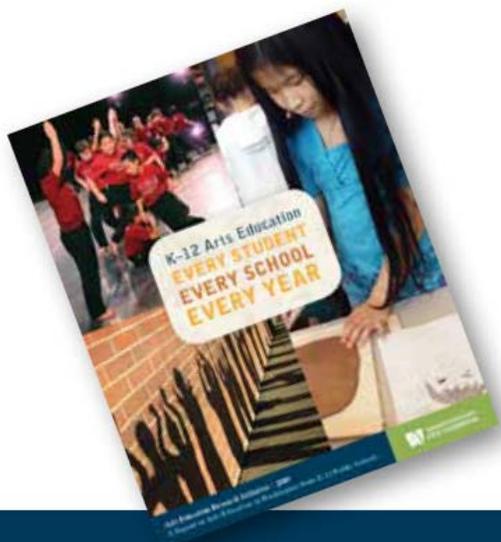


K-12 Arts Education EVERY STUDENT EVERY SCHOOL EVERY YEAR



Action Agendas & Markers of Quality

On the following pages are suggestions for improving arts learning (Take Action) and the best practices (Markers of Quality) excerpted from the Washington State Arts Commission's 2009 Arts Education Research Initiative publication, *K-12 Arts Education: Every Student, Every School, Every Year*.



Read the full report at:

www.arts.wa.gov/education/aeri.shtml

TAKE ACTION

How can we address the gap between policy and practice in order to ensure consistent arts education opportunities for all students?

Improve access to arts curricula

- Share resources. Schools, districts, and funders can work together to make written arts curricula accessible to all teachers.
- Encourage local school boards to adopt district-wide arts curriculum that aligns with state standards.

Measure what students learn

- Build statewide support for assessment of student learning in the arts by advocating for continuing development of assessment tools and approaches.
- Train teachers to conduct, document, and report arts assessments—and use the results to improve instruction.

Support arts teachers

- Provide resources to support arts specialists, including increased staffing budgets, planning time and professional development.
- Increase arts education training and certification opportunities in colleges and universities.

Advance arts partnerships

- Support collaboration between schools and cultural organizations in which resources can be shared to support common educational goals.
- Develop long-term partnerships that support sequential arts learning aligned with state standards.

Leverage sustainable funding

- Establish and support specific line items for arts education within school and district budgets.
- Engage the community and local stakeholders in safeguarding arts funding by communicating the importance of resources for arts education.

SCHEDULING

Take action

- Share effective scheduling techniques at elementary and secondary levels.
 - Increase arts learning opportunities in elementary and middle school to build demand and readiness for arts instruction in later grades.
 - Cross-credit arts classes with other core classes in high school.
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CURRICULUM

Markers of quality

To provide strong instruction in the arts, teachers need curricula that include:

- *A Clear Scope* that identifies what to teach – the specific arts concepts, skills, techniques and processes
- *A Sequence* that presents an order for teaching concepts and skills
- *Teaching Strategies* that suggest how to present content in multiple ways
- *Alignment* between instruction and state learning goals
- *Reviews* at regularly scheduled, district-level evaluations

Take action

- Share curriculum resources; identify and distribute effective curricula and develop new resources collaboratively.
- Provide training and build teacher capacity to develop effective curricula.
- Develop integrated approaches—including elementary curriculum that makes authentic connections between the arts and other core subjects as well as secondary courses where the arts and Career and Technical Education (CTE) courses are cross-credited.
- Engage local school boards in support of district-wide arts curricula that align with state learning goals.

ASSESSMENTS

Markers of quality

Effective assessments of arts learning include:

- *Clear criteria and indicators* for teachers and students to use in assessing student work
- *Formative and summative assessments* that are an ongoing, embedded part of the teaching and learning process for both teachers and students
- *Varied assessment strategies*, such as checklists, rubrics, self-assessment, peer critique and portfolios
- *Alignment* with state learning goals in the arts
- *Student-focused approaches* in which students are engaged in and understand the assessment process
- *Feedback loops* in which assessment results are shared with students, families, districts, and stakeholders at the local and state level.

Take action

- Track results at classroom, school, district, and state levels; use results to inform curriculum approaches and teaching practices.
- Train educators on how to plan and conduct valid and reliable assessments, and how to document, report, and use the results.
- Recognize students as the primary users of assessments, making sure they get ongoing feedback on their progress.
- Use technology to enhance assessment opportunities; consider new media tools for easier documentation and sharing of student work.
- Build statewide support for assessments and advocate for continued development of strong assessment tools and reporting approaches.

STAFFING

Markers of quality

Schools that attract and retain qualified arts specialists offer the following.

- *Leadership opportunities* for arts specialists, and expectations that they will be collaborative partners in meeting state standards, curriculum integration efforts, and school improvement teams
- *Balanced scheduling* that allows arts staff sufficient time to teach arts curriculum
- *Common planning time* so that arts specialists and other classroom teachers can plan curriculum collaboratively
- *Performance evaluations* and professional development opportunities, on par with those offered for teachers of other core subjects

Take action

- Identify and expand university programs that train qualified arts educators in dance, music, theatre, and visual arts.
- Train district administrators and principals in how they can support arts specialists in multiple arts disciplines in elementary and secondary schools.
- Develop recruitment strategies to ensure that existing arts positions remain filled.
- Support the work of highly qualified teaching artists as a complement to staff arts specialists and as providers of professional development.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Markers of quality

Effective professional development for teaching in the arts includes:

- *In-depth instruction* over time, rather than one-time workshops
- *Multiple strategies*, such as coaching, mentored practice, and modeling
- *Varied content*, including curriculum design, arts concepts and, skills, performance-based assessments, and arts integration
- *Alignment* with state learning standards
- *College credit* or clock hours for teachers
- *Accessible scheduling*, with programs offered regionally and regularly

Take action

- Support and develop sequential professional development in the arts, including best practices in skill-building, curriculum development, and criteria-based assessment practices.
- Provide on-the-job professional development, including coaching and feedback.
- Develop training for all teachers of the arts, so that arts specialists, classroom generalists, and teaching artists have consistent understanding of student learning goals.
- Offer professional development locally and throughout the state.
- Convene higher education institutions and continuing education providers to strengthen education in the arts for future teachers.

COLLABORATION

Markers of Quality

In an effective collaboration between educators, artists, and arts organizations, partners work together on:

- *Shared educational goals* that align with state standards and ensure partnership programs are focused on student learning in the arts
- *Curriculum* that is developed collaboratively between teaching artists, classroom teachers, schools, and organizations
- *Mentorships* and coaching relationships that provide professional development opportunities for classroom teachers and teaching artists
- *Resource Development*, which includes joint efforts for securing financial and other resources

Take Action

- Identify potential local partners who work in the arts, cultural, and education organizations, and opportunities for sharing resources among these organizations.
- Expand and replicate effective partnership models that are successful locally and nationally
- Pursue long-term projects, such as full-year partnerships, and professional development programs, rather than short-term or one-time experiences.
- Capitalize on cultural arts opportunities present in and reflective of the local community; consider schools' family engagement goals and opportunities for engaging diverse family populations through the arts.
- Share evidence of success with education leaders and policy makers when involved in a productive partnership.

FUNDING

Markers of quality

In an effective funding structure, schools and districts include:

- *Line items for arts education* within school budgets designed to preserve and expand arts funding
- *Sustainable funding* that is consistent year to year
- *Balanced funding for the arts* that proportionally allocates funds for the arts instruction and resources
- *Staffing budgets* that specifically support arts specialists
- *Maintenance budgets* to ensure the availability of the arts equipment and supplies needed to meet curriculum expectations

Take action

- Identify opportunities for collaboration with other schools and with local arts organizations in order to both share resources and seek joint funding.
- Educate local policy makers in support of a dedicated, consistent funding stream to support arts learning.
- Seek arts grants from local, state, federal, corporate, and foundation resources to supplement—but not supplant—line items for the arts.
- Build community awareness of the importance of funding for arts education, then involve the community in safeguarding that funding.

TAKE ACTION * Everyone can play a role

Educators, parents, cultural organizations, policy makers, funders, and community leaders can all play a role in achieving ongoing, in-depth, and consistent arts education for all K-12 students.

Schools and school districts

- Establish clear, long-term plans for advancing arts education.
- Support and advocate for state and local policies that support these efforts.
- Develop arts education committees to plan, implement, and monitor arts education policies and programs; include teachers, school leaders, parents, and community advocates in these efforts.
- Establish guidelines for minimum funding levels and staffing requirements to fully support arts instruction, curriculum development, professional development, materials, and planning time.

Principals and teaching faculty

- Adopt flexible schedules that provide time for arts education within the regular school day.
- Provide common planning time for arts educators and classroom teachers to develop connections between different areas of classroom curriculum.
- Work with parents to increase community understanding and support for arts education.

State partners and funders

- Establish and support policies that advance arts education for every Washington student.
- Provide professional development for principals and teachers in arts education implementation.
- Evaluate ongoing statewide progress in arts education at regular intervals using the baseline established in AERI research, as well as OSPI assessment implementation reports.
- Educate policy makers, boards, and the business community about the central role of the arts in basic education.
- Identify public and private funds to support and increase effective, systemic approaches for arts education.

Cultural organizations

- Work with schools and districts to develop long-term, sustainable partnerships characterized by collaborative planning, in-depth arts learning, and ongoing assessment.
- Showcase successful school partnerships and advocate for K-12 arts education as part of the regular school day.
- Train organization staff and teaching artists to work collaboratively in the K–12 environment and provide professional development in the arts for classroom teachers.

Parents, families, and community members

- Find out which arts disciplines are being taught at which grade levels in the schools in your area. Support successful programs and advocate for new programs to address needs.
- Encourage schools to develop demonstrations of arts learning to share with the school community.
- Talk to educators, school board members, and other policy makers about the benefits of arts learning that you've witnessed in your own family members.

Partners at all levels

- Report regularly on growth in arts education at all levels and share information with students, families, local and statewide community members, arts education advocates, and legislators.
- Work together as partners with a common goal: arts education for every student, at every school, every year.