



For Immediate Release:

October 20, 2016

Media Contact:

Jenny Kern, 415-495-4200, ext.102, jenny@spitfirestrategies.com

Arts Advocates Launch New Suite of Tools to Help Schools and Communities Improve Status of Arts Education Throughout the State

Tools designed to identify and help address education inequities across the state

Sacramento, CA – Create CA, in partnership with the California Department of Education and the Arts Education Data Project, today launched [a first-of-its-kind suite of tools](#) designed to help increase participation in arts education across the state.

The tools include the [California Arts Education Data Project](#), which analyzes and reports school-level data on arts education courses and grades 6 through 12 enrollment across the state. It is designed to enable leaders at the state, district and school level – as well as parents and advocates – to identify and address education inequities across the state. In addition, the [California Arts Education Data Project: A Roadmap for School Districts](#) guides districts through the process of examining their data to better understand their unique circumstances and challenges. The Roadmap contains resources and helpful guides to assist districts in assessing their own programs and creating strategic arts plans. Finally, the *California Arts Education Data Project Communication Toolkit* provides materials to share these new resources with local stakeholders.

“School leaders want to offer diverse and high-quality arts education courses, which are essential to ensuring our students foster the creativity needed for 21st century careers,” said State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. “We know arts education in California isn’t where we want it to be and we’re excited to join with our partners to provide new tools to help connect school leaders with other districts to learn best practices and strategies for navigating challenges.”

Presented in a user-friendly, color-coded dashboard, the Project provides important information to education leaders, teachers and parents about levels of access to and enrollment in arts programming in schools. The dashboard allows users to review school-level, district, county and statewide data and presents the statewide averages as the baseline for comparison. It reports data from 2013–2014 and 2014–2015 from 3,719 schools, covering more than three million students in grades 6 through 12, which is roughly half of California’s student population.

“Quality arts education has long been lauded as an important priority in California because we know it sparks creative thinking, an essential skill to succeed in today’s competitive workforce,” said Craig Cheslog, chair elect of Create CA, California’s Statewide Arts Education Coalition. “But as our 2015 Blueprint for Creative Schools identified, until now there have been few opportunities to analyze arts education data in a coordinated effort to identify and help address education inequities at the secondary school level.”

The executive summary of the data show that although nearly 97 percent of students have access to some level of arts education, 26 percent of students have access to all four arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual art as required by the state education code. Also, 86 percent of schools provide at least one arts discipline, but only 12 percent of schools offer the four required arts disciplines. The data shows the need to improve student participation rates, as only 38 percent of students were enrolled in at least one arts discipline. Further disparities exist by discipline, with 17 percent of students enrolled in art, 14 percent in music, 5 percent in arts, media and entertainment, 4 percent in theatre and 2 percent in dance.

“Data is an important tool to improve outcomes,” said Bob Morrison of Quadrant Research, the [Arts Education Data Project’s](#) research partner and project director. “In New Jersey, we saw that just the act of making arts education data available to schools led to increased participation rates, and we have high hopes for California.”

The data reinforces the need to continue to address inequities in access to and participation in arts education. The data shows the greater the percentage of students on free and reduced lunch, the lower the arts participation rate. In addition, the data indicates that the proportion of students without access to any arts courses was greater where the majority of students in the school are either African American or Hispanic when compared to the total student enrollment distribution.

Research Findings Summary (see full research summary results [here](#))

- Between 2014 and 2015, there was a 9.6 percent decline in the number of students without access to any arts instruction.
- Although nearly 97 percent of students have access to some level of arts education, only 26 percent of students have access to all four arts disciplines of dance, music, theatre and visual art as required by the state education code. Also, although 86 percent of schools provide at least one arts discipline, only 12 percent of schools offer the four required arts disciplines.
- In total, 38 percent of students were enrolled in at least one arts discipline. Further disparities exist by discipline, with 17 percent of students enrolled in art, 14 percent in music, 5 percent in arts, media and entertainment, 4 percent in theatre and 2 percent in dance.
- The data shows the greater the percentage of students receiving free and reduced lunch, the lower the participation rate in the arts.
- The data shows the proportion of students without access to any arts courses was greater where the majority of students in the school are either African American or Hispanic when compared to the total student enrollment distribution.
- Students with no access to the arts were overrepresented in charter schools.
- Although schools with no arts courses tend to be in rural areas, the greatest concentration of students without access to arts is in large cities.

- Student enrollment in arts education during middle school was unusually low. In other states arts education participation rates decline as the grade levels advance, but in California there was a larger percentage of students participating in high schools than in either middle schools or elementary/high school combination schools.
- The overall student to arts teacher ratio in traditional public schools was 232 to 1.

About the Data

The California Arts Education Data Project reports on student enrollment in arts education courses for schools with grades 6 through 12, which includes high schools, intermediate/middle/junior high schools and elementary/high combinations schools. Currently, elementary school data is not included, as subject-level data is not currently collected at the elementary level. As a result, the report covers 3,719 schools with a total population of 3,070,640 students. The source of data comes directly from information schools submitted through the California Longitudinal Pupil Achievement Data System (CALPADS) - California's K–12 longitudinal data system for the 2013–2014 and the 2014–2015 school years. Demographic data is from the Common Core of Data file from the National Center for Education Statistics. Data will be added annually, allowing the project to show progress over time.

###

About Create CA

Create CA, California's Statewide Arts Education Coalition, is working to ensure all students are able to reach their full potential by advancing an education model that promotes creativity and the arts for the 21st century workforce. The California Department of Education, California County Superintendents Educational Services Association (CCSESA), the California Alliance for Arts Education (CAAE), the California Arts Council (CAC) and the California State PTA are organizational members coordinating with this effort. To see a complete list of the 15 members of the Create CA Leadership Council, [go here](#).

Create CA thanks the following funders for their generous support: The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, The National Endowment for the Arts, The Stuart Foundation, The Music Man Foundation, The California Arts Council and The Panta Rhea Foundation.

About the California Department of Education

The California Department of Education is a state agency led by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom Torlakson. For more information, please visit the [California Department of Education's](#) Web site or by [mobile device](#). You may also follow Superintendent Torlakson on [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#) and [YouTube](#).

About the Arts Education Data Project

The Arts Education Data Project is a partnership between the State Education Agency Directors of Arts Education and Quadrant Research. The nationwide project coordinates with participating state departments of education to collect and report arts education data from State Longitudinal Data

Systems (SLDS) and other state department of education data sets on an annual basis. Learn more at <http://artsedata.org>.

Funding for the Arts Education Data Project has been generously provided by The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, NAMM Foundation, Ohio Arts Council, Educational Theatre Association and National Association for Music Education.