	87 %	65 %	-	-
MN*	94 %	82 %	-	-
NH	-	50 %	-	-
NJ	91 %	-	-	-
OH	84 %	-	-	-
Percentages represent high schools only.				

Graduation requirement

Researchers studied how many schools had established arts graduation requirements and also measured existing graduation requirements against state policy when in place. The Colorado report concludes that 57 percent of schools require a minimum of one art credit for graduation and the Illinois report notes that 80 percent of high schools do not have an arts requirement for graduation (Cirillo et al., 2008). New Jersey tracked the percentage of schools in compliance with its one-year of coursework in the arts requirement (Quadrant Research, 2012). This increased from 83 percent in 2006 to 97 percent in 2011. Oregon results uncovered that only five high schools had enrolled students in arts courses that students could use for credit towards a new career-oriented graduation requirement (Collins, 2011). When taken as a whole, states perform unevenly in their ability to meet the established graduation requirements. This may in part be due to new and changing graduation requirements generally and in the arts specifically.

Assessment

A recent WestEd report sheds light on the reality that not nearly enough formal, high-quality assessment occurs in K–12 arts classrooms (WestEd, 2010). The state and multi-state reports that tracked assessment practices support the findings from this national study. Specifically state level reporting of schools' district-developed assessment usage ranges from 10–64 percent, while reliance on teacher-developed assessments ranged from 53–88 percent, and 6–23 percent reported no assessment practice.

Grade weighting

Results around grade weighting are reported in relatively similar ways across the reports that study this policy issue. Within the group of states that studied grade weighting, a high percentage of schools (more than 80 percent) weighted regular arts courses equally (see Table 4). This number then dips as it relates to weighting advanced courses, particularly when determining class rank and honor roll.

A FRAMEWORK FOR ENGAGING IN STATE-LEVEL ARTS EDUCATION RESEARCH

What to study

The first step in any research endeavor is refining the research questions. What do you want to know? What is already known? Most of these state arts education studies relied on the expertise of researchers to lead, guide, or facilitate the process. Skilled researchers can guide practitioners through the process of answering these questions and designing a robust and manageable research effort.

Given that a growing body of state and multi-state studies exists, any future work in this area is no longer an isolated effort. Therefore it is important that future project not only consider what is important to learn about for a state or multi-state effort, but also how this new research relates the work that has come before. The multi-state study conducted by South Arts does this by using the national arts availability averages (in the aforementioned National Center for Education Statistics report) as a benchmark for the Southern region and individual Southern state results (Bell, 2014).[17]

On a similar note, the researchers of the current set of studies either explicitly identify areas for future study or their findings lend themselves to emerging research questions. Future state and multi-state studies could consider exploring the following research areas as part of their work:

- Tracking fuller implementation of arts integration approaches, particularly at the elementary school level.

- Tracking the roll out of media arts classes, particularly at the high school level.

- Controlling for school size, since it is the strongest predictor of arts education availability.[18]

- Identifying and building a body of validated arts assessments at the state level.

- Comparing the median income of school districts and the availability of arts education.

- Comparing levels of arts education availability/participation and teachers measures (e.g., teacher preparation and evaluation).

> "Once a team establishes a new or iterative research project with clearly defined research questions, the next step is to determine first, what data is already available that could answer these questions and second, what are the information gaps?"

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17 Additionally, Minnesota compares its data regarding multi-year partnerships with cultural organizations to results from Ohio, Michigan, and New Jersey (p. 19) and Oregon contextualizes its pre-service education requirements to the countrywide picture (p. 7).

18 For example, see the 2012 New Jersey study.

- Studying student subpopulations with known little to no access and identifying barriers.

- Study schools or districts that are known to have unique features, such as the most rural.[19]

- Determining the relative significance of outside financial support (most typically provided by PTA/PTO and local arts agencies) as compared to the total arts education budget at the school level.

How to study

Once a team establishes a new or iterative research project with clearly defined research questions, the next step is to determine first, what data is already available that could answer these questions and second, what are the information gaps? Available data may be accessed at the school, district, or state level. Identifying the appropriate contacts, getting permission to access the targeted data, receiving the data, and cleaning the data for the purpose of a specific research effort is certainly time consuming. However, enumerating this kind of data is more reliable than asking administrators to thoroughly and accurately describe the arts education programs at their schools. Also, once this process is set up, it can be repeated with increasing efficiencies. Finally, starting with available data means that should you decide to go down the path of developing survey, interview, or site visit instruments, you could use the initial data collection and analysis process to develop strategic and nuanced questions for the second data collection phase. When designing a second phase of study, gathering new data that will align with this initial data set should be strongly considered. If the first stage analysis accesses data which covers the majority of a state, yet the second phase reaches less 50 percent of the state, a clear comparison is not possible. As mentioned earlier, New Jersey achieved a high participation rate by making the survey mandatory; this tact should be considered for emulation in future studies.

What available data can answer the research questions? How can we access it?	What are the information gaps? What supplemental data collection protocols do we need to design?
DATA THAT MAY BE AVAILABLE TODAY School performance data School budget Number of FT and PT arts specialists on staff Teacher assignment data Student enrollment	STUDY TOPICS THAT WILL LIKELY REQUIRE SUPPLEMENTAL DATA COLLECTION Professional development Partnerships with cultural organizations Funding beyond the school budget Grade weighting Arts integration

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19 For example, see the Wisconsin and Oklahoma studies.

In addition to considering starting or continuing this work by focusing on available data, new projects in particular may want to consider the scale of the project. For example, the Oregon researcher began by studying readily available data at the district level (Collins, 2011). This was still a sizeable effort, but a manageable one. Future arts education studies in Oregon will certainly use this work as a point of departure.

Future research efforts could benefit from the following advances:

- Create course codes for media arts in elementary and middle schools.
- Create course codes for dance classes that are currently taught under physical education course codes.
- Create an industry standard for per pupil spending on arts education.
- Work towards creating more DOE data sharing agreements so researchers can access better student-level data.

How to share

It becomes clear rather quickly when reading these state reports that the authors are telling a story. Many of these reports have clear messages and recommendations targeted to specific readers–policymakers, district and school leadership, funders, community organizations, and families. This closing section offers some recommendations for crafting future stories as educators, artists, and researchers continue collaborating on these studies.

Presenting your data

Most of the reports in recent years contextualize the results in a number of ways. These include articulating what all schools are expected to do based on the current state arts education policies, presenting compelling research-based evidence about the benefits of arts education, and a history of arts education in the state (some of these go back to the 1800s).

The following are some recommendations for presenting results:

- It is helpful to present participation rates in data collection efforts both as a percentage of schools or district who responded and as a percentage of the student population represented by the sample.
- Most states are presenting public school data only. When considering including charter and private schools in a study, it would be helpful to present results by school category. This would allow for easier comparisons to other work. Also, there is emerging evidence that charter schools are less likely to offer arts education courses than other public schools.

- Student enrollment in dance and theater will likely be low and need to be contextualized by the availability of these courses.

- High school student participation rates can look deceptively low since data reflects enrollment in a single year, while these students typically have four years to meet their arts course requirement.

Tone was inconsistent across the state and multi-state reports. There were numerous examples of a positive finding (e.g., 87 percent of schools offer at least one art discipline) being presented with an emphasis on the negative aspect (e.g., 13 percent of schools not offering arts instruction). Reports that primarily framed all findings in "what is in place" language versus "what is lacking" language read as stronger pieces. When there are findings that require attention, these can be highlighted further. For example, for each finding where there is need for improvement in the Missouri report, the authors cite arts education research to underscore why action is necessary (Scheuller, 2010). Likewise, the Washington report included sections highlighting "Markers of Quality" and ways to "Take Action" for each area studied. These additions to the report offer a clear view of what is being done well and what can be improved (AERI, 2009).

Showing your story

The amount of possible graphs and other visual aids that organize data with this research is vast. The reports reviewed in this study ranged in their length and intended audience, which influenced the visual presentation. The following are only two examples from this sample that represent powerful and clear ways of communicating complex findings.

First, Minnesota's report organizes the finding by state policy with the policies on the left and the results (evidence of compliance) on the right. This arrangement (seen below) works in the body of the report, but would also serve well as a stand-alone piece (Quadrant Research, 2012b).
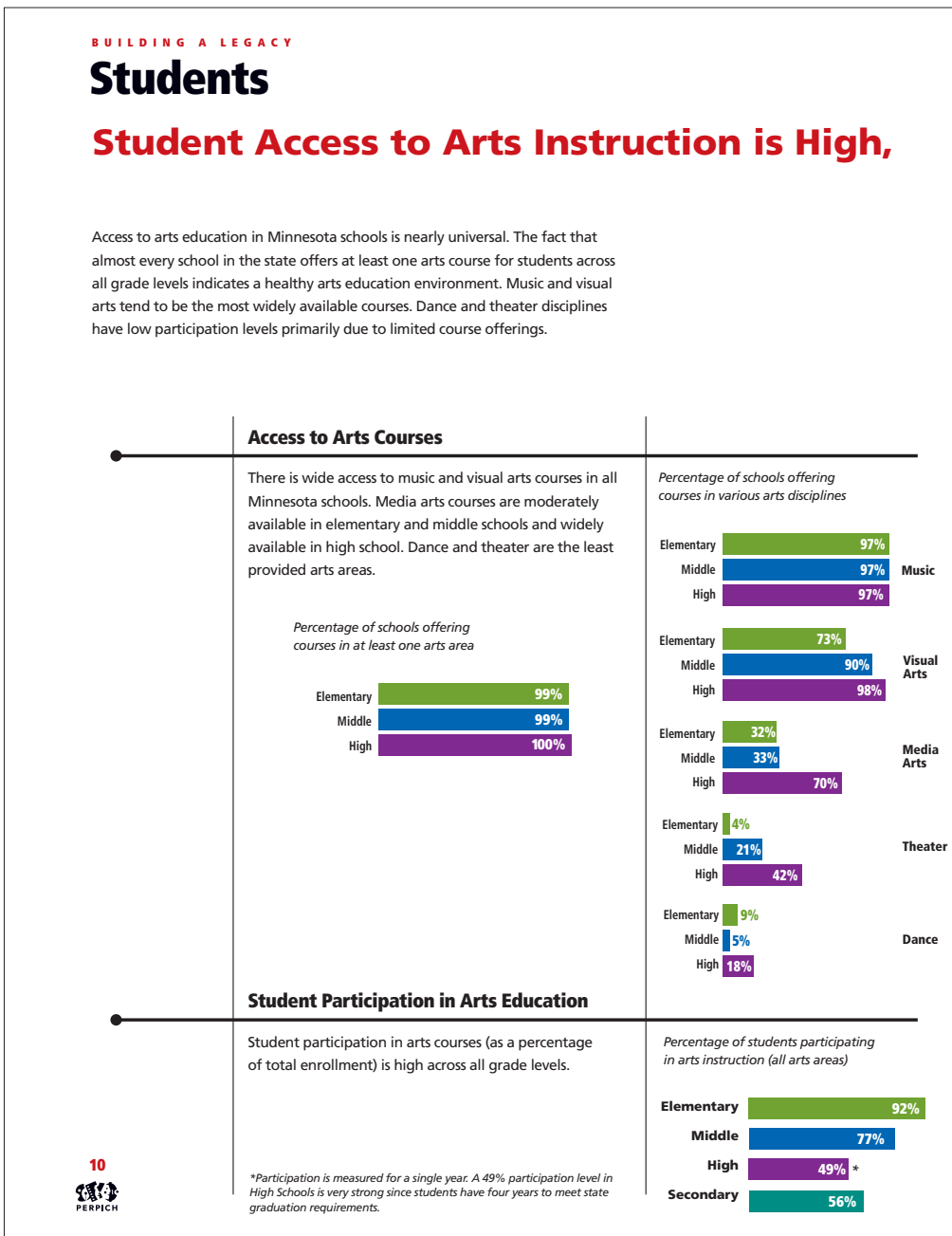
Second, Oregon's report (seen below) includes a two-page spread with the art disciplines running down the right-hand side and availability results organized by all schools, elementary schools, middle schools, and high schools running across (Collins, 2011). Many of the reports included compelling photographs of arts education in action.

Findings: by Arts Discipline

Middle Schools	High Schools	
95% of middle schools provided coursework in music and **97%** of students attended a middle school where music was taught.	**68%** of high school provided coursework in music and **89%** of students attended a high school where music was taught.	Music
72% of middle schools provided coursework in visual arts and **80%** of students attended a middle school where visual arts were taught.	The visual arts were the most common discipline taught at the high school level, with **76%** of high school providing visual arts instruction and **93%** of students attending a high school where visual arts were taught.	Visual Arts
29% of middle schools provided coursework in theater and **34%** of students attended a middle school where theater was taught.	**44%** of high school provided coursework in theater and **76%** of students attended a high school where theater was taught.	Theater
At the middle school level, there is no National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course code to recognize instruction in dance, though dance may be incorporated into specialized units of physical education.	**11%** of high school provided instruction in dance and **23%** of students attended a high school where dance was taught.	Dance
At the middle school level, there is no National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) course code to recognize instruction in media arts, though one school, Yamhill Carlton Intermediate School, reported instruction in Digital Media Design.	**51%** of high school provided instruction in media arts and **70%** of students attended a high school where media arts are taught.	Media Arts

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The combined report for the four western states of Idaho, Montana, Utah and Wyoming provides both clear quantitative data shown in graphs and charts (see below); as well as compelling portraiture of four exemplary programs, including descriptions and photos—an example of which is included on the next page (Bothell, 2010).

Table V: Teachers Used to Teach Music

	Idaho	Montana	Utah	Wyoming
Specialists with a College Degree in the Art Form	69%	64%	40%	67%
Classroom Teachers With Arts Primary Assignments	10%	24%	26%	19%
Paraprofessionals or Prep-Time Specialists	5%	2%	11%	4%
Volunteers/Parents With Arts Interest or Experience	15%	8%	22%	9%
Artists	1%	2%	1%	1%

Table W: Teachers Used to Teach Theatre

	Idaho	Montana	Utah	Wyoming
Specialists with a College Degree in the Art Form	50%	22%	26%	53%
Classroom Teachers With Arts Primary Assignments	21%	55%	40%	4%
Paraprofessionals or Prep-Time Specialists	5%	7%	8%	17%
Volunteers/Parents With Arts Interest or Experience	15%	15%	22%	22%
Artists	9%	0%	4%	4%

SAEA Four-State Arts-Education Survey 2009-2010

Source: Bothell Assessment and Research and WESTAF 2010

"With arts integration we're getting kids out of the box that we've put them in and we're letting them use the creative side of their brains to figure things out," she continues. "They are learning how to learn. It has been amazing."

Building relationships

These arts education state studies represent hard work completed by diverse stakeholders working together. Many of the reports took full advantage of these relationships in their research efforts and in print. Consider the possibilities the final manuscript provides for strengthening an important relationship by asking a leader who is new to your coalition to write the introduction. The partners involved in organizing, executing, and funding these research efforts are responsible for the high quality level of the work. The reports themselves are opportunities to celebrate these partnerships and make them public to promote the research and inspire change.

Each phase of a state-level arts education study presents moments to engage and partner with new and diverse stakeholders. From the research design, implementation, and analysis phases, to the report writing and dissemination, presenting a clear picture of arts education across the country with compelling data points serves as a strong call to action to work towards the best learning opportunities for all students.

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APPENDIX: LIST OF REPORTS INCLUDED IN THIS REVIEW

SINGLE STATE REPORTS	
Alaska	Alaska Council on the Arts, & Alaska Arts Education Consortium. (2009). *On Thin Ice: Arts Education in Alaska Schools* View report online.
Arizona	Quadrant Research. (2010). *Engaging Students, Supporting Schools, Accessing Arts Education: Highlights from the Arizona Arts Education Census* View report online.
California	Quadrant Research. (2004). *Sound of Silence—The Unprecedented Decline of Music Education in California Schools.* View report online. SRI International, commissioned by the Hewlett Foundation. (2007). *An Unfinished Canvas, Arts Education in California: Taking Stock of Policies and Practices.* View report online.
Colorado	Cypress Research Group. (2008). *Colorado Visual and Performing Arts Education Survey Statistical Report.* View report online.
Florida	Rosoff, Susan. (2010). *Arts Achieve! Model Schools Critical Success Factors.* View report online. Kelly, Steven. (2012). *A Comparison of Cohort Data From 2007-2008 to 2010-2011 Regarding Fine Arts-Related Instruction's Influence on Academic Success,* Florida Music Director. View report online.
Illinois	Cypress Research Group & Illinois Creates. (2005). *Arts at the Core: Every School, Every Student.* View report online.
Kansas	Kansas Arts Commission Arts Education Survey, 2009. View report online.
Kentucky	Collaborative for Teaching and Learning. (2005). *Status of Arts Education in Kentucky Public Schools: Final Report.* View report online.
Louisiana	Kid smart & Louisiana Department of Culture, Recreation & Tourism. (2009) *Division of the Arts Louisiana Arts Education School Survey.* View public survey online. View school leader survey online.
Michigan	Michigan Youth Arts & Quadrant Research. (2012) View report online.
Minnesota	Quadrant Research. (2012) *Building a Legacy.* View report online.
Mississippi	Mississippi Alliance for Arts Education. (2007). *Mapping the Future of Arts Education.* View report online.
Missouri	Alliance for Arts Education & Missouri Arts Council. (2010). View report online.

New Hampshire	Quadrant Research. (2012). *Measuring Up: New Hampshire Arts Education Data Project Report.* View report online.
New Jersey	Quadrant Research (2007). *Within Our Power: The Progress, Plight and Promise of Arts Education for Every Child.* View report online. Quadrant Research. (2012) *Keeping the Promise, Arts Education for Every Child: The Distanced Traveled – The Journey Remaining.* View report online.
Oklahoma	Quadrant Research. (2010) *Scratching the Surface: What We Know – And Don't Know – About Music Education in Oklahoma.* View report online.
Ohio	Georges, Corwin & Quadrant Research. (2011). *Status of Arts Education in Ohio's Public Schools. Ohio Alliance for Arts Education.* View report online.
Oregon	Collins, Sarah. (2011). *Access to the Arts in Oregon Schools.* View report online.
Rhode Island	The Governor's Task Force. (2001). *Literacy in the Arts: A Framework for Action.* View report online.
Texas	Frank Coachman, Deputy Director, Texas Music Educators Association, & Texas Coalition for Quality Arts Education. (2010). T*he Relationships between Fine Arts Course Enrollment and Middle School and High School Academic Ratings, Campus Rating Improvement and Graduation Rates in Texas Public Schools.* View report online.
Washington	AERI Research. (2009). *K-12 Arts Education: Every Student, Every School, Every Year,* 2009 View report online.
Wisconsin	Quadrant Research. (2008). *Arts Education in Wisconsin Public Schools: A preliminary review.* View report online.
MULTI-STATE REPORTS	
South Arts	Bell, Alan. (2014). *Arts Education in the South.* A South Arts Research Publication. – [Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee] View report online.
Western States Arts Federation	Western States Arts Federation & Bothell Assessment. (2010). *Statewide Arts Education Assessment – [Idaho, Montana, Utah, and Wyoming]* View report online.

All of these reports are available online at: www.AmericansForTheArts.org/SP3

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