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***Creativity Challenge:
The State of Arts Education in California***

SRI Education's latest study, "Creativity Challenge: The State of Arts Education in California," commissioned by the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation as a follow-up to the 2007 "An Unfinished Canvas: Arts Education in California," reveals that a majority of California schools continue to fail to meet the state's arts education mandate of offering all California students dance, music, theater, and visual arts instruction.

Download the full report at CreateCA.org/CreativityChallenge

For more information, contact us at info@createca.org.



Background

Creativity Challenge

The State of Arts Education in California



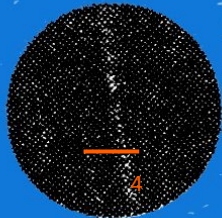
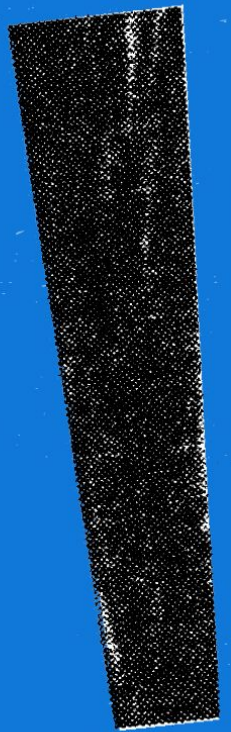
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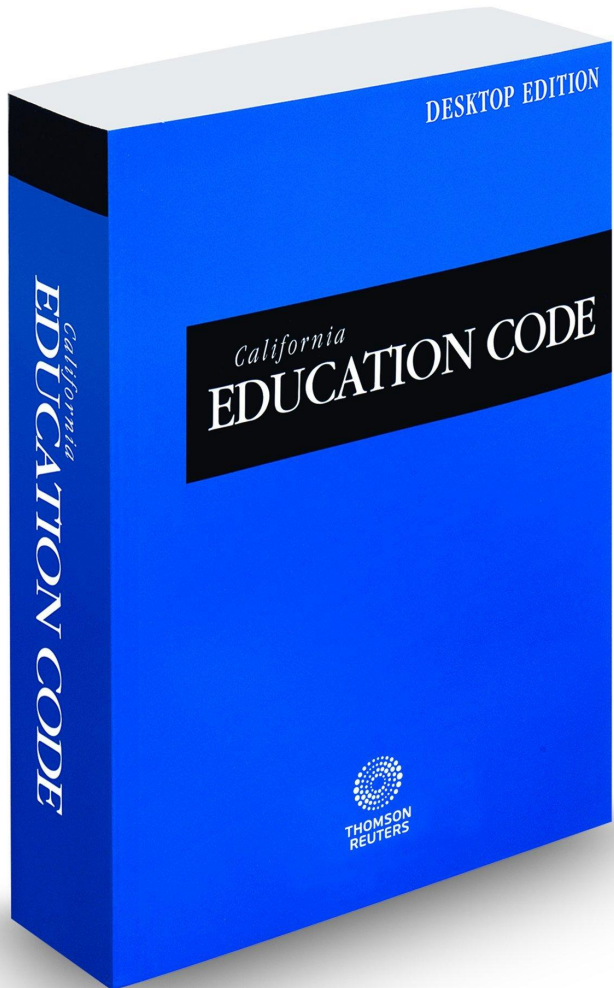
- **The study measures the degree to which students have an opportunity to complete standards-based, sequential arts education K-12 in all arts disciplines required by state law.**
- **Evaluates data from the 2019-20 school year.**
- **Refreshes the 2007 study “An Unfinished Canvas” that reported:**
 - **Although some California schools have excellent arts programs in place, with well-trained teachers, standards-aligned curricula, and high-quality facilities and materials, most do not. Instead, arts education in California is plagued by a lack of funding, underprepared elementary-level teachers, and inadequate facilities. It suffers from uneven implementation and is often crowded out by other curricular demands. As a result, most students in California do not receive instruction at the level required under state policy.**
- **Using data from the 2005-06 school year from “An Unfinished Canvas” as a baseline for comparison, it shows that some schools have made incremental improvements in providing arts education, but nearly nine in ten schools continue to fall short of complying with state requirements.**

If we want to get through the tough problems that face us today, it will require

**IMAGINATIVE LEADERS WHO CAN
DREAM & CREATE A NEW REALITY.**

Arts education is essential to getting us there.





Section 51210a – Visual and Performing Arts shall be included in the school curriculum for **all students grades 1-6.**

Section 51220g- VAPA shall be offered to **all students in grades 7-12.**

Section 51050- the governing board of every school district shall enforce in its schools the courses of study.

Benefits of Arts Ed



**5X less likely
to drop out
of school**



**4X more likely to
be recognized for
academic
achievement**



**4X more likely
to receive a
bachelor's
degree**



**30% more
inclined to pursue
a professional
career**

Benefits of Arts Ed

- **Set and achieve positive goals**
- **Feel and show empathy for others**
- **Establish and maintain positive relationships**
- **Make responsible decisions**
- **Understand and manage emotions**

SELF
DISCOVERY





Report's Key Findings





9 IN 10 CA SCHOOLS

CONTINUE TO FALL SHORT OF COMPLYING WITH STATE ARTS EDUCATION POLICY

As in 2006, only 11% of California schools offered a sequential, standards-based course of study in all four of the arts disciplines (music, dance, art, theatre) required by California policy.



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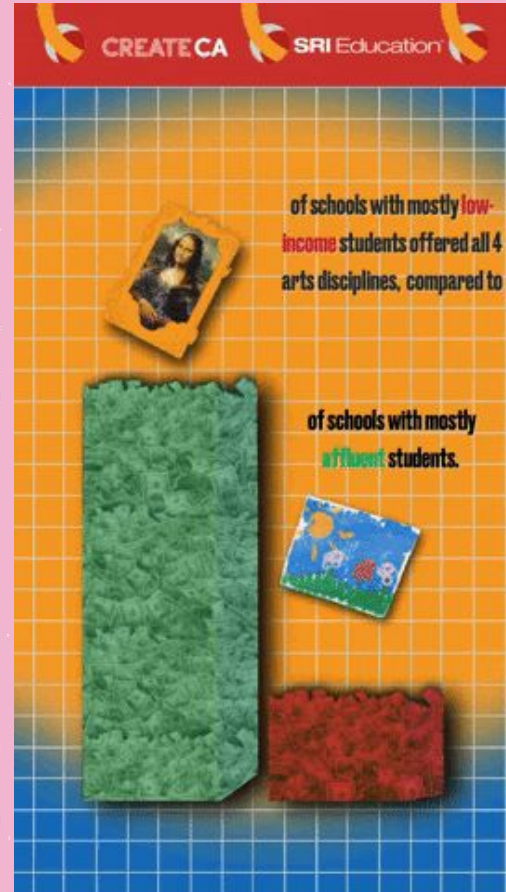
FOR ME, PERSONALLY, I CAN'T AFFORD TO DO MUSIC LIKE OTHER STUDENTS CAN OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL. I DON'T HAVE THE MONEY TO PAY FOR PRIVATE LESSONS. SO, SCHOOL IS THE ONLY OPTION I HAVE.


- High school student



However, the percentage of schools offering a course of study in at least one required arts discipline **increased modestly** from 2006 to 2020 as did the percentage of schools offering instruction in each required arts discipline.

14% of schools with mostly low income students offered all 4 four disciplines, compared to 32% of schools with majority affluent students





Most California schools offer sequential, standards-based education in music and visual arts but not in dance, media arts, or theatre.

In 2019–20, most middle schools and many high schools failed to offer a single course in dance or theatre.

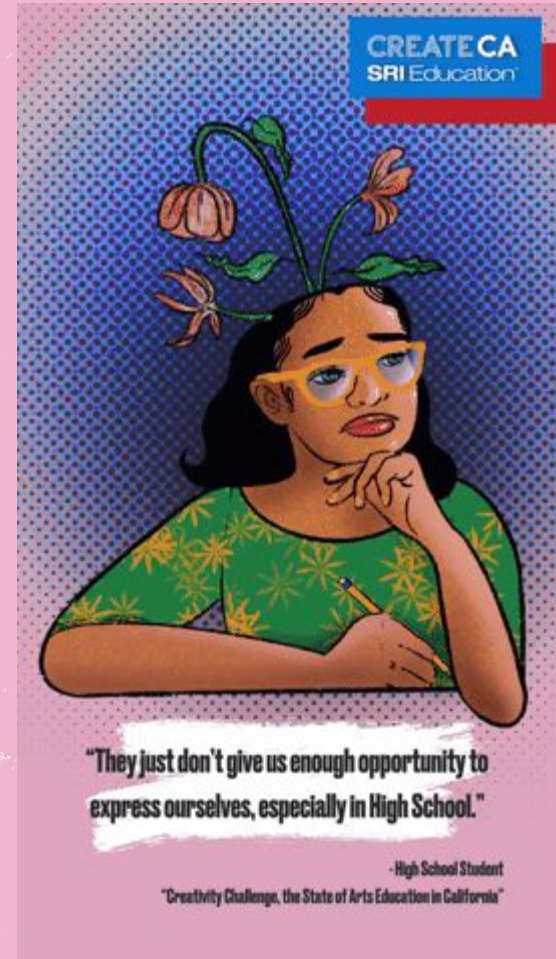


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Only 11% of rural CA high schools offer all 4 arts disciplines.



Elementary schools, court and community schools, and schools serving high proportions of children from low-income families provide less arts instruction.



What barriers impede increased access to arts instruction?

In 2020, inadequate funding remained the most significant barrier to increasing access to arts education.

Elementary schools reported significantly more barriers to increasing arts access than secondary schools.

More middle schools than high schools cited inadequate funding and lack of teacher capacity as barriers to access to arts education.

RECOMMENDATIONS



- **The report calls attention to the need to expand opportunities to train teachers in all areas of arts instruction. Such efforts could include professional development for existing teachers and new pipelines for bringing artists and arts teachers into classrooms.**
- **Steady, reliable funding for arts instruction, especially for districts that serve large proportions of low-income students, is needed to ensure access to arts education remains sustainable.**

- **The state should also consider requiring school districts to collect more specific data about which types of students (e.g., by grade, income level, and demographic group) have access to which types of arts courses to deepen state and local policymakers understanding of the extent to which districts are meeting state requirements for the arts.**
- **This report also shows recent work by arts education advocates have helped schools expand access to arts education, even in districts with fewer financial resources. Local and state policymakers must take advantage of available resources to ensure every public school student receives a high quality visual and performing arts education.**

FAQs

WHY IS THE RESEARCH IMPORTANT?

- **On the most basic level, arts education is essential for student well-being and academic success, as well as for preparing the next generation of Californians for 21st century jobs and civic engagement.**
 - For our economy and the health of our civic institutions, and to support student engagement and mental health in the wake of the pandemic, our schools must make arts a priority.
- **Access to arts education is an equity issue. Low-income and students-of-color faced more barriers to access. The students who can benefit the most from the arts are least likely to have access to them.**
 - The report shows that districts that serve higher-income families do a better job of complying with arts education requirements. Districts that rely primarily on local funding, which are typically high-income areas, have the financial stability to build out and maintain arts education programs, whereas it's harder for state-funded districts to do so.

To what extent is the data in “Creativity Challenge” really meaningful today, since it represents a snapshot in time prior to the COVID-19 pandemic?

- **The report relies on data from the last “normal” school year prior to the pandemic. Recent years have included long stretches of remote learning, which made teaching the arts challenging. The report therefore provides an accurate snapshot of the state of arts education without the distraction of pandemic disruptions.**

Aren't California schools awash with money?

- **California school funding is cyclical and is widely disparate across different school districts - especially where race and equity play a role in historic discrimination.**
- **Spikes in state funding tend to be one-time infusions, making it impossible for lower-income districts to use those funds to hire teachers with those monies. A more consistent commitment to funding schools as a whole, arts education included, is required if we want a permanent solution**

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- **SHARE** the findings and recommendations of the report.
Download the report toolkit.
- **ADVOCATE** for financial resources and curricular time for arts education
- **JOIN A LOCAL PARENT OR COMMUNITY GROUP** and share information about the role of arts education
- **JOIN YOUR DISTRICT'S LCAP ADVISORY COMMITTEE** to advise and provide input regarding priorities and resources
- **JOIN CREATE CA** at CreateCA.org



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THANK YOU