



EVALUATION REPORT

THE CREATIVE ADVANTAGE YEAR 4 EVALUATION REPORT

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Executive Summary

The Creative Advantage is a city-wide initiative to establish equitable access to arts education for all students in Seattle Public Schools. It is made possible through a public-private partnership with Seattle Public Schools, the City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Foundation, and community arts organizations. Implementation of The Creative Advantage began in 2013 in its first pathway – the Central Arts Pathway (CAP) – with 13 schools. Over the past five years, The Creative Advantage has expanded to over 40 schools in the district, with the goal of reaching all Seattle Public Schools.

This Year 4 evaluation focuses on several desired outcomes of The Creative Advantage during the 2016-17 school year, including increasing access to high quality arts classes, increasing equity across the district, impacting student learning, and supporting teachers in integrating the arts by providing focused professional development opportunities. During this fourth year of implementation, The Creative Advantage evaluation focused on three research questions:

Question 1: To what extent does student participation in the arts change over time?

Question 2: To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills and culturally responsive instruction change over time?

Question 3: What are the emerging promising practices?

The Creative Advantage initiative continues to establish that the arts are a critical component of basic education for all students in Seattle.

As part of the evaluation process, researchers conducted classroom observations at all pathway schools, to explore the impact of The Creative Advantage on 21st Century learning, instructional practice, and student engagement. These school visits, in addition to interviews with program leaders and school stakeholders, revealed a wide range of procedures, practices, and levels of engagement present during the 2016-2017 school year. One arts team leader shared, “This year we are going deeper and wider. It’s not about a particular unit, lesson plan, or class, but about creating a school atmosphere...we are trying to create an entire school where every kid feels comfortable and challenged.” Another noted, “The big theme for us has been equity, and equal access to arts. We are a very diverse population, but we are segregated. We want to learn how to use the arts as a way of desegregating.”

There were several promising findings uncovered during this fourth year evaluation process, including:

- Clear evidence of 21st Century Skills in 42% of the Central Arts Pathway classrooms that were visited in 2016, compared to 34% in 2015, and 23% in 2014. There was also evidence of an increase in student perseverance, culturally responsive teaching, and critical thinking.



- Greater reach of the arts to students. As a result of increased investments in the arts through the efforts of The Creative Advantage and Seattle Public Schools, over 5,000 students are receiving music instruction from a certificated music teacher. There is qualitative and quantitative evidence of increased awareness and presence of arts in school buildings.
- Continued evidence of robust relationships with many of the community arts partners on the approved roster.
- A city- and district-wide investment in professional development focused on the arts. One program leader explained, “We have opportunities for teachers across the district. Many program stakeholders communicated that partnerships formed as a result of The Creative Advantage helped their school, ‘to access the cultural connection for our students and make school more meaningful and interesting – giving them opportunities to express their individual likes and interests.’”

In this fourth year evaluation, the impact and growing reach of The Creative Advantage can be seen in three specific places: in positive trends regarding access to the arts, in trends seen regarding the implementation of 21st Century skills instruction, and in emerging promising practices.

One positive trend in arts access can be seen through student course-taking patterns. These patterns in general show steadiness in arts enrollments for the past five years, with some schools showing great increases within the past three years. The CAP, during the 2016-2017, showed especially promising growth. In the CAP, there had been a three-year consecutive drop in the total number of arts classes taken, until the 2015-2016 school year when the pattern reversed. From 2014-2015 to 2015-2016, the number of arts classes taken rose by 1%, and from 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, the number of arts classes taken increased by 3.6%. In this most recent year, increases were seen in both Music enrollments (2% increase) and Visual Arts (10% increase). This was the first year in five consecutive years that increases in the number of classes taken were experienced in both Music and Visual Arts.

Along with these successes, there remain areas for focused improvement. Transcript analysis of course-taking trends for arts courses reveal that there are continued patterns in both elementary and secondary schools that reveal persistent over- and under-representations of certain racial groups in certain arts disciplines. There continue to be deep differences in equitable representations of racial groups especially in music, and these patterns of over- or under-representation seem to remain entrenched, with racial groups rarely moving from one designation to another. There also seems to be a pattern within schools that when a racial group is under-represented in music, it is over-represented in visual arts, and vice versa. Reasons for these patterns might vary from one school to another, but evaluators recommend reviews of course schedules, offerings, and supports

Executive Summary

when these patterns are present in a school. These are discussed in more detail in the section regarding Focus 1: Impact on Arts Access.

Successful growth was also seen in the number of 21st Century skills evident in classroom instruction and interactions. Not only were there more classrooms with clear evidence of these practices (51% in 2017 versus 34% in 2015), but all indicators showed improvement during this time. Additionally, teachers, administrators, and arts partners all expressed experiences of students demonstrating these skills, building capacity to problem solve and challenging themselves to grow in their arts efficacy.

Finally, the impact and reach of the initiative could be seen in systemic shifts that were taking place in districts and in schools. The energy and efforts flowing from The Creative Advantage initiative contributed to a continued system-wide emphasis on arts education in SPS. This systemic change in SPS has focused on improving basic education in the arts through new staffing and budgeting procedures, through moving schools closer to recommended number of arts instructional minutes for students, and through a commitment by district leaders to support the continuance of the initiative in future years.

In addition to these strengths, there are a number of challenges that continue regarding implementation and sustainability of The Creative Advantage. Overall, these occur in struggles with prioritization of the arts, staffing, time, communication, procedures, and sustainability. However, because every school, pathway, and district can structure The Creative Advantage to best fit its needs, these struggles manifest differently in individual schools. For this reason, an intentional structure for sharing experience, wisdom, information, and procedure is suggested to help schools work in the most efficient manner possible.

There are some definitive recommendations that evaluators suggest to support continued improvement and implementation of The Creative Advantage. These recommendations include:

- Early planning to build and sustain partnerships and community relationships
- The creation of an Arts Team Handbook to manage transitions and support new arts team leaders
- The creation of an online forum for information sharing, management, and coordination
- Focused efforts on ways to actively bring student art work out into the community
- Greater school collaboration to share information about successes and challenges, lessons learned, and strategies to increase capacity and exposure to the arts in each building
- The eliciting of student voice and perceptions about the ways in which the initiative has influenced their arts understandings and experiences



- Securing time during staff meetings or other information exchanges to convey initiative information directly to a wider school audience (teachers, teacher leaders, specialists, etc.) in a repeated and timely manner
- Differentiating professional development offerings so that they meet the needs of participants at varied stages of implementation
- Continuing to champion and spread the message that Arts are a vital part of basic education in the state of Washington

The Creative Advantage Evaluation

YEAR 4 REPORT

INTRODUCTION

The Creative Advantage is a city-wide initiative to establish equitable access to arts education for all students in Seattle Public Schools (SPS). The Creative Advantage is made possible through a public-private partnership with Seattle Public Schools, the City of Seattle Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Foundation, and community arts organizations. In 2011, a planning grant from the Wallace Foundation enabled the partnership to conduct a needs assessment around the state of arts education in Seattle Public Schools. This needs assessment found inconsistent access to arts education, especially for students qualifying for free and reduced lunch, students eligible for the transitional bilingual program, and students identifying as Black, Hispanic, or American Indian/Alaska Native. Vast discrepancies emerged in program offerings based on school resources.

To address these concerns, the Seattle K-12 Arts Plan was created and aims to provide equitable arts access throughout the district. The plan lays out specific benchmarks for the number of hours or credits each grade-band of students will receive in certificated arts instruction. The goal is to ensure that every student at every elementary, middle, and high school is getting consistent, high-quality, sequential instruction in the arts. For example, the goal at the elementary level is for students to receive 60 minutes of music and visual art instruction each week.

The plan also emphasizes the importance of 21st Century Skills developed through the arts, including creative and critical thinking, collaboration, communication, perseverance, and growth mindset. As the comprehensive plan states, “SPS needs to be preparing its students to graduate with the skills needed to thrive in Seattle’s strong creative economy as well as the many innovation driven companies of the region, such as Boeing, Microsoft, and Amazon.com” (p. 16). Finally, the plan focuses on creating access to school-community arts partnerships that increase student engagement and broaden their experiences in the arts. For a more thorough history and background on The Creative Advantage, please refer to the Years 1, 2, and 3 Evaluation reports, located on The Creative Advantage website (www.creativeadvantageseattle.org).

The Creative Advantage approach includes prioritizing increased arts access in the schools, engaging in regional and school arts planning with K-12 pathways, building community arts partnerships, providing comprehensive professional development, and conducting rigorous evaluation of the program to address emerging promising practices and continual improvement. The goals of The Creative Advantage are to ensure that every student in every school receives:



- High quality arts instruction that teaches sequential arts skills and techniques, develops 21st Century Skills, and is culturally responsive
- Instruction from certified arts teachers
- Integrated arts instruction
- Arts experiences through partnerships with community-based organizations and teaching artists
- Opportunities to connect arts to careers in high school

A key component of The Creative Advantage is the creation of regional arts plans for each of the district's nine designated pathways. SPS is organized into five regions, and each of these regions is further organized into one or two pathways. When The Creative Advantage launches into a new area, it engages either with one pathway or with both pathways in an entire region. The Central Arts Pathway (CAP) was the first area to implement The Creative Advantage, and the initiative began there in the spring of 2013. The South-Southwest Arts Pathway (SSWAP) began the initiative in 2014-15; and the Southeast Arts Region began the initiative in both of its two pathways in 2016-2017. The remaining pathways will begin implementation on a staggered basis until all schools in the district have been reached (ARTS and SPS, 2013).

Following each regional planning year, the next step of school level planning begins. Each elementary, middle, and high school within the pathway assembles an arts team, including administrators, teachers, community partners and parents. This team works with a Creative Advantage Arts Leadership Coach to develop a three-year arts vision for the school and an implementation action plan. These school level planning meetings continue to be recognized by program stakeholders as a strength of The Creative Advantage. One school level team shared that their Arts Leadership Coach "did a great job of walking us through the process," and another teacher noted that these meetings provided structure and scaffolding, and "got their messy ideas cleaner and more organized."

While the Central Arts Pathway schools continued to use their arts plans to guide their work in this final year of implementation, the South-Southwest Arts Pathway schools began to put their plans into practice during the 2016-2017 school year, and the Southeast Arts Pathway schools began their regional planning meetings in 2017.

Combined with the development of regional and school level art plans, another essential component of The Creative Advantage is the Community Arts Partner roster, a searchable database of over 90 partners throughout the city. The individual teaching artists and organizations on The Creative Advantage website provide valuable arts learning opportunities for students throughout the city. Examples of organizational partners include the Book-It Repertory Theatre, Arts Corps, Show Brazil!, and Seattle Arts & Lectures Writers in the Schools (WITS). Schools are provided a

budget of \$15,000 to hire arts partners that best fit their unique school and community needs. Art teams at each school are tasked with developing partnership priorities and selecting the most appropriate way to spend their funds in alignment with their arts plans.

The purpose of this report is to outline and communicate the current status of The Creative Advantage and to present evaluation findings for The Creative Advantage in the Central Arts Pathway in Year 4, and the South-Southwest Arts Pathway in Year 3 (Table 1). Additionally, the report will highlight programmatic successes, emerging promising practices, barriers to implementation, and contextual factors influencing the current and future arts pathways.



Table 1.
PATHWAY PLANS

Year 1 Regional Planning

	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020
Central Arts Pathway	<i>Year 1 Regional Planning</i>	<i>Year 2 SP</i>	<i>Year 3 SI</i>	<i>Year 4 SSP</i>			
South-Southwest Arts Pathway		<i>Year 1 Regional Planning</i>	<i>Year 2 SP</i>	<i>Year 3 SI</i>	<i>Year 4 SSP</i>		
Southeast Arts Pathway				<i>Year 1 Regional Planning</i>	<i>Year 2 SP</i>	<i>Year 3 SI</i>	<i>Year 4 SSP</i>

Year 2 School Planning (SP)

Year 3 School Implementation (SI)

Year 4 School Implementation and Sustainability Planning (SSP)

THE CREATIVE ADVANTAGE YEAR 4

A Focus on Impact and Influence

During this fourth year of The Creative Advantage, evaluators identified three program elements that showed continued positive change. These areas were identified not only because of their individual importance to the success of the initiative, but also because these were areas that had experienced exciting advancements – such as with the arts partnerships – or were extending the reach and capacity of the initiative – such as with the rich professional development offerings. These included:

- Communication about The Creative Advantage
- Arts partnerships and professional development
- Systemic shifts to meet basic education in the arts

Communication about The Creative Advantage

Communication continued to be a very important initiative element. Multiple forms of communication and information outreach allowed for the engagement of stakeholders and furthered the initiative's reach. It also improved awareness and access and continued to provide important supports for all involved. As in prior years, throughout the 2016-2017 school year, program leaders continued to distribute monthly electronic arts pathway newsletters to arts team leaders at all pathway schools. Additionally, The Office of Arts & Culture distributed monthly e-newsletters to arts partners and others interested in arts education. All community and school stakeholders continued to have access to these materials through a link on The Creative Advantage website. Newsletters included details about upcoming trainings and professional development opportunities, school level celebrations and successes, administrative information, and links to regional and national arts education articles. Newsletters also outlined the main objectives of The Creative Advantage and provided pathway and region-specific information to support program outreach and implementation.

Arts Partnerships and Professional Development

Throughout the 2016-2017 school year, The Creative Advantage offered robust professional development opportunities to support continuous growth and learning through and about the arts. There were three primary offerings. First, The Creative Advantage series presented professional development for members of arts organizations, teaching artists, and certificated teachers. This series developed through partnerships with the Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Art Museum, and SPS. Second, the Visual & Performing Arts Program was offered to support the professional development of certificated teachers. Third, there were opportunities for grant funded professional development that aligned to The Creative Advantage pathway/region goals. One participant shared,



The Summer Institute at SAM was really powerful; the speaker and the workshops. The speaker said, “always ask the why behind the behavior of the students,” which really made me think about my own practice. I met some amazing people that were really inspiring and ended up taking classes with one of the workshop leaders. The professional development opportunities through The Creative Advantage are well organized and well-conceived; they have really brought our CA team together.

In addition to these offerings, there were also professional development opportunities that arose through community partnerships. Seattle Art Museum, as an ongoing arts partner, leads an annual learning series in the spring and the annual Creative Advantage Institute each August. SPS also maintains a close partnership with Arts Corps. This partnership has invested in developing arts assessments that teach and assess arts and 21st Century skills. One of these assessments –the 21st Century Arts Common Assessments – fully launched in SPS during the 2016-17 school year.

Another initiative partnership allowed for a summer institute on theatre arts for SPS teachers. For this summer institute, The Creative Advantage joined with Bringing Theatre into the Classroom (BTiC), a theatre partnership between Seattle Children's Theatre, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Pacific Northwest Ballet, and Seattle Repertory Theatre. Forty-four teachers from schools in all initiative pathways attended this 5-day intensive workshop on integrating theatre arts into their teaching practice. Teacher evaluations of this this summer institute addressed the powerful ways in which they were connected with arts instruction. One teacher wrote,

I'm not a big crybaby, but I teared up a bit on Friday when this class ended. That might be a first for me! I loved being involved in this.... I loved connecting with teachers and pushing myself to take some risks. I'm reserved and quiet, and I won't pretend that I acted otherwise. But with my kids, I'll be able to bring a ton to them because it's all been heavily internalized. Thank you all!

Teachers also conveyed great excitement about the practical elements that they could bring directly into their classrooms and to their students:

I almost canceled my registration...a week felt like a long time. I am sooo glad I came! I feel excited for what I will bring to my classroom this year, and also the thought of how I can be more engaged in the arts myself.

Systemic Shifts to Meet Basic Education in the Arts

The Creative Advantage continued to promote shifts in thinking about the arts throughout the city, and this was seen as a primary area in which the impact and influence of the initiative in its entirety might be seen. One goal was to position and develop The Creative Advantage in such a way so that it could exert a far-reaching and expansive influence throughout the public-school system, as well

as within the diverse communities that make up the city of Seattle. In support of this perspective, the arts plan is being used to guide the implementation of system-wide investments.

Some of these investments include the funding of elementary music certificated teachers in Creative Advantage pathway schools and the development of a staffing guideline in “The School Budget Development Instructions,” which is a district-wide tool to support principals in their annual budgeting and staffing decisions. The guideline prioritizes the staffing of elementary Music, Visual Art, and Physical Education certificated teachers (more details are later in the report). Additional investments include the launching of Summer Media Arts Skills Center Courses and the comprehensive implementation of the 21st Century Arts Common Assessments for all visual and performing arts teachers. These system-wide changes continue to reinforce the vision of The Creative Advantage which aims to address equity by increasing capacity for the arts at schools across the district.



EVALUATION DESIGN

Methodology

This evaluation utilized a multiple-measures, mixed methodology approach. The collection of both quantitative and qualitative data adds scope and breadth to the study, in addition to providing the ability to triangulate findings (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Descriptions of the evaluation questions and data sources are provided below.

Evaluation Focus and Questions

For this Year 4 evaluation report, program leaders identified three specific areas for focused analysis. Two of these areas investigate the direct impact of the initiative and the third involves promising practices that are emerging as a result of the initiative and its influence. These were considered primary areas to evaluate in order to get a full picture of the impact and reach of the initiative. Three research questions derived from these focus points. This report highlights data to support each of these focus points and corresponding research questions:

Focus 1: Impact on Arts Access

Question 1: To what extent does student participation in the arts change over time?

Focus 2: Impact on 21st Century Skills Instruction

Question 2: To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills instruction change over time?

Focus 3: Emerging Promising Practices

Question 3: What are the emerging promising practices?

Because the full picture of emergent practices becomes clearer after the assessment of the impact and implementation of the initiative, this final focus question is explored in the section which follows the implementation review. Answers to this question emerge only after taking into consideration the full body of evidence from all years of the initiative in all regions and pathways.

Participants

At the time of this Year 4 evaluation, there were three SPS areas that had actively implemented the initiative. The first area to implement the initiative was the Central Arts Pathway (CAP), which is the Central Region's Washington Middle School Service Area. This region consists of 13 schools and began implementation during the 2012-2013 school year. Table 2 lists the schools that comprise the CAP. This was the fourth year of the initiative for schools in this pathway, and they had completed a year of regional planning, a year of school planning, and then two years of program/school implementation. The final year also included sustainability planning.

The second area involved in implementation was the South-Southwest Arts Pathway (SSWAP). The schools in this pathway began initial pathway planning in 2014-2015 and followed this with school level planning in 2015-2016. Table 3 lists the 10 schools that comprise the SSWAP.

The third implementation area of The Creative Advantage initiative happened in the Southeast Arts Region, which comprises two pathways. This group of schools began principal regional planning in both pathways in 2016-2017. Table 4 lists the 21 schools within this region.

Table 2.
CENTRAL ARTS PATHWAY SCHOOLS

School Level	School
Elementary Schools	Bailey Gatzert Elementary School
	John Muir Elementary School
	Leschi Elementary School
	Lowell Elementary School
	McGilvra Elementary School
	Montlake Elementary School
	Stevens Elementary School
	Thurgood Marshall Elementary School
K – 8 School	Madrona K – 8 School
Middle Schools	Meany Middle School (re-opened in 2017-18 school year)
	Washington Middle School
High Schools	Garfield High School
	Nova High School



Table 3.
SOUTH-SOUTHWEST PATHWAY SCHOOLS

School Level	School
Elementary Schools	Arbor Heights Elementary
	Concord International Elementary
	Highland Park Elementary
	K-5 STEM at Boren (option)
	Roxhill Elementary
	Sanislo Elementary
	West Seattle Elementary
Middle School	Denny International Middle School
High Schools	Chief Seattle International High School
	Interagency Southwest at Youngstown Cultural Arts Center

Table 4.
SOUTHEAST PATHWAY SCHOOLS

School Level	School
Elementary Schools	Beacon Hill Elementary
	Dearborn Elementary
	Dunlap Elementary School
	Emerson Elementary school
	Graham Elementary
	Hawthorne Elementary
	Kimball Elementary
	Maple Elementary
	Martin Luther King Jr. Elementary

	Rainier View Elementary
	Van Asselt Elementary
	Wing Luke Elementary
K – 8 Schools	Orca K-8
	South Shore K-8
Middle Schools	Aki Kurose Middle School
	Mercer International Middle School
High Schools	Cleveland STEM High School
	Franklin High School
	Interagency at Columbia
	Rainier Beach High School
	South Lake High School

Data Sources

Focus Groups, Surveys and Interviews

Evaluators conducted site visits to the CAP and SSWAP schools to hold focus groups and interviews with arts team teachers and administrators during the spring of 2017. The use of structured focus groups and interview protocols provided a qualitative perspective to allow evaluators to tell the story of The Creative Advantage evolving and adapting to meet the needs of diverse SPS communities. Additionally, evaluators met with program leaders throughout the academic year. Surveys focused on eliciting teacher perceptions regarding implementation and process, among other things, were administered to community arts partners participating in The Creative Advantage, as well as to arts teachers within the school district.

STAR Classroom Observations[®]

Evaluators conducted observations in classrooms throughout the pathway schools. The STAR Classroom Observation Protocol^{®1} is designed as a research instrument to measure the degree to

¹ Researchers completed a validation study on the STAR Protocol in 2010. Report findings established content, concurrent, and construct validity. Good inter-rater reliability was also found using the Kappa reliability coefficient



which Powerful Teaching & Learning™ (cognitive, research-based instruction) is present during any given period of observation in a classroom. Through 12 Indicators, the STAR Protocol® efficiently assesses student learning in the areas of *Skills, Thinking, Application, and Relationships*. In addition, evaluators modified the existing protocol to include 21st Century Skills: *Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Collaboration, Communication, and Persistence*. Finally, BERC researchers, in collaboration with program leaders, aggregated four indicators on the protocol to develop a *Culturally Responsive Component*.

Student Data

The BERC Group worked with SPS to obtain and analyze student level data, including achievement results, course taking patterns, and absences. This information is updated annually to provide a longitudinal perspective on the initiative.

Document Collection and Analysis

Evaluators collected and analyzed various documents related to the initiative, including the Seattle K-12 Arts Plan, previous research reports, survey data, and The Creative Advantage and partner websites.

(.90) in addition to internal consistency (.92) using Cronbach's Alpha for the Indicators taken together. Furthermore, the STAR Protocol's single construct, Powerful Teaching and Learning™ (PTL), was found to show a positive contribution to student achievement beyond the effects of low income. Most notably, a unique contribution was found for PTL in predicting math achievement. About 7% of the variance in math achievement was explained by PTL (Baker, Gratama, Petersen, & Thompson, 2010).

EVIDENCE OF IMPACT

Focus 1: Impact on Arts Access

To what extent does student participation in the arts change over time?

During the 2016-2017 school year, program leaders and evaluators gathered data to measure the impact of The Creative Advantage on student access to the arts in both CAP and SSWAP arts pathways. Evaluators conducted a transcript analysis to look at secondary course taking patterns, completed classroom observations at all pathway schools, and collected qualitative perspectives provided by program participants. Additionally, program leaders and evaluators worked to create a comprehensive database to track the number of certificated arts teachers being hired and retained in the district, and surveyed arts teachers to understand their perspectives on the value of 21st Century instruction. These multiple data sources helped to inform the overall picture of Arts Access. Analyses of Secondary Course Taking Patterns, Elementary Arts Access, and Arts Equity Indexes are presented here.

Secondary Course Taking Patterns

To explore the extent to which student participation in the arts changed over time, researchers analyzed student transcripts to determine the number and types of arts courses taken at the secondary level. Figures 1 and 2 show the number of Arts credits taken by the graduating class of 2017 at Garfield High School in the CAP and by students at Chief Sealth International High School in the SSWAP. The results were disaggregated by race.

Data from Garfield High School show some positive arts enrollment totals for the 2017 school year. One promising result is evidence that three out of the five racial groups (Hispanic-56%; Multiracial-73%; and White-62%) had more than 50% of students who met the Seattle K-12 Arts plan recommendation of two arts credits or more for graduation. The Seattle K-12 Arts plan recommends that, by 2020, students have at least four semesters (two credits) of high school level arts coursework by graduation. This goal aligns with the new state 24-credit graduation requirement, which raises the required number of arts credits for graduation from one to two.

However, transcript data also provide evidence that there were wide differences in credit earnings by racial group and clear places for improvement. At Garfield High School, White and Multiracial students earned three or more Arts credits at higher rates than Asian, Black, and Hispanic students. Results also indicate that upon graduation, fewer than 50% of Asian and Black students had earned the minimum recommended number of two arts credits by graduation (40% and 36% respectively). In fact, 20% of Asian students and 18% of Black students had earned fewer than one Art credit by graduation. This is in comparison with the three other student groups, which all had fewer than 10% of students with only one-credit.

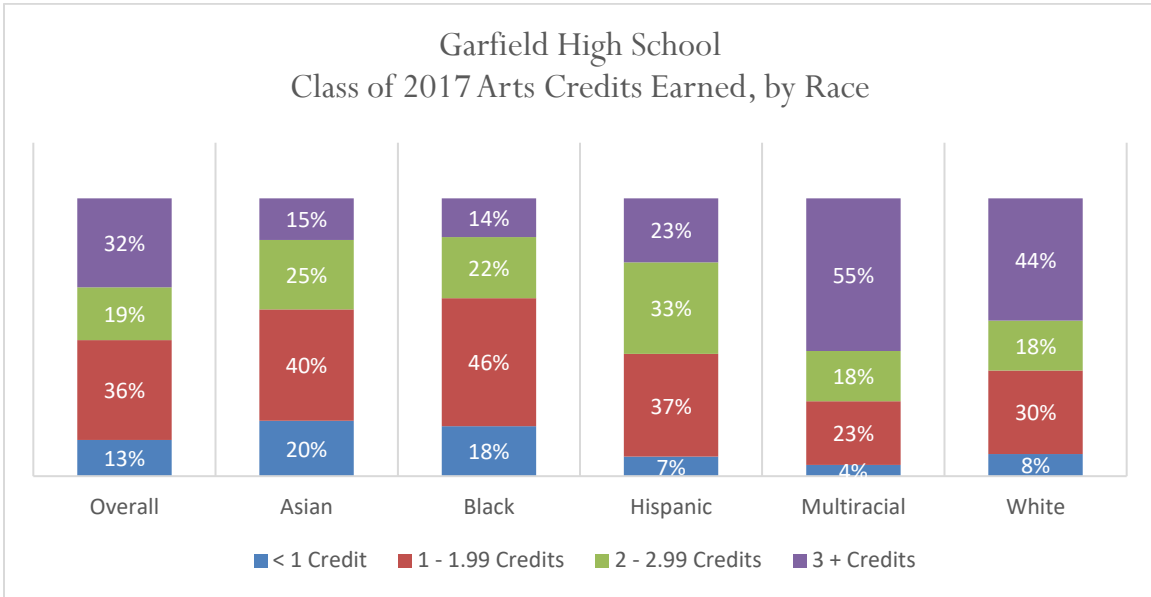


FIGURE 1.

At Chief Sealth International High School, the distribution of arts credits earned, when analyzed by racial group, was more uniform than at Garfield. However, very few of the graduating students had earned three or more credits of art classes. The majority of students had earned only one credit or slightly more than one credit (less than two credits). At Chief Sealth High School, the Seattle K-12 Arts plan recommendation of two arts credits by graduation was not met by the majority of students; fewer than 20% of students in any racial group earned two credits or more in 2017.

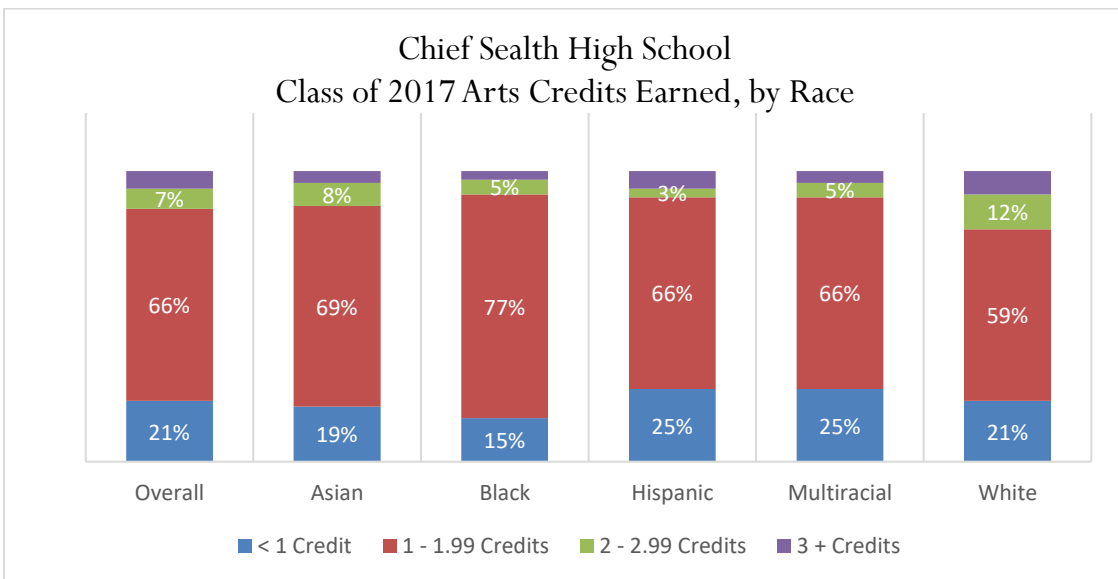


FIGURE 2.

In addition to credits earned by the graduating class of 2017, researchers looked at the number of arts courses taken by middle and high school students in the CAP over time to determine if student participation in The Creative Advantage would impact the elective selection of arts courses in secondary school. Rising fifth graders were the first cohort of elementary students to have been part of the CAP Creative Advantage implementation and transition to middle school (Figures 3 and 4). Results from the transcript analysis show that in 2016-2017 Washington Middle School students took more arts classes than during the previous 3 years, with 74.4% of students enrolled in at least one art course.

Longitudinal data indicates that, prior to The Creative Advantage, there had been a three year consecutive drop in the total number of arts classes taken, until the 2015-2016 school year when the pattern reversed. From 2014-2015 to 2015-2016, the number of arts classes taken rose by 1%. This was a mixed rise, with numbers decreasing in Music classes taken (1.5% decrease) and numbers increasing in Visual Arts classes taken (14% increase). From 2015-2016 to 2016-2017, the number of arts classes taken increased by 3.6%. Increases were seen in both Music enrollments (2% increase) and Visual Arts (10% increase). This was the first year in five consecutive years that increases in the number of classes taken were experienced in both Music and Visual Arts.

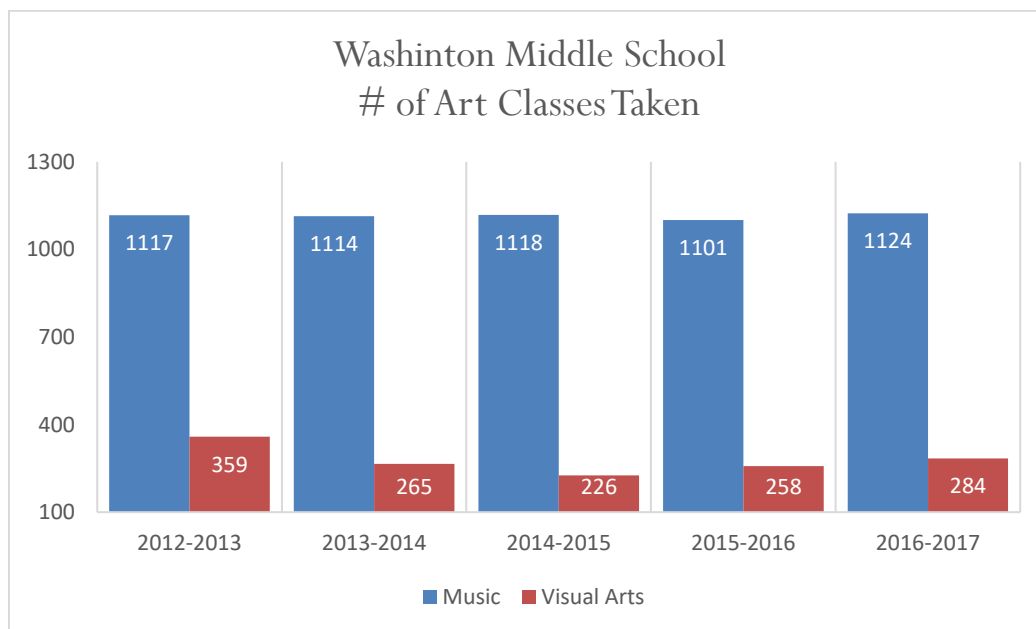


FIGURE 3.

At Garfield High School, overall, 68.9% of students took at least 1 art class, an increase of 3.6 percentage points from 2015-2016. Students took more music courses during the 2016-2017 school year than in prior years, but took fewer theater courses. The number of music classes taken



in 2016-2017 rose by 17% from the prior year to a five-year high of 861. This number was 6.7% greater than the previous high, which was experienced during the 2013-2014 school year. This number was also well above the prior four-year average which was 762 classes taken.

As indicated in Figure 4, the number of students taking theater classes in 2016-2017 was down from the prior year – showing a 14.8% decrease. When considered over the five-year time span of the data, the number of theater classes taken decreased by nearly one half, from 240 classes taken in 2012-2013 to 121 classes taken in 2016-2017. This is a 49.6% decrease during this time period. However, the number of theater classes taken had sharply declined from the 2012-2013 school year to the 2013-2014 school year, and since that time the numbers have continued to remain at this lower level. Given the very large drop in numbers and then the consistent four year pattern of number of courses taken, it may be more useful to consider the data over a four year time period as opposed to the five year period. When considered at the new lower levels established after the large decline in 2013-2014, the number of theater classes taken during 2016-2017 is just slightly lower than average. The average number of courses taken in the three prior years was 130; in 2016-2017 students took 121 theater courses.

The number of visual arts courses taken in 2016-2017 remained consistent with the numbers from the prior year, 2015-2016. However, these two year totals (907 and 905, respectively) reflected the highest numbers of visual arts courses taken in the five year period being analyzed. The number of visual arts classes taken in 2016-2017 was also well above the average number of visual arts classes taken in the prior four years. The average number of visual arts classes taken from 2012 to 2016 was 870.5, and the number taken during the 2016-2017 school year was greater than this at 905.

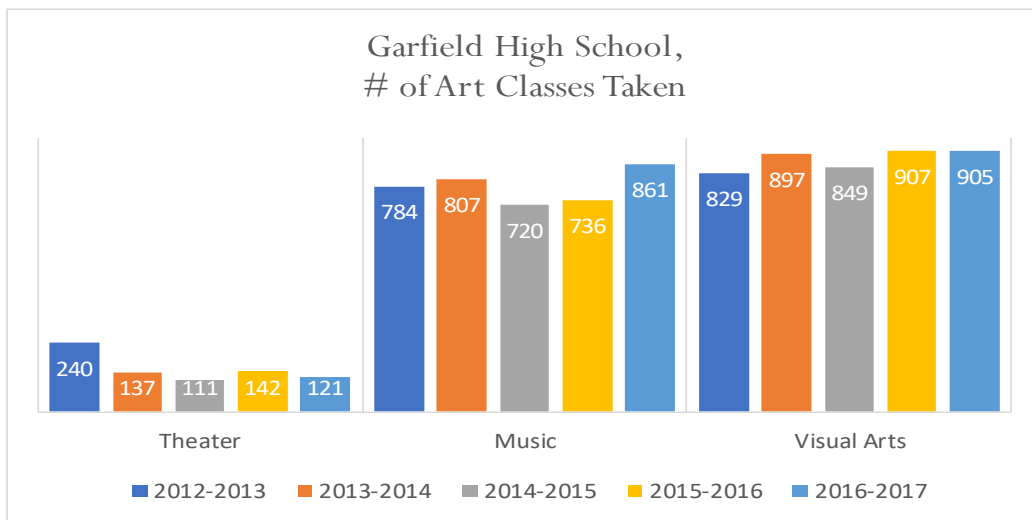


FIGURE 4.

Elementary Arts Access

In addition to the analysis of secondary course taking patterns, evaluators and program leaders gathered data to explore access to high quality art courses at the elementary level. Table 5 provides a list of the total number of elementary students receiving music instruction with a certificated music teacher funded by The Creative Advantage. As of the 2016-2017 school year, over 5,000 students were receiving music with teachers funded by The Creative Advantage.

Table 5.
TOTAL NUMBER OF STUDENTS RECEIVING MUSIC INSTRUCTION BY A CERTIFICATED ARTS TEACHER FUNDED BY SPS.

School	Number of Students
Central Arts Pathway (CAP)	
Bailey Gatzert Elementary School	346
John Muir Elementary School	425
Leschi Elementary School	404
Lowell Elementary School	330
McGilvra Elementary School	283
Montlake Elementary School	390
Stevens Elementary School	300
Thurgood Marshall Elementary School	544
Total CAP	3022
South-Southwest Arts Pathway (SSWAP)*	
Arbor Heights Elementary School	344
Concord International	321
Highland Park Elementary School*	377



Roxhill Elementary School	307
Sanislo Elementary School	171
STEM K-8	470
West Seattle Elementary School	236
Total SSWAP	2226
Total CAP & SSWAP Students	5248

Researchers are also gathering data which will indicate the average number of weekly arts minutes that students in The Creative Advantage Pathway schools are receiving, as well as the number of certificated arts teachers being hired and retained across the school district. To collect and manage this teacher level data, evaluators and district employees worked together to create a comprehensive inventory system which will track the number of arts teachers and courses taught at the school level. This inventory system will contain updated, yearly data and will provide important longitudinal data regarding arts access for use in future evaluations.

Arts Equity Indexes

One way to monitor equity in the arts in schools is to determine the distributions of student groups within arts disciplines and analyze these distributions for over- and under-representations. The BERC Group collected and organized this data into equity indexes, which show school-wide representations of students in arts classes by race and discipline. These indexes center around an index score of 100 which is used as a mark of full and equitable distribution of a group within an arts discipline. Bars on the index which fall below the central mark of 100 illustrate a population that is underrepresented in the given discipline; bars which rise above the mark of 100 illustrate a population that is over-represented. Figures 5 through 12 display index scores for CAP and SSWAP middle and high schools over time, and these indexes are disaggregated by race and discipline.

There are four schools represented here – Garfield High School, Washington Middle School, Chief Sealth International High School, and Denny International Middle School – and each school has two index charts, one for music and one for visual arts. These schools were presented here because they represent major feeder school pairs (middle to high school) for the CAP and SSWAP pathways. Analyses specific to each school appear below the corresponding school indexes, but there are some overall points of analysis that all groups appear to share. A discussion of these patterns first, before

the indexes which follow, might provide helpful context for the overall analysis and understanding of the results.

Overall, it appears that no matter the school, the racial group or the arts discipline, student groups generally did not reposition themselves from under-represented to over-represented (and vice-versa) over time. In other words, over the five year time span presented in the provided indexes, when a group of students was under-represented in a discipline, this under-representation continued throughout all five years. This pattern of continued representation was also true for those groups that were over-represented in a discipline.

For example, continued under-representation can be seen in the five-year pattern of Black students represented in music classes at Washington Middle School (Figure 7). In every year from 2012 to 2017, this group of students had a very low representation in music classes. There were small changes in representation during the five-year time period, but none great enough to move the group's standing from under- to fully- or over-represented. Another example from Garfield High School illustrates this same pattern but with over-representation (Figure 6). In every year from 2012 to 2017, Black students at Garfield High School show a consistent over-representation in visual arts classes. This is the only racial group to be over-represented in all five years, and despite small changes in its representation, none was great enough to move the group's standing from over- to fully- or under-represented. The one exception to this generalized pattern of continued representation is Chief Sealth International High School. This school shows representational changes that were unlike the other schools and that moved groups across the central index line, in both directions. Their findings will be discussed next to their indexes (Figures 9 and 10).

It is also helpful to analyze these indexes by discipline to see the general state of representation by racial group. In the visual arts, there is one overall pattern of note. In the visual arts classes in all four schools, Black students are generally over-represented across all five years (Figures 6, 8, 10, 12). There is no other racial group that shares over-representation in all schools across this time period. Considering only the 2016-2017 data, at Garfield High School and at Washington Middle School, this over-representation is shared by Hispanic students, and at Denny International Middle School and at Chief Sealth, this is shared by White students. Students in the Other group also were over-represented at Chief Sealth during this time. In the visual arts discipline during this five year time period, there was no one racial group that was under-represented at all four schools. However, at Denny International Middle School, Hispanic students were under-represented during all of the five years, and at Washington Middle School, White students were under-represented during all of the five years.

In Music, there are two overall patterns of note. First, in music classes in all four schools, Asian, Other, and White students were generally over-represented across all five years (Figures 7, 9, 11,



13). This pattern differed slightly with Washington Middle School, where Asian students have consistently been under-represented in music classes. It also differed with Chief Sealth, which has seen a steady adjustment in Other student representation from over-representation toward more equitable representation and currently (2016-2017) shows this group to be under-represented. Second, in the music discipline during this five-year time period, Black students were under-represented at all four schools for all years. There was one exception in one year to this pattern at Chief Sealth High School in 2012-2013 where Black students were over-represented. Every year that followed at this school, however, showed this group to be under-represented. Using the data from 2016-2017, Hispanic students were also under-represented at three of the four schools, but showed full equitable representation at Chief Sealth High School.

An additional pattern concerns the level of under-representation in music by certain groups. In the visual arts, under-represented groups as a whole seemed to approach the equity line in the visual arts, suggesting that even though they were under-represented, they were fairly close to equitable representations. This only varied with two groups in two schools – Washington Middle School with under-representation of White students and Denny International Middle School with under-representation of Hispanic students (Figures 8 and 12). This close-to-equity pattern does not seem to be the case with music classes, where the distances from the data to the 100 equity index mark were much greater. This can be seen in Black student representations at Garfield High School, Washington Middle School, and Denny International Middle School (Figures 5, 7, 11). This also can be seen with Hispanic student representations at Denny International Middle School (Figure 11).

Finally, there is an over/under distribution pattern in the indexes that appears when comparing racial groups with disciplines in some schools. This can be illustrated using index data from Washington Middle School. Data across all five years for the Black student group in music shows great under-representation, with all years falling short of the 100 equity index mark (Figure 7). However, in this same school, data across all five years for the Black student group in visual arts shows great over-representation, with all years rising definitively above the 100 equity index mark (Figure 8). This is a pattern that is repeated with Hispanic groups within this school as well. It is also a pattern that is true in reverse for other racial groups. Data across all five years for the White student group in music shows great over-representation, with all years rising definitively above the 100 equity index mark (Figure 7). Data in this same school across all five years for the White student group in visual arts shows great under-representation, with all years falling short of the 100 equity index mark (Figure 8). A pattern such as this suggests there might be additional factors at play within specific schools which might contribute to the over- and under- representations of students and student groups within an arts discipline, factors such as course offerings, schedules, and timings, for example. Schools that exhibit this pattern might benefit from further explorations in these and other areas.

Music Index by Race for 5 Years - Garfield High School

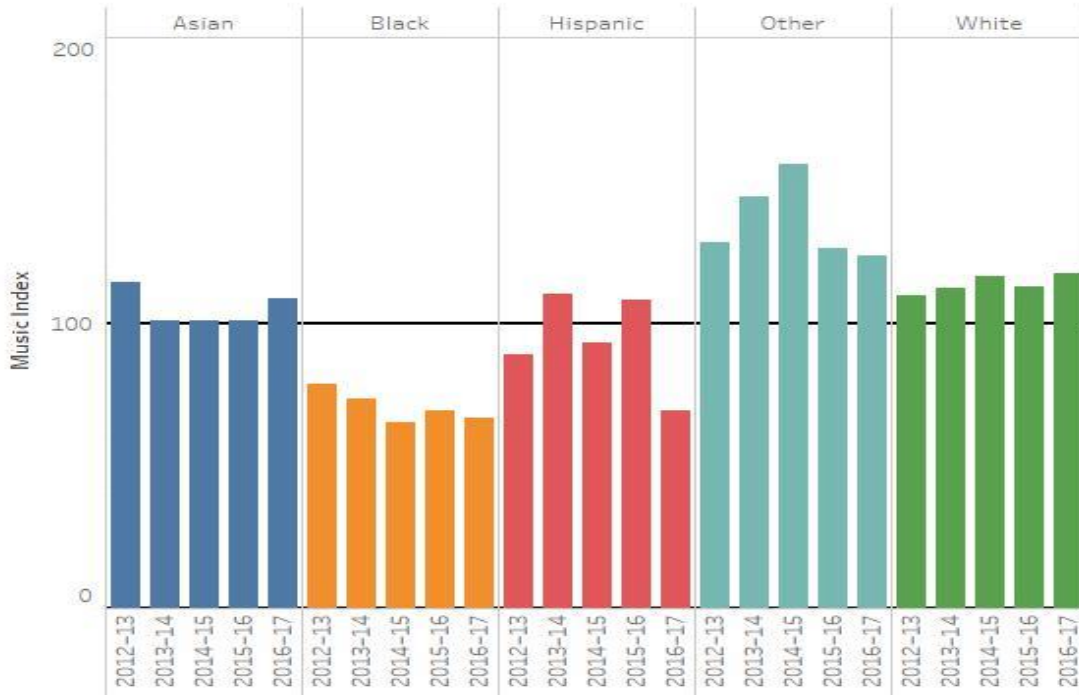


FIGURE 5.

Visual Arts Index by Race for 5 Years - Garfield High School

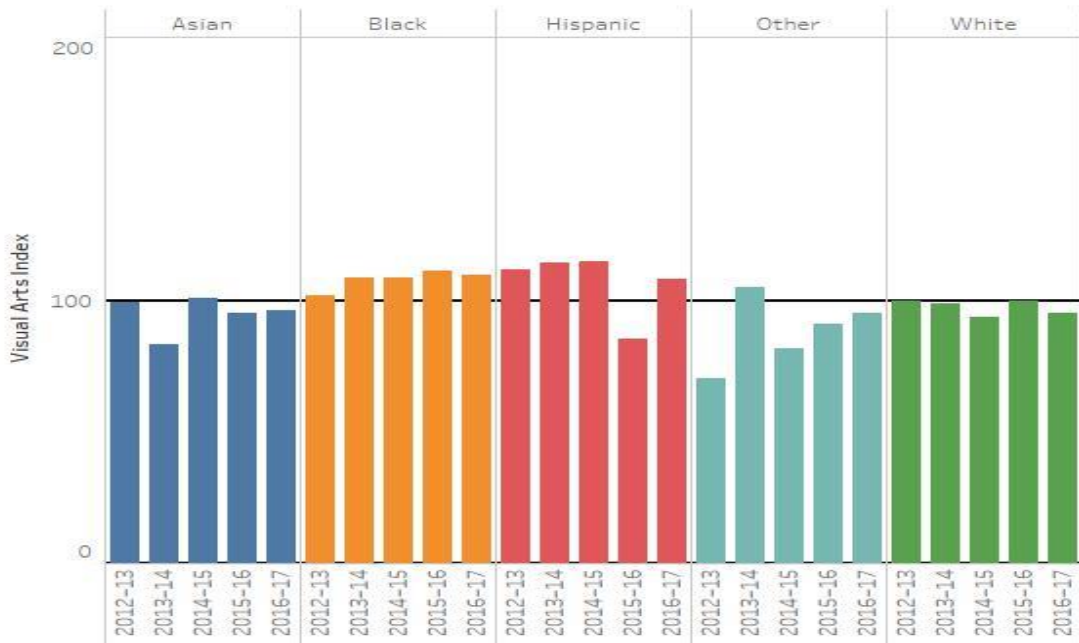


FIGURE 6.



Garfield High School. Garfield High School shows large differences in equity representation among racial groups in music, but fairly even distributions by racial group in visual arts. Over the five-year period from 2012 to 2017, Asian students were the one racial group that was consistently fully and for the most part equitably represented in music. Students in the Other and White groups were consistently over-represented in all five years, and Black students were consistently under-represented in all five years. Hispanic students showed a rare mixture of both over- and under-representation.

In terms of recent trends, an analysis of the data for the last three years might reveal some effects of The Creative Advantage. The most recent two years would show results from actual program implementation years. In music, Asian students became over-represented after two prior years of equitable representation. Black students remained strongly under-represented, but made small increases toward more equitable representation. Hispanic students showed two years that were close to equal representation (one year slightly over and one year slightly under), but then showed a large drop into under-representation in the most recent year, 2016-2017. Other students continued to be largely over-represented, but showed movement toward more equitable representations in the most recent two years. Finally, White students remained little changed and were over-represented during all five years.

In the visual arts, racial groups were fairly evenly represented. Asian students and White students were equitably represented across the five years, while Black and Hispanic students were generally over-represented during these years. In terms of recent three-year trends, Asian and White students remained consistent in their equitable representation, as did Black students in their over-represented state. Hispanic students showed a large decrease from over- to under-representation, followed by a large increase, and currently remain slightly over-represented. The Other students have shown a steady rise toward equitable representation, and of all of the groups, this Other group showed the steadiest and clearest movement toward equitable representation.

Music Index by Race for 5 Years - Washington Middle School

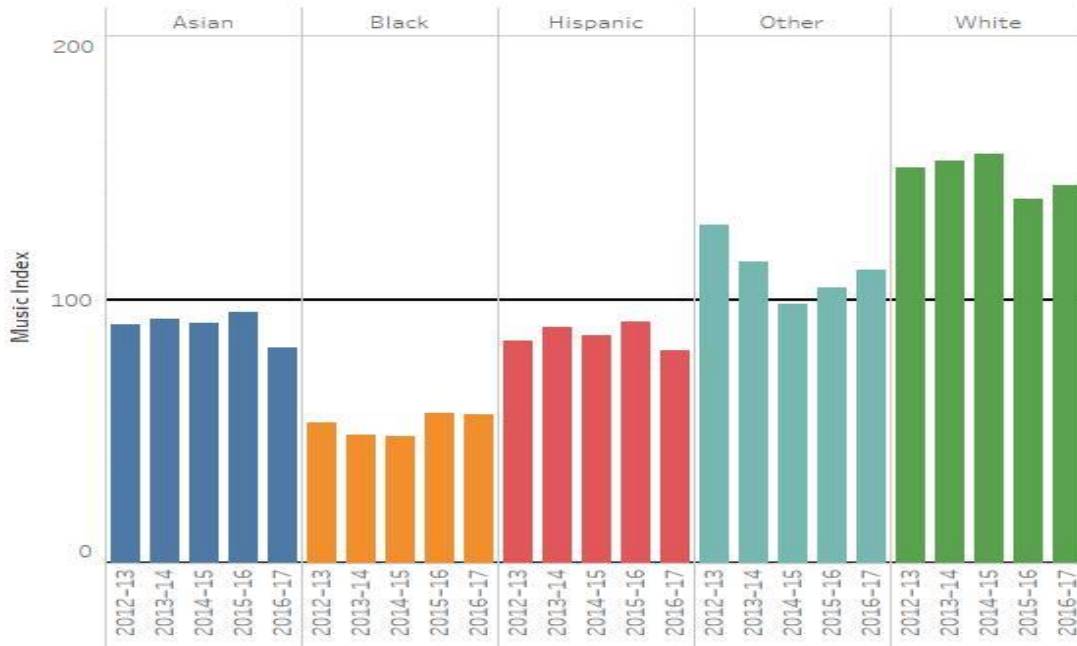


FIGURE 7.

Visual Arts Index by Race for 5 Years - Washington Middle School

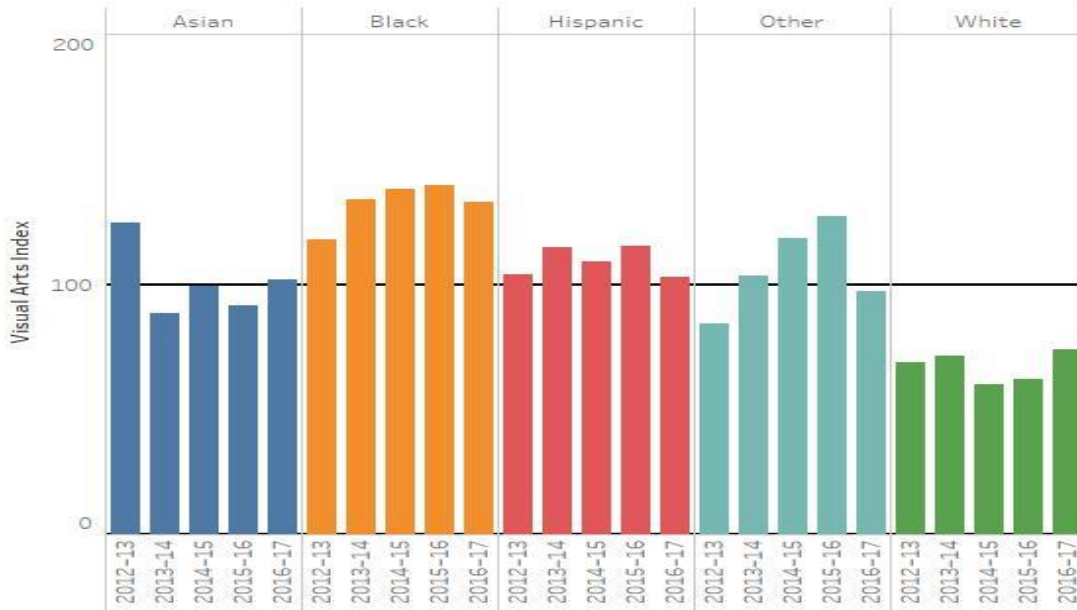


FIGURE 8.



Washington Middle School. Of the four schools, Washington Middle School is one of two schools that shows very large differences in equity representation among racial groups in music and in visual arts; Denny International Middle School is the other. Although the overall over- and under-representations of groups have remained the same during the five year time period, there are some promising movements being made in the most recent three years.

While White students continue to be largely over-represented in music, the most recent two years of data shows a clear drop which marks a distinctive move toward more equitable representations. Another promising trend can be seen with the small but clear increases made by Black students which indicates a definite movement toward more equitable distribution. Other students also show positive movement from just slightly under-represented to just slightly over-represented. Two groups, Asian and Hispanic, however, show movement away from more equitable representations; the largest drops for both seem to have occurred during the 2016-2017 school year.

In the visual arts, racial groups had large differences in equity representation during the five year time period, but all groups seemed to show positive movement in the most recent three years. All three of the racial groups that have been over-represented during the past five years (Black, Hispanic, and Other) showed drops and movement toward the 100 equity index number, and two of these groups (Hispanic and Other) actually reached this mark in the most recent 2016-2017 year. Additionally, the one group that has been strongly under-represented in the visual arts (White students) has shown growing representation in the most recent three years, which marks another group's positive movement toward the benchmark.

Music Index by Race for 5 Years - Chief Sealth International High School

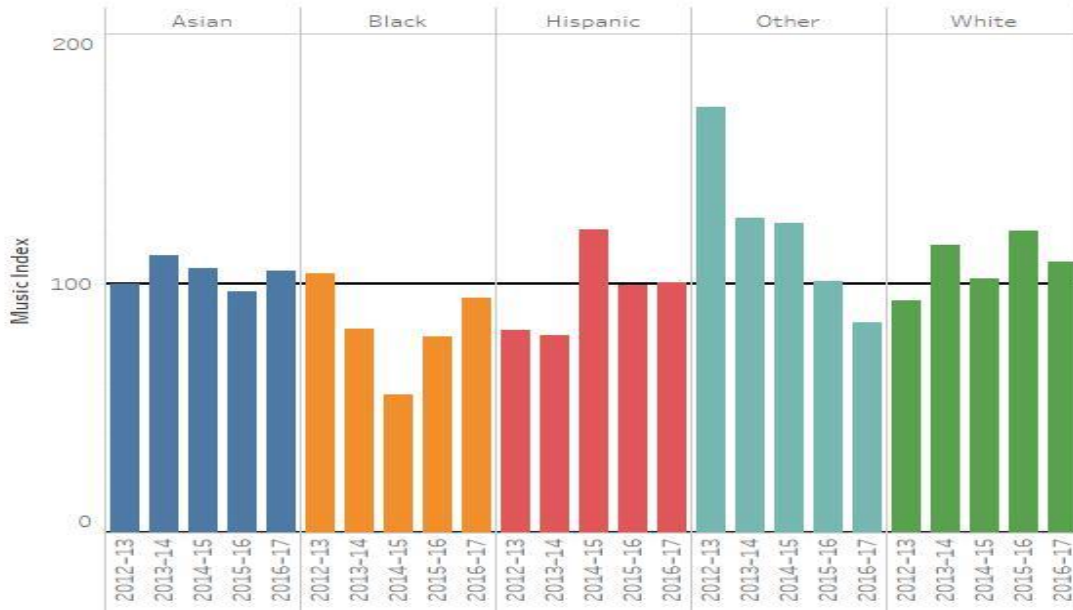


FIGURE 9.

Visual Arts Index by Race for 5 Years - Chief Sealth International High School

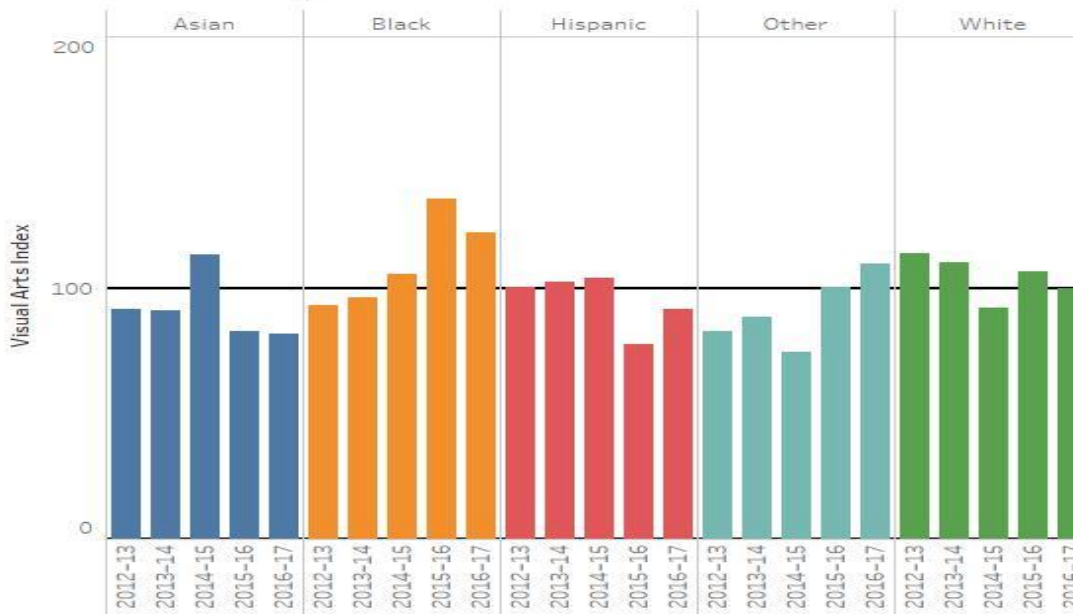


FIGURE 10.



Chief Sealth International High School. Chief Sealth International High School has shown a very positive overall movement toward equitable representations in both music and visual arts for all of its racial groups, especially during the most recent three year period. In music, all five racial groups have made positive movements toward the 100 equity index mark, with Black students showing the greatest positive change with a strong movement away from under-representation toward equitable representation. Other students also showed a strong adjustment from high over-representation to just under the equity mark. During the 2016-2017 school year, four of the five racial groups might be considered to be very close to being equally represented in music.

In visual arts during the most recent three years, four of the five racial groups made positive movements toward being more equitably represented. Black and White student groups both showed promising decreases from over-representation, while Hispanic and Other student groups both showed promising increases from under-representation. Asian students continued to be under-represented and showed a definitive decrease in representation from the 2014-2015 school year.

Music Index by Race for 5 Years - Denny International Middle School

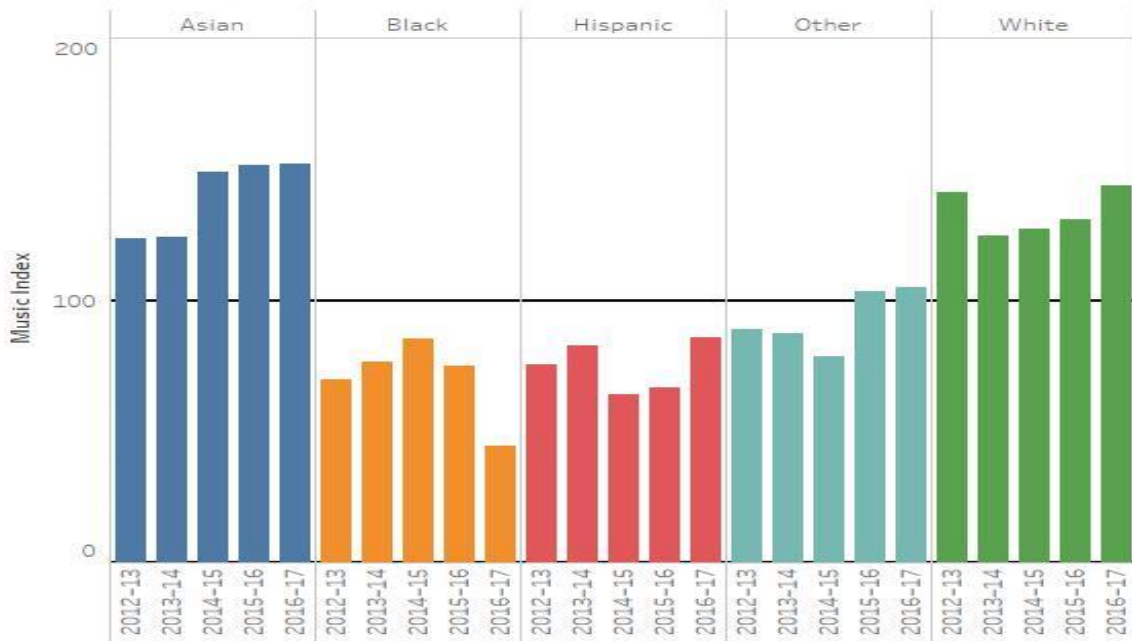


FIGURE 11.

Visual Arts Index by Race for 5 Years - Denny International Middle School

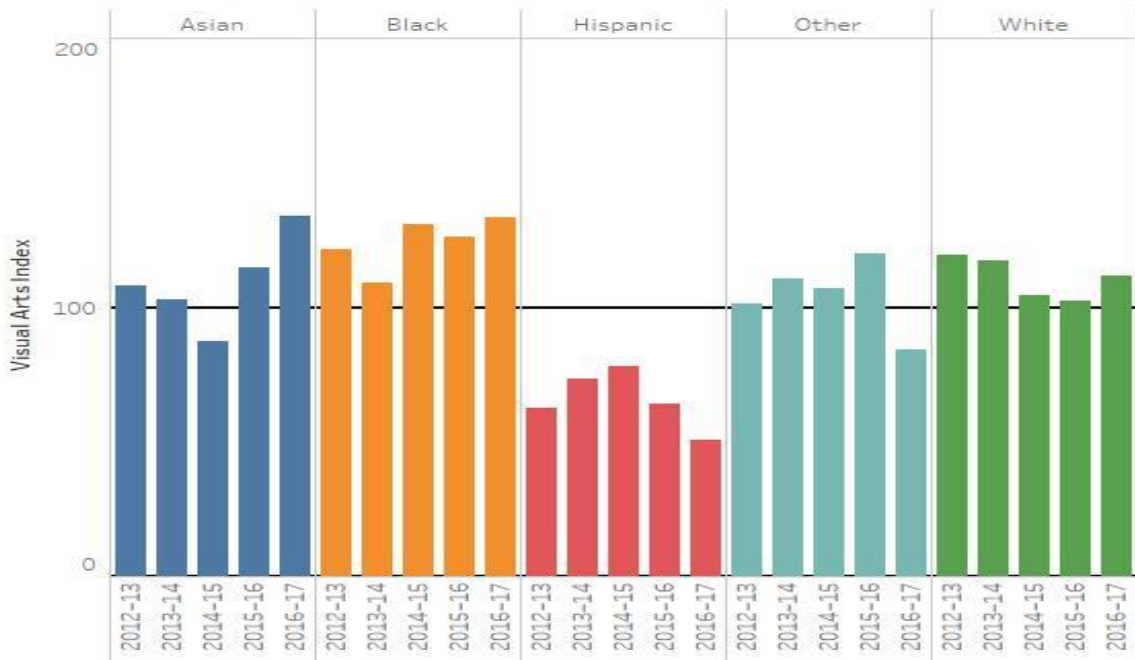


FIGURE 12.

Denny International Middle School. Denny International Middle School presents very large differences in equity representation among racial groups in both music and in visual arts. As with the other schools, the overall over- and under-representations of groups at Denny International Middle School has generally remained the same during the five year time period. The data from this school tell a mixed story which differs by racial group; some groups show promising movements in the most recent three years toward equitable distributions while others do not. This is true in both disciplines – music and visual arts.

In music during the past three years, there were positive movements made by Hispanic students toward greater representation. This group made its greatest increase away from under-representation in the 2016-2017 school year. Other students made a similar large increase away from under-representation, and for the past two years this Other group has been just over the 100 index mark. Black students have not experienced this positive movement, and in the 2016-2017 school year, the under-representation of this group in music deepened considerably. Additionally, the over-representation of Asian and White students increased, with the over-representation of Asian students hitting new highs for each of the most recent three years.

In the visual arts, there were two notable movements made by groups within the past three years, but they were unlike the positive movements seen in music. The first involves Hispanic students



who have been strongly under-represented during the past five years; this group's representation in music dropped to a five-year low during the 2016-2017 school year. The second involves Other students, who have shown fairly equitable representations at or around the 100 index mark for four years, and yet showed a drop from over-representation into under-representation during the 2016-2017 school year. Black students showed three consecutive years of over-representation with little change, while Asian students showed a steep increase from under-representation to over-representation in the most recent three years. White students seemed to remain close to the 100 index mark showing fairly equitable distributions in the visual arts.

Evaluators will continue to track these metrics longitudinally to help program stakeholders better understand course selection patterns and equity distributions for middle school and secondary students.

Focus 2: Impact on 21st Century Skills Instruction

To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills instruction change over time?

The 21st Century Skills, as defined by SPS, are skills and learning dispositions critical to success in school, career, and life. These include *Creative Thinking*, *Critical Thinking*, *Communication Skills*, *Collaboration Skills*, and *Perseverance Skills*. An additional 21st Century Skill used by SPS, *Growth Mindset*, is not included in the observation Protocol due to the difficulty inherent in measuring it through classroom observations, instead of surveys or other means. *Creative Thinking* is manifested when the teacher provides students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas and solutions and to make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks; this is in contrast to the thinking that is shown from the use of scripted lessons and assignments. *Critical Thinking* is manifested when the teacher provides opportunities for students to elaborate, refine, analyze, and/or evaluate ideas, instead of just recalling information. *Communication Skills* are manifested when teachers provide students the opportunity to articulate their thoughts and emotions effectively using oral, written, and nonverbal skills, instead of just stating correct or incorrect answers. *Collaboration Skills* are manifested when teachers provide students with opportunities to work effectively and respectfully in diverse teams, instead of simply completing assignments individually. *Perseverance Skills* are manifested when teachers support students to persist in completing tasks and goals in the face of obstacles, instead of allowing them to give up.

How are the 21st Century Skills measured?

The 21st Century Skills section of the Protocol includes relevant strategies from the STAR Protocol as well as additional strategies developed through research into 21st Century Skills. One half of the Indicators ($n = 5$) are designed to measure the extent to which the teacher initiates effective opportunities for students to demonstrate the 21st Century Skills. The other half of the Indicators

($n = 5$) are designed to measure the extent to which students are effectively engaged in using these skills. The 21st Century Skills section of the Protocol is scored on all 10 Indicators, all five 21st Century Skills Components, and Overall. The scores from the original STAR Protocol are not included in scoring; however, because several observables exist in both the STAR Protocol and the 21st Century Skills section, there is often some overlap. The 4-point scoring scale represents the extent to which 21st Century Skills are evident during an observation period. The Indicator and Component scales range from 1-Not Observable to 4-Clearly Observable. The Overall score represents the extent to which the overall teaching and learning practices observed were aligned with Powerful Teaching and Learning. The 4-point scale ranges from 1-Not at All, 2-Very Little, 3-Somewhat, and 4-Very.

Central Arts Pathway: Year 4 Evidence

Overall, researchers found clear evidence of 21st Century Skills in 51% of the CAP classrooms they visited in 2017, compared to 34% in 2015 and 42% in 2016 (Figure 13). There was consistent growth in STAR scores over time for CAP classrooms. All of the 21st Century Skills scores fell in the moderate range, and all showed improvement since the 2016 data collection. In 2017, communication was the highest-scoring 21st Century Skill, with 54% of classrooms scoring a 3 or 4, representing an increase of 8 percentage points from 2016 (Figure 16). Scores of 3 and 4 for Perseverance demonstrated the strongest growth again this year (Figure 18), increasing 16 percentage points from 2016, and 37 points since the 2014 baseline data collection. This quantitative evidence for perseverance was strongly aligned with qualitative data collected during focus groups and surveys. Teachers, administrators, and art partners shared their experiences of students building capacity to problem solve and to take appropriate risks to challenge themselves and increase efficacy in the arts. Scores in Collaboration also showed growth, demonstrating a 7 percentage point increase in scores of 3 and 4 since 2016 (Figure 17). Scores for Critical Thinking remained fairly consistent during spring 2017 observations, and represent a continued area of focus for the upcoming school year (Figure 15).

An analysis of individual indicators (Table 6) revealed that researchers observed 52% of teachers providing students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas/solutions and make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks, up from 51% during 2016. Additionally, teachers provided opportunities for students to problem solve in 58% of the classrooms visited, and students were observed articulating their thoughts and emotions in 48% of classes.

South-Southwest Arts Pathway: Year 3 Evidence²

For the SSWAP, researchers found clear evidence of 21st Century Skills in 51% of classrooms during the 2017 data collection, demonstrating an increase of 11 percentage points from the baseline data collection (Figure 13). Evidence of Creative Thinking was observed in 41% of classrooms visited (Figure 14), a 9 percentage point decrease from 2016, and scores of 3 or 4 in



Communication decreased from 49% in 2016 to 31% in 2017. Perseverance, which scored the lowest during baseline data collection (31%), increased to 43% of classrooms scoring a 3 or 4 in 2017 (Figure 18). Additionally, evidence of Critical Thinking in classrooms increased by 11 percentage points during the 2017 data collection, and was the highest scoring indicator during this evaluation year (Figure 15).

An analysis of individual indicators (Table 7) revealed that researchers observed 46% of teachers providing students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas/solutions and make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks. Additionally, teachers provided opportunities for students to problem solve in 44% of the classrooms visited. The lowest scoring indicator, at 30%, was students articulating their thoughts and emotions. Students were observed working effectively and respectfully in teams during 58% of classroom visits during the spring 2017 data collection, representing the highest scoring indicator.

Overall

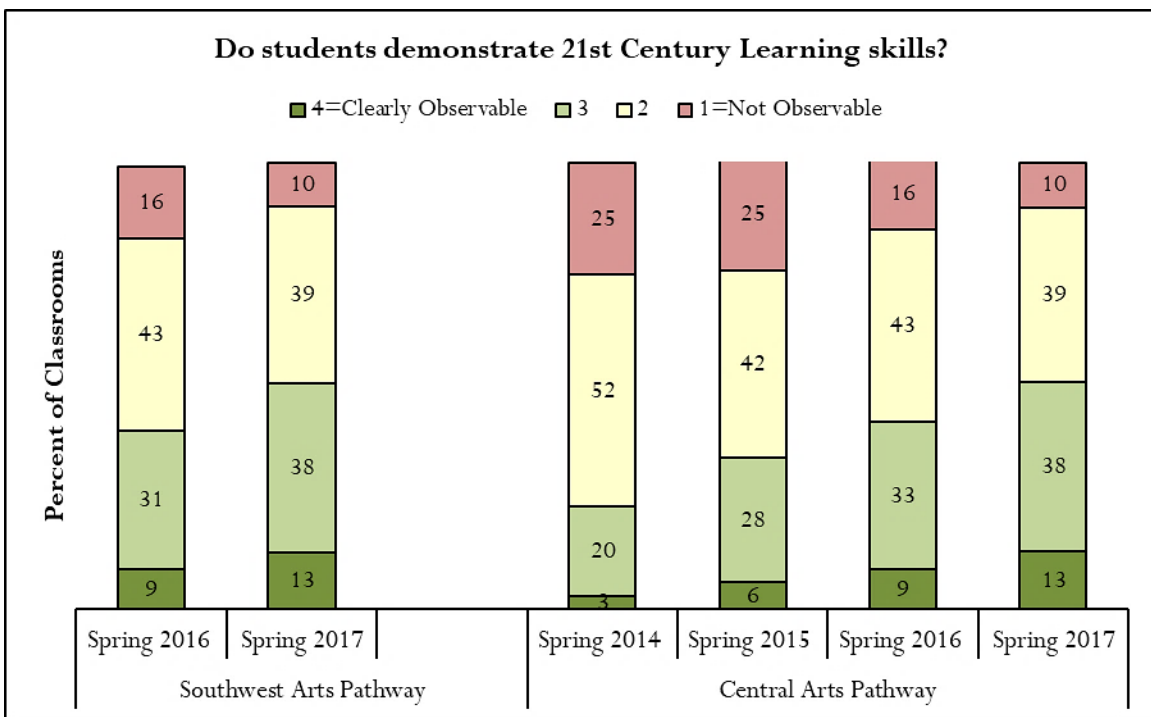


FIGURE 13. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – OVERALL 21ST CENTURY SKILLS

Creative Thinking

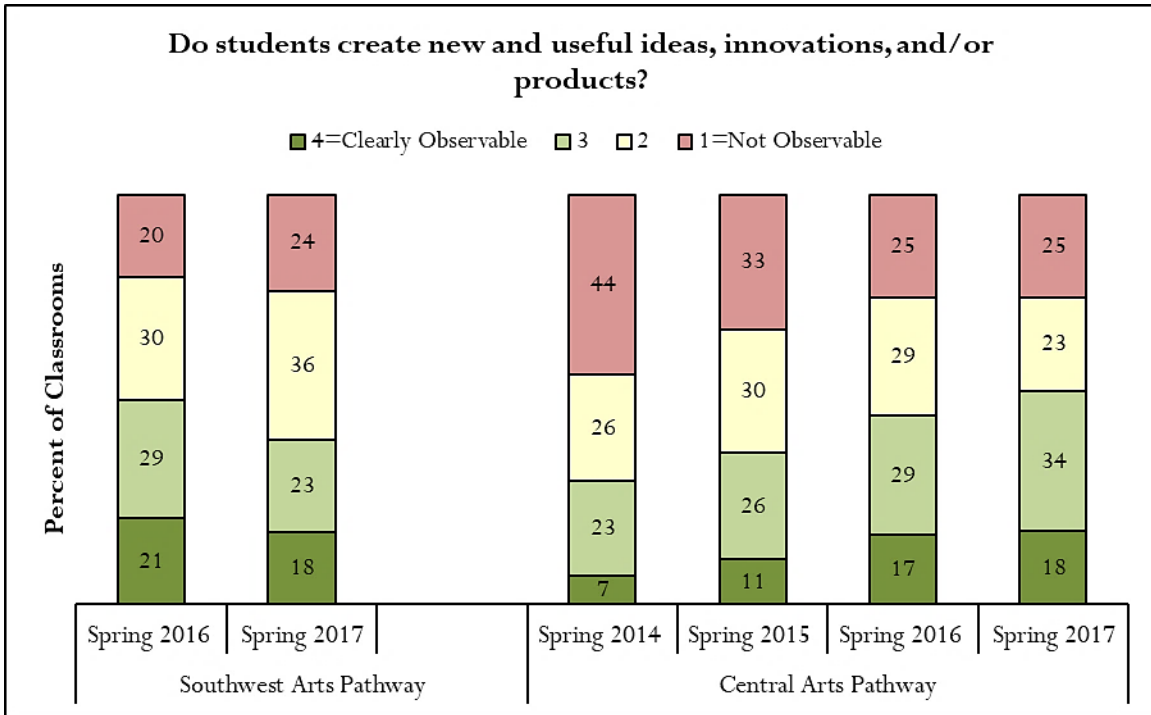


FIGURE 14. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – CREATIVE THINKING

Critical Thinking

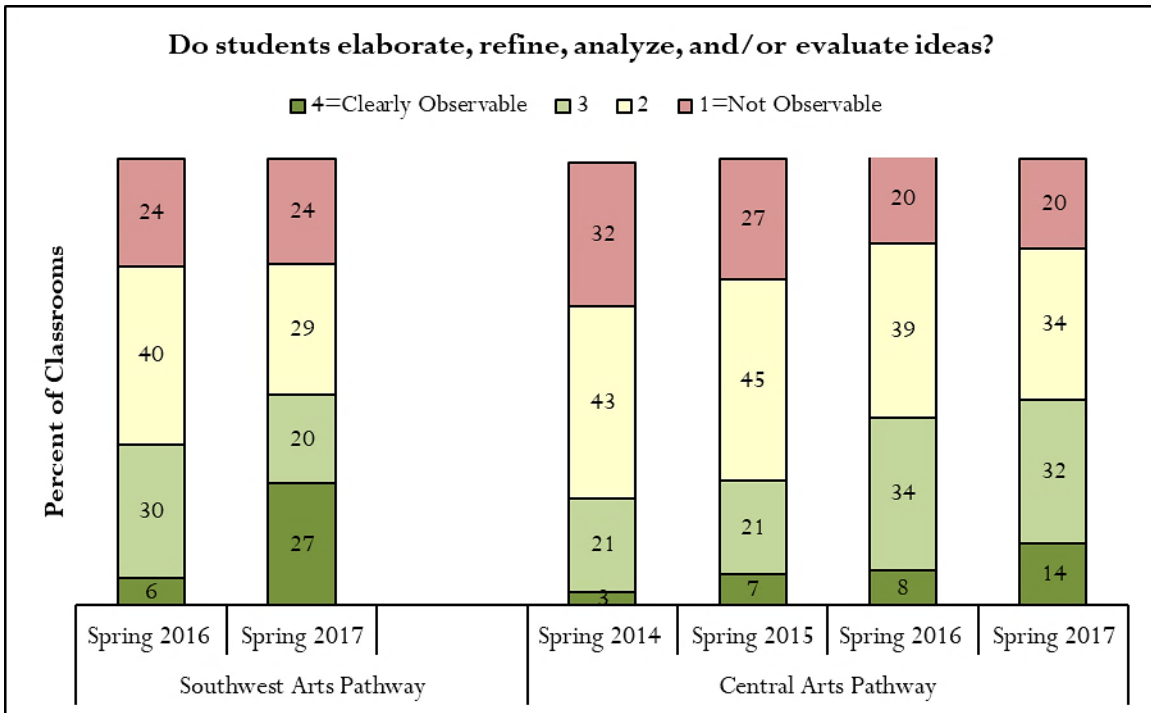


FIGURE 15. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – CRITICAL THINKING



Communication

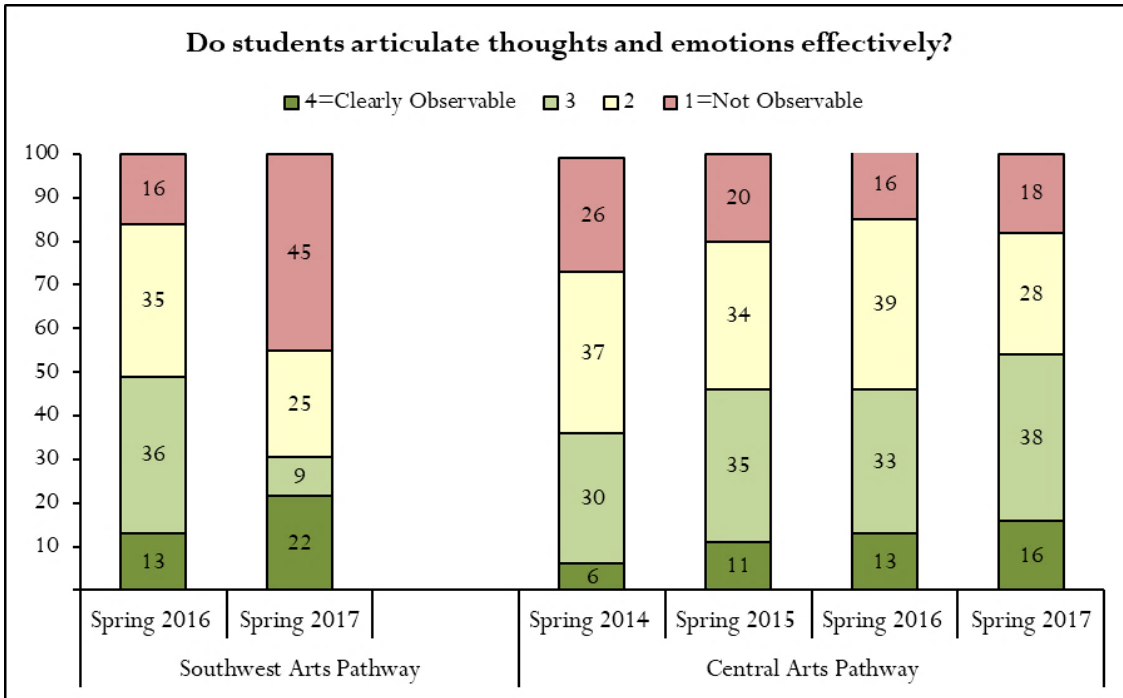


FIGURE 16. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – COMMUNICATION

Collaboration

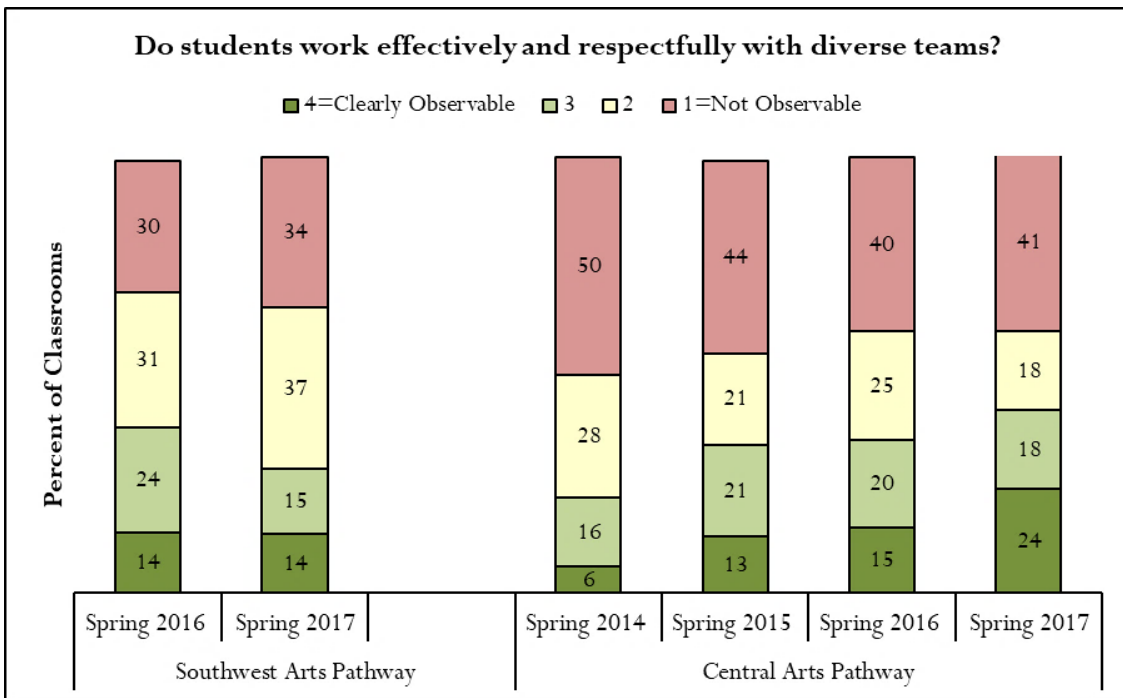


FIGURE 17. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – COLLABORATION

Perseverance

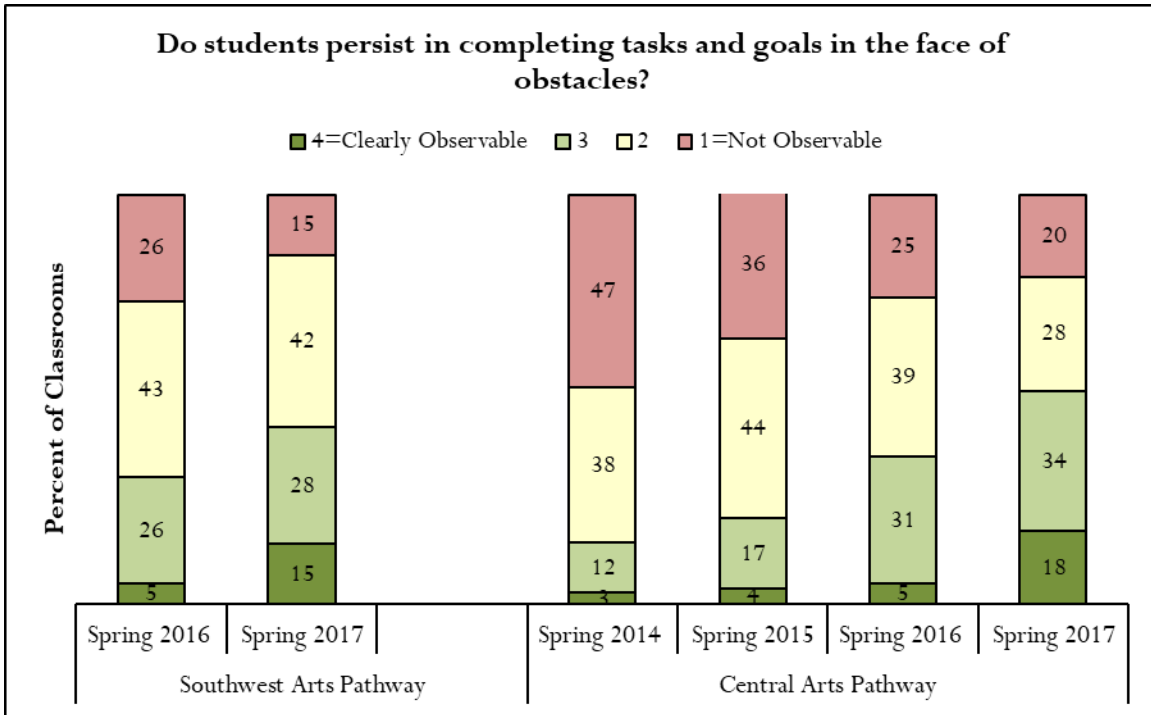


FIGURE 18. CLASSROOM OBSERVATION DATA – PERSEVERANCE



Table 6.

21st CENTURY SKILLS INDICATORS, CENTRAL ARTS PATHWAY

<i>Creative Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
13. Teacher provides students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas/solutions and make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks.	25%	23%	33%	19%
			52%	
14. Students create new and useful ideas, innovations, and/or products.	27%	28%	27%	19%
			46%	
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
15. Teacher provides opportunities for students to engage with skills/concepts in multiple ways.	25%	29%	32%	14%
			46%	
16. Students elaborate, refine, analyze, and/or evaluate ideas.	23%	35%	24%	18%
			42%	
<i>Communication</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
17. Teacher provides students an opportunity to engage in dialogue, debate, and written/oral assignments.	13%	34%	35%	18%
			53%	
18. Students articulate thoughts and emotions.	20%	32%	32%	16%
			48%	
<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
19. Teacher provides opportunities for student collaboration.	38%	21%	15%	26%
			41%	
20. Students work effectively and respectfully in teams.	44%	18%	18%	20%
			38%	
<i>Perseverance</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
21. Teacher provides encouragement and problem-solving strategies.	18%	24%	38%	20%
			58%	
22. Students reflect on growth, connect learning tasks to long-term goals, and/or practice strategies for taking responsibility and dealing with challenges.	28%	33%	28%	11%
			39%	

Table 7.**21st CENTURY SKILLS INDICATORS, SOUTH-SOUTHWEST ARTS PATHWAY**

<i>Creative Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
13. Teacher provides students an opportunity to generate and develop novel ideas/solutions and make their own choices about how to approach learning tasks.	28%	25%	22%	25%
			46%	
14. Students create new and useful ideas, innovations, and/or products.	26%	33%	24%	17%
			40%	
<i>Critical Thinking</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
15. Teacher provides opportunities for students to engage with skills/concepts in multiple ways.	22%	38%	23%	18%
			40%	
16. Students elaborate, refine, analyze, and/or evaluate ideas.	19%	30%	25%	25%
			51%	
<i>Communication</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
17. Teacher provides students an opportunity to engage in dialogue, debate, and written/oral assignments.	20%	29%	25%	25%
			51%	
18. Students articulate thoughts and emotions.	42%	27%	14%	17%
			30%	
<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
19. Teacher provides opportunities for student collaboration.	41%	27%	12%	20%
			31%	
20. Students work effectively and respectfully in teams.	22%	21%	34%	24%
			58%	
<i>Perseverance</i>	<i>1</i>	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i>	<i>4</i>
21. Teacher provides encouragement and problem-solving strategies.	23%	33%	27%	17%
			44%	
22. Students reflect on growth, connect learning tasks to long-term goals, and/or practice strategies for taking responsibility and dealing with challenges.	10%	45%	30%	15%
			45%	

Additionally, researchers disaggregated the results from STAR data collections to look specifically at arts classrooms (Figure 19). Within the CAP, arts classroom observations showed evidence of 21st Century Skills in 59% of classrooms observed. This is 8 percentage points higher than scores for all CAP classrooms observed in 2017, and 19 percentage points higher than scores for arts classrooms in 2016. Evidence of Creative Thinking decreased slightly in arts classrooms during the 2017 data collection, while all other 21st Century Skills scores increased in CAP arts classrooms. Most notably, scores for perseverance increased by 19 percentage points in 2017 (Figure 20).



During SSWAP observations, disaggregated scores for 21st Century Skills in Arts classrooms were consistent with total classroom scores. Scores for 21st Century Skills decreased 25 percentage points from 2016 (Figure 19). Scores for Creative thinking decreased by over 50% from the baseline data collection, and scores for Communication decreased by 25 percentage points. Conversely, scores for Critical Thinking, Collaboration, and Perseverance increased during the 2017 data collection (Figure 21).

Overall

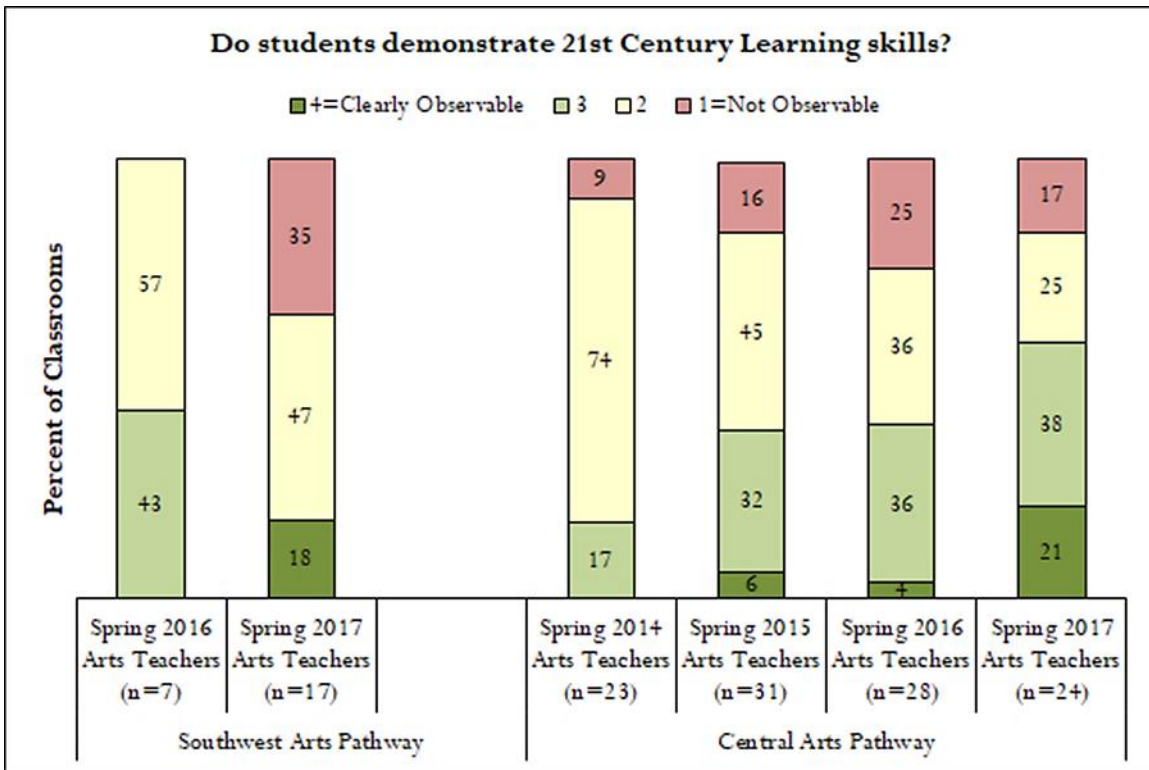


FIGURE 19. DISAGGREGATED RESULTS FROM ARTS CLASSROOMS

21st Century Skills, CAP

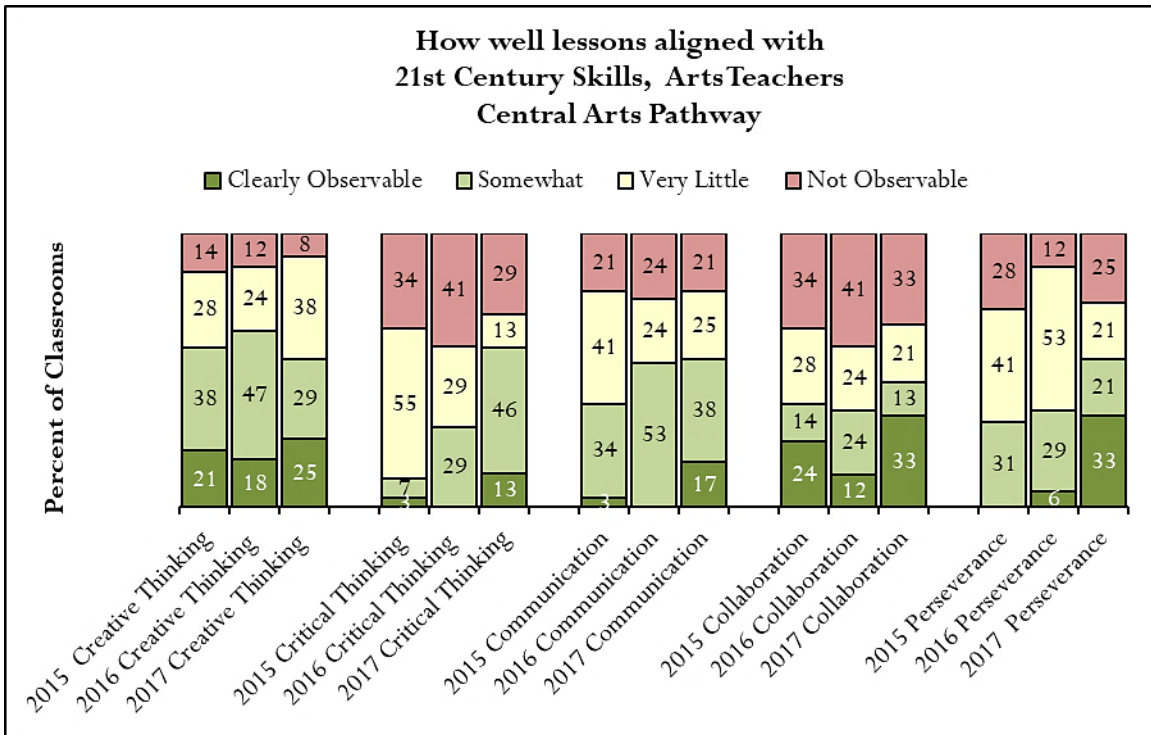


FIGURE 20. ARTS CLASSROOMS OVER TIME

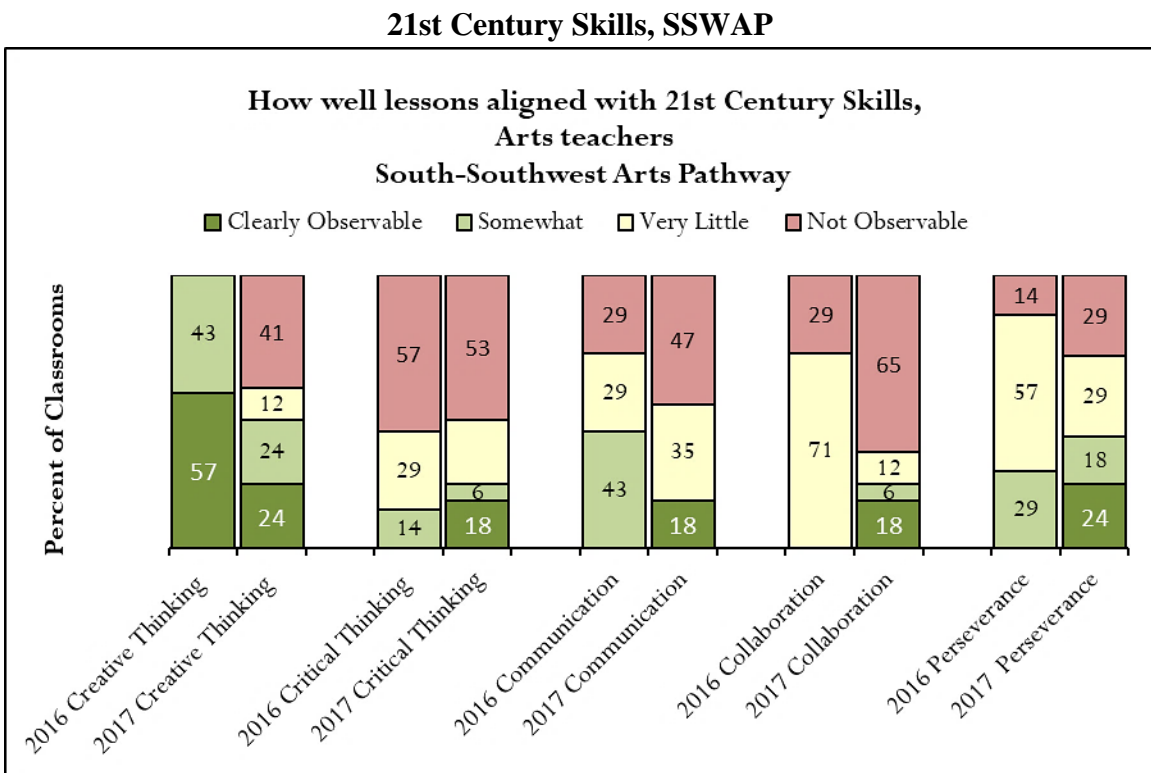


FIGURE 21. ARTS CLASSROOMS OVER TIME



Cultural Responsiveness

In conjunction with personnel from SPS, researchers at The BERC Group identified four Indicators from the STAR Protocol to measure the extent to which the classrooms observed exhibited Culturally Responsive teaching and learning. Half of the Indicators ($n = 2$) focused on teachers ensuring the purpose of the lesson was clear and relevant to all students and ensuring the classroom was a positive and challenging environment. The other half ($n = 2$) focused on students demonstrating a meaningful personal connection to the lesson and experiencing learning activities that were adapted to meet the needs of diverse learners. The 4 point scoring scale represents the extent to which Culturally Responsive teaching and learning was evident during an observation period. The Indicator and Component scales range from 1-Not Observable to 4-Clearly Observable. The Overall score represents the extent to which the overall teaching and learning practices observed were aligned with Cultural Responsiveness. The 4-point scale ranges from 1-Not at All, 2-Very Little, 3-Somewhat, and 4-Very.

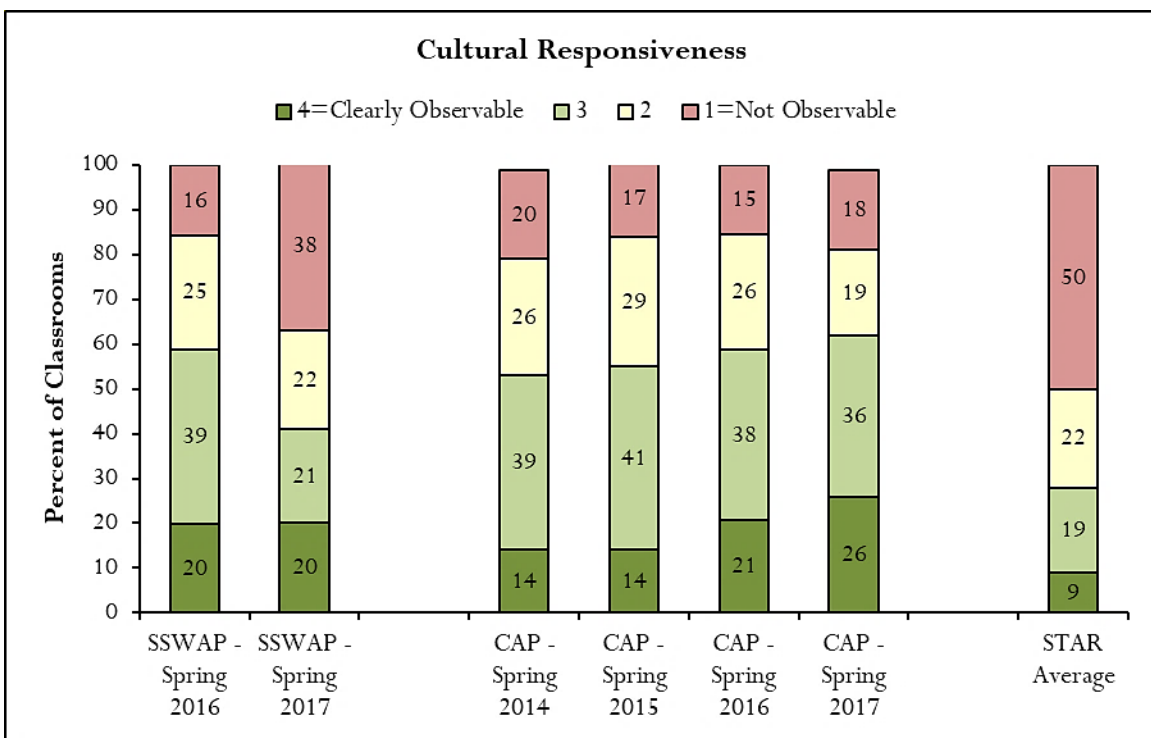


FIGURE 22.

Central Arts Pathway. Researchers observed evidence of Culturally Responsive practices in 62% of the CAP classrooms visited in 2017 compared to 59% in 2016 (Figure 22). This is 34 percentage points higher than the STAR average, and a 3-point increase from the prior year. An analysis of the individual Indicators (Table 8) showed that 59% of students were observed working collaboratively

with peers (a 4 percentage point increase from 2016); and in 86% of classrooms, teachers were observed providing a safe, positive learning environment for all learners.

Table 8.

CENTRAL ARTS PATHWAY - CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	1	2	3	4
7. Teacher assures that the purpose of the lesson is clear and relevant to all students.	22%	23%	39%	16%
			55%	
8. Students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection to the lesson.	35%	21%	23%	22%
			45%	
10. Teacher assures the classroom is a positive and challenging academic environment.	1%	13%	47%	39%
			86%	
11. Students work collaboratively to provide social, peer-support for learning.	13%	19%	34%	25%
			59%	

South-Southwest Arts Pathway. Researchers observed evidence of Culturally Responsive practice in 41% of classrooms (Figure 22) in the SSWAP during the 2017 data collections. This is an 18 percentage point decrease from 2016. The highest scoring Indicators in the SSWAP were Indicators 10 regarding classroom environment and 11 regarding collaborative work. Teachers were observed creating a positive and challenging learning environment in 63% of classrooms (a 20 percentage point decrease from 2016), and students were seen working collaboratively with peers 47% of the time. Additionally, researchers observed teachers ensuring the purpose of the lessons were clear and relevant in only 18% of the classrooms visited (Table 9).

Table 9.

SOUTH-SOUTHWEST ARTS PATHWAY - CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE INSTRUCTION	1	2	3	4
7. Teacher assures that the purpose of the lesson is clear and relevant to all students.	78%	4%	7%	11%
			18%	
8. Students demonstrate a meaningful personal connection to the lesson.	30%	34%	21%	15%
			36%	
10. Teacher assures the classroom is a positive and challenging academic environment.	12%	25%	35%	28%
			63%	
11. Students work collaboratively to provide social, peer-support for learning.	30%	23%	22%	25%
			47%	



During spring focus groups, participants shared perspectives on Culturally Responsive instruction, as well as perspectives on creating equitable opportunities for all students in their school communities. Teachers spoke of the need to increase awareness of strategies for using art with special education and ELL students. They also articulated their desire to receive more diversity training and professional development. One arts team member shared,

There is a lot of research on music and learning, yet it is a huge clash here at our school, especially with the Somali population. . . . As we continue to push the arts, we need to keep considering the needs of each individual culture. Right now, when we create lessons, it does not always occur to us that there are things outside of our cultural norms. We need more training and support in this area.

21st Century Skills Survey

In addition to classroom observations to determine the extent to which arts teachers were incorporating 21st Century skills and strategies into their instructional practice, evaluators administered a survey to help program leaders better understand arts teacher beliefs related to critical thinking, creative thinking, collaboration, communication, and perseverance. Teachers were asked to respond to 23 Likert style questions, with a score of 1- “Strongly Disagree” to 5- “Strongly Agree.” Ninety-two teachers participated in the pencil and paper survey, which was scored and analyzed in Fall 2016. Figure 23 shows results from a sample of survey questions.

For most items, teachers scored questions about 21st Century skills positively, but three items received more neutral responses. One of these items asked teachers whether they believed it is more important for students to hear their own voice during class than the teacher’s voice; this item had a more neutral average score of 3.73. Another item asked whether student effort is more important than student achievement; this item received an average score of 3.94.

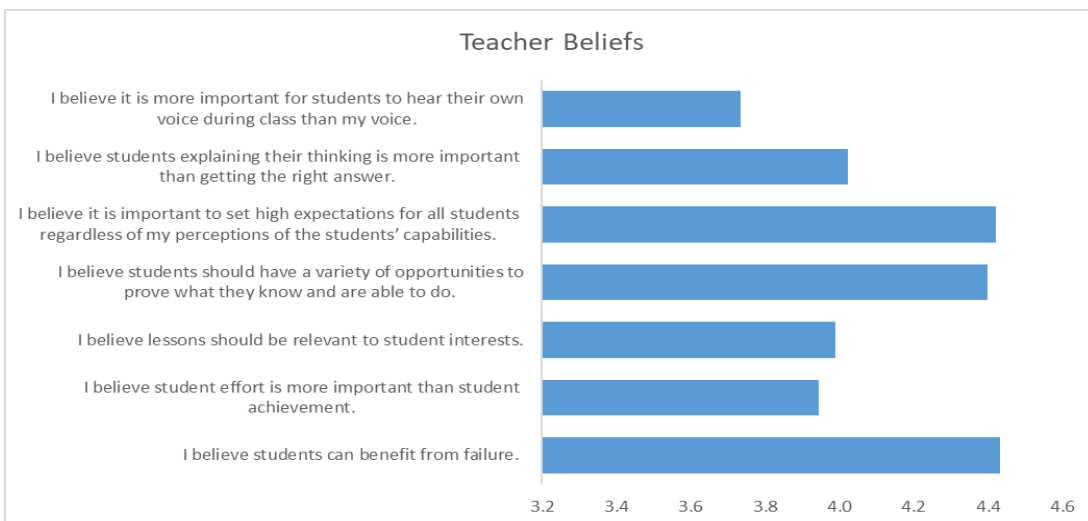


FIGURE 23.

CREATIVE ADVANTAGE IMPLEMENTATION REVIEW

For this evaluation, the CAP was entering into its fourth year of the initiative and the SSWAP was entering into its third year. From the initial year's planning to this third or fourth year's implementation, many exciting shifts were being seen by evaluators across both pathways. These positive changes were also met with emerging or continued implementation issues. It is important to note that despite the single name for the initiative, each school, pathway, and region was empowered to structure the initiative in the way that best met its needs and resources. Because of this, implementation successes and concerns met by one school or pathway might differ greatly from another. While this complicates the ability to make generalizations about implementation for all schools, there were some overall patterns that emerged along with some that were individual to each pathway. Patterns and overall impressions regarding contextual factors, program level planning, and professional development are discussed first, followed by partnership highlights specific to the CAP and SSWAP.

Contextual Factors

Interviews and focus groups with school stakeholders and program leaders revealed several contextual factors impacting the overall implementation of The Creative Advantage at the district and school level. Overarching themes discovered during qualitative data collection included inconsistent funding for the arts, lack of prioritization of the arts as a core subject, and communication about the value and importance of arts for all students. Additionally, resource allocation in the form of human capital and time were discussed. These contextual factors are explored throughout the evaluation report.

Program Level Planning and Implementation

During the course of the 2016-2017 school year, program leaders continued to meet regularly to discuss best practices for ongoing improvement. Leaders focused on creating professional development aligned with the goals and vision of The Creative Advantage, strengthening arts partnership opportunities and programming, and addressing district wide changes to arts education that impacted the progress towards program goals. They worked collaboratively to respond to stakeholder concerns and formatively assess the program.

Focused Professional Development

Within The Creative Advantage there is a city- and district-wide investment in professional development. There are three primary avenues for professional development, and together they were designed to meet the needs of a variety of stakeholders. First, The Creative Advantage series presented professional development for members of arts organizations, teaching artists, and certificated teachers. This series developed through partnerships with the Office of Arts & Culture, Seattle Art Museum, and SPS. Second, the Visual & Performing Arts Program was offered to support the professional development of certificated teachers. Third, there were opportunities for



grant funded professional development that aligned to Creative Advantage pathway/region goals. There were also professional development opportunities that arose through various community partnerships. The commitment to supporting teachers and partners through continued professional development is a strength of the initiative, and the impact of this professional development is a key measure of success of The Creative Advantage.

This commitment can be seen through the multitude of offerings on a variety of arts related topics – from training about how to use arts assessments for guiding student learning and teacher evaluation to support with analyzing year end data on the arts. In addition, this commitment was evidenced in the way some professional development was offered on multiple dates to allow teachers choice and greater access to development information. This was true, for example, with the 21st Century Arts Common Assessments professional development session, which was offered on multiple dates to extend its reach to more teachers. Finally, not only was the professional development varied and relevant to participants, some of the offerings were very well attended, which illustrates the way in which some offerings met a clear desire and need. Worth mention again is that initiative schools structured their arts work in many different ways, so to find and develop offerings that supported the work of all members, no matter the direction they were taking the initiative in their schools, is a challenging task. One success in this regard involved The 21st Century Arts Common Assessments professional development session, which reached 156 out of 180 teachers (87%). Part 2 in this professional development series, offered roughly one month later, provided information and support to 72% of involved teachers. As the initiative work continues in future years, communication and information sharing between participant schools and different pathways and regions will help to identify specific needs and tailor professional development to meet these needs.

Professional Development Offerings

In 2016-2017, there were several opportunities for professional development offered for teachers, administrators, and community partners. This evaluation report highlights five professional learning workshops including the 21st Century Arts Common Assessment trainings, four teaching artist meet-up sessions, the annual summer arts institute, and Bringing Theater into the Classroom (BTiC), (Tables 10 and 11). Feedback from participants was collected via survey and provided perception data regarding the content and quality of the professional development offered.

Table 10.**PROFESSIONAL LEARNING WORKSHOPS**

Title	Leaders/ Mentors	Description
Annual Arts Partner Kick-off	Regan Pro, Lara Davis, Gail Sehlhorst, Tina LaPadula	Kick off a new series of Creative Advantage partner trainings.
21st Century Training	Gail Sehlhorst, Brian Carman	Exploration of how to use art to bring 21st Century skills and assessments into your classroom.
Advocating for Arts and Social Justice	Julie Trout, Amy Pak, Fern Rendell, Sabrina Burr	Strategies to successfully advocate for arts in your school and community.
Reteaching Gender and Sexuality	Sid Peterson, Aysha Kloub	Art strategies to examine and unpack the ways that power and privilege play out in relation to gender and sexuality.
Arts & ELL	Carina del Rosario, Alison Youngst	Exploration of key concepts and techniques to implement best practices for teaching and learning in ELL classroom settings.
Teaching Artist Meet-Up Sessions		
Music Educators: More Music and More Conversation	Deborah Schaaf, Aaron Walker Loud	An evening of music and conversation with peers at the Moore Theatre in Seattle, celebrating the musical talent of youth in the community.
Theatre and Performance Educators: Playback Theatre Northwest for Educators-Tell Them Your Story	Rachel Street, Roberto Ascalon	Hands-on skill building to strengthen creative teaching practices through storytelling.



Visual Art Educators: Restorative Drawing and Sculptural Exploration	Julie Trout, Mylen Huggins	Opportunity to engage in a creative process of exploring 2-dimensional and 3-dimensional art, followed by a chance to participate in a reflective process.
Media Educators: Media Skills for Educators	Nancy Chang, Brian Carmen	Film study and response using technology as a platform.

Although there were few surveys collected from several of the professional development workshops offered during the 2016-2017 school year, those surveys that were completed provided predominately positive responses about each experience, rating² most as innovative (4), or proficient (3).

21st Century Common Arts Assessment Trainings

Program leaders offered 3 professional development opportunities dedicated to the 21st Century Arts Common Assessment during the 2016-2017 school year. The first, delivered in September, focused on reviewing the TPEP goal setting process and applying these learnings to arts disciplines. Teachers were provided guidance on how to read student growth rubrics. They were also given time and support to practice writing focused and measurable goal statements. Following the training, 68 program participants completed evaluation forms to reflect on their learning. The responses were positive, with the majority of teachers scoring the trainings as “innovative” or “proficient”. Several participants felt that working with colleagues on arts specific goals was the most valuable aspect of this training. Additionally, respondents felt that there was value in providing on-going training related to arts assessments.

The second training related to the 21st Century Arts Common Assessment was delivered in October 2016, and the third in May 2017. Of the 19 participants that shared their evaluation of the October training, several felt that the most valuable learnings were their new understanding of the Teacher and Principal Evaluation Project (TPEP), as well as a more developed understanding of how to use EXCEL to organize and understand data. Similar feedback was shared from respondents following the third training in May. Although there were fewer responses (n=7), all of the participants that shared their experiences in May felt that the most valuable aspect of this training was learning how to analyze and talk about their data.

² Rated on a 4-point scale, with 4=innovative, 3=proficient, 2=basic, 1=unsatisfactory

Summer Arts Partner Institute

For the annual Creative Advantage Summer Arts Partner Institute in August 2017, The Seattle Art Museum and The Creative Advantage program leaders invited Dr. Shawn Ginwright to deliver the keynote address. Dr. Ginwright is an Associate Professor of Education and author of “Hope and Healing in Urban Education: How Activists and Teachers are Reclaiming Matters of the Heart.” The audience consisted of a large group of teachers, administrators, and artists within the community. Immediately following this address, participants were offered a choice from three workshops (Table 11). One hundred and forty-seven participants completed or partially completed a follow-up survey to better understand the impact of these workshops.

Table 11.

CREATIVE ADVANTAGE 2017 SUMMER ARTS PARTNER INSTITUTE

Workshop Title	Workshop Leader	Number of Respondents
Creative Response: Spoken Word	Roberto Ascalon	28
Creative Response: Visual Arts	Lauren Atkinson	37
Radical Healing	Dr. Shawn Ginwright	71

Overall, participants responded positively when asked about their experiences during the Arts Partner Institute. Survey results showed that for each item, over 80% of participants agreed or strongly agreed with the statement offered (Figure 24). Additionally, when asked to rate their overall experience on a scale of 1-10, with 1 being the worst professional development and 10 being the best, over 80% of respondents scored an 8 or above, and 94% of respondents felt that this opportunity would help them to partner more effectively with schools (Figure 25).

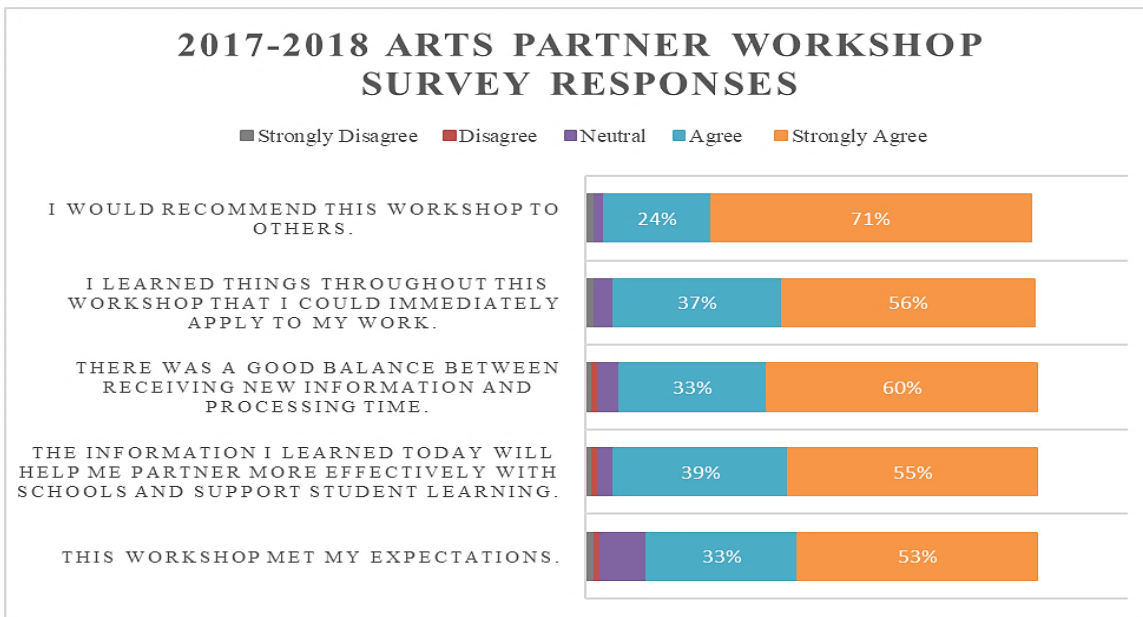


FIGURE 24.

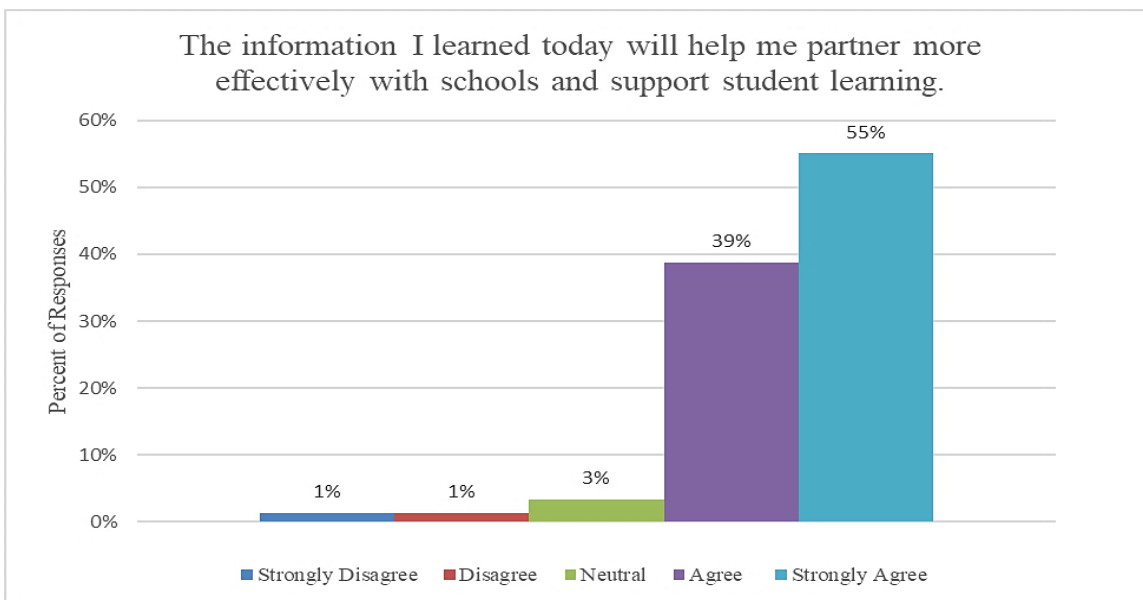


FIGURE 25.

Qualitative responses from these Arts Partner Institute surveys provided additional positive responses. Several participants shared that the keynote speaker was inspiring, genuine, and brought a sense of purpose and direction to the work. There was a deep connection between the keynote address and the workshops that followed, and participants commented on the authenticity of the experiences offered. One explained,

This was an incredibly moving exercise - on a personal level and also on a collective level. It helped me to affirm (reaffirm) work I am doing as a teaching artist teaching creative writing, and how powerful it is to share our stories, not only to build empathy and listening skills, but also to remember our vulnerability and willingness to share and create the safe space and opening for someone else to know they can be open and vulnerable too. It was so powerful to not only talk about but actively experience what it feels like...and to think about how I can [bring] my own honesty and vulnerability into my teaching and artistic practice to share with my students....

Another shared that the “one-on-one and eye contact with a new person, and deep prompts and safe space to play with vulnerability and genuine depth” was impactful, and helped the responder to rethink current practices in the classroom. Several other participants spoke to the depth of the experience, the chance to make connections and build relationships in a safe space, and the opportunity to learn the vocabulary around social justice and equity issues.

Survey respondents also commented on the hands-on activities and opportunities for reflection throughout the summer institute. Many noted that “working collaboratively in silence” and “creative agreements” were both valuable activities offered. Additionally, activities including mandala making, poetry writing, and contour drawing were seen as adding high value to the professional development.

In addition to questions about the value of the workshops, program leaders included survey items designed to inform decisions for future professional development opportunities. Participants were asked to share any questions they had remaining, and how The Creative Advantage could support them in their efforts to implement some of their learning in their classrooms or art making process. Several respondents shared that while this was an excellent introduction to many of the deep, rich topics covered during the training, they felt uncertain about how to take the work and use it in authentic, meaningful ways. Many expressed an interest in learning strategies to effectively communicate the social justice work to reluctant colleagues and students. One respondent commented, “Dialogue is pretty complicated. It would be helpful to have more concrete ideas for how it can be used with students; also, how to use it with younger kids.” Another wrote, “I’m not sure how to even begin to implement in my practice. It caused me to ask questions, be introspective, but I am still left in a similar place I was before, just with more information.”

When asked what support would be helpful, “resources” was the most frequent response. Several respondents asked for follow up trainings, books and lesson plans, and opportunities to ask specific questions about how to use this work in daily practice. One respondent shared,



...resources on doing this work across lines of identity. As a white teacher of mostly students of color, I am aware that vulnerability can be very risky for young people in multi-racial environments. Wondering how to be real about this while I co-encourage bravery.

BTiC Professional Development

In July 2017, 44 teachers participated in BTiC, a 5-day professional development workshop focused on introducing theater into the classroom. Nineteen Seattle Public Schools were represented from all three Creative Advantage regions. There were 5 full days of workshops, and each teacher received three follow up mentorship sessions with a teaching artist during the 2017-2018 school year.

Professional development leaders provided participants with two opportunities to share feedback; an on-line survey and a paper survey. Overall, survey responses from both were positive. When asked what they felt was the best part of the workshop, several teachers commented “all of it” or “everything about it”. One teacher shared,

Hard to say...I loved the energy and enthusiasm. It was easy for teachers to feel like they could take risks and try new things. I loved that staff taught lessons to us as adults and not as if we were students. I felt respected and supported. All of the mini-workshops were well done, always wish for more time! However, I was exhausted at the end of each day!"

Another noted,

It was very well designed to make good use of our time, give us choice about what we wanted to do, and it provided tools and ideas that are useful to me to apply right away. I love that there is follow up. I love that it was designed for everyone to feel successful and comfortable, yet challenged.

Teachers also commented on the organization of the week, the number of choices they felt were available, the high level of energy, and the quality instruction. One new teacher commented,

As this was my first year, I was overwhelmed with all that was new to me, but each workshop broke the skills down. I especially see how I can use the BTiC lessons to create a culture of respect and support in my classroom. I love all the ways to collaborate. Loved the passing of the script in Painless Writing, and the energy and humor of the Improv class. I certainly will start my year with the Empathy and Respect. I loved the book Rachel shared and it inspires me to see what I can do with other books I have. I am also eager to see how to adapt theater experiences with my curriculum to make the concepts more clear to my students. The whole week was amazing!

Workshop leaders also asked for constructive feedback from survey participants. One participant noted that it might have been helpful to “schedule the high school vs elementary options more

deliberately.” Another suggested that the workshop leaders allow time for returning teachers to talk about their experiences incorporating theater into their classrooms since their last workshop. A few teachers wanted more time to practice and plan for lessons. One teacher noted,

It would be nice to have video resources to fall back on after we are at school this year and some of our learning is a bit fuzzy. The week was so packed and a bit overwhelming. Everything is clear now, I just don't want to forget all I learned and hope that my notes will remind me of the finer parts of each session.

Valuable Arts Partnerships

In addition to an increased awareness and presence of arts in school buildings, there was evidence of lasting relationships with many of the arts partners on The Creative Advantage roster. The importance of these partnerships extended to teachers, school leaders, and students alike. Teacher responses often noted partnership benefits that would positively influence their planning and future instruction. One school arts team shared,

We would say that having the arts partnerships has been impactful, and made me think about how to incorporate what I have learned into my instruction. Also, for me, helping to think about how I can bring a little bit of art in in different ways; being more intentional.

Many teachers spoke to the value of the partnerships formed as a result of The Creative Advantage. Within the CAP, schools continued to work with organizations and individuals they had partnered with in the past. Focus group participants discussed the importance of building relationships with arts partners, and shared that trust with their arts partners helped them to feel more efficacious and take risks. One school team noted,

Our most successful partnership has been with Jack Straw. They come to the school, they give their time, they are flexible, and they have really great leadership. They teach drama, speech, podcasting, digital stories, and after school music. We want to keep our relationship with them, as it adds tremendous value to our school.

Another CAP school leader explained the administrative benefits that came with being allowed to choose their own partner(s) and create their own partnership structure with teachers. This school decided to work with one partner exclusively during their tenure as a Creative Advantage school. The school leader shared,

We have worked exclusively with MoPOP. It made it much easier on contracts and paperwork. This year, MoPOP did graphic novel pages with the Japanese class, theater presentations with the ELL class, production presentations with one of the engineering classes...horticulture classes did something with illustration. The teachers would share their curriculum, and partner with the educational director of the museum who helped to



select the appropriate artist. The teacher would then work with the artists to develop lessons...working this way helped keep the process manageable.

These relationships between arts partners and schools had visible benefits to students as well, as observed by their teachers. Teachers shared that there was value in being challenged to explore ideas outside of one's own comfort levels, and they described their students as "eager" and "enthusiastic" when arts organizations and individuals from the community came in to teach. Several teachers noted the pride students exhibited when arts partners asked them to talk about their own schools, and communities. Teachers also commented on the level of engagement and motivation present during these collaborative partnerships. One shared,

Just the extra movement opportunity for my students made them energized for the rest of the day. It allowed them to express themselves in ways that aren't what we regularly do. Having someone who is passionate about the art was amazing.

The Community Arts Partners who were engaged in this initiative were also asked to share their experiences regarding their work with SPS. These partners had provided learning experiences during the 2016-2017 school year in a variety of arts areas, including dance, music, theater, visual arts, literary arts, and multidisciplinary arts. Surveys asked for descriptions of services provided, as well as for perceptions regarding logistics, partnership creation, teacher roles, and outcome assessment after programs. Responses from both pathways indicate an overall high level of satisfaction with the initiative; 66% of responses from CAP and 88% of responses from SSWAP indicated satisfied or very satisfied.

When asked about the ease of logistics regarding partnerships with pathway schools, Arts partner responses indicated a similar high level of satisfaction, with 88% of CAP responses and 86% of SSWAP responses indicating satisfied or very satisfied with The Creative Advantage program logistics (Figure 26).

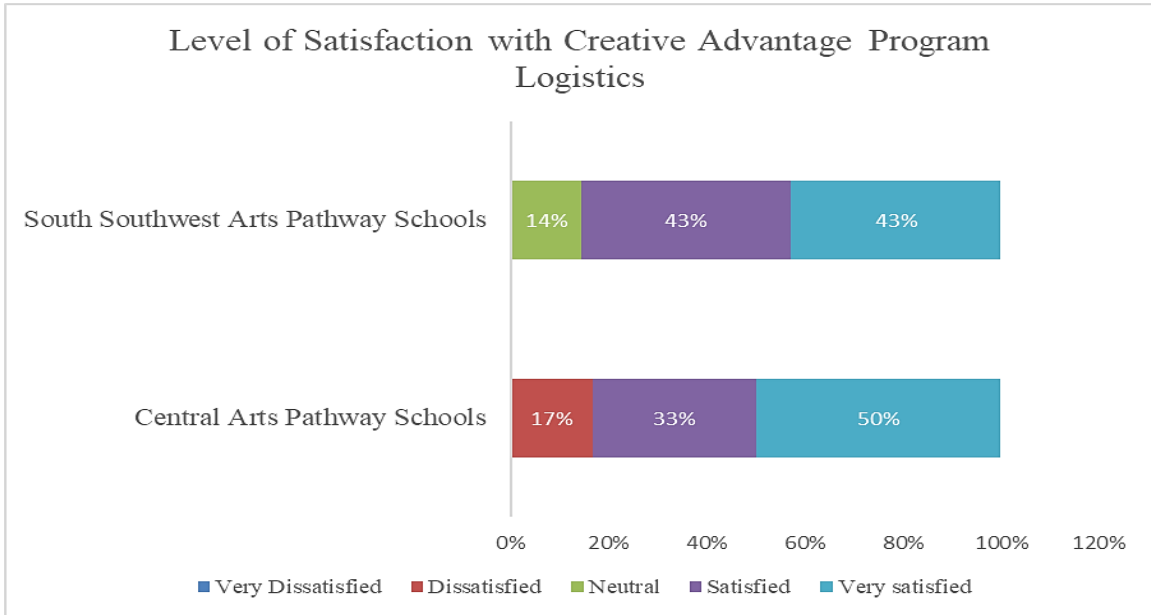


FIGURE 26.

Arts partners also responded to a question about how they solicit partnerships with the schools. Within both pathways, schools were most often responsible for initiating the partnerships. However, especially in the SSWAP, Arts partners also played important roles in initiation (Figure 27).

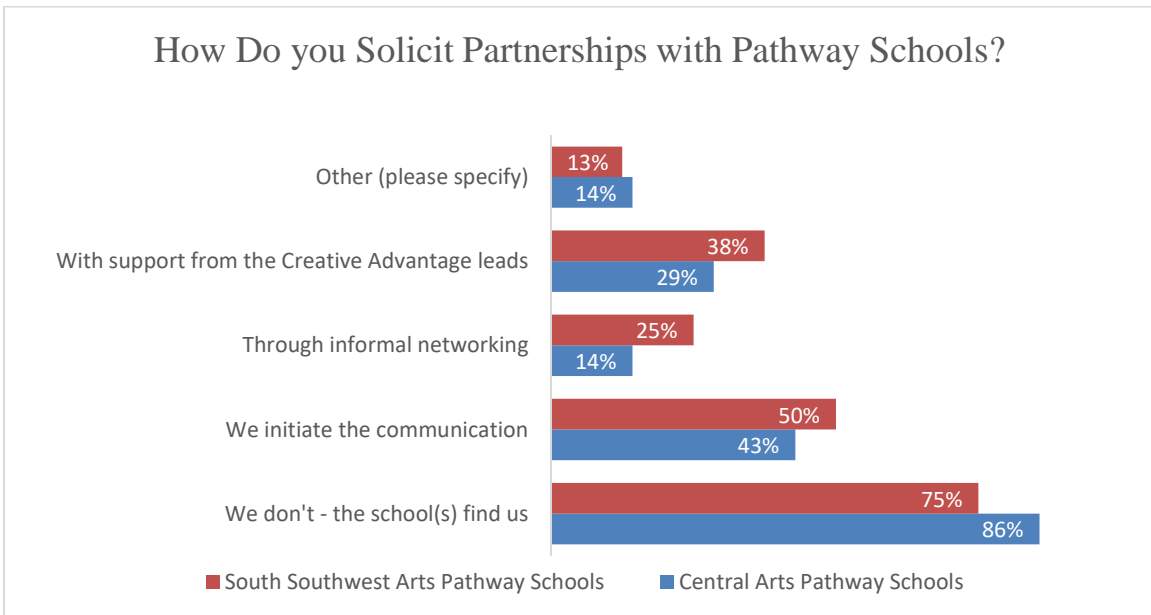


FIGURE 27.



Regarding the role of teachers during lessons, Arts partner responses indicated that teachers played a variety of important support roles during lessons. Survey results which focused on the type of teacher activities during partnership lessons indicated that teachers had three primary roles during classroom visits. The most frequent role for teachers involved classroom management support during lessons (77.8%). Teachers also played important roles in building community (55.6%) and in helping to plan the lessons (44.4%).

Finally, arts partners shared several ways in which they assessed outcomes during their work with students. While all of the survey respondents agreed that they assess for skill development in their respective disciplines, 89% also assessed 21st Century skills development, 33% tracked attendance, and 22% measured academic improvement (Figure 28).

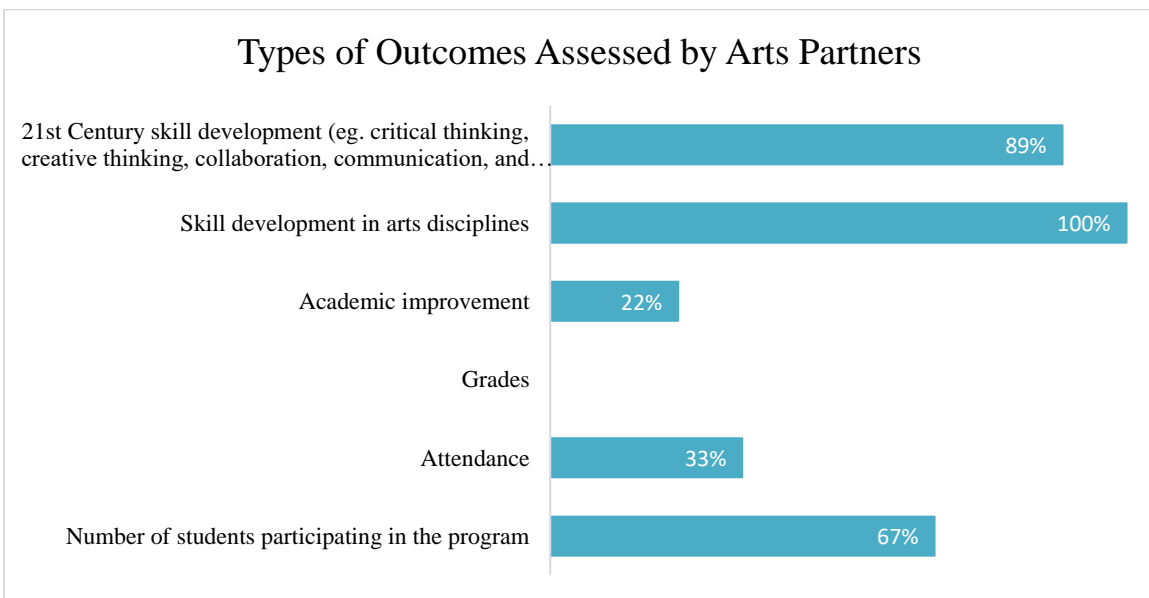


FIGURE 28.

CAP Partnership Highlights

During the 2016-2017 school year, 10 schools in the CAP participated in arts partnerships with individuals and organizations on The Creative Advantage partnership roster. Artists and organizations included Jack Straw, Book-It Repertory Theatre, Jah Breeze, the Seattle Repertory Theatre, YMCA Powerful Schools, Roger Fernandes, and Brazil Arts & Education. These partnerships were distributed across elementary, middle, and high school grade levels, and included multi-week residencies, school wide performances, and collaborative partnerships between artists and classroom teachers to develop lessons. Students engaged in visual arts, music, theater, technology, story-telling, and poetry writing, and were given opportunities to share their creativity with others.

SSWAP Partnership Highlights

Similarly, during the 2016-2017 school year, 10 schools in the SSWAP worked with community arts partners to provide rich arts opportunities for students, and teachers, throughout the schools. Schools in the SSWAP developed relationships with several individual artists from the roster, including Diane Stewart, Franchessa Berry, Sumayya Diop, Jennifer Bennett, and Greg Stump. Additionally, schools partnered with Jack Straw, Arts Impact, The Seattle Children's Theatre, and Book-It Repertory Theatre. These opportunities allowed students to listen to and create music, write and share their own personal stories, and make relevant, real-time connections to their learning.

Partnership Challenges

Overall, focus group participants seemed pleased with the diversity of the partnership list, and expressed that communication involving partnerships had continued to improve over time. They were also overwhelmingly positive about the collaborative work once partnerships were established. However, there continued to be challenges regarding the process of selecting, contracting with, and building relationships with arts partners. One school team shared, "The hardest part for us was trying to get through the website and access the partnership list. Had we been able to access local artists we knew, we would have saved a ton of time and money." Another arts team described the process of securing partnerships as "exhaustive," "frustrating," and "not user friendly."

Additionally, a few schools shared that they would like to understand how to better support their arts partners in working with students receiving special education services. Teachers suggested providing lesson plans in advance of the partnership visit, so teachers could make accommodations and build in opportunities for all students to be included and feel successful.

Positive Systemic Shifts

The Creative Advantage initiative dovetailed with and helped to further a continued system-wide emphasis on arts education in SPS. This systemic change in SPS has focused on improving basic education in the arts through new staffing and budgeting procedures, through moving schools closer to recommended number of arts instructional minutes for students, and through a commitment by district leaders to support the continuance of the initiative in future years.

Staffing and budget procedure shifts were most clearly seen in changes made to "The School Budget Development Instructions" for 2016-2017, which is the district's tool to support principals in their annual budgeting and staffing decisions. This book has a guideline on how to staff Preparation-Conference-Planning (PCP) teachers, which are also called "Specialists." This guideline reflects efforts to ensure that the arts are supported as a core academic subject and that they are included throughout SPS in a way that is comprehensive, sequential, predictable, and equitable. The language for hiring PCP teachers now states,



When hiring *new* Preparation-Conference-Planning (PCP) teachers, the Weighted Staffing Standards (WSS) **PCP allocations must be used for physical education, music, or visual arts teachers**, and not courses such as technology or world languages. This change is necessary to meet Washington State Basic Education requirements for core academic subjects... Example: A school is allocated 2.0 FTE PCP. A Spanish teacher is leaving. Physical education (PE) is embedded into the day without using WSS PCP allocations. Music is already one of the WSS PCP teachers. Hire a visual arts teacher for the open WSS PCP allocation.

Outcomes from the changes that were made to the guideline resulted in the establishment of 10 new arts programs (five music and five visual arts), eight new teachers, and the purchase of instructional materials for all new programs – including instruments, visual arts equipment, consumables and non-consumables, and curriculum (the *Silver Burdett Making Music* curriculum).

The Creative Advantage initiative supported these new staffing and budget guidelines and the overall goal of eliminating arts gaps by working through Seattle Public Schools' budget to provide targeted enhanced funding for certificated teachers at pathway schools. In CAP and SSWAP, data-driven decisions were made to fund elementary music certificated teachers. In CAP this resulted in six schools opening new programs and three schools receiving a smaller amount of funding to support arts staffing. In the SSWAP, seven schools opened music programs. Prior to this none of the seven schools in the SSWAP had music. Across both pathways, eight new teachers were hired.

Positive systemic shifts have also been seen in the formalization of recommended arts minutes for students at each grade level. The School Budget Development Instructions, in addition to staffing and budget instructions, includes the *recommended* minutes for arts and music (60 minutes per week for each discipline).⁴ The Creative Advantage initiative helps schools to meet these SPS arts minute recommendations; it also works in support of the Seattle Public School K-12 Arts Plan, which lays out specific grade level arts goals for elementary, middle, and high school students (Table 12).

⁴ SPS research shows that in order for students to meet standard in music and visual arts they need a minimum of 60 minutes.

Table 12.

Elementary School:
60 minutes of visual arts weekly, taught by a certificated arts teacher
60 minutes of music weekly, taught by a certificated music teacher
Instruction through residencies with arts organizations and professional artists
Integrated arts instruction in every classroom

Middle School:
A minimum of two semesters of visual, performing, or media arts
Integrated arts instruction in 6 th grade science, language arts, or social studies classes
Art options that are diverse, relevant, and encourage continuation in high school

High School:
A minimum of four semesters of visual, performing, or media arts
Integrated arts instruction in 9 th grade language arts or social studies classes
Sequential opportunities to participate in arts programs at their high school
Opportunities to connect the arts to careers like music recording and graphic design

Finally, positive systemic changes were evidenced through a desire on the part of District leaders to support continued improvements in arts education. District leaders highlighted several processes which would continue this work into upcoming school years. One new process would focus on data collection and management to create a comprehensive list of arts teachers and courses across the district. Another new process would involve the development of a system of accountability to oversee implementation of the Arts Plan. The district also supported the creation and sharing of instructional materials, funds, and support at the school level, and provided opportunities for principals to connect and collaborate with one another for support.



Central Arts Pathway Year 4: School Sustainability Planning

The Creative Advantage Experience

CAP focus groups and interview responses revealed diversity in implementation procedures and practices during the 2016-2017 school year. Some school leaders shared that discussions were shifting to sustainability of their arts programs, while other schools continued to focus on real-time implementation of program components. One participant's response illustrates the great potential benefits of the initiative but also highlight the complexity of the endeavor. These comments were after four years of initiative work. The participant said, "conceptually, this initiative is amazing. Having the arts brought into the school is amazing. However, the execution is really difficult."

Schools in the CAP continued to communicate an understanding of the primary goals and the overall potential benefits of The Creative Advantage. One school leader shared, "Our school is pro art.... We are about process not product. Yes, it can be messy and chaotic and loud, but there is purpose and intention in those moments. It can bring you together." During this last year of implementation, many schools adapted their goals to meet the specific needs of their communities, and to do this, they referenced their arts plans as useful tools for helping them maintain focus and reinvigorate participants.

Several arts teams were directive in their approach to incorporating The Creative Advantage into their buildings, and these teams targeted efforts to work with one partnership, one grade level, or one discipline. Other arts teams identified a broader, overarching approach, attempting to increase access to the arts for all students, creating an arts culture throughout the school, and engaging partnerships at the macro level. For example, one arts team shared that they "continued creating a vibrant arts scene" within their school and community, while another arts team spoke to strategic decisions to increase arts minutes for individual grade levels.

During focus groups, participants highlighted efforts to share student work with families and communities. They purposefully used art to celebrate the diversity within their communities by increasing efforts to build meaningful connections and by tapping into "the cultural wealth and diversity of our students...." One school arts leader in the CAP shared, "Our big moment this year was the culture fair. We had performances, art for sale, and for view. We had really high attendance, from media, families, and community organizations that showed up." Another arts team member noted,

Creative Advantage has definitely promoted opportunities that include students and families; for example, we got to go to MoPOP and breakdance with a student and their grandma, which was a very unifying experience...and provided opportunities to participate in really rich, collaborative work.

In addition to increasing engagement at the student and community level, several CAP arts teams spoke to the value of simply increasing exposure to artwork and to arts language throughout their building. Specifically, schools created intentional spaces for the display of student art work, and they shared videos of their students performing on the school district’s website. In one school, arts leaders created spaces in hallways and stairwells for students to take breaks and engage with art materials, including a community weaving project and mural wall.

Student Outcomes

CAP teachers and administrators spoke openly about the impact of the arts on their students, and their school culture. The words “persistence” and “empowerment” were used repeatedly during spring focus groups. Many participants shared specific stories of students who were transformed by the opportunity to engage with the arts. One team member described this experience:

Yes! We have had 2 SAM shows, and a lot of the students now consider themselves artists. (Art) has been a great opportunity in our rooms to shine where they otherwise might not have. As a staff, we talk about how we are having different experiences in different classrooms with the same kids. It is amazing how some of the more challenging kids are having successes in our classrooms; they might be struggling in reading, but they are so creative and expressive...we had a student that was brought to life in art, and we have been able to stretch that to other places across the school....

Another arts team leader described the way in which she saw the initiative as being valuable for all students, no matter their prior experiences with the arts:

I think this is a 2-pronged approach; students that have never taken arts become exposed, and find some skills they didn’t know they had. Also, students who were already familiar with the arts can make connections with additional content that they weren’t making before.

She also observed that this arts experience for students transcended a simple learning of or exposure to the arts and supported a development of crucial 21st Century Skills:

The arts do truly teach the 21st Century Skills, particularly perseverance and growth mindset. The more we can communicate this sense of “process” the more we can support kids in understanding that it does not need to be such an instant world; they can dig in.

In addition to student impact, many program stakeholders shared stories of community engagement and pride resulting from the opportunities provided through The Creative Advantage. One school leader spoke of how excited students felt to have their parents come in and observe in Reader’s Theater, describing it as “empowering” for both the students and parents. Another school arts member shared,



One of our goals was for the choir to be out in our community, instead of just having parents come to us. Our choir performed at the State of the District event. We have over 100 members in our choir; everybody was in awe of our students.

Challenges

Communication

CAP arts teams shared thoughts about the challenges of implementing The Creative Advantage within their buildings. These discussions focused on systems issues, including scheduling, budgeting, staff and time allocation, and leadership. One teacher shared, “If I could, I would find some volunteers to do the outreach we need to link back to The Creative Advantage. I put a newsletter out the first year, but did not get a response from the teachers, so have not followed up or been rigorous about it.” Another noted, “There is really no money to do the additional work, which ultimately makes it less sustainable.”

Capacity and consistency

Several schools in the CAP changed schedules, added classrooms, or had administrative turnover that shifted the capacity and direction of their work. One school arts leader noted:

I think people on our staff are really open, but there is not really time to talk with each other, and it has been challenging to work with the new administration. Now, we have to intentionally make a point that the arts are relevant; I think she is still a little unclear about the initiative, but teachers understand the value.

Another teacher addressed the perennial issues of time and money. This teacher described that this year it was more difficult to “get new teachers on board.” The adjusted funding structure required schools to raise a portion of their own budget for the arts, and this teacher described that the subsequent increase in demand for time on busy schedules was a definite limiting factor. Teachers also expressed dissatisfaction with what was seen as prohibitive paperwork and mentioned their struggles to maintain focused leadership.

South-Southwest Arts Pathway Year 3: School Implementation

The Creative Advantage Experience

Schools in the SSWAP began their school-wide implementation during the 2016-2017 school year. Arts teams shared their experiences about integrating the arts into classes throughout their buildings during this first full year of implementation. Because The Creative Advantage initiative allowed individual pathway schools the freedom to structure their arts experiences in a way that best met their needs, the initiative took different forms in different schools as schools all sought to maximize arts experiences for their students. Two of the schools in the pathway shared that they were building on their Arts Impact grant, which is a grant supporting arts integration professional

development and coaching partnerships. Several other teachers in SSWAP schools described their work building relationships with arts partners and reaching out to families to share student successes through their art making.

SSWAP focus group participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the goals of The Creative Advantage during 2017 focus groups. Several referenced the school arts plans created the year before, and articulated a common focus of, “providing equitable arts access for all of the students served in the district.” Within this overarching theme, participants discussed their specific school level goals related to The Creative Advantage. One arts teacher spoke about giving students “opportunities to perform that they would not normally have,” which led to discussions about the value of these opportunities to increase student participation and motivation across the school day.

One administrator shared a school-wide desire to embrace the arts that resulted in part from the school’s work on The Creative Advantage initiative:

We want to be an arts integrated *school*. We are taking baby steps, and planning what we can do in the next 2 months, 2 years, etc. We set goals for how we can provide more opportunities to connect with families and increase engagement, provide professional development for teachers, and train students as art docents to share their work with families during gallery walks.

Teachers and administrators spoke about increasing opportunities for families and the community to participate in their students’ artistic experiences. One school shared its, “two-pronged approach to increasing arts,” which included increasing the presence of student art displayed throughout its building while also developing more arts integrated lessons into classroom practice. Several school teams also discussed a new target of increasing opportunities to present and share student artwork with peers and community members, which they hoped to focus on during the 2016-2017 school year. Additionally, having students engage in discussions about their art work was seen as a high value opportunity to build 21st Century Skills such as creative thinking, communication, and collaboration.

One middle school leader shared,

We are having more students come into the school with experience in music, so we are increasing our capacity to provide music. Our music teachers want to put forth a genuine effort to recruit more students of color for music, and increase equity and opportunity for students with traditionally less exposure. We consider this an opportunity to reach out the community; if you don’t know, you don’t go.

Another teacher noted,



I think music has really impacted the building, and I think people are really appreciative of music and drumline. It wasn't typically the kids you see in this light, but they were focused and passionate...we are seeing we need to give these students choice.

Student Outcomes

Arts team members and school leaders shared their experiences related to student outcomes from participation in the arts throughout the SSWAP. Overall, there was a sense that the increased dialogue and awareness of the arts was beginning to take root in many of the school communities throughout the pathway. Despite contextual barriers around scheduling, time, and resources, many school level stakeholders expressed feeling excited about some of the responses they were seeing in their students. One shared,

The students are really engaged and creative in the arts. They are curious, and want to understand everything. They are willing to take risks. The other thing I am seeing is that there are not the same meltdowns while doing the art that we used to see. The resilience, the ability to make mistakes, and the willingness to try again, is remarkable. They are much more patient with themselves. Now they have the background knowledge, which helps to build their confidence.

Challenges

Support

Several SSWAP schools shared that inconsistent support for the implementation phase of The Creative Advantage was seen as a challenge. One teacher noted, "We want to honor the plan. There was a ton of support for designing it, but not a lot of support for implementing it." Many expressed that this was incongruent with the ample support provided during their planning phase, which was seen as a relative strength of the initiative. One arts team suggested,

It would be nice if, every fall, someone from the district came out to each school to get us started with the year and set some benchmarks. We haven't had any contact with the principal that helped us to set up our goals. There wasn't really a roadmap for the year. This felt shocking, since last year I felt they were so adamant about how we needed to do things. To go to nothing this year was confusing; we felt we needed help with implementation, not just planning.

Communication

Communication continued to be a challenge for schools in the SSWAP. One arts team leader shared, "This is a very large staff. I do not think if you asked people about The Creative Advantage they would know what it is yet." Similarly, a school administrator told evaluators,

Our families would not have any idea of what the vision and goals of The Creative Advantage are. Even our staff wouldn't know... On the administrative side, we have talked out how to discuss the different opportunities we have for learning at this school, and that these are the things we do, and what they look like.

Time

Time to integrate the arts was also perceived as a challenge during the 2016-2017 school year. Many participants echoed the comment shared by one arts leader that,

It has been difficult getting the arts into the classroom. Even if you are integrating, it is not always seen as valuable time. It's hard because everybody feels the pressure of standardized testing...teachers want to try something but often feel that they can't.

Teacher efficacy

Finally, focus group participants discussed feeling uncertain or unprepared to use art in their classrooms, despite their excitement about the art materials closets and professional development opportunities. Teacher efficacy was seen as a barrier by several SSWAP art teams. One team member shared,

I feel like people in our building would not argue that the arts are great, but so many of the teachers don't feel comfortable. If we can get all of our staff to believe in the arts and their capabilities in the arts, this might help to push this efficacy out to the students.



BARRIERS TO IMPLEMENTATION

In addition to the many strengths and successes of The Creative Advantage Initiative, program stakeholders identified some common barriers to implementation during focus groups and interviews across the CAP and SSWAP schools. These included prioritizing the initiative, providing dedicated staffing, time, communication, processes and procedures, and maintaining relationships with arts partners. Additionally, issues of sustainability continued to be discussed, particularly in the CAP schools.

School Level Prioritization of the Arts

Although many focus group participants expressed value in and understanding of the connections between the arts and student success, they were also clear to note that the arts still do not hold a priority place in the hierarchy of academic importance within many school buildings. Many schools continued to focus on more traditional content aligned with State assessments and quantitative performance measures, despite the number of stories shared by teachers and administrators highlighting the successes within their own communities. One teacher noted, “Art continues to be seen as a side project, despite the evidence from increased student excitement and engagement.”

Dedicated Staffing

Throughout the spring, program participants at all school levels and in both pathways referenced teacher and administrative leadership as a potential barrier to the successful school level implementation of The Creative Advantage. One teacher noted, “I think this initiative really needs one dedicated person to lead the charge, and see it through.” She continued by explaining, “I think the arts are something that you just need to continually weave into everything. It needs to be intentional.” Another teacher shared, “Make sure you invest in having a management system in place, so you know the gift you are about to be given will bear fruit.”

Several other administrators and teachers spoke to the need for a more consistent school level leadership team with guidance and direction on how to engage teachers, parents, and community members in building up the initiative, and working to identify ways to sustain it over time. Although The Creative Advantage uses a collaborative leadership model, many stakeholders felt this was not structured enough to truly keep the work moving forward.

Time

Time continued to be a barrier to fidelity implementation of The Creative Advantage. Again this year, administrators expressed concerns about scheduling time for the arts in master schedules already saturated with core content. Additionally, many teachers expressed feeling pressed for time to plan, leaving them feeling unprepared and compromising the integrity and meaningfulness of the lessons. One shared, “I would like to see more time and opportunity built in for teachers to talk with one another about lesson planning and infusing the arts.”

Communication

Similar to last year, communication about the components of The Creative Advantage was seen as a barrier to implementation. While many school arts teams spoke to their efforts to engage families and community members, they also shared that this remained a challenge. Very few people were aware of The Creative Advantage newsletters, and those that received them acknowledged they did not often sit down and read them. One arts team did share that they felt this feedback was received by program leaders, however, and that efforts to improve communication were underway.

“Although the newsletter wasn’t successful, they do respond right away to my questions, answer e-mails, and are trying to make changes. This is a strength of the program.”

Schools did highlight their efforts to engage community members and families by hosting cultural nights and arts events. Several shared that although their families might not be aware of where the opportunities come from, they were supportive and excited to participate in celebrating their students’ artwork.

Processes and Procedures

There were several discussions focused on the processes and procedures needed to secure and fund partnerships. Stakeholders shared frustrations with the website, specifically the organization of the arts partner roster. One noted, “The partnership list is not as user friendly as it could be. You can’t really just print it and look through it. Also, the paperwork piece is a complication.” Another told evaluators,

The artists were not efficient with the personal services contracts; some of them did not have business licenses yet, so that made it difficult for us. One of our partnerships proved to be so labor intensive for our office staff we decided not to pursue it again, despite the value of the actual experience.

Sustainability

School level teams were concerned about their ability to sustain the work after the end of funding. Many asked for suggestions, including more trainings on grant writing and fund raising, and a few shared that they did not even use their Creative Advantage funding this year, because the expectation that they would raise a portion of the funds internally was a barrier.



PROMISING PRACTICES

Focus 3: Emerging Promising Practices

To what extent does the use of 21st Century Skills instruction change over time?

With two cohorts fully underway, and a third beginning its regional planning, several promising practices have emerged from The Creative Advantage initiative. These include increased student exposure to arts disciplines, new engagements with community, the establishment of lasting relationships with arts partners, and continuing systemic changes of policy and approach throughout the district.

Exposure to Arts Disciplines

Program and district leaders have made a sustained, comprehensive commitment to increasing equitable access to high quality arts instruction throughout SPS. In addition to adding the media skills center and increasing the number of certificated arts instructors, The Creative Advantage has provided capacity for schools to build relationships with artists spanning the spectrum of arts disciplines. During the 2016-2017 school year, students engaged in African drumming, poetry writing, video, digital storytelling, theater, dance, and a variety of visual arts experiences they may have otherwise not been exposed to without The Creative Advantage. Additionally, teachers throughout the district were given multiple professional development opportunities to learn new arts techniques and strategies to implement in their classrooms. One arts team leader noted that for her students, the arts “are more of a common expectation now.” Another shared that her awareness of equity and diversity has increased as exposure to the arts has increased, helping her to create a more responsive environment for her students.

Community Engagement

During spring 2017 focus groups and interviews, several arts team members spoke about arts events and cultural nights being planned in their schools. These events were intended to strengthen the connections between families, the community, and the school. Many of the arts team members acknowledged that their participation in The Creative Advantage helped to support and influence these new school arts events. Student artwork and performances were often a central focus, with one school noting that “multicultural night was changed to ‘Arts Showcase’; we filled the library with student art.”

Lasting Relationships with Arts Partners

Among the most valuable benefits of The Creative Advantage, particularly for schools in the CAP, was the establishment of and continued partnerships with the greater arts community. Arts team leaders shared that despite challenges with the logistics of partnering, these experiences with real artists from the community were “the most valuable aspect” of being a Creative Advantage school. Many of the schools have maintained the same partnerships over several years.

Continued Arts Awareness

Most of the arts teams noted that The Creative Advantage had altered the language and culture of their buildings in some way. Many expressed that their teachers were more open to experiencing the arts and learning new skills, and others noted that student engagement was noticeably different when students were given opportunities to participate in the arts. One teacher shared that the mural in their building was being used for public relations and that it honors their student and school community, showing the value they place on the arts.

There were still concerns that the arts were not yet held in the same regard as traditional “core” subjects, but overall, program participants expressed that they seemed to be moving in a positive direction. They articulated that the initiative had connected them to artists and exposed them to arts instruction and professional development, and that this alone had increased awareness for all.

Changes in Instructional Practice

Over time, schools in the CAP showed an increase in the presence of 21st Century instructional skills. Students were being given more opportunities to work together, make relevant connections to their learning, and think creatively and critically. Additionally, evidence of perseverance in CAP and SSWAP schools continued to increase over time. The ability to persist despite challenges is critical to social, emotional, and academic success. Teachers throughout school buildings shared that they saw increased engagement in learning, improved problem-solving skills, and a willingness to take appropriate risks. Additionally, classroom teachers noticed that when the arts were infused into core subjects, students who typically struggled to pay attention were more likely to maintain focus and demonstrate efficacy. Several participants shared the belief that the arts were helping to level the playing field in their classrooms.



CONCLUSIONS

In 2016-17, schools in the CAP completed their final year of program implementation. Schools continued to focus on their vision and action plans created during school-wide planning. In order to work towards sustainability, schools were provided with a reduced amount of funding, and were asked to match a portion through their own fundraising efforts. This was perceived as a challenge for several schools, and CAP arts teams were concerned about their capacity to continue with partnerships. Despite these concerns, teachers and administrators in the CAP continued to communicate positive regard for the initiative, with many expressing their gratitude, and sharing hopes for additional funding at some point in the future.

Within the SSWAP, schools began their first full year of program implementation. Ten schools in the pathway used their Creative Advantage funds to engage in arts partnerships with community artists, and program stakeholders spoke about their experiences implementing their arts plans. Overall, arts team members reported satisfaction with the support provided during facilitated planning, but they also expressed a hope for more consistent support during the implementation phase of their work. When asked to summarize their thoughts and experiences about The Creative Advantage, one teacher shared,

I think we are on the right path to bringing more art into the classroom. We continue to get more community members involved, and businesses involved. Our plan is to make it so our hallways have more of the impactful art we have been doing in classes.

During Spring 2017 school visits, interview and focus group respondents emphasized funding, prioritization of the arts, and student success as focal points of the project. They highlighted professional learning opportunities and the annual summer arts institute as strengths of The Creative Advantage. Teaching artist meet-up sessions helped teachers to increase their exposure to different types of art and to implement their experiences in classrooms. Many participants agreed or strongly agreed that key aspects of the Arts Partner Workshop were informative, applicable, and effective in disseminating ideas. Several respondents considered that the topics were deep enough that they wanted additional resources, and asked for more diverse and leveled professional development in the future.

Throughout both pathways, teachers viewed partnerships as critical to increasing access to arts. Partners included community arts organizations, small businesses, museums, and individual artists. Most of the partnerships were positive experiences for both sides. Students were excited to participate; teachers were happy to have experts running the skilled aspects of the lessons; and arts partners believed they were developing skills for student participants.

Participants continued to encounter challenges during the implementation phase of The Creative Advantage. Forming arts partnerships with external partners, getting buy-in from other teachers within the school, finding funding, and carving out time for the arts were identified as barriers. However, these barriers are typical for any teacher or group that is tasked with changing the culture of a school, and there was unanimous agreement that the resources provided by The Creative Advantage helped to better equip teachers for the challenging work ahead.

Researchers assessed program impact by conducting transcript analysis of student course-taking patterns, observing classrooms, and collecting qualitative data from participants. Student course-taking, disaggregated by race, revealed that students are not equitably represented across the pathways or within arts disciplines. Despite these patterns, instruction became more effective over time. Teachers worked to shift their instructional habits towards the 21st Century Skills of Creative Thinking, Critical Thinking, Communication, Collaboration, Perseverance and Growth Mindset. Classroom observation data in the CAP over time showed that 21st Century skills became more prevalent over time. Additionally, the extent to which culturally responsive practices were evident in classrooms also increased over time for classrooms in the CAP.



RECOMMENDATIONS

In order to build upon strengths and support areas of need, we suggest The Creative Advantage consider the following recommendations:

Early Planning

Several arts teams proposed planning partnerships earlier in the school year – potentially as early as August. One of the barriers to working with the partners was the time needed to build relationships, manage the paperwork, and incorporate the lessons into already busy schedules. Another barrier was trying to develop these commitments at the same time as other schools in the pathways. We recommend schools build in time for arts teams to connect with arts partners during the teacher work week in August. This would allow the arts teams to reconnect and create an intentional plan for their partnerships during the year to help mitigate confusion and lessen the burden.

Create an Arts Team Handbook

One barrier to sustainability of the work over time was staff and administrative turn-over. Several school level stakeholders suggested the creation of an Arts Team handbook or binder to help manage transitions and support new arts team leaders. This handbook might include a detailed list of arts partnerships with examples illustrating how to reach out and connect, samples of personal service contracts with instructions embedded, and suggestions for arts integrated lessons.

Message Board to Communicate about Partnerships

Several program participants spoke to the benefits, and challenges, of engaging in partnerships. While relationship building was viewed as a high value component of establishing partnerships, the paperwork, communication, and vetting of arts partners was identified as a barrier. One suggestion is to create an online forum or discussion board for arts teams to share their processes and strategies to overcoming these barriers. This message board might also include a tool for managing paperwork and coordinating with the arts based on their organizational structure.

Community Art Walk

One focus group participant suggested taking the collaborative efforts one step further by bringing student artwork into the community. She shared an experience in a local school district as an example. “All of the schools had a venue in a community business, and the kids posted their artwork for a week. It was really awesome to see the community come together for their students.” We recommend The Creative Advantage consider finding more opportunities to bring the work outside of school buildings and into communities.

School to School Collaboration

We recommend schools work together to share their ideas, lessons learned, and strategies to overcome barriers and increase capacity and exposure to the arts in their buildings. This level of

collaboration would also support schools during leadership and teacher turnover, as there would be an established network of arts team members to share experience and support new members.

Involve Students in the Process

One of the most significant aspects of 21st Century learning involves the active and engaged participation from the students themselves. Many of the skills and indicators that support Powerful Teaching and Learning include student voice, student collaboration, and students making meaningful connections to lessons. For The Creative Advantage, we recommend that program leaders identify and develop opportunities for students to express their understanding of and feelings about the initiative and about the impact The Creative Advantage is having on their experience in school. Program leaders could create a student survey, have informal student focus groups, or create question/answer opportunities for students to respond creatively.

In addition to new recommendations based on focus groups and interviews during the 2016-2017 school year, several suggestions from 2015-2016 were reemphasized and are included below.

Encourage Clear Communication of Program Logistics

Representatives from both pathways remained uncertain about program components, funding, and deadlines. Interviews and focus groups revealed that while communication within schools appears to be improving, there is still a lack of basic awareness about The Creative Advantage at the parent and community levels.

Program leaders continued to disseminate comprehensive newsletters to each pathway, yet very few focus group participants referenced these resources. Within each building, arts team leaders should take responsibility for communicating the information in The Creative Advantage newsletters throughout the school and community, either by printing pertinent information and posting it to a school bulletin board or sending e-mail links throughout the year. We highly recommend that the Arts Team Coordinators work with their building principals to secure time on a staff meeting agenda to process information in the newsletters. This process will very likely lead to a clearer understanding of the initiative and the types of supports that are available.

Targeted Resources for Sustainability

Despite a comprehensive offering of professional development, several teachers continued to suggest that professional development should be differentiated for teachers at all levels of implementation, from those new to the initiative to those with more veteran status. They also spoke to the desire to learn how to grant write and find opportunities to find funding sources and keep the work moving forward. One option could be to create on-line seminars or professional development opportunities focused on grant writing, or to provide links for on-line courses already in existence. Sites like Coursera or EdX offer MOOCs (Massive Open On-line Courses) for educators and are low cost, accessible options.



Continue to Communicate the Message the Arts are a Part of Basic Education

Program stakeholders should continue to find ways to communicate the message that Arts are a part of basic education in the state of Washington. The Seattle K-12 Arts plan articulates this, and school leaders should continue to advocate for the importance of the arts in creating equitable opportunities for all students.

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