

County Arts Commission Unveils Findings from K-12 Arts Ed Profile

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The Los Angeles County Arts Commission has released findings from an 18-month survey of arts education in K-12 public schools.

The Arts Ed Profile was administered to all 2,277 schools across LA County, including 81 districts, four charter school networks as well as a few individual charter schools.

It represents data from the 2015-17 academic years and identifies the breadth and distribution of arts education in Los Angeles County.

In addition to the report, the LACAC has created an online Arts Ed Profile tool, which allows users to explore the data for themselves.

Some of the report's key findings include:

- * Arts instruction is offered in nearly every school in LA County and most schools offer two or more disciplines, but very few schools in the County offer year-long arts instruction to all students.

- * In general, the quantity of arts instruction is higher in elementary grades (PreK-8), while the quality of instruction is higher in secondary grades (9-12).

* Grades 7-8 are the peak years for arts instruction. During those years, instruction in all artistic disciplines is offered at nearly every school.

* Teaching artists and arts nonprofits play a critical role in arts education, providing instruction in more than half of all public schools in LA County.

* Equity continues to be a challenge in arts education. English learners, students on free and reduced-price meals (a proxy for low income) and students of color tend to receive less arts instruction and at a lower quality than their counterparts—especially in elementary grades.

The findings from this report were released as part of the “Arts Now: LA County Arts Education Summit” at the Japanese American National Museum in downtown Los Angeles.

The summit marked 15 years of coordinated efforts in arts education for the county and was co-presented by the LA County Arts Ed Collective, the California Alliance for Arts Education, Arts for LA and the Los Angeles County Arts Commission.

The event was part of the statewide Arts Now Campaign, which works to shed light on school districts and counties that are currently working to improve the quality of student education through the arts, and to encourage others to prioritize arts education in a K-12 educational setting.

Over the course of the day, the event acknowledged the history of arts education in LA County, looked forward to its future and sought to answer the question: How do we move as a collective community toward scale and equity for all students?

Supervisor Hilda L. Solis provided closing remarks for the morning’s plenary session and Los Angeles County Board of Education President Alex Johnson delivered the keynote address.

Attendees took part in a full day of discussions and workshops addressing scale and equity. Workshop highlights included discussions about increasing arts access for English learners, exploring inclusive arts educational practices, the role of data in arts education and a forum in which students were able to voice their experience with issues of advocacy and engagement.

The day concluded with a collective conversation and reception that aimed to both revisit bright spots from the day’s discussions and to explore how the efforts of individual artists, teachers, communities and districts can become the achievements of the whole.

The day also featured a live performance by Pasadena USD’s Marshal Fundamental Secondary School Jazz Band and dancers from LAUSD’s Marina Del Rey Middle School, as well as readings of poems written in response to the day’s event by members of the Melrose Poetry Bureau.

Now in its 15th year, the LA County Arts Education Collective (formerly Arts for All) is dedicated to making the arts core in K-12 public education. In addition to providing professional development to arts educators and administrators, making grants to school districts and providing other support to the arts education community, the Arts Ed Collective also works to measure the quantity, quality and equity of arts education in public schools.

The Los Angeles County Arts Commission fosters excellence, diversity, vitality, understanding and accessibility of the arts in Los Angeles County. The Arts Commission provides leadership in cultural services for the County, encompassing 88 municipalities and nearly 140 unincorporated areas, including funding and job opportunities, professional development and general resources. Visit lacountyarts.org.